

CONTENTMENT

In company with my friend, Dr. Blank, of Baltimore, I was leisurely strolling the deck of the grand ship "Washington," which was bearing us back to our native shores from Europe, when we were joined by Captain Dwyer, of the steamer, who informed us of the strange gentleman who had attempted to end his own life that afternoon, by leaping overboard into the sea.

"He protested vigourously" said the Captain, "when his mad attempt was foiled by members of the crew, saying he was tired of life and the the deceits of the world, and wished to free himself from them forever."

Since the Doctor wished to see the demented gentleman, we were kindly conducted to his stateroom by Captain Dwyer. He received us kindly, but neither asked any questions nor expressed any desire to join in our conversation. He walked back and forth languidly, and seemed to be oppressed with a heavy burden of sorrows.

"You seem sorrowful" said I at length. "If your suffering is of the body, my friend here is a physician, and, peradventure, can afford you relief, for he has travelled into distant lands, and has collected very choice remedies for human infirmities."

"My sufferings are not of the body, but of the mind" he answered, "I am weary of life. It is nothing but a cheat, promising what it never fulfils, and affording only hopes that end in disappointment, or, if realized, only in disgust,"

"Have you lost the beloved of your heart, or been disappointed in the attainment of something upon which rested all your hopes of happiness?" asked Dr. Blank.

"Alas, no, I have been disappointed, not in means, but in their results. I have everything one could wish to possess, but yet I want. I am cursed with a gratification of all my wishes, and the realization of all my fondest hopes. My whole life I have wasted in the acquisition of riches, that only awakened new desires, and brought honors that no longer gratify my pride nor recompense me for the labour of sustaining them. I have been deceived in the pursuit of honours that now weary me in their enjoyment, and I am now consumed by the longing for real happiness, which I can never find."

"Your case is indeed beyond my skill," said the Doctor, and the man, cursed with the fruition of all his fondest hopes, turned away from us in despair.

"One of the thousands of the human race who have conceived the same vain idea of happiness," said I, when we were once more alone on the deck.

"True," he returned, "men rush on in their vain endeavour to acquire riches, thinking that then their cup of happiness will be full, but, when they have accumulated millions, how sadly do they realize that the contentment that they strove for is yet far beyond their reach. It is always the same, whether a man wants one or many things. He will be truly contented only when the ship of life bears him safely over the troubled waters of this world into the harbour of eternal bliss."

For some moments we stood in silence, quietly gazing over the brooding waters of the Atlantic, through which the huge liner was swiftly ploughing her way onward to New York.

J. T. O'Meara, '28.

The mother may forget the child,
That smiles so sweetly on her knee,
But I'll remember thee, Glencaire,
And all that thou hast done for me.

—Burns.

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not,
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are these that tell of
saddest thought.

—Shelley.

Levity will operate with greater force, in some instances, than rigour. It is, therefore, my first wish, to have my whole conduct distinguished by it.

—George Washington.