

The Crane Classics

Adventures in Common Sense

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THERE ARE OTHERS

A GOOD part of all you do is done by others.

To all your righteousness, and all your weakness and wickedness, others contribute a large share.

The criminal has some truth when he lays the blame on others. The banker might as justly place the credit for his prosperity to others.

There is a deal of humbug in individuality. Each of us is a part of our parents, neighborhood, times, of the prevalent public opinion, of soul-drifts hither and yonder. We progress or recede, we suppose; but it is like one walking in a coach while the train is going its own course with us and all our fellow-passengers.

In Bernard Shaw's "Philanderer" is a line: "If you take people seriously off the stage, why don't you take them seriously on it, where they are under some sort of decent restraint?"

Mary Lawton, an actress playing in the above-mentioned comedy, expressed an opinion, in a recent newspaper interview, that there is a deal of irony in that line which only actor people can appreciate.

"Is there any place in the world," she asks,

“where a human being is more restrained than on the stage? Any place where every result depends not only on yourself and your power, but on everything and everybody else? Is there any other profession where the crucial moment may be spoiled by a giggling schoolgirl or by a tack on the carpet? Where your entire effect is wasted if you are not given the right cue? Where your big scene may be entirely lost by a chair put in the wrong place?”

If this be the case upon the stage, then “all the world’s a stage,” for the like holds true everywhere.

The orator’s triumph is a nicely balanced affair, of himself, his genius, and his effort on the one hand, and the time, the place, and the audience on the other. Beecher’s speech in England, where he subdued the mob and won undying fame; Webster’s reply to Hayne, and the addresses of Burke and John Bright make poor reading now, at least compared with their tremendous power when uttered, for the others are no longer here.

The rule holds in the smaller matters of life. Every swain knows how the success of his avowal depends fearfully upon seizing precisely the psychological moment.

There are things you can say to your wife under certain circumstances and all will be well, while if you are stupid in your choice of time and place woe be unto you!

The net effect of anything you say, for that matter, to anybody anywhere is more than half determined by the "stage setting."

The fact is, life is team play.

Most of the failures have imagined that they were the only persons on the boards.

Most of the sensitive, pouting, and soured simply missed their cue.

The best conversationalist is not the one who says the cleverest things, but the one who waits, judges, and times his remark perfectly.

Whoever will "make a hit" in this life must watch his neighbor as himself.

Much of the prominence of the prominent is due to their ability to keep off the stage while it is the turn of some one else.

It was not a bad idea of Mr. Roosevelt to visit Africa and South America.

And to all those who suffer the pangs of a neglected ego, and who for one reason or another feel that they have hardly won the applause in life they deserved, it may be well to hand the homely observation:

"There are others!"