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Ghosts of Inconstant Dreams

"Why, of the world's greatest poetry," asks Norman Hapgood, "does so little treat of love? Usually we think of love as the very stuff of which poetry is composed. This is largely true in the lower grades, but not at the top." To most of us who are not familiar with the Iliad, or have forgotten our Virgil, Dante, Aeschylus, Ruskin, Goethe, Schiller, Milton or Shakespeare, this statement may come as a surprise. Love, Hapgood thinks, is only a part of life with these great masters; whereas with the lesser breeds it is played up as the surest key to the popular heart. In the more restricted sense in which we use love it plays a minor part in our greatest poetry, Romeo and Juliet and the Vita Nuova being the notable exceptions to the rule.

Why is this? Is it because to the average man and woman love is but a passing flurry, incredibly sweet today, an unspeakable, misshapen dead thing tomorrow? Today it inspires, consumes, demands and glorifies. Tomorrow the fires are spent; the hurricane becomes a breeze; the breeze a calm—calm forgetfulness. Only in rare instances does love save its reputation by falling victim to a providential and dramatic conclusion, as in the story of Romeo and Juliet. If it lives, like all else, it dies. Because it is an entity of impossible definition, an incalculable quantity finding strength in human weakness, it is bound to perish. Most of the objects on which we lavished our adolescent affections are today comical incongruities. Early maturity is filled with painful ghosts of inconstant dreams. Even death, life's supreme joke, finds us fearfully hoping that somewhere in the oblivion that awaits us a benign demigod will benevolently add love as a crown and recompense for our mortal existence.

Perhaps if man had been created by Anatole France there would not be so many ghosts of inconstant dreams. This delightful Frenchman would have set youth at the end of the human span. Instead of fashioning man after the great apes he would have selected insects because the insects which, after a life time as caterpillars, change into butterflies and for the brief final term of their existence have no other thought but to love and be lovely. Some insects, in their last metamorphosis, are reborn into this purified form only to love an hour and die. Anatole's little scheme while it may sound like the slogan of a flapper, appeals to one's imagination, to say the least. Perhaps, too, it would be better to meet the right butterfly and love an hour and die. Certainly it would be more humane than the existing system which permits one to meet the butterfly, romp blissfully through the allotted hour, and, instead of dying, wake up to find the butterfly is a poor little moth! Therein lies the rub. But the demigods, or gods or journeyman demons of the Alexandrine philosophy, who are credited with creating the material universe, beat Anatole to it by several thousand years. So the maddening, mawkish farces of self-delusion must go on, leaving more and more ghosts of inconstant dreams.

The Source of Pity and Courage

It is a great mistake to suppose that scientific truths differ essentially from those of every day. The only distinction is their superior degree of extension and precision. From the point of view of practice, the difference is highly important. At the same time we must not forget that the savant's powers of observation are limited to appearances and phenomena, and can never penetrate the substance or know anything of the true nature of things. An eye armed with a microscope is only a human eye after all. It sees more than the naked eye does, but not in any different way. The man of science multiplies the points of contact between man and nature, but it is impossible for him to modify in any particular the essential character of the mutual relations between the two. He sees the manner of production of certain phenomena which escape us, but he is prohibited, just as much as we are, from inquiring why they are so produced.

To demand a system of morals from Science is to invite cruel disappointments. Men believed, three hundred years ago, that the earth was the center of creation. Nowadays we know it is only a coagulated drop of the sun. We know what gases burn at the surface of the most distant stars. We know that the universe, in which we are a wandering speck of dust, is forever in labor, bringing to birth and devouring its offspring; we know that heavenly bodies are ceaselessly dying and being born. But wherein has our moral nature been altered by these prodigious discoveries? Have mothers come to love their little ones better or less ar-

dently? Do we appreciate the beauty of women any more or any less in consequence? Does a hero's heart beat any differently within his bosom? No, no! Be the earth great or small, what matter is that to mankind? It is always great enough, provided it gives us a stage for suffering and for love. To suffer and to love, these are the twin sources of its inexhaustible beauty. Suffering, pain—how divine it is, how misunderstood! To it we owe all that is good in us, all that makes life worth living; to it we owe pity, and courage, and all the virtues. The earth is but a grain of sand in the barren infinity of worlds. Yet, if it is only on the earth creatures suffer, it is greater than all the rest of the universe put together. Nay! it is everything, and the rest is nothing. For otherwise, without it there is neither virtue nor genius. What is genius, if not the art of charming away pain? Very great minds have, I know, cherished other hopes. Renan surrendered himself with smiling alacrity to the dream of a scientific morality. He reposed an almost unlimited confidence in Science. He believed it would change the world because it can tunnel mountains. I do not think with him that it can make us gods. To say the truth, I do not very much want it to. I do not feel I have within me the stuff of a divinity, no matter how petty a one. My feebleness is dear to me. I cling to my imperfection, as the very essence of my being.—Anatole France.

The Voice of Christmas

Christmas has a subtle way of making us remember them, we carelessly forget the very One whose birth our generosity and conviviality oddly commemorates. To most of us the busy days leading up to Christmas are spent in trying to make a lonesome dollar do the impossible. And when the romantic green back sticks stubbornly to standard and refuses to stretch the spirit of sacrifice creep in and the voice of Christmas is heard.

The majority of us are the better for the burden Christmas brings. The "want lists" of our friends are filled while we deny ourselves. Many a mother's heart thumps with warm compassion and tender solicitude as her brood of Santa-expecting tots confidently await the arrival of jolly old Saint Nick. And often, before our unseeing eyes, mothers willingly frudge to their calvaries that their little ones may not wake up to find an empty stocking.

Perhaps, in the rush to provide, we do forget Him; yet in our humble way and with never a voice of complaint we unconsciously pay homage to His memory when our better selves responds to the voice of Christmas.

The High Knob Park

The High Knob National Park project may owe its conception to a politically fertile mind, yet it is only fair to say that when overzealous workers sought to use it as a vote pulling possibility the leaders on both sides promptly killed the move. These men saw further away than sundown of November 11. And it is well that they did. As the proposition now stands there is a possibility that the park will be established. When it becomes a reality Wise county will come into its own. In dollars and dimes it will stimulate our local cash registers to a surprising degree of activity. That is one side of our scenery which will serve all who will serve the tourist. And the tourist, having come will depart conquered, for, as some one has said, these mountains do have charms beyond words. And when the world learns what a lovely spot Nature has tucked away in this county of ours building room will be built upon and those who are fortunate enough to own it will wax rich in money of the realm. So says the High Knob Park Committee.

Friendship

No one knew better the value of friendship than Emerson. And with the same simplicity which has made his poetry immortal he wrote:

The end of friendship is a commerce, the most strict and homely that can be joined; more strict than any of which we have experience. It is for aid and comfort through all the relations and passages of life and death. It is fit for serene days and graceful gifts and country rambles; but also for rough roads and hard fare, shipwreck, poverty and prosecution.

Emerson was famous for his independence and always revolted against being bound to any scheme or system or doctrine. Perhaps this is why he said, "I wish to say what I feel and think today, with the proviso that tomorrow I shall contradict it all!" And many things he did contradict but his lines on friendship stood without change.

The radio craze is something of a nuisance, but it has its advantages, just as well. A fellow can lay in bed Sunday morning and listen to a sermon a thousand miles away—or he can nod without fear of detection.

What's the use of having unofficial observers at the peace conference? The correspondents give us all the news there is, and then some.

Do your Christmas shopping whenever you please.

Insurance Is No Longer a Fad

The Only Remedy for The Inevitable "Rainy Day"

WHEN we hear of a death one of the first thoughts which enter our minds is, "I wonder if he carried insurance?" If a home is burned in the small hours of the night, and we know that the owner had spent a life time creating it, we ask ourself, "I wonder if he carried Fire insurance?" If an automobile is badly damaged or destroyed in a wreck we quite promptly ask the owner, "Did you carry insurance?"

In these days when Insurance is no longer a fad, but a real investment, which in a great measure has come to soften the harshest tragedies, wise people are looking ahead and planning for the inevitable "rainy day." Fire, accident or death plays no favorites; indeed, calamity seems to have a sorry habit of visiting those who can least afford a financial reverse. Therefore it is only natural that insurance has come to be recognized as a great boon to the man or woman who must make every nickel count.

If you own a home and have a family your first duty to them is protection. They deserve it and because you are a good business man you will naturally seek that protection from reliable sources. The South-West Insurance Agency, at Big Stone Gap, represents the largest Insurance Companies in the World. When they write your policy you can rest assured that there will be no "ifs" when the time comes to settle a claim. With them the insurance business is something more than getting your money and giving you a policy. They give you conscientious service, which is reliable information, expert care and prompt settlement of all claims.

If you have neglected to cover your home because of this reason or that, make up your mind to stop inviting disaster and talk the matter over with our representative. There are many ways by which you can secure protection without straining your purse. We will be glad to explain in detail anything you might not understand. But remember that Insurance is no longer a fad, but an investment that no one, rich or poor, should be without. Give us a ring or drop into our office in the First National Bank Building, at Big Stone Gap. We'll do the rest—gladly.

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