AARON IN THE WILD WOODS

The Story of a Southern Swamp.

By JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS.

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CHAPTER II.

THE SECRETS OF THE SWAMP.

However hard and fast the door of the Swamp may be locked at night, however tightly it may be shut, it opens quickly enough to whomsoever carries the key. There is no creaking of its vast and heavy hinges; there is not the faintest flutter of a leaf, nor the softest whisper of a blade of grass. That is the bargain the bearer of the key must make:

That which sleeps, disturb not its slumber.
That which moves, let it swiftly pass.

Else the Swamp will never reveal itself. The sound of one alien footfall is enough. It is the signal for each secret to hide itself and for all the mysteries to vanish into mystery. The Swamp calls them all in, covers them as with a mantle, and puts on its every-day disguise, the disguise that the eyes of few mortals have ever penetrated. But those who stand by the bargain that all key bearers must make—whether they go on two legs or on four, or whether they fly or crawl, or creep or swim—find the Swamp more friendly. There is no disguise anywhere. The secrets come swarming forth from all possible or impossible places, and the mysteries, led by their torch bearer, Jack-o'-the-Lantern, glide through the tall canes and move about among the tall trees.

The unfathomable blackness of night never sets foot here. It is an alien and is shut out. And this is one of the mysteries. If, when the door of the Swamp is opened to a key bearer the black night seems to have crept in, wait a moment. Have patience. It is a delusion. Underneath this leafy covering, in the midst of this dense growth of vines and saw grass, and reeds and canes, there is always a wonderful hint of dawn; a shadowy, shimmering hint, elusive and indescribable, but yet sufficient to give dim shape to that which is near at hand.

Not far away the frightened squeak of some small bird breaks sharply on the ear and strong. The Indians had camped round about, had tried to run its mysteries down and had failed. Then came a band of wandering Spaniards, with ragged clothes and tarnished helmets and rusty shields, and neighing horses—the first the Swamp had ever seen. The Spaniards floundered in at one side—where the trumpet-vine tried to marry the black-jack tree—and floundered out on the other side more bedraggled than ever. This was a great victory for the Swamp, and about that time it came to know and understand itself. For centuries it had been "organizing," and when it pulled De Soto's company of Spaniards in at one side and flung them out at the other, considerably the worse for wear, it felt that the "organization" was complete. And so it was and had been for years and years, and so it remained thereafter—a quiet place when the sun was above the trees, but wonderfully alert and alive when night had fallen.

The Swamp that Aaron knew was the same that the Indians and Spaniards had known. The loblolly pine had grown and the big poplars on the knoll had expanded a trifle with the passing centuries, but otherwise the Swamp was the same. And yet how different! The Indians had not found it friendly and the Spaniards regarded it as an enemy; but to Aaron it gave shelter and sometimes food, and its mysteries were his companions. Jack-o'-the-Lantern showed him the hidden paths when the mists of night fell darker than usual. He became as much a part of the Swamp as the mysteries were, entering into its life and becoming native to all its moods and conditions. And his presence there seemed to give the Swamp new responsibilities. Its thousand eyes were always watching for his enemies, and its thousand tongues were always ready to whisper the news of the coming of an alien. The turkey buzzard soaring thousands of feet above the top of the great pine, the blue falcon, suspended in the air a mile away, the crow, flapping lazily across the fields, stood sentinel during the day, and the Swamp understood the messages they sent.

THE RED FOX AND THE GRAY FOX.

of the Swamp. This is no alien note, and Jack-o'-the-Lantern dances up and down and all the mysteries whisper in concert:

"We wish you well, Mr. Fox. Don't choke yourself with the feathers. Goodnight, Mr. Fox, goodnight!"

Two minute globules of incandescent light come into sight and disappear, and the mysterious whisper:

"Too late, Mr. Mink, too late! Better luck next time. Goodnight!"

A rippling sound is heard in the lagoon as the Leander of the Swamp slips into the water. Jack-o'-the-Lantern flits to the level shore of the pool and the mysteries come sweeping after, sighing:

"Farewell, Mr. Muskrat! Good luck and goodnight!"

Surely there is an alien sound on the knoll yonder—snapping, growling and fighting. Have stray dogs crept under the door? Oh, no! The Swamp smiles, and all the mysteries go trooping thither to see the fun. It is a wonderful frolic! Mr. Red Fox has met Mr. Gray Fox face to face. Something tells Mr. Red Fox, "Here's your father's enemy." Something whispers to Mr. Gray, "Here's your mother's murderer." And so they fall to, screaming and gnawing and panting and snarling. Mr. Gray Fox is the strongest, but his heart is the weakest. Without warning he turns tail and flies, with Mr. Red Fox after him, and with all the mysteries keeping them company. They run until they are past the boundary line—the place where the trumpet flower tried to marry the black-jack tree—and then, of course, the Swamp has no further concern with them. And the mysteries and their torch-bearers come trooping home.

It is fun when Mr. Red Fox and Mr. Gray Fox meet on the knoll, but the Swamp will never have such a frolic as it had one night when a strange bird came flying in over the door. It is known that the birds that sleep while the Swamp is awake have been taught to hide their heads under their wings. It is not intended that they should see what is going on. Even the buzzard that sleeps in the loblolly pine, and the wild turkey that sleeps in the live oak, conform to this custom. They are only on the edge of the Swamp, but they feel that it would be rude not to put their heads under their wings while the Swamp is awake. But this strange bird—of a family of night birds not hitherto known to that region—was amazed when he beheld the spectacle.

"Oho!" he cried: "what queer country is this, where all the birds are headless? If I'm to live here in peace I must do as the brethren do."

So he went off in search of advice. As he went along he saw the Bullfrog near the lagoon.

"Queerer still," exclaimed the stranger. "Here is a bird that has no head, and he can sing."

This satisfied him, and he went further, until he saw Mr. Wildcat trying to catch little Mr. Flying Squirrel.

"Good evening, sir," said the stranger. "I see that the birds in this country have no heads."

Mr. Wildcat smiled and bowed and licked his mouth.

"I presume, sir, that I ought to get rid of my head if I am to stay here, and I have nowhere else to go. How am I to do it?"

"Easy enough," responded Mr. Wildcat, smiling and bowing and licking his mouth. "Birds that are so unfortunate as to have heads frequently come to me for relief. May I examine your neck to see what can be done?"

The strange bird fully intended to say, "Why, certainly, sir!" He had the words all made up, but his head was off before he could speak. Being a large bird he fluttered and shook his wings and jumped about a good deal. As the noise was not alien the Swamp and all its mysteries came forth to investigate, and oh, what a frolic there was when Mr. Wildcat related the facts! The torch-bearers danced up and down with glee and the mysteries waltzed to the quick piping of the Willis-Whistlers.

Although the Swamp was not a day older when Aaron, the son of Ben Ali, became a key-bearer, the frolic over the headless bird was far back of Aaron's time. Older! The Swamp was even younger, for it was not a swamp until old age had overtaken it—until centuries had made it fresh and green. At night the Willis-Whistlers were on guard, and their lines extended for miles in all directions, and the Swamp itself was awake, and needed no warning message. Sometimes at night the sound of Randall's trumpet fell on the ear of the Swamp, or the voice of Uncle Fountain was heard lifted up in song, as he went over the hills to his fish baskets in the river, and these were restful and pleasing sounds. Sometimes the trailing cry of hounds was heard. If in the day, Rambler, the track dog, would listen until he knew whether the cry came from Jim Simmon's "nigger dogs," from the Gossett hounds, or from some other pack. If at night, the Swamp cared little about it, for it was used to these things after the sun went down.

Mr. Coon insisted on gadding about, and it served him right, the Swamp insisted, when the hounds picked up his drag—as the huntsmen say—and brought him home with a whirl. He was safe when he got there, for let the hounds bay at the door of his house as long as they might, no hunter with torch and axe would venture into the Swamp. They had tried it—oh, many times.

But the door was locked, and the key
Was safely hid in a hollow tree.

But it was merely Cousin Coon who lived up the river, well and good. It would teach the incurable vagrant a lesson, and the Swamp enjoyed the fun. The Willis-Whistlers stopped to listen, the mysteries hid behind the trees, and the Jack-o'-the-Lantern extinguished his torch as the hounds came nearer with their quavering cries. Was it Mr. Coon or Cousin Coon? Why, Cousin Coon, of course. How did the Swamp know? It was the simplest thing in the world. Wasn't there a splash and a splutter as he ran into the quagmire? Wasn't there a snap and a snarl when the partridge-peavine caught his foot? Did he know the paths? Didn't he double and turn and go back the way he came, to be caught and killed on dry land? Would Mr. Coon of the Swamp ever be caught on dry land? Don't you believe it! If cut off from home, he would run to the nearest pond and plunge in. Once there, was there a hound that would venture to take a bath with him? The Swamp laughed at the thought of such a thing. Aaron smiled, the White Pig grunted, and Rambler grinned. Cousin Coon is no more, but Mr. Coon is safe at home and the Swamp knows it.

Good luck to all who know the way,
By crooked path and swinging vine!
For them Night's messengers shall stay,
For them the laggard moon shall shine.

But it was not always that aliens and strangers were unwelcome. Occasionally in the still hours between midnight and dawn the Swamp would open its doors to Gossett's Riley. He had no key and he had never come to know and feel that the Swamp was something more than a mixture of mud and water, trees, canes, vines and all manner of flying, creeping and crawling things. To him the Swamp was merely a place and not a thing, but this was ignorance, and the Swamp forgave it for various reasons. Forgave it and pitied him as he deserved to be pitied. And yet he had qualities out of the common, and for these the Swamp admired him. He was little more than a dwarf, being "bowlegged and chuckle-headed," as Susy's Sam used to say, and was called Chunkey Riley, but very much of a man for all that. At alog-rolling there was not a negro for miles around who could pull him down with the handstick. Aaron could do it, but Aaron was not a negro, but an Arab, and that is different. Chunky Riley was even stronger in limb and body than Aaron, but Aaron used his head, as well as body and limb—and that also is different. Riley was not swift of foot, but he could run far, as Gossett's hounds well knew. More than that, he could go on all-fours almost as fast as he could run on two legs, and that was something difficult to do.

The Swamp found Chunky Riley out in a very curious way. The first time he came to bring a message to Aaron he waited for no introduction whatever. The Willis-Whistlers warned him, but he paid no attention to their warning; the mysteries whispered to him, but his ears were closed. He searched for no path, and was blind to all the signals. He blundered into the Swamp and floundered toward the knoll as the Spaniards did. He floundered out of the quagmire near where the White Pig lay. He had the scent and all the signs of an alien, and the White Grunter rushed at him with open mouth. The Swamp was now angry from center to circumference, and poor Chunky Riley's ending would have been swift and sudden but for the fact that he bore some undeveloped kinship to the elements that surrounded him.

As the White Pig rushed forward with open mouth Chunky Riley caught a vague glimpse of him in the darkness, gave one wild yell, leaped into the air, and came down a-straddle of the Grunter's back. This was more than the White Pig had bargained for. He answered Riley's yell with a loud squeal, and went tearing through the swamp to the place where Aaron dwelt. The big owl hooted, Rambler howled, and Jack-o'-the-Lantern threw down his torch and fled. The Swamp that had been angered was amazed and frightened. What demon was this that had seized the White Grunter and was carrying him off? What could the rest hope for if so fierce a creature as the White Pig could be disposed of in this fashion? Even Aaron was alarmed at the uproar, for Chunky Riley continued to yell, and the White Pig kept up its squealing.

It was well that the Grunter, when he came to Aaron's place, ran close enough to a tree to rub Chunky Riley off his back, otherwise there is no telling what would have happened. It was well, too, that Chunky Riley called loudly for Aaron when he fell, otherwise he would have been made mincemeat of, for as soon as the White Pig was relieved of his strange burden his anger rose fiercer than ever, and he came charging at Chunky Riley, who was lying prone on the ground, too frightened to do anything more than try to run to a tree on all fours. Aaron spoke sharply to the White Pig.

"Shall I use a club on you, White Grunter? Shall I make bacon of you? You heard him call my name."

The White Pig paused. His small eyes glittered in the dark, and Chunky Riley heard his tusks grate ominously. He knew the creature was foaming with rage.

"Ooft! Your name, Son of Ben All?" said the White Pig in language that Chunky Riley thought was merely a series of angry grunts and snorts. "Ooft! I heard him call for Aaron, and how long has it been since I heard you say to the Red Chatterer in the hickory tree that there were a thousand Aarons, but only one son of Ben All? Ooft-Ooft! Am I a horse to be ridden? Humph! No man could ride me—it is what you call a thing. Umph! let it ride you and then talk about clubs. Ooft!"

"Is dat Aaron?" Chunky Riley ventured to inquire. "Ef 'tis, I wish you'd be good enough ter tv dat ar creetur 'way fum here, kaze I ain't got no knack fer bein' chaw'd up an' spit out, an' trampled on an' teetotally ruint right 'fo' my own face."

"What's your name?" inquired Aaron.

"You ought ter know me, but I dunner whedder you does er not. I'm name Riley—dey calls me Chunky Riley fer short."

Aaron was silent for a moment, as if trying to remember the name. Presently he laughed and said: "Why, yes; I know you pretty well. Come we'll kindle a fire."

"No, suh—not me! Not less'n you'll run dat ar wil' hog off. He mo' servigrous dan a punt'er. Ef I hadn't er straddled 'im des now he'd 'a' c't me bodyaciously up an' dey wouldn't 'a' been nothin' lef' but de buttons on my cloze, an' nobody in de roun' worl' would 'a' know'd dey wuz buttons."

Aaron laughed while speaking to the White Pig. "Get to bed, Grunter. It is the Lifter—the man that is as strong in the back as a horse."

"Ooft, ooft! Let him ride you out as he rode me in—ooft! He's no man! Ooft! No bed for me. When a horse is ridden he must eat, as I've heard you say, Son of Ben Ali, Ooft-ooft!"

The White Pig, still grinding his tusks together, turned and trotted off into the darkness, and presently Aaron and Chunky Riley heard him crashing through the canes and reeds. Then Aaron kindled his fire.

"Why did you come?" inquired the son of Ben Ali when the two had made themselves comfortable.

"Des ter fetch word that Marster wuz layin' off ter git after you wid Simmons' nigger dogs 'fo' long."

"All the way through the dark for that? When did you come to like me so well?"

"O, 'taint 'zactly dat," replied Chunky Riley, frankly. "I hear um talkin' 'bout it when Marster an' dat ar Mr. Simmons wuz walkin' out in de hoss lot. I wuz in de corn crib, an' dey didn't know it, an' I des sot dar an' lis'n at um. An' den dis mornin' I see dat ar little Marse Abercrombie, an' he say, 'Go tell Aaron quick ez you kin.'"

"The child with the crutches?" queried Aaron.

"De ve'y same," replied Chunky Riley. He paused awhile and then added: "I'd walk many a long mile fer dat white chil', day er night, rain er shine."

He gazed in the flickering fire a long time, waiting for Aaron to make some comment. Hearing none, he finally turned his eye on his companion. Aaron was looking skyward, where one small star could be seen twinkling through the ascending smoke from the fire, and his lips were moving, though they framed no words that Chunky Riley could hear. Something in the attitude of the Son of Ben Ali disturbed the negro.

"Well, I done what I come ter do," he said, making a pretense of stretching himself and yawning, "an' I speck I'd better be gwine." The Son of Ben Ali still kept his eye fixed on the twinkling star. "What pesters me," Chunky Riley went on, "is de idee dat dat ar wil' hog went 'zactly de way I got ter go. I don't want ter hatter ride 'im no mo' less'n I got a saddle an' bridle."

"Come!" exclaimed Aaron, suddenly. "I'll go with you. I want to see the Little Master."

"De dogs 'll fin' yo' track sho, ef dey start out tomorrer," suggested Chunky Riley.

The only response the Son of Ben Ali made to this suggestion was to say: "Take the end of my cane in your hand and follow it. We'll take a short cut."

Chunky Riley had queer thoughts as he followed his tall conductor, being led as if he were a blind man; but he said nothing. Presently (it seemed but a few minutes to Chunky Riley) they stood on the top of a hill.

"Look yonder!" said Aaron. Away to the left a red light glimmered faintly.

"What dat?" asked the superstitious negro.

"The light in the Little Master's window."

"How come it so red, den?" inquired Chunky Riley.

"Red curtain," replied Aaron, curtly.

"Well, de Lord he'p us! Is we dat close?" cried Chunky Riley.

"Your way is there," said the Son of Ben Ali; "this is mine."

The negro stood watching Aaron until his tall form was lost in the darkness.

(To be Continued.)

GERMAN BUILDING BLOCKS.

Easy and Interesting Way to Study Architecture in the Nursery.

"See what I have just brought my boys from Vienna," said the father of two of the most intelligent and perfectly trained lads that I know. "I have always thought it a pity that more boys, or rather more parents, do not know about these building blocks, for that is really all they are—but such building blocks!

"They represent a regular progression, and this is the ninth box that my boys have had, each for a little more complicated designs than the one before it. They began playing with the first series as soon as they could sit alone and put one block on top of another; and now that they are 8 and 10 years old they play with them with always increasing interest, as I do myself, for that matter. They have had more hours of solid pleasure and enjoyment out of these toys—if, indeed, one may call them toys—than out of all their other playthings combined. The beauty of it is, there is always something fresh and new in the way of combinations. The manufacturers have architects continually at work designing, and from their schemes the most clever and beautiful models are selected, and then formed into books of designs.

"This box is what is called a supplement box, and the designs that go with it call for the use of the blocks in part or all of the preceding boxes.

"Expensive? Well, not when you consider that they are absolutely imperishable, so that the money spent for them is in the nature of a permanent investment. I paid $3.50 for this last box, but the blocks that my boys began playing with seven years ago are in just as good condition today as these new ones. And they are so fond of them that of the thousands of different pieces that they have manipulated they have lost only nine in almost as many years. Indeed, putting them back in the boxes according to the pretty design painted on the inside the cover is a part of the game. So absolutely exact are the patterns that the loss of a single block, be it ever so small, renders the erection of the building impossible. They may be easily replaced, however, by simply sending on for the required number, as they are most carefully systematized.

"The blocks are of real stone, as you see, the tints resembling the stone, brick and slate colors of real building material, thus giving to the buildings a beautifully colored and imposing appearance. The heaviness of the stones and the mathematical exactness of each cause them to lie firmly together and makes building an easy task. The work is swiftly done, and even the very largest buildings, in spite of their more complicated nature, easily constructed by children. The surface of the stones is sufficiently rough to prevent the stones from shifting; and if a child is ambitious to erect a permanent structure the stones may be stuck together with ordinary gum, and can be taken to pieces again by soaking in lukewarm water. When they become soiled they may be cleaned by simply washing them in soap and water.

"Of course, the boys have no thought beyond the fun of the thing. But I am tremendously interested in it as an educational factor. Why? It teaches them deftness, accuracy, order, symmetry, sense of proportion, taste in the combination of color, and a world of other essentials. The small box of tiles in subdued, harmonious tints is a most charming study in color effects. Both memory and invention are greatly strengthened by the proper use of the stones, as it is very interesting to an intelligent child to try to build a given design from memory, or to erect a building quite according to his own ideas. With the ordinary wooden blocks the structure so often topples over just as it is nearly finished that it discourages and irritates a child, but with the heavier stone this disappointment cannot be experienced, for they are so accurately molded, that they fit each other to a nicety, and stand absolutely firm.

"Froebel and his followers gave building blocks the very first place among the different occupations to be practiced by children and youths. To boys with any bent toward architecture these 'anchor boxes' are simply invaluable, as their clever and artistic designs in bridges, convents, Gothic and Greek churches, cottages of every style, pillars, etc., are a liberal education.

"They range in price from 20 cents upwards, and the stones vary in size from one-half and one inch cubes to pieces three inches in length."

OLD ABE, THE WAR EAGLE.

The Bird of Battle Carried by the Eighth Wisconsin Volunteers.

The emperors of Rome used to have the figure of an eagle in silver borne aloft before their armies, but in our late civil war one regiment carried a live eagle, a bald-head, again and again into battle. That regiment was the Eighth Wisconsin volunteers, and the bird was the special property of company C. They bought him at the beginning of the war, and, till the end of the war, his place was next in rank to that of the regimental flag. The men named him Old Abe, and swore him into the United States service, a ceremony that consisted of putting around his neck red, blue and white ribbons, and decorating his breast with a rosette of the same. Being now a national bird, he was furnished at state expense with a new perch decorated in the national colors, and this perch, which was used throughout the war, and is worn and battered with service, is still preserved by Wisconsin as an army relic. An eagle bearer was appointed, company C was the regimental color company, and when the regiment formed in line the eagle was always on the left of the color bearer. Old Abe was in all the regiment's battles. He had some of his tail feathers shot away once, but he never lost a drop of blood, and, more than that, neither color bearer nor eagle bearer in this regiment was ever shot, so that the soldiers said that Old Abe led a charmed life, and that he cast a spell of protection around these two men who were his particular friends. He would grow greatly excited in battle, and scream and flap his wings continually; he would also behave in this vain-glorious way any time that his regiment gave vent to cheers, but to the cheering of other regiments he paid no attention. After he had been in the army a year he always gave heed to "Attention;" he would fasten his eye on the parade commander and note time accurately. When parade was dismissed he would drop his military airs and stretch and flap his wings.

The soldiers were so inspired with enthusiasm by their bird that at the battle of Corinth the confederate General Price said he would rather capture that eagle than to take the whole regiment without him. But he was never taken, and it was the boast of his regiment that they never lost a battle, though they saw such hard service that nearly half of their original number lay, when the war closed, in soldiers' graves. The old colonel of the regiment said that he sincerely believed that the regiment's proud record owed not a little to the eagle; he shared General Price's view of the case.

PRATTLE OF THE YOUNGSTERS.

Teacher—What animal attaches himself to man the most? Johnny Thickhed—The—er—er— bulldog, ma'am.

"Now, Violet, can you give me any reason why I should not punish you for being naughty?" Violet—Yes, ma. The doctor said you weren't to take any vi-lent ex'cise.

"I love to have you come to see sister, Mr. Tompkins." "Why, Dickie?" "'Cause she never likes that candy you bring her, an' gives it to me."

Mamma—Johnnie, if I gave you two pennies and sister none, what would you do? Johnnie—I'd spend 'em.

Little Margery has just begun to go to the kindergarten, and is filled with a due sense of the importance of her studies there and the solemn value of the attainments that have been put within her reach. The other afternoon, after coming home from school, she remained in a brown study for a time and then said: "Mamma, do I know as much now as I don't know?"

Mamma—Well, Edith, how did you like the kindergarten? Edith—I didn't like it a bit. The teacher put me on a chair and told me to sit there for the present. And I sat and sat, and she never gave me the present.

"He's your first cousin, isn't he?" said an old lady to 6-year-old Freddy, alluding to a new baby, of whom Freddy was very fond. "Oh, no," replied Freddy, "I had two cousins before he was born."

"What time is it, my lad?" asked an American traveler of a small Irish boy, who was driving a couple of cows home from the fields. "About twelve o'clock sir," replied the boy. "I thought it was more." "It's never any more here," returned the lad, in surprise. "It just begins at one again."

THE BEST OF TRUMPS.

Harper's Bazar.

St. Valentine,
O saint benign,
How much we mortals owe to thee!
What blessings great
Should be thy fate!
What love from all should go to thee!

Just glance around,
Gaze o'er the ground,
And see
What life would be
Were't not for thee.

Look first on men,
And witness then
How into classes twain—
Both vain—
Men are divided in these day.
You'll stand amaze!
They toil from morn till night,
Or else they loaf with all their might.
Their noses grinding on the stone,
A mass of toiling skin and bone,
Or else, impatient of the moil of life,
In clubs take refuge from all strife.
Their trump, a spade or club,
Ay, there's the rub!

And maids these days?
Poor maids! Their ways
Sometimes compel the thought
That they are far more easy caught
By glittering things—
By trinkets, rings—
Than by a nature fit for wings!
Their trump the diamond.

Then you come
With Cupid in your train, and take the numb
And icy hearts of all mankind,
And bring the thought of love—sweet love, the blind,
One snap upon fair Cupid's string,
And pessimistic thoughts take wing,
And spite of diamonds, clubs and spades,
Hearts are the trumps of men and maids.

Ah, Valentine,
Thou saint benign,
How much we mortals owe to thee!
What blessings great
Should be thy fate!
What love from all should go to thee!

WHY PATTI'S VOICE LASTS

De Vivo Has Worked Out the Prob'em to His Satisfaction.

THERE IS NO MYSTERY ABOUT IT

Inherited Vocal Strength Supplemented with Systematic Bodily Care and No Straining of the Voice for Effect.

Since Patti's last appearance in this country a question that has been often asked by old and young opera-goers is:

"Why does Patti's voice continue to be divine? Why has it lasted so long?"

Diego de Vivo volunteers an explanation together with reminiscences of her tour of the United States.

As it touches neither a secret nor a mystery, I willingly will answer this repeated question for the benefit of the singing world. I knew the little Adelina when she was not yet 14 years old. She was living with her sister, Amelia Strakosch, in her house in Twenty-second street, near Eighth avenue, in New York, and she was then playing stage with various dolls, which she cherished so much as never to go to sleep without having one in her arms. She was then as good a songstress as I had ever heard. She had sung on the concert stage for four or five years, assisting the great pianist, Lovis Moreau Gottschalk, in a tour in Cuba, and also, if I do not mistake, the famous violinist, Ole Bull. I know that in that time she earned enough money to buy a comfortable cottage for her parents.

The late Henry E. Abbey was then giving four concerts, assisted by Christine Nilsson. She was assisted by the Boston Quintet club and the tenor Boyestain. In the four concerts I think he took about $2,500. I assisted in the first two concerts at the Grand opera house, and there I met all the critics and my friends, who told me that it was my turn to bring Patti there. Two days later I told Abbey to bring Patti there, where he could charge $7 or $8 and make triple or quadruple the money he had cleared with Nilsson. He said:

"My dear De Vivo, I got enough of Patti. I lost $20,000, but I made a reputation."

The newspapers for two or three days urged me to bring Patti there, and at their request I telegraphed Patti the following dispatch: "Here is a mine of gold for you. Do not accept any offer until my arrival in New York."

Her agent telegraphed back: "All right. Adelina will wait for you."

I left on Sunday at 3 p. m. The interview had appeared in the morning.

DE VIVO OUTWITS MR. ABBEY.

On Thursday I called on Patti at the Windsor hotel. I sent in my card, and Nicolini came out. He told me that Mr. Abbey was inside, and he said to call on the following day, as they were not going to make any engagement with Abbey. On Friday Patti sang with Schalchi in "Semiramide," and she gave me two seats to go and hear her, as I had not heard her in twenty-two years. She sang divinely and was superbly supported by the great Schalchi as Arsace. Scalchi made a great impression on me by her magnificent contralto voice. At the first entr'acte I met Abbey, who called me to a corner and said:

"My dear De Vivo, you can have Patti, as I did not come to an arrangement with her."

"Thank you," I said. "I knew that you did not succeed. But how is it that you told me in San Francisco that you would not engage her, and then changed your mind so quickly?"

"To tell you the truth," he replied, "your interview in the Call made me change my mind, and I dispatched my agent on the same train you went by, and I followed him the day after, so as not to give you a chance to engage her."

On the following Monday I made her a proposition for nine concerts to be given in three weeks' time, the only spare time she had after her engagement with Mapleson before her engagement for the London season. Her engagement with me was for $40,000, I to supply the company and pay traveling and other expenses. According to my calculations, the venture would have cost me about $65,000, and I am quite sure that I would have taken in in nine concerts from $80,000 to $90,000. She left for the western tour about two weeks afterward. From Cincinnati, in February, I received a letter from her agent telling me that Adelina was sorry to give up her engagement with me, for the reason that he had received a letter from Ernest Guy, the London impresario, begging Patti to be in London by May 20 instead of June 10. So I lost the pleasure of managing Patti for a short season and $20,000 which I would have cleared by the engagement. My prophecy was verified in the season of 1884 and 1885, when I persuaded Mapleson to bring her to San Francisco. The excitement was just what I had anticipated. The Grand Opera house there, a large theater, was mobbed at ten performances by Patti at $7 a seat; and there were full houses with Gerster at $5 a seat. Mapleson's agent had in bank, if I well remember, before the company arrived there about $90,000, the proceeds of sales of tickets.

PATTI RESERVES HER POWERS.

How do I account for Patti's voice being still fresh? The following reasons will tell:

First, her perfect method of the old Italian singing school, inherited from and taught by her mother, who was a famous singer; her father, who was a fine tenor, and her half brother, Antonio Barili, a great musician and singing maestro.

Second, her systematic, almost mechanical life in eating, drinking and exercise, a life of privation and toil.

Third, her right of choice, according to her contract, of the operas and songs; each fitted the register of her voice.

Fourth, she seldom attended rehearsals, and so did not fatigue her voice.

Fifth, she never sang when slightly indisposed, no matter the price offered, and she never forced her voice for effect, as, generally, all the singers do.

Sixth, the last and most indisputable reason why Patti's voice has lasted so long, and in my belief it will last at least half dozen a dozen years longer—I hope so—is a mathematical reason, which I will present in the form of the following problem: I know as an opera manager that sopranos, mezzo-sopranos, contraltos, tenors, baritones and bassos, for forty years or more generally have been engaged by the impresarios to sing four times a week, with few exceptions. Admit that the career of a prima donna lasts twenty years. The average season of an opera singer is seven months in a year. Singing seventeen times a month, or 119 times in the season, for twenty seasons, the singer would have a total of 2,380 times singing. Patti has sung on an average ten times a month—I know it positively—each seven months, making seventy times. In the thirty-seven years of her career, just ended, she would have sung 2,590 times. It will be seen that she has sung in the thirty-seven years of her career, 210 more times than the other prima donnas of her era in careers of twenty years.

Should this not demonstrate to readers convincingly why Patti's voice has lasted so long? There is no mystery nor any secret about it. Rubini, the greatest tenor of the century, used to say: "The more voice you use, the less remains." Patti has adopted this rule, and that is the reason her divine voice has survived those of her contemporaries and rivals.

Viva, la diva! May she live forever!

LABOR AND INDUSTRY.

United States has 200,000 machinists.

America last year made 4,125,988,540 cigars.

We sent 103,000,000 pounds of ham to England last year.

Indianapolis has a new union of canvassers and agents.

For the year ending June 30, 1896, the net earnings of the 172,369 miles of railway in the United States were $368,675,047.

About the only crop of which the state of Nevada has a surplus is potatoes, which bring $8 to $10 a ton for shipment to the coast.

The Kiel canal is lighted over sixty-two miles by electricity and is the longest distance in the world lighted continuously in that way. There are 5,000 poles.

J. R. Morse, an American, has the contract for the first railway in Corea. It will connect the port of Chemulpo with Seoul, the capital, a distance of twenty-five miles, and will cost $1,850,000.

The American Federation of Labor is now fairly installed in its new quarters at the national capital and its address is 700 Fourteenth street, N. W., Washington, D. C. Frank Morrison is the secretary.

In Berlin women are rapidly displacing men in the textile industry. In Ghent there are 618 women to 1,000 men employed. In all Belgium the proportion is 64 women to 100 men. There are 4,000 females between 10 and 20 years of age employed.

The Grand Rapids Typographical union admits reporters and editors to membership, and President Prescott expresses the opinion that the day is not far distant when there will be numerous well-organized writers' unions in the country.

The shoe and leather trade of Baltimore has an invested capital of nearly $7,000,000, and the amount of the wholesale and manufacturing trade of the city in this line is estimated at $16,000,000 annually, the retail and customs trade adding $4,000,000 more.

United States Consul Connelly, at Nioga, Japan, in a recent report to the State department at Washington, shows that the wages of workmen in Japan have been more than doubled since the war with China, and the demand for workmen is greater than the supply. One large cotton mill raised the wages of its hands and enticed away the men of other mills, which invoked a guard of police to prevent their employes escaping.

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LESSONS IN NEWSPAPER MAKING.

In Lesson No. 2

We will teach you how The Bee compares regarding actual news printed with its would-be competitors.

For 6 days we have the following result:

January	25th Mon.	26th Tues.	27th Wed	28th Thur.	29th Fri.	30th Sat.	Total.
EVENING BEE	874	909½	816¾	904¾	881	859	5,245
Evening World-Herald	906½	841¼	816¼	851	753	815½	4,983½

OMAHA EVENING BEE printed ..... 5,245 inches
Evening World-Herald printed ..... 4,983½ inches

Almost 13 columns more pure reading matter in the Evening Bee for one week than in the World-Herald.

Now take the Morning and Sunday

papers for 7 days (one week)—

And we have the following result:

January	25th Mon.	26th Tues.	27th Wed.	28th Thur	29th Fri.	30th Sat.	31st Sun.	Total.
Morning and Sunday Bee	940½	905¾	935¾	896¾	1,019½	1,433	1,831¼	7,462½
Morning and Sunday World-Herald	915	930½	849½	882¼	933¾	771¼	1,472½	6,754¾
Morning and Sunday Lincoln Journal	803½	808¼	806¾	818½	873	763	1,547½	6,430¼
Morning and Sunday Sioux City Journal	863½	784¾	709	676½	708	644	1,253¾	5,633¼

Like Lesson No. 1, The Bee shows itself to be far above all competitors—here you see—

THE MORNING AND SUNDAY BEE printed ..... 7,462½ inches
The Morning and Sunday World-Herald printed ..... 6,754¾ inches