
C1 • ADVANCED

Is He Living Or Is He Dead

Full version reader.

Is He Living Or Is He Dead

Fiction · C1 · Advanced · Apex English Graded Readers

Full version content extracted from EPUB.

How to use this reader

Read each chapter once without stopping, and don't worry about every word. Then read it again slowly and underline the language you want to keep. Use the **Ask the teacher** page at the end for your notes, doubts and favourite lines, and bring them to your next Apex class.

Contents

1. CHAPTER ONE
2. CHAPTER TWO
3. CHAPTER THREE
4. CHAPTER FOUR
5. CHAPTER FIVE
6. CHAPTER SIX
7. CHAPTER ONE
8. CHAPTER TWO
9. CHAPTER THREE
10. CHAPTER FOUR
11. CHAPTER FIVE

CHAPTER 1

CHAPTER ONE

(Scene - An Artist's Studio in Rome)

"Oh, George, I do love you!"

"Bless your dear heart, Mary, I know that - why is your father so stubborn?"

"George, he means well, but art is nothing to him - he only understands groceries. He thinks you would starve me."

"Oh! Why am I not a money-making grocer, instead of a gifted sculptor with nothing to eat?"

"Do not lose hope, Georgy, dear - all his prejudices will fade away as soon as you get fifty thousand dol -"

"Fifty thousand demons! Child, I have no money to pay for my board!"

CHAPTER 2

CHAPTER TWO

(Scene - A Dwelling in Rome)

"My dear sir, it is useless to talk. I haven't anything against you, but I can't let my daughter marry a hash of love, art, and starvation - I believe you have nothing else to offer."

"Sir, I am poor. But is fame nothing? The Honorable Bellamy Foodie of Arkansas says that my new statue of America is a clever piece of sculpture, and he is satisfied that my name will one day be famous."

"Bosh! What does that Arkansas ass know about it? Fame's nothing - the market price of your marble statue is the thing to look at. It took you six months to chisel it, and you can't sell it for a hundred dollars. No, sir! Show me fifty thousand dollars and you can have my daughter - otherwise she marries young Simper. You have just six months to get the money. Good morning, sir."

CHAPTER 3

CHAPTER THREE

"Oh, John, friend of my boyhood, I am the unhappiest of men."

"You're a simpleton!"

"I have nothing left to love but my poor statue of America - and see, even she has no sympathy for me in her cold marble face so beautiful and so heartless!"

"Didn't you say you had six months to get the money?"

"Don't laugh at my agony, John. If I had six centuries what good would it do? How could it help a poor fellow without name, capital, or friends?"

"Idiot! Coward! Baby! Six months to get the money - and five will do!"

"Six months - a lot of time. Leave it to me. I'll get it."

"What do you mean, John? How on earth can you get such an enormous sum for me?"

"Will you let that be my business? Will you leave the thing in my hands? Will you swear to submit to whatever I do? Will you promise me to find no fault with my actions?"

"I am dizzy - confused - but I swear."

John took up a hammer and slowly smashed the nose of America! He made another pass and two of her fingers fell to the floor - another, and part of an ear came away - another, and a row of toes was cut to pieces - another, and

the left leg, from the knee down, lay a ruin!

John put on his hat and went away.

George gazed speechless upon the nightmare before him for thirty seconds, and then fell to the floor and went into convulsions.

John returned presently with a carriage, got the broken-hearted artist and the broken-legged statue aboard, and drove off, whistling peacefully. He left the artist at his lodgings, and drove off and disappeared down the Via Quirinalis with the statue.

CHAPTER 4

CHAPTER FOUR

"The six months will be up at two o'clock today! Oh, agony! My life is ruined. I wish I were dead. I had no supper yesterday. I have had no breakfast today. I dare not enter an eating-house. And hungry? - don't mention it! My bootmaker and my tailor demand the payment of my debts - my landlord haunts me. I am miserable. I haven't seen John since that awful day. Mary smiles on me tenderly when we meet in the streets, but her father makes her look in the other direction. Now who is knocking at that door? Who has come to persecute me? That villain the bootmaker, I'm sure. Come in!"

"Ah, happiness attend your highness! I have brought my lord's new boots - ah, say nothing about the pay, there is no hurry, none in the world. Shall be proud if my noble lord will continue to honor me with his custom - ah, adieu!"

"Brought the boots himself! Doesn't want his pay! Takes his leave with a bow! Desires a continuance of my custom! Is the world coming to an end? Of all the - come in!"

"Pardon, signor, but I have brought your new suit of clothes for -"

"A thousand pardons for this intrusion, your worship! But I have prepared beautiful rooms below for you!"

"I have called to say that your credit at bank is completely restored, and we shall be most happy if you will ask for any -"

"My noble boy, she is yours! She'll be here in a moment!
Take her - marry her - love her - be happy! - God bless you
both! Hip, hip, hur -"

"Oh, George, my own darling, we are saved!"

"Oh, Mary, my own darling, we are saved - but I'll swear I
don't know why nor how!"

CHAPTER 5

CHAPTER FIVE

(Scene - A Roman Cafe)

One of a group of American gentlemen reads and translates from the weekly edition of *Il Slangwhanger di Roma* the following:

Wonderful Discovery! - Some six months ago Signor John Smithe, an American gentleman, purchased a small piece of ground in the Campagna. Then Mr Smithe had that piece of ground transferred to a poor American artist named George Arnold. He said that later he would make some improvements on the ground for Signor A., at his own cost. Four weeks ago, while making some necessary excavations Signor Smithe unearthed the most remarkable ancient statue. It was an exquisite figure of a woman, and though stained by the soil, no eye can look unmoved upon its beauty. The nose, the left leg from the knee down, an ear, and also the toes of the right foot and two fingers of one of the hands were gone, but otherwise the noble figure was in a remarkable state of preservation. The government at once took possession of the statue, and appointed a commission of art critics, antiquaries, and cardinal princes of the church to fix its value and decide what sum of money must go to the owner of the ground in which it was found. The whole affair was kept a secret until last night. Last night they decided that the statue is a Venus, and the work of some unknown but gifted artist of the third century before Christ. They consider it the most

perfect work of art the world has any knowledge of.

At midnight they held a final conference and decided that the Venus was worth the enormous sum of ten million francs! In accordance with Roman law the government being half-owner in all works of art found in the Campagna, the State has to pay five million francs to Mr Arnold and take possession of the beautiful statue. This morning the Venus will be removed to the Capitol, and at noon the commission will visit Signor Arnold with His Holiness the Pope's order upon the Treasury for the royal sum of five million francs in gold!

Chorus of Voices. - "Luck! It's no name for it!"

Another Voice. - "Gentlemen, I propose that we immediately form an American company for the purchase of lands and excavations of statues here, to bull and bear the stock."

CHAPTER 6

CHAPTER SIX

(Scene - The Roman Capitol Ten Years Later)

"Dearest Mary, this is the most celebrated statue in the world. This is the famous 'Capitoline Venus' you've heard so much about. Here she is restored by the most noted Roman artists."

"The worshipped, the celebrated Capitoline Venus - and what a sum she is valued at! Ten millions of francs!"

"And oh, Georgy, how beautiful she is!"

"Ah, yes - but nothing to what she was before John Smith broke her leg and smashed her nose. Oh! Gifted Smith! - noble Smith! Author of all our happiness! Hark! Do you know what that wheeze means? Mary, the boy has got a cough. Will you never learn to take care of the children!"

The Capitoline Venus is still in the Capitol at Rome, and is still the most charming and most celebrated work of ancient art the world can boast of. But if ever it shall be your fortune to stand before it and go into ecstasy over it, don't permit this true and secret history of its origin to spoil happiness and keep your own counsel.

The progress made in the great art of ship-building since Noah's time is quite noticeable. Also, the looseness of the navigation laws in the time of Noah is in quite striking contrast with the strictness of the navigation laws of our time. It would not be possible for Noah to do in our day what he was allowed to do in his own. Experience has

taught us the necessity of being more conservative, more careful of human life. Noah would not be allowed to sail from Bremen in our day. The inspectors would come and examine the Ark, and make all sorts of objections. A person who knows Germany can imagine the scene and the conversation without difficulty. The inspector would be in a beautiful military uniform; he would be respectful, friendly, the perfect gentleman, but steady as the north star to the last requirement of his duty. He would make Noah tell him where he was born, and how old he was, and what religious sect he belonged to, and the amount of his income, and his social position and the name and style of his occupation, and how many wives and children he had, and how many servants and the name, sex, and age of the whole of them; and if he hadn't a passport it would be necessary to get one immediately. Then he would take up the matter of the Ark:

'What is her length?'

'Half male, the others female.'

'From a hundred years up -'

'Ah! Going to Chicago, good idea, too. Surgeon's name?'

'We have no surgeon.'

'Must have a surgeon. Also an undertaker - especially the undertaker. These people must not be left without necessities of life at their age. Crew?'

'And half of them women?'

'Have they ever served as seamen?'

'Have any of you ever been to sea?'

'Where were you brought up?'

'On a farm - all of us.'

'This vessel needs a crew of eight hundred men. You must have them. She must have four mates and nine cooks. Who is captain?'

'You must get a captain. Also a chambermaid. Also sick nurses for old people. Who built this vessel?'

'Is it your first attempt?'

'I suspected it. Cargo?'

'Foreign or domestic?'

'Principal wild ones?'

'Megatherium, elephant, rhinoceros, lion, tiger, wolf, snakes - all the wild things of all climates - two of each.'

'They must have iron cages. Who feeds and waters the animals?'

'It is dangerous for both. The animals must be cared for by competent keepers. How many animals are there?'

'Big ones, seven thousand; big and little together, ninety-eight thousand.'

'You must have twelve hundred keepers. How is the vessel lighted?'

'Two windows for a tunnel six hundred feet long and sixty-five feet deep? You must put in the fifteen hundred incandescents. What do you do in case of leaks? How many

pumps have you?'

'You must have pumps. How do you get water for the passengers and the animals?'

'We let down the buckets from the windows.'

'It is not enough. What is your motive power?'

'Motive power. What power do you use in driving the ship?'

'You must have sails or steam. What is the nature of your steering apparatus?'

'Haven't you a rudder?'

'How do you steer the vessel?'

'You must have a rudder. How many anchors have you?'

'You must have six. One is not allowed to sail a vessel like this without that protection. How many lifeboats have you?'

'You will have twenty-five. How long are you expecting your voyage to last?'

'Eleven or twelve months.'

'Eleven or twelve months. Pretty slow, I think. What is your ship sheathed with - copper?'

'Not sheathed at all.'

'Dear man, the wood-boring creatures of the sea would make holes in her and send her to the bottom in three months. She cannot be allowed to go away in this condition; she must be sheathed. Just a word more: Do you know that Chicago is an inland city, and not reachable with

a vessel like this?'

'Shecargos? What is Shecargos? I am not going to Shecargos.'

'Indeed? Then may I ask what the animals are for?'

'Just to breed others from.'

'Others? Is it possible that you haven't enough?'

'For the present needs of civilisation, yes; but the rest are going to be drowned in a flood, and these are to renew the supply.'

'Are you sure of that?'

'Perfectly sure. It is going to rain forty days and forty nights.'

'Do not worry about it, dear sir, it often happens here.'

'Not this kind of rain. This is going to cover the mountain-tops, and the earth will pass from sight.'

'Privately - but of course not officially - I am sorry you know this, for now I must not allow you to use sails. I must make you use steam. Your ship cannot carry the hundredth part of an eleven-months' water-supply for the animals. You will have to have condensed water.'

'But I tell you I am going to get water from outside with buckets.'

'It will not be enough. Before the flood reaches the mountain-tops the fresh waters will have joined the salt seas, and it will all be salt. You must condense your water. I will now bid you good-bye, sir. Did I understand you to

say that this was your very first attempt at ship-building?'

'My very first, sir, I give you the honest truth. I built this Ark without having any experience or instruction in ship-architecture.'

'It is a remarkable work, sir, a most remarkable work.'

'This compliment does me infinite honour, dear sir, and I shall keep it in my memory while life shall last. Sir, I thank you. Adieu.'

No, the German inspector would be limitlessly polite to Noah, and would make him feel that he was among friends, but he wouldn't let him go to sea with that Ark.

HONOURED AS A CURIOSITY IN HONOLULU

If you get into conversation with a stranger in Honolulu, and want to find out what kind of man your stranger is, strike out boldly and address him as "Captain". Watch him carefully, and if you see by his face that you are on the wrong track, ask him where he preaches. It is a safe bet that he is either a missionary or captain of a whaler. I became personally acquainted with seventy-two captains and ninety-six missionaries. The captains and ministers form one-half of the population; the third fourth is composed of common Kanakas and mercantile foreigners and their families; and the final fourth is made up of high officers of the Hawaiian Government.

A solemn stranger met me in the suburbs one day, and said:

"Good morning, your reverence. Preach in the stone church over there, no doubt?"

"No, I don't. I'm not a preacher."

"Really, I beg your pardon, captain. I trust you had a good season. How much oil -"

"Oil! Why, what do you take me for? I'm not a whaler."

"Oh! I beg a thousand pardons, your Excellency. Major-General in the household troops, no doubt? Minister of the Interior, likely? Secretary of War? First Gentleman of the Bedchamber? Commissioner of the Royal!"

"Stuff! Man, I'm no official. I'm not connected in any way with the Government."

"Bless my life! Then who are you? What are you? And how did you get here? And where did you come from?"

"I'm only a private personage - a modest stranger - lately arrived from America."

"No! Not a missionary! Not a whaler! Not a member of his Majesty's Government! Not even Secretary of the Navy! Ah! heaven! It is too good to be true; alas! I do but dream. And yet that noble, honest face - those frank eyes - that massive head; your hand; give me your hand, bright man. Excuse these tears. For sixteen years I have yearned for a moment like this, and -"

Here his feelings were too much for him, and he fainted. I pitied this poor creature from the bottom of my heart. I was deeply moved. I shed a few tears on him, and kissed him for his mother. I then took the money he had, and went

away.

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

The following I found in a Sandwich Island paper which some friend has sent me from that quiet place. The coincidence between my own experience and that of the late Mr Benton is so remarkable that I cannot help publishing and commenting upon the paragraph. The Sandwich Island paper says:

How touching is this tribute of the late Hon. T.H. Benton to his mother's influence: - "My mother asked me never to use tobacco; I have never touched it from that time to the present day. She asked me not to gamble, and I have never gambled. I cannot tell who is losing in games that are being played. When I was seven years of age she asked me not to drink, and then I made a resolution to give up drinking; and that I have kept it through all time I owe to my mother."

I never saw anything so curious. It is almost an exact repetition of my own moral career. How well I remember my grandmother's asking me not to use tobacco, good old soul! She said, "You're at it again, are you, you boy? Now, don't ever let me catch you chewing tobacco before breakfast again, or I'll whip you fiercely." I have never touched it at that hour of the morning from that time to the present day.

She asked me not to gamble. She whispered and said. "Put up those wicked cards this minute! - two pair and a jack, you fool and the other fellow's got a flush!"

I never have gambled from that day to this - never once - without a "cold deck" in my pocket. I cannot even tell who is going to lose in games that are being played unless I dealt myself.

When I was two years of age she asked me not to drink, and then I made a resolution to give up drinking. That I have kept it and enjoyed the effects of it through all time, I owe to my grandmother - let these tears prove my gratitude. I have never drunk a drop from that day to this of any kind of water.

HOW THE AUTHOR WAS SOLD IN NEWARK

It is seldom pleasant to tell on oneself, but sometimes it is a sort of relief to a man to make a confession. I wish to unburden my mind now, but I almost believe that I do it more because I feel a strong desire to blame another man than because I want to pour balm upon my wounded heart. (I don't know what balm is, but I believe it is the correct expression to use in this connection.)

You may remember that I lectured in Newark not long ago for the young gentlemen of the society. During the afternoon of that day I was talking with one of the young gentlemen and he said he had an uncle who, from some cause or other, seemed not to feel any emotion. And with tears in his eyes, this young man said, "Oh, if I could only see him laugh once more! Oh, if I could only see him weep!"

I was touched. I said: "Bring him to my lecture. I'll start him for you."

"Oh, if you could but do it! If you could but do it, all our family would bless you forever - for he is so very dear to us."

I was deeply moved. I said: "My son, bring the old man here. I have got some jokes in that lecture that will make him laugh if there is any laugh in him; and if they won't, I have got some others that will make him cry or kill him, one or the other." Then the young man blessed me, and wept on my neck, and went after his uncle. He placed him in full view, in the second row of benches, that night, and I began on him. I tried him with mild jokes, then with severe ones; I dosed him with bad jokes and riddled him with good ones; I fired old jokes into him, and peppered him with red-hot new ones; I attacked him on the right and left, in front and behind. At last I was hoarse and sick and furious; but I never moved him once - I never started a smile or a tear! I finished the lecture at last with one wild burst of humor, and fired a joke full at him!

Then I sat down quite exhausted.

The president of the society came up and bathed my head with cold water, and said: "What made you carry on so at the end?"

I said: "I was trying to make that old fool laugh, in the second row."

And he said: "Well, you were wasting your time, because he is deaf and dumb, and as blind as a badger!"

A NABOB'S VISIT TO NEW YORK

In Nevada they told me the story of an adventure of two of her nabobs, which may or may not have occurred. I give it for what it is worth:

Col. Jim had seen somewhat of the world, and knew more or less of its ways: but Col. Jack was from the back districts of the States, had led a life of hard toil, and had never seen a city.

These two, whom god sent sudden wealth, planned a visit to New York - Col. Jack to see the sights, and Col. Jim to keep him from misfortune. They reached San Francisco in the night and sailed in the morning. When they arrived in New York Col. Jack said:

"I've heard of carriages all my life, and now I mean to have a ride in one; I don't care what it costs. Come along."

They stepped out on the side-walk, and Col. Jim called a fashionable carriage. But Col. Jack said:

"No, sir! None of your cheap carriages for me. I'm here to have a good time, and money ain't any object. I mean to have the nobliest carriage that's going. Stop that yeller one with the pictures on it - don't you worry - I'll stand all the expenses myself."

So Col. Jim stopped an empty omnibus and they got in. Said Col. Jack:

"Ain't it gay, though? Cushions, and windows and pictures till you can't rest. What would the boys say if they could see us travelling like this in New York? By George, I wish they could see us."

Then he put his head out of the window, and shouted to the driver:

"Say, Johnny, this suits me! I want this she-bang all day. Let 'em out! Make 'em go! We'll make it all right to you, sonny!"

The driver passed his hand through the strap-hole for his fare - it was before the gongs came into common use. Col. Jack took the hand and shook it cordially. He said:

"You understand me, old boy! All right between gents. Smell that, and see how you like it!"

And he put a twenty dollar gold piece in the driver's hand. After a moment the driver said he could not make change.

"Bother the change! Put it in your pocket."

Then to Col. Jim with a clap on his thigh -

"Ain't style, though? Hanged if I don't hire this thing every day for a week."

The omnibus stopped and a young lady got in. Col. Jack stared for a moment, then pushed Col. Jim with his elbow.

"Don't say a word," he whispered; "let her ride if she wants to. Gracious, there's room enough."

The young lady got out her purse and handed her fare to Col. Jack.

"What's this for?" he said.

"Give it to the driver, please."

"Take back your money, madam. We can't allow it. You are welcome here to ride as long as you please, but the she-bang is hired; we can't let you pay a cent."

The girl sat in a corner, very much confused. An old lady with a basket climbed in, and passed her fare.

"Excuse me," said Col. Jack. "You are perfectly welcome here, madam, but we can't allow you to pay. Sit right down there, mum, and don't you feel the least uneasy. Make yourself as free as if you were in your own carriage."

Within two minutes three gentlemen, two fat women, and a couple of children entered.

"Come right along, friends," said Col. Jack, "don't mind us." Then he whispered to Col. Jim, "New York ain't no sociable place."

He didn't allow passengers to pass fares to the driver, and made everybody cordially welcome. The people pocketed their money; they enjoyed the episode. Half-a-dozen more passengers entered.

"Oh, there is plenty of room," said Col. Jack. "Walk right in and make yourselves at home." Then in a whisper to Col. Jim - "But ain't these New Yorkers friendly? And ain't they cool about it too?"

More passengers got in; more yet, and still more. Both seats were filled, and men were standing up holding on to the straps. People with baskets and bundles were climbing up on the roof. Half-suppressed laughter was heard from all sides.

At last Col. Jack said: "Stop, driver! Keep your seats, ladies and gents. Just make yourselves free - everything's paid for. Driver, take them everywhere, and if you want more money, come to St. Nicholas, and we'll make it all right. Pleasant journey to you, ladies and gents; go it just as long as you please - it shan't cost you a cent!"

The two comrades got out, and Col. Jack said:

"Jimmy, it's the sociablest place I ever saw. Everybody was so comfortable. By George, we'll have to barricade our doors tonight, or some of these people will try to sleep with us."

IS HE LIVING OR IS HE DEAD?

I was spending the month of March, 1892, at Mentone, in the Riviera. Mentone is quiet, simple, restful. The rich do not come there. As a rule, I mean, the rich do not come there. Now and then a rich man comes, and I soon got acquainted with one of them. I will call him Smith. One day, in the Hotel des Anglais, at the second breakfast, he exclaimed:

"Quick! Cast your eye on the man going out at the door. Remember every detail of him."

"Do you know who he is?"

"Yes. He spent several days here before you came. He is an old, retired and very rich silk manufacturer from Lyons, they say, and I think he is alone in the world, for he always looks sad, and doesn't talk with anybody. His name is Theophile Magnan."

But here we were interrupted. About ten that evening I ran across Smith, and he asked me up to his room to help him smoke and drink hot Scotch. It was a cozy place, with its comfortable chairs, its cheerful lamps, and its friendly open fire of olive-wood. After the second Scotch Smith said:

"Now - I'll tell you a curious history, and you listen to it. It has been a secret for many years - a secret between me and three others; but I am going to break the seal now. Are you comfortable?"

Here follows what he told me:

"A long time ago I was a young artist - a very young artist, in fact - and I wandered about the country parts of France, sketching here and sketching there, and was soon joined by a couple of darling young Frenchmen who were at the same kind of thing that I was doing. We were as happy as we were poor, or as poor as we were happy. Claude Frere and Carl Boulanger - these are the names of those boys. At last we came to a Breton village, and an artist as poor as ourselves took us in and saved us from starving - Francois Millet -"

"What! The great Francois Millet?"

"Great? He wasn't any greater than we were, then. He hadn't any fame, even in his own village; and he was so poor that he hadn't anything to feed us on but turnips, and even the turnips failed us sometimes. We four became great friends. We painted together with all our might, but very seldom we could get rid of any of our sketches. We

had lovely times together; but... O my soul! how we were short of money now and then!

"For a little over two years this went on. At last, one day, Claude said:

"Boys, we've come to the end. Do you understand that? - absolutely to the end. There's a league formed against us. I've been all around the village and it's just as I tell you. They refuse to credit us for another centime until all our debts are paid up.'

"This struck us cold. We realized that our circumstances were desperate, now. There was a long silence. Finally Millet said with a sigh:

"Nothing occurs to me - nothing. Suggest something, lads.'

"There was no answer unless a mournful silence may be called an answer. Carl got up, and walked nervously up and down, then said;

"It's a shame! Look at these canvases: they are as good pictures as anybody in Europe paints - I don't care who he is. Yes, and plenty of strangers have said the same - or nearly that, anyway.'

"But didn't buy,' Millet said.

"No matter, they said it; and it's true, too. Look at your "Angelus" there! Will anybody tell me -'

"Pah, Carl - my "Angelus"! I was offered five francs for it.'

"Why didn't you take it?'

"Come - don't all speak at once. I thought he would give more - I was sure of it - he looked it - so I asked him eight.'

"He said he would call again.'

"Thunder and lightning! Why Francois -'

"Oh, I know - I know! It was a mistake, and I was a fool. Boys, I meant for the best; and I -'

"Why, certainly, we know that, bless your dear heart; but don't you be a fool again.'

"I? I wish somebody would come along and offer us a cabbage for it - you'd see!'

"A cabbage! Oh, don't name it - it makes my mouth water. Talk of things less trying.'

"Boys,' said Carl, 'do these pictures lack merit? Answer me that.'

"Aren't they of very great and high merit? Answer me that.'

"Of such great and high merit that, if a celebrated name were attached to them, they would sell at splendid prices. Isn't it so?'

"Certainly it is. Nobody doubts that.'

"But - I'm not joking - isn't it so?'

"Why, of course it's so - and we are not joking. But what of it? What of it? How does that concern us?'

"In this way, comrades - we'll attach a celebrated name to them!'

"The conversation stopped. The faces were turned upon Carl. Where was a celebrated name to be borrowed? And who was to borrow it?

"Carl sat down, and said:

"Now, I have a perfectly serious thing to propose. I think it is the only way out, and I believe it to be a perfectly sure way. I base this opinion upon certain facts in human history. I believe my project will make us all rich.'

"'Rich! You've lost your mind.'

"'Yes, you have - you've lost your mind. What do you call rich?'

"'A hundred thousand francs apiece.'

"'He has lost his mind. I knew it.'

"'Yes, he has. Carl, privation has been too much for you, and -'

"'Carl, you want to take a pill and get right to bed.'

"'Bandage him first - bandage his head, and then -'

"'Shut up!' said Millet, 'and let the boy say his say. Now, then - come out with your project, Carl. What is it?'

"'Well, then, I will ask you to note this fact in human history: that the merit of many a great artist has never been acknowledged until after he was starved and dead. This has happened so often that I may say: the merit of every great unknown and neglected artist must and will be recognized, and his pictures climb to high prices after his death. My project is this: we must cast lots - one of us must

die.'

"The remark fell calmly and so unexpectedly that we almost forgot to jump. Then there was a wild chorus of advice again - medical advice - for the help of Carl's brain. At last silence fell and Carl went on again with his project.

"Yes, one of us must die, to save the others - and himself. We will cast lots. The one chosen shall be celebrated, all of us shall be rich. Don't interrupt - I tell you I know what I am talking about. Here is the idea. During the next three months the one who is to die shall paint with all his might, not pictures, no! Sketches, studies, parts of studies. And all that time the rest of us will be busy supporting the dying and working Paris and the dealers - preparations for the coming event, you know; and when everything is just right, we'll spring the death on them and have the notorious funeral. You get the idea?"

"N-o; at least, not qu -'

"Not quite? Don't you see? The man doesn't really die; he changes his name and vanishes; we bury a dummy, and cry over it, with all the world to help. And I -'

"But he wasn't allowed to finish. Everybody broke out into a hurrah of applause. For hours we talked over the great plan, without ever feeling hungry; and at last, when all the details had been arranged, we cast lots and Millet was elected - elected to die, as we called it. Then we pawned everything we had, and got enough for a farewell supper and breakfast and a few francs over for travel, and for Millet to live a few days on.

"Next morning, early, the three of us left the village after breakfast - on foot, of course. Each of us carried a dozen of Millet's small pictures purposing to sell them. Carl went to Paris, where he would start the work of building up Millet's fame. Claude and I were to separate, and travel all over France.

"Now, it will surprise you to know what an easy and comfortable thing we had. I walked two days before I began business. Then I began to sketch a villa near a big town - because I saw the proprietor standing on a verandah. He came down to watch me painting and by and by he spoke up with enthusiasm, and said I was a master!

"I put down my brush, took out a Millet, and pointed to the cipher in the corner. I said, proudly:

"I suppose you recognize that?"

"The man looked very much confused, and was silent. I said, sorrowfully:

"You don't mean to say that you don't know the cipher of Francois Millet!"

"Of course he didn't know that cipher; but he said:

"No! Why, it is Millet's, sure enough! I don't know what I could have been thinking of. Of course I recognize it now."

"Next, he wanted to buy it; but I said that although I wasn't rich I wasn't that poor. However, at last, I let him have it for eight hundred francs."

"Yes. Millet would have sold it for a pork-chop. Yes, I got eight hundred francs for that little thing. I wish I could get

it back for eighty thousand. But that time's gone by. I made a very nice picture of that man's house, and I wanted to offer it to him for ten francs, but being the pupil of such a master, I sold it to him for a hundred. I sent the eight hundred francs straight back to Millet from that town and went out again next day.

"But I didn't walk - no. I rode. I have ridden ever since. I sold one picture every day, and never tried to sell two. I always said to my customer:

"I am a fool to sell a picture of Francois Millet's at all, for that man is going to live three months, and when he dies his pictures can't be had for love or money.'

"I tried to spread that little fact as far as I could, and prepare the world for the event.

"The plan of selling the pictures was mine. I suggested it that last evening when we were planning our campaign, and it succeeded with all of us. I walked only two days, Claude walked two - but Car! Walked only half a day, and after that he travelled like a duke.

"Every now and then we visited a country editor and gave him some information about Francois Millet; not an item praising him in any way, but only a word concerning the present condition of the 'master' - sometimes hopeful, sometimes sad, but always with fears for the worst. We always marked these paragraphs, and sent the papers to all the people, who had bought pictures of us.

"Carl was soon in Paris. He made friends with the correspondents, and got Millet's condition reported to

England and all over the continent, and America, and everywhere.

"At the end of six weeks from the start, we three met in Paris. Everything was so ripe, that we saw that it would be a mistake not to strike now, right away, without waiting any longer. So we wrote Millet to go to bed, for we should like him to die in ten days if he could get ready.

"Then we figured up and found that we had sold eighty-five small pictures and studies, and had sixty-nine thousand francs for it. Carl had made the last sale and the most brilliant one of all. He sold the 'Angelus' for twenty-two hundred francs. How we did praise him! Not foreseeing that a day would come when France would struggle to own it and a stranger would buy it for five hundred and fifty thousand, cash.

"We had a champagne supper that night, and next day Claude and I went off to nurse Millet through his last days and keep everybody out of the house and send daily bulletins to Carl in Paris for publication in the papers of several continents for the information of a waiting world. The sad end came at last, and Carl was there in time to help us.

"You remember that great funeral, and what a sensation it made all over the world, and how the celebrated of two worlds came to testify their sorrow. We four - still inseparable - carried the coffin, and allowed none to help. And we were right about that; because it hadn't anything in it but a wax figure, and any other coffin-bearers would

have found out it was too light. Yes, we same old four, carried the cof -"

"We four - for Millet helped to carry his own coffin. In disguise, you know. Disguised as a relative - distant relative."

"But true, just the same. Well, you remember how the pictures went up. Money? We didn't know what to do with it. There's a man in Paris today who owns seventy Millet pictures. He paid us two million francs for them. And as for a lot of sketches and studies which Millet made during the six weeks that we were away, well, it would astonish you to know the figure we sell them at nowadays..."

"It is a wonderful history, perfectly wonderful!"

"But what became of Millet?"

"Can you keep a secret?"

"Do you remember the man I called your attention to in the dining-room today? That was Francois Millet."

One of the saddest things that I ever observed in my life (said the banker's clerk) was in Corning, during the war. Dan Murphy enlisted as a private, and fought very bravely. The boys all liked him, and, when a wound by and by weakened him so that it was too heavy work for him to carry a gun, they fixed him up as a sutler. He made money then, and sent it always to his wife to bank for him. She was a washer and ironer, and knew enough by hard experience to keep money when she got it. She didn't waste a penny. On the contrary, she began to get miserly

as her bank account grew. She hated to part with a cent, poor creature, for twice in her hard-working life she had known what it was to be hungry, cold, friendless, sick, and without a dollar in the world, and she was afraid of suffering so again. Well, at last Dan died; and the boys, who respected him telegraphed to Mrs Murphy to know if she would like to have him embalmed and sent home; when you know the usual custom was to dig a poor devil like him into a hole, and then inform his friends what had become of him. Mrs Murphy decided that it would only cost two or three dollars to embalm her dead husband, and so telegraphed "Yes." It was in the evening before the burial that the bill for embalming arrived, and was presented to the widow.

She uttered a wild sad cry that pierced every heart, and said: "Sivinty-foive dollars for stoffin' Dan, blister their souls! Did thim divils suppose I was goin' to stairt a Museim, that'd be dalin' in such expinsive curiassities!"

The banker's clerk said there was not a dry eye in the house.

The first visitor that came to see me when I settled down recently was a gentleman who said he was an assessor, and connected with the U.S. Internal Revenue Department. I said I had never heard of his branch of business before, but I was very glad to see him. Would he sit down? He sat down. I did not know anything particular to say, and I asked him if he was opening his shop in our neighbourhood.

He said he was. (I did not wish to appear ignorant, but I had hoped he would say what he was going to sell).

I ventured to ask him "How was trade?" And he said "So-so."

I then said we would drop in, and if we liked his house as well as any other, we would become his customers.

He said he thought we would like his establishment and added he never saw anybody who would go off and search for another man in his line after trading with him once.

I do not know how it happened, but gradually we got talking and then everything went along as comfortably as clock-work.

We talked, and talked, and talked - at least I did; and we laughed, and laughed, and laughed - at least he did. But all the time I had my presence of mind about me. I decided to find out all about his business - and thought I would have it out of him without his suspecting what I was at. I would tell him all about my own business, and he would naturally forget himself, and tell me all about his affairs before he suspected what I was about. I thought to myself, My son, you little know what an old fox you are dealing with. I said:

"Now you never would guess what I made lecturing this winter and last spring?"

"No - don't believe I could, to save me. Let me see - let me see. About two thousand dollars, maybe? But no; no, sir, I know you couldn't have made that much. Say seventeen hundred, maybe?"

"Ha! ha! I knew you couldn't! My lecturing money for last spring and this winter were fourteen thousand seven hundred and fifty dollars. What do you think of that?"

"Why, it is amazing - perfectly amazing. I will make a note of it. And you say even this wasn't all?"

"All! Why, bless you, there was my income from the Daily Warwhoop for four months - about - about - well, what should you say to about eight thousand dollars, for instance?"

"Say! Eight thousand! I'll make a note of it. Why, man! Am I to understand that you had still more income?"

"Ha! Ha! Ha! Why, you're only in the suburbs of it, so to speak. There's my book. The Innocents Abroad - price from 3.50 dollars to 5 dollars. Listen to me. Look me in the eye. During the last four months and a half, saying nothing of sales before that, but just simply during the four months and a half, we've sold ninety-five thousand copies of that book. Ninety-five thousand! Think of it. Average four dollars a copy, say. It's nearly four hundred thousand dollars, my son. I get half."

"The suffering Moses! I'll set that down. Fourteen-seven-fifty-eight-two hundred. Total, say - well, upon my word, the grand total is about two hundred and thirteen or fourteen thousand dollars! Is that possible?"

"Possible! If there's any mistake it's the other way. Two hundred and fourteen thousand, cash, is my income for this year if I know arithmetic."

Then the gentleman got up to go. At the last moment he handed me a large envelope, and said it contained his advertisement; and that I would find out all about his business in it; and that he would be happy to have my custom - would, in fact, be proud to have the custom of a man of such enormous income; and that he used to think there were several wealthy men in the city, but when they came to trade with him he discovered that they hardly had enough to live on; and that, in truth, it had been such a long age since he had seen a rich man face to face, and talked to him, and touched him with his hands, that he could hardly hold himself back from embracing me - in fact, would consider it a great favor if I would let him embrace me.

This so pleased me that I did not try to resist, but allowed this simple-hearted stranger to throw his arms about me and weep a few tears down the back of my neck. Then he went his way.

As soon as he was gone I opened his advertisement. I studied it attentively for four minutes. I then called up the cook, and said:

"Hold me while I faint! Let Marie turn the cakes." The gentleman's "advertisement" was nothing in the world but a list of questions about my private affairs.

What were your profits, during the past year, from any trade of business wherever carried on?

It was plain that that stranger had enabled me to make a goose of myself. By working on my vanity, the stranger had

made me declare an income of two hundred and fourteen thousand dollars. By law, one thousand dollars of this was free from income tax - the only relief I could see, and it was only a drop in the ocean. At the legal five per cent, I must pay to the government the sum of ten thousand six hundred and fifty dollars, income tax!

(I may remark, in this place, that I did not do it.)

I am acquainted with a very wealthy man, whose house is a palace, whose table is regal, whose expenses are enormous, yet a man who has no income, as I have found out; and to him I went for advice in my distress. He took my receipts, he put on his glasses, he took his pen, and in a minute I was a pauper! He did it simply by manipulating the bill of "Deductions." And when he finished he handed me the paper, and I saw at a glance that during the year my income, in the way of profits, had been one thousand two hundred and fifty dollars and forty cents.

"Now," said he, "the thousand dollars is free from income tax. What you want to do is to go and swear this document in and pay tax on the two hundred and fifty dollars."

"Do you," said I, "do you always work up the 'deductions' in this way in your own case, sir?"

"Well, I should say so! If it weren't for those eleven saving clauses under the head of 'Deductions' I should be beggared every year to support this hateful, and wicked, and tyrannical government."

This gentleman stands away up among the very best of the solid men of the city - the men of moral weight, of

commercial honesty, of social spotlessness - and so I followed his advice. I went down to the revenue office, and under the accusing eyes of my old visitor I stood up and swore to lie after lie till my self-respect was gone for ever and ever.

But what of it? It is nothing more than thousands of the richest and proudest, and most respected, and honored men in America do every year. And so I don't care. I am not ashamed. I shall simply, for the present, pay attention not to talk much.

THE STORY OF AN OLD SAILOR

Some years ago I was with a friend of mine in a village which in the first half of the nineteenth century was a great center of the whaling industry.

There was a dedication of a great town hall, a public building, and we were there in the afternoon. This great building was filled with happy villagers, and my friend and I started down to the center aisle. He saw a man standing in that aisle, and he said: "Now, look at that bronzed veteran - and tell me, do you see anything about that man's face that is emotional? Do you see anything about it that suggests that inside that man anywhere there are fires that can be started? Would you ever imagine that that is a human volcano?"

"Why, no," I said, "I would not. He looks like a wooden Indian in front of a cigar store."

"Very well," said my friend, "I will show you that there is emotion even in that unpromising place. I will just go to

that man and I will just mention in the most indifferent way an incident in his life. That man is getting along toward ninety years old. He is past eighty. I will mention an incident of fifty or sixty years ago. Now, just watch the effect.

He came up to the man and addressed him, and made a remark or two, I could not catch up. In an instant that old man was literally in rage and was filling the whole place with profanity of the most exquisite kind. You never heard such profanity. I never heard it also pronounced with such eloquence.

I never enjoyed profanity as I enjoyed it then - more than if I had been uttering it myself. There is nothing like listening to an artist - all his passions passing away in lava, smoke, thunder, lightning, and earthquake.

Then this friend said to me: "Now, I will tell you about that. About sixty years ago that man was a young fellow of twenty-three, and had just come home from a three years' whaling voyage. He came into that village of his, happy and proud because now, instead of being chief mate, he was going to be master of a whale ship, and he was proud and happy about it.

"Then he found that there had been a kind of a cold frost upon that town and the whole region roundabout; for while he had been away the Father Mathew temperance excitement had come upon the whole region. Therefore, everybody had taken the pledge; there wasn't anybody for miles around that had not taken the pledge.

"So you can see what a solitude it was to this young man, who was fond of his grog. And he was just an outcast, because when they found he would not join Father Mathew's Society they ostracized him, and he went about that town three weeks, day and night, in complete loneliness - the only human being in the whole place who ever took grog, and he had to take it secretly.

"If you don't know what it is to be ostracized by your fellow-man, may you never know it. Then he recognized that there was something more valuable in this life than grog, and that is the fellowship of your fellow-man. And at last he gave it up, and at nine o'clock one night he went down to the Father Mathew Temperance Society, and with a broken heart he said: 'Write my name down for membership in this society.

"And then he went away crying, and at earliest dawn the next morning they came for him and said that his new ship was ready to sail on a three years' voyage. In a minute he was on board that ship and gone.

"Well he was not out of sight of his village that he began to regret what he had done. But he had made up his mind that he would not take a drink, and so that whole voyage of three years was a three years' agony to that man because he saw all the time the mistake he had made. The crew would pass him with their grog, come out on the deck and take it, and there was the torturous smell of it.

"He went through the whole three years of suffering. At last when he was coming into port it was snowy and cold,

he was stamping through the snow two feet deep on the deck and longing to get home. His crew tortured him to the last minute with hot grog, but at last he had his reward. He really did get to shore at last, and jumped and ran and bought a jug and rushed to the society's office and said to the secretary:

"Take my name off your membership books, and do it right away! I have got a three years' thirst."

"And the secretary said: 'It is not necessary. You were black-balled!'"

LEGEND OF SAGENFELD, IN GERMANY

More than a thousand years ago this small district was a kingdom - a little bit of a kingdom, a sort of toy kingdom, as one might say. Its life was a simple life, its people a gentle race; it lay always in a deep dream of peace; there was no evil, there was no envy, there was no ambition, there was no unhappiness in the land.

In the course of time the old king died and his little son Hubert came to the throne. The people's love for him grew daily; he was so good and so pure and so noble, that by and by this love became a passion, almost a worship. Now at his birth the soothsayers had studied the stars and found something written in that shining book to this effect.

In Hubert's fourteenth year an important event will happen; the animal whose singing shall sound sweetest in Hubert's ear shall save Hubert's life. So long as the king and the nation shall honor this animal's race for this good deed, the ancient dynasty shall not fail of an heir, nor the

nation know war, or fatal disease, or poverty. But beware of erring choice!

All through the king's thirteenth year but one thing was talked of by the soothsayers, the statesmen, the little parliament, and the general people. That one thing was this: How is the last sentence of the prophecy to be understood? What goes before seems to mean that the saving animal will choose itself at the proper time; but the closing sentence seems to mean that the king must choose beforehand, and say what singer among the animals pleases him best, and that if he choose wisely the chosen animal will save his life, his dynasty, his people, but that if he should make "an erring choice" - beware!

By the end of the year there were as many opinions about this matter as there had been in the beginning; but a majority of the wise and the simple were agreed that the safest plan would be for the little king to make choice beforehand, and the earlier the better. So all persons who owned singing creatures were commanded to bring them to the great hall of the palace in the morning of the first day of the new year. This command was obeyed. When everything was in readiness for the trial, the king made his solemn entry with the great officers of the crown, all clothed in their robes of state. The king mounted his golden throne and prepared to give judgement. But in a minute he said:

"These creatures all sing at once; the noise is unbearable; no one can choose in such a noise. Take them all away, and bring back one at a time."

This was done. One sweet singing bird after another charmed the young king's ear and was removed to make way for another candidate. But he found it hard to choose, and all the harder because the promised penalty for an error was so terrible that it made the king afraid to trust his own ears. He grew nervous and his face showed sorrow. His ministers saw this, for they never took their eyes from him a moment. Now they began to say in their hearts:

"He has lost courage - the cool head is gone - he will err - he and his dynasty and his people are doomed!"

At the end of an hour the king sat silent awhile, and then said:

"Bring back the linnet."

In the middle of its song the king was about to uplift his scepter in sign of choice but checked himself and said:

"But let us be sure. Bring back the thrush; let them sing together."

The thrush was brought, and the two birds sang their songs together. The king thought, then his decision began to strengthen - one could see it in his face. Hope returned to the hearts of the old ministers, their pulses began to beat quicker, the scepter began to rise slowly, when... There was a frightful interruption! It was a sound like this - just at the door:

"Waw... he! Waw... he! - Waw-he! Waw-he! Waw-he!"
Everybody was startled.

The next moment the dearest, sweetest, prettiest little peasant-girl of nine years ran into the hall, her brown eyes glowing with childish eagerness; but when she saw that noble company and those angry faces she stopped and cried. Nobody gave her welcome, none pitied her. Then she looked up through her tears, and said:

"My lord the king, I pray you pardon me, for I meant no wrong. I have no father and no mother, but I have a goat and a donkey, and they are all in all to me. My goat gives me the sweetest milk, and when the dear good donkey brays it seems to me there is no music like to it. So when my lord the king's jester said the sweetest singer among all the animals should save the crown and nation, and made me to bring here -"

All the court burst into a rude laugh, and the child went away crying, without trying to finish her speech. The chief minister had a private order that she and her donkey be driven out of the palace.

Then the trial of the birds went on. The two birds sang their best, but the scepter lay motionless in the king's hand. Hope died slowly out in the breasts of, all. An hour went by; two hours, still no decision. The waiting people outside the palace grew mad with anxiety. The twilight came on, the shadows fell deeper and deeper. The king and his court could no longer see each other's faces. No one spoke - none called for lights. The great trial had been made; it had failed; each and all wished to hide their faces from the light and cover up their deep trouble in their own hearts.

Finally - hark! Rich, full sounds of the sweetest melody streamed forth from a far part of the hall - the nightingale's voice!

"Up!" shouted the king, "let all the bells make proclamation to the people, for the choice is made and we have not erred. King, dynasty, and nation are saved. From this time on let the nightingale be honored throughout the land forever. And publish it among all the people that whosoever shall insult a nightingale, or injure it, shall suffer death. The king has spoken."

All that little kingdom was drunk with joy. There were bonfires before the castle and in the city all night long, the people danced and drank and sang, and the triumphant clamour of the bells never ceased.

From that day the nightingale was a sacred bird. Its song was heard in every house; the poets wrote its praises; the painters painted it; its sculptured image was everywhere on walls, arches and public buildings. It was even taken into the king's councils; and no important matter of the state was decided until the soothsayers had laid the thing before the state nightingale and translated to the ministry what it was that the bird had sung about it.

The young king was fond of the chase. When the summer came he rode forth with hawk and hound, one day, in a brilliant company of the nobles. In a great forest he has lost them, then took what he imagined a near cut, to find them again; but it was a mistake. He rode on and on, hopefully at first, but with sinking courage finally. Twilight

came on, and still he was in a lonely and unknown land.

Then came a catastrophe. In the dim light he forced his horse through a thicket overhanging a deep and rocky valley. When horse and rider reached the bottom, the former had a broken neck and the latter a broken leg. The poor little king lay there suffering from pain, and each hour seemed a long month to him. He tried to hear any sound that might promise hope of rescue; but he heard no voice, no sound of horn or bay of hound. So at last he gave up all hope, and said, "Let death come!"

Just then the deep, sweet song of a nightingale reached his ear.

"Saved!" the king said. "Saved! It is the sacred bird and the prophecy has come true. The gods themselves protected me from error in the choice."

He could hardly contain his joy. Every few moments now he thought he heard the sound of approaching help. But each time it was a disappointment: no help came, only the sacred bird sang on. He began to think he had made a mistake about his choice. Toward dawn the bird ceases. The morning came, and with it thirst and hunger; but no help. The second day ended. At last the king cursed the nightingale.

Immediately the song of the thrush came from out the wood. The king said in his heart, "This was the true bird - my choice was false - help will come now."

But it did not come. Then he lay many hours insensible. When he came to himself, a linnet was singing. He listened

- with apathy. His faith was gone. "These birds," he said, "can bring no help; I and my house and my people are doomed." He was grown weak from hunger and thirst and suffering, and felt that his end was near. In truth he wanted to die. For long hours he lay without thought or feeling or motion. Then his senses returned. The dawn of the third morning was breaking. Ah, the world seemed very beautiful to his worn eyes. Suddenly a great longing to live rose up in his lad's heart, and he wanted to see his home and his friends once more. In that moment a soft, faint, far-off sound, but oh, how sweet to his waiting ear, came out of the distance:

"Waw... he! Waw... he! - Waw-he! - Waw-he! - Waw-he!"

"That, oh, that song is sweeter, a thousand times sweeter than the voice of the nightingale, thrush, or linnet, for it brings not only hope, but real help and now, indeed, my life, my house and my people are saved. The sacred singer has chosen itself. The ass shall be sacred from this day!"

The beautiful music grew nearer and nearer, stronger and stronger - and even sweeter and sweeter to the sufferer's ear. The little donkey appeared near-by; and when at last he saw the dead horse and the wounded king, he came and snuffed at them with simple curiosity. The king petted him, and he knelt down as he always did when his little mistress desired to mount. With great difficulty and pain the lad drew himself upon the creature's back. The ass went singing forth from the place and carried the king to the little peasant-girl's hut. She made him a bed, gave him goat's milk, and then flew to tell the great news to the first

party of searchers she might meet.

The king got well. His first act was to proclaim the sacredness of the ass; his second was to add this particular ass to his cabinet and make him chief minister of the crown; his third was to have all the statues of nightingales throughout his kingdom destroyed, and replaced by statues of the sacred donkey; and his fourth was to announce that when the little peasant-girl would reach her fifteenth year he would make her his queen - and he kept his word.

Such is the legend. This explains why the image of the ass is everywhere on walls and arches; and it explains why, during many centuries, an ass was always the chief minister in the royal cabinet, just as is still the case in the most cabinets to this day; and it also explains why, in that little kingdom, during many centuries, all great poems, all great speeches, all great books, all public ceremonies and all royal proclamations always began with these exciting words:

"Waw... he! Waw... he! - Waw-he! - Waw-he! - Waw-he!"

PUNCH, BROTHERS, PUNCH

Will the reader cast his eye over the following verses, and see if he can discover anything harmful in them?

Conductor, when you receive a fare,

Punch in the presence of the passenjare!

A blue trip slip for an eight-cent fare,

A buff trip slip for a six-cent fare,

A pink trip slip for a three-cent fare,
Punch in the presence of the passenjare!
Punch, brothers! punch with care!
Punch in the presence of the passenjare!

I came across these rhymes in a newspaper, a little while ago, and read them a couple of times. They took instant and complete possession of me. All through breakfast they went waltzing through my brain; and when, at last, I finished, I could not tell whether I had eaten anything or not. I went to my room to write. I took up my pen, but all I could get it to say was, "Punch in the presence of the passenjare." I fought hard for an hour, but it was useless. The day's work was ruined - I could see that clearly enough. I gave up and went downtown, and soon discovered that my feet were keeping time to those rhymes. When I could stand it no longer I stopped. But it did no good; those rhymes went on disturbing me just as before. I returned home, and suffered all the afternoon; suffered all through dinner; suffered, and cried, and jingled all through the evening, went to bed and jingled right along, the same as ever; got up at midnight frantic, and tried to read; but there was nothing visible upon the page except "Punch! punch in the presence of the passenjare."

Two days later, on Saturday morning, I arose and went to my friend, the Rev. Mr. to walk to the Talcott Tower, ten miles distant. He stared at me, but asked no questions. We started. Mr. talked, talked - as is his habit. I said nothing; I

heard nothing. At the end of a mile, Mr. said:

"Mark, are you sick? I never saw a man look so worn and absent-minded. Say something; do!"

Gloomily, without enthusiasm, I said: "Punch, brothers, punch with care! Punch in the presence of the passenjare!"

My friend eyed me blankly, looked perplexed, then said:

"Mark, there does not seem to be anything sad in what you have said, certainly nothing sad: and yet - may be it was the way you said the words - I never heard anything that sounded so pathetic. What is -"

But I heard no more. I was already far away with my pitiless, heart-breaking "blue trip slip for an eight-cent fare, buff trip slip for a six-cent fare, pink trip slip for a three-cent fare; punch in the presence of the passenjare." I do not know what occurred during the other nine miles. However, all of a sudden Mr. laid his hand on my shoulder and shouted:

"Oh, wake up! Wake up! Wake up! Don't sleep all day! Here we are at the Tower, man! I have talked myself deaf and dumb and blind, and never got an answer. Just look at this autumn landscape! Look at it! Look at it! What do you say to this?"

I sighed and murmured -

"A buff trip slip for a six-cent fare, a pink trip slip for a three-cent fare, punch in the presence of the passenjare."

Rev. Mr. stood there, very grave, then he said -

"Mark, there is something about this that I cannot understand. Those are about the same words you said before; there does not seem to be anything in them, and yet they nearly break my heart when you say them. Punch in the - how is it they go?"

I began at the beginning and repeated all the lines. My friend's face lighted with interest. He said:

"Why, what a fascinating jingle it is! It is almost music. It flows along so nicely. I have nearly caught the rhymes myself. Say them over just once more, and then I'll have them, sure."

I said them over. Then Mr. said them. He made one little mistake, which I corrected. The next time and the next he got them right. Now a great burden seemed to fall from my shoulders. That torturing jingle was forgotten and a greatful sense of rest and peace descended upon me. I was light-hearted enough to sing; and I did sing for half an hour, as we went homeward. Then my freed tongue found speech again, and I began talking. At last I said:

"Haven't we had a good time! But now I remember, you haven't said a word for two hours. Come, come, out with something!"

The Rev. Mr. turned his eyes upon me, sighed and said:

"Punch, brothers, punch with care! Punch in the presence of the passenjare!"

A sudden pain shot through me as I said to myself, "Poor fellow, poor fellow! he has got it, now."

I did not see Mr. for two or three days after that. Then, on Tuesday evening, he visited me. He was pale and worn. He lifted his eyes to my face and said -

"Ah Mark, those heartless rhymes have ridden me like a nightmare, day and night, hour after hour, to this very moment. Saturday evening I had a sudden call, by telegraph, and took the night train for Boston. The occasion was the death of an old friend who had requested that I should preach his funeral sermon. I took my seat in the car and began to think of the sermon. But I never got beyond the opening paragraph; for then the train started and the car-wheels began their 'clack, clack-clack-clack-clack! Clack, clack-clack-clack-clack' and right away those rhymes fitted themselves to that accompaniment. It lasted for an hour. It seemed to me that I must go mad if I sat there any longer; so I undressed and went to bed. But the thing went right along, just the same. 'Clack- clack-clack, a blue trip slip, clack-clack-clack, for an eight cent fare; clack-clack-clack, a buff trip slip, clack-clack- clack, for a six-cent fare, and so on, and so on, and so on - punch, in the presence of the passengjare!' Sleep? Not a single wink! I was almost a lunatic when I got to Boston. Don't ask me about the funeral. I did the best I could, but all was in vain. The moment I had finished, I fled to the anteroom almost frenzy. I saw an aged maiden aunt of the dead man there, who had arrived from Springfield too late to get into the church. She began to sob, and said: 'Oh, oh, he is gone, he is gone, and I didn't see him before he died!'

'Yes!' I said, 'He is gone, he is gone, he is gone - oh, will this suffering never cease!'

'You loved him, then! Oh, you too loved him!'

'Loved him! Loved who?'

'Why, my poor George! My poor nephew!'

'Oh-him! Yes-oh, yes, yes. Certainly - certainly. Punch - Punch - oh! This misery will kill me!'

'Bless you! Bless you, sir, for those sweet words! Were you present during his last moments?'

'Yes! I - whose last moments?'

'Yes! Oh, yes-yes-yes! I suppose so, I think so, I don't know! Oh, certainly - I was there - I was there!'

'Oh, what a privilege! What a privilege! And his last words-oh, tell me, tell me his last words! What did he say?'

'He said - he said-oh, my head, my head, my head! He said, he said - he never said anything but Punch, punch, punch in the presence of the passenger! Oh, leave me, madam! In the name of all that is generous, leave me to my madness, my misery, my despair! - a buff trip slip for a six-cent fare, a pink trip slip for a three-cent fare, punch in the presence of the passenger!'

My friend's hopeless eyes rested upon mine; then he said impressively:

"Mark, you do not say anything. You don't offer me any hope. But, ah, me, it is just as well - it is just as well. You could not do me any good. The time has long gone by when

words could comfort me. Something tells me that my tongue is doomed to repeat those jingles for ever. There - there it is coming on me again: a blue trip slip for an eight-cent fare, a buff trip slip for a -"

Thus murmuring the rhymes, my friend sank into a peaceful trance and forgot his suffering.

How did I finally save him from the asylum? I took him to a neighbouring university and he recited the rhymes into the ears of the poor unthinking students. How is it with them, now? The result is too sad to tell. Why did I write this article? It was for a noble purpose. It was to warn you, reader, if you should come across those merciless rhymes, to avoid them - avoid them as you would a pestilence!

THE ART OF INHUMATION

Once I met a man in the street whom I had not seen for six or seven years; and something like this talk followed. I said:

"But you used to look sad and old; you don't now. Where did you get all this youth and cheerfulness? Give me the address."

He laughed, took off his shining hat, pointed to a pink circlet of paper there, with something lettered on it, and went on laughing while I read, "J. B., Undertaker". Then he put his hat on, and cried out:

"That what's the matter! It used to be rough times with me when you knew me - insurance-agency business, you know; very irregular. Big fire, all right - good trade for ten days

while people are frightened; after that dull policy business till next fire. But towns like this don't have fires often enough. I tell you, this is the business! People don't wait for example to die. No, sir, they die all the time - there ain't dull spots in the undertaker line. I just started in with two or three little old coffins and a hired hearse, and now look at the thing! I've worked up a business here that would satisfy any man, no matter who he is. Five years ago I lived in a small room just under the roof. I live in a beautiful house now."

"Does a coffin pay so well? Is there much profit in a coffin?"

"Oh! How you talk!" Then, with a dropping of his voice and an impressive look he said:

"Look here; there's one thing in this world which isn't ever cheap. That's a coffin. There's one thing in this world about which a person doesn't say - I'll look around a little, and if I find I can't do better I'll come back and take it.' That's a coffin. There's one thing in this world which a person won't take in pine if he can go walnut; and won't take in walnut if he can go mahogany; and won't take in mahogany if he can go an iron casket with silver door-plate and bronze handles. That's a coffin. And there's one thing in this world which you don't have to worry around after a person to get him pay for. And that's a coffin. Undertaking? Why, it's the dead-surest business in Cristendom, and the noblest.

"Why, just look at it. A rich man won't have anything but the very best; and you can give it to him. And now a poor

man, and if you work him right he'll bust himself on a single lay-out. Or especially a woman. For instance: Mrs O'Flaherty comes in - widow - wiping her eyes and moaning. She looks about and says:

"And what might you ask for that one?"

"Thirty-nine dollars, madam," says I.

"It's a big price, sure, but Pat shall be buried like a gentleman, as he was, if I have to work me fingers off for it. I'll have that one, sir."

"Yes, madam," says I, "and it is a very good one, too; not costly, to be sure, but in this life we must cut our garments to our cloth, as the saying is." And then I go on: "This one with the white satin lining is a beauty, but I am afraid - well, sixty-five dollars is a rather - rather - but no matter, I felt obliged to say to Mrs O'Shaughnessy -"

"Do'ye mind to say that Bridget O'Shaughnessy bought her husband to that bootiful box to ship that drunken divil to hell in?"

"Then Pat shall go to heaven in the twin to it, if it takes the last cent the O'Flahertys can get; and mind you, add some extras, too, and I'll give ye another dollar."

"Of course I don't forget to mention that Mrs O'Shaughnessy hired fifty-four dollars' worth hearse and then Mrs O'Flaherty demands a better hearse".

"Well," said I, "if you are so light-hearted and jolly in ordinary times, what must you be in an epidemic?"

"No, you're wrong, there. We don't like to see an epidemic. An epidemic doesn't pay. Well, of course, I don't mean that, exactly, but it doesn't pay in proportion to the regular thing. Doesn't it occur to you why?"

"I can't imagine. What is it?"

"It's just two things."

"Well, what are they?"

"And what's the other?"

"Well, in ordinary times, a person dies, and we lay him up in ice; one day, two days, maybe three, to wait for friends to come, takes a lot of it - melts quickly. We ask high prices for that ice. Well, don't you know, when there's an epidemic, they rush 'em to the cemetery the minute the breath's out. No market for ice in an epidemic. Same with Embalming. In ordinary times you take a family that's able to embalm, and you've got a soft thing. You can mention sixteen different ways to do it - though there ain't only one or two ways, when you come down to the bottom facts of it - and they'll take the highest-priced way, every time. It's human nature-human nature in grief. It doesn't reason, you see. All it wants is physical immortality for the dead person, and they're willing to pay for it. All you've got to do is to be calm and go to work; and in a couple of hours he is worth a cool six-hundred - that's what he's worth. Well, don't you seem when there's an epidemic people don't wait to embalm. No, indeed, they don't; and it hurts the business like health, as we say - hurts it like hell...th, health, see? - our little joke in the trade. Well, I must be

coming. Give me a call whenever you need any - I mean, when you're dying, some time."

And in this joyful high spirits, he ran away.

WITHDRAWING A WATERMELON

I remember, I remember it so well. I remember it as if it were yesterday, the first time I ever stole a watermelon. Yes, the first time. At least, I think it was the first time or along about there. It was, it was, must have been, about 1848, when I was 13 or 14 years old. I remember that watermelon well. I can almost taste it now.

Yes, I stole it. Yet why use so cruel a word? It was the biggest of the watermelons on a farmer's wagon standing in the street in the old town of Hannibal, Missouri. While the farmer was busy with another... anoth... er... customer, I withdrew this melon. Yes, "I stole" is too strong. I withdrew it. I retired it from circulation. And I myself retired with it.

The place to which the watermelon and I retired was a lumber yard. I knew a nice quiet alley between the sweet-smelling planks and to that spot I carried the melon. Looking at it for a few moments I broke it open with a stone.

It was green - impossibly, hopelessly green. I do not know why this fact affected me, but it did. It affected me deeply. It changed in me the moral values of the universe. I began to reflect. Now, reflection is the beginning of reform. There can be no reform without reflection...

I asked myself how I should behave. What would conscience dictate? What should a high-minded young man do after retiring a green watermelon? What would George Washington do? Now was the time for all the lessons received at Sunday School to act.

And they did act. The word that came to me was "restitution". There lay the path of duty. I reasoned with myself. I labored. At last I made up my mind. "I'll do it," said I. "I'll take him back his old melon." Not many boys would have been heroic, would so clearly have seen the right and decided to do it. The moment I reached that resolution I felt a strange uplift. One always feels an uplift when he turns from wrong to righteousness. I arose, spiritually strengthened, renewed and refreshed, and in the strength of that refreshment carried back the watermelon - that is, I carried back what was left of it - and made him give me a ripe one.

But I had a duty toward that farmer, as well as to myself. I told him he ought to be ashamed of himself giving his - his customers green melons. And he was ashamed. He said he was. He said he felt as badly about it as I did. In this he was mistaken. He hadn't eaten any of the melon. I told him that the single case was bad enough, but asked him to consider what would become of him if this should become a habit with him. I pictured his future. And I saved him. He thanked me and promised to do better.

We must always labor thus with those who have taken the wrong road. Probably this was the farmer's first false step. He had not gone far, but he had put his foot on this road.

Happily, at this moment a friend appeared - a friend who put out a helping hand and held him back. Others might have hesitated to speak to him of his mistake but I didn't. And it is one of the gratifications of my life that I can look back on what I did for that man in his hour of need.

The blessing came. He went home with a bright face to his wife and I - I got a ripe melon. I trust it was with him as it was with me. Reform with me was no passing episode. It was permanent. Since that day I have never stolen a water... never stolen a green watermelon.

CHAPTER 7

CHAPTER ONE

It was night. Stillness reigned in the great old feudal castle of Klugenstein. The year 1222 was drawing to a close. Far away in the tallest of the castle's towers a single light glimmered. A secret council was being held there. The old lord of Klugenstein sat in a chair thinking. At last he said: "My daughter."

A young man of noble presence, clad from head to heel in a knight's clothes answered: "Speak, father!"

"My daughter, the time has come to the mystery that has puzzled all your young life. Know, then, that it had its birth in the matters which I shall now reveal. My brother Ulrich is the great Duke of Brandenburg. Our father, on his deathbed, decided that if no son were born to Ulrich the succession should pass to my house, provided a son were born to me. And further, in case no son were born to either, but only daughters, then the succession should pass to Ulrich's or my daughter. And so I and my old wife here prayed for the birth of a son, but the prayer was vain. You were born to us. I was in despair. I saw the mighty prize slipping from my grasp.

"Five years had Ulrich been married and yet he had no children at all.

"I thought: 'All is not lost.' A saving plan had shot through my brain. You were born at midnight. Only the doctor, the nurse, and six waiting-women knew your sex. I hanged them all before an hour passed. Next morning all the

barony went mad with happiness because a son was born to Klugenstein - an heir to Brandenburg! And well the secret has been kept. Your mother's own sister nursed you and from that time forward we feared nothing.

"When you were ten years old a daughter was born to Ulrich. We grieved, but hoped for good results from measles, or physicians, or other natural enemies of infancy, but were always disappointed. She lived, she grew strong. But it is nothing. We are safe. For, ha! Ha! Have we not a son? And is not our son, well-beloved Conrad, the future duke?

"Now time has come to go to my brother Ulrich. The cares of state do tire him, therefore he wills that you shall come to him and be already duke in act, though not yet in name. Your servants are ready - you must journey to-night.

"Now listen well. Remember every word I say. There is a law as old as Germany, that if any woman sit for a single instant in the great ducal chair before she has been absolutely crowned in presence of the people - she shall die! So remember my words. Pronounce your judgments from the Premier's chair, which stands at the foot of the throne. Do this until you are crowned and safe."

The conversation ended. The tears of the gentle-natured girl could not move the old lord of Klugenstein. And so, at last, with a heavy heart, she saw the castle gates close behind her, and found herself riding away in the darkness surrounded by her vassals and servants.

The old baron sat silent for many minutes after his daughter's departure, and then he turned to his sad wife and said:

"Dame, it is three months since I sent the handsome Count Detzin on his devilish mission to my brother's daughter Constance. If he fails we shall be not wholly safe, but if he succeeds our girl will be a duchess!

CHAPTER 8

CHAPTER TWO

Six days after these events the brilliant capital of the Duchy of Brandenburg greeted Conrad, the young heir to the crown. The old duke's heart was full of happiness, for Conrad's handsome person had won his love at once. The great halls of the palace were crowded with nobles, who welcomed Conrad bravely; and so bright and happy did all things seem, that he felt his fears and sorrows passing away.

But in a distant apartment of the palace a scene of a different nature was taking place. By a window stood the duke's only child, the Lady Constance. Her eyes were red and swollen, and full of tears. She was alone.

"The villain Detzin is gone - has fled the dukedom!" she said aloud. "I could not believe it at first, but, alas! It is too true. And I loved him so. I dared to love him though I knew the duke, my father, would never let me marry him. I loved him - but now I hate him! With all my soul I hate him! Oh what is to become of me? I am lost, lost, lost! I shall go mad!"

CHAPTER THREE

A few months passed. All men praised the young Conrad's government and the old duke soon gave everything into his hands. But, strangely enough, Conrad was not happy. For he saw that the Princess Constance had begun to love him! The love of the rest of the world was happy fortune for him, but this love was dangerous! And he saw, moreover, that the delighted duke had discovered his daughter's passion and was already dreaming of a marriage. Every day the deep sadness that had been in the princess's face faded away; every day hope and animation shone brighter from her eye.

Conrad was terrified. He bitterly cursed himself for having yielded to the instinct that had made him seek the companionship of one of his own sex when he was new and a stranger in the place - when he was sorrowful and needed sympathy. He now began to avoid his cousin. But this only made matters worse, for, naturally enough, the more he avoided her the more she came his way. The girl haunted him; she hunted him; she met him at all times and in all places, in the night as well as in the day. There was surely a mystery somewhere.

This could not go on forever. All the world was talking about it. The duke was beginning to look perplexed. Poor Conrad was becoming a ghost through fear and distress. One day as he was coming out from a private anteroom near the picture gallery Constance confronted him, and

seizing both his hands in hers, exclaimed:

"Oh, why do you avoid me? What have I done - what have I said, to lose your kind opinion of me - for surely I had it once? Conrad, do not despise me, but pity a tortured heart! I cannot, cannot hold the words unspoken longer, or they will kill me - I love you, Conrad! There, despise me if you must!"

Conrad was speechless. Constance hesitated a moment, and then, misinterpreting his silence, she flung her arms about his neck and said:

"You can love me - you will love me! Oh, say you will, my own, my worshipped Conrad!"

Conrad groaned aloud. He thrust the poor girl from him, and cried:

"You know not what you say! It is forever and ever impossible!" And then he fled like a criminal, leaving the princess in the gallery, A minute afterward she was crying and sobbing there, and Conrad was crying and sobbing in his chamber. Both were in despair.

By and by Constance rose slowly to her feet and moved away, saying:

"He was despising my love at the very moment that I thought it was melting his cruel heart! I hate him! I hate him!"

CHAPTER FOUR

Time passed on. Sadness rested once more upon the countenance of the good duke's daughter. She and Conrad were seen together no more now. The duke grieved at this. But as the weeks passed Conrad's color came to his cheeks, and his old-time liveliness to his eye, and he administered the government with wisdom.

But soon a strange whisper began to be heard about the palace. It grew louder; it spread farther. The gossips of the city got hold of it. It swept the dukedom. And this is what the whisper said:

"The Lady Constance has given birth to a child!"

When the lord of Klugenstein heard it he shouted: "Long live Duke Conrad! - For so, his crown is sure from this day forward! Detzin has fulfilled his mission well, and he shall be rewarded!"

CHAPTER FIVE

THE FRIGHTFUL CATASTROPHE

The time of the trial came. All the great lords and barons of Brandenburgh were assembled in the Hall of Justice in the ducal palace. No space was left unoccupied where there was room for a spectator to stand or sit. Conrad, clad in purple and ermine, sat in the Premier's chair, and on either side sat the great judges of the dukedom. The old duke had commanded that his daughter should be tried without any favor, and then had gone to his bed broken-hearted. His days were numbered. Poor Conrad had begged not to be made the judge of his cousin's crime, but in vain.

The saddest heart in all that great assembly was in Conrad's breast.

The gladdest was in his father's, for unknown to his daughter "Conrad," the old Baron Klugenstein had come, and was among the crowd of nobles.

The Lord Chief Justice said: "Prisoner, stand forth!"

The unhappy princess rose, and stood before the great assembly. The Lord Chief Justice continued:

"Most noble lady, before the great judges of this dukedom you have been accused and proved guilty of having given birth to a child out of holy wedlock and by our ancient law the penalty for this crime is death. Now listen to this Grace the acting duke, our good Lord Conrad, who will pronounce his solemn sentence."

Conrad stood up, looked at the princess and the tears came into his eyes. He opened his lips to speak, but the Lord Chief Justice said quickly:

"Not there, your Grace, not there! It is not lawful to pronounce judgment upon any of the ducal family except from the ducal throne!"

A shudder went to the heart of poor Conrad. He had not been crowned! He hesitated and turned pale with fear. But it must be done. Wondering eyes were already upon him. They would be suspicious eyes if he hesitated longer. He ascended the throne and said:

"Prisoner, in the name of our sovereign Lord Ulrich, Duke of Brandenburg, listen to what I am going to say. By the ancient law of the land, unless you name the partner of your guilt, you must surely die. Take this opportunity - save yourself while yet you may. Name the father of your child!"

Silence fell upon the great court - a silence so deep that men could hear their own hearts beat. Then the princess slowly turned, with eyes gleaming with hate, and pointing her finger straight at Conrad, said:

At these words Conrad's heart sank. What power on earth could save him! To disprove the charge he must reveal that he was a woman, and for an uncrowned woman to sit in the ducal chair was death! At one and the same moment he and his old father fainted and fell to the ground.

The remainder of this thrilling story will not be found in this or any other publication, either now or at any future time.

The truth is, I have got my hero (or heroine) into such a difficult situation that I do not see how I am ever going to get him (or her) out of it again, and therefore I will wash my hands of the whole business, and leave that person to get out the best possible way - or else stay there. I thought it was going to be easy enough to overcome the difficulty but I think different now.

Tables d'hote at the great Schweitzerhof were a variety of nationalities, but they offered a better opportunity to observe costumes than peoples, for the guests sat at immensely long tables, and therefore the faces were mainly seen in perspective, but the breakfasts were served at small round tables, and then if one had the opportunity to get a table in the middle of the hall he could have as many faces to study as he could desire. We used to try to guess out the nationalities, and generally succeeded rather well. Sometimes we tried to guess people's names, but that was a failure; that is a thing which probably requires a good deal of practice. We presently dropped it and gave out efforts to less difficult particulars. One morning I said:

"There is an American party."

"Yes - but name the state."

I named one state, Harris named another. We agreed upon one thing, however - that the young girl in the party was very beautiful, and very tastefully dressed. But we disagreed as to her age. I said she was eighteen, Harris said she was twenty. The dispute between us became warm, and I finally said, with a pretence of being in

earnest:

"Well, there is one way to settle the matter - I will go and ask her."

Harris said, sarcastically, "Certainly, that is the thing to do. All you need to do is to use the common formula over here: go and say, 'I'm an American!' Of course she will be glad to see you."

Then he hinted that perhaps there was no great danger of my speaking to her.

I said, "I was only talking - I didn't intend to approach her, but I see that you do not know what a fearless person I am. I am not afraid of any woman that walks. I will go and speak to this young girl."

The thing I had in my mind was not difficult. I meant to address her in the most respectful way and ask her to pardon me if her strong resemblance to a former acquaintance of mine was deceiving me; and when she should reply that the name I mentioned was not the name she bore, I meant to beg pardon again, most respectfully, and go away. There would be no harm done. I walked to her table, bowed to the gentleman, then turned to her and was about to begin my little speech when she exclaimed:

"I knew I wasn't mistaken - I told John it was you! John said probably wasn't, but I knew I was right. I said you would recognize me immediately and come up; and I'm glad you did, for I shouldn't have felt much flattered if you had gone out of this room without recognizing me. Sit down, sit down - how strange it is - you are the last person I was ever

expecting to see again."

This was very surprising. It took my wits clear away, for an instant. However, we shook hands cordially all around, and I sat down. But truly this was the tightest place I ever was in. I seemed to vaguely remember the girl's face, now, but I had no idea where I had seen it before, or what the girl's name was. I immediately tried to talk about Swiss scenery, to keep her from dangerous topics that might show that I did not know her, but it was of no use, she went right along upon matters which interested her more:

"Oh dear, what a night that was, when the sea washed the forward boats away - do you remember it?" "Oh, don't I!" said I - but I didn't.

"And don't you remember how frightened poor Mary was, and how she cried?"

"Indeed I do!" said I. "Dear me, how it all comes back!"

I wished it would come back - but my memory was a blank. The wise way would have been to confess frankly; but I could not bring myself to do that, after the young girl had praised me so for recognizing her; so I went on, deeper and deeper into the mire, hoping for a chance clue but never getting one. The Unrecognizable continued:

"Do you know, George married Mary, after all?"

"Indeed he did. He said he did not believe she was half as much to blame as her father was, and I thought he was right. Didn't you?"

"Of course he was. It was a perfectly clear case. I always said so."

"Why, no you didn't! At least that summer."

"Oh, no, not that summer. No, you are perfectly right about that. It was the following winter that I said it."

"Well, as it turned out, Mary was not in the least to blame - it was all her father's fault - at least his and old Darley's."

It was necessary to say something - so I said:

"I always considered Darley to be a troublesome old thing."

"So he was, but they always had a great affection for him, although he had so many eccentricities. You remember that when the weather was the least cold, he would try to come into the house."

I was rather afraid to go on. It was clear that Darley was not a man - he must be some kind of animal - possibly a dog, maybe an elephant. However, tails are common to all animals, so I dared to say:

"And what a tail he had!"

"One! He had a thousand!"

This was confusing. I did not quite know what to say, and only thought:

"Is it possible she is going to stop there, and wait for me to speak? If she does, the conversation is blocked. This is a topic which a person cannot talk upon easily and instructively without more or less preparation."

But here, to my gratitude, she interrupted my thoughts by saying:

"The Negro's own quarters were comfortable enough, but when the weather was cold, the family were sure to have his company - nothing could keep him out of the house. But they always liked him because he had saved Tom's life, years before. You remember Tom?"

"Oh, perfectly. Fine fellow he was, too."

"Yes, he was. And what a pretty little thing his child was!"

"You may well say that. I never saw a prettier child."

"I used to delight to pet it and play with it."

"You named it. What was that name? I can't call it to mind."

O God! I would have given something to know what the child's sex was. However, I had the good luck to think of a name that would fit either sex - so I said:

"I named it Frances."

"From a relative, I suppose? But you named the one that died, too - one that I never saw. What did you call that one?"

I was out of neutral names, but as the child was dead and she had never seen it, I thought I might risk a name for it and be lucky. Therefore I said:

"I called that one Thomas Henry."

"That is very strange... very strange."

I sat still. I was in a good deal of trouble, but I believed everything would be all right if she wouldn't ask me to name any more children. I wondered where the lightning was going to strike next. She was still thinking over the last child's name and said:

"I have always been sorry you were away at the time - I would have had you name my child."

"Your child! Are you married?"

"I have been married thirteen years."

"Christened, you mean."

"No, married. The youth by your side is my son."

"It seems impossible. I do not mean any harm by it, but would you mind telling me if you are over eighteen? - that is to say, will you tell me how old you are?"

"I was just nineteen the day of the storm we were talking about. That was my birthday."

That did not help much, as I did not know the date of the storm. I was about to say, "You haven't changed a bit since then" - but that was risky. I thought of saying, "You have improved ever so much since then" - but that wouldn't answer, of course. I was about to say something of the weather, for a saving change, when the girl exclaimed:

"How I have enjoyed this talk over those happy old times - haven't you?"

"I never have spent such a half-hour in all my life before!" said I, with emotion; and I could have added, that was very

near to truth. I was about to make my good-byes and get out, when the girl said:

"But there is one thing that is ever so puzzling to me."

"That dead child's name. What did you say it was?"

But I had forgotten the child's name: I hadn't imagined it would be needed again. However, I had to pretend to know, anyway, so I said:

The boy at my side corrected me, and said:

I thanked him - in words - and said, with alarm:

"O yes,- I was thinking of another child that I named - I have named a great many, and I get them confused - this one was named Henry Thompson."

"Thomas Henry," calmly said the boy.

I thanked him again - strictly in words - and stammered out:

"Thomas Henry - yes - Thomas Henry was the poor child's name. I named him for Thomas - er - Thomas Carlyle, the great author, you know - and Henry - er - er - Henry the Eighth. The parents were very grateful to have a child named Thomas Henry."

"That makes it more strange than ever," murmured my beautiful friend.

"Because when the parents speak of that child now, they always call it Susan Amelia."

That's done it. I could not say anything: to go further would be to lie, and that I would not do; so I simply sat still and suffered. In a minute the enemy laughed a happy laugh and said:

"I have enjoyed this talk over old times, but you have not. I saw very soon that you were only pretending to know me, so I made up my mind to punish you. And I have succeeded pretty well. I was glad to see that you knew George and Tom and Darley, for I had never heard of them before and therefore could not be sure that you had; and I was glad to learn the names of those imaginary children too. One can get a lot of information out of you if one goes at it cleverly. Mary and the storm, and the forward boats washed away, were facts - all the rest was fiction. Mary was my sister; her full name was Mary - Now do you remember me?"

"Yes," I said, "I do remember you now; and you are as hard-hearted as you were thirteen years ago in that ship, else you wouldn't have punished me so. You haven't changed your nature nor your person, in any way at all; you look just as young as you did then, you are just as beautiful as you were then. Well, I am defeated and confess it."

When I went back to Harris, I said:

"Now you see what a clever and talented person can do."

"Excuse me, I see what a person of colossal ignorance and simplicity can do. The idea of your going to a party of strangers, that way, and talking for half an hour; why, I never heard of a man in his right mind doing such a thing

before. What did you say to them?"

"I never said any harm. I only asked the girl what her name was."

"I don't doubt it. Upon my word I don't. I think you were capable of it. It was stupid of me to let you go over there and make such an exhibition of yourself. But you know I couldn't really believe you would do such an inexcusable thing. What will those people think of us? But how did you say it? - I mean the manner of it. I hope you were not impolite."

"No, I was careful about that. I said, my friend and I would like to know what your name is, if you don't mind."

"No, that was not impolite. And I am glad you put me in. What did she do?"

"She didn't do anything in particular. She told me her name."

"Simply told you her name. Do you mean to say she did not show any surprise?"

"Well, now I come to think, she did show something; maybe it was surprise; I hadn't thought of that."

"Oh, undoubtedly you hadn't. Then what did you do?"

"I offered my hand and the party gave me a shake."

"I saw it! I did not believe my own eyes, at the time. Did the gentleman say anything about cutting your throat?"

"No, they all seemed glad to see me, as far as I could judge."

"And do you know, I believe they were. I think they said to themselves, 'Doubtless this curiosity has got away from his keeper - let us amuse ourselves with him.' Then you sat down. Did they ask you to sit down?"

"No, they did not ask me, but I suppose they did not think of it."

"You have an unmistakable instinct. What else did you do? What did you talk about?"

"Well, I asked the girl how old she was."

"Undoubtedly. Your delicacy is beyond praise. Go on, go on - she told you her age?"

"Yes, she told me her age, and all about her mother, and her grandmother, and her other relatives, and all about herself."

"This is excellent. Go on - it is not possible that you forgot to inquire into her politics?"

"No, I thought of that. She is a democrat, her husband is a republican, and both of them are Baptists."

"Her husband? Is that child married?"

"She is not a child. She is married, and that is her husband who is there with her."

"Has she any children?"

"Yes - seven and a half."

"That is impossible."

"No, she has them. She told me herself."

"Well, but seven and a half? How do you make out of the half? Where does the half come in?"

"There is a child which she had by another husband - not this one but another one - so it is a stepchild, and they do not count it full measure."

"Another husband? Has she had another husband?"

"Yes, four. This one is number four."

"I don't believe a word of it. It is impossible, upon its face. Is that boy there her brother?"

"No, that is her son. He is her youngest. He is not as old as he looks; he is only eleven and a half."

"These things are all absolutely impossible. But all right. Are they going to stay here long?"

"No, they leave before noon."

"There is one man who is deeply grateful for that. How did you find out? You asked, I suppose?"

"No, at first I inquired into their plans, in a general way, and they were going to be here a week and make trips round about; but toward the end of the interview, when I said you and I would tour around with them with pleasure, and offered to introduce you, they hesitated a little, and asked if you were from the same establishment that I was. I said you were, and then they said they had changed their mind and considered it necessary to start at once and visit a sick relative in Siberia."

"Ah, me, they wanted to know if I was from the same 'establishment that you came from, did they? What did they mean by 'establishment'?"

"I don't know; it never occurred to me to ask."

"Well, I know. They mean an asylum - an idiot asylum, do you understand? So they think there's a pair of us, after all. Now what do you think of yourself?"

"Well, I don't know. I didn't know I was doing any harm; I didn't mean to do any harm. They were very nice people, and they seemed to like me."

Harris made some rude remark and left for his bedroom - to break some furniture, he said. He was an easily irritated man; any little thing would disturb his temper.

The young woman had made fun of me, but no matter, to revenge myself I made fun of Harris.

This establishment's name is Hochberghaus. It is in Bohemia, a short day's journey from Vienna, and being in the Austrian Empire is, of course, a health resort. The empire is made up of health resorts; it distributes health to the whole world. Its waters are all medicinal. They are bottled and sent throughout the earth; the natives themselves drink beer. This is of course self-sacrifice - but foreigners who have drunk Vienna beer have another idea about it. Especially the Pilsener which one gets in a small cellar up a dark street (the name has escaped me, but the place is easily found). You inquire for the Greek church; and when you get to it, go right along by - the next house is that little beer-mill. It is far from all traffic and all noise; it

is always Sunday there. There are two small rooms, with low ceilings supported by massive arches: the arches and ceilings are whitewashed, otherwise the rooms would pass for prison cells. The furniture is simple and cheap, there is no ornamentation anywhere. But the beer there is incomparable; there is nothing like it elsewhere in the world. In the first room you will find twelve or fifteen ladies and gentlemen of civilian quality; in the other one a dozen generals and ambassadors. One may live in Vienna many months and not hear of this place; but having once heard of it he will always visit it.

However, this is all incidental, it has nothing to do with my subject. My subject is health resorts. All unhealthy people ought to stand in Vienna, and use that as a base, making flights from time to time to the outlying resorts, according to need. A flight to Marienbad to get rid of fat; a flight to Carlsbad to get rid of rheumatism; a flight to Kaltenleutgeben to take the water cure and get rid of the rest of the diseases.

And there are plenty of other health resorts at your service and convenient to get at from Vienna; charming places, all of them; Vienna sits in the center of a beautiful world of mountains with now and then a lake and forests; in fact, no other city is so fortunately situated.

There are more than enough of health resorts, as I have said. Among them this place - Hochberghaus. It stands alone on the top of a wooded mountain, and is a building of great size. It is called the Appetite Anstalt, and people who have lost their appetites come here to get them restored.

When I arrived I was taken by Professor Haimberger to his consulting-room and questioned:

"It is six o'clock. When did you eat last?"

"What was on the table?"

"Chops, chickens, vegetables, and so on?"

"Yes, but don't mention them - I can't bear it."

"Are you tired of them?"

"Oh, completely. I wish I might never hear of them again."

"The mere sight of food offends you, does it?"

"More, it revolts me."

The doctor thought for a short time, then got out a long menu and ran his eye slowly down it.

"I think," said he, "that what you need to eat is - but here, choose for yourself."

I glanced at the list, and shuddered. Of all the barbarous dishes that were ever mentioned in the menu these were the worst. At the top stood "tough, underdone tripe, garnished with garlic"; half-way down the bill stood "young cat; old cat; scrambled cat"; at the bottom stood "sailor-boots, softened with tallow - served raw." The wide intervals of the bill were packed with dishes which could insult a cannibal. I said:

"Doctor, it is not honest to joke over so serious a case as mine. I came here to get an appetite, not to throw away what's left."

He said, seriously, "I am not joking; why should I joke?"

"But I can't eat these horrors."

He said it with a naivete that was admirable, whether it was real or assumed.

"Why not? Because - why, doctor, for months I have seldom been able to eat anything more substantial than an omelette. These unspeakable dishes of yours -"

"Oh, you will come to like them. They are very good. And you must eat them. It is the rule of the place, and is strict. I cannot permit any departure from it."

I said, smiling: "Well, then, doctor, you will have to permit the departure of the patient. I am going."

He looked hurt, and said in a way which changed the aspect of things:

"I am sure you would not do me that injustice. This appetite cure is my whole living. If you should go forth from it with the sort of appetite which you now have, it could become known, and you can see, yourself, that people would say my cure failed in your case and hence can fail in other cases. You will not go; you will not do me this hurt."

I apologized and said I would stay.

"That is right. I was sure you would not go; it would take the food from my family's mouths."

"Would they mind that? Do they eat these barbarous things?"

"They? My family?" His eyes were full of gentle wonder.
"Of course not."

"Oh, they don't! Do you?"

"I see. It's another case of a physician who doesn't take his own medicine."

"I don't need it. It is six hours since you lunched. Will you have supper now - or later?"

"I am not hungry, but now is as good a time as any, and I would like to be done with it and have it off my mind. It is about my usual time, and regularity is commanded by all the authorities. Yes, I will try to eat a little now."

The professor handed me that hateful menu.

"Choose - or will you have it later?"

"Oh, dear me, show me to my room, I forgot your hard rule."

"Wait just a moment before you finally decide. There is another rule. If you choose now, the order will be filled at once; but if you wait, you will have to await my pleasure. You cannot get a dish from that bill until I give my permission."

"All right. Show me to my room, and send the cook to bed; there is not going to be any hurry."

The professor took me up one flight of stairs and showed me into a most inviting and comfortable apartment consisting of parlor, bedchamber, and bath-room.

The front windows looked out over green valleys and hills clothed with forests - a noble solitude of the world. In the parlor were many shelves filled with books. The professor said he would now leave me to myself; and added:

"Smoke and read as much as you please, drink all the water you like. When you get hungry, ring and give your order, and I will decide whether it shall be filled or not. Yours is a stubborn, bad case, and I think the first fourteen dishes in the bill are each and all too delicate for its needs. I ask you as a favor to restrain yourself and not call for them."

"Restrain myself, is it? Give yourself no uneasiness. You are going to save money by me. The idea of restoring a sick man's appetite with this food is clear madness."

I said it with bitterness, for I felt outraged by this calm, cold talk over these heartless new engines of assassination. The doctor looked sad, but not offended. He laid the bill of fare on the commode at my bed's head, "so that it would be handy," and said:

"Yours is not the worst case I have met with by any means: still it is a bad one and requires serious treatment; therefore I shall be delightful if you will restrain yourself and begin with No. 15."

Then he left me and I began to undress, for I was dog-tired and very sleepy. I slept fifteen hours and woke up finely refreshed at ten the next morning. Vienna coffee! It was the first think I thought of - coffee, compared with which all other European coffee and all American hotel coffee is

mere fluid poverty. I rang, and ordered it; also Vienna bread, that delicious invention. The servant spoke through the door and said - but you know what he said. He referred me to the bill of fare. I allowed him to go - I had no further use for him.

After the bath I dressed and started for a walk, and got as far as the door. It was locked on the outside. I rang and the servant came and explained that it was another rule. The patient was allowed to get out only after the first meal. I had not been very anxious to get out before; but it was different now. Being locked in makes a person wishful to get out. I soon began to find it difficult to put in the time. At two o'clock I had been twenty-six hours without food. I had been growing hungry for some time; I recognized that I was not only hungry now, but hungry with a strong adjective in front of it. Yet I was not hungry enough to face the bill of fare.

I must put in the time somehow. I shall read and smoke. I did it; hour by hour. The books were all of one kind - shipwrecks; people lost in deserts; people shut up in caved-in mines, people starving in besieged cities. I read about all the disgusting dishes that ever famishing men had stayed their hunger with. During the first hours these things nauseated me; hours followed in which they did not so affect me; still other hours followed in which I found myself smacking my lips over some infernal messes. When I had been without food forty-five hours I ran eagerly to the bell and ordered the second dish in the bill, which was a sort of dumplings containing a compost made of caviar and

tar.

It was refused me. During the next fifteen hours I rang the bell every now and then and ordered a dish that was further down the list. Always a refusal. But I was conquering prejudice after prejudice right along; I was making sure progress; I was moving slowly up to No. 15 with deadly certainty, and my heart beat faster and faster, my hopes rose higher and higher.

At last when food had not passed my lips for sixty hours, victory was mine, and I ordered No. 15:

"Soft-boiled spring chicken - in the egg; six dozen, hot and fragrant!"

In fifteen minutes it was there; and the doctor along with it, rubbing his hands with joy. He said with great excitement:

"It's a cure, it's a cure! I knew I could do it. Dear sir, my grand system never fails - never. You've got your appetite back - you know you have; say it and make me happy."

"Bring on your carrion - I can eat anything in the bill!"

"Oh, this is noble, this is splendid - but I knew I could do it, the system never fails. How are the birds?"

"Never was anything so delicious in the world; and yet as a rule I don't care for game. But don't interrupt me, don't - I can't spare my mouth, I really can't."

Then the doctor said:

"The cure is perfect. There is no more doubt nor danger. Let the poultry alone; I can trust you with a beefsteak now."

The beefsteak came - as much as a basketful of it - with potatoes, and Vienna bread and coffee; and I ate a meal then that was worth all the costly preparation I had made for it. And dropped tears of gratitude on the beefsteak all the time - gratitude of the doctor for putting a little plain common sense into me when I had been empty of it so many, many years.

Ask the teacher

Notes, doubts and favourite lines to take to your next class:

© Apex English · alunos.apexenglish.com.br