

which followed, bright enough for Carl, who had wearied of the quiet of the Gray House, were lonely for Rudolf, though at first often gladdened by brilliant tales of the lad of whom the master musicians wrote as a genius, predicting that the world would yet ring with his fame.

After reading praises such as these Rudolf seemed for a while to move in a waking dream, and his dark eyes would kindle and his bent form straighten as his fancy pictured the triumphs awaiting the boy.

Nor was his belief in Carl's future at all shaken by less welcome tidings which, as the years passed, found their way to the Gray House. What wonder that the boy was often careless and erratic, finding the restraint and ceaseless toil of his new life as irksome as the dreary monotony of his days in the village? Or what mattered it since in a short space he accomplished what cost others years of ceaseless endeavor? Thus indeed it seemed when the long days of the Professor's waiting were well nigh spent, for the conservatory's highest honors lay easily within Carl's grasp.

There is no telling what impossible things Rudolf dreamed during those last days preceding Carl's home-coming, and, perhaps, because of the seeming nearness of their fulfilment the days seemed longer and lonelier than ever. But, though, they lagged drearily enough they passed somehow, and the great day of the Professor's life dawned at last. It seemed to him strangely out of harmony with the event it was to witness, for it was that day when the rain fell ceaselessly, leaving great drops heavy on the grass and on the roses in the garden. And, yet at evening when all the street

was golden, and the sunset light flooded his room, casting a faint radiance on the dark wood of the polished floor, wherein the carved high-backed chairs were dimly mirrored, it seemed to Rudolf as he sat alone with head bowed low over the keys of the old piano, that his life for the years to be held little in common with the sunshine. It was only that another of his dreams had come to naught, but he was old and the dream had been part of his life. That day there had come from the conservatory a letter which Rudolf had opened with trembling hands, thinking it told of some new triumph come to Carl. It had been short; just a few kindly written words saying that "the boy was young, and it was doubtless but a passing whim"—a preface which caused Rudolf to wonder, and then the sentence which seemed to have robbed life of all its brightness, for Carl had left the conservatory just when its brightest laurels hung within his reach to join a troupe of singers.

For a while Rudolf's heart had been hot with anger as he thought of his own sacrifices, so lightly prized, and the art to him a sacred thing, which Carl held at such little worth; but that was soon past, for all else was forgotten in his great grief that little Carl should have gone out of his life, leaving him no word.

Before him on the piano lay the finished score of his last and greatest work, a sonata which he had written as a graduating gift for the boy. His hand had trembled a little that morning as he wrote the dedication. There in the twilight he was to have played it for him, and when the last notes had died away Carl was to have come behind him with the caressing way he loved so well, and resting his strong