

MUSINGS ON THE LOUNGE

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Musings on the Lounge by Bert Finck

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BERT FINCK

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THE LOUNGE**

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By Bert Finck
Edited by Beckwith

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Musings on the Lounge



Most all of us need guides, not judges; nurses, not jails; infirmaries, not prisons; not punishment, but cures. Many a sin has been committed through exhaustion; and many through the fever of despair; many through the wild hunger-pangs for love and sympathy—it takes maddest presumption to condemn.

All in this world must battle, you may know: some, with the sword; some, with the shield; some, with their patience; some, with their wit; some, with the cap and bells of the fool; some, with the medicine-bottle; some, with the crutch.

We see and we hear nature with the eyes and ears of our heart's mood; even as we are, so nature is; morning to me is night, perhaps, to you; my night may be your morn. Unto the broken-hearted, spring is a sad

Musings on the Lounge

part of the year, for it tells of sprouting hopes that very soon will fade away; unto the conscience-stricken, rain-drops are the tears of remorse; while to bright buoyant innocence, there is music in the rustling of dry leaves. The despondent hears a sigh in the bird's rejoicing, and he beholds a shadow in each beam; the waters speak, but they are always moaning; the winds tell of ethereal tragedies. The stars, which to some are brilliant signals of hope, to others are the bright, cruel emblems of fate, indifferent to the life or death of worlds and ages; while the moon, inspirer of romance and love, can heartlessly smile upon miseries. "Be true! be true!" is the continuous song of nature; but to him that has been faithless, it chants a dirge for a lost soul.

I always did love flowers; that is, wild and the common garden flowers; those which awaken with the spring, and fall asleep with the autumn. Hot-house flowers bear the odor of artificiality like so many people that I know; pretty, perhaps, but not healthily so, bearing a kind of feverish attraction.

Musings on the Lounge

Curious are these people, even interesting—fascinating, for a short while; but, too often, that which is called originality, is perversity; not rarely, glossy degeneration itself. Wit may be the sharp tooth of innate bitterness; entertaining conversation; the network of fraud; animation may be assisted by an opiate; and interest in every one may be interest in none. Give me the man or woman who is natural—who is truly original, and he or she will not create much attention in the world. It is the feverish, the unhealthy, that attract for a glittering moment, and then pass, soon forgotten, out of the way. The true, the real, move along unnoticed, but when they are gone there is a vacancy in the circle where they moved. Give me the wild and common garden flowers that fall asleep with the autumn, and awaken with the spring; give me the hearts that are natural and true, for they fall asleep when their work is done, and awaken again.

My money's gone. What does it matter?
We are here to-day and dead to-morrow.
It matters not how foolishly I spent it; it

Musings on the Lounge

is not in my possession, and it does somebody good. But this is what concerns me—what most terribly concerns me—the words that I have uttered and that can not be recalled. They are not in my possession, and they do somebody harm. The money that I lost is gone from me forever; and what difference, when I die, whether I own one coin or two? But the words that I have uttered are but lost from my possession; they are mine, without the power to control or call them back. The money that I lost may bring pleasure to another, but brings it joy or sorrow, it will perish with this life. But the words that I have uttered meet me in eternity.

The night is dark, without a single star; so is my life, without a ray of hope. But in the blackness comes a roving wind, whispering mysterious sympathy; so in my life's deep gloom a wandering spirit tells of unseen guidance through my misery.

It is easy to philosophize when your heart is bright with ideals; but who can moralize or muse with shattered dreams? Who can

Musings on the Lounge

contemplate in the midst of ghosts, or theorize in the tombs of murdered hopes? What man can speculate upon eternity, when on this earth his love has been betrayed, and he cares not if he ever lives again, for that which would make a new world sweet can not be there? What soul would yearn for an unending life, were there no soul it longed to meet again? What is the worth of this life, or another, if it gives no gold of precious sentiment?

You'll often find that men assail the vice which they in secret are most guilty of; while sometimes they that laugh at kindly deeds, in hidden corners, weep from sympathy.

What we call industry is sometimes a feverish flight of souls from the presence of ghosts: souls flee from accusing visions that pursue, into the strong arms of labor, and attain a virtue by means of their fears.

Many a glorious deed that illumines the pages of history; many a work of art that