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*"MORE WATER GLIDETH BY THE MILL  
THAN WOTS THE MILLER OF."*

# A CLUB



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**A CLUB**





” ” A CLUB ” ”  
“*An assembly of good fellows*”

BY  
ONE OF THE MEMBERS

Joseph S. Overbach

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## A CLUB

In memory of long, unbroken comradeship with fine fellows and beautiful streams and woods and fields, this rambling journey is affectionately inscribed as the tribute of the lover to them all.



## A CLUB

An assembly of good fellows.—*Dr. Johnson's Dictionary.*

NOT far from the confusion and exactions of the great city, out amid the oaks and pines of Long Island, that grow big and stately enough if given elbow-room for air and sunshine, are the many acres to which we are to journey together. They belong, some of the uninitiated say, to a club, though really no club, in the popular acceptation of the word, has anything to do with their ownership. Rather are they the priceless possession of a few men bound together by ties of fellowship, the like of which it would not be worth while for one to set out in search of, unless prepared to go to the ends of the earth—and even then without much likelihood of success. Therefore,

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if now and then I do call this organization a Club, you will understand that I have in mind some such picture or memory as Dr. Johnson must have had, when he defined a club to be "An assembly of good fellows"; always provided that this sturdy, genuine scholar and man, when he wrote *good fellows* meant fine fellows, the best fellows.

Even though you have heard of this Club or have visited it, you may nevertheless profit by this rambling journey we are to make together, if you care for God's best handiwork in the fashioning of men and of bright skies and woods and fields and streams. For as the interpreter, if he be the true lover of them, can point out in rare pictures, or books, or other treasures, some hidden beauties not apparent to the casual glance, so you may learn from me something new of the engaging men and the living things here.

At the outset take it for granted that this Club has to ordinary Clubdom a relation which Bohemia has to places where men sordidly grub for mere money and I might add mere fame; for fame can be so full of alloy that it is all but counterfeit. To understand whether my

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illustration be good or bad, you must of course know how far apart Bohemia and such other places are. And inasmuch as no one has measured the distance more accurately than has John Boyle O'Reilly, let us take him for our authority.

## IN BOHEMIA

I'd rather live in Bohemia than in any other land;  
For only there are the values true,  
And the laurels gathered in all men's view.  
The prizes of traffic and state are won  
By shrewdness or force or by deeds undone;  
But fame is sweeter without the feud,  
And the wise of Bohemia are never shrewd.  
Here, pilgrims stream with a faith sublime  
From every class and clime and time,  
Aspiring only to be enrolled  
With the names that are writ in the book of gold;  
And each one bears in mind or hand  
A palm of the dear Bohemian land.  
The scholar first with his book—a youth  
Aflame with the glory of harvested truth;  
A girl with a picture, a man with a play,  
A boy with a wolf he has modeled in clay;  
A smith with a marvelous hilt and sword,  
A player, a king, a plowman, a lord—  
And the player is king when the door is past.  
The plowman is crowned, and the lord is last!  
I'd rather fail in Bohemia than win in another land;  
There are no titles inherited there,  
No hoard or hope for the brainless heir;  
No gilded dullard native born  
To stare at his fellow with leaden scorn:

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Bohemia has none but adopted sons;  
Its limits, where Fancy's bright stream runs;  
Its honours, not garnered for thrift or trade,  
But for beauty and truth men's souls have made.  
To the empty heart in a jeweled breast.  
There is value, maybe, in a purchased crest;  
But the thirsty of soul soon learn to know  
The moistureless froth of the social show;  
The vulgar sham of the pompous feast  
Where the heaviest purse is the highest priest;  
The organized charity, scrimped and iced,  
In the name of a cautious, statistical Christ;  
The smile restrained, the respectable cant,  
When a friend in need is a friend in want;  
Where the only aim is to keep afloat,  
And a brother may drown with a cry in his  
throat.  
Oh, I long for the glow of a kindly heart and the  
grasp of a friendly hand,  
And I'd rather live in Bohemia than in any other  
land.

Well that has a generous swing to it you must admit, as we re-hear the lines. Doubtless Emerson would have considered O'Reilly very low in the poetic scale, for even Poe was to him only the "jingle" poet; and Shelley too we recall came under his ban. We need not, however, be concerned about a defense of either of them, for they stand now on a pinnacle before which all men do homage. Yet we are all entitled to have for such transgressions in judgment an irritation, not unlike that which



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Horace expressed over the occasional poetic nap of Homer.

Nevertheless, the haven and refuge I am speaking of is better than all Bohemia; for Bohemia is on the border land if not within the province of Fame or Devil-caredom, and is often the resort of the notables or the *Boulevardiers* of life; while this place to which we are journeying, and within which, if you have just a bit of fancy, you have already arrived, is divided only by an imaginary line from the fields of pure content.

By the way, a friend of mine a physician of this City, ripe now in wisdom and professional distinction, told me of an experience of his with O'Reilly which may have some passing interest. The two were rooming together in Boston, where one was ministering to the body diseased and the other, by editorial work to the mind in need of journalistic nourishment, which O'Reilly, in his best moments, could furnish abundantly. The young physician, had for some slight frivolity, been unceremoniously turned out of a noted sea-food restaurant in Boston by its proprietor, a crusty, uncompromising old bachelor. He thereupon besought O'Reilly to pour

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out a few vials of newspaper wrath upon the head of such a tyrant; but O'Reilly devised a more subtle punishment. Accordingly, day by day, when walking in company to their offices, they would stop for a moment when passing the restaurant and say in unison, "The Lord damn . . . . . ." One day, on arriving there and finding it temporarily closed and crêpe on the door, O'Reilly's comment was: "Well, you see my plan was the better, for our petition has been granted and the Lord has damned him."

I have told you how far away this Club is from Clubdom, but it is still further from the world of affairs. If I were to attempt to tell you how far it, as well as the rest of the self-respecting God-fearing world, is from the world of the unseemly professional Turkey Trot,—where, to use the suggestive current phrase, the modern girl is more danced against than dancing—I might be obliged to have recourse to the language of the astronomer, when giving the distance of the earth from the fixed stars, and state it in so many "Light years." Perhaps the mother, engrossed in duties or pleasures, often fails to notice how treacherously slippery is the floor and how unwholesome the atmos-

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phere of this dance frenzy and orgy, or appreciate what little effort the man-milliner and social rounder over there would really put forth to save that daughter from a fall—if amid such surroundings she grow giddy with the whirl and lose her footing.

Well, you may be right in thinking all this the occasion for the jeremiad and anathema of the preacher, and the sneer and paradox of the cynic, and not a matter for me to be venture-some enough to express opinions about. Yet if observation counts for much, some of these professional censors are so inclined to the superlative in expression, that not everything they may have to say is always accepted at its face value. Or again, they grow drowsy on their watch, and, now and then, it may well be the privilege of the layman to volunteer as a sentinel in the outposts.

Whether among the members of this guild—or Club, if you will have it so—there are men of distinction in the professions and in business, no one knows or cares once its waters and woods and fields greet the eye and ear and the thresholds of its doors are crossed. No one here is

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catalogued as a human ledger with entries on the credit side of only fame or fortune, gained at the sacrifice of much that is worth while in the world; though with such a debit side of ungratified joy, that the balance, when struck, gives warning that the life recorded there is all but bankrupt.

Therefore they are hospitable, and you, though the stranger within their gates, will be permitted to know the indefinable charm of this miniature world set apart as it is from the rest of man's work and God's work—where there is wholesome contempt for much that never can have aught in common with such a place of delight. Surely if at all responsive to the appeal which the best of mankind and of nature is making to us all—though many of us unfortunately have such poor hearing—you will have some faint notion of the obligation you are under, at being asked to make this visit with me, once you have really learned of these men and of their possessions here.

There are, however, some suggestions you must not fail to give heed to, if you would be quite welcome and profit by your visit. You

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are not to consider yourself as on parade, or strive to be scintillating, or the central figure in this democracy of equals. Even though filled to overflowing with the brilliant remark, keep it for some one who will appreciate it better than would these men, at least while here. Or if it be really clever, keep it for them at other times and places where amid the ordinary, earthy things of life it will be ensured a hospitable hearing. You might spend no end of time within these old walls, with their old fittings and associations, and hallowed memories, yet not hear the egotistic speech, the story announced at the outset to be "funny" or the attempt to air one's importance or knowledge. Anecdoteage need not expect to win prizes in this place. Modesty holds court here, and the spirit of the injunction of the father to the son starting off for his journey into the world, not to show his gold watch until he was asked what time it was, is part of our unwritten constitution. And when the member is asked for information you will notice how unostentatiously it is forthcoming.

Still you must not for a moment consider that there is lack of wit or of its appreciation

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among these men; quite the contrary, or they would not be as they are, men of such superior judgment. For, rightly interpreted, are not wit and judgment companion traits and but different manifestations of a knowledge of the wise things of the world? To end all doubt on the subject, read the brilliant chapter of one of the great books of the world, past, present or to come—Sterne's "digression" in *Tristram Shandy*, on the two "heavenly emanations," the two "ornamental knobs of the chair." You will find there, too, as satisfactory evidence as anywhere else in his writings, the genius of this man whom many in this day and generation have forgotten or else with whom, to their loss and shame, they have never become acquainted.

In this refuge from boredom there are no such exhibitions of the vanity and selfishness Swift refers to:

For instance, nothing is more generally exploded than the folly of talking too much; yet I rarely remember to have seen five people together where some one among them hath not been predominant in that kind, to the great constraint and disgust of all the rest. But among such as deal in multitudes of words, none are comparable to the sober, deliberate talker, who proceedeth with much thought and caution, maketh his preface, brancheth out into

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several digressions, findeth a hint that putteth him in mind of another story, which he proceedeth to tell you when this is done; cometh back regularly to his subject, cannot readily call to mind some persons, holdeth his head; complaineth of his memory; the whole company all the while in suspense; at length, says he, it is no matter, and so goes on. And to crown the business it perhaps proveth at last a story the company hath heard fifty times before; at best some insipid adventure of the relator.

As we hear such words, we are entitled to have the comforting thought that we may be wrong in our misgivings as to the time present—seeing that in some respects at least, the seventeenth century was not radically different from the twentieth. May it not well be that many a modern-day tendency in our political and social life, regarded by us as an new disease, is but a new symptom of an incurable disease as old and likely to continue as long as the hills? Perhaps Gilbert, of Gilbert-Sullivan fame, was right in putting on his “list” the one (characterized by him as the idiot, if I remember rightly)

who praises with enthusiastic tone  
All centuries but this and every country but his own.

Let me tell you something else of this place, which you will cease to be incredulous about,

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or surprised at, if ever you become one of us. We shall not be unaccompanied in our journey. Wherever we go together there will be with us the cheery spirit of many a former member—permitted to come back from the majority he has joined, whenever upon the lips or in the thoughts of a friend and companion of his life here in days of old his memory is recalled. Why, the members who still fish and talk and play here in earthly fashion, knowing full well how limited the loss was to be, did not even mourn as those without hope, at the passing out of their lives of these others. The tears and the sighs were few because the living knew that the separation was not to be real, as understood by the uninitiated. If these others were to leave a void here, there would be quite a different story to tell. We know, however, that when they cease to come again by train or motor-car, they will yet come in other fashion—on the winds and in all other ways congenial to those who people the spirit world. There is merely to be a change in the order of the coming of those who go away, to become—suppose we say *non-resident* members.

There is nothing so strange that in our com-



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pany are to be these others; for how many of the ghostly beings, whose dwelling-place is the world of our thoughts, have ever lived at all save in the minds of gifted, inspired men? Without much tax upon your memory, you can call the long roll of such creations of the imagination; and without them as our companions day by day we do not really live our lives.

Do you have in mind Lamb's *Dream Children*? Well, if not, at the first opportunity take the volume from the library shelf or the unvisited garret or wherever else you may be able to come across it, and after ridding it of the accumulated dust read the little story again. Then if you will not believe and know that his dream children were real children, as real as was his "fair Alice," you may be sure we shall have made this journey together in vain.

You recall how, after Colonel Newcome has answered "Adsum" as his name was called and stands in the presence of the Master—and the story is all told—Thackeray adds:

As I write the last line with a rather sad heart, Pendennis and Laura, and Ethel and Olive fade away into Fableland. I hardly know whether they are not true; whether they do not live near us some-

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where. They were alive and I heard their voices; but five minutes since I was touched by their grief;

and keeps "a lingering hold of your hand and bids you farewell with a kind heart."

Yes, Thackeray was right if he believed that they had lived, and wrong if he doubted it; for to us they have just as much lived as has he himself, who is of the immortals only in the creations of his own genius.

Have you had the good fortune to read the touching, exquisite tribute of Barrie to Meredith?

All morning there had been a little gathering of people outside the gate. It was the day on which Mr. Meredith was to be, as they say, buried. He had been, as they say, cremated. The funeral coach came, and a very small thing was placed in it and covered with flowers. One plant of the wall-flower in the garden would have covered it. The coach, followed by a few others, took the road to Dorking, where, in a familiar phrase, the funeral was to be, and in a moment or two all seemed silent and deserted, the cottage, the garden, and Box Hill.

The cottage was not deserted, as They knew who now trooped in to the round in front of it, their eyes on the closed door. They were the mighty company, his children, Lucy and Clara and Rhoda and Diana and Rosa and Old Mel and Roy Richmond and Adrian and Sir Willoughby and a hundred others, and they stood in line against the box-wood, waiting for him to come out. Each of his

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proud women carried a flower, and the hands of all his men were ready for the salute.

What a rebuke are such words for our dullness of vision!

How much more then, can we be said to continue in the companionship of those comrades who have really lived, and who are now the haunting memories of these rooms and fields and woods and streams.

Longfellow, though not always the poet of inspiration, with his nobility of soul had often miraculous insight into things, as unseen by some of us as is the invisible side of the moon. Do we not agree with him that Burns still "haunts his native land as an immortal youth" and that "his hand guides every plow"?

Are we not sure that the spirit of Robert Emmet and of every one that has led a life of generous and self-sacrificing thought and deed is still in the world?

Do we not hear yet the echoing footsteps of Dr. Johnson, as he wanders through Fleet Street in the gloom of want, and again in the sunlight of the plenty which his talents and the absence of any taint of hypocrisy or fawning in his bluff and generous character were to win for

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him? Are not the coffee-houses there again filled with the Wits of London?

As we enter Westminster Hall does it require much draft upon the imagination to reproduce before us the great actors and spectators in that imposing drama of life, when Warren Hastings was arraigned and impeached by Edmund Burke for high crimes and misdemeanors, before the bar of English justice? Can we not believe that Macaulay—with all his love of gaudy coloring which so often caused him to fall short of the highest creative work—was enabled with his mind's eye to view as at an artist's sitting that momentous scene, before he transferred it to his brilliant canvas?

If we cross the Thames and enter the hallowed precincts of Southwark Cathedral, does not the spirit of Shakespeare come from the Globe Theatre near-by to stand with us at the tomb of his brother and of John Gower?

Are not the streets of Rome still peopled with the men who made martial conquest of the earth, and the streets of Athens with those who set standards for intellectual excellence of all time?

Does not Barrie, too, make my belief as to these absent ones of ours a sure conviction, as he

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tells how Meredith himself on that day arose and flung wide open the door of the cottage to greet the great company of his creation:

In the room on the right, in an armchair which had been his home for years—to many the throne of letters in this country—sat an old man, like one forgotten in an empty house. When the last sound of the coaches had passed away he moved in his chair. He wore gray clothes and a red tie, and his face was rarely beautiful, but the hair was white and the limbs were feeble, and the wonderful eyes dimmed, and he was hard of hearing. He moved in his chair, for something was happening to him, and it was this: old age was falling from him. This is what is meant by Death to such as he, and the company awaiting knew. His eyes became again those of the eagle, and his hair was brown, and the lustiness of youth was in his frame, but still he wore the red tie.

He rose, and not a moment did he remain within the house, for “golden lie the meadows, golden run the streams,” and “the fields and the waters shout to him golden shouts.”

Box Hill was no longer deserted. When a great man dies—and this was one of the greatest since Shakespeare—the immortals await him at the top of the nearest hill. He looked up and saw his peers. They were all young, like himself. He waved the staff in greeting. One, a mere stripling, “slight unspeakably,” R. L. S., detached himself from the others, crying gloriously, “Here’s the fellow I have been telling you about!” and ran down the hill to be the first to take his Master’s hand.

In the mean time an empty coach was rolling on to Dorking.

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Is there much doubt in the minds of any of us that there is the "Choir Invisible," and that there proceeds from it a mighty, resistless influence for the fashioning of the thoughts and the words and the deeds of men?

Perhaps you will bear with me for adding an experience of my own.

Once a child came to our household; but ill fitted for the rough, dusty highway of life, he made but a short journey along it. His days were only sufficient to enable him to know a few things, and to lisp a few words. One of the things about him which he recognized and loved—perhaps because it was of such close kinship with himself—was the butterfly, and one of the words he first learned to utter was "Butterf'y." I see him now as I have seen him all these years—as clearly as one can see through tears—with tiny foot uplifted, to descend in little emphatic stamp as he said his one big word. There came a day when, summoned to a distant city on a professional errand, the last I saw of him was as he repeated for me with that voice which was all gentle music, his Butterf'y. Alas, before my return, the spirit of that child which had come out of

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the unknown to our household as a brief resting-spot, had fluttered back to the place whence it had come.

Years went by and now the counterpart of this precious memory, another little boy of a later generation only just a bit sturdier, has come into my life. This new-comer is my good comrade. Often he takes me by the hand—much more than I can be said to take him by his hand—and we wander off in the fields together, to see the flowers and birds, and talk over a good many things which are more worth while than some of us at times realize. It is true I do most of the talking, for he does not yet talk in language that we grown-ups think the only means of communicating ideas. Yet he expresses his assent and dissent in a way clearly understood by himself and quite intelligible to me. Then if his step suggests weariness, he climbs to my shoulder and we leave the bright skies and continue our comradeship indoors. Always at some part of the play, in his own invented way outstretched on half-bent knees he hides his face from me away down among some banked-up pillows. Thereupon I am to call the roll of the places where he

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is not to be found, and he is to answer "No" with that musical, rising inflection all his own. Finally I must guess where he really is. And when—after his mouse-like silence which is confession—I find him laughing as only he can laugh, underneath a shock of golden, sunlight curls, I am quite sure then, as I often am, that something of that other child has passed into the soul and into the face of this gentle, manly and beautiful little boy.

No, it would merely be the gratification of a foolish curiosity if as you suggest I consent to be for you the biographer of these men. Moreover, there would be a limit to your patience as I extolled their virtues—while omitting their faults, though for that matter they have none worth chronicling.

I should, however, be remiss if I failed to speak of George the First (there are other Georges here, good fellows, but of course only one George the First); George Rex! George Emperor! No, there is nothing in your point that in this democratic land of ours the only ruler is an unelected boss, and that this George of ours therefore cannot have inherited his



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office but must have been elected. For though the statement be without the support of constitution or by-laws, it is nevertheless true that his term of office is unlimited. The members, voting in their own right, and as the holders of the proxies of these unseen *non-resident* members, merely go through the annual farce of perpetuating in office this man, who *is* the office. Even were he not the whole-souled fellow we all know him to be, and were he at times crusty, as he never is, it is doubtful if we should let him resign his high office, so capably does he administer it. Let me give you an illustration: In years gone by, the big pond over there would uniformly, as the season advanced, become a mass of uninviting weeds, despite the fact that the Club set many of its employees at work to pull them out and then transport them to the barnyard, to fatten the ducks kept there for that purpose. So this good old practice of the Peterkins here would doubtless have gone on till judgment day but for this President, who reasoned thus: Why always weeds to the ducks and never ducks to the weeds? So it was resolved; and if you visit us again later in the year you will witness the industrious,

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talkative snow-white "Pekins" on the pond at their task of which they never weary and from which no weed need ever expect to survive. Then, too, we still have the toothsome, fat duck for the table. There are other reasons a-plenty for our canniness as well as our sentiment, in keeping in office such a resourceful as well as a beloved administrator.

I forbear exhausting your patience with telling you of the others like him. But I am too wise to fall into the inadvertence of the writer who, desiring to sum up a like situation in brief but comprehensive fashion, had the misfortune to trifle with the imported phrase: *Ab uno disce omnes*. Unfortunately it was a quotation which ripped out of its context was made to do service never intended by the author, who was classifying the wicked by reason of the transgression of one offender. So I shall not venture out of my depth, but answer in my native and not in borrowed foreign speech dead or living, that many of the others are an approach to our George in loveableness. As planets they necessarily get some of the reflected light of his ways. Nevertheless, I may later on if the day or

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night be long enough, say a word or two to you of these others.

This quotation adventure, by the way, is not commended to the inexperienced. The cleverest sometimes fall into a trap; and lawyer-like I give you, as I shall again and again, the support of good authority.

In one of the early cases which determined the true interpretation of the commerce clause of our Federal Constitution, a distinguished advocate was seeking to persuade the Supreme Court of the United States that the decision of the Court of last resort of the State of New York was right in holding that this State had, by the statute it had enacted, properly granted exclusive rights for the navigation of the Hudson River. Momentous consequences were involved in the outcome. The federal government was insisting that any such interpretation would throttle industry, and leave the United States in little if any better position as a nation, than under the Articles of Confederation after the arms of the Revolution had been laid down.

The favor of the statute was intended in large part as the just reward of a generous

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State for the history-making steamboat invention of Fulton. In his argument the advocate eloquently urged this view, and in his rhetorical peroration undertook also, by the quotation of a line from Virgil, to depict the stimulus to industry and inventive energy and the national prosperity which would result, if the interpretation of the Courts of New York were upheld by the Supreme Court of the United States:

*Quæ regio in terris nostri non plena laboris?*

It would have been an apt and telling quotation, if the counsel had been right in his supposition that the *laboris* referred to enterprise and prosperity. Unfortunately he left out of his calculations the other meaning of *labor*—travail and misfortune, which it there signified. As you recall, the line is only part of the words of Æneas, who in his wandering with Achates from Troy has reached Carthage, where he is about to recount to Dido the destruction of his beloved city. As he sees upon the walls of the portals of her palace the graphic pictures which depict the ruin of all that had been dear to him in the world, he cries out in his bitterness:

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*Constitit et lachrymans Quis jam locus inquit Achate  
Quae regio in terris nostri non plena laboris?*

The Attorney-General of the United States Government, in reply gave the quotation in full, and dealt a crushing blow to the argument of his adversary. For, considering the personnel of the Supreme Court at that time, it is difficult—as I will explain to you at another time if you are interested in the subject—to estimate the far-reaching influence this misquotation exerted.

I might add, that for the solace of the advocate the record of the case was so arranged as to make his error less conspicuous and embarrassing. Curiously enough, a well-known book of classical quotations in my possession makes the same error.

One more illustration of the misquotation habit, and I shall have done. A case was being argued some time since, before a well-known Vice-Chancellor of New Jersey, now gone to his rest. He was an accomplished scholar as well as a wise judge. The perturbed advocate who was thus spurning a concession of his opponent:

*Timeo Danaos dona ferentes,*

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realized that the Judge, whose closed eyes suggested the judicial nap, was quite awake. For with aroused look and scholarly eye aflame, the Judge interposed, “*ET dona ferentes*, my friend, *even though* they bear gifts”; the emphasis on the “*et.*” And with a smile for a literary reprimand he added, “But may your reference to legal authorities have no such fatal omission.”

So, you see, I am avoiding any such pitfalls or bramble-bushes as one meets with by rushing at random upon quotations which are often about as serviceable to the user, as the hook to the fish that takes a fancy to the artificial fly.

I wonder whether you will consider it a failure to keep the promise just made to recount to you no more instances of misquotation, if I speak of a chronological mess into which I once heard a well-known legislator of this State stumble?

An unfinished case in court at Albany made it necessary for me to remain there until the day following. During the evening I wandered into the Senate Chamber, where there was a debate of much interest between the Republican leader of the Republican party then in control of the Legislature, and the minority Democratic

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leader—each of whom has gone to such reward as may be the portion of the politician hereafter. The debate was over the proposed passage of a bill which the minority leader was attempting in his declamatory style, to demonstrate would be a denial of the right of home rule to the City of New York. He accordingly pictured himself as a very modern, Democratic Horatius on a Tammany Bridge repelling the attacks of the Huns and Vandals of the Republican party upon the city, for whose safety he seemed prepared to run such risks.

The brilliant Republican leader did not let this opportunity for rejoinder pass when his time came, for he said something after this order: The Senator from the ——— District is quite confused in his recollection of history or legend, for Horatius had long been gathered to his fathers when the Huns and Vandals descended upon the Imperial City. Yet there was a time when Rome was saved from ruin by the cackling of geese; and perhaps what the gentleman wishes to communicate to this body, is not that he is a hero on a bridge, but merely a modern-day representative of that wide-awake and one-time-sacred flock.

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Now, returning to the point we were discussing, what more in common conscience could you wish to know of these members? Little, unless you are of those accustomed to appraise success in life merely by distinction in the clinic, the court-room, or the market-place. Only let me add, do not fall into the error of having recourse here to wrong standards for measuring real worth, for you would thus make shipwreck of your candidacy, however great your desire to be one of us some day. For you will, in a sense, be under scrutiny by those here in spirit as well as in bodily presence, who are to vote on your election. Remember always that one of the conditions on which the *non-resident* members have given proxies to the resident members is, that they are revocable if this implied understanding ever be departed from: No one, for the reason alone that he has been born with or achieved distinction or had it thrust upon him, shall be other than an intruder on this holy ground.

For the qualifications of a candidate, no search is made in the College of Heraldry as to his ancient lineage: his blood is not tested to determine whether it is extremely blue; the



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records of the tax office are not ransacked to ascertain the extent of his accumulations; nor is he required to produce his LL.D. and M.A. sheepskin testimonials of great learning. On the contrary, like Napoleon, the candidate can be his own ancestor; but he must be wise and generous, and have at least red blood, and the proof of his good-fellowship must be incontrovertible. Then the applicant may become, in that phrase of O'Reilly's, an "adopted son."

You must not look here for things banal or new, which the world often sets too much store by; and you must readjust some modern-day notions which—at least while here in this spot—we long ago consigned to the limbo where all foolish notions should be consigned.

There are to be seen here old rooms, old fittings, old appointments; for you will readily understand that those who are of the "dear guest and ghost" membership could not be expected to re-visit strange and therefore uninviting surroundings. And without such membership this Club would indeed have an unfillable void. There, too, is the old mill over whose dam still run the musical waters as they have run through the long years—since

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the days of the Revolution our pleasing historian Gherardi tells us. Yet chief among the old things you will find here, is the survival of that fellowship which makes each member in this loyal, royal circle a man and a brother. If you profit by this visit you will surely flout the cheap assertions that environment has not often a determining influence on men's dispositions and conduct. For change the surroundings never so slightly, and the living humans themselves here have changed too; and of course the ghosts are gone, since they would not tolerate the iconoclast in these hallowed precincts. You may be sure the "resident" members would never run the risk of such a calamity.

Do not, however—with your astigmatic vision as to this place and these men—which will continue until you are fitted by me or someone else with right glasses to look through—entertain the view that with my extended monologue we are not progressing toward this land I am picturing to you. It is essential that we take the *festina lente* gait in our journey. Otherwise the woods and fields and streams and the men, too, might then appear to you as not unlike other woods and fields and streams and

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men; and you could not possibly be guilty of any more foolish error.

So I shall digress now and then in order that you may get the several points of view you will need, from which to see these men and these things understandingly. And always remember that the digression is the antithesis of transgression.

Sterne never got fairly started with his story; but one "digression" after another took possession of him, and the masterpiece was finished before the story had been begun. What an irreparable loss it would be if the prefaces of the chapters of Thackeray and Fielding—their digressions—had never been penned. Therefore level at me none of your complaints for my wanderings as if they were an offense. Remember, too, how often I return to firm ground, as I present to you these men through the sayings of the Masters. So I shall quote from them again and again and make it clear to you how much better it is to have me string together some of the wise things others have said, than to strive for so-called originality, —which sometimes is a label for queer com-

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pounds. An Irishman, a justice in one of our minor district courts, who was more distinguished for his wit than for his legal learning, once said to me that his court was properly enough called one of original jurisdiction, because it was the source of so much original law. And how much more enjoyment we should bring to ourselves and be the source of for others, if we stifled some of our striving after originality!

You do not in truth need quotations as a justification for my desultory un-original talk. We all know the lot of one that goes forward to the goal of his ambition on the often uninviting, dusty, overcrowded highway—regarding neither the left nor the right, turning away from the fields and woods and streams and by-paths, which all call to him to revel in their beauty. The void is greater than the substance of that man's life. Ruskin says in his Chapter *Ad Valorem* in *Unto this Last*, which will live when some of his more ambitious work will have been forgotten:

As the art of life is learned, it will be found at last that all lovely things are also necessary; the wild flowers by the wayside as well as the tended corn; and the wild birds and creatures of the forest as well as the tended cattle; because man doth not live by bread only, but also by the desert manna.

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One who disregards such a view will be equally unmindful of the diverting poetic excursion, and accordingly the best of life and of literature will be a closed book to him. Nor ought we to be too sure that the hopeless dullness of his monotony will serve him in the matter of harvesting the fame or money or distinction in life, for which he is making such a cruel sacrifice. For in the crop thus gathered will be found no small proportion of the noxious tare.

After all, in such a life can there be said to be any harvest, since with the harvest there is associated in our minds the productive soil, the sunlight, the exhilaration of effort. I have always thought another illustration more befitting its description.

Doubtless, city-bred as you are, you never saw the old-fashioned, horse-power-driven, itinerant threshing-machine such as in days gone by made its fall visits to the small farms of our neighborhood. Its operation involved a cruel kind of work even for a horse, which could never make progress up or down, backward or forward, with all its climbing on and on. Merciless enough was that machine, with its propped-up, steeply inclined frame, rigid in all

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but the floor beneath which was to move when the grinding began, compelling the horse to begin his uphill climb—though there was no hilltop to reach—or be bruised and crushed as he was thrown forward. I see it as I saw it so often on our farm, but with the spectacles now in my possession, I can make out that there is a man in it with hopeless face and stooping body as he too climbs to his work. Like the horse he is grinding for someone else to profit by. As he sweats, but keeps on climbing yet never advancing, he cannot enjoy sights—much less visions—since there are none unenveloped in the dust he is making. Even the humane dust-consumer could not appreciably improve all this; for, as you see, the back must be bent, the head well inclined and the eye on the earth or he would not be able to grind at all. What a noise there is too! Yet there is no good reason why we should be so much concerned at what is happening, since the man knew beforehand that the job he had volunteered for would have nothing to do with prospects or quiet—but was to be only grinding.

By legislation and by vast expenditures we are demanding that the wage-earner, though he

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must get his bread by the sweat of the face, shall nevertheless not work as one without hope. Yes, now that I think of it with the charity born of this place, I was quite inconsiderate, about the poor fellow over there in that threshing-machine. Surely let us not be contemptuous of him, for he is beyond the reach of the reclaiming agencies of either statute or money. Salvation must be preached to him though unfortunately these days are not very orthodox. It is a sad case, and I would not reflect upon your intelligence to the extent of saying that this human threshing-machine does not include our Club in its itinerary.

Those of low as well as of high station, the poor as well as the rich, to their discomfort and at times their destruction, cling to the idols of possessions.

The appalling sea tragedy seems but yesterday, when that proud vainglorious ship sailed boastingly out of one harbor never to reach another. On the deck of that ship after she had foundered, her captain—with what anguish only we who knew him intimately will ever begin to understand—was directing how others were to be saved, with never a thought of him-

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self. He was to be the last man on deck and go down with his ship. He told two of the crew to man a life-boat filled with women. As the captain turned away one of them said to his mate, that he would go down to his bunk for some of his belongings but be back in a moment; the life-boat was launched with a substitute who was saved. He who was lost doubtless found the things he went in search of, but both he and they lie now at the bottom of the sea.

What was true of this sailor is true of many a man we have known. Yes, more than this, for he perhaps could not afford to part with his belongings, while others come to grief in the greedy pursuit of the thing for which they have no real need. Alas, still others meet their fate in the pursuit of the thing which can never rightfully be theirs.

What loathsome, destroying disease can the innocent-looking germ of a wrong conception of life breed in us.

We do not have to go back to the classics to learn that the bow must be relaxed, if its further use be of any moment to its owner. Next to



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the blessings Sancho Panza invoked for the inventor of sleep—and of course they should come first—be those for him who invented the “digression,” not alone for the written book or the told story, but for the journey of life. For it always keeps men from much monotony and grief, and sometimes it saves them from selling themselves into slavery.

Not so much effort after all is needed to secure this union of work and play such as you see manifest here among the men of this Club. Pardon me for giving you by way of illustration a leaf out of the book of my own experience.

Once a valued client—about the beginning of June, when the salmon were beginning their annual run from the sea—wished my professional advice in one of his many money-making projects. The salmon was my plea for a vacation. He replied that I could go, after what he wished me to assist him in accomplishing had filled his pockets, and put some small change at least into mine. Poor man, he knew nothing of fresh-run salmon, of beautiful rivers and pools and woods, of the exhilaration of the long walk, of taking a hand at poling the canoe up the rapids, or of the delight of a day well spent

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and of floating down-stream with that canoe not filled with fish, but with one or two worth while—back to the camp to swap stories with your messmates, of the big salmon that rose once but would never rise again, and of the one that really got away through no fault of the man behind the rod. Why, this client of mine seemed to think all this would wait for me, and that bright salmon could be killed with as complete a disregard of season as cold-storage market salmon could be bought. I sought to make it clear to him that one of my partners would serve him just as well. The wily client replied in his most brazen, flattering way that for me there was no substitute. Nevertheless I was cajolery-proof. I had, however, to use all my arts of persuasion—for there was before me the warning that a lawyer pleading his own cause has a fool for a client. So I tried my hand at painting a picture for him, in order to secure his cordial assent to my going—though I should have gone, believe me, whether or no. I told him of fishing, not merely when the sun was well up in the heavens, but of another kind when the daylight is ebbing away into that, which with us would be a rapidly diminishing

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twilight and then night, but which on a salmon-river is often but the occasion for the oncoming flood of a wondrous, prolonged afterglow from the west, and the streaming in of a majestic light from the north; and when, too, the birds are all out as if for a prize-song festival. For the hermit-thrush is there with that plaintive, emotional, soul-stirring note which only he and his half-brother, the wood-thrush, and his diminutive second cousin, the veery—each of whom is there as well—can ever sing. So, too, is the white-throated sparrow—the Peabody bird for some classifications, but the nightingale of the canoemen, and justly so called by them since almost invariably he repeats his gentle, restful notes at midnight. Then, most wonderful of all, the tiny winter wren—which the writers of bird-books know so little of, or at least write so unappreciatively of—begins his magician's song—which in its wild careering, profligate notes is not merely an outburst of melody but—— No, I forego any attempt at description of my own, but quote you the comment, or rather protest, of a graceful writer over an inadequate reference to this wren.

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This is Nuttall's description:

The wren has a pleasing warble, much louder than might be expected from its diminutive size. Its song likewise continues more or less throughout the year—even during the prevalence of a snow-storm it has been heard as cheerful as ever. It likewise continues its note till very late in the evening, though not after dark.

This is the protest of the commentator, Mr. Montague Chamberlain:

Had Nuttall ever met with the winter wren in its summer haunts; had he ever heard its wild melody break the stillness of the bird's forest home, or know of the power controlled by that tiny throttle, and of its capacity for brilliant execution; had he but once listened to its sweet and impassioned tones and the suggestive joyousness of its rapid thrills; had Nuttall, in short, ever heard the bird sing—he could not, surely, have damned it with such faint praise. The song of this wren is not well known; for the bird seldom sings beyond the nesting season, and then is rarely heard away from the woodland groves. But once heard the song is not soon forgotten; it is so wild and sweet a lay, and is flung upon the woodland quiet with such energy, such hilarious abandon, that it compels attention. Its merits entitle it to rank among the best of our sylvan songsters.

I told my client Midas, of casting for salmon amid such light and such sounds in the waters of a pool reflecting as in a magic mirror all the wealth of glorious color in the heavens, and of

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the rise of a big fish to the fly, and of the added music of the high reel-note as he makes his first big run. Yes, you and he did hear me aright; it was the *music* of the reel. If you still insist that it was a discord, I shall have no dispute with you, but retort that out of discords Wagner wrought some of his surpassing orchestral harmonies. Then I described to him the mighty leap of the fish from the pool and the conclusion of the fisherman that everything animate about himself had at the same time left his body; the prolonged matching of the wit of man against the wit of the salmon; the calling into service sometimes of the picturesque flambeau; and the final human triumph with the salmon netted or beached—not gaffed, for such butchers' work was long since banished there.

After that persuasive picture, I added up for him the other *pros* and an inconsequential *con* or two something after this fashion: You, my client, are not in trouble. No one seeks to diminish that big pile of your accumulations; you wish merely to add to it. Even suppose you are correct in thinking I alone can best serve you. Why should I, if by so doing I be

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obliged to substitute the unprofitable fee for some of the Joy of life, who has a disposition not to come your way again, if you do not always keep the door of your being flung wide open for her to enter? Or to change the figure of speech, Joy will cease with her warnings, if like Felix of old you answer too often, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee."

I added that gray hairs and a grandchild were my *memento moris*, and my advance information that the season was not so far off, when I should cast no fly in any waters. When that day had come and the newspapers had informed him I should never again be adviser or advocate for anyone, I suggested that perhaps he might be disposed to say to himself, "Well, sorry enough am I that an important business engagement makes it impossible for me to hear the last word said concerning my counsel and the last hymn sung in his behalf, for he was a good kind of a fellow." Whereupon I made two proposals to him: that he consent that I go without irritation on his part, and that neither of us permit any engagement to interfere with attendance at that last office for the one, to whom the night had

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come and whose work was over. The sequel was that the client agreed to wait; later his project was successfully carried out, and meanwhile he received a fine specimen of the king of fish from the waters I went to. And one of us is assured of the presence of the other, on that final day when ashes shall be given to ashes and dust to dust.

Before we end our talk of fishing and get to your enjoyment of the sport, let me play the philosopher and suggest how often in trait and gullibility men are like unto fish.

At times when the sun is in mid-heaven the salmon seems proof against all the wiles of the fisherman, and never so much as wag of head or tail will there be for encouragement, though in turn all somber flies—Black Dose, Night Hawk, or what you will—be tried. There lies the motionless salmon in his favored pool. Then the gaudiest, biggest Silver Doctor will bring the rush, the rise and the prey.

Bret Harte in his inimitable way tells how some men are to be taken. Fortunately the scene of the story is not laid in New York. Otherwise my sense of fair dealing and courtesy and perhaps compassion would forbid my adding

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a further reason (quite as convincing though as some of the other silly reasons given) why the doors of our poor old battered Stock Exchange should be boarded up for good and all. For the broker of whom the story is told was a wicked man and gave away dangerous secrets to the Devil. This Devil was once fishing from the roof of a church in Sacramento for victims in the street below, but with indifferent success. In return for all the untiring efforts which only a devil can make, his sole catch was a broker, who thereupon twitted the Devil of unskilfulness, while boasting of his own cunning. Finally the bargain was struck that the broker was to take a hand at the fishing, and the Devil go down into the street. I should like to think that this broker was a kindly soul and did not wish the Devil to get possession of any new secrets as against men, who, heaven knows, even under most favorable conditions have a perilous time with life and devils. Alas, it was no charitable thought of that broker which imposed the condition that the Devil go down into the street, but merely, as you will learn, the vanity to make his own triumph and the Devil's discomfiture come full circle.



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Thereupon the broker fished alone, and victim after victim was stretched upon the roof until *mirabile dictu*—and here is uncovered the reason for that proviso about the enforced descent of the Devil—up came the Devil himself at the end of the line. I forget whether it is recorded that the Devil blushed. Doubtless he prayed—or had recourse to something which with devils corresponds to prayer—that the broker tell him the name of the irresistible fly. The broker was inconsiderate enough to disclose the secret, and ever since the Devil has understood more than before about fishing for men; for he learned that it was the “Wild-cat” fly which had done such deadly execution.

As there is a sprinkling of brokers among the members here, perhaps it would be prudent for me to add—lest it be thought I am seeking to establish a monopoly of wickedness in their class—that in popular estimation the Devil would not carry on such a thriving business, did he not now and then replenish his old shop-worn goods, with a fresh stock from the manufacturing plant of the lawyer as well as the broker.

The men of this Club—whom by the way I am picturing to you in my rambling talk, oftener

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than you realize—have long understood all this which I was at such pains to detail to my client. They are not sacrificing the days and years of their lives to the end that they may become either misers or spendthrifts of the possessions they have heaped up. It should occasion no surprise therefore, when you see them here, in the full possession of strength, having cast off in whole or part the burden of pitiless work long before it has rounded the shoulders, flattened the chests, and destroyed the enthusiasm for the golden hours of the afternoon and the evening of life. Each of them knows what it means

To mix his blood with sunshine and to take  
The winds into his pulses.

Again I have recourse to Ruskin in his *Ad Valorem* Chapter:

We need examples of people also leaving Heaven to decide whether they are to rise in the world, decide for themselves that they will be happy in it, and have resolved to seek—not greater wealth but simpler pleasure; not higher fortune but deeper felicity, making the first of possessions self-possession.

Believe me, my friend, these men are as good examples as you could find of such even though you ransacked the earth.

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If you would know of their capacity for friendship, I ask Montaigne—one of my authorities for the sin or virtue of rambling, just as your point of view is—to speak for me, with that charm which has made his writings so refreshing to those that weary of much of the commonplace in the literary output of to-day.

In that matchless translation of Florio we read:

As for the rest, those we ordinarily call friends and amities, are but acquaintances and familiarities, tied together by some occasion or commodities, or means whereof our mindes are entertained. In the amitie I speák of, they entermixe and confound themselves one in the other, with so universall a commixture, that they weare out, and can no more finde the seme that hath conjoynd them together. If a man urged me to tell wherefore I loved him, I feele it cannot be expressed, but by answering; Because it was he, because it was my selfe. There is beyond all my discourse, and besides what I can particularly report of it, I know not what inexplicable and fatall power, a meane and Mediatrix of this indissoluble union. We sought one another, before we had seene one another, and by the reports we had heard one of another; which wrought a greater violence in us, than the reason of reports may well beare: I think by some secret ordinance of the heavens, we embraced one another by our names. And at our first meeting, which was by chance at a great feast, and solemne meeting of a whole towneship, we found our selves so surprized, so knowne, so acquainted, and so combinedly bound together, that

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from thence forward, nothing was so neere unto us, as one unto another.

Yet neither Shakespeare, nor Montaigne, nor Cicero, nor Emerson, nor Horace, nor any of the other illustrious men whose voices are immortal in the world, ever told of a finer, more generous, responsive, unselfish manifestation of priceless friendship than joins together this band of brothers here.

Do not, therefore, consider all this preliminary talk of mine superfluous. You need, you often say, the guide to instruct you as to insects and birds and flowers and stars in space. How, then, are you justified in rushing to the conclusion that any part of this introduction is superfluous? You wish to meet these men understandingly. Accordingly you ought to be interested in advance, in knowing how it is that the modern-day miracle is wrought, whereby this comradeship has grown up among men of divergent tastes and notions and occupations—evidenced not by the flabby deposit of one hand into another, but by the grip of the hand, the hearty, affectionate greeting and embrace,

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which ordinarily we associate only with the effervescence of impulsive youth.

The fact is that there is this transformation, when the threshold of these inviting rooms is crossed, and the engrossing thoughts of the several walks of life—from which the members come and to which they must necessarily return—are shed as a worldly garment not to be paraded or even worn here.

At a public dinner a short time since, I was the guest of an old friend—not a snob I should explain, lest you misinterpret what he said to me. He had had many advantages of birth and breeding and education and social environment. On the way home in his carriage he communed with himself and me, to the effect generally that doubtless I was a bit surprised to meet his other guests of the evening. “Well,” said he, “they are with me a good deal nowadays at my luncheon club, at my home, at their homes and at public dinners, though we were not friends in boyhood or at the university or in middle age, and have not altogether the same point of view of life. Yet steadily one by one, my old companions have gone the way we must all go, and

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but for these men I should be, as it were, alone in the world." Then the thought occurred to me: what would have been the satisfaction of this man's diminishing life, had the good fortune come to him to be one of this company, where the greater the age and the more uncertain the step, the more loving are the arms of welcome.

Did you ever hear the old, almost forgotten English ballad "The Keys of Heaven" really sung? If not, get some one to sing it for you; not slur or murder the song but interpret it. Or if this be impracticable read it—but read even such attenuated poetry aloud, as you ought to read all poetry, unless trying not to understand it. Then realize that the "keys of the heart" and not the "keys of Heaven" or the treasures of earth, are the way to the companionship of "walk and talk," among these men, just as they were with the long-hesitating, but ultimately wise lady of the song.

If you are disposed to refer to the tales you say you have heard of the merry-making of these men, why then I interpose for them the demurrer—which with us of the law serves the purpose of the colloquial retort of the layman:

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Well, what of it! There is no court of conscience or of good manners or of common sense that is entitled to be applauded for condemning mirth which—though it may be over-indulged in, as it never is here—is in large part born of wisdom. For the wisest at times give themselves over to what is playful and frolicsome,

“Within the limit of becoming mirth.”

Thank Heaven there still live men with such good sense allied to moderation, as to be merry. Why the very word “merry,” as it is understood by us here, and as it was once understood by the world, ill serves for any unfavorable comment or reflection upon the doings of such men. You do not have to ransack the erudite volumes of the etymologists, to learn that “merry” was once descriptive of that which promoted true pleasure and happiness and agreeable diversion, and had to do even with religious fervor. Mr. L. Pearsall Smith, in his entertaining as well as instructive work on the English language, will tell you this.

Mirth is not a debauch, nor was “Merrie England” intended to portray England on a spree.

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If you are disposed to be still more of a word-antiquarian, you can learn from the modern dictionary, and from Mr. Pearsall, too, that "merry" can be traced further back to the word which signified "short"; so that what is merry is but means to the end of lessening care and the dullness of life by good cheer. If as you intimate, "merry" has come to have the slightly opprobrious significance of excessive frivolity, when applied to the doings of full-grown men gathered together, it is only because the conduct of some others has been beyond the border line which discretion ought to prescribe for its legitimate province. Read Lamb's "New Year's Eve" if you would know how even a shy, retiring soul can voice for us a bold, unanswerable plea for the pleasures of living.

Have you of late read Sterne's touching dedication of Tristram Shandy to Mr. Pitt, whom he first addresses as Great Sir, and then as "more to his Honour Good Sir?"

Never poor wight of a Dedicator had less hopes from his Dedication than I have from this of mine; for it is written in a bye corner of the kingdom and in a retir'd thatch'd house, where I live in a constant endeavor to fence against the infirmities of ill health and other evils of life by mirth, being firmly per-



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suaded that every time a man smiles—but much more so when he laughs, it adds something to this Fragment of Life.

How thoroughly this stricken man of genius understood the true meaning of mirth!

How delightful would be the world if we could organize humankind into groups, and license to stray from the somber path of the conventions only those with the capacity and the virtue to curb over-indulgence in pleasures, which, as I have said, is never witnessed within this group of men here. For like other sensible men they can make the trivial wager without dipping into someone else's cash-box for the wherewithal; they know the cup that cheers but not the cup that inebriates; and they can unbend without rolling on the floor.

How discriminating my licensing bureau would be in recognizing that the dangerous experiment for one is but a petty offense for another. Before consenting to issue its license it would take into consideration that, in some instances, even the petty offense should not be so unbridled as to set an evil example to the community at large. My bureau would determine which of the statues are to have clothes

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on, and which are to be seen in their naked grace and beauty; which books are to be published in their entirety and which are to have expurgated editions; it could determine—no, I must cut illustrations short, or run the risk of being excommunicated by some of the uncompromising, for attempting to turn upside down the established social order.

Yet what a new era of sanity and wisdom such a beneficent license bureau would usher in, by thus prescribing the ordering of the comings and goings of men on the fine principle of conduct of Dr. Johnson—to be abstemious when it was impossible to be temperate. Perhaps the motto of the bureau might be adapted from the quotation Bosworth makes: Refrain if you cannot abstain.

All decently merry men would, of course, favor such a bureau. And how could the dull, censorious just make their righteousness square with a vote against such a reasonable alignment of the parties, as we of the law would say. For thereby much happiness would come into the world without risk to those not entitled to, and therefore not able to get, their license. Let us have done with the view that is always yea

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yea, and nay nay, and by way of variety, now and then at least, adopt the view that is relative and not absolute.

*Qui vit sans folie n'est pas si sage qu'il croit,* says La Rochefoucauld. Nor was he any mean philosopher, nor as some superficially think, merely the cynic. He did not propose, without protest, that vice should be permitted to wear the livery of virtue, or pretense that of merit, or arrogance that of true courtesy. Would that more of us looked long and understandingly into his mirror, where the wisest attitude toward life is so often reflected!

Shakespeare, to whom we so often have recourse for the organic law of common sense, sums this controversy up for us all:

Nor aught so good but strained from that fair use  
Revolts from true birth, stumbling on abuse.

Do you wish a very modern view of the visitations of the hard-and-fast censor of things finite and infinite? The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table tells how—no, you shall have the incident in Oliver Wendell Holmes's own words, for it would be literary heresy to attempt to paraphrase it:

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Here is a little poem I sent a short time since to a committee for a certain celebration. I understood that it was to be a festive and convivial occasion, and ordered myself accordingly. It seems the president of the day was what is called a "teetotaler." I received a note from him in the following words, containing the copy subjoined, with the emendations annexed to it.

"DEAR SIR,—Your poem gives good satisfaction to the committee. The sentiments expressed with reference to liquor are not, however, those generally entertained by this community. I have therefore consulted the clergyman of this place, who has made some slight changes, which he thinks will remove all objections, and keep the valuable portions of the poem. Please to inform me of your charge for said poem. Our means are limited, etc., etc., etc.

"Yours with respect."

### HERE IT IS—WITH *SLIGHT ALTERATIONS!*

Come! fill a fresh bumper,—for why should we go  
logwood  
While the ~~nectar~~ still reddens our cups as they flow!  
decoction  
Pour out the ~~rich juices~~ still bright with the sun,  
dye-stuff  
Till o'er the brimmed crystal the ~~rubies~~ shall run.  
half-ripened apples  
The ~~purple-globed clusters~~ their life-dews have bled;  
taste sugar of lead  
How sweet is the ~~breath~~ of the ~~fragrance they shed!~~  
rank poisons wines!!!  
For summer's ~~last roses~~ lie hid in the ~~wines~~

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That were garnered by <sup>stable-boys</sup> ~~maidens who laughed through~~ <sup>smoking</sup>  
long-nines.  
~~the vines.~~

Then a <sup>scowl</sup> smile, and a <sup>howl</sup> glass, and a <sup>scoff</sup> toast, and a <sup>sneer</sup> cheer,  
strychnine and whisky, and ratsbane and beer  
For all the good ~~wine, and we've some of it here!~~

In cellar, in pantry, in attic, in hall,  
Down, down, with the tyrant that masters us all!  
~~Long live the gay servant that laughs for us all!~~

The company said I had been shabbily treated, and advised me to charge the committee double—which I did. But as I never got my pay, I don't know that it made much difference. I am a very particular person about having all I write printed as I write it. I require to see a proof, a revise, a re-revise, and a double re-revise, or fourth-proof rectified impression of all my productions, especially verse. A misprint kills a sensitive author. An intentional change of his text murders him. No wonder so many poets die young.

Yes, true enough it is, that few of us can tolerate the combined loss of pay and self-esteem from any such high-handed proceeding. Why even Mrs. Malaprop was aroused to great wrath, merely by "aspersions upon her parts of speech."

Just here let me tell you of a conversation I

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once had with Lord Charles Russell, one evening while he was in this country. As a barrister he had been counsel to the English Jockey Club. As Lord Chief Justice he was called upon to decide a case in which the Club was deeply interested, involving the question whether an anti-gambling-house statute prohibited the wager on the race-course. He of course was under obligation to render a *pro forma* decision against the claims of the Club, so that the case might be heard before the House of Lords on final appeal. Called upon to adopt this course, he was much interested in the decisions of our courts concerning a somewhat similar statute of the State of New York. I wish some extremists could have listened to his commendation of the statute and the decisions which declined to order decapitation for the simple, inoffensive wager; and also to his sane, temperate discussion of the general subject of diversion, which so often incurs the risk of the *ex-cathedra* judgment as for hopeless, uncondonable guilt.

A distinguished surgeon of a foreign city some time since told me of a remark once made to him by Oliver Wendell Holmes—that the bigot,

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like the pupil of the eye, contracts under the light. Clever and epigrammatic surely that was; and let us hope, despite some rather disheartening experiences to the contrary, that it may come to be true of our day and generation. Alas that the gospel of reasonableness is preached and practised so sparingly in these exacting, strenuous days!

In short, after much reflection, I am quite prepared to insist that the license coming from my bureau would, in importance and salutary influence, be next to the poetic license—though of course in this too prosaic world, the poetic license should have the first place of honor.

Inasmuch, too, as there is the counterfeit as well as the genuine poetic license, my bureau might in time acquire jurisdiction over the granting of even it. Yes, in my Republic or Utopia, the poet would have to apply for his license by a very convincing petition—not written in rhyme or blank verse either, but in wingless prose—before securing permission to carry about any such dangerous, concealed weapon as the pen.

If you would have more ancient authority, then recall how Ovid, after having said—: If

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we mount too high we set the heavens aflame;  
and if we descend too low we set the earth  
aflame—adds that which has ever since been  
regarded as typically descriptive of the golden  
mean in life—

*Medio tutissimus ibis*

A beloved partner of mine, Charles Francis Stone, with whom I was associated for so many years until he went to the reward reserved for the elect—a man of infinite humor and noble character, whose profound legal learning was matched by his general scholarship—said to me that a fellow-student of his at Harvard once translated these words “The Ibis is safest in the middle way.” Along with our smile at this, should we not pause to consider how many there are who, though they avoid any such rendering, yet never arrive at the true meaning of the phrase, so little do they know of life however much they may know of Latin.

We can learn from Horace that to the great men of old, dignity was not necessarily associated with what Sheridan aptly terms “An unforgiving eye and a damned disinheriting



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countenance." For Horace tells in one of his Satires how Scipio Africanus and Laelius were accustomed, with Lucilius, to make merry until the cabbage was well boiled. If one is curious as to the special kind of play in which they indulged themselves, he will find the information in the note of an ancient commentator, which tells how Lucilius ran around the dining couch, threatening a blow with the twisted napkin.

Fortunate indeed it is for their peace of mind (which is another term for the preservation of their conceit), that some of the dyspeptics do not indulge in the reading of the ancient, or for that matter the modern classics.

How well Horace, whose wise and kindly face looks out so often from the pages of his writings, came to know life as he went on in his journey. How he evidenced that understanding by many an injunction not to be forever on the highways of life where the multitude strive and struggle, but to frequent, now and then, the places where Relaxation so often loiters with Joy for a companion. What good judgment, and common sense and wholesome advice and wisdom are in such lines as these:

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*Verum pone moras et studium lucri  
Nigroromque memor, dum licet, ignium  
Misce stultitiam conciliis brevem  
Dulce est desipere in loco.*

What a sermon it is for all of us, however much identified we may be with the world of affairs—preached by Horace and practised here among these men.

We are not to lose interest in practical affairs; only we are to assign them their proper place in the true economy of life; we are not to give over the acquisition of possessions, but are to put away from us the greed of wealth, and the folly and nonsense commended to us are not to be long-continued or over-indulged in, but brief, and fitting, as well. And all this is to be done while we have the opportunity, and are mindful of the consuming fires of the funeral pyre.

If your patience or my time permitted, I could reinforce all this by further generous selections from the great poets, whom so many of us erroneously regard as guilty of extravagance in expression. I could quote, too, from Cicero and a host of others, and if need be, from Holy Writ, down to this modern strenuous day of exhausting the never-to-be-renewed sources of life. We replenish our bank-accounts so that we may not overdraw them; we are on the hunt

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for the good-health nostrum lest we become bankrupt in health; but to the springs of the emotions and of geniality, we give little heed. We relegate to the nursery all such sane adages as "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," and go in on life with the capacity irretrievably gone for the infectious, vigor-prolonging, joy-producing, frolicsome nonsense.

Why, even the baseball "fan" whose hard, unenviable job in life it is to occupy the "bleachers," is wiser, for *he* "stretches at the seventh inning."

The men of this Club have a fairly good opinion of themselves, but that is mere pride of character, not the petty vanity of an offensive conceit. Why should not such men know their worth? They have been with and are esteemed by their peers whose approval is a certificate of good character and good citizenship. No one of this Club would feel it to be anything but a calamity in his life, if he ceased to be well thought of by his fellows here, or lost their affectionate regard; and this would surely result if the conceit were too pronounced.

I spoke perhaps too hastily a moment since of the conceit of the dyspeptic. Let us not bear

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too hardly on him or anyone else in this matter of conceit; for what would become of us if we possessed none of it? If the choice has to be between too much conceit or none, my vote might perhaps be for the conceit. You remember what our old friend the "Autocrat" says about it:

Little localized powers, and little narrow streaks of specialized knowledge, are things men are very apt to be conceited about. Nature is very wise; but for this encouraging principle how many small talents and little accomplishments would be neglected! Talk about conceit as much as you like, it is to human character what salt is to the ocean; it keeps it sweet, and renders it endurable. Say rather it is like the natural unguent of the sea-fowl's plumage, which enables him to shed the rain that falls on him and the wave in which he dips. When one has *all* his conceit taken out of him, when he has lost all his illusions, his feathers will soon soak through, and he will fly no more.

Let me add one other illustration. You see, as I promised, how in the main, my talk takes on the form of the brief—the assertion and then the authority: though sometimes, as one may not do at the Bar with the legal principle, I assert the right to announce new and unsupported theories of my philosophy of life.

Here it is, from George Eliot;

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Indeed, what mortal is there of us, who would find his satisfaction enhanced by an opportunity of comparing the picture he presents to himself of his own doings, with the picture they make on the mental retina of his neighbors? We are poor plants buoyed up by the air-vessels of our own conceit; alas for us, if we get a few pinches that empty us of that windy self-subsistence! The very capacity for good would go out of us. For, tell the most impassioned orator, suddenly, that his wig is awry, or his shirt-lap hanging out, and that he is tickling people by the oddity of his person, instead of thrilling them by the energy of his periods, and you would infallibly dry up the spring of his eloquence. That is a deep and wide saying, that no miracle can be wrought without faith—without the worker's faith in himself, as well as the recipient's faith in him. And the greater part of the worker's faith in himself is made up of the faith that others believe in him.

Let me be persuaded that my neighbor Jenkins considers me a blockhead, and I shall never shine in conversation with him any more. Let me discover that the lovely Phœbe thinks my squint intolerable, and I shall never be able to fix her blandly with my disengaged eye again.

Thank heaven, then, that a little illusion is left to us, to enable us to be useful and agreeable—that we don't know exactly what our friends think of us—that the world is not made of looking-glass, to show us just the figure we are making, and just what is going on behind our backs! By the help of dear, friendly illusion, we are able to dream that we are charming—and our faces wear a becoming air of self-possession; we are able to dream that other men admire our talents—and our benignity is undisturbed; we are able to dream that we are doing much good—and we do a little.

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Now let me try my hand (and here you see appearing the very conceit I am inveighing against) at an illustration. In order that conceit be tolerable to others and not hopelessly demoralizing to ourselves, it ought not to be our distinguishing, preponderating trait. It should always be an alloy in our make-up, as is the alloy in the precious-metal coin, which thereby is hardened and toughened, so as to withstand the rough handling the world is to give it. If, however, there be too abounding a conceit for our character-alloy, then the parallel would be the spurious, counterfeit coin or even the gold brick.

There is no trace of a crude selfishness in these men, as there is no false sentiment or lack of candor as they cling tenaciously to their possessions here. Are they not right in all this? Do not the most favored of us ordinarily see the companions of youth and school and university dropping out of the ranks of the procession, without any to close up the gaps? Or if there be such, they are but the stranger or the chance acquaintance. These men look out from their surroundings, at least with equanimity upon many a disheartening prospect for the others.

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For here with their contentment, they perhaps involuntarily have a feeling approaching to a kind of peace at the contrast. To be convinced that such a state of mind often justifiably or at least unconsciously results under like conditions, you have only to read in the opening of the second book of Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*, of a certain kind of pleasurable satisfaction to one safe on shore, at beholding the distress of those in peril from the violent seas.

Even though the statement were true that these members do not carry into the great outside world the same broad, charitable views they entertain while in this miniature world, the fact need not necessarily be apologized for as a fault. These men know enough of life to enjoy it sanely, with an enthusiasm to which only discretion sets bounds, and yet have a sympathetic interest and an active share in giving a helping hand to those that seem likely to stumble or lose their way in that outside world. If you pattern others after such men, have you not immeasurably advanced the outposts of generosity and kindness? If, on the other hand, you undertake to collect together a body of men, whose announced business it is to love

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mankind indiscriminately, is there not a risk that your group will include at least some questionable saints and stagy politicians, with here and there a very evident hypocrite?

I attended one evening not so long ago a political dinner, at which two speakers now occupying high positions in the federal government, asserted that the true rule of life was the desire to love and be loved by our fellow-men. I was convinced then as I am now, that something more is needed to assure our safety on the voyage we all are making, than any such cheering "All's Well" from the Lookout. I was convinced then as I am now that we must, in addition, insist upon chart and compass, and at least appliances for dead reckoning if we are to be denied those requisite for the observation. There are abroad in the modern-day world with all its finer progress, many new-fangled notions of political rights and duties that are conspicuously false. One having the courage to announce his lack of sympathy with such notions invites denunciation from the spawners of them—and generally gets his invitation accepted with pleasure and promptness. The condition of being loved by such men is that we agree with them.



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How would it do to change somewhat any such besetting ambition—to be loved by all our fellow-men—to a rule of conduct which shall have for its first and fundamental prompting the performance of duty as it presents itself, and acquiescence in only worthy ideas—so that there shall be for us the resulting self-respect? Let the approval of the multitude and the majority follow if it will; but let us gain our own approval first, and have the mirror into which we look give back the reflection of nothing, the genuineness of which we are in any wise doubtful about.

We have to wait a long time in the world for correct information; and until the revision of the Scriptures, none but biblical scholars knew that the writer of Proverbs had said: “He that maketh many friends doeth it to his own destruction.” And Hamlet said: Not many friends, but those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried (and these can never be many), grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel.

“But do not dull thy palm with entertainment  
Of each new-hatch’d, unfledg’d comrade.”

Let me add that the distinguishing traits of sanity, kindliness, gentleness, fine courage and

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manly spirit, and last but not least the reasonable conservatism of many a member of this Club, and their wholesome contempt for the charlatan (though for the moment he may have usurped the judgment seat) enable them to keep step in the ranks of advancing citizenship. And these men do this better than many others that are disposed to be rather noisy about their accomplishments.

How refreshing it is to meet a body of men such as you see here with temperate, well-seasoned, progressively conservative and conservatively progressive opinions to express—men of years and wisdom, but not aged!

For the thought of Swift is the thought of all of us: "Every man desires to live long; but no man would be old." If we reckon life by mere lapse of years, perhaps the majority here are well along in their journey, with but a slight admixture of the few young men, who for good and sufficient reasons have been permitted to join this family of their seniors.

The truth is that in no such Club as this should the young man be monarch; because if life is to be progressive as to pleasure as well

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as duty, there should always be the fuller enjoyment for youth to look forward to. And most things in life are an anti-climax to the gratification from companionship with a group of men like these.

It is sometimes a question in the minds of those of mature years, whether our present-day methods with the youngster are the best for his true rearing. To give him too early in life a salmon-rod, or to introduce him to an experience which can better come to him when qualified by years and observation for its full appreciation, is to promote the development of that depressing sight—the blasé youth.

After a fashion, it is like the unwisdom of handing over to the immature French child La Fontaine's Fables to be learned by rote. For what can it be expected to fathom of the depth of his insight into life, the gentle satire and the satisfying, refreshing philosophy which he has put into such masterpieces as "Les Animaux Malades de la Peste" and "Les deux Pigeons"? Of the significance of "La Chene et la Roseau," the child would have about as much real understanding, as of the Ode of Horace which tells how the great pine is so often swept

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by the tempest and the loftiest towers fall. The failure when young to know the worth of such masterpieces, may mean a failure also to know their worth when the child has become man; for with the re-reading in after years, the childish interpretation is imperceptibly revived, so as to interfere with an adequate appreciation of the genius of La Fontaine. Perhaps it is for this reason that the subtle charm of his creations is often more apparent to foreigners than to his countrymen.

By no means do I consider it a misfortune without its distinct compensation, that some of us here long ago parted company with our teens.

While we are upon this subject of education perhaps I ought—for the benefit of yourself and all other unfortunates who do not know it—to add the following anecdote as to the training of the young girl. At a convention of masters of schools for girls, where one of the chief subjects for discussion was the wisest plan of education, some maintained that the romantic side of the girl was to be ministered to; others, that prosaic, matter-of-fact instruction should have the first place.

It was the good fortune of the convention to

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have present a distinguished teacher, who advised the middle course, urging that the disposition of the girl should be influential if not controlling as to the appropriate form of training. The too romantic girl was not to be over-fed with figures of rhetoric, nor was the starved fancy of another girl to be deprived of the poetic prescription and stimulus. He was not required to argue his case *ad nauseam*, for an incident in his own experience was convincing. It seems that there was in his well-known school a scholar with the fanciful, almost fantastic bent of mind. In the class of mythology, when asked Who was Ganymede: she gave the rather original answer that he was the offspring of Olympus and an eagle. The startled examiner protested at any such unrecorded origin, and insisted that the mountain had had no part in the birth of this love-child. He even went so far as to explain, that it was impossible for a mountain to make any contribution to progeny. This latter assertion of course was a little too sweeping, for we all know that the pregnant mountain once gave birth to the *ridiculus mus*. No one, however, had ever before gone to the length of claiming that a moun-

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tain had at any time been the cause of travail in another — even in the promiscuous love-making of those ancient days, when the world was young and marriage-license bureaus few.

Nevertheless the young lady stood her ground, and, still insisting that Ganymede was the offspring of Olympus and an eagle, appealed from the decision of the Chair to her text-book, from which she read with wrapt expression and heavenward-cast eye, how it had all happened: “And an eagle bore Ganymede to Olympus.”

The comment of this distinguished teacher to those present was that nothing was found to be so efficacious for her ailment as liberal, frequently repeated, good, old-fashioned doses of mathematics.

Returning now from our digression, let me repeat that there are really no old men here. A goodly number have toiled or run, as the case may have been, to the top of the hill and are now on their way toward the foot, and there are, of course, the lengthening shadows as the sun goes down; but these men are not old. They are really young fellows in thought and

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spirit and deed. On the wrong side of the hill, think you? No, you are mistaken again. For on the side of the hill where they are, may be seen the wide prospects, the extended horizon, the glory of the slowly, gently approaching sunset and the company of those who make life really worth the living.

Would you tolerate the recalling of the rather hackneyed lines:

Grow old along with me:  
The best is yet to be  
The last of life for which the first was made.

Let me add something that has not been called upon to do such yeoman's service in quotation—the concluding Henley poem from Stevenson's masterpiece, "A Christmas Sermon":

A late lark twitters in the quiet skies;  
And from the west,  
Where the sun, his day's work ended,  
Lingers as in content,  
There falls on the old, gray city  
An influence luminous and serene,  
A shining peace.

The smoke ascends  
In a rosy-and-golden haze. The spires  
Shine, and are changed. In the valley  
Shadows rise. The lark sings on. The sun,  
Closing his benediction,

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Sinks, and the darkening air  
Thrills with a sense of triumphing night—  
Night, with her train of stars  
And her great gift of sleep.

So be my passing!  
My task accomplished and the long day done,  
My wages taken, and in my heart  
Some late lark singing,  
Let me be gathered to the quiet west,  
The sundown splendid and serene,  
\* \* \* \* \*

“Death” writes Henley as his final word, which I have omitted, and in place of which I shall have the printer insert asterisks—if ever I summon up the courage to risk the disapproval of the writing guild, with its “closed shop” prejudices.

For such an end is surely not death, but an inspiration, and a new membership in the “Choir Invisible.” What a fine spirit there is in those lines; and how was it possible for the man who had the greatness to write them, to be so inconsiderate as he was in thought and speech to the memory of Stevenson? Nevertheless, as there is so often the apology for the ungracious act, let us assign the cause to the pain, which was so much of Henley’s portion in life, and let us have no quarrel with those



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who are now seeking to dedicate to him a fitting memorial. Let us all, now and then at least, stand up to say a word for those whom we are not hastily to condemn in the court of public opinion, wherefrom there is so seldom a satisfactory appeal.

The whole of "A Christian Sermon" is in its way on as high a level as the Henley Poem, as Stevenson writes the obituary for his fellows, all of whom are in his conception failures. At best they are to be grouped into the faithful and the unfaithful failures, though for the faithful failure there is to be the sure reward:

Give him a march with his old bones. There out of the glorious, sun-colored earth, out of the day and the dust and the ecstasy, there goes another faithful failure.

What a frank, but at the same time a generous, comforting epitaph for us all!

Yet how often do men write a poor, vain record on the tombstones they erect, as in the lives they lead!

In days gone when the humorist of the Burlington Hawkeye had his well-established vogue, he told how the epitaph concerning a beloved wife also testified to the fact that the loving

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husband of this beloved wife owned and edited an interesting newspaper, the annual subscription for which was but a few dollars; and to the further fact that the editor could be interviewed without difficulty, if the reader chose to mount a few flights of stairs and knock on the door of the sanctum.

Then sometimes, as in the acts of life, we leave in epitaphs the record open to misinterpretation. One of my partners tells me, that in a cemetery near the campus of Cornell University there are in line three gravestones, each one erected to the memory of a beloved wife of ——. Two are modest enough, barely rising a few inches out of the earth, while the remaining one towering up high above them and other neighboring tombstones, bears the explanation, "Ordered by herself." Whether the inscription is intended to bear witness to the husband's consideration for the two wives by featuring the vanity of the other, or whether he was merely a thoughtless, bereaved satirist, future generations are left in doubt not to be easily resolved.

Nor is the meaning quite clear of the inscription I have seen on the walls of Lady Chapel,

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in Ely Cathedral, to the memory of one Robert Lightfoot, Collector of the Land Tax for the County of Cambridge. The tablet, which is in memory too of his wife and his son, recites neither their virtues nor their faults, but only the dates of their birth and death, with this concluding comment, "Of what sort the above ment'd persons were, the last day will discover." Even the Curate there was not without misgivings that the mortuary cynic may have intended to intimate that someone of the members of the family may have been not less light-fingered than Light of Foot.

Of the over-featuring of ourselves in the epitaphs some write for others, let me give you as good an illustration as you are likely to come across in many a day.

As a youth I attended a church in my native town, where one could hear impassioned sermons by truly great preachers—though one of them once suggested that not piety, but the expectation of subsequent aid in deciphering for me the meaning of Greek and Latin texts, had more or less to do with my being of the congregation. In the churchyard there a monument can be seen, ostensibly erected to the

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memory of the unfortunate victims of the shipwrecked barks, the *Bristol* and the *Mexico*. But it is not, as you will hear, altogether disregarding of the virtues of those responsible for its erection and for the purchase of the meager plot on which it stands.

The monument is not an impressive one and a very small sum must have represented its cost. As for the land, the inscription is at pains to recite its limited dimensions (30 x 161 feet); though in some way or other not quite clear, 150 bodies were enabled to find a resting-place there and yet leave enough unoccupied ground remaining, to justify its being set apart for further use as a MARINERS' BURYING-GROUND.

Here are the modest inscriptions. On one side is this:

THE INHABITANTS OF THE COUNTY,  
IMPELLED BY A GENEROUS SENSIBILITY,  
HAVE PURCHASED THIRTY FEET FRONT  
BY 161 FEET DEEP OF THIS YARD,  
AND SET IT APART EXCLUSIVELY AS  
A MARINERS' BURYING-GROUND.

On the other side this:

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TO COMMEMORATE THE MELANCHOLY FATE  
OF THE UNFORTUNATE SUFFERERS BELONGING  
TO THE BRISTOL AND MEXICO, THIS  
MONUMENT WAS ERECTED PARTLY BY THE  
MONEY FOUND UPON THEIR PERSONS AND  
PARTLY BY THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE  
BENEVOLENT AND HUMANE IN THE COUNTY OF  
QUEENS.

If you are on the lookout for precision of statement, you should not fail to notice how discriminating this language is. For, though the riflers of the carcasses were “benevolent and humane,” they laid no claim to a generous sensibility which was reserved for the providers of the burial-plot. Yet both classes to their credit be it said, were sufficiently generous to give the local poet his opportunity which he seized upon in this fashion:

WHAT LO, ALAS, BENEATH THIS MONUMENT DOTH (SIC)  
SLEEP,  
THE BODIES OF THOSE THAT HAD CROSSED THE DEEP,  
BUT INSTEAD OF BEING LANDED SAFE ON SHORE,  
ON A COLD AND FROSTY MORNING, THEY ALL WERE  
NO MORE.

If you would like to have ocular proof of this which borders on the incredible, we can pause

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as on our way home we pass the church or rather the site of the church. For fire has twice carried it off—some irreverent ones assert, through spontaneous combustion of accumulated hell - fire - and - brimstone deliverances of the preachers and laymen of days gone by.

What a gruesome story of the misconceived words of the tombstone inscription, is De Maupassant's "La Morte."

The mistress dies alas, with a destroying cough, and inconsolable over her loss the lover wanders off into the world. The homing instinct seizes him and he comes back one day to his old dust-covered rooms, left just as they were when tenanted by the two care-free occupants.

The thought possesses him to visit her grave and see again the tombstone for which he had provided the epitaph. After a view of the grave he determines to sleep that night within the city of the dead and with her grave for a couch. So eluding the vigilance of the cemetery guardian, he wanders back out of view as the day dies. Then the gates are shut, and he is free to return unobserved. But the night has come on quickly and he unfortunately has

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lost his way. Thereupon, horrible to behold, the earth begins to tremble sufficiently to break open the receptacles in which the dead are; and out of the graves come the skeletons one by one. There is a purpose, too, in their coming—for each of the skeletons begins work and with the obliterating stone is removing the false epitaph, and making ready a new surface whereon is to be carved the truth. One, Jacques Olivant, is at work on his epitaph, which tells of the age at which he died, of his uprightness and how he loved his kind and died in the faith of the Lord. The only part of it which survives is the record of his age. The new words disclose that by his cruelty he had hastened the death of his father whose property he wished to inherit, had tortured his wife, tormented his children, been treacherous to his neighbors and when the opportunity offered had been a thief as well. And so the good work goes on.

The wanderings of the lover bring him at last to the tomb of his mistress where she, too, is busy with the substitution of truth for fiction; and in place of the lover's epitaph

“ELLE AIMA, FUT AIMÉE, ET MOURUT”

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she is carving with her bony digit the story of her unfaithfulness and the cause of her death.

“**ÉTANT SORTIE UN JOUR TROMPER SON AMANT, ELLE EUT FROID SOUS LA PLUIE, ET MOURUT.**”

No wonder the poor, disillusioned devil was found in the morning unconscious near her tomb.

If time and your patience served, I might tell you of the pretentious tomb and effigy in St. Saviour's Church, of the famous charlatan Dr. Lockyer whose long epitaph records his virtues and his pills. And though in the lines his “virtues” are put first, and his “pills” second, his virtues are written in small letters but his **PILLS** thus.

Yes, unquestionably you are prepared to say enough “of graves, of worms and epitaphs.” Perhaps you are right in this; but bear with me until I have recited to you the Requiem of Stevenson:

Under the wide and starry sky,  
Dig the grave and let me lie,  
Glad did I live and gladly die  
And I laid me down with a will;

This be the verse you grave for me,  
Here he lies where he longed to be.  
Home is the sailor, home from sea,  
And the hunter home from the hill.



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One cannot, as he reads such lines or better still hears them sung to their fine Homeric-music setting, think of death only as the cruel, implacable messenger of the fates, particularly if the end come when one is ready for the journey and has truly lived his life. Yes, surely this is so, though that life be but half over, if some part of it shall have been spent in ministering even in slight measure to the other fellow that has happened for the moment to be out of luck with fate.

Even if all this disconnected talk may have unduly taxed your good-nature, you need not consider yourself the only person since the beginning of time that has had to exercise patience under the afflictions of the world—one of the worst of which I am prepared to concede is the endless talker. You must bear in mind, too, that I have had an endless subject, in attempting to describe to you a world in itself small though it be. So have the kind of patience Sir Henry Hawkins says he was called upon to manifest, while sitting on the Bench to which he had been elevated as Lord Brampton:

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The art of advocacy was being exercised between an Irishman and a Scotchman, which made the English language quite a hotchpotch of equivocal words and a babel of sounds. The butcher's slander was one that seemed to shake the very foundations of butchery throughout the world, namely, an insinuation that the plaintiff had sold Australian mutton for Scotch beef—on the face of it an extraordinary allegation, although it had to find its way through the interpretation of a jury as to its meaning.

Amidst this international wrangle the judge kept his temper, occasionally when the combatants flagged a little for want of breath, cheering them on by saying in an interrogative tone, "yes?" and in the meanwhile writing the following on a slip of paper which he handed to a friend:

### Great Prize Competition for Patience.

Hawkins

First Prize.

Job

Honourable mention.

Be assured there will be a consolation prize for you as well when you are permitted really to know the men and the things here.

Still you must remember how much time we have necessarily consumed in our journeyings. We have been all the way to the streets of Rome where Horace gathered much of the material for his Satires, and to his Sabine Farm where he was the genial philosopher and spokesman for sensible men of all ages; and so down along the way until we have reached the world of

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to-day. We have fallen in with some great people, who, though they never heard the name of this Club, nevertheless, unconsciously wrote much about it both in verse and prose.

Now that I think of it, we might in our wanderings have been benefited by stopping awhile to recall the beginning of one of the chapters of George Eliot, as she teaches us how we are to measure the time and effort of life aright:

Extension, we know, is a very imperfect measure of things; and the length of the sun's journeying can no more tell us how far life has advanced than the acreage of a field can tell us what growths can be active within it. A man may go south, and, stumbling over a bone, may meditate upon it till he has found a new starting-point for anatomy; or eastward, and discover a new key to language telling a new story of races; or he may head an expedition that opens new continental pathways, get himself maimed in body, and go through a whole heroic poem of resolve and endurance; and at the end of a few months he may come back to find his neighbors grumbling at the same parish grievance as before, or to see the same elderly gentleman treading the pavement in discourse with himself, shaking his head after the same percussive butcher's boy, and pausing at the same shop-window to look at the same prints. If the swiftest thinking has about the pace of a greyhound, the slowest must be supposed to move, like the limpet, by an apparent sticking, which after a good while is discerned to be a slight pro-

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gression. Such differences are manifest in the variable intensity which we call human experience, from the revolutionary rush of change which makes a new inner and outer life, to that quiet recurrence of the familiar, which has no other epochs than those of hunger and the heavens.

Suppose now we change the *dramatis personæ*. No, not necessarily that, but merely change the activity of the groups, and another paragraph of equal interest can be written. Have the stay-at-home the same. Only this time let the other go in search of the higher joys of life such as are to be found within the magic circle which comradeship draws about her true worshippers. And, believe me or not as you will, the contrast between the doings of the two, would then be as well defined, as it was rightly represented to be, — when one of them went forth and wrought great things in the world, while a plodding routine was the occupation of the other.

Let me hope that you have not fretted overmuch about all this preliminary, rambling chat, except for the reason, perhaps, that you have done little of the talking. But really the going out with rod and fly and creel, you are looking forward to, is not all there is to fishing, which

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has to do quite as much with the breeze and the sunshine, the wild flowers and birds, with the canopy of the blue sky and, last but not least, with the human companionship. The mere getting of fish—why the fish-market is the place for that kind of fishing with the silver hook!

Only if we understand all this and strive to be like the “towardly scholar” of Isaac Walton, shall we begin to understand the meaning of all his adopted phrases—“that angling is a rest to the mind, a cheerer of the spirits, a diverter of sadness, a calmer of unquiet thoughts, a moderator of passions, a procurer of contentedness, and a begetter of the habits of peace and contentedness.” What a wealth of speech all this is, and how it laughs at rivalry in expression to one that knows the glory of the stream wherein trout are to be taken!

So, in this spirit let us start, not for the ponds where there are fish in abundance to be had for the asking, but for the old Connetquot River, the brook of inspiration. Then I am sure you will in the end agree with me that if Walton could be moved to such utterance over the Itchen and like prosaic rivers, it would have been possible for him to write a still greater

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classic, had his musings been about the stream and the sights and the men you are to be privileged to see.

It is rather a long distance we have to go, but let us make the trip afoot. It will be worth while, even though we shall not have much opportunity to pause on our way at the sight of the wild flowers which grow in such luxuriance here, or at the sound of the songsters, as, with the cup of thanksgiving full to overflowing, they pledge you their merry toasts. It will be enough for you to get a glimpse of the prospect, as we go for miles through these pine-covered walks, varied now and then by the drumming and rush of the partridge, the swift flight of the mallard and the black duck, and the interested inspection of you by the deer as they roam at will over these thousands of acres with their sunlit, shadow-lit paths. There will be opportunity a-plenty for you to see good examples in detail of all this loveliness when you meet it at close range as we wade the brook—before we fish, and while we fish, and after we fish.

Let us then, as we set forth, agree with Emerson: "Give me health and a day and I will make the pomp of emperors ridiculous"; for

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never were fishermen blessed with better health of body or spirit, or a finer day than we for this outing—pilgrimage I should venture to say if your enthusiasm were at all like mine. And doubtless Lamb in his “Grace before meat” speaks for you as well as he does for me when he says, “I wish we had at hand a form of grace for setting out on an inviting journey.”

There is compensation for most of the vexatious things of life. And now your reward—in the walk before you to the headwaters of this brook of brooks and your joy in wading it—is to come for having been willing to put up with my monopolistic conduct, against which, fortunately for me, you could invoke no restraining statute. In order, however, to be free of impedimenta (rod, creel, and what not), let us take along with us one of the boatmen—no ordinary boatman this, but guide, friend and philosopher as well. With a knowledge which will persuade you that you are all but blind he will point out some of the mystery of the woods and streams, and the devious ways of the game he traps. He will be a real companion believe me. Though some of his language may be classified as profane, and

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some of it not any more intended for introduction into the drawing-room than are cowhide boots that have just made a visit to an Augean Stable, why what of it all, say I his advocate! Heaven be praised, that now and then something of an approach to plain speech in the calling of the spade the spade, goes to make up the language of men. At the worst these non-drawing-room words of his are classic; and again, lawyer-like I ask you to accept nothing on my unsupported assertion, but refer you to some of the unrestrained, and rather markedly primitive expressions of Rabelais and Sterne.

As to that portion of his speech which superficially might be considered profane, I am prepared to admit that under provocation it might, for aught I know, be as picturesque as was the language of Bret Harte's *Vulgar Little Boy* whose sensibilities the driver overlooked.

He was playing in the street, and the driver of a passing vehicle cut at him sportively, with his whip. The vulgar little boy rose to his feet and hurled after his tormentor a single sentence of invective. I refrain from repeating it, for I feel that I could not do justice to it here. If I remember rightly it conveyed, in a very few words, a reflection on the legitimacy of the driver's birth; it hinted a suspicion of his father's integrity, and impugned the fair fame of his mother,



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it suggested incompetency in his present position, personal uncleanliness, and evinced a skeptical doubt of his future salvation.

Perhaps this is not a very appropriate illustration, since no driver would ever dare cut at our boatman with a whip. Still I must admit he makes very few by "jimony" oaths, Castor and Pollux mythology not being in his repertory. Nevertheless his sterling worth has convinced me—that the blush of the avenging spirit as it flies to heaven with his oaths, and the tear of the recording angel as they are written down, make it all but certain that the unreligious words of this man will as surely be blotted out forever, as was the "By God" of Uncle Toby.

So you can see I have many defenses for my client. Naturally enough, for if, like those of my profession, you were now and then free to delve as an antiquary into its old procedure, you would readily see that the defenses I interpose for my friend are directness and simplicity—compared with the twists and turnings of an old-time pleader. For he was permitted to go so far now and then in the defense of one charged with the appropriation of the illustrative ket-

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tle, as to insist that his client had never had it; that it was cracked when he got it, and moreover that he had returned it.

Now in our long but stimulating walk, we have come to the house of our guide on the borders of the upper reaches of this stream, in which we are to fish and in which he, in a sense, lives; for rarely the day goes by when, as part of his duties as guardian or for his own pleasure, he does not wade it. Before we begin with the fly, suppose we sit on this string-piece and fill a pipe and rest a bit after our long tramp, so that we shall be the better prepared to see some things and hear some voices about us which otherwise might escape our notice.

Really it was worth while to have waited and not made the dangerous experiment of smoking in these woods, so eager always to burst into the disastrous blaze. Not only have we thus given the woods a fair chance, but we have made our appetite keener for the pipe now. Strange it is how many of us—and I am quite prepared without any searching cross-examination to own up to transgression in tobacco, if you will let the witness go with this confession

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—so often permit a great pleasure to grow into a perfunctory and unappreciated habit. You recall, I am sure, what Burton, in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, says about tobacco, and recognize how forcible an illustration it is of what we have been saying of use and abuse, of temperance and of over-indulgence.

Tobacco, divine, rare, superexcellent tobacco, which goes far beyond all the panaceas, potable gold, and philosopher's stones, a sovereign remedy to all diseases. A good vomit, I confess, a virtuous herb, if it be well qualified, opportunely taken, and medicinally used, but as it is commonly abused by most men, which take it as tinkers do ale, 'tis a plague, a mischief, a violent purger of goods, lands, health, hellish, devilish, and damned tobacco, the ruin and overthrow of body and soul.

Southey, too, in his colloquies on society has his *Mask*, *Montesinos*, and the ghostly *Sir Thomas More* discourse of tobacco and restraint:

*Sir Thomas More.*—*Pro pudor!* There is a snuff-box on the mantelpiece—and thou revilest tobacco!

*Montesinos.*—Distinguish, I pray you, gentle ghost! I condemn the abuse of tobacco as filthy, implying in those words that it has its allowable and proper use. To smoke is, in certain circumstances, a wholesome practice; it may be regarded with a moral complacency as the poor man's luxury, and with liking by anyone who follows a lighted pipe in

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the open air. But whatever may be pleaded for its soothing and intellectualising effects, the odour within doors of a defunct pipe is such an abomination, that I join in anathematising it with James, the best-natured of kings, and Joshua Sylvester, the most voluble of poets.

Why by the way do not our clubs, if they will insist on the pipe banishment (though, Heaven be praised, there is no like injunction with us here) give us some such persuasive authority of the classics, in lieu of their despotic rules and regulations?

Afterward, Montesinos is able to add for his satisfaction—something which many of us unfortunately cannot say—“Thank Heaven I bear about with me no habits which I cannot lay aside as easily as my clothes.” What a boastful, supercilious, even though a truthful Mask!

A little later on Sir Thomas is permitted to have his say concerning merriment and reasonableness:

*Sir Thomas More.*—Good Flesh and Blood, that was a nipping reply! And happy man is his dole who retains in grave years, and even to gray hairs, enough of green youth's redundant spirits for such excursive-ness! He who never relaxes into sportiveness is a wearisome companion, but beware of him who jests at everything! Such men disparage by some ludicrous association all objects which are presented to

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their thoughts, and thereby render themselves incapable of any emotion which can either elevate or soften them, they bring upon their moral being an influence more withering than the blast of the desert. A countenance, if it be wrinkled either with smiles or with frowns, is to be shunned; the furrows which the latter leave show that the soil is sour, those of the former are symptomatic of a hollow heart.

Now that we have heard from the ghostly Sir Thomas, let us give him the opportunity of speaking in the flesh on the subject of moderation, when he could do his own thinking and was not obliged to let Southey do it for him.

In that imaginary commonwealth Utopia—where he so often subtly gives one extreme in contrast to the other here on earth, so as to persuade us of the common sense of the middle course—he is describing with telling satire the contempt with which the gold of our idolatry is held there:

Of the same metals, gold and silver, they likewise make chains and fetters for their slaves, to some of which, as a badge of infamy, they hang an ear-ring of gold, and make others wear a chain or a coronet of the same metal; and thus they take care by all possible means to render gold and silver of no esteem; and from hence it is that while other nations part with their gold and silver as unwillingly as if one tore out their bowels, those of Utopia would look on their giving in all they possess of those metals (when

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there were any use for them) but as the parting with a trifle, or as we would esteem the loss of a penny! They find pearls on their coasts, and diamonds and carbuncles on their rocks; they do not look after them, but, if they find them by chance, they polish them, and with them they adorn their children, who are delighted with them, and glory in them during their childhood; but when they grow to years, and see that none but children use such baubles, they of their own accord, without being bid by their parents, lay them aside, and would be as much ashamed to use them afterward as children among us, when they come to years, are of their puppets and other toys.

There followed the effect of the good example. For when the Anemolian ambassadors came to Utopia full panoplied in all their gorgeous apparel, they were everywhere received with contempt.

You might have seen the children who were grown big enough to despise their playthings, and who had thrown away their jewels, call to their mothers, push them gently, and cry out, "See that great fool, that wears pearls and gems as if he were yet a child!" while their mothers very innocently replied, "Hold your peace! this, I believe, is one of the ambassadors' fools."

Thus the ambassadors learned the lesson which is manifest in this Club—but not taught, for we have no pedagogues among us, thanks to our lucky stars.

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“Their plumes fell and they were ashamed of all that glory for which they had formerly valued themselves, and according laid it aside.”

Nor is it related that they were ever minded to put such things on again.

By the way, would you believe it, this very stream into which our feet are dangling, runs and flows with its generous waters as you see it, in large part by reason of the comradeship of the men of this Club. Rather a strained view, think you? Well then let me tell you why you are wrong.

The City of New York some years ago authorized a kind of financial municipal debauch, in its proposal to take the waters of Suffolk County, with the preliminary expenditure of scores of millions of dollars. Though the scheme was wholly unjustified, opposition to it seemed almost futile. I will not undertake to tell you in detail how the love of these waters by the few here, resulted in arousing a whole county to the menace to the beauty and utility of this part of Long Island. The scheme was utterly defenseless, for within sight almost was the water of the Esopus watershed, and thanks to

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a determined stand taken, the residents of this county and not the politicians had a water holiday. Moreover under the proddings of the determined defense against vandalism and indefensible extravagance, New York began to think about saving the water it had available, instead of entering upon this job; and to-day, in its Boroughs of Manhattan and the Bronx, the City consumes less water than it did nine years ago. Altogether it is a suggestive chapter in municipal history that needs no comment.

Before we start, suppose I confess to you that there is one thing about this brook so perfect in its beauty and associations, operating to detract just a bit from its old glory. Things called the brown trout—but really sharks and tooth-tongued cormorants and feeders upon trout—were some years ago introduced as an experiment into these waters, where by preying upon the native speckled beauty they grew mightily to filthy proportions. The designation of trout applied to this intruder equals in relevancy the definition of the crab—as a fish, red in color, that crawls backward. This the naturalist pronounced quite correct, except in the par-



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ticulars that a crab was not a fish, was not red and did not crawl backward.

A goodly part of the duty of our boatman at the spawning season when these fish are in evidence—lurking concealed at other times in wait for their prey—is to keep their propagation within reasonable limits, for their extermination seems all but hopeless. One might well conclude that the time has come for putting an end to the practice of importation into this country of the strange bird and the strange fish of unknown characteristics. The introduction of the brown trout here and elsewhere was about as appropriate as if the national government—while making gigantic efforts to prevent the slaughter of the wild bird—were to start in with the wholesale propagation of crow black-birds for the purpose of inducing them to lay their eggs in the nests of song-birds, the young of which they were ultimately to destroy. Not content with one pest, the English sparrow, we have now the starling, with the likelihood that we are to find in him a new thief which will still further rob the song-birds of their natural food and so threaten their extinction.

Everywhere throughout the country, the tale

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is the same as to these fish and where the warfare against them is not unremitting, beautiful streams are beautiful no longer. Though it is well established that the burnt child dreads the fire, no such infantile philosophy is permitted to enter into the calculations of many grown-ups.

As you sit here looking down this stretch of laughing water, with its gentle, eddying current and its bright, pebbly bottom, into which those long graceful, waving, peacock-tail-like weeds plunge their roots—what a wealth of beauty there is for the eye to feast upon! Where think you is its counterpart? Here matted together are blue and white violets, such as grow only on the very edge of running brooks; and near them are wood anemones which scorn to appear as individual specimens, but insist on carpeting the ground with their nodding grace. There at the turning below, that suggestion of blue is really a big bed of irises; and as we wade on we shall come across the like of them again and again, side by side with such marsh-marigolds as are worth many a long and tiresome journey to meet with. What beauty—on

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the elevations beyond the edge of the brook—there is in the sun-drop, the yellow sorrel and the loose-strife so lavish of their charms. See, too, the wonderful admixture of color in the flowers of the white huckleberry blossom and the shadbush, in contrast with the lustrous red of the scarlet maple-tree.

With these sights as a suggestion of what is to swing into our view, we make a first cast. Or rather you do, for my satisfaction shall be in seeing you do creditable execution with the fly, and in being privileged to hear your language as you now and then forget your “back-cast” and land that same effective fly high up in the snags of the maple. You do not need to be told by me that this procedure will be fatal, for the moment, to good temper, and likely to produce from you a flow of words which may be described as a weak reflection of the irreligious vocabulary of our boatman—when at his best or worst according to the point of view.

Now after luck piled on luck, wait a moment until the boatman picks up from among the white pebbles of this hustling stream, the arrowhead and spearhead, the sight of which will carry your mind back to the red-skinned

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fisherman whose haunts were here in days of old. I have scores of these trophies, the result of this man's sharp vision. Wait too a moment more, as he points out to you how the mallard builds her nest on the hummock of a miniature island, so that what little there is of scent to the drake or hen at nesting-time shall be lessened for the trailing enemy, whatever shape it take. Again, let him show you the consummate cunning required to cope with the cunning of the mink he so successfully traps. For unless the trapper, after having ferreted out the runway, so manœuvres that ingenuity shall wholly cover up ingenuity in the setting of the trap—just as the highest art is the concealment of art—there will never be mink for his reward.

Yet if we permit him to continue entertaining and instructing us with his nature-knowledge, not only shall I have a dangerous rival in talk but you will never be at the end of your fishing. And surely the hobbies of fishermen and monologists ought not to be thus trifled with.

As we see such secrets laid bare, as we hear such notes as the birds sing this day, and as the winds play on Æolian harps as of old, do we

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not realize that everywhere for the observing, nature has set sign-posts as clear and unmistakable as the "Stop Look and Listen" warnings at railroad-crossings? But do we not, both by night and day, as often disregard the one as "joy-riders" do the other? What the stars have to tell of the mythological past and of their part in the divine scheme of the universe, apparently has for us little if any interest. With all our modern-day intelligence, we know less even of their names or their ways, than did the shepherd of old as he tended his flock under their inspiring radiance. What a commentary it all is on our indifference, and what a dread and consuming and corrupting disease nature-phobia is!

In my experience as a boy, the *res angustae domi* of the country physician permitted only a short attendance at the boarding-school before the course at the University, and required that the beginnings of my education be at the public school. Yet I remember there the engrossing Burritt's *Geography of the Heavens*, with the celestial chart and its mythological forms, which still appear to me in the sky, in place of the mere geometric figures you see there.

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Sometimes I wonder what substitute the preparatory school of to-day, commendable as it so often is, supplies for this elementary training in the rudiments of astronomy—capable of furnishing so much genuine satisfaction throughout life, in enabling one merely to know the stars in their constellation groupings.

To many of us this glory of the heavens is not more real than to the young Irish school-boy, of whom this story was told, when the disappointing Halley's Comet was the object of so much sky-gazing. A public-school teacher took some of his pupils into one of our parks for a view of the mighty traveler through space. Though it was not to be seen, this youngster, in his enthusiasm, thought he had identified it when he saw the brilliant Rigel or Betelgeuse. He was rebuked by being told that he was pointing to Orion. His surprise was evidenced by his comment: "Orion, is it? Well! well! but I t'ought all the stars was Greeks."

Be sure, however, that your knowledge of the heavens justifies the laugh you may be disposed to indulge in over this, lest Horace, who could write the suggestive Satire as well as the Ode, ask you:

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*Quid rides? mutato nomine de te  
Fabula narratur;*

Nevertheless darkness is not far off and all digression must cease. Once more back to the rod and the treasures it has in store for the patient angler. Here at the turn in the brook, where it eddies around the gnarled root of a towering scarlet maple, I promise you there awaits the adept a trout of goodly proportions and rare beauty. No need now to consider your back-cast, for it is not the seductive fall of the fly that is to serve you; for down almost on your knees, you are to let it so drift in the whirling, chattering little current, that it will be swept around as a tempting morsel into the unseen pool. Yes it was good management and a resulting trout worth while.

Now as we walk through this pool—for you will not get another rise here—surely the sight of the deer just beyond, leisurely and unafraid at his daily watercress meal, and another and still another, must persuade you that you are far from the customary haunts of many an unfortunate fellow in the world.

I sometimes marvel that the true fisherman, even after his experience with salmon and other

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big fish, can ever lose his zest for the trout-brook. To the true lover of nature and the rod, it is possible to find here a restfulness which one must seek long and often in vain for elsewhere. Granted that the one is a more ambitious, engrossing pastime than the other; by no means is this the whole story. For do we not too often ignore what is simple and full of charm for that which is grand and imposing? Do you remember what Carlyle says in one of his essays—where he is often more satisfying than when peering at the world as the cynic or at least severe critic, or painting heroic canvases of the vivid history which has made epochs? He is speaking of Burns:

While the Shakespeares and Miltons roll on like mighty rivers through the country of Thought, bearing fleets of traffickers and assiduous pearl-fishers on their waves, this little valclusa fountain will also arrest the eye; for this also is of nature's own and most cunning workmanship, bursts from the depths of the earth with a full, gushing current into the light of day; and often will the traveler turn aside to drink of its clear waters and muse among its rocks and pines!

Now the limit of the "take" has been reached and your creel is full, for fortunately you have been industrious while I have been merely idle



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and talkative. So you will have more leisure to see the wood-duck—and hear him, too, for he is worth listening to—as he darts with his variegated brilliant plumage across the sky; to notice many a red-start and jolly chickadee and towhee, and listen to those satisfying notes of the catbird, which, if so disposed, you can appropriate to yourself as his chatty congratulations over your expert handling of the rod. There too, are the red-winged blackbird and the flicker with their beauty of plumage and grace of flight, and the half-dozen warblers that chirp gaily enough though what they have to say is not much of a warble. But the song-sparrow and the vesper-sparrow and the brown thrasher off in the clearing, will provide you with a genuine melody, while the catbird—after those congratulations—will reproduce for you the songs of all bird neighbors, so as to convince you that mimicry is a goodly part of his stock in trade. Here, low down among the boughs, is another black and white specimen of what some facetious person might term the *lucus a non lucendo* species—the warbler that does not warble. Unfortunately, it will be too late for us to hear the joyful orioles whis-

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ting away, as only they have the knack for, while they hang their purse-nests on the topmost limbs of the grand elms which provide for us such bountiful shade about the old Club-house. But you shall have this enjoyment in the morning.

We have passed the Shanty and Bunces—what memory for us here in those old names—until now Deep Water sends us out of the brook to the shore for our mile walk home.

On leaving these waters, as if to persuade you that this really is enchanted ground, that plaintive song in the distance is from the raucous-throated blue jay — unprepossessing in everything but plumage, some suppose. No bird-book I know of properly describes the nesting note of the blue jay; perhaps it is not sung elsewhere.

Then from the swampy depths, what a symphony of sound there is, which only the thrush has the genius for! Do you recall Edward Rowland Sill's lines:

The thrush sings high on the topmost bow,—  
Louder, louder, low again; and now  
He has changed his tree,—you know not how,  
For you saw no flitting wing.

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All the notes of the forest throng,  
Flute, reed, and string, are in his song;  
Never a fear knows he, nor wrong,  
Nor a doubt of anything.

Small room for care in that soft breast;  
All weather that comes is to him the best,  
While he sees his mate close on her nest,  
And the woods are full of spring.

He has lost his last year's love, I know,—  
He, too,—but 'tis little he keeps of woe;  
For a bird forgets in a year, and so  
No wonder the thrush can sing.

Yet if you listen intently, perhaps in that  
note you may hear something of the lament  
over the loss of the old love.

Now the day which has made history for  
each of us is past—for never with all my  
familiarity with it, do I wade this brook with-  
out a lively sense of thanksgiving, that for me  
its beauty can never grow old—and we go back  
to the beginning, to that group of men to whom  
I have attempted to prepare you for an intro-  
duction, and who will greet and entertain you  
as a Prince of the blood.

As we saunter along, it seems to me that the  
obligation is mine for having been permitted to

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bring you here, rather than yours for having been asked to come. Many a time I have longed for such an opportunity as this, when with an appreciative guest I might wander on through these streams and woods and fields, in the company too of the Masters who were privileged to write great thoughts for the true interpretation of all we have seen and heard and talked of.

What a theme, too, I have had in that sentiment among the members here, though as from time to time I have referred to it, it has seemed to me that the shrug of the shoulders betrayed only the patient and not the acquiescing listener! Perhaps you, along with so many others are disposed to frown upon any exhibition of sentiment, as somewhat beneath the dignity of men grown to maturity. If so the view is wrong and at best plausible—only because sentiment is often confounded with some modern-day notions of sentimentality, and the man of sentiment (would that the resourceful in word coinage would give him a name, Sentimentist even I could tolerate) with the sentimentalist. The two things and the two beings, nevertheless, are as wide apart and with as little in

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common as pride and vanity, virility and effeminacy, courage and bravado, emotion and affectation, as a walk and a strut.

Sentiment has come to have its slightly discredited signification, very much as mirth has come to convey the suggestion of frivolity—not merely because of over-indulgence in it, but of any indulgence in inappropriate time, place, and circumstance. We are not for this reason to hold sentiment in light regard, unless we wish to have many of our conclusions reflect error. There are occasions—and they are not so infrequent as many of us realize—when we must roughly brush sentiment aside, as we do the dust when it threatens to be a nuisance to the comfort and well-being of others as well as of ourselves. Still the loss would be immeasurable and irreparable, if either dust or sentiment should disappear from our lives.

Fortunately for our own good we are not permitted to destroy or change the character of dust, but only to brush it aside so that it may continue to fulfill its part in the economy and the beauty of the world. But sentiment we can, if we will, destroy or transform into quite another thing which—to draft into service ex-

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pressive slang—may be said to be “gush”; and when sentiment has degenerated into this it is all but dead. Merely because we see the abuse of sentiment among some of its unthinking votaries, do not let us cease to be grateful that in the big world too there is this sentiment which has grown here into such flower and strength.

The scientist now tells us that but for dust—objectionable and uninviting as it so often is—water would no longer be precipitated in rain for the thirsting earth; and that if dust did not intervene between us and the sights we see, nature would be without much of her glory and the sky no longer beautiful and blue. And when we cease to behold men and things with vision steeped in sentiment, we shall have only sorry prospects in life.

Yes as I think of all this, I have well-nigh determined to run the risk of the censure of critic and cynic and put the substance of our walk and talk into print, so that there may be some record of a story which should have been told long ago.

Here among these men I should be as con-

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fidest of its appreciation, as Horace was of the favorable judgment of mankind when he penned his *non omnis moriar*: for they, if none others, would understand its meaning and its spirit. Of that much at least I am certain.

Then, too, there is the probability that our own children—and it may be their children too as time goes on and they in turn take the vacant chairs here—would turn its pages so as to learn how they as well may repeat for themselves such a rambling journey as we have made together to-day; and that is an inviting probability.

And it is barely possible too that a few kindred spirits in that outside world, should they come across the story, would welcome it if only for its sentiment.

\* \* \* \* \*

Well at last here you are, late at night though it be, in my room where so much of my life centers; where you may sleep to the music of the waters as they go over the dam to the old mill-race below, and so on to Great River and to the bay and to the sea. Abundant too are those waters as well as musical; and surely in these days

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“more water glideth by the mill  
Than wots the miller of.”

for there is no miller now in that mill.

You can dream here of what you saw and what you heard while the sun was in the heavens and after it had set; and of to-morrow and of more fishing on your part and less talking on my part, and when you are to know the strike and run and struggle of the striped bass. As you awake and see the dawn-clouds and then the sun in the mirror-lake at your feet, and make ready for another day you will understand how hopeless it would be, if you undertook to give adequate expression of your gratitude for your excursion into this wonderland of ours.

What, are you too immune from the sleeping sickness? Well no threat to postpone the saying of Good Night has terrors for me, my friend, for I am an old offender here they say, in postponing that time. I have my justification too, for I dislike to have these critics of mine denied the high privilege of sitting up late themselves so as to be able, among other things, to tell me why I ought to be in the land



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of dreams. Moreover I read poetry and am able to call upon Shelley to be my advocate.

Good night? ah! no; the hour is ill  
Which severs those it should unite;  
Let us remain together still,  
Then it will be *good* night.

Now that my critics know the real reason for my late hours, will they ever have the ungraciousness to call me to account again?

Then too—for we must not ignore the earthly things—there is that toothsome, seductive, midnight supper at which Carl is host.

Yes, you are right, it was a feast in more senses than one—that dinner, where all these Knights sat around the one Table, which was just as well provided with good things to eat and drink and see and hear and as much entitled to be famous, as if it had been quite Round.

You still wish to ask me questions about some of these men? Well, for this once, you shall have your way, seeing that I have been so long master of ceremonies. Of *facile princeps* George you already know. The member on his left, whom as you say you heard referred

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to as “De—— something or other,” and who had the odd, affectionate nickname of Goickie, and who told stories in such style, that you began to smile long before the story was well under way, and were laughing yourself tired before it was finished—why he is as kindly and considerate as his wit is keen.

When the spirit moves him, as it so often does, what he says is “argument for a week, laughter for a month, and a good jest forever.”

A former member here had an uncontrollable passion for the purchase of inexpensive artificial flies, but a positive genius in effecting, step by step, profitable exchanges of them with other members, for the best to be had for love or money. Who but this man could have said that the member had succeeded in getting together probably the finest collection anywhere on earth, as the result of his “Arbitrage in flies”?

One of our members (not indisposed on occasion to have a commercial stake in the broils of our sister nations on this side of the Atlantic) had a touch of rheumatism in his arm. Others like our mirth-provider can play golf. Yet who but he could have said, by way of comment

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upon our member's ailment, that he would not care to give that man, even in such condition, "a stroke a hole" in selling a battle-ship to a South American Republic?

These two buildings like wings of the Club-house, are "Annexes" in which some of the members have their own rooms, varying in desirability. Perhaps the least desirable one of them all, had been owned by A. I happened to mention at the dinner-table that B had bought the room of A. Who but this man of infinite jest, could have said that he was pained at my regrettable lack of precision in speech—inasmuch as the fact was that instead of B having bought the room of A, A had sold the room to B?

Who but he could have said—no I must desist or we shall never get to the others. Yet before we take leave of this genial soul, let me say Heaven be praised that, in this work-a-day world (and he has been of it) there is one man who disports himself with speech, like those in the Mermaid of old, as if he

Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest  
And resolved to live a fool the rest  
Of his dull life.

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Time does not suffice for me to be able to tell you all about Sam, who was, pleasant to remember, on my right. I may say confidentially, that now and then he very solemnly pretends to wear a frown, but we know it is only a mask—so thin and transparent that we can all see the engaging laugh behind it. Accept the statement from me that he is of such abounding charity, that if he were a judge and held Court Sessions here, the most hardened offender would be likely to escape punishment, or at most receive some kind of benevolent reprimand—even though the tears the fellow wept were of the Shakespearian variety, born in an onion. There are the other Sams too—fit company for these members here.

Yes, that was Frank on the right of George the First and on my left—thus sandwiching me so favorably, and yet leaving me near the throne; and though there is only one Frank, he is a host in himself. But let him be warned that, if by any accident he should ever part company with his smile and jovial greeting, no one would be able to recognize him and he would pass for a stranger within these gates.

There were the several Georges on the one

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side of the table, honored in their several walks of life, whom you would admire and like better, the oftener you had the privilege of meeting them here. One of them is as kindly in thought and word and deed as he is lavish in his "no trump" bids, and this is saying a volume; all of them are as good fellows as you would care to meet or overtake in a day's travel, and the George on the other side has a heart as big as his frame, and as generous as his greeting. Never were there "Four Georges" or five Georges like these. Alas, not long ago another George beloved by us all went away to join the absent ones, and our Bayard, *sans peur et sans reproche* as the Chevalier of old, and the other dear fellows—Cochrane and Gussie and Phil and Suydam—went away too.

Harry across the table—as young in spirit as his own boys whose big brother he really is—as you thought, is a true friend of mine (as he has been of many another) and has been so since the days when his friendship meant much. Hal by his side is a man you may be sure of in foul weather as in fair weather, stanch and steadfast in the faith of friendship. Suppose

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we say of the Harrys, Hal, and Henry alike, that they are here at home and abroad in the world, Prince Hals? And this is saying much; for as we recall, Prince Hal, though a frolicsome soul, yet had the dignity—but none of the “false and idle ceremony”—of a king among men.

No, John and his companionable neighbor are not brothers but father and son—the son growing more like the “Père” as the days go by. Nor, however long the ex-mayor may live, would he wish to listen to higher praise or more comforting prophecy than this; and if, as is our privilege, you often saw them together like two playfellows, you would know that their love for each other is little short of a religion.

Who was the one sitting near them? Why, that was my partner. I ought not, perhaps, to speak much of my own family, but let me say that, in the score of years we have kept company together, I have never heard him utter an ungenerous or unjust word; and you will search long for his like.

Yes, you are right, there is only one Howard here; but he is the peer of all the Howards anywhere and of any time.

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But one Lucius, too; and none can shoot shot straighter than he with gun or the witty yet always kindly word. He is the Poet Laureate of the Club. He can compose the Limerick and the whimsical doggerel verse with the facility of the best at the art—and art it is, make no mistake; for it calls for not only sense but sensibility. Even with the punning rhyme he is a past master, agreeing doubtless with Thomas Hood that

However critics may take offense,  
A double meaning has double sense.

Would that I were at liberty to quote a few stanzas from the delightful cantos of the Iliad of Islip, about the genial “Mayor” and the other heroes. Many a man responsible for solemn lines of poetry would make no headway with the kind that Lucius and his guild can write.

Nor do men of distinction hesitate to enjoy such verse. President Wilson is fond of it, and no wonder, since he lived in an atmosphere where such things were cultivated abundantly. Laurence Hutton, of delightful memory, once told me that there was no word in the English

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language for which one of the genial spirits of Princeton could not furnish a rhyme. There was never any doubt of this after the evening, when at a little gathering he was challenged to find one for chrysanthemum. There was no interval between the challenge and the lines:

The boy that can his anthem hum  
Shall have his white chrysanthemum.

Hutton himself was an adept at the art, though very unappreciative of his accomplishment. One delightful day during a summer we were both spending at North East Harbor, I was reading with him the proof-sheets of one of his "Literary Landmark" books. While we were chatting together, he asked me in his peculiar way if I could explain why in the world it was that having written . . . . books he had received for the past year only \$ . . . . in royalties. My answer was that I could think of no reason, except perhaps that he had gotten into the way of publishing the kind of book which was far away from the charm of such a story as *A Boy I Knew*. I added that many of the lines I had heard him recite when engagingly reminiscent, as he so uniformly was, did belong to literature. He pooh-poohed this,



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but doubtless you will agree with me that I was right and he was wrong as you hear the following:

It seems that Hutton and a friend of his, while spending the winter in Rome, had a rather depressing attack of indigestion from too much chianti. After some search they found a hostelry in which fairly palatable beer could be gotten, and thenceforth beer was substituted for claret. Shortly afterward his friend went to Verona, in order to make a study of some of the finer façades there, and facetiously sent to Hutton a glowing account of how much better Verona beer was than Roman beer. In his special-delivery retort, Hutton, as you will see, was quite equal to the occasion:

I do not wish to shock you, sir,  
Or fill you full of fear,  
But this I hope you won't forget  
That Romeo and Juliet,  
According to Shakespeare,  
When living in Verona once  
Were laid out on one bier.

L'Envoi

So beware of Verona beer.

August, with a boy of the same name sitting by him, you knew. His father, too, was a

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member of the Club, so that there have been three generations of the family here. A long time ago that father, in speaking one day of the things which are of moment in life, said to me that one of his chief joys as the years went by was that this son was to be the worthy custodian of his name and fortune. More than this has come true so diligent has the son been with his inheritance; for he has linked that name inseparably with enterprises of mighty import to this generation. By the construction of our subway system he has given New York City the opportunity to become a real metropolis, and he is now building the Cape Cod Canal to shorten the route and lessen the perils of the sea for the ships of commerce. Each enterprise, too, had previously been pronounced impracticable by men of broad vision and large experience; but, as has been said in the varying phrases of ancient and modern days, the gods favor the brave. Yet his good-fellowship to those who know him well, is quite the equal of his wisdom and foresight; and thus you see the ease with which, under right conditions, one can put a biography into a paragraph.

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There were more than one William—sweet Williams, I should term them, if I dared be so facetious. One of them you heard now and then ask the dealer at cards to “wait a moment,” before supplying the demand of the player next him. But all of them would make the same request of you out in the larger world, if thereby they might have the privilege in advance of yourself of doing a good turn to the other fellow in life.

The Admiral there—the equal of any that ever trod the deck of a ship—as you recall, resigned his commission because a politically late-departed high government official insisted that an M.D. should command the hospital ship. By the way, when this happened one of America’s best humorists, in the choicest of letters of congratulation to the Admiral on the uncompromising stand he had taken, expressed deep concern as to the report that this same high official was to put a chiropodist in command of our foot-soldiers.

Yes there were Louis and Crawford who are brothers of us all, too; and the Club would pass an unanimous vote—for it would summarily expel any member who voted “no”—if it would

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be effective to compel more frequent visits from them both and their absent brother as well. The Governor and Charles over there—such is the salutary atmosphere of this place—were, I am sure, swapping views having little to do with the manufacturing-plant or the syndicate agreement. If I did not think that Fairfax—a man of big affairs and big sympathies—would discharge me as his hired legal man, I could tell you that out of the South there has come no finer product in the form and substance of the true man than he. I could wish you no better luck than to sit often, as you did for a moment to-night, by the side of our only Honorary Member entertaining “Hub Clarke” and listen to his once-upon-a-time fact and legend of the Club. It is a pity that the yarns he spins are not likely to be preserved in the printed page, for he shows no disposition to make authorship his hobby. Still he is not too old to learn anything he turns his mind to; and I assure him that if he writes as well as he talks, his book will be one of the season’s “best sellers” here and elsewhere.

You are right, Edwin is in fact what he seemed to you, a genial, whole-souled fellow;

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and I have no trifling admiration for his intelligence, seeing that he invariably addresses me as "The Learned One." The others here, to my humiliation, when they refer to me as the Owl, have no thought of that bird's wisdom but only of his proclivity for sitting up late o' nights.

There was Aaron Pennington, strong of wind and limb, who can row as well as play with the youngest here, a veritable host in himself. Surely wisdom has reserved for him: "Length of days in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honor." Heaven grant that the length of days may be prolonged to the one hundred and twenty-three years of Aaron of old; and I do not need to tell you that the riches of his honor will keep pace with the years. None more than companionable, jovial Geraldyn and Arthur and "Captain Phil" and "Doctor Jack" and "Brad" and Walter and Casimir are surer of the generous welcome within these walls. Then too there were Charlie and Otto and John B. and Edward, whose names are writ large in the financial world. Yet no one here envies them that distinction, but on the contrary we rather commiserate

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with them because they are not oftener here, rather than there.

Percy of the younger generation, to the despair of mothers still remains wedded to the main business of his life, of providing a delightful time for the other fellow—notwithstanding the persuasive example of his partner Benedick Buell, who comes back to us now and then with never so charming a Beatrice.

Last but by no means least, there was Fred of Commodore fame. Yes, he has reduced to ownership and possession a goodly portion of the world's goods, but he has in still greater abundance the esteem of his acquaintances and the love of his friends.

I wish some of the other members had been with us, so that I might tell you of them too; but take it from me that they are all congenial company with the rest, and they could not possibly have a more acceptable or a more eloquent tribute.

Let me add to these biographies in epitome two incidents illustrative of the abounding sentiment here.

While shooting once in a "Blind" with the Admiral, and speaking of this distinguishing

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trait among us, he suggested that in a sense his outfit was a very good illustration of it. For, said he, "without the knowledge of any of the owners, I have on the hat of George, the undercoat of Sam, the overcoat of Harry, the boots of George, and the gloves of Arthur, and have taken the gun of Edwin and the ammunition of Howard." He added by way of comment, that nowhere else in the lands he knew of—and he is a well-traveled man—was there the fellowship which would permit one to do likewise, without fear of pains and penalties or at least of the forbidding, disinheriting look.

Recently one of the members of the Club was stricken down by a great grief which took from him, for the time being, all the joy and hope of life. After a while he returned one day when only a few members were likely to be present. As I put my arm through his and wandered over to this room where we now are—so that I might hand him a little book containing much of real consolation, even to one stricken as he had been—he said to me with breaking voice and tear-filled eye: "How like a great peace it is to come back home and be with the boys again."

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If you would know the avocations of these men—for their vocation is to be members of this Club—why you can consult the Directory of Directors, or the Social Register, or the Blue Book, or a Who's Who compilation or what you will, and satisfy yourself; but the search would not interest me or them.

Understanding now all that I have told you and all that you yourself have seen of these men, are you not prepared to believe with me that as they filed out from the dining-room into our one big room, they were joined by those non-resident ones who used to frequent these feasts, but who alas will never be here again in the earthly sense?

We referred during the day to Longfellow's *Robert Burns*. Do you think that Longfellow was entitled to extend a warmer welcome to that poet of another land, than we to these dear old companions of ours? No, never let one of them have less from us!

His presence haunts this room to-night,  
A form of mingled mist and light  
From that far coast.  
Welcome beneath this room of mine!  
Welcome! this vacant chair is thine,  
Dear guest and ghost!



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Perhaps someone may afterward seek to persuade you that you merely went with a garrulous host to a prosaic club, but you will know how foolish such a notion is, for you have been more than a king in his kingdom this day. And as we say Good Night, surely you will agree with me that these men would prefer that you remember them—not as distinguished and successful in that outside world—but as members here in this abode of reasonableness and fellowship and sentiment and of nature's loveliness; where the Right of Sanctuary permits the service of no warrant for their apprehension by Black Care or sordid thought, and where many a reassuring dream of life comes true.

Good Night then let it be; and if you care to consult my wishes think of me here among them all just as

ONE OF THE MEMBERS.













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