

AN ANTIDOTE TO CARE.

Think that the grass upon thy grave is green;
Think that thou seest thine own empty chair;
The empty garments thou wast worn to wear;
The empty room where long thy haunt hath been.
Think that the lane, the meadow, and the wood,
And mountain summit feel thy feet no more,
Nor the loud thoroughfare, nor sounding shore;
All mere blank space where thou thyself hast stood.
Amid this thought-created silence say
To thy stripped soul, what a I now, and where?
Then turn and face the petiv, nar-wing care
Which has been gnawing thee for many a day,
And it will be as dies a wailing breeze
Lost in the solemn roar of bounding seas.

—[James Sm. than.

THE MUSICIAN'S STORY.

Yes, I don't know but what the colonel is right; we see some very curious things in this profession of ours. I am often tempted to think that it would make a very interesting story if a reporter would some time simply write out an account of a single day's experiences and tell all he sees without adding even a tinge of romance. First of all the very variety of the life has a certain charm for the uninitiated, who have an idea that it must be delightful to be behind the scenes in everything, as they like to put it. As though it was always pleasant to see things stripped of all romance. Now, it is right there that I take issue with what the colonel has just said. It is not well to have everything laid bare. I would rather have some of the gift left on my gingerbread. I want a little romance in mine. I would like to go all through life and have some of the illusions of youth left when I get through; and here I am not yet thirty, not by several years, and the few ideals that I managed to bring with me through college have been escaping ever since so fast that I have hardly been able to see them go. That's why I am tempted to quite journalism—thanks, I mean the newspaper business, of course. Now I have a story to tell that illustrates the point I am making. Talking is not much of my line, however, and I have often thought I ought to write what I have to say. Still, if somebody will stand a mug of ale, I'll tell it anyway. Thanks, Judge, here's to you, and here goes.

Well, to begin with, I suppose you boys all remember that fellow Harrington who died a couple of weeks ago and had such a big funeral. The papers gave a good deal of space to it at the time, for his family amount to a good deal, even if he didn't, peace to his ashes. He was a pretty lively youth, and they do say that the way he made the paternal ducats fly was a caution to fathers, and I've no doubt he has furnished the text for many a sermon to wayward youth since he left us. He set a fast pace and every one knew he couldn't keep it up long, but he had a good time while it lasted. The way I came to get onto his story was a very natural one.

The day after he died an editor called me into his room and told me he wanted me to do the funeral and to give it a good write up, you know.

"He never did anything particular," remarked the man of the shears and paste pot, "but his father was a friend of the governor's so I guess we can stand about half a column if you can get it in early enough. The ceremony is at 3 o'clock. You can write your stuff up in the organ loft, and if you have one of the boys come up there after your copy ought to be able to get a good story down in time for the second edition. There's nothing on the book for you this evening, so you needn't come back to the office."

It was a great show, and I flattered myself that we had a fairly good account of that afternoon. Pretty much all of the West End was there, and I could have filled a half column with the names of prominent people in the congregation if I had wanted to.

I was through my work and had my work on its way to the office long before the ceremony was over, but I stayed on because I wanted to see just how far the minister would go in his remarks about the departed brother. De mortuis et de rest of it is all well enough, but I think they carry it too far sometimes. Then, you know, up at that church they have an organist who can fairly make that big organ of his talk, and cry, too, when he feels that way; and I like nothing better than to sit up there in the loft when he is playing away so that he fairly forgets that there is anyone else in the church. After the congregation is all gone he sits there by the hour and plays to himself as though it was his only pleasure and solace in life.

He's a queer old chap. I don't suppose he ever had much fun out of life, but somehow I like him, and every time I am sent up there to report the Bishop's sermons, I make it a point to stay awhile afterward with my old friend. I could stay there for hours and hear him talk to me with his music. There is hardly ever anything lively or hopeful about him, but it touches me in some sensitive place, and makes me feel sure that there is some story in his life. If only one could get at it. It would make a good special, I know, and I am going to try to get it, sometime. He has no family, of that I am certain, but somehow he seems to take the greatest interest in young people, and I've noticed that he always played his best at weddings. He does not often talk much, but that day, after every one had gone I got him started by a king, he had known anything about the young man who was dead. At first he did not seem inclined to talk, but, finally, after he had been wandering over the keys for some time, making music that was indefinitely sad, as if it were full of tender memories, he turned part way about on his stool and told me a story that I shall never forget. I do not know whether it was true, but at any rate it was worth the hearing, for it taught me a lesson that was worth the learning. It showed me that there are two ways at least of looking at the same thing; and who can say which is the better way?

There was something very impressive in the scene to me. By the time he had finished the church was almost dark, and all the light there was came through the stained glass windows and gave a melancholy tinge to it all. One ray from the setting sun as it broke through the clouds fell fair upon the old man's head and gilded his snow-white hair until he looked almost young again. The lines in his face seemed to fade away as he talked along in his low, sweet voice. For a time I almost forgot the reality of the world outside and was lost in the enthusiasm and fervor of the old musician's story. I can give you a pretty good idea of what the old man said, for it made a deep impression on me at the

time; I thought then that I would write it up some time. But I haven't. It would seem almost a sacrilege to treat his ideal any less earnestly than he did. I couldn't write that sort of a story, anyway, but I'll try to tell it to you just as he told it to me.

Yes, I can tell you his story, now that he is dead—poor boy—so full of life and hope and promise that it seems almost as though it could not be. I must have grown to love him more than I knew, for now that he is dead, I feel indeed that I have lost a friend. Yet I never knew him, never spoke to him. He was a young man, while my youth has gone so far into the past that it seems as though never had been young. He was a man of the world, with many friends, and what am I but a poor, old tired-out musician, living by adding what little I can to the pleasure of others? I have looked upon his face for the last time. He is dead, and they have carried him forth from this great church, where his friends were gathered together to show as best they could the love and respect they bore him. We heard the minister say those words of consolation and hope, old, yet ever new, "I am the resurrection and the life." What more could he have said?

Now all are gone and you and I are left alone up here, with my thoughts and the memories of other years that come flooding over me. The light from those rich-colored windows is already beginning to fade away and these evening shadows give an added gloom to this dreary place. Not one of all that crowd that was so lately here even gave a thought to the old musician, and yet it seems to me that I knew him better than any of them. I knew his hopes and fears and I knew what the sorrow was that spoiled his life and made him glad to die. There was one other, but she learned it when it was too late.

I saw her, too, to-day. She was pale and sad-eyed and when the voice of the singer rang out clear and rich, bearing all the words of that sweet hymn of hope, "And is this all?" I felt somehow that she was weeping and that she knew it was not all.

I remember so well the first time that I saw her. She was but a girl then, just growing into womanhood, and I was one of the musicians who played at the ball given in honor of her first appearance in society. Yes, she was they that call a society girl, but she looked to me like one who was able to lead and not to follow others. Well born, rich and beautiful, life must have looked very fair to her. I remember she was spoken of as the most successful debutante of the season. She was beautiful, of that there was no doubt, with dark hair and eyes that would start a man to improvising wild and noble music, with passionate and tender strains, but with here and there a jarring note, for there was something about her eyes that seemed out of place—a proud, ambitious look that did not become a young girl and that made her look older than she really was. She was that sort of woman that might inpire a man to noble deeds if she would, or else to wreck all beside, rather than to lose her; whom a man might love, and, losing, die for. I knew that even though I was but a lonely old musician.

I often wonder whether the people at receptions and balls in the great world ever give a thought to the musicians setting off by themselves and playing for their pleasure. Do they ever realize for a moment that we see all that goes on about us and are the unseen audience of many a farce and comedy and tragedy. Many a ball room is the scene of events that may make or mar a life, and we musicians, left out of account and screened, perhaps, behind flowers and foliage, are often the closest and most interested spectators. A queer life is given to them by themselves and playing for their pleasure. Do they ever realize for a moment that we see all that goes on about us and are the unseen audience of many a farce and comedy and tragedy.

Two years later she came back alone. I saw her one bright spring morning riding in the park. She was not in mourning, but she looked tired and worried and anything but a happy woman. I imagine she had not found life much to her liking. Perhaps she had but herself to blame for it, but she was the any less to be pitied for that? She had done as many other young girl had done, and as they will continue to do through all time. She had but lived up to the teachings of her little world, and had made about as much out of her life as she had been taught to do. A butterfly would do poorly in harness, you know.

I saw him, too, not long ago—not, not her husband, but the other one. I heard that he had been off in the mountains in the far west, working hard in that open, free life that is so close to the heart of Mother Nature, and striving, I suppose, to forget. But there are some gals that will not be laid. To me the fact that he had nursed a poor sheep herder through a long illness, and then had fallen ill himself and had been vainly knocking at death's door for weeks, did not altogether account for his pitiable condition. It may have done so with the rest, but it is my opinion that he did not care very much to live. And so I was not much surprised last night when the old sexton came to me and told me that my services would be needed at the church.

The full-rigged ship, the Harry Williams, met with a peculiar accident while passing under the Brooklyn bridge recently. A sailor was at work near the top of the mainmast as the ship approached the structure. The mainmast was unusually high, and as the ship swept down the river a carpenter at work on the bridge yelled to the sailor, who slid down just in time to save himself. The foremast passed under safely, but the top of the mainmast struck the bridge and about six feet of the stock was snapped off. It was said at the bridge entrance that this was the first accident of the kind recorded since the bridge was erected.

She, too, was here, and I saw her, off in a dark corner of the church, where no one could have noticed that solitary figure, clad all in black and at times shaken by her silent emotion. Upon the black covering of the box above the young man's breast, I noticed two great red roses on her breast. I think, perhaps, never see one another again.

Or the following winter we see them together everywhere we go, and, seeing one, we know right well we will see the other not far away. One can tell a great deal if one only sees a person's eye light up as if it sees a wished-for face appear. That may be all, or the friendship may ripen into more. So the world wags, and so it will continue to wag on long after my fingers have lost their cunning and grown stiff and cold.

How often have I played right merrily at a young girl's first dance, and later on played her wedding march, or, perchance—and this is the saddest part of all—have played above her body music that she did not hear, and that would have sounded weak and poor compared to the sweet strains she was perhaps already hearing. Ah, me, what a deal an old man has seen; and yet that boy who is now in his last resting place knows more of the great riddle of life and death than one can learn in a long life on earth. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," said the minister.

But I am wandering from his story. It was in her second season that they met. From the first she had been what they call a success. I could tell that even from my point of view. She was courted, sought after and admired. At every ball it seemed to me she held a little court. Men flocked to her side, and I heard it whispered that one or two had reason to wish that they had never met her. I did not like her as well as I did when I first knew her. I am glad, and it may have been a little cynical, but it seemed to me as though her face had lost some of its girlish frankness. She had been too popular and the result was she was spoiled.

He was very young, and a certain honest boyish look in his face made him look younger than he was. As you probably know yourself, he was better built for books and works than for the ways of society, but his peasant manner and his sincerity I suppose must have made him hosts of friends.

And so they met. I remember it was during an interval between the dances. They were standing close to our corner when a mutual friend went through that curious formality that is necessary in a civilized society before any two of God's creatures may even recognize the fact of each other's existence. They stayed together for an hour and it was evident they liked each other very well. That was but the first of many meetings. He was evidently fascinated and he never lost an opportunity of being with her. I do not think she was ever in earnest, but at any rate it was worth the hearing, for it taught me a lesson that was worth the learning.

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One night late in the same winter I saw them together at a great ball that was quite the event of the year. She was the gayest of the gay, and no one else was half so fair as she, with a great red rose almost buried in the wealth of her dark hair, and another on the breast of her white gown. I watched them with a closer attention than usual that night, but later on I missed them from the throng of dancers. They were gone some time, and then I saw them coming in from the great conservatory beyond. She had his arm, but they were not speaking, and there was a hard, strained look about his eyes that was infinitely sadder to me than tears. He slipped away later without being observed, and I saw him no more for many a day.

So time passed on and they had well nigh gone from my thoughts, until one night, a couple of years later, this old church was brilliantly lighted and filled with all the wealth and fashion of the town. It was with a dull heart, however, that I sat up here and played the wedding march. Yes, you are right. It was her wedding night, and people called it a wonderfully fine match. She had come home to marry a foreigner of rank and title she had met and won in some European capital. It was a brilliant affair, and many a young girl no doubt that night envied her success.

As I played the old familiar strains of the march, old, yet even now, "I am the resurrection and the life." What more could he have said?

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SOMEWHAT STRANGE.

ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS OF EVERYDAY LIFE.

Queer Facts and Thrilling Adventures Which Show That Truth is Stranger Than Fiction.

DURING the last Paraguayan War it was noticed that the men who had been without salt for three months and who had been wounded, however slight, died of their wounds because they would not eat.

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