

In truth, because of the quiet life of its lonely inmate, the Gray House had come to be regarded in the village as rather an uncanny place, and when sometimes at evening the sound of the Professor's playing might be faintly heard in the street, many shook their heads, thinking perhaps that strains so weirdly sweet, must needs be fairy music to which it were better not to hearken.

It may be that Rudolf at times felt very lonely during those long years when his nephew Carl was studying at the great conservatory and he was the only dweller in the Gray House. Seeing the very children run by the place with bated breath, glancing fearfully the while at the gleam of gray showing among the green of the lindens, may have awakened sad memories of those other days when the Gray House had been full of life and laughter and many trod the rose bordered path leading to its hospitable door, who in the after time seemed to have forgotten the way.

The merry company which in the old days was wont to gather at the place, had predicted a wonderful career for the young musician so singularly gifted, and Rudolf shared the common belief, feeling the power within him and fancying with the glad hopefulness of youth, that he could order the future to his liking. He had been a great dreamer then and despite many hard awakenings he was a dreamer to the end. Perhaps it was because in his own time so few of his dreams came true, that his life always seemed like a sad little story, although it would be puzzling to fashion its simple happenings into a tale that many would care to hear. There had been a little love in it, for he was to have wed Carl's mother in the days before she

learned to love his younger brother. There had been much ambition, for Rudolf had hoped to do great things in his art and to leave behind him a famous name, but after love slipped from his grasp he grew to think of fame and the acclamations of men as little worth.

Then, just as he was growing old, and shortly before little Carl came to him, fortune went the way of love and fame and of the three left fewest regrets.

It was one of the beautiful things about the Professor, that despite many cruel disappointments, he never lost faith or courage but continued in his quiet way, hoping, striving, till the end, and left the world, which after all had treated him ungently, still holding his boyish belief that it was a very bright place even though somehow he had missed the sunshine.

It was in the later years that Carl came to him, a sacred charge held in trust for his dead brother and the only woman who ever had part in the Professor's life. The sunny careless boy with Rudolf's own gift and so like what he had been before the shadows began to gather, found his way straight to Rudolf's heart. Then began for him the drudgery of lesson-giving and the days of self-denial, happy days withal, brightened as they were by dreams of Carl's future, one more brilliant than his wildest fancies had pictured for himself and which each toilsome hour was bringing nearer. They seemed even happier in the retrospect when at length the Professor's slender store augmented by privations of which Carl little guessed, had grown large enough to admit of the lad's entering upon his long course of study at the great conservatory—the first step towards the realization of the Professor's dreams. The years