

Family Circle.

WITHIN SEA WALLS:

OR HOW THE DUTCH KEPT THE FAITH.

CHAP. I. THE CARILLON PLAYER.

Evening was falling over the great city of Ghent. The sun was high in heaven still, for the season was glorious mid-summer; but from the numerous towers and pinnacles which arose among the level miles of streets and canals began to sound modulated voices of bells, one with another mingling in a sweet jangled resonance through the serene air. It was the time of vespers, the hour of cessation from labor. Presently amid the carillons swelled another sound, in no wise musical, which grew gradually like the surging of a sea. An imposing sound, greater than organ's diapason or waves' roar to the thoughtful observer: even the tramp of thousands of human feet, the hum of armies of artisans pouring along the streets. During their passage to and from work daily all other transit and traffic through the city was suspended; the draw-bridges might not be raised for ships on the canals; passengers turned aside out of the thoroughfares, and people kept their children indoors, lest they should be trodden down by the moving multitudes. Thus did Ghent homage in the sixteenth century to the workers of the Fleece, which the enterprise of her merchants and manufacturers had transmuted into "the Golden Fleece."

High in one of the belfries, whence chimed the carillons, a man stood before a range of immense wooden keys, as of a gigantic organ. Each, as he struck it, swung the bell above, and thus a melody was fashioned forth. A mournful one this evening, the music of a misereere: sweet and sad to listeners far below, as it were the complaint of a soul. The player lingered over the notes, heedless of the changing echoes in the tower above, and sent his music raining down upon the streets longer than need be for very love of it.

When it had ended, he connected by a crank the machinery of the ordinary chimes,—a cylinder constructed like that of a barrel-organ, which would note the hours till morning. Gradually the melody died from all the steeples, and the tramp ceased in the busy street below. Then from the body of the monastery church, to which this belfry belonged, ascended other music, echoing faintly through cloisters and closed doors to this rude loft under the bells. It was the Salve Regina, or Virgin's Hymn, at vespers, sung by the choir of priests,—preface to such prayer as never gets beyond earth's noises.

Our carillon player scarcely heard it; he was gazing intently from a fretted loophole over the wide flat land. Closest lay the town, within a given cincture of walls and fortifications: long lines of streets and squares, shining canals, and three hundred bridges, clear as in a map; the frowning citadel ("chateau des Espagnols," the freeborn Flemings called it), set in the ancient quarter of St. Bavon, keeping guard, as Charles V. intended that it should. Grand churches, massive convents, elegant private dwellings, huge factories, rose frequently above the level of common houses, for the Gantois were a people rich and religious; ships lined the quays,—the murmur of a dense population brooded about it all.

But not at "the innumerable housetops" did the carillon player gaze. It was at a spot beyond the walls, where the green country stretched afar towards the dim sea-dykes. There was something unusual in the meadow-land yonder; a camp seemed to be forming. Wagons were drawn up tents were pitched, bodies of men were moving about.

"They cannot mean to defy her highness's government!" murmured the gazer. "Do they forget that the edicts are in as much force as ever?"

He shook his head as he turned aside to his large-keyed instrument, and forthwith proceeded to disobey the edict himself; for he thrust his hand into some hidden crevice of the woodwork, and drew forth a book, in which he read, among other passages utterly subversive of existing ideas, the following:—

"Our Lord Jesus Christ, when he cometh, is nothing else but joy and sweetness to a trembling and broken heart: as here Paul witnesseth, who setteth him out with this most sweet and comfortable title when he saith, 'which loved me, and gave himself for me.' Christ, therefore, in very deed is a lover of those who are in trouble and anguish, in sin and death; and such a lover as gave himself for us."

Read therefore with great vehemency those word, 'me,' and 'for me;' and so inwardly practice with thyself, that thou with a sure faith mayest conceive and print this 'me' in thy heart, and apply it to thyself, not doubting but that thou art of the number of those to whom this 'me' belongeth."

Thereupon our carillon player lifted his head, as having heard pleasant news, and his commonplace Flemish face was lit up with the gladness of one that findeth great spoil. Had he then also forgotten the terrible edicts? Did he not know that barely having this book in his possession was a title to death "by fire, by the pit, by the sword," or, according to a boon lately granted, by the halter? Any inquisitor would recognize in the foregoing paragraph the foul heresy of Martin Luther.

Luther's "Commentary on the Galatians" did what every religious book ought to do,—sent its reader to Holy Scripture. He drew from the same recess, a well worn Flemish Testament to look for the text that had so moved him, and in the search came upon many a rill of the water of life, drank and was refreshed.

Once more his eyes glanced from the loophole upon the distant encampment, and its aspect was changed: its temerity became a holy courage. His heart yearned towards his brethren, with the drawing of of invisible bonds.

Down the long ladders and many stages from the tower-top he came, with a purpose more than half formed in his mind. Alas for human strength! Opening the postern door into the church cloister, his eyes fell upon the white scapular of an Augustian monk pacing to and fro, while he read and repeated his Hours. The austere monk in the community, the keenest against heresy,—always detailed on the duty of attending inveterate impenitents at the last. That half formed purpose shrank back.

"You seldom are seen at vespers now, Gerard Franck," said the monk, stopping short. Then one noticed how glowing were the eyes in the ascetic face under that white cowl.

"The carillons—," began his excuse.

"Nay, nay; who desireth to serve God must not make his daily business a cover for neglect. The carillons ceased long since."

He resumed his walk and his clasped book without more words. "Does he suspect me?" was the anxious thought of the reprimanded man as he humbly went home. This was close under the shadow of the big church, a brick box set gable-end outward, quite up against the carved buttresses,—one of a nest of such little houses, in which dwells chiefly the dependents of the ecclesiastical establishments.

To be continued.

The Brakeman goes to Church.

On the road once more, with Lebanon fading away in the distance, the fat passenger drumming idly on the window pane, the cross passenger sound asleep and the tall thin passenger reading "General Grant's Tour Around the World," and wondering why "Green's August Flower" should be printed above the doors of "A Buddhist temple at Benares." To me comes the brakeman, and seating himself on the arm of the seat says:

"I went to church yesterday."

"Yes?" I said, with that interested inflection that asks for more. "And what church did you attend?"

"Which do you guess?" he asked.

"Some union mission church?" I hazarded.

"Naw," he said, "I don't like to run on these branch roads, very much I don't often go to church, and when I do, I want to run on the main line, where your run is regular and you go on schedule time and don't have to wait on connections. I don't like to run on a branch. Good enough, but I don't like it."

"Episcopal?" I guessed.

"Limited express," he said, "all palace cars and two dollars extra for a seat; fast time and only stop at the big stations. Nice line, but too exhaustive for a brakeman. All train men in uniform, conductor's punch and lantern silver-plated, and no train boys allowed. Then the passengers are allowed to talk back at the conductor, and it makes them too free and easy. No, I couldn't stand the palace cars. Rich road, though. Don't often hear of a receiver being appointed for that line. Some mighty nice people travel on it, too."

"Universalist?" I suggested.

"Broad gauge," said the brakeman; "does too much complimentary business. Everybody travels on a pass. Conductor

doesn't get a fare once in fifty miles. Stops at all flag stations and won't run into anything but a union depot. No smoking car on the train. Train orders are rather vague though, and the train men don't get along well with the passengers. No, I didn't go to the Universalist, though I know some awfully good men who run on that road."

"Presbyterian?" I asked.

"Narrow gauge, eh?" said the brakeman, "pretty track, straight as a rule; tunnel right through a mountain rather than to go around it; spirit level grade; passengers have to show their tickets before they get on the train. Mighty strict road, but the cars are a little narrow; have to sit one in a seat and no room in the aisle to dance. Then there's no stop over tickets allowed; got to go straight through to the station you're ticketed for, or you can't get on at all. When the car's full, no extra coaches; cars built at the shops to hold just so many and nobody else allowed on. But you don't often hear of an accident on that road. It's run right up the rules."

"Maybe you joined the Free Thinkers?" I said.

"Scrub road," said the brakeman, "dirt road bed and no ballast; no time card and no train dispatcher. All trains run wild and every engineer makes his own time, just as he pleases. Smoke if you want to; kind of a go-as-you-please road. Too many side tracks, and every switch wide open all the time, with the switchman sound asleep and the target lamp dead out. Get on as you please and get off when you want to. Don't have to show your tickets, and the conductor isn't expected to do anything but amuse the passengers. No, sir, I was offered a pass, but I don't like the line. I don't like to travel on a road that has no terminus. Do you know, sir, I asked a division superintendent where that road run to, and he said he hoped to die if he knew. I asked him if the general superintendent could tell me, and he said he didn't believe they had a general superintendent, and if they had, he didn't know anything more about the road than the passengers. I asked him who he reported to, and he said 'nobody.' I asked a conductor who he got his orders from, he said he didn't take orders from any living man or dead ghost. And when I asked the engineer who he got his orders from, and he said he'd like to see anybody give him orders, he'd run that train to suit himself or he'd run it into the ditch. Now you see, sir, I'm a railroad man, and I don't care to run on a road that has no time, makes no connections, runs nowhere and has no superintendent. It may be all right, but I've railroaded too long to understand it."

"Did you try the Methodists?" I said.

"Now you're shouting," he said with some enthusiasm. "Nice road, eh?" Fast time and plenty of passengers. Engines carry a power of steam, and don't you forget it; steam gauge shows a hundred and enough all the time. Lively road; when the conductor shouts "all aboard," you can hear him to the next station. Stop-over checks given on all through tickets; passenger can drop off the train as often as he likes, do the station two or three days and hop on the next revival train that comes thundering along. Good, wholesome companionable conductors; ain't a road in the country where the passengers feel more at home; no passes; every passenger pays full traffic rates for his ticket. Wesleyanhouse air brake on all trains, too; pretty save road, but I didn't ride over it yesterday."

"Maybe you went to the Congregaional church?" I said.

"Popular road," said the brakeman, "an old road, too; one of the very oldest in this country. Good road bed and comfortable cars. Well managed road, too; directors don't interfere with division superintendents and train orders. Road's mighty popular, but it's pretty independent, too. See, didn't one of the division superintendents down East discontinue one of the oldest stations on this line two or three years ago? But it is a mighty pleasant road to travel on. Always has such a splendid class of passengers."

"Perhaps you tried the Baptist?" I guessed once more.

"Ah, ha!" said the brakeman, "she's a daisy, isn't she? River road; beautiful curves; sweep around anything to keep close to the river, but it's all steel rail and rock ballast, single track all the way and not a side track from the round house to the terminus. Takes heap of water to run it through; double tanks at every station, and there isn't an engine in the shops that can pull a pound or run a mile with less than two gauges. But it runs through a

lovely country; these river roads always do; river on one side and hills on the other; and it's a steady climb up the grade all the way till the end runs where the fountain-head of the river begins. Yes, sir, I'll take the river road every time for a lovely trip, sure connections and good time, and no prairie dust blowing in at the windows. And yesterday, when the conductor came around for the tickets with a little basket punch, I didn't ask him to pass me, but I paid my fare like a little man—twenty-five cents for an hour's run and a little concert by the passengers thrown in. I tell you, Pilgrim, you take the river road when you want—"

But just here the long whistle from the engine announced a station and the brakeman hurried to the door, shouting:

"Zionsville!" "This train makes no stops between here and Indianapolis!"

R. J. B.

Little Sins.

Charlie was spending the winter with his married sister. Every one thought him a good boy; indeed, he himself was quite sure he could do nothing wrong. One day, as he was passing the pantry, he saw a box of raisins. They were the largest raisins he had ever seen. He stepped in slyly and took bunch after bunch, and then slipped away, feeling like a thief, and yet thinking, "It is only a little thing." This he did day after day, till there was quite a hole in the box of raisins. Still no one seemed to notice it.

One day a visitor told the following story at the dinner table:

Walking through a fine park two years before, he had seen a large sycamore tree. A wood worm about three inches long was forcing its way under the bark of the trunk. "Ah!" said the gentleman who was with him, "in time that worm will kill the tree."

"A hard thing to believe," said his friend.

"By and by you will see," replied the other.

Soon the worm was found to have gone a distance under the bark. The next summer the leaves came off earlier than usual. Something serious seemed the matter. When the next summer came—just two years from the time the worm began its work—the tree was dead. The hole made by the worm could be seen in the very heart of the trunk.

"You were right," said the gentleman; "the tree was ruined by that worm only three inches long."

If a worm could do such harm, what may not what persons call "little sins" do to a man or woman, a boy or girl?

Charlie felt the blood rush into his face. He was sure every one must know about the raisins, and the story was told on purpose. He did not dare to look up from his plate. After dinner they all went into the parlor; but as no one took special notice of him, Charlie concluded he must be mistaken. Still he began to feel now, as never before, that God knew all about it.

The next time he was emptied to take from a basket what was not his, he remembered what the worm did to the tree. "That is just what sin is doing to my soul," he thought. He drew back in fear, and ran away as fast as possible; nor could he rest until he had told his sister the whole story. Then he went with a lowly penitent heart to his heavenly Father, asking that all sins might be forgiven, and that, for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ, a new spirit might be put within him.

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