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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK A HERO AND A GREAT MAN ***



A Hero and a Great Man

Story by
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A Hero and A Great Man

We hang the petty thieves and appoint
the great ones to public office
- Aesop

They say knowledge is power.
Power walks with ambition.
Ambition will devour
A man without vision.

Through a turbid town,
A great man walks.
Through a troubled town,
A great man talks.

He tells tales of bravery.
On attention he feeds.
With speech most savory
He boasts of great deeds.

He is well respected.
He enjoys much recognition.



He hopes to be selected
For a prestigious position.

He likes to be seen.
He likes to be heard.
When he is on the scene,
He fills the air with word.



As greatness is a need
This need is his fate.
He is as great indeed,
As his need to feel great.

One day as he was walking,
He happened to overhear
Two girls that were talking.
He turned his curious ear.

As their words he overheard,
He felt his aid was required.
Always attracted to the spoken word
To the girls he inquired,

“Why do you girls carry on
In such a vociferous way?
To you my attention is drawn
Upon this beautiful day!!!”

And to him the girls inquired,
“Where does the sun go at night?”
He knew an answer was required.
But he knew not what was right.

Where it goes, he could not say
As he covertly looked about.
Being a master of delay,
He calmly searched for an out.

A man was passing by
And overheard this conversation.
He thought he could supply,

A goodly explanation.



Details of this man are unknown
For he lived a life withdrawn.
He prefers to be quiet and alone.
A common life he has forgone.

You see, he was not like you and me.
His methods were strange and new.
A different world his eyes would see.
A world in which others would have no clue.

Despite his odd looks.
He is more than he appears.
He has read many books,
Yet still wet behind the ears.

Every culture to its own will conform.
The mind of the crowd is a shallow creek.
As this man was far from the norm,
He was seen by the people as a freak.

He values his peace.
He is devoted to thought.
This is his release.
Nothing finer could be bought.

As peace is a need
This need is his fate.
Attempting to run from greed,
On simplicity he would concentrate.

He never felt the peace
That he needed to feel.
He would never cease
To search for what's real.

If work was completed
According to plan,
It should not be repeated
By a frustrated man.

The only exception
For such repetition
Is the struggle for perfection,
Or the folly of a politician.

When he did a deed,
When he found satisfaction,
He could see no need
For any further action.

If nothing was there broken
Or no deed to be done,
No answer to be spoken,
Then action was there none.

If there is no disruption
And everything seems in balance,
Wasteful action is corruption
Of the purest talents.

A problem of complexity



Needs a simple solution.
A mind in perplexity
Is lost in convolution.

Now for the girls' question,
He felt he knew, really.
He had a suggestion,
And he offered it freely.



"A weary sun will hide
To give a new night birth.
The sun then goes to the other side
Of our blessed Mother Earth."

The problem seemed to be solved.
The great man saw this.
He went to get involved.
For attention he could not miss.

The freak's words had merit.
An advantage had been gained,
But the great man could not bear it.
His status must be maintained.

The freak's words he twisted
With his eloquent speech.
His charisma could not be resisted.
It was he who would teach.

He took the freak's idea
And made it his own.
No man would be right
Except he alone.

He devised his own story
Using the freak's word.
He would take the glory
And make the freak seem absurd.

"He is not entirely correct."
The great man thus began.
"I mean no disrespect
But I am, of course, a great man!"



“He was on the right track.
This I won’t deny.
What truth may he lack,
I will attempt to supply.

He does not know, it seems,
That our grateful relation
To the Sun’s warm beams
Lies in the Earth’s rotation.

If you but wait,
This problem I will solve.
Upon its axis straight,
Does the Earth revolve.

As our great God
Is wont to create,
Upon this imaginary rod
Does the Earth rotate.

The sun remains still
While the Earth moves and spins
Where the sun’s warmth may fill
A new day on Earth begins.

Just as the moon is the reason
For waves in the ocean
The change of the season
Is the Earth in Her motion.

It is basic science.
The sun could never hide.
Our Earth is in complete reliance
Of the Sun on every side.”

The girls were amazed
At this great display of speech.
Into the great man’s eyes they gazed
As he proceeded to teach.

A lesson he had taught
Not unlike a story compiled
From a borrowed thought
With it’s author left reviled.

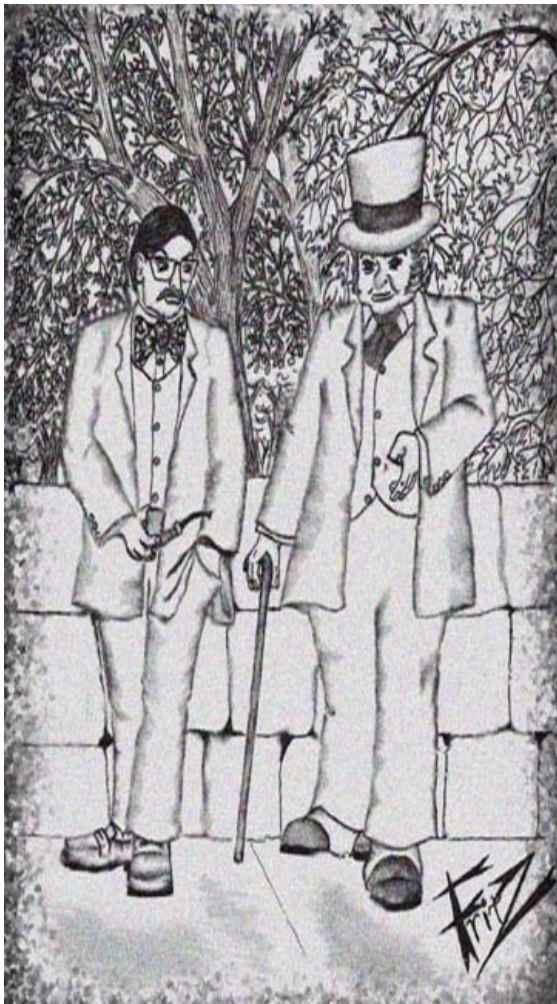
The freak was appalled
Watching innocence beguiled.
The girls were enthralled
While the great man smiled.

Who was being deceived?
The freak felt some dismay.
The great man the girls believed.
And the freak just walked away.

It seemed childish to contest.
He saw no reason to fight.
He thought best not to protest.
Both of their answers were right.

Over time the great man grew
To earn a great man’s reputation.
His words would cause much ado
And even some speculation.

A few weeks quickly went by
During which time came a threat.
No rain had fallen from the sky,



But the ground seemed to be wet.



Water trickled like blood from a gash.
Soon the streets turned to mud.
People could not walk without a splash.
There was fear that the town would flood.

Slowly, this problem would develop.
The water would continue to run.
Eventually, the whole town it would envelop
If something was not soon done.

Water does not feel sorrow nor care
Wherever it trickles and roams.
The people were becoming more aware,
For it was soon in their homes.

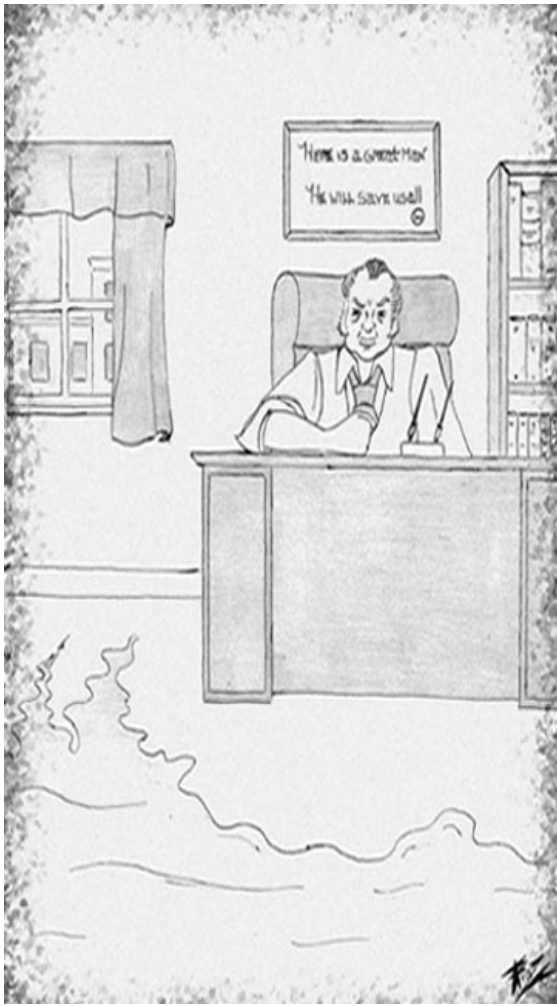
To the great man the people went
For some kind of solution.
There must be a way to prevent
Any further ground dilution.

The great man promised thus,
"To you I can assure,
For any problem threatening us
For sure there is a cure!"

"I will stop this silly little flood.
Upon the great man you can rely.
The ground may be covered in mud
But, somewhere, must a solution lie!"

In his office the great man sat
Staring at the water on the floor.
He knew not how to deal with that,
But he knew there would be more.

Desperately trying to think of a plan
He repeatedly read the plaque on the wall,
"Here is a Great Man



He will save us all!"

The sparkling water had a sense of beauty
As it reflected in the plaque.
A painful reminder of his duty,
A leader must never slack.

So, eagerly, he donned his heavy boots,
And ventured forth for a walk
Through a series of muddy routes,
For to the people he must talk.

The great man noticed one man solitary
As he trekked a turbid trail.
To the woods with buckets he did carry
In a struggling effort his home to bail.

Though his face he could not see,
He knew that this man to be clever and brave.
He could not dwell on who it could be
For the great man had a town to save.

He thought of the people as his duty required
To give them this instruction.
By this sight he was inspired
To save the town from destruction.

"Together we must pull!
This I must accent!"
So each man scooped a bucket full
And into the woods with the water they went.



Soon this method had no effect.
The water continued to rise.
The people were beginning to suspect,
This is not where the solution lies.

The great man saw this method would fail
But he knew he must not quit.
Again he trekked the turbid trail
To this problem he did commit.

Then the great man saw a lone man dig
A trench in which the water would drop.
He dug it deep and he dug it big.
Perhaps, in this trench, the water would stop!

He thought of the people, as his duty required
To give them this instruction.
By this site he was again inspired
To save the town from destruction.

"We must dig a great ditch
In which the water will drop.
Into this we all must pitch
If the water we are to stop!

A solution to this we must seek.
Look to me in your time of need.
Though the situation may now look bleak,
We will succeed with my lead!"

Upon his shoulder, he felt a hand.
It was, in fact, the odd man.
The great man, at first, did not understand.
Then the freak thus began,



"You may be great and the people strong,
But this won't stop the water's force.
This will not work for very long.
We must stop it at the source."

The great man let out a great big laugh,
And to the odd man he talked down.
"You think you can speak on the people's behalf?
A great man must save this town!"
"We all share the same concern.
Your offer I do appreciate,
However, to experience, we must now turn.
This issue is too great."

As the great man continued to give his speech
The freak had turned and walked away.
A solution soon someone must reach
No matter what the great man would say.

Soon the town will certainly be
Just a huge pool of mud.
It is not really hard to see
That nothing is stopping this great flood.

His mind was cloudy and his feet were muddy.
While the great man talked and talked,
The freak used this time to think and study,
So in search of the source he walked.

The freak followed the water alone.
Deep into the woods he was led.
There he found a slab of stone.
On the stone it read,

"In the event of a flood
This lesson should be learned
Unless you like to live in mud,
The valve must be turned."

Below these words there was an arrow



And it was pointing to the creek.
The creek had begun to overflow.
This was, no doubt, the source of the leak.

The freak was indeed happy to learn
How the flood had been produced.
He found the valve and gave it a turn.
And the water immediately was reduced.

He went back up the muddy trail
And told the people what he had done.
But no one would believe his tale,
Not a single, solitary one.

Afraid of being deceived,
The people showed only doubt,
"Why should he be believed?
What is he all about?"

Skepticism and emotion
Were sparked by the freak's word.
His story caused quite a commotion,
And the great man, of course, overheard.
He said, "I will solve this dispute.
Whatever the problem, there must be a plan.
Of the truth, we are in pursuit.
A great problem requires a great man!"



"I'd like a word, please come with me,"
To the freak the great man said.
The freak complied with his plea.
To the great man's office he was led.

Once in his office, he closed the door.
He could not wait to ask,
"What did you do, I want to hear more,
About how you pursued this task."

As the freak began to describe
The valve at the creek and slab of stone.
The great man was not willing to subscribe
To this story by a man who lives alone.

The great man was in disbelief.
He began to give the freak a speech.
His talk was not short, nor was it brief.
To the freak, a lesson he would teach.

He told the freak about being great,
And that by his word he would rule.
Being a master at debate,
He made the freak look like a fool.

From the office the freak went,
Stuck on the words the great man had said.
He walked the path back home in resent,
As the great man's voice he heard in his head.

It's obvious that the town is his.
He could hear the people as he walked through.
"Who in the world does he think he is?
He thinks he is a great man too!"



The farther he walked the angrier he became,
To think that words could outshine skill.
"Great man, bah...what a name!
I'll show them all, I will!"

Into the forest, he marched in retaliation.
He felt the need to settle the score.
He could not bear this indignation.
This town was not his home anymore.

He found again the slab of stone.
He found again the valve by the creek.
Never before had he felt so alone.
Revenge now did he seek.

In his anger, he turned the valve back.
The water began to overflow.
He thought, for a moment, about this attack.
Then he decided the people must know.

On the way back, he felt some guilt.
His conscience was big and his mind was young.
Upon action his existence was built.
Once back in town, he held his tongue.

The town again began to flood.
And the people again began to worry.
The ground again had turned to mud.
To their buckets again the people would hurry.

The efforts again the great man would direct,
But an effort repeated is a lesson taught.
Soon the bucket method had no effect,
And this sent the great man into thought.

The man with the bucket, he only saw from afar.
And the man in the trench, never showed his face.
He began to feel that this was bizarre,
And then this pattern, he began to trace.

These men were indeed one and the same!
The great man was struck with revelation.
This peculiar freak, with no name,



Had been the source of his inspiration!

He headed down the muddy trail,
Into the forest he would withdraw.
There he dropped his water pale.
He could not believe what he saw.

There he found a slab of stone
Just as the freak had said.
He wondered how this could go unknown
As the words on the stone he read,

“In the event of a flood
This lesson should be learned
Unless you like to live in mud,
The valve must be turned.”

Below these words there was an arrow
And it was pointing to the creek.
The creek had begun to overflow.
No doubt this was the source of the leak.

The great man was indeed happy to learn
How the flood had been produced.
He found the valve and gave it a turn.
And the water immediately was reduced.



He went back up the muddy trail,
And told the people what he had done.
The people all gathered to hear his tale,
And all were intrigued, but one.

“Knowledge is power,” the great man began.
“A man who knows power is a man who is wise.
The greater the problem, the greater the man
Who can find the answer that’s little in size.

Great men do heroic deeds.
Over the common men they tower.
Great men are what this town needs...
Men who face danger, and do not cower.

I am a great man, but a hero am I?
That’s a title I cannot claim.
There are those whose talent we may deny,
But they are heroes just the same.”

As they heard those words so profound,
The people hailed the great man and cheered.
The freak looked down at the ground.
He knew to them he would always seem weird.

The girls who argued about the sun walked by.
They offered him words so sweet,
“You’re a nice man, there’s no need to cry.
He’s a great man, and he can’t be beat.”

The freak looked at the girls and smiled.
He could see that a leader is all they need.
It’s noble to protect the innocence of a child.
“Yes,” he said, “He is a great man indeed.”

The End

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