

A Short Story

Feature Page

By W. Edmiston

THE TWO COMPANIONS

By W. A. Edmiston (Soph. Science)

"Are you coming to the city, neighbour?" The speaker was a short, middle-aged man dressed for the most part in brown. On his back hung a worn, empty knapsack. He stood in the bright summer sun gazing at an older man who was working in his field. The other did not seem to hear him: at first, but finally raised his head and gazed at the other.

"Do you think it's safe?" he answered. "There's been a lot of talk about enemy air raids."

"I don't think the people in the market place need to worry very much," replied the man in brown. "The swine usually bomb the factories."

The old man stood thinking for some time, then said, "All right. I have to go soon so it might as well be this week as next."

After a hurried preparation on the part of the older man, the two set out on the wide highway toward the city. The noon-day sun beating down on their backs gave them a feeling of joyous anticipation, for it was not often they were able to leave their farms to go to the city for supplies.

"Where will we spend the night, my friend?" asked the younger, smiling at his companion.

"There is a good inn on the edge of the city, that will be safe from the bombers," answered the old man.

"Bas!" said the younger. "I am not afraid of the bombers. If I were young again I'd be fighting in the army. As it is, I have two sons serving my country. One has even a medal to show for his courage. However, if you wish to spend the night on the edge of town it's all right with me."

He shrugged his shoulders, and the two men continued their walk. They passed through many small villages where they met old friends and made new acquaintances. Everywhere the talk was of the war, of the fighting forces that had put the name of this, their country, on the lips of the world. They talked of their sons and daughters, nephews and nieces who were helping make this true. They talked in hushed tones of the enemy bombers that had so often hit their country, and in these tones could be detected a note of fear.

As the afternoon progressed, the heat became more intense. From time to time, a slight breeze cooled their faces. It was just after one of these breezes, that the man in brown noticed that his older friend had shivered convulsively.

"What's the matter, are you cold?" he asked.

"No," replied the other. "It is strange. I have a feeling inside of me that something terrible is about to happen. I feel as if some awful catastrophe will befall us; that we are walking into the arms of danger. I don't know why it is. It may be that this talk of war and of bombing has unnerved me. I am an old man and not used to great excitement or exertion."

"Be quiet!" commanded the other sharply. "Do you want people to think you have lost your mind? There is nothing to be afraid of, for we are only going to the edge of the city tonight. We'll enter it tomorrow morning and you'll soon find out that your fears are groundless."

"It is impossible for me to forget it," the other disagreed. "It hangs over my head like a dark cloud. I will continue to the city because you want me to, but it's against my better judgment. I honestly believe that to turn back would be the wisest course."

"You're old and afraid," exclaimed the man in brown. "Do you think that after walking this far, I would let the intuition of a silly old man turn me back home, without buying a thing? Come on now, we'll soon be at the inn and once you have a glass of good red wine in you, you'll forget the war, the wind and your fear."

(Continued on Page Eight)

Contest Results

First: The Two Companions by W. A. Edmiston, '49

Second: Motive for Daring by G. R. L. Fisher, '49

Third: To Kiss the Cross by Robert Rogers, '48

Honourable Mention: Unusual Friendship by Paul J. Poirier, '50

Enlightenment in the Morning by Tom Crowther, '47

The Letters by W. H. Laughlin

Essay and Poetry Prizes will be announced next week.

Notes and Comment

We are happy. Something has been accomplished. If someone asks, "How is the Brunswickan contest going?" We can say with a light heart, "It is over." Then (as soon as they can be committed to memory) we can recite the names of the winners matter-of-factly enough to impress that person, and ourselves, with our efficiency and feel very good indeed.

For five minutes we have been studying the above lines and now, we are suddenly aware that for the past 5,000 years civilization has been fooling itself—

Mark Twain (who was unwittingly, one of the first labour organizers) once defined work as that which one is obliged to do. He tried to show that work was really a lot of fun if one looked at it the right way. This concept, a great many people feel, is good because when they finish a job, the sense of accomplishment is exhilarating.

This view we find to be ridiculous and from our study we believe it is analogous to the old parable wherein the man of unmeasured mental capacity is found bumping his head against the wall and when asked about his behavior says he bumps his head because it feels so nice when he stops.

For over 5000 years work has been considered good. Now, we have found this premise to be false. No wonder there have been wars and rumors of wars...

That we must look forward rather than backward in order to progress is true. Work is evil when one is looking forward (except in the cases of a few misdirected youths.)

We hope, in all sincerity, that the reader realizes the implications of this discovery! We are greater than Karl Marx! Civilization will not only be revolutionized, it will be turned inside out. Soon, friend, we will unfurl the banners—"Ambition is the root of all evil. Workers stop working, you have nothing to lose but your identity."

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CLASSICS

(Part Two)

By Aigeron Quisquid, A. B. (Johns-Manville)

William Shakespeare, Bard of Avon, and the greatest original playwright in our English language, died in 1616. A couple of his cronies, Johnny Heming and Hank Condell, then assembled the first, and best, anthology of all time. The works were published in order, they said, "to keep the memory of so worthy a friend and fellow alive." Thirty-six plays and a fist-full of rose-scented sonnets were included, and later someone rattling around in the Bard's garret came across "Pericles, Prince of Tyre" which turned out to be a play, although a Shakespearean scholar named Malone claimed the Bard didn't write it, but blamed two other Elizabethans.

This brings us to a rather interesting point. Ever since 1616, scholars, wise men, and college professors have been making profound remarks on the subject of Shakespeare so that it's come to the point where most people will have nothing to do with it—too complicated. The trouble was, Shakespeare had no idea that he was a genius, and this has been held against him. He wrote exciting, entertaining, and intelligible stuff, and the scholars have since crusaded arduously to convince people that there are more hidden references, subtle illusions, and poetic paradoxes in Shakespeare than old John Milton could shake a stick at. However, it should be borne in mind that scholars have to eat, and Shakespeare has been their bread and butter for nearly four centuries.

Most people think Shakespeare is the greatest writer in our language. (1) That is why you can't get much further than sixth grade before he begins to creep into the English course. It is somewhere around high-chool that people begin tampering with the original works. A regular length play by Shakespeare, such as Macbeth, is studied with an average of ten texts, (2) explaining the imagery, illusions, and further obscuring the general idea. I have never been able to prove this, but I suspect that one of the reasons students prefer not to read Shakespeare is because they've never been given the chance to. (3) Shakespeare was an entertainer, and as such, he is still good theatre; he has become more of a drudge now, however, since mention of his name often requires as many as two term essays and a short term paper.

Of course, Shakespeare is not quite as immortal as some people say they think he is. Coriolanus, Troilus, Titus Andronicus, Cymbeline, and Dear Ruth seem to be pretty much forgotten, although there's a move afoot by the Dramatic Society to revive the latter. Then too, tastes change and there's no accounting for either the change or the taste, and it's just possible that "The Merchant of Venice" wouldn't run a short week-end at the Old Gaiety. People like Falstaff, Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet, and Othello and Puck have been around long enough to become institutions, and most people think they'll survive, even when we stop speaking English. (4).

Shakespeare wrote poetry too — dashing them off on the backs of menus and wine cards in the old Boar's Head Tavern. He was well known for his sonnets, all of them, although I've only gotten as far as Sonnet CXXXVII, or so. Sonnet CXXI, is dedicated to the U. N. B. Co-eds: "In faith, I do not love thee with mine eyes... For they in thee a thousand errors note..."

The Bard took some of his clues from history, and borrowed a few characters from Seneca and his little friends. Seneca borrowed heavily on a Greek named Euripides, but don't let all this throw you. The Greeks had a word for pretty darn near everything.

Footnotes:—

- (1) Among those who don't is Henry Miller, who thinks Shakespeare is overrated. Probably wrong.
(2) Usually among the ten texts: "What Macbeth Meant" by Jones. "The Meaning of Macbeth" by Brown. "Macbeth Means to Me" by Smith. "The Truth About Macbeth" by Jones, Brown and Smith.
(3) Too busy reading Jones, Brown and Smith.
(4) In his distinguished book, "Shakespeare Told Me", Dr. Homer G. Askew says, "If the current mortality rate of freshman English students continues, the English language will be stone dead by 2140 A. D."

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