

**STOLEN CORRESPONDENCE
FROM THE "DEAD
LETTER" OFFICE BETWEEN
MUSICAL CELEBRITIES**

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Stolen Correspondence from the "Dead Letter" Office Between Musical Celebrities by B. A. Sharp

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B. A. SHARP

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From the "DEAD LETTER"
Office Between Musical
Celebrities ∴ ∴ ∴ ∴

BY

B. A. SHARP

*Bachelor of Unlimited Art and Undis-
covered Science*



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PREFACE.

WHEN I was in Washington recently, I took a stroll around town, and after an hour's walk I came to the Capitol. All roads lead to Rome, don't you know. I was shown through (the Capitol, of course, not Rome), and everything was explained to me in a very nice way. Then my guide took me over to the Congressional Library—a magnificent building, the treasury of our brainwork. Wandering through the building and admiring the different departments, I noticed a door with a sign "Dead Letter Office." As I could not make out what such sign or such office meant, I went in and asked of a very old and very kind gentleman (he must have been the sexton of that useful institution) to explain what was the reason of the existence of such an office. The very old and very kind gentleman told me that the office is a kind of a cemetery for all the dead letters—that is, the letters which were wrongly addressed or otherwise did not reach their destination—and he showed me around the many rooms of the cemetery—I mean, departments. Everywhere piles, heaps, mountains of dead letters, and I could not help thinking: "What a loss of energy

and time in writing these letters." Suddenly I saw in an obscure corner a large parcel with the inscription: "Correspondence between Musical celebrities." I will tell the truth, that I was tempted, and noticing that the very old and very kind gentleman was looking the other way, I snatched the parcel and put it under my overcoat. In the train, on the way to New York, I read through the correspondence and thinking that it might do some good, I decided to publish it. But as I am and always was, or pretended to be, an honest man, I put the title in the following way: "STOLEN CORRESPONDENCE" from the "Dead Letter Office," as the case was, without attributing to myself the honor belonging to

THE AUTHOR.

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DALTON BLUTKOPFF
to
JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH



My Dear Old Boy:

How are you, Sebastian? You must be getting old. Let me see, you were born in 1685, and now we are in 1901. Well, you must be about two hundred and sixteen years old. That is quite an age, isn't it? I hope, when I am as old as you are, I shall have a name like yours.

Between us, I can't make out why you should have such a name. Is it through your masses, fugues, counterpoint or piano pieces, that you got it? You write very uncomfortably for the piano; it is too difficult. I never took your writings as a model; it would never pay. For my model in harmony and piano technique, I took the "Maiden's Prayer," and I am quite successful here as a composer.

Not long ago I wrote a song, by name "Penny Dearer." It has been sung by the great, but not over-great, baritone, actor and lecturer, Bispham. Of course, I made him great. Oh, you should hear that song. It is

a dream, not a song. Some people say it is taken from our patriotic song, "When Johnny Comes Marching Home." Well, I'll tell you, after I composed this song, the resemblance struck me, too; but does it not happen that the same great compositions are written by different composers? In fact, all the new operas remind us of the old ones. Don't they?

I have also composed an oratorio, "Vanilla Tedium." Some profane jester made a joke on it, by calling it "Vanilla I scream;" isn't that foolish? Speaking frankly, and with some modesty, Sebastian, the workmanship of this oratorio surpasses yours in the B-minor mass. I simply took Smith's five finger exercises for the "angels" theme: *Do, re, mi, fa, sol; sol, fa, mi, re, do*. How does it strike you, Sebastian? So simple and so grand. I forgot to tell you that I have also tried myself in the operatic field. I have composed an opera, entitled, "The Yellow Fool" or "The Scarlet Satchel"; quite an original name, you must admit? Well, well, I must tell you, without pride, it is a "*chef d'oeuvre*." Everybody says it is. You can ask my brother Franz. The opera was produced by my own opera company; and it made a sensa-