

THE STATUE IN THE LIBRARY

By John Burkitt

THERE IS A STATUE OF A FAUN IN THE ROYAL Library close to the section on Natural Philosophy, and the statue is rather handsome though a bit wistfully sad in its expression.

It was made of a young lad named Dorian who unlike the vast majority of fauns who are healthy and robust, he was always weak of constitution, plagued by allergies and tired spells and palpitations of the heart, and as a result spent very little time out of doors.

Many doctors looked at the lad. The Royal Magi themselves took an interest in the faunling but their best efforts with herbs and hot and cold treatments did little if any good.

Dorian haunted the library the way other faunlings haunted the flowery meadows and shade dappled forests. He read voraciously, the one thing in life he had strength

to do with enthusiasm. The classical adventures were his playground, the works of natural philosophy his pilgrimages into the greater world, and the musings of Eratosthenes his window on a greater truth that transcended the world he could see and touch.

It was said by the time Dorian was 14 that he knew more than the Mage Scribe himself. And though this cannot be verified, everyone recognized his great wisdom and people would ask him questions rather than seeking the answer in books.

One day the Mage Scribe was about the library tidying up when he saw the usual table empty. He wondered where Dorian had gone, and when he saw that a white rose had been placed in his favorite chair, he knew the awful truth. Dorian had died.

His heartbroken parents wanted to erect a monument to his tragically brief life, but the King himself took an interest in the situation and he declared a public subscription so everyone that loved Dorian could show it by donating to a full sized statue to be placed in the library he so loved.

It was a splendid statue of the 14 year old faunling, and by all accounts it was much like having him back at his usual post.

But then a strange and wonderful thing happened. Over the years his features began to age, and people

swore he grew taller. In fact, like the young buck he was to become, so became his statue. The miraculous occurrence was recognized when the statue itself was presented with the tokens of majority that would have gone to Dorian when he became his own buck.

It wasn't for many more years when the artist who did the original statue lay on his deathbed that the truth came out.

So heartbroken were Dorian's parents that they paid nearly every crescent they had to change the statue each year and watch Dorian grow as the Lord intended. And when they ran out of extra funds, the sculptor took his own money and bought the extra bronze needed to recast the statue bigger and more splendid than before.

Now Dorian symbolizes eternal hope. His name in Greek means "Gift" and so he was in life, and also in death, the gift of hope to all who suffer that the ugliness of suffering may be turned into a form of beauty.

THE END