

(editor's note: This paper was transcribed from a handwritten cursive copy with various difficulties. For a perfect rendition, the reader might wish to consult the original, itself a copy, in the volume entitled *Literary Club Papers*, Dec 20, 1890 to May 30, 1891)

## Doomed

“Men must endure  
Their going, even as their coming hither”  
King Lear Act 1 Sc. II

“How d' do, Charlie, old man!” “Why, hello Jerry, haven't seen you for a week.” The two fashionably dressed men who had accosted one another thus an upper Fifth Avenue this bright February afternoon were evidently of the haut ton , In dress they were as alike as two peas, ruddy complexions, shining beaver hats with very narrow brims, abnormally high collars astoundingly well setting coats, striped trousers and patent leather boots. If they had dropped their large walking sticks chance alone would have enabled each to distinguish his own. They looked young but were not as young as they wished to appear.

As the two friends stood talking together, Charlie suddenly started, wheeled about and followed with his eyes the impressing figure of man more than 6 feet tall, of a noble cast of countenance and with an expression of suppressed but hopeless misery “George! I say! Isn't that Horace Manfred of Haley's Theater! Looks as if he had seen a ghost; reminds me of the man I saw hanged when I was on the humane commission, “Yes; said Jerry, “that's Manfred and I'd rather be in his boots than my own, though I find these pretty comfortable. As an actor he is top notch, in morality he would shame many of us society men and he's so religious that the Fourth Presbyterian Church would take him in in a jiffy if they weren't so confoundedly afraid of Mrs. Gundy. I suppose that he's taking a constitutional and practicing a facial makeup for some tragic scene. Well, old fellow I must be trotting along.” “Where are you bound?” “Oh I don't know, bring up at the club, I suppose; where are you off to?” “Oh I don't know, suppose I'll have to look in at the club;” and these specimens of our leisure class parted, each to pursue his aimless path.

## 2

Horace Manfred field when observed by our friends was not practicing a part but was beginning to act one in dead earnest. He had had four weeks of throat trouble. Being like all robust people constitutionally opposed to doctors he had paid little attention to his throat until a sickening utterance had threatened to mar his work, when once a resolution had been taken Manfred acted promptly. This morning, after his breakfast, he conquered by an effort of will his morning indolence, and threw the row of colored porters in the hallway of the hotel into a shocked state of confusion by appearing there before eleven o'clock. These slaves of hotel discipline were disturbed by the transgression of due order on the part of the distinguished guest and when one ventured to whisper that ‘sonfin’ was up, all up and down the line, all solemnly shook their woolly heads.

Dr. Morley, throat specialist, welcomed Manfred, whom he knew as an acquaintance with

flattering cordiality. This worthy physician possessed to an unusual degree the reassuring influence that does suffering humanity hardly less good than medicine. Seated in a comfortable leather chair with the kind faced doctor chattering facetiously with him, Manfred almost lost the undefined dread that had begun to steal over his heart. When work began the doctor ceased talking. In silence laryngoscope was thrust back into Manfred's throat. This was put aside, (feeling gently among the tissues with thumb and forefinger) and, pushing the chair toward the light, the doctor pressed Manfred's tongue aside. At length with a peculiar "ah;" he stopped and told Manfred that he had finished. When the subject of this careful diagnosis looked up, he seemed to see another man. The doctor's face had taken on the most pathetic look that Manfred, student of physiognomy as he was, had ever seen. "Well, Doctor, am I going into consumption?" "My dear friend," began the doctor in subdued tone which had something awe-struck in it. "I have had many painful duties to perform, but never as painful a one as now confronts me. Do you wish to know all?" "All," said Manfred, whose face all color had left, through clenched teeth, "then my dear friend, I must tell you that you have cancer of the kind originating in the fraenum. I can hold out no hope of cure, although, thank God, I can relieve you of much suffering. Use all your fortitude and turn to him who deserteth us not in our extremity."

Manfred's head reeled. Hardly noticing the doctor's proffered hand, he took hat and coat and strode from the office. The doctor with the mournful look still upon his face sent for another patient who wondered greatly at hearing the sedate physician mutter "The world's out of joint; a cancer is the devil; I'd give my head to cure their cancer and can't do it."

### 3

Manfred walked to Harlem in a kind of doze and then back again. It seemed to him that he would just walk on until he died. To say that hope was dying in his heart as yet would not be true. Perhaps hope never dies before consciousness at last departs from the brain. There was rather a great upheaval taking place in him and the convulsion subsiding, must leave him either a maniac or resigned to a complete readjustment of aims and desires. Physical weariness at length asserted a wholesome influence and it may have been that which saved the balance of his mind, without consciously resolving to do so, he turned back uptown and soon found himself physically prostrate, in his suite of rooms at the Windsor Hotel. It was growing late. Habit which such experiences prove to be indeed second nature made him think of the evening. Many things are stronger than death; and this doomed man put aside the impulse to send at this late hour an excuse to his manager as he had often put aside impulses to do a selfish acts. He even ate a hearty dinner, although the good people of the hotel, who treated him as a matter of public interest and watched him closely, noticed his unusual pallor and his absented minded manner. During the evening having again asserted its power to such an extent that he performed his part with his old skill and accuracy, yet the watchful minions of the press did not fail to observe "a lack of spirit in the performance." To go to his hotel and to bed was only a part of the accustomed routine. Nature in bringing to his half willing eyes sound sleep only used that power which she never loses over the healthy brain, ere the racked nerves dispute her sway.

The man to whom a great calamity has come, never realizes at once that the blow has irrevocably fallen. It is on the morning after, that the realization comes, when, as sleep little by little forsakes the brain, so little by little the heart sinks in misery unutterable. The memory of the alertness and renewal of hope that on happier mornings had followed refreshing sleep makes the wretchedness more complete. It was only by a great effort that Manfred forced himself to rise. Without ever thinking of breakfast he set off to find his manager. A heartbreaking scene followed, in which the loud distress of the fat little "Colonel" Marvin contrasted strangely with the quiet somberness of Manfred. From the theater office Manfred went directly to a real estate broker, for his determination to avoid another such painful scene was suddenly and unalterably taken. It was difficult to make this practical person understand what he wanted. Having at once decided that Manfred was seeking a country house where he could breathe a little country air for a day or two and then rush back to the city, the broker offered mansion after mansion with the customary accompaniments of good society nearby, good churches and good schools, within so many minutes of the City Hall. Finally, Manfred abruptly asked what he had at the seashore. With some reluctance, the broker produced "his line of cottages" for the next season. The description of Chadwick a lonely place on Squam Beach now to be reached by means of a mixed train running once a day, seemed to Manfred appropriate. The owner communicated with by telephone, agreed to the terms proposed, with no small wonder at his good luck in renting his lonely wooden box to a good tenant at this time of year and for an indefinite period. As no desire for food had as yet made itself felt this day, Manfred had not given his domestic arrangements at Chadwick of thought. He simply told the broker, who began to have doubts concerning his sanity, that he would start immediately. He had almost reached his hotel before the necessity of a servant occurred to him. After buying a Harald at the hotel he again started down town to find an elderly woman to do the work of his little home. "It ain't to the say coast ye're going at this bitter sayson? Was the first command put to him by the buxom person proposed by the "Intelligence office." "It is," was his calm reply, "and I will pay you well for little work." "And how many avenins out wod I have fur findin some wan to help kape up me spirits? It's crossed in love ye are an ye wad' n't say two words in a day. Whin me Patrick that's dead this three year, the Blessid Vargin have mercy on his soul," — but Manfred could stand this no longer and broke in with a tempting offer that overrode all objections. He even promised to get a supply of certain "bitthers", without which the woman declared, "the say air destroys the tashte of the vittles." For an additional fee the "Intelligence office," agreed to accompany Bridget to the ferry. This tremendous deed thus successfully accomplished, Manfred went back to his hotel, settled his bill, he ate a little lunch and started for the ferry. Bridget was there, in a costume designed to captivate the hearts of the "life savers," whose existence, artfully suggested by the "Intelligence Office," alone induced her to hold her employment. That night they spent at Squam, and the next day about noon, they were left, along with a barrel of flour and a wagon load of groceries, and the Chadwick station.

It was a cheerless prospect that greeted Manfred when, with his garrulous maid, he was

put off at Chadwick. The Railroad skirts Banegat Bay, which is here separated from the ocean by less than a quarter of a mile of sand dunes. The Bay seemed part of the murky air and the sea spray, driven by the East wind, chilled the very marrow. From the station a hungry looking man who suggested a wolf driven from his winter lair, appeared. This man manifested no curiosity at the certainly unusual arrival of strangers at this time of the year but set about getting the goods on the platform into the station. With some hesitation Manfred asked the way to Mr. Johnson's cottage, and inquired how he could have baggage and groceries conveyed thither. He gathered from the man's answer that the cottage was somewhere in the fog to the south east and that Capt. Bill at the hotel might solve the problem of getting to it. Pointing to a forlorn rambling pile near the railroad, he disappeared within. Capt. Bill, a fair specimen of the old shore population had too native politeness to ask the reason of Manfred's coming. He simply called a man from the bar room and made him "gear up and take the folks over to Johnson's cottage." The vehicle that soon appeared was a dilapidated [ ] wagon with broad-tired wheels, drawn by two small horses. Boards placed across the body of the wagon furnished seats. Bridget had said nothing but was looking volumes of indignation, seated on one of the improvised seats in her finery already bedraggled by the salt air. She gazed with unspeakable scorn at the cheerless symphony of sky and sand. "Johnson's Cottage" was not inviting with long slats nailed athwart its shutters and the bleak east wind whistling around its corners, but it at least promised shelter. With the aid of the man the slats were gotten off and the shutters opened. Johnson had left the cottage furnished and Bridget's wrath evaporated while she explored the rooms and closets. Manfred went out on the front veranda and feasted his eyes upon the ocean. The murky clouds hung so low that skies seemed to mingle with them, and the turbid surf incessantly roaring on the beach seemed to come from these dense masses of vapor. An ecstasy came over him as the noise of the surf grew louder and louder in his ears and the pitiless blast seemed struggling with him, could he but have died then in that fancied struggle with the ocean wind.

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Manfred was a man of heroic type. By coming to this lonely sea side cottage without leaving any clue to his whereabouts by which his few relatives or his many friends would be likely to find him, he had escaped from a world of misery. His days were passed in walks by the waves, and no inclemency of weather prevented his taking, each day, at least one long ramble on the beach. Bridget soon fell into such awe of the silent master that she spent much of her time in the kitchen of the hotel, regaling the good ladies of the shore with fictitious tales of herself and Mr. Manfred. She did all buying of provisions and enjoyed the dignity and sense of superiority that this gave her. Manfred nearly forgot Bridget's existence, and was almost surprised if she appeared after ringing the bell that summoned him to his meals. When in the cottage he stayed in an upper room, by a window looking out upon the ocean, the mighty friend that seemed to have taken him into its confidence. His tongue and throat became more annoying and despite the gargle which for form's sake he used, the thrills of intense pain became more frequent. Early in the struggle to adjust himself to circumstances he had resolved not to try to speak. Neither he nor anyone else should know that the power of speech had left him.

Shakespeare's King Lear was one of the characters he once had hoped to make notable in the annals of the American stage. He found a curious satisfaction in attempting to learn by heart the whole of the play, and this became his one and absorbing task. If he could not sleep, he worked at this; he silently repeated its lines as he walked on the sands or sat by his window.

For six weeks the state of things continued and might have gone on much longer; but a change was to come. One afternoon a loud knock at his door startled him. Before he could rise to open the door, Bridget entered, red in the face, hair disheveled, tongue dancing "Ye're no gentleman, Ye ain't, to bring a honest God-fearin woman to consort with the fishin divils in this berrin waste! It's drunk they said I was, and the lyin winch was drunk hersel and me as sober as the babe unborn. Taking me bitters but twice a day an I shook the lyin say sands off me fate an the thrain laves in alf an hour." Manfred was astounded. Doubtless the woman had been drunk, for the people of the coast are kindly where there is no question of money. He paid Bridget more than was her due and pointed to the door. Bridget's habit of awe returned as she looked at Manfred, and she quietly left the room and as quietly departed.

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Bridget's going was a fearful blow to Manfred. He could not go to the Hotel and reveal his pitiable plight to those rough people. Starving had no part of his indefinitely formulated scheme. As night drew on, he began to find that Bridget's presence in the house had been, all unconsciously to himself, a kind of companionship. The dejection that is one of the symptoms of advanced stages of his disease took hold of him and possessed him. His thoughts wandered to the bright life from which he had been wrenched in his prime. Sick at heart, he let the well worn little volume fall from his hands. The loathsome death that must soon come, seemed like a great cyclone drawing the smiling hope of the earth. The last line that he had committed to memory, the most bitterly hopeless of all literature was in his head:

"Never, never, never, never, never;"

it had no end and no beginning. Seizing his hat, his feet shod only in slippers, he rushed out upon the beach. No thought of God and a hereafter came to confront him. Perhaps, say what the preachers may, we moderns have but one God and one hereafter. In supreme moments we act on other grounds. "Never, never, never, never, never," was Manfred's only thought; this, and the wretched death that must precede. The night was pitch black except for the slight glimmer that the white surf affords. He walked straight on. The waves wet his feet. Why should he stop? What was there for which he should stop? The waves fought against him, angered him by their resistance. He pressed on through them, out into the slow rolling swells, on and on, with arms that were never to know weariness again.

8

The club. It wants no description, for comfortable chairs, uniformed waiters and innumerable newspapers are humdrum things. The conversation is in keeping with the

chairs and the waiters, but we have some concern with that, "Say, Jerry, seen the Morning Herald?" "No, Charlie, I suppose I must look at it before I go home." "Two columns about Manfred's suicide.

Had cancer of the tongue, went down to a cabin in an uninhabited part of the Jersey coast with an old Irish woman to die it out. Irish woman saw him in a fit and decamped. Manfred swam half a mile offshore in his clothes and ground himself.

Capt. Bill Chadwick in a column and a half tells how the body was found. I say, do you blame the man?" Jerry bethought himself. It was a more knotty question than he was accustomed to answer. He hemmed and hawed fought again and finally said; "Well, you know it doesn't do to run counter to the teachings of religion; it's too subversive of things generally. Do I blame him? Well, I'd rather not commit myself. He had to die and would only have made trouble for people for he couldn't tell how long. Well, I'd rather not say."

Mr. Auburn Cinti

(J. Remsen Bishop)