

Hank Snow, The Face On The Barroom Floor 1966

Recorded by Hank Snow
Author - Hugh Antoine D'Arcy

'Twas a balmy summer evening and a goodly crowd was there
Which well-nigh filled Joe's barroom on the corner of the square
And as songs and witty stories came through the open door
A vagabond crept slowly in and posed upon the floor.
"Where did it come from?" Someone said. "The wind has blown it in?"
"What does it want?" another cried, "Some whiskey, rum or gin?"
"Here, Toby, seek him, if your stomach's equal to the work!"
"I wouldn't touch him with a fork, why, he's as filthy as a Turk."
This badinage the poor wretch took with stoical good grace
In fact, he smiled as though he thought he'd struck the proper place
"Come, boys, I know there's kindly hearts among so good a crowd
Why, to be in such good company would make a deacon proud."
"Give me a drink - that's what I want - I'm out of funds, you know
When I had cash to treat the gang, this hand was never slow
What? You laugh as tho' you thought this pocket never held a sou
Why, I was fixed as well, my boys, as anyone of you."
"There, thanks - that's braced me nicely - God bless you one and all
Next time I pass this good saloon, I'll make another call
Give you a song? No, I can't do that - my singing days are past
My voice is cracked and my throat's worn out and my lungs are going fast.
"Say, Give me another whiskey and I'll tell you what I'll do
I'll tell you a funny story and a fact I promise, too
That I was ever a decent man, not a one of you would think
But, I was some four or five years back - say, give us another drink.
"Fill her up, Joe, I want to put some life into my frame
Such little drinks, to a bum like me, are miserably tame
Five fingers - there, that's the scheme - and corkin' whisky, too
Well, here's luck, boys; and landlord, my best regards to you.
"You've treated me pretty kindly and I'd like to tell you how
I came to be the dirty sot you see before you now
As I told you once, I was a man with a muscle, frame and health
And, but for a blunder, ought to have made considerable wealth.
"I was a painter - not one that daubed on bricks and wood
But an artist and for my age, was rated pretty good
I worked hard at my canvas and I was bidding fair to rise
'Coz gradually I saw the star of fame before my eyes.
"I made a picture perhaps you've seen, 'tis called the 'CHASE OF FAME'
It brought me fifteen hundred pounds and added to my name
And then I met a woman - now comes the funny part
With eyes that petrified my brain and sunk into my heart.
"Why don't you laugh? it's funny that the vagabond you see
Could ever love a woman and expect her love for me
But 'twas so, and for a month or two, her smiles were freely given
And when her loving lips touched mine it carried me to heaven.
"Boys, did you ever see a girl for whom your soul you'd give
With a form like the Milo Venus, too beautiful to live
With eyes like the purest of diamonds and a wealth of chestnut hair?
If so, 'twas she, for there never was another half so fair.
"I was working on a portrait one afternoon in May
Of a fair-haired boy, a friend of mine, who lived across the way
And Madeline admired it and much to my surprise
Said she'd like to know the man that had such dreamy eyes.
"It didn't take long to know him and before the month had flown
My friend had stole my darlin' and I was left alone
And ere a year of misery had passed above my head
The jewel that I had treasured so, had tarnished and was dead.
"That's why I took to drink, boys - why, I never saw you smile
I thought you'd be amused and laughing all the while
Why, what's the matter - friend? There's a teardrop in your eye
Come, laugh like me; why 'tis only babes and women that would cry.
"Say, boys, if you'd give me just another whiskey, I'll really be glad

And I'll draw right here a picture of the face that drove me mad
Give me that piece of chalk with which you mark the baseball score
And you shall see the lovely Madeline upon the barroom floor."
Another drink and with chalk in hand the vagabond began
To sketch a face that well might buy the soul of any man
And then as he placed another lock upon the shapely head
With a fearful shriek, he leaped and fell across the picture - dead.