

# "AH! I HAVE SIGHED TO REST ME."

Dorothy's Life Went Out in the Organ Loft While the Young Organist Played at the Noiseless Keys.

A BIT OF QUIANT PATHOS FROM THE CITY'S WHIRL.

Dorothy Was Seventy-five Years Old and She Will Pump the Organ No More in the Dutch Evangelical Church on East Houston Street.

In a small undertaking establishment on the east side there lay yesterday afternoon the body of an old woman. It was indeed in a plain coffin—there were no flowers piled upon it and no friends kept watch last night.

The dead woman who lay there kept with her in death the mystery of her life. And the manner of her dying—quaintly pathetic, like a chapter out of an old-fashioned clerical novel.

Seventy-five years of age was Dorothy Struthoff, and in the organ loft of the Dutch Evangelical Church, where she had so often pumped the air that came forth through the organ pipes in the old Lutheran hymns, she fell suddenly dead on Monday. In vain the little organist pressed the keys. Something was amiss. Glancing into the organ loft she saw the dim light through the window falling softly on the dead woman's face.

Six years ago Dorothy Struthoff called at the residence of the Rev. Julius Geyer, on East Second street, and asked for work. She was so very old that many perhaps would have turned her away.

DOROTHY FOUND A HOME.

But the pastor of the Dutch Evangelical Church had seen much of the misery of life, and he knew what awaited a homeless and friendless old woman. He and his wife took her in, and Dorothy was happy. She seemed strong and well and she was grateful and industrious.

She assisted in the household work as much as they would permit, and she made herself specially useful in caring for the children.

She was a reserved woman; they all noticed that. She said little or nothing about her past life. Once in a long while she would speak of Germany and describe to the children the gardens, the forests or the quaint villages with their open squares in which the young men and women danced by night.

THEY LIKED THE CHILDREN.

At such times Dorothy's face softened, and a moist came over the eyes that were usually rather sharp than kind. Sometimes, too, she would take a neighbor's child in her lap and pet her gently, as if she loved to have

the little one there and feel the baby arms about her neck.

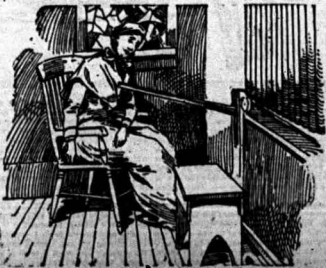
But in general Dorothy was self-contained, and if she had moments of loneliness she gave no sign.

In the Geyer household there is a daughter, Julia, thirteen years of age. She is pretty, bright and lovable, and old Dorothy had not been in the home long before she became warmly attached to the little girl.

She was always ready to do anything for Julia. She prepared the child's lunches and mysterious and delightful little cakes made their appearance therein. She was always willing to tie bows or take walks or let Julia experiment in cookery on the kitchen range. Julia reciprocated her affection in a way, and the small mistress and the venerable maid became fast friends.

Pastor Geyer's daughter is a very fine performer on the pipe organ and practices industriously each day on the organ in her father's church. The old servant loved the music dearly, and used to beg to be allowed to pump the organ for the little girl when she practiced. This arrangement was made and faithfully carried out.

Day after day the young girl and old woman walked to the little red church in Houston street, where Julia played and Dorothy pumped, feeling herself almost



THE DIM LIGHT ABOVE ON DOROTHY'S DEAD FACE.

Identified with the music which rolled from the great organ.

that day, but her manner, to the child was very tender. As they walked along the old woman complained, for the first time, of feeling tired. She said she hardly knew what ailed her, but there was a faintness she could not understand.

Julia was sympathetic.

"When we get to the church you shall have a nice rest to-day," said the child. "You needn't pump for me to-day if you don't feel well. I can look over my music and play solitarily."

They reached the church and ascended to the organ loft. The effort told on Dorothy and she trembled as she reached the top step.

"Sit right down here," said Julia, bustling around behind the organ and bringing out a chair. "Take a nice long rest and don't worry about me."

With this the girl went back to her place at the keyboard and softly touched the noiseless keys.

The old church was very quiet. The afternoon light shone dimly through the stained-glass windows, and only the rustle of the music leaves as Julia turned them broke the silence.

It lasted a long time. Julia herself fell into a reverie and forgot the flight of the minutes. From the quiet woman behind the

organ there was no sound, but below the window a street musician had stationed himself, and the old, worn-out air, "Ah, I have sighed to rest me," floated upward.

THERE WAS NO ANSWER.

Julia listened dreamily until it ended, and the musician moved on to another house and began the same air again. Then it occurred to her that it was getting late and she spoke.

"Dorothy," she said, "would you not like to play just one tune before you go?" There was no answer.

"Dorothy," a little louder. Still there was silence behind the great organ.

Then the young girl arose and went to the seat where she had left the old servant.

It was very dim in the shadow of the great pipes, but her eyes were accustomed to the gloom and she saw clearly.

The old woman still sat in the chair Julia had placed for her. But, although there had been no sound and no warning, an unseen visitor had entered. It had beckoned and the soul had followed, leaving the lifeless clay behind as contented to the child the dead woman had loved so well.

As that child stood agnost in the presence of death, once more the musician below tuned up, and once more the old air came through the window.

"Ah, I have sighed to rest me."