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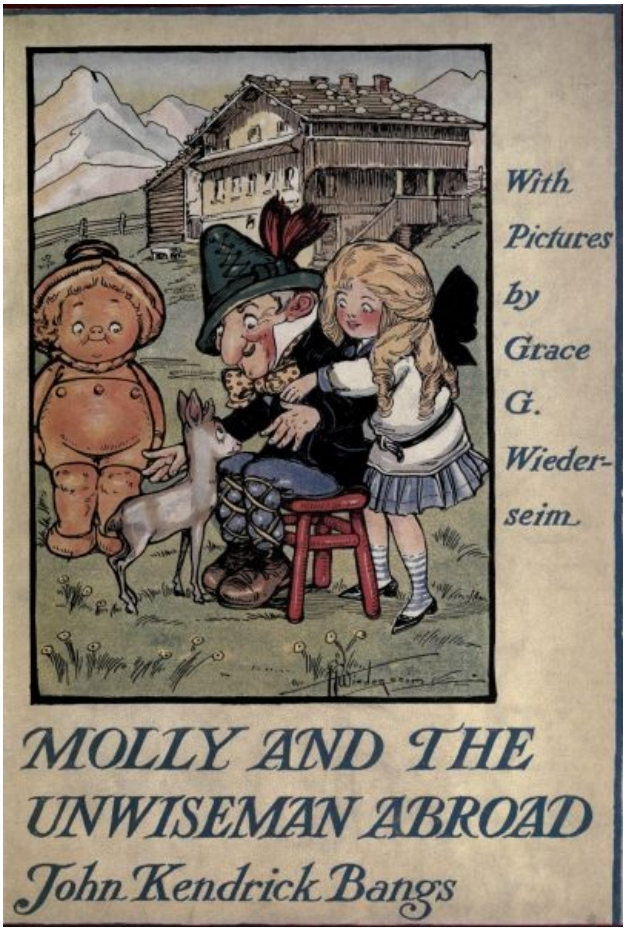


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# MOLLIE AND

# THE UNWISEMAN ABROAD

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**"I'VE BEEN TRYING TO FIND OUT HOW TO TIE A SINKER TO THIS SOUP"**
***Page 47***

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# MOLLIE AND THE UNWISEMAN ABROAD

**BY**

**JOHN KENDRICK BANGS**

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***WITH ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOR BY***

**GRACE G. WIEDERSEIM**

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**PHILADELPHIA & LONDON**

**J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY**

**1910**

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**TO**

**MY FRIENDS THE CHILDREN**

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# CONTENTS



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# ILLUSTRATIONS



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# FOREWORD

## INTRODUCING TWO HEROES AND A HEROINE

### I.

There were three little folks, and one was fair—
  Oh a rare little maid was she.
Her eyes were as soft as the summer air,
  And blue as the summer sea.
Her locks held the glint of the golden sun;
  And her smile shed the sweets of May;
Her cheek was of cream and roses spun,

And dimpled the livelong day.

**II.**

The second, well he was a rubber-doll,
Who talked through a whistling hat.
His speech ran over with folderol,
But his jokes they were never flat.
He squeaked and creaked with his heart care-free
Such things as this tale will tell,
But whether asleep or at work was he
The little maid loved him well.

**III.**

The third was a man—O a very queer man!
But a funny old chap was he.
From back in the time when the world began
His like you never did see.
The things he'd "know," they were seldom so,
His views they were odd and strange,
And his heart was filled with the genial glow
Of love for his kitchen range.

**IV.**

Now the three set forth on a wondrous trip
To visit the lands afar;
And what befel on the shore, and ship,
As she sailed across the bar,
These tales will make as plain as the day
To those who will go with me
And follow along in the prank and play
Of these, my travellers three.

[Pg 13]

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# I.

## MOLLIE, WHISTLEBINKIE, AND THE UNWISEMAN

Mollie was very much excited, and for an excellent reason. Her Papa had at last decided that it was about time that she and her Rubber-Doll, Whistlebinkie, saw something of this great big beautiful world, and had announced that in a few weeks they would all pack their trunks and set sail for Europe. Mollie had always wanted to see Europe, where she had been told Kings and Queens still wore lovely golden crowns instead of hats, like the fairies in her story-book, and the people spoke all sorts of funny languages, like French, and Spanish, and real live Greek. As for Whistlebinkie, he did not care much where he went as long as he was with Mollie, of whom like the rest of the family he was very fond.

"But," said he, when he was told of the coming voyage, "how about Mr. Me?" [Pg 14]

Now Mr. Me was a funny old gentleman who lived in a little red house not far away from Mollie's home in the country. He claimed that his last name was Me, but Mollie had always called him the Unwiseman because there was so much he did not know, and so little that he was willing to learn. The little girl loved him none the less for he was a very good natured old fellow, and had for a long time been a play-mate of the two inseparable companions, Mollie and Whistlebinkie. The latter by the way was called Whistlebinkie because whenever he became excited he blew his words through the small whistle in the top of his hat, instead of speaking them gently with his mouth, as you and I would do.

"Why, we'll have to invite him to go along, too, if he can afford it," said Mollie. "Perhaps we'd better run down to his house now, and tell him all about it."

"Guess-sweed-better," Whistlebinkie agreed through the top of his beaver, as usual.

And so the little couple set off down the hill, and were fortunate enough to find the old gentleman at home. [Pg 15]

"Break it to him gently," whispered Whistlebinkie.

"I will," answered Mollie, under her breath, and then entering the Unwiseman's house she greeted him cheerily. "Good Morning, Mr. Me," she said.

"Is it?" asked the old gentleman, looking up from his newspaper which he was reading upside-down. "I haven't tasted it yet. I never judge a day till it's been cooked."

"Tasted it?" laughed Mollie. "Can't you tell whether a morning is good or not without tasting it?"

"O I suppose you can if you want to," replied the Unwiseman. "If you make up your mind to believe everything you see, why you can believe a morning's good just by looking at it, but I prefer to taste mine before I commit myself as to whether they are good or bad."

"Perfly-'bsoyd!" chortled Whistlebinkie through the top of his hat.

"What's that?" cried Mollie.

"Still talks through his hat, doesn't he," said the Unwiseman. "Must think it's one of these follytones." [Pg 16]

"Never-erd-o-sutcha-thing!" whistled Whistlebinkie. "What's a follytone?"

"You *are* a niggeramus," jeered the Unwiseman. "Ho! Never heard of a follytone. Ain't he silly, Mollie?"

"I don't think I ever heard of one either, Mr. Unwiseman," said Mollie.

"Well-well-well," ejaculated the Unwiseman in great surprise. "Why a follytone is one of those little boxes you have in the house with a number like 7-2-3-J-Hokoben that you talk business into to some feller off in Chicago or up in Boston. You just pour your words into the box and they fall across a wire and go scooting along like lightning to this person you're talkin' to."

"Oh," laughed Mollie. "You mean a telephone."

"I call 'em follytones," said the Unwiseman coolly. "Your voice sounds so foolish over 'em. I never tried 'em but once"—here the old man began to chuckle. "Somebody told me Philadelphia wanted me, and of course I knew right away they were putting up a joke on me because I ain't never met [Pg 17] Philadelphia and Philadelphia ain't never met me, so I just got a little squirt gun and filled it up with water and squirted it into the box. I guess whoever was trying to make me believe he was Philadelphia got a good soaking that time."

"I guess-smaybe-he-didn't," whistled Whistlebinkie.

"Well he didn't get me anyhow," snapped the Unwiseman. "You don't catch me sending my voice to Philadelphia when the chances are I may need it any minute around here to frighten burgulars away with. The idea of a man's being so foolish as to send his voice way out to Chicago on a wire with nobody to look after it, stumps me. But that ain't what we were talking about."

"No," said Mollie gravely. "We were talking about tasting days. You said you cooked them, I believe."

"That's what I said," said the Unwiseman.

"I never knew anybody else to do it," said Mollie. "What do you do it for?"

"Because I find raw days very uncomfortable," explained the Unwiseman. "I prefer fried-days." [Pg 18]

"Everyday'll be Friday by and by," carolled Whistlebinkie.

"It will with me," said the old man. "I was born on a Friday, I was never married on a Friday, and I dyed on Friday."

"You never died, did you?" asked Mollie.

"Of course I did," said the Unwiseman. "I used to have perfectly red hair and I dyed it gray so that young people like old Squeaky-hat here would have more respect for me."

"Do-choo-call-me-squeekyat!" cried Whistlebinkie angrily.

"All right, Yawpy-tile, I won't—only——" the Unwiseman began.

"Nor-yawpy-tile-neither," whistled Whistlebinkie, beginning to cry.

"Here, here!" cried the Unwiseman. "Stop your crying. Just because you're made of rubber and are waterproof ain't any reason for throwing tears on my floor. I won't have it. What do you want me to call you, Wheezikid?"

"No," sobbed Whistlebinkie. "My name's—Whizzlebinkie."

"Very well then," said the Unwiseman. "Let it be Fizzledinkie——only you must show proper [Pg 19] respect for my gray hairs. If you don't I'll have had all my trouble dyeing for nothing."

Whistlebinkie was about to retort, but Mollie perceiving only trouble between her two little friends if they went on at this rate tried to change the subject by going back to the original point of discussion. "How do you taste a day to see if it's all right?" she asked.

"I stick my tongue out the window," said the Unwiseman, "and it's a good thing to do. I remember once down at the sea-shore a young lady asked me if I didn't think it was just a sweet day, and I stuck my tongue out of the window and it was just as salt as it could be. Tasted like a pickle. 'No, ma'am, it ain't,' says I. 'Quite the opposite, it's quite briny,' says I. If I'd said it was sweet she'd have thought I was as much of a niggeramus as old Fizz——"

"Do you always read your newspaper upside-down?" Mollie put in hastily to keep the Unwiseman from again hurting Whistlebinkie's feelings.

"Always," he replied. "I find it saves me a lot of money. You see the paper lasts a great deal [Pg 20] longer when you read it upside-down than when you read it upside-up. Reading it upside-up you can go through a newspaper in about a week, but when you read it upside-down it lasts pretty nearly two months. I've been at work on that copy of the *Gazette* six weeks now and I've only got as far as the third column of the second page from the end. I don't suppose I'll reach the news on

the first column of page one much before three weeks from next Tuesday. I think it's very wasteful to buy a fresh paper every day when by reading it upside-down backwards you can make the old one last two months."

"Do-bleeve-youkn-reada-tall," growled Whistlebinkie.

"What's that?" cried the old man.

"I-don't-be-lieve-you-can-read-at-all!" said Whistlebinkie.

"O as for that," laughed the old man, "I never said I could. I don't take a newspaper to read anyhow. What's the use? Fill your head up with a lot of stuff it's a trouble to forget."

"What *do* you take it for?" asked Mollie, amazed at this confession.

"I'm collecting commas and Qs," said the Unwiseman. "I always was fond of pollywogs and pug- [Pg 21]
dogs, and the commas are the living image of pollywogs, and the letter Q always reminds me of a good natured pug-dog sitting down with his back turned toward me. I've made a tally sheet of this copy of the *Gazette* and so far I've found nine thousand and fifty-three commas, and thirty-nine pugs."

Whistlebinkie forgot his wrath in an explosion of mirth at this reply. He fairly rolled on the floor with laughter.

"Don't be foolish, Fizzledinkie," said the Unwiseman severely. "A good Q is just as good as a pug-dog. He's just as fat, has a fine curly tail and he doesn't bite or keep you awake nights by barking at the moon or make a nuisance of himself whining for chicken-bones while you are eating dinner; and as far as the commas are concerned they're better even than pollywogs, because they don't wiggle around so much or turn into bull-frogs and splash water all over the place."

"There-raintenny-fleeson-cues-sneether," whistled Whistlebinkie.

"I didn't catch that," said the Unwiseman. "Talk through your nose just once and maybe I'll be [Pg 22]
able to guess what you're trying to say."

"He says there are not any fleas on Qs," said Mollie with a reproving glance at Whistlebinkie.

"As to that I can't say," said the Unwiseman. "I never saw any—but anyhow I don't object to fleas on pug-dogs."

"You don't?" cried Mollie. "Why they're horrid, Mr. Unwiseman. They bite you all up."

"Perfly-awful," whistled Whistlebinkie.

"You're wrong about that," said the Unwiseman. "They don't bite you at all while they're on the pug-dog. It's only when they get on you that they bite you. That's why I say I don't mind 'em on the pug-dogs. As long as they stay there they don't hurt me."

Here the Unwiseman rose from his chair and walking across the room opened a cupboard and taking out an old clay pipe laid it on one of the andirons where a log was smouldering in the fire-place.

"I always feel happier when I'm smoking my pipe," he said resuming his seat and smiling pleasantly at Mollie.

"Put it in the fire-place to warm it?" asked Whistlebinkie. [Pg 23]

"Of course not, Stupid," replied the Unwiseman scornfully. "I put it in the fire-place to smoke it. That's the cheapest and healthiest way to smoke a pipe. I don't have to buy any tobacco to keep it filled, and as long as I leave it over there on the andiron I don't get any of the smoke up my nose or down my throat. I tried it the other way once and there wasn't any fun in it that I could see. The smoke got in all my flues and I didn't stop sneezing for a week. It was dreadful, and once or twice I got scared and sent for the fire-engines to put me out. I was so full of smoke it seemed to me I must be on fire. It wasn't so bad the first time because the firemen just laughed and went away, but the second time they came they got mad at what they called a second false alarm and turned the hose on me. I tell you I was very much put out when they did that, and since that time I've given up smoking that way. I never wanted to be a chimney anyhow. What's the use? If you're going to be anything of that sort it's a great deal better to be an oven so that some kind cook-lady will keep filling you up with hot-biscuits, and sponge-cake, and roast turkey." [Pg 24]

"I should think so," said Mollie. "That's one of the nice things about being a little girl——you're not expected to smoke."

"Well I don't know about that," said the Unwiseman. "Far as I can remember I never was a little girl so I don't know what was expected of me as such, but as far as I'm concerned I'm perfectly willing to let the pipe get smoked in the fire-place, and keep my mouth for expressing thoughts and eating bananas and eclairs with, and my throat for giving three cheers on the Fourth of July, and swallowing apple pie. That's what they were made for and hereafter that's what I'm going to use 'em for. Where's Miss Flaxilocks?"

Miss Flaxilocks was Mollie's little friend and almost constant companion, the French doll with the deepest of blue eyes and the richest of golden hair from which she got her name.

"She couldn't come to-day," explained Mollie.

"Stoo-wexited," whistled Whistlebinkie.

"What's that?" asked the Unwiseman. "Sounds like a clogged-up radiator."

"He means to say that she is too excited to come," said Mollie. "The fact is, Mr. Unwiseman, we're all going abroad——" [Pg 25]

"Abroad?" demanded the Unwiseman. "Where's that?"

"Hoh!" jeered Whistlebinkie. "Doesn't know where abroad is!"

"How should I know where abroad is?" retorted the Unwiseman. "I never had any. What is it anyhow? A new kind of pie?"

"No," laughed Mollie. "Abroad is Europe, and England and——"

"And Swizz-izzer-land," put in Whistlebinkie.

"Swizz-what?" cried the Unwiseman.

"Switzerland," said Mollie. "It's Switzerland, Whistlebinkie."

"Thass-watised, Swizz-izzerland," said Whistlebinkie.

"What's the good of them?" asked the Unwiseman.

"O they're nice places to visit," said Mollie.

"Do you walk there?" asked the Unwiseman.

"No—of course not," said Mollie with a smile. "They're thousands of miles away, across the ocean."

"Across the ocean?" ejaculated the Unwiseman. "Mercy! Ain't the ocean that wet place down around New Jersey somewhere?" [Pg 26]

"Yes," said Mollie. "The Atlantic Ocean."

"Humph!" said the Unwiseman. "How you going to get across? There ain't any bridges over it, are there?"

"No indeed," said Mollie.

"Nor no trolleys?" demanded the Unwiseman.

Mollie's reply was a loud laugh, and Whistlebinkie whistled with glee.

"Going in a balloon, I suppose," sneered the Unwiseman. "That is all of you but old Sizzerinktum here. I suppose he's going to try and jump across. Smart feller, old Sizzerinktum."

"I ain't neither!" retorted Whistlebinkie.

"Ain't neither what—smart?" said the Unwiseman.

"No—ain't goin' to jump," said Whistlebinkie.

"Good thing too," observed the Unwiseman approvingly. "If you did you'd bounce so high when you landed that *I* don't believe you'd ever come down."

"We're going in a boat," said Mollie. "Not a row boat nor a sail boat," she hastened to explain, "but a great big ocean steamer, large enough to carry over a thousand people, and fast enough to cross in six days." [Pg 27]

"Silly sort of business," said the Unwiseman. "What's the good of going to Europe and Swazzoozalum—or whatever the place is—when you haven't seen Albany or Troy, or New Rochelle and Yonkers, or Michigan and Patterson?"

"O well," said Mollie, "Papa's tired and he's going to take a vacation and we're all going along to help him rest, and Flaxilocks is so excited about going back to Paris where she was born that I have had to keep her in her crib all the time to keep her from getting nervous procrastination."

"I see," said the Unwiseman. "But I don't see why if people are tired they don't stay home and go to bed. That's the way to rest. Just lie in bed a couple of days without moving."

"Yes," said Mollie. "But Papa needs the salt air to brace him up."

"What of it?" demanded the Unwiseman. "Can't you get salt air without going across the ocean? Seems to me if you just fill up a pillow with salt and sleep on that, the way you do on one of those pine-needle pillows from the Dadirondacks, you'd get all the salt air you wanted, or build a salt cellar under your house and run pipes from it up to your bedroom to carry the air through." [Pg 28]

"It wouldn't be the same, at all," said Mollie. "Besides we're going to see the Alps."

"Oh—that's different. Of course if you're going to see the Alps that's very different," said the Unwiseman. "I wouldn't mind seeing an Alp or two myself. I always was interested in animals. I've often wondered why they never had any Alps at the Zoo."

"I guess they're too big to bring over," said Mollie gravely.

"Maybe so, but even then if they catch 'em young I don't see," began the Unwiseman.

Whistlebinkie's behavior at this point was such that Mollie, fearing a renewal of the usual quarrel between her friends ran hastily on to the object of their call and told the Unwiseman that they had come to bid him good-bye.

"I wish you were going with us," she said as she shook the old gentleman's hand.

"Thank you very much," he replied. "I suppose it would be nice, but I have too many other things to attend to and I don't see how I could spare the time. In the first place I've got all those commas [Pg 29]

and Qs to look after, and then if I went away there'd be nobody around to see that my pipe was smoked every day, or to finish up my newspaper. Likewise also too in addition the burgulars might get into my house some night while I was away and take the wrong things because I haven't been able yet to let 'em know just what I'm willing to have 'em run off with, so you see how badly things would get mixed if I went away."

"I suppose they would," sighed Mollie.

"There'd be nobody here to exercise my umbrella on wet days, either," continued the old gentleman, "or to see that the roof leaked just right, or to cook my meals and eat 'em. No—I don't just see how I *could* manage it." And so the old gentleman bade his visitors good-bye.

**"TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF, FIZZLEDINKIE, AND DON'T BLOW TOO MUCH THROUGH THE TOP OF YOUR HAT"**

"Take care of yourself, Fizzledinkie," he observed to Whistlebinkie, "and don't blow too much through the top of your hat. I've heard of boats being upset by sudden squalls, and you might get the whole party in trouble by the careless use of that hat of yours." [Pg 30]

Mollie and her companion with many waves of their hands back at the Unwiseman made off up the road homeward. The old gentleman gazed after them thoughtfully for awhile, and then returned to his work on his newspaper.

"Queer people—some of 'em," he muttered as he cut out his ninety-ninth Q and noted the ten-thousand-six-hundred-and-thirty-eighth comma on his pollywog tally sheet. "Mighty queer. With a country of their own right outside their front door so big that they couldn't walk around it in less than forty-eight hours, they've got to go abroad just to see an old Alp cavorting around in Whizzizalum or whatever else that place Whistlebinkie was trying to talk about is named. I'd like to see an Alp myself, but after all as long as there's plenty of elephants and rhinoceroses up at the Zoo what's the good of chasing around after other queer looking beasts getting your feet wet on the ocean, and having your air served up with salt in it?"

And as there was nobody about to enlighten the old gentleman on these points he went to bed that night with his question unanswered.

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# II.

[Pg 31]

## THE START

Other good byes had been said; the huge ocean steamer had drawn out of her pier and, with Mollie and Whistlebinkie on board, together with Flaxilocks and the rest of the family, made her way down the bay, through the Narrows, past Sandy Hook and out to sea. The long low lying shores of New Jersey, with their white sands and endless lines of villas and summer hotels had gradually sunk below the horizon and the little maid was for the first time in her life out of sight of land.

"Isn't it glorious!" cried Mollie, as she breathed in the crisp fresh air, and tasted just a tiny bit of

the salt spray of the ocean on her lip.

"I guesso," whistled Whistlebinkie, with a little shiver. "Think-ide-like-it-better-'fwe-had-alittle-land-in-sight."

"O no, Whistlebinkie," returned Mollie, "it's a great deal safer this way. There are rocks near the shore but outside here the water is ever so deep—more'n six feet I guess. I'd be perfectly happy if the Unwiseman was only with us." [Pg 32]

Just then up through one of the big yawning ventilators, that look so like sea-serpents with their big flaming mouths stretched wide open as if to swallow the passengers on deck, came a cracked little voice singing the following song to a tune that seemed to be made up as it went along:

"Yo-ho!
Yo-ho—
O a sailor's life for me!
I love to nail
The blithering gale,
As I sail the bounding sea.
For I'm a glorious stowaway,
I've thrown my rake and hoe away,
On the briny deep to go away,
Yeave-ho—Yeave-ho—Yo-hee!"

"Where have I heard that voice before!" cried Mollie clutching Whistlebinkie by the hand so hard that he squeaked.

"It's-sizz!" whistled Whistlebinkie excitedly.

"It's what?" cried Mollie.

"It's-his!" repeated Whistlebinkie more correctly.

"Whose—the Unwiseman's?" Mollie whispered with delight.

"Thass-swat-I-think," said Whistlebinkie. [Pg 33]

And then the song began again drawing nearer each moment.

"Yeave-ho,
Yo-ho,
O I love the life so brave.
I love to swish
Like the porpoise fish
Over the foamy wave.
So let the salt wind blow-away,
All care and trouble throw-away,
And lead the life of a Stowaway
Yeave-ho—Yeave-ho—Yo-hee!"

"It is he as sure as you're born, Whistlebinkie!" cried Mollie in an ecstacy of delight. "I wonder how he came to come."

"I 'dno," said Whistlebinkie. "I guess he's just went and gone."

As Whistlebinkie spoke sure enough, the Unwiseman himself clambered out of the ventilator and leaped lightly on the deck alongside of them still singing:

"Yeave-ho,
Yo-ho,
I love the At-lan-tic.
The water's wet
And you can bet
The motion makes me sick. [Pg 34]
But let the wavelets flow away
You cannot drive the glow away
From the heart of the happy Stowaway.
Yeave-ho—Yeave-ho—Yo-hee!"

Dear me, what a strange looking figure he was as he jumped down and greeted Mollie and Whistlebinkie! In place of his old beaver hat he wore a broad and shiny tarpaulin. His trousers which were of white duck stiffly starched were neatly creased down the sides, ironed as flat as they could be got, nearly two feet wide and as spick and span as a snow-flake. On his feet he wore a huge pair of goloshes, and thrown jauntily around his left shoulder and thence down over his right arm to his waist was what appeared to be a great round life preserver, filled with air, and heavy enough to support ten persons of his size.

"Shiver my timbers if it ain't Mollie!" he roared as he caught sight of her. "And Whistlebinkie too—Ahoy there, Fizzledinkie. What's the good word?"

"Where on earth did you come from?" asked Mollie overjoyed.

"I weighed anchor in the home port at seven bells last night; set me course nor-E by sou-sou-west, made for the deep channel running past the red, white and blue buoy on the starboard tack, reefed my galyards in the teeth o' the blithering gale and sneaked aboard while Captain Binks of the good ship *Nancy B.* was trollin' for oysters off the fishin' banks after windin' up the [Pg 35]

Port watch," replied the Unwiseman. "It's a great life, ain't it," he added gazing admiringly about him at the wonderful ship and then over the rail at the still more wonderful ocean.

"But how did you come to come?" asked Mollie.

"Well—ye see after you'd said good-bye to me the other day, I was sort of upset and for the first time in my life I got my newspaper right side up and began to read it that way," the old gentleman explained. "And I fell on a story of the briny deep in which a young gentleman named Billy The Rover Bold sailed from the Spanish main to Kennebunkport in a dory, capturing seventeen brigs, fourteen galleons and a pirate band on the way. It didn't say fourteen galleons of what, but thinkin' it might be soda water, it made my mouth water to think of it, so I decided to [Pg 36] rent my house and come along. About when do you think we'll capture any Brigs?"

"You rented your house?" asked Mollie in amazement.

"Yes—to a Burgular," said the Unwiseman. "I thought that was the best way out of it. If the burgular has your house, thinks I, he won't break into it, spoiling your locks, or smashing your windows and doors. What he's got likewise moreover he won't steal, so the best thing to do is to turn everything over to him right in the beginning and so save your property. So I advertised. Here it is, see?" And the Unwiseman produced the following copy of his advertisement.

**FOR TO BE LET**

**ONE FIRST CLASS PREMISSES**

**ALL MODDERN INCONVENIENCES**

**HOT AND COAL GAS**

**SIXTEEN MILES FROM POLICE STATION**

**POSESSION RIGHT AWAY OFF**

**ONLY BURGULARS NEED APPLY.**

Address, The Unwiseman, At Home.

"One of 'em called the next night and he's taken the house for six months," the Unwiseman went [Pg 37] on. "He's promised to keep the house clean, to smoke my pipe, look after my Qs and commas, eat my meals regularly, and exercise the umbrella on wet days. It was a very good arrangement all around. He was a very nice polite burgular and as it happened had a lot of business he wanted to attend to right in our neighborhood. He said he'd keep an eye on your house too, and I told him about how to get in the back way where the cellar window won't lock. He promised for sure he'd look into it."

"Very kind of him I'm sure," said Mollie dubiously.

"You'd have liked him very much—nicest burgular I ever met. Had real taking ways," said the Unwiseman.

"Howd-ulike-being-outer-sighter-land?" asked Whistlebinkie.

"Who, me?" asked the Unwiseman. "I wouldn't like it at all. I took precious good care that I shouldn't be neither."

"Nonsense," said Mollie. "How can you help yourself?"

"This way," said the Unwiseman with a proud smile of superiority, taking a bottle from his pocket. [Pg 38] "See that?" he added.

"Yes," said Mollie. "What is it?"

"It's land, of course," replied the Unwiseman, holding the bottle up in the light. "Real land off my place at home. Just before I left the house it occurred to me that it would be pleasant to have some along and I took a shovel and went out and got a bottle full of it. It makes me feel safer to have the land in sight all the way over and then it will keep me from being homesick when I'm chasing those Alps down in Swazoozalum."

"Swizz-izzerland!" corrected Whistlebinkie.

"Swit-zer-land!" said Mollie for the instruction of both. "It's not Swazoozalum, or Swizziz-zerland, but Switzerland."

"O I see—rhymes with Hits-yer-land—when the Alp he hits your land, then you think of Switzerland—that it?" asked the Unwiseman.

"Well that's near enough," laughed Mollie. "But how does that bottle keep you from being homesick?"

"Why—when I begin to pine for my native land, all I've got to do is to open the bottle and take out [Pg 39] a spoonful of it. 'This is my own, my native land,' the Poet said, and when I look at this bottle so say I. Right out of my own yard, too," said the Unwiseman, hugging the bottle tightly to his breast. "It's queer isn't it how I should find out how to travel so comfortably without having to ask anybody."

"I guess you're a genius," suggested Whistlebinkie.

"Maybe I am," agreed the Unwiseman, "but anyhow you know I just knew what to do as soon as I made up my mind to come along."

Mollie looked at him admiringly.

"Take these goloshes for instance. I'm the only person on board this boat that's got goloshes on," continued the old gentleman, "and yet if the boat went down, how on earth could they keep their feet dry? It's all so simple. Same way with this life preserver—it's nothing but an old bicycle tire I found in your barn, but just think what it would mean to me if I should fall overboard some day."

"Smitey-fine!" whistled Whistlebinkie.

"It is that. All I'll have to do is to sit inside of it and float till they lower a boat after me," said the Unwiseman. [Pg 40]

"What have you done about getting sea-sick?" asked Mollie.

"Ah—that's the thing that bothered me as much as anything," ejaculated the Unwiseman, "but all of a sudden it came to me like a flash. I was getting my fishing tackle ready for the trip and when I came to the sinkers, there was the idea as plain as the nose on your face. Six days out, says I, means thirty-seven meals."

"Thirty-seven?" asked Mollie.

"Yes—three meals a day for six days is—," began the Unwiseman.

"Only eighteen," said Mollie, who for a child of her size was very quick at multiplication.

"So it is," said the Unwiseman, his face growing very red. "So it is. I must have forgotten to set down five and carry three."

"Looks that way," said Whistlebinkie, with a mirthful squeak through the top of his hat. "What you did was to set down three and carry seven."

"That's it," said the Unwiseman. "Three and seven make thirty-seven—don't it?"

"Looked at sideways," said Mollie, with a chuckle. [Pg 41]

"I know I got it somehow," observed the Unwiseman, his smile returning. "So I prepared myself for thirty-seven meals. I brought a lead sinker along for each one of them. I'm going to tie one sinker to each meal to keep it down, and of course I won't be sea-sick at all. There was only one other way out of it that I could think of; that was to eat pound-cake all the time, but I was afraid maybe they wouldn't have any on board, so I brought the sinkers instead."

"It sounds like a pretty good plan," said Whistlebinkie. "Where's your State-room?"

"I haven't got one," said the Unwiseman. "I really don't need it, because I don't think I'll go to bed all the way across. I want to sit up and see the scenery. When you've only got a short time on the water and aren't likely to make a habit of crossing the ocean it's too bad to miss any of it, so I didn't take a room."

"I don't think there's much scenery to be seen on the ocean," suggested Mollie. "It's just plain water all the way over."

"O I don't think so," replied the Unwiseman. "I imagine from that story about Billy the Rover [Pg 42] there's a lot of it. There's the Spanish main for instance. I want to keep a sharp look out for that and see how it differs from Bangor, Maine. Then once in a while you run across a latitude and a longitude. I've never seen either of those and I'm sort of interested to see what they look like. All I know about 'em is that one of 'em goes up and down and the other goes over and back—I don't exactly know how, but that's the way it is and I'm here to learn. I should feel very badly if we happened to pass either of 'em while I was asleep."

"Naturally," said Mollie.

"Then somewhere out here they've got a thing they call a horrizon, or a horizon, or something like that," continued the Unwiseman. "I've asked one of the sailors to point it out to me when we come to it, and he said he would. Funny thing about it though—he said he'd sailed the ocean for forty-seven years and had never got close enough to it to touch it. 'Must be quite a sight close to,' I said, and he said that all the horrizons he ever saw was from ten to forty miles off. There's a [Pg 43] place out here too where the waves are ninety feet high; and then there's the Fishin' Banks—do you know I never knew banks ever went fishin', did you? Must be a funny sight to see a lot o' banks out fishin'. What State-room are you in, Mollie?"

"We've got sixty-nine," said Mollie.

"Sixty-nine," demanded the Unwiseman. "What's that mean?"

"Why it's the number of my room," explained Mollie.

"O," said the Unwiseman scratching his head in a puzzled sort of way. "Then you haven't got a State-room?"

"Yes," said Mollie. "It's a State-room."

"I don't quite see," said the Unwiseman, gazing up into the air. "If it's a State-room why don't they call it New Jersey, or Kansas, or Mitchigan, or some other State? Seems to me a State-room ought to be a State-room."

"I guess maybe there's more rooms on board than there are States," suggested Whistlebinkie.

"There ain't more than sixty States, are there, Mollie?"

"There's only forty-six," said Mollie.

"Ah—then that accounts for number sixty-nine," observed the Unwiseman. "They're just keeping a [Pg 44]
lot of rooms numbered until there's enough States to go around."

"I hope we get over all right," put in Whistlebinkie, who wasn't very brave.

"O I guess we will," said the Unwiseman, cheerfully. "I was speaking to that sailor on that very point this morning, and he said the chances were that we'd go through all right unless we lost one of the screws."

"Screws?" inquired Whistlebinkie.

"Yes—it don't sound possible, but this ship is pushed through the water by a couple of screws fastened in back there at the stern. It's the screws sterning that makes the boat go," the Unwiseman remarked with all the pride of one who really knows what he is talking about. "Of course if one of 'em came unfastened and fell off we wouldn't go so fast and if both of 'em fell off we wouldn't go at all, until we got the sails up and the wind came along and blew us into port."

"Well I never!" said Whistlebinkie.

"O I knew that before I came aboard," said the Unwiseman, sagely. "So I brought a half dozen [Pg 45]
screws along with me. There they are."

And the old gentleman plunged his hand into his pocket and produced six bright new shining screws.

"You see I'm ready for anything," he observed. "I think every passenger who takes one of these screwpeller boats—that's what they call 'em, screwpellers—ought to come prepared to furnish any number of screws in case anything happens. I'm not going to tell anybody I've got 'em though. I'm just holding these back until the Captain tells us the screws are gone, and then I'll offer mine."

"And suppose yours are lost too, and there ain't any wind for the sails?" demanded Whistlebinkie.

"I've got a pair o' bellows down in my box," said the Unwiseman gleefully. "We can sit right behind the sails and blow the whole business right in the teeth of a dead clam."

"Dead what?" roared Mollie.

"A dead clam," said the Unwiseman. "I haven't found out why they call it a dead clam—unless it's because it's so still—but that's the way we sailors refer to a time at sea when there isn't a handful [Pg 46]
o' wind in sight and the ocean is so smooth that even the billows are afraid to roll in it for fear they'd roll off."

"We sailors!" ejaculated Whistlebinkie, scornfully under his breath. "Hoh!"

"Well you certainly are pretty well prepared for whatever happens, aren't you, Mr. Unwiseman," said Mollie admiringly.

"I like to think so," said the old gentleman. "There's only one thing I've overlooked," he added.

"Wass-that?" asked Whistlebinkie.

"I have most unaccountably forgotten to bring my skates along, and I'm sure I don't know what would happen to me without 'em if by some mischance we ran into an iceberg and I was left aboard of it when the steamer backed away," the Unwiseman remarked.

Here the deck steward came along with a trayful of steaming cups of chicken broth.

"Broth, ma'am," he said politely to Mollie.

"Thank you," said Mollie. "I think I will."

Whistlebinkie and the Unwiseman also helped themselves, and a few minutes later the Unwiseman disappeared bearing his cup in his hand. It was three hours after this that Mollie [Pg 47]
again encountered him, sitting down near the stern of the vessel, a doleful look upon his face, and the cup of chicken broth untasted and cold in his hands.

"What's the matter, dearie?" the little girl asked.

"O—nothing," he said, "only I—I've been trying for the past three hours to find out how to tie a sinker to this soup and it regularly stumps me. I can tie it to the cup, but whether it's the motion of the ship or something else, I don't know what, I can't think of swallowing *that* without feeling queer here."

And the poor old gentleman rubbed his stomach and looked forlornly out to sea.

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# III. [Pg 48]

## AT SEA

It was all of three days later before the little party of travellers met again on deck. I never inquired very closely into the matter but from what I know of the first thousand miles of the

ocean between New York and Liverpool I fancy Mollie and Whistlebinkie took very little interest in anybody but themselves until they had got over that somewhat uneven stretch of water. The ocean is more than humpy from Nantucket Light on and travelling over it is more or less like having to slide over eight or nine hundred miles of scenic railroads, or bumping the bumps, not for three seconds, but for as many successive days, a proceeding which interferes seriously with one's appetite and gives one an inclination to lie down in a comfortable berth rather than to walk vigorously up and down on deck—though if you *can* do the latter it is the very best thing in the world *to* do. As for the Unwiseman all I know about him during that period is that he finally gave [Pg 49] up his problem of how to tie a sinker to a half-pint of chicken broth, and diving head first into the ventilator through which he had made his first appearance on deck, disappeared from sight. On the morning of the fourth day however he flashed excitedly along the deck past where Mollie and Whistlebinkie having gained courage to venture up into Mollie's steamer chair were sitting, loudly calling for the Captain.

"Hi-hullo!" called Mollie, as the old gentleman rushed by. "Mr. Me!"—Mr. Me it will be remembered by his friends was the name the Unwiseman had had printed on his visiting cards. "Mister Me—come here!"

The Unwiseman paused for a moment.

"I'm looking for the Captain," he called back. "I find I forgot to tell the burgular who's rented my house that he mustn't steal my kitchen stove until I get back, and I want the Captain to turn around and go back for a few minutes so that I can send him word."

"He wouldn't do that, Mr. Me," said Mollie.

"Then let him set me on shore somewhere where I can walk back," said the Unwiseman. "It would be perfectly terrible if that burgular stole my kitchen stove. I'd have to eat all my bananas and [Pg 50] eclairs raw, and besides I use that stove to keep the house cool in summer."

"There isn't any shore out here to put you on," said Mollie.

"Where's your bottle of native land?" jeered Whistlebinkie. "You might walk home on that."

"Hush, Whistlebinkie," said Mollie. "Don't make him angry."

"Well," said the Unwiseman ruefully. "I'm sure I don't know what to do about it. It is the only kitchen stove I've got, and it's taken me ten years to break it in. It would be very unfortunate just as I've got the stove to do its work exactly as I want it done to go and lose it."

"Why don't you send a wireless message?" suggested Mollie. "They've got an office on board, and you can telegraph to him."

"First rate," said the old man. "I'd forgotten that." And the Unwiseman sat down and wrote the following dispatch:

> DEAR MR. BURGULAR:
>
> Please do not steal my kitchen stove. If you need a stove steal something else like the telephone book or that empty bottle of Woostershire Sauce standing on the parlor [Pg 51] mantel-piece with the daisy in it, and sell them to buy a new stove with the money. I've had that stove for ten years and it has only just learned how to cook and it would be very annoying to me to have to get a new one and have to teach it how I like my potatoes done. You know the one I mean. It's the only stove in the house, so you can't get it mixed up with any other. If you do I shall persecute you to the full extent of the law and have you arrested for petty parsimony when I get back. If you find yourself strongly tempted to steal it the best thing to do is to keep it red hot with a rousing fire on its insides so that it will be easier for you to keep your hands off.
>
> Yours trooly,
> THE UNWISEMAN.
>
> P.S. Take the poker if you want to but leave the stove. It's a wooden poker and not much good anyhow.
>
> Yours trooly,
> THE UNWISEMAN.

"There!" he said as he finished writing out the message. "I guess that'll fix it all right."

"It-tortoo," whistled Whistlebinkie through the top of his hat.

"What?" said Mollie, severely.

"It-ought-to-fix-it," repeated Whistlebinkie.

And the Unwiseman ran up the deck to the wireless telegraph office. In a moment he returned, his face full of joy.

"I guess I got the best of 'em that time!" he chortled gleefully. "What do you suppose Mollie? [Pg 52] They actually wanted me to pay twenty-one dollars and sixty cents for that telegram. The very idea!"

"Phe-ee-ew!" whistled Whistlebinkie.

"Very far from few," retorted the Unwiseman. "It was many rather than few and I told the man so. 'I can buy five new kitchen stoves for that amount of money,' said I. 'I can't help that,' said the

man. 'I guess you can't,' said I. 'If you could the price o' kitchen stoves would go up'."

"What did you do?" asked Mollie.

"I told him I was just as wireless as he was, and I tossed my message up in the air and last time I saw it it was flying back to New York as tight as it could go," said the Unwiseman. "I guess I can send a message without wires as well as anybody else. It's a great load off my mind to have it fixed, I can tell you," he added.

"What have you been doing with yourself since I saw you last, Mr. Me?" asked Mollie, as her old friend seated himself on the foot-rest of her steamer chair.

"O I've managed to keep busy," said the Unwiseman, gazing off at the rolling waves.

Whistlebinkie laughed. [Pg 53]

"See-zick?" he whistled.

"What me?" asked the Unwiseman. "Of course not—we sailors don't get sea-sick like land-lubbers. No, sirree. I've been a little miserable due to my having eaten something that didn't agree with me—I very foolishly ate a piece of mince pie about five years ago—but except for that I've been feeling first rate. For the most part I've been watching the screw driver—they've got a big steam screw driver down-stairs in the cellar that keeps the screws to their work, and I got so interested watching it I've forgotten all about meals and things like that."

"Have you seen horrizon yet?" asked Whistlebinkie.

"Yes," returned the Unwiseman gloomily. "It's about the stupidest thing you ever saw. See that long line over there where the sky comes down and touches the water?"

"Yep," said Whistlebinkie.

"Well that's what they call the horrizon," said the Unwiseman contemptuously. "It's nothin' but a big circle runnin' round and round the scenery, day and night, now and forever. It won't go near [Pg 54] anybody and it won't let anybody go near it. I guess it's just about the most unsociable fish that ever swam the sea. Speakin' about fish, what do you say to trollin' for a whale this afternoon?"

"That would be fine!" cried Mollie. "Have you any tackle?"

"Oh my yes," replied the Unwiseman. "I've got a half a mile o' trout line, a minnow hook and a plate full o' vermicelli."

"Vermicelli?" demanded Mollie.

"Yes—don't you know what Vermicelli is? It's sort of baby macaroni," explained the Unwiseman.

"What good is it for fishing?" asked Whistlebinkie.

"I don't know yet," said the Unwiseman "but between you and me I don't believe if you baited a hook with it any ordinary fish who'd left his eyeglasses on the mantel-piece at home could tell it from a worm. I neglected to bring any worms along in my native land bottle, and I've searched the ship high and low without finding a place where I could dig for 'em, so I borrowed the vermicelli from the cook instead."

"Does-swales-like-woyms?" whistled Whistlebinkie. [Pg 55]

"I don't know anything about swales," said the Unwiseman.

"I meant-twales," said Whistlebinkie.

"Never heard of a twale neither," retorted the Unwiseman. "Just what sort of a rubber fish is a twale?"

"He means whales," Mollie explained.

"Why don't he say what he means then?" said the Unwiseman scornfully. "I never knew such a feller for twisted talk. He ties a word up into a double bow knot and expects everybody to know what he means right off the handle. I don't know whether whales like vermicelli or not. Seems to me though that a fish that could bite at a disagreeable customer like Jonah would eat anything whether it was vermicelli or just plain catterpiller."

"Well even if they did you couldn't pull 'em aboard with a trout line anyhow," snapped Whistlebinkie. "Whales is too heavy for that."

"Who wants to pull 'em aboard, Smarty?" retorted the Unwiseman. "I leave it to Mollie if I ever said I wanted to pull 'em aboard. Quite the contrary opposite. I'd rather not pull a whale on board [Pg 56] this boat and have him flopping around all over the deck, smashing chairs and windows, and knockin' people overboard with his tail, and spouting water all over us like that busted fire-hose the firemen turned on me when I thought I'd caught fire from my pipe."

"You did say you'd take us fishing for whales, Mr. Me," Mollie put in timidly.

"That's a very different thing," protested the Unwiseman. "Fishin' for whales is a nice gentle sport as long as you don't catch any. But of course if you're going to take his side against me, why you needn't go."

And the Unwiseman rose up full of offended dignity and walked solemnly away.

"Dear me!" sighed Mollie. "I'm so sorry he's angry."

"Nuvver-mind," whistled Whistlebinkie. "He won't stay mad long. He'll be back in a little while with some more misinformation."

Whistlebinkie was right, for in five minutes the old gentleman returned on the run.

"Hurry up, Mollie!" he cried. "The sailor up on the front piazza says there's a school of Porpoises ahead. I'm going to ask 'em some questions." [Pg 57]

Mollie and Whistlebinkie sprang quickly from the steamer chairs and hurried along after the Unwiseman.

"I've heard a lot about these Schools of Fish," the Unwiseman observed as they all leaned over the rail together. "And I never believed there was such a thing, because all the fish I ever saw were pretty stupid—leastways there never were any of them could answer any of the questions I put to 'em. That may have been because being out o' water they were very uncomfortable and feelin' kind of stiff and bashful, but out here it ought to be different and I'm going to examine 'em and see what they're taught."

"Here they come!" cried Mollie, as a huge gathering of porpoises plunging and tumbling over each other appeared under the lee of the vessel. "My what a lot!"

"Hi there, Porpy!" shouted the Unwiseman. "Por-pee, come over here a minute. What will seven times eight bananas divided by three mince pies multiplied by eight cream cakes, subtracted from a Monkey with two tails leave?"

The old man cocked his head to one side as if trying to hear the answer. [Pg 58]

"Don't hear anything, do you?" he asked in a moment.

"Maybe they didn't hear you," suggested Mollie.

"Askem-something-geezier," whistled Whistlebinkie.

"Something easier?" sniffed the Unwiseman. "There couldn't be anything easier than that. It will leave a very angry monkey. You just try to subtract something from a monkey some time and you'll see. However it is a long question so I'll give 'em another."

The old gentleman leaned forward again and addressing the splashing fish once more called loudly out:

"If that other sum is too much for you perhaps some one of you can tell me how many times seven divided by eleven is a cat with four kittens," he inquired.

Still there was no answer. The merry creatures of the sea were apparently too busy jumping over each other and otherwise indulging in playful pranks in the water.

"They're mighty weak on Arithmetic, that's sure," sneered the Unwiseman. "I guess I'll try 'em on jography. Hi there, Porpee—you big black one over there—where's Elmira, New York?" [Pg 59]

The Porpoise turned a complete somersault in the air and disappeared beneath the water.

"Little Jackass!" growled the Unwiseman. "Guess he hasn't been going to school very long not to be able to say that Elmira, New York, is at Elmira, New York. Maybe we'll have better luck with that deep blue Porpoise over there. Hi-you-you blue Porpoise. What's the chief product of the lunch counter at Poughkeepsie?"

Again the Unwise old head was cocked to one side to catch the answer but all the blue porpoise did was to wiggle his tail in the air, as he butted one of his brother porpoises in the stomach. The Unwiseman looked at them with an angry glance.

"Well all I've got to say about you," he shouted, "is that your father and mother are wasting their money sending you to school!"

To which one of the Porpoises seemed to reply by sticking his head up out of the crest of a wave and sneezing at the Unwiseman. [Pg 60]

"Haven't even learned good manners!" roared the old gentleman.

Whereupon the whole school indulged in a mighty scrimmage in the water jumping over, under and upon each other and splashing the spray high in the air until finally Whistlebinkie in his delight at the sight cried out,

"I-guess-sitz-the-football-team!"

"I guess for once you're right, Whistlebinkie," cried the Unwiseman. "And that accounts for their not knowing anything about 'rithmetic, jography or Elmira. When a feller's a foot-ball player he don't seem to care much for such higher education as the Poughkeepsie lunch counter, or how many is five. I knew the boys were runnin' foot-ball into the ground on land, but I never imagined the fish were running it into the water at sea. Too bad—too bad."

And again the Unwiseman took himself off and was not seen again the rest of the day. Nor did Mollie and Whistlebinkie see much of him for the rest of the voyage for the old fellow suddenly got it into his head that possibly there were a few undiscovered continents about, the first sight of which would win for him all of the glory of a Christopher Columbus, and in order to be unquestionably the very first to catch sight of them, he climbed up to the top of the fore-mast and remained there for two full days. Fortunately neither the Captain nor the Bo'-sun's mate noticed what the old gentleman was doing or they would have put him in irons not as a punishment but to protect him from his own rash adventuring. And so it was that the Unwiseman was the first person on board to catch a glimpse of the Irish Coast, the which he announced with a loud cry of glee. [Pg 61]

"Land ho—on the starboard tack!" he cried, and then he slid down the mast-head and rushed

madly down the deck crying joyfully, "I've discovered a continent. Hurray for me. I've discovered a continent."

"Watcher-goin'-t'do-with it?" whistled Whistlebinkie.

"Depends on how big it is," said the Unwiseman dancing gleefully. "If it's a great big one I'll write my name on it and leave it where it is, but if it's only a little one I'll dig it up and take it home and add it to my back yard." [Pg 62]

But alas for the new Columbus! It soon turned out that his new discovery was only Ireland which thousands, not to say millions, had discovered long before he had, so that the glory which he thought he had won soon faded away. But the old gentleman was very amiable about it after he got over his first disappointment.

"I don't care," he confided to Mollie later on. "There isn't anything in discovering continents anyway. Look at Columbus. He discovered America, but somebody else came along and took it away from him and as far as I can find out he don't even own an abandoned farm in the United States to-day. So what's the good?"

"Thass-wat-I-say," whistled Whistlebinkie. "I wouldn't give seven cents to discover all the continents there is. I'd ruther be a live rubber doll than a dead dishcover anyhow."

Later in the afternoon when the ship had left Queenstown, Mollie found the Unwiseman sitting in her steamer chair hidden behind a copy of the London *Times* which had been brought aboard, and strange to relate he had it right-side up and was eagerly running through its massive columns. [Pg 63]

"Looking for more pollywogs?" the little girl asked.

"No," said the Unwiseman. "I'm trying to find the latest news from America. I want to see if that burgular has stole my stove. So far there don't seem to be anything about it here, so the chances are it's still safe."

"Do you think they'd cable it across?" asked Mollie.

"What the stove?" demanded the Unwiseman. "You can't send a stove by cable, stupid."

"No—the news," said Mollie. "It wouldn't be very important, would it?"

"It would be important to me," said the Unwiseman, "and inasmuch as I bought and paid for their old paper I've got a right to expect 'em to put the news I want in it. If they don't I'll sue 'em for damages and buy a new stove with the money."

The next morning bright and early the little party landed in England.

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# IV. [Pg 64]

## ENGLAND

The Unwiseman's face wore a very troubled look as the little party of travellers landed at Liverpool. He had doffed his sailor's costume and now appeared in his regular frock coat and old fashioned beaver hat, and carried an ancient carpet-bag in his hand, presenting to Mollie and Whistlebinkie a more familiar appearance than while in his sea-faring clothes, but he was evidently very much worried about something.

"Cheer up," whistled Whistlebinkie noting his careworn expression. "You look as if you were down to your last cream-cake. Wass-er-matter?"

"I think they've fooled us," replied the Unwiseman with a doubtful shake of his gray head. "This don't look like England to me, and I've been wondering if that ship mightn't be a pirate ship after all that's carried us all off to some strange place with the idea of thus getting rid of us, so that the Captain might go home and steal our kitchen-stoves and other voluble things."

"Pooh!" ejaculated Whistlebinkie. "What makes you thinkit-taint England?" [Pg 65]

"It's too big in the first place," replied the Unwiseman, "and in the second it ain't the right color. Just look at this map and you'll see."

Here Mr. Me took a map of the world out of his pocket and spread it out before Whistlebinkie.

"See that?" he said pointing to England in one corner. "I've measured it off with a tape measure and it's only four inches long and about an inch and a half wide. This place we're in now is more'n five miles long and, as far as I can see two or three miles across. And look at the color on the map."

"Tspink," said Whistlebinkie.

"I don't know what you mean by tspink," said the Unwiseman, "but——"

"It's-pink," explained Whistlebinkie.

"Exactly," said the Unwiseman. "That's just what it is, but that ain't the color of this place. Seems to me this place is a sort of dull yellow dusty brown. And besides I don't see any houses on the map and this place is just chock-full of them."

"O well, I guess it's all right," said Whistlebinkie. "Maybe when we get further in we'll find it grows pinker. Cities ain't never the same color as the country you know." [Pg 66]

"Possibly," said the Unwiseman, "but even then that wouldn't account for the difference in size. Why should the map say it's four inches by an inch and a half, when anybody can see that this place is five miles by three just by looking at it?"

"I guess-smaybe it's grown some since that map was made," suggested Whistlebinkie. "Being surrounded by water you'd think it would grow."

Just then a British policeman walked along the landing stage and Whistlebinkie added, "There's a p'liceman. You might speak to him about it."

"Good idea," said the Unwiseman. "I'll do it." And he walked up to the officer.

"Good morning, Robert," said he. "You'll pardon my curiosity, but is this England?"

"Yessir," replied the officer politely. "You are on British soil, sir."

"H'm! British, eh?" observed the Unwiseman. "Just what *is* that? French for English, I suppose." [Pg 67]

"This is Great Britain, sir," explained the officer with a smile. "Hingland is a part of Great Britain."

"Hingland?" asked the Unwiseman with a frown.

"Yessir—this is Hingland, sir," replied the policeman, as he turned on his heel and wandered on down the stage leaving the Unwiseman more perplexed than when he had asked the question.

"It looks queerer than ever," said the Unwiseman when he had returned to Whistlebinkie. "These people don't seem to have agreed on the name of this place, which I consider to be a very suspicious circumstance. That policeman said first it was England, then he said it was Great Britain, and then he changed it to Hingland, while Mollie's father says it's Liverpool. It's mighty strange, and I wish I was well out of it."

"Why did you call the p'liceman Robert, Mr. Me?" asked Whistlebinkie, who somehow or other did not seem to share the old gentleman's fears.

"O I read somewhere that the English policemen were all Bobbies," the Unwiseman replied. "But I didn't feel that I'd ought to be so familiar as to call him that until I'd got to know him better, so I just called him Robert." [Pg 68]

Later on Mollie explained the situation to the old fellow.

"Liverpool," she said, "is a part of England and England is a part of Great Britain, just as Binghamton is a part of New York and New York is a part of the United States of America."

"Ah—that's it, eh?" he answered. "And how about Hingland?"

"That is the way some of the English people talk," explained Mollie. "A great many of them drop their H's," she added.

"Aha!" said the Unwiseman, nodding his head. "I see. And the police go around after them picking them up, eh?"

"I guess that's it," said Mollie.

"Because if they didn't," continued the Unwiseman, "the streets and gutters would be just over-run with 'em. If 20,000,000 people dropped twenty-five H's apiece every day that would be 500,000,000 H's lyin' around. I don't believe you could drive a locomotive through that many—Mussy Me! It must keep the police busy pickin' 'em up." [Pg 69]

"Perfly-awful!" whistled Whistlebinkie.

"I'm going to write a letter to the King about it," said the Unwiseman, "and send him a lot of rules like I have around my house to keep people from being so careless."

"That's a splendid idea," cried Mollie, overjoyed at the notion. "What will you say?"

"H'm!" said the Unwiseman. "Let me see—I guess I'd write like this:" and the strange old man sat down on a trunk and dashed off the following letter to King Edward.

DEAR MISTER KING:

Liverpool, June 10, 19—.

I understand that the people of your Island is very careless about their aitches and that the pleece are worked to a frazzil pickin' 'em up from the public highways. Why don't you by virtue of your exhausted rank propagate the following rules to unbait the nuisance?

I. My subjex must be more careful of their aitches.

II. Any one caught dropping an aitch on the public sidewalks will be fined two dollars.

III. Aitches dropped by accident must be picked up to once immediately and without delay.

IV. All aitches found roaming about the city streets unaccompanied by their owners will be promptly arrested by the pleece and kept in the public pound until called for after which they will be burnt, and the person calling for them fined two dollars. [Pg 70]

V. All persons whether they be a pleeceman or a Dook or other nobil personidges seeing a strange aitch lying on the sidewalk, or otherwise roaming at random without any visible owner whether it is his or not must pick it up to once immediately and without delay under penalty of the law.

VI. Capital H's must be muzzled before took out in public and must be securely fastened by glue or otherwise to the words they are the beginning of.

VII. Anybody tripping up on the aitch of another person thus carelessly left lying about can sue for damages and get two dollars for a broken leg, five dollars for a broken nose, seven dollars and a half for a black eye, and so on up, from the person leaving the aitch thus carelessly about, or a year's imprisonment, or both.

VIII. A second offense will be punished by being sent to South Africa for five years when if the habit is continued more severe means will be taken like being made to live in Boston or some other icebound spot.

IX. School teachers catching children using aitches in this manner will keep them in after school and notify their parents who will spank them and send them to bed without their supper.

X. Pleecemen will report all aitches found on public streets to the public persecutor and will be paid at the rate of six cents a million for all they pick up.

I think if your madjesty will have these rules and regulations printed on a blue pasteboard card in big red letters and hung up all over everywhere you will be able, your h. r. h., to unbait this terrible nuisance.

Yoors trooly,
THE UNWISEMAN.

[Pg 71]

P.S. It may happen, your h. r. h., that some of your subjex can't help themselves in this aitch dropping habit, and it would therefore be mercyful of you to provide letter boxes on all the street cornders where they could drop their aitches into without breaking the rules of your high and mighty highness.

Give my love to the roil family.
Yoors trooly,
THE UNWISEMAN.

"There," he said when he had scribbled the letter off with his lead pencil. "If the King can only read that it ought to make him much obliged to me for helping him out of a very bad box. This Island ain't so big, map or no map, that they can afford to have it smothered in aitches as it surely will be if the habit ain't put a stop to. I wonder what the King's address is."

"I don't know," said Whistlebinkie with a grin. "He and I ain't never called on each other yet."

"Is King his last name or his first, I wonder," said the Unwiseman, scratching his head wonderingly.

"His first name is Edward," said Mollie. "It used to be Albert Edward, but he dropped the Albert."

"Edward what?" demanded the Unwiseman. "Don't they call him Edward Seventh?" [Pg 72]

"Yes they do," said Mollie.

"Then I guess I'll address it to Edward S. King, Esquire, Number Seven, London—that's where all the kings live when they're home," said the Unwiseman.

And so the letter went addressed to Edward S. King, Esquire, Number Seven, London, England, but whether His Majesty ever received it or not I do not know. Certainly if he did he never answered it, and that makes me feel that he never received it, for the King of England is known as the First Gentleman of Europe, and I am quite sure that one who deserves so fine a title as that would not leave a polite letter like the Unwiseman's unanswered. Mollie's father was very much impressed when he heard of the Unwiseman's communication.

"I shouldn't be surprised if the King made him a Duke, for that," he said. "It is an act of the highest statesmanship to devise so simple a plan to correct so widespread an evil. If the Unwiseman were only an Englishman he might even become Prime Minister."

"No," said the Unwiseman later, when Mollie told him what her father had said. "He couldn't make me Prime Minister because I haven't ever studied zoology and couldn't preach a sermon or even take up a collection properly, but as for being a Duke—well if he asked me as a special favor I might accept that. The Duke of Me—how would that sound, Mollie?" [Pg 73]

"Oh it would be perfectly beautiful!" cried Mollie overwhelmed by the very thought of anything so grand.

"Or Baron Brains—eh?" continued the Unwiseman.

"That would just suit you," giggled Whistlebinkie. "Barren Brains is you all over."

"Thank you, Fizzledinkie," said the Unwiseman. "For once I quite agree with you. I guess I'll call on some tailor up in London and see what it would cost me to buy a Duke's uniform so's to be ready when the King sends for me. It would be fine to walk into his office with a linen duster on and have him say, 'From this time on Mister Me you're a Duke. Go out and get dressed for tea,'

[Pg 74]

and then turn around three times, bow to the Queen, whisk off the duster and stand there in the roil presence with the Duke's uniform already on. I guess he'd say that was American enterprise all right."

"You'd make a hit for sure!" roared Whistlebinkie dancing up and down with glee.

"I'll do it!" ejaculated the Unwiseman with a look of determination in his eyes. "If I can get a ready-made Duke's suit for $8.50 I'll do it. Even if it never happened I could wear the suit to do my gardening in when I get home. Did your father say anything about this being England or not?"

"Yes," said Mollie. "He said it was England all right. He's been here before and he says you can always tell it by the soldiers walking around with little pint measures on their heads instead of hats, and little boys in beaver hats with no tails to their coats."

"All right," said the Unwiseman. "I'm satisfied if he is—only the man that got up that map ought to be spoken to about making it pink when it is only a dull yellow dusty gray, and only four inches long instead of five miles. Some stranger trying to find it in the dark some night might stumble over it and never know that he'd got what he was looking for. Where are we going to from here?" [Pg 75]

"We're going straight up to London," said Mollie. "The train goes in an hour—just after lunch. Will you come and have lunch with us?"

"No thank you," replied the Unwiseman. "I've got a half dozen lunches saved up from the ship there in my carpet bag, and I'll eat a couple of those if I get hungry."

"Saved up from the ship?" cried Mollie.

"Yep," said the Unwiseman. "I've got a bottle full of that chicken broth they gave us the first day out that I didn't even try to eat; six or seven bottlefuls of beef tea, and about two dozen ginger-snaps, eight pounds of hard-tack, and a couple of apple pies. I kept ordering things all the way across whether I felt like eating them or not and whatever I didn't eat I'd bottle up, or wrap up in a piece of paper and put away in the bag. I've got just three dinners, two breakfasts and four lunches in there. When I get to London I'm going to buy a bunch of bananas and have an eclaire put up in a tin box and those with what I've already got ought to last me throughout the whole trip."

"By the way, Mr. Me," said Mollie, a thoughtful look coming into her eyes. "Do you want me to [Pg 76] ask my Papa to buy you a ticket for London? I think he'd do it if I asked him."

"I know he would," said Whistlebinkie. "He's one of the greatest men in the world for doing what Mollie asks him to."

"No thank you," replied the Unwiseman. "Of course if he had invited me to join the party at the start I might have been willing to have went at his expense, but seeing as how I sort of came along on my own hook I think I'd better look after myself. I'm an American, I am, and I kind of like to be free and independent like."

"Have you any money with you?" asked Mollie anxiously.

"No," laughed the Unwiseman. "That is, not more'n enough to buy that Duke's suit for $8.50 with. What's the use of having money? It's only a nuisance to carry around, and it makes you buy a lot of things you don't want just because you happen to have it along. People without money get along a great deal cheaper than people with it. Millionaires spend twice as much as poor people. Money ain't very sociable you know and it sort of hates to stay with you no matter how kind you [Pg 77] are to it. So I didn't bring any along except the aforesaid eight-fifty."

"Tisn't much, is it," said Mollie.

"Not in dollars, but it's a lot in cents—eight hundred and fifty of 'em—that's a good deal," said the Unwiseman cheerfully. "Then each cent is ten mills—that's—O dear me—such a lot of mills!"

"Eight thousand five hundred," Mollie calculated.

"Goodness!" cried the Unwiseman. "I hope there don't anybody find out I've got all that with me. I'd be afraid to go to sleep for fear somebody'd rob me."

"But *how*—how are you going to get to London?" asked Mollie anxiously. "It's too far to walk."

"O I'll get there," said the Unwiseman.

"He'll probably get a hitch on the cow-catcher," suggested Whistlebinkie.

"Don't you worry," laughed the Unwiseman. "It'll be all right, only—" here he paused and looked about him to make sure that no one was listening. "Only," he whispered, "I wish somebody would [Pg 78] carry my carpet-bag. It's a pretty big one as you can see, and I *might*—I don't say I would—but I might have trouble getting to London if I had to carry it."

"I'll be very glad to take care of it," said Mollie. "Should I have it checked or take it with me in the train?"

"Better take it with you," said the Unwiseman. "I haven't any key and some of these railway people might open it and eat up all my supplies."

"Very well," said Mollie. "I'll see that it's put in the train and I won't take my eyes off it all the way up to London."

So the little party went up to the hotel. The Unwiseman's carpet-bag was placed with the other luggage, and the family went in to luncheon leaving the Unwiseman to his own devices. When they came out the old fellow was nowhere to be seen and Mollie, much worried about him

boarded the train. Her father helped her with the carpet-bag, the train-door was closed, the conductor came for the tickets and with a loud clanging of bells the train started for London. It was an interesting trip but poor little Mollie did not enjoy it very much. She was so worried to [Pg 79] think of the Unwiseman all alone in England trying some new patent way of his own for getting over so many miles from Liverpool to the capital of the British Empire.

"We didn't even tell him the name of our hotel, Whistlebinkie," she whispered to her companion. "How will he ever find us again in this big place."

"O-he'll-turn-up orright," whistled Whistlebinkie comfortingly. "He knows a thing or two even if he is an Unwiseman."

And as it turned out Whistlebinkie was right, for about three minutes after their arrival at the London hotel, when the carpet-bag had been set carefully aside in one corner of Mollie's room, the cracked voice of the Unwiseman was heard singing:

"O a carpet-bag is more comfortabler
Than a regular Pullman Car.
Just climb inside and with never a stir,
Let no one know where you are;
And then when the train goes choo-choo-choo
And the ticket man comes arown,
You'll go without cost and a whizz straight through
To jolly old London-town.
To jolly, to jolly, to jolly, to jolly, to jolly old London-town."

"Hi there, Mollie—press the latch on this carpet-bag!" the voice continued. [Pg 80]

"Where are you?" cried Mollie, gazing excitedly about her.

"In here," came the voice from the cavernous depths of the carpet-bag.

"In the bag," gasped Mollie, breathless with surprise.

"*The* same—let me out," replied the Unwiseman.

And sure enough, when Mollie and Whistlebinkie with a mad rush sped to the carpet-bag and pressed on the sliding lock, the bag flew open and Mr. Me himself hopped smilingly up out of its wide-stretched jaws.

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# V. [Pg 81]

## A CALL ON THE KING

"Mercy!" cried Mollie as the Unwiseman stepped out of the carpet-bag, and began limbering up his stiffened legs by pirouetting about the room. "Aren't you nearly stufficated to death?"

"No indeed," said the Unwiseman. "Why should I be?"

"Well *I* should think the inside of a carpet-bag would be pretty smothery," observed Mollie.

"Perhaps it would be," agreed the Unwiseman, "if I hadn't taken mighty good care that it shouldn't be. You see I brought that life-preserver along, and every time I needed a bite of fresh air, I'd unscrew the tin cap and get it. I pumped it full of fine salt air the day we left Ireland for just that purpose."

"What a splendid idea!" ejaculated Mollie full of admiration for the Unwiseman's ingenuity.

"Yes I think it's pretty good," said the Unwiseman, "and when I get back home I'm going to invent it and make a large fortune out of it. Of course there ain't many people nowadays, especially [Pg 82] among the rich, who travel in carpet-bags the way I do, or get themselves checked through from New York to Chicago in trunks, but there are a lot of 'em who are always complaining about the lack of fresh air in railroad trains especially when they're going through tunnels, so I'm going to patent a little pocket fresh air case that they can carry about with them and use when needed. It is to be made of rubber like a hot-water bag, and all you've got to do before starting off on a long journey is to take your bicycle pump, pump the fresh-air bag full of the best air you can find on the place and set off on your trip. Then when the cars get snuffy, just unscrew the cap and take a sniff."

"My goodness!" cried Mollie. "You ought to make a million dollars out of that."

"Million?" retorted the Unwiseman. "Well I should say so. Why there are 80,000,000 people in America and if I sold one of those fresh-air bags a year to only 79,000,000 of 'em at two dollars apiece for ten years you see where I'd come out. They'd call me the Fresh Air King and print my [Pg 83] picture in the newspapers."

"You couldn't lend me two dollars now, could you?" asked Whistlebinkie facetiously.

"Yes I *could*," said the Unwiseman with a frown, "but I won't—but you can go out on the street and breathe two dollars worth of fresh air any time you want to and have it charged to my account."

Mollie laughed merrily at the Unwiseman's retort, and Whistlebinkie for the time being had nothing to say, or whistle either for that matter.

"You missed a lot of interesting scenery on the way up, Mr. Me," said Mollie.

"No I didn't," said the Unwiseman. "I heard it all as it went by, and that's good enough for me. I'd just as lief hear a thing as see it any day. I saw some music once and it wasn't half as pretty to look at as it was when I heard it, and it's the same way about scenery if you only get your mind fixed up so that you can enjoy it that way. Somehow or other it didn't sound so very different from the scenery I've heard at home, and that's one thing that made me like it. I'm very fond of sitting quietly in my little room at home and listening to the landscape when the moon is up and [Pg 84] the stars are out, and no end of times as we rattled along from Liverpool to London it sounded just like things do over in America, especially when we came to the switches at the railroad conjunctions. Don't they rattle beautifully!"

"They certainly do!" said Whistlebinkie, prompted largely by a desire to get back into the good graces of the Unwiseman. "I love it when we bump over them so hard they make-smee-wissle."

"You're all right when you whistle, Fizzledinkie," smiled the Unwiseman. "It's only when you try to talk that you are not all that you should be. Woyds and you get sort of tangled up and I haven't got time to ravel you out. But I say, Mollie, we're really in London are we?"

"Yes," said Mollie. "This is it."

"Well I guess I'll go out and see what there is about it that makes people want to come here," said the Unwiseman. "I've got a list of things I want to see, and the sooner I get to work the sooner I'll see 'em. First thing I want to get a sight of is a real London fog. Then of course I want to go down [Pg 85] to the Aquarium and see the Prince of Whales, and call on the King and Queen, and meet a few Dukes, and Earls and things like that. Then there's the British Museum. I'm told there is a lot of very interesting things down there including some Egyptian mummies that are passing their declining years there. I've never talked to a mummy in my life and I'd rather like to meet a few of 'em. I wonder if Dick Whittington's cat is still living."

"O I don't believe so," said Mollie. "He must have died long years ago."

"The first time and maybe the second or third or even the fourth time," said the Unwiseman. "But cats have nine lives and if he lived fifty years for each of them that would be—let's see, four times nine is eighteen, three times two is ten, carry four and——"

"It would be 450 years," laughed Mollie.

"Pretty old cat," said Whistlebinkie.

"Well there's no harm in asking anyhow, and if he is alive I'm going to see him, and if he isn't the chances are they've had him stuffed and a stuffed cat is better to look at than no cat at all," said the Unwiseman, brushing off his hat preparatory to going out. "Come on, Mollie—are you ready?" [Pg 86]

The little party trudged down the stairs and out upon the avenue upon which their hotel fronted.

"Guess we'd better take a hansom," said the Unwiseman as they emerged from the door. "We'll save time going that way if the driver knows his business. We'll just tell him to go where we want to go, and in that way we won't have to keep asking these Roberts the way round."

"Roberts?" asked Mollie, forgetting the little incident at Liverpool.

"Oh well—the Bobbies—the pleecemen," replied the Unwiseman. "I want to get used to 'em before I call them that."

So they all climbed into a hansom cab.

"Where to, sir?" asked the cabby, through the little hole in the roof.

"Well I suppose we ought to call on the King first," said the Unwiseman to Mollie. "Don't you?"

"I guess so," said Mollie timidly.

"To the King's," said the Unwiseman, through the little hole.

"Beg pardon!" replied the astonished cabby. [Pg 87]

"Don't mention it," said the Unwiseman. "Drive to the King's house first and apologize afterwards."

"I only wanted to know where you wished to go, sir," said the cabby.

"The King's, stupid," roared the Unwiseman, "Mr. Edward S. King's—didn't you ever hear of him?"

"To the Palace, sir?" asked the driver.

"Of course unless his h. r. h. is living in a tent somewhere—and hurry up. We didn't engage you for the pleasures of conversation, but to drive us," said the Unwiseman severely.

The amazed cabman whipped up his horse and a short while afterwards reached Buckingham Palace, the home of the King and Queen in London. At either side of the gate was a tall sentry box, and a magnificent red-coated soldier with a high bear-skin shako on his head paced along the path.

"There he is now," said the Unwiseman, excitedly, pointing at the guard. "Isn't he a magnificent sight. Come along and I'll introduce you."

The Unwiseman leapt jauntily out of the hansom and Mollie and Whistlebinkie timidly followed. [Pg 88]

"Howdido, Mr. King," said the Unwiseman stepping in front of the sentry and making a profound salaam and almost sweeping the walk with his hat. "We've just arrived in London and have called to pay our respects to you and Mrs. King. I hope the children are well. We're Americans, Mr. King, but for the time being we've decided to overlook all our little differences growing out of the Declaration of Independence and wish you a Merry Fourth of July."

The sentry was dumb with amazement at this unexpected greeting, and the cabby's eyes nearly dropped out of his head they bulged so.

"Mollie, dear," continued Mr. Me, "Come here, my child and let me introduce you to Mr. King. Mr. King, this is a little American girl named Mollie. She's a bit bashful in your h. r. h's presence because between you and me you are the first real King she's ever saw. We don't grow 'em in our country—that is not your kind. We have Cattle Kings and Steel Kings, and I'm expecting to become a Fresh Air King myself—but the kind that's born to the—er—to the purple like yourself, [Pg 89] with a gilt crown on his head and the spectre of power in his hand we don't get even at the circus."

**MOLLY MAKES HER COURTESY TO MR. KING**

"Very glad to meet you," gasped Mollie, feasting her eyes upon the gorgeous red coat of the sentry.

The sentry not knowing what else to do and utterly upset by the Unwiseman's eloquence returned the gasp as politely as he could.

"She's a mighty nice little girl, Mr. King," said the Unwiseman with a fond glance of admiration at Mollie. "And if any of your little kings and queens feel like calling at the hotel some morning for a friendly Anglo-American romp, Mollie will be very glad to see them. This other young person, your h. r. h., is Whistlebinkie who belongs to one of the best Rubber families of the United States. He looks better than he talks. Whistlebinkie, Mr. King. Mr. King, Whistlebinkie."

Whistlebinkie, too overcome to speak, merely squeaked, a proceeding which seemed to please the sentry very much for he returned a truly royal smile and expressed himself as being very glad [Pg 90] to meet Whistlebinkie.

"Been having pretty cold weather?" asked the Unwiseman genially.

"Been rawther 'ot," said the sentry.

"I only asked," said the Unwiseman with a glance at the guard's shako, "because I see you have your fur crown on. Our American Kings wear Panama crowns this weather," he added, "but then we're free over there and can do pretty much what we like. Did you get my letter?"

"Beg your pardon?" asked the sentry.

"Mercy!" ejaculated the Unwiseman under his breath. "What an apologetic people these English are—first the cabby and now the King." Then he repeated aloud, "My letter—I wrote to you yesterday about this H dropping habit of your people, and I was going to say that if after reading it you decided to make me a Duke I'd be very glad to accept if the clothes a Duke has to wear don't cost more than $8.50. I might even go as high as nine dollars if the suit was a real good one that I could wear ten or eleven years—but otherwise I couldn't afford it. It would be very kind of [Pg 91] your h. r. h. to make me one, but I've always made it a rule not to spend more than a dollar a year

on my clothes and even a Duke has got to wear socks and neckties in addition to his coats and trousers. Who is your Majesty's Tailor? That red coat fits you like wall-paper."

The sentry said something about buying his uniforms at the Army and Navy stores and the Unwiseman observed that he would most certainly have to go there and see what he could get for himself.

"I'll tell 'em your h. r. h. sent me," he said pleasantly, "and maybe they'll give you a commission on what I buy."

A long pause followed broken only by Whistlebinkie's heavy breathing for he had by no means recovered from his excitement over having met a real king at last. Finally the Unwiseman spoke again.

"We'd like very much to accept your kind invitation to stay to supper, Mr. King," he observed—although the sentry had said nothing at all about any such thing—"but we really can't to-night. You see we are paying pretty good rates at the hotel and we feel it a sort of duty to stay there and [Pg 92] eat all we can so as to get our money's worth. And we'd like to meet the Queen too, but as you can see for yourself we're hardly dressed for that. We only came anyhow to let you know that we were here and to tell you that if you ever came to America we'd be mighty glad to have you call. I've got a rather nice house of my own with a kitchen-stove in it that I wouldn't sell for five dollars that you would enjoy seeing. It's rented this summer to one of the most successful burgulars in America and I think you'd enjoy meeting him, and don't hesitate to bring the children. America's a great place for children, your h. r. h. It's just chock full of back yards for 'em to play in, and banisters to slide down, and roller skating rinks and all sorts of things that children enjoy. I'll be very glad to let you use my umbrella too if the weather happens to be bad."

The sentry was very much impressed apparently by the cordiality of the Unwiseman's invitation for he bowed most graciously a half dozen times, and touched his bear-skin hat very respectfully, and smiled so royally that anybody could see he was delighted with the idea of some day visiting [Pg 93] that far off land where the Unwiseman lived, and seeing that wonderful kitchen-stove of which, as we know, the old gentleman was so proud.

"By the way," said the Unwiseman, confidentially. "Before I go I'd like to say to you that if you are writing at any time to the Emperor of Germany you might send him my kind regards. I had hoped to be able to stop over at Kettledam, or wherever it is he lives—no, it's Pottsdam—I always do get pots and kettles mixed—I had hoped to be able, I say, to stop over there and pay my respects to him, but the chances are I won't be able to do so this trip. I'd hate to have him think that I'd been over here and hadn't paid any attention to him, and if you'll be so kind as to send him my regards he won't feel so badly about it. I'd write and tell him myself, but the fact is my German is a little rusty. I only know German by sight—and even then I don't know what it means except Gesundheit,—which is German for 'did you sneeze?' So you see a letter addressed to Mr. Hoch ——"

"Beg pardon, but Mr. Who sir?" asked the Sentry. [Pg 94]

"Mr. Hoch, der Kaiser," said the Unwiseman. "That's his name, isn't it?"

The sentry said he believed it was something like that.

"Well as I was saying even if I wrote he wouldn't understand what I was trying to say, so it would be a waste of time," said the Unwiseman.

The sentry nodded pleasantly, and his eyes twinkled under his great bear-skin hat like two sparkling bits of coal.

"Good bye, your h. r. h.," the Unwiseman continued, holding out his hand. "It has been a real pleasure to meet you, and between you and me if all kings were as good mannered and decent about every thing as you are we wouldn't mind 'em so much over in America. If the rest of 'em are like you they're all right."

And so the Unwiseman shook hands with the sentry and Mollie did likewise while Whistlebinkie repeated his squeak with a quaver that showed how excited he still was. The three travellers re-entered the hansom and inasmuch as it was growing late they decided not to do any more sight- [Pg 95] seeing that day, and instructed the cabby to drive them back to the hotel.

"Wonderfully fine man, that King," said the Unwiseman as they drove along. "I had a sort of an idea he'd have a band playing music all the time, with ice cream and cake being served every five minutes in truly royal style."

"He was just as pleasant as a plain everyday policeman at home," said Mollie.

"Pleasanter," observed the Unwiseman. "A policeman at home would probably have told us to move on the minute we spoke to him, but the King was as polite as ginger-bread. I guess we were lucky to find him outside there because if he hadn't been I don't believe the head-butler would have let us in."

"How-dy'u-know he was the King?" asked Whistlebinkie.

"Oh I just felt it in my bones," said the Unwiseman. "He was so big and handsome, and then that red coat with the gold buttons—why it just simply couldn't be anybody else."

"He didn't say much, diddee," whistled Whistlebinkie.

"No," said the Unwiseman. "I guess maybe that's one of the reasons why he's a first class King. [Pg 96] The fellow that goes around talking all the time might just as well be a—well a rubber-doll like

you, Fizzledinkie. It takes a great man to hold his tongue."

The hansom drew up at the hotel door and the travellers alighted.

"Thank you very much," said the Unwiseman with a friendly nod at the cabby.

"Five shillin's, please, sir," said the driver.

"What's that?" demanded the Unwiseman.

"Five shillin's," repeated the cabby.

"What do you suppose he means?" asked the Unwiseman turning to Mollie.

"Why he wants to be paid five shillings," whispered Mollie. "Shillings is money."

"Oh—hm—well—I never thought of that," said the Unwiseman uneasily. "How much is that in dollars?"

"It's a dollar and a quarter," said Mollie.

"I don't want to buy the horse," protested the Unwiseman.

"Come now!" put in the driver rather impatiently. "Five shillin's, sir."

"Charge it," said the Unwiseman, shrinking back. "Just put it on the bill, driver, and I'll send you a cheque for it. I've only got ten dollars in real money with me, and I tell you right now I'm not going to pay out a dollar and a quarter right off the handle at one fell swoop." [Pg 97]

"You'll pay now, or I'll—" the cabby began.

And just then, fortunately for all, Mollie's father, who had been looking all over London for his missing daughter, appeared, and in his joy over finding his little one, paid the cabby and saved the Unwiseman from what promised to be a most unpleasant row.

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# VI. [Pg 98]

## THEY GET SOME FOG AND GO SHOPPING

The following day the Unwiseman was in high-feather. At last he was able to contemplate in all its gorgeousness a real London fog of which he had heard so much, for over the whole city hung one of those deep, dark, impenetrable mists which cause so much trouble at times to those who dwell in the British capital.

"Hurry up, Mollie, and come out," he cried enthusiastically rapping on the little girl's door. "There's one of the finest fogs outside you ever saw. I'm going to get a bottle full of it and take it home with me."

"Hoh!" jeered Whistlebinkie. "What a puffickly 'bsoyd thing to do—as if we never didn't have no fogs at home!"

"We don't have any London fogs in America, Whistlebinkie," said Mollie.

"No but we have very much finer ones," boasted the patriotic Whistlebinkie. "They're whiter and cleaner to begin with, and twice as deep."

"Well never mind, Whistlebinkie," said Mollie. "Don't go looking around for trouble with the Unwiseman. It's very nice to be able to enjoy everything as much as he does and you shouldn't never find fault with people because they enjoy themselves." [Pg 99]

"Hi-there, Mollie," came the Unwiseman's voice at the door. "Just open the door a little and I'll give you a hatful of it."

"You can come in," said Mollie. "Whistlebinkie and I are all dressed."

And the little girl opened the door and the Unwiseman entered. He carried his beaver hat in both hands, as though it were a pail without a handle, and over the top of it he had spread a copy of the morning's paper.

"It's just the finest fog ever," he cried as he came in. "Real thick. I thought you'd like to have some, so I went out on the sidewalk and got a hat full of it for you."

Mollie and Whistlebinkie gathered about the old gentleman as he removed the newspaper from the top of his hat, and gazed into it.

"I do-see-anthing," whistled Whistlebinkie.

"You don't?" cried the Unwiseman. "Why it's chock full of fog. You can see it can't you Mollie?" he added anxiously, for to tell the truth the hat did seem to be pretty empty. [Pg 100]

Mollie tried hard and was able to convince herself that she could see just a tiny bit of it and acted accordingly.

"Isn't it beautiful!" she ejaculated, as if filled with admiration for the contents of the Unwiseman's hat. "I don't think I ever saw any just like it before—did you, Mr. Me?"

"No," said the Unwiseman much pleased, "I don't think I ever did—it's so delicate and—er—steamy, eh? And there's miles of it outdoors and the Robert down on the corner says we're

welcome to all we want of it. I didn't like to take it without asking, you know."

"Of course not," said Mollie, glancing into the hat again.

"So I just went up to the pleeceman and told him I was going to start a museum at home and that I wanted to have some real London fog on exhibition and would he mind if I took some. 'Go ahead, sir,' he said very politely. 'Go ahead and take all you want. We've got plenty of it and to spare. You can take it all if you want it.' Mighty kind of him I think," said the Unwiseman. "So I [Pg 101] dipped out a hat full for you first. Where'll I put it?"

"O——," said Mollie, "I—I don't know. I guess maybe you'd better pour it out into that vase up there on the mantel-piece—it isn't too thick to go in there, is it?"

"It don't seem to be," said the Unwiseman peering cautiously into the hat. "Somehow or other it don't seem quite as thick inside here as it did out there on the street. Tell you the truth I don't believe it'll keep unless we get it in a bottle and cork it up good and tight—do you?"

"I'm afraid not," agreed Mollie. "It's something like snow—kind of vaporates."

"I'm going to put mine in a bottle," said the Unwiseman, "and seal the cork with sealing wax—then I'll be sure of it. Then I thought I'd get an envelope full and send it home to my Burgular just to show him I haven't forgotten him—poor fellow, he must be awful lonesome up there in my house without any friends in the neighborhood and no other burgulars about to keep him company."

And the strange little man ran off to get his bottle filled with fog and to fill up an envelope with it [Pg 102] as well as a souvenir of London for the lonesome Burglar at home. Later on Mollie encountered him leaving the hotel door with a small shovel and bucket in his hand such as children use on the beach in the summer-time.

"The pleeceman says it's thicker down by the river," he explained to Mollie, "and I'm going down there to shovel up a few pailsful—though I've got a fine big bottleful of it already corked up and labelled for my museum. And by the way, Mollie, you want to be careful about Whistlebinkie in this fog. When he whistles on a bright clear day it is hard enough to understand what he is saying, but if he gets *his* hat full of fog and tries to whistle with that it will be something awful. I don't think I could stand him if he began to talk any foggier than he does ordinarily."

Mollie promised to look out for this and kept Whistlebinkie indoors all the morning, much to the rubber-doll's disgust, for Whistlebinkie was quite as anxious to see how the fog would affect his squeak as the Unwiseman was to avoid having him do so. In the afternoon the fog lifted and the Unwiseman returned.

"I think I'll go out and see if I can find the King's tailor," he said. "I'm getting worried about that [Pg 103] Duke's suit. I asked the Robert what he thought it would cost and he said he didn't believe you could get one complete for less than five pounds and the way I figure it out that's a good deal more than eight-fifty."

"It's twenty-five dollars," Mollie calculated.

"Mercy!" cried the Unwiseman. "It costs a lot to dress by the pound doesn't it—I guess I'd better write to Mr. King and tell him I've decided not to accept."

"Better see what it costs first," said Whistlebinkie.

"All right," agreed the Unwiseman. "I will—want to go with me Mollie?"

"Certainly," said Mollie.

And they started out. After walking up to Trafalgar Square and thence on to Piccadilly, the Unwiseman carefully scanning all the signs before the shops as they went, they came to a bake-shop that displayed in its window the royal coat of arms and announced that "Muffins by Special Appointment to H. R. H. the King," could be had there.

"We're getting close," said the Unwiseman. "Let's go in and have a royal cream-cake." [Pg 104]

Mollie as usual was willing and entering the shop the Unwiseman planted himself before the counter and addressed the sales-girl.

"I'm a friend of Mr. King, Madame," he observed with a polite bow, "just over from America and we had a sort of an idea that we should like to eat a really regal piece of cake. What have you in stock made by Special Appointment for the King?"

"We 'ave Hinglish Muffins," replied the girl.

"Let me see a few," said the Unwiseman.

The girl produced a trayful.

"Humph!" ejaculated the Unwiseman looking at them critically. "They ain't very different from common people's muffins are they? What I want is some of the stuff that goes to the Palace. I may look green, young lady, but I guess I've got sense enough to see that those things are *not* royal."

**"THESE ARE THE KIND HIS MAJESTY PREFERS," SAID THE GIRL**

"These are the kind his majesty prefers," said the girl.

"Come along, Mollie," said the Unwiseman turning away. "I don't want to get into trouble and I'm sure this young lady is trying to fool us. I am very much obliged to you, Madame," he added turning to the girl at the counter. "We'd have been very glad to purchase some of your wares if you hadn't tried to deceive us. Those muffins are very pretty indeed but when you try to make us believe that they are muffins by special appointment to his h. r. h., Mr. Edward S. King, plain and simple Americans though we be, we know better. Even my rubber friend, Whistlebinkie here recognizes a bean when he sees it. I shall report this matter to the King and beg to wish you a very good afternoon." [Pg 105]

And drawing himself up to his full height, the Unwiseman with a great show of dignity marched out of the shop followed meekly by Mollie and Whistlebinkie.

"I-didn-tsee-an-thing th-matter-withem," whistled Whistlebinkie. "They looked to me like firs-class-smuffins."

"No doubt," said the Unwiseman. "That's because you don't know much. But they couldn't fool me. If I'd wanted plain muffins I could have asked for them, but when I ask for a muffin by special appointment to his h. r. h. the King I want them to give me what I ask for. Perhaps you didn't observe that not one of those muffins she brought out was set with diamonds and rubies." [Pg 106]

"Now that you mention it," said Mollie, "I remember they weren't."

"Prezactly," said the Unwiseman. "They weren't even gold mounted, or silver plated, or anything to make 'em different from the plain every day muffins that you can buy in a baker's shop at home. I don't believe they were by special appointment to anybody—not even a nearl, much less the King. I guess they think we Americans don't know anything over here—but they're barking up the wrong tree if they think they can fool me."

"We-mightuv-tastedum!" whistled Whistlebinkie much disappointed, because he always did love the things at the baker's. "You can't tell just by lookin' at a muffin whether it's good or not."

"Well go back and taste them," retorted the Unwiseman. "It's your taste—only if I had as little taste as you have I wouldn't waste it on that stuff. Ah—this is the place I've been looking for." [Pg 107]

The old man's eyes had fallen upon another sign which read "Robe Maker By Special Appointment to T. R. H. The King and The Queen."

"Here's the place, Mollie, where they make the King's clothes," he said. "Now for it."

Hand in hand the three travellers entered the tailor's shop.

"How do you do, Mr. Snip," said the Unwiseman addressing the gentlemanly manager of the shop whose name was on the sign without and who approached him as affably as though he were not himself the greatest tailor in the British Isles—for he couldn't have been the King's tailor if he had not been head and shoulders above all the rest. "I had a very pleasant little chat with his h. r. h. about you yesterday. I could see by the fit of his red jacket that you were the best tailor in the world, and while he didn't say very much on the subject the King gave me to understand that you're pretty nearly all that you should be."

"Verry gracious of his Majesty I am sure," replied the tailor, washing his hands in invisible soap, and bowing most courteously. [Pg 108]

"Now the chances are," continued the Unwiseman, "that as soon as the King receives a letter I wrote to him from Liverpool about how to stamp out this horrible habit his subjects have of littering up the street with aitches, clogging traffic and overworking the Roberts picking 'em up, he'll ask me to settle down over here and be a Duke. Naturally I don't want to disappoint him because I consider the King to be a mighty nice man, but unless I can get a first-class Duke's costume——"

"We make a specialty of Ducal robes, your Grace," said the Tailor, manifesting a great deal of interest in his queer little customer.

"Hold on a minute," cried the Unwiseman. "Don't you call me that yet—I shant be a grace until I've decided to accept. What does an A-1 Duke's clothes cost?"

"You mean the full State——" began the Tailor.

"I come from New York State," said the Unwiseman. "Yes—I guess that's it. New York's the fullest State in the Union. How much for a New York State Duke?"

"The State Robes will cost—um—let me see—I should think about fifteen hundred pounds, your Lordship," calculated the Tailor. "Of course it all depends on the quality of the materials. Velvets are rawther expensive these days." [Pg 109]

Whistlebinkie gave a long low squeak of astonishment. Mollie gasped and the Unwiseman turned very pale as he tremblingly repeated the figure.

"Fif-teen-hundred-pounds? Why," he added turning to Mollie, "I'd have to live about seven thousand years to get the wear out of it at a dollar a year."

"Yes, your Lordship—or more. It all depends upon how much gold your Lordship requires—" observed the Tailor.

"Seems to me I'd need about four barrels of it," said the Unwiseman, "to pay a bill like that."

"We have made robes costing as high as 10,000 pounds," continued the Tailor. "But they of course were of unusual magnificence—and for special jubilee celebrations you know."

"You haven't any ready made Duke's clothes on hand for less?" inquired the Unwiseman. "You know I'm not so awfully particular about the fit. My figure's a pretty good one, but after all I don't want to thrust it on people." [Pg 110]

"We do not deal in ready made garments," said the Tailor coldly.

"Well I guess I'll have to give it up then," said the Unwiseman, "unless you know where I could hire a suit, or maybe buy one second-hand from some one of your customers who's going to get a new one."

"We do not do that kind of trade, sir," replied the Tailor, haughtily.

"Well say, Mr. Snip—ain't there anything else a chap can be made beside a Duke that ain't quite so dressy?" persisted the old gentleman. "I don't want to disappoint Mr. King you know."

"Oh as for that," observed the Tailor, "there are ordinary peerages, baronetcies and the like. His Majesty might make you a Knight," he added sarcastically.

"That sounds good," said the Unwiseman. "About what would a Knight gown cost me—made out of paper muslin or something that's a wee bit cheaper than solid gold and velvet?"

This perfectly innocent and sincerely asked question was never answered, for Mr. Snip the Tailor made up his mind that the Unwiseman was guying him and acted accordingly. [Pg 111]

"Jorrocks!" he cried haughtily to the office boy, a fresh looking lad who had broken out all over in brass buttons. "Jorrocks, show this 'ere party the door."

Whereupon Mr. Snip retired and Jorrocks with a wink at Whistlebinkie showed the travellers out.

"Well did you ever!" ejaculated the Unwiseman. "You couldn't have expected any haughtier haughtiness than that from the King himself."

"He was pretty proud," said Mollie, with a smile, for to tell the truth she had had all she could do all through the interview to keep from giggling.

"He was proud all right, but I didn't notice anything very pretty about him," said the Unwiseman. "I'm going to write to the King about both those places, because I don't believe he knows what kind of people they are with their bogus muffins and hoity-toity manners."

They walked solemnly along the street in the direction of the hotel.

"I won't even wait for the mail," said the Unwiseman. "I'll walk over to the Palace now and tell him. That tailor might turn some real important American out of his shop in the same way and then there'd be a war over it." [Pg 112]

"O I wouldn't," said Mollie, who was always inclined toward peace-making. "Wait and write him a letter."

"Send-im-a-wireless-smessage," whistled Whistlebinkie.

"Good idea!" said the Unwiseman. "That'll save postage and it'll get to the King right away instead of having to be read first by one of his Secretaries."

So it happened that that night the Unwiseman climbed up to the roof of the hotel and sent the following wireless telegram to the King:

My dear Mr. King:

That tailor of yours seems to think he's a Grand Duke in disguise. In the first place he wanted me to pay over seven thousand dollars for a Duke's suit and when I asked him the price of a Knight-gown he told Jorrocks to show me the door, which I had already seen and hadn't asked to see again. He's a very imputinent tailor and if I were you I'd bounce him as we say in America. Furthermore they sell bogus muffins up at that specially appointed bake-shop of yours. I think you ought to know these things. Nations have gone to war for less.

Yours trooly,
The Unwiseman.

[Pg 113]

P.S. I've been thinking about that Duke proposition and I don't think I care to go into that business. Folks at home haven't as much use for 'em as they have for sour apples which you can make pie out of. So don't do anything further in the matter.

"There," said the Unwiseman as he tossed this message off into the air. "That saves me $8.50 anyhow, and I guess it'll settle the business of those bogus muffin people and that high and mighty tailor."

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# VII.

[Pg 114]

## THE UNWISEMAN VISITS THE BRITISH MUSEUM

"What's the matter, Mr. Me?" asked Mollie one morning after they had been in London for a week. "You look very gloomy this morning. Aren't you feeling well?"

"O I'm feeling all right physically," said the Unwiseman. "But I'm just chock full of gloom just the same and I want to get away from here as soon as I can. Everything in the whole place is bogus."

"Oh Mr. Me! you mustn't say that!" protested Mollie.

"Well if it ain't there's something mighty queer about it anyhow, and I just don't like it," said the Unwiseman. "I know they've fooled me right and left, and I'm just glad George Washington licked 'em at Bunco Hill and pushed 'em off our continent on the double quick."

"What is the particular trouble?" asked Mollie.

[Pg 115]

"Well, in the first place," began the old gentleman, "that King we saw the other day wasn't a real king at all—just a sort of decoy king they keep outside the Palace to shoo people off and keep them from bothering the real one; and in the second place the Prince of Whales aint' a whale at all. He ain't even a shiner. He's just a man. I don't see what right they have to fool people the way they do. They wouldn't dare run a circus that way at home."

Mollie laughed, and Whistlebinkie squeaked with joy.

"You didn't really expect him to be a whale, did you?" Mollie asked.

"Why of course I did," said the Unwiseman. "Why not? They claim over here that Britannia rules the waves, don't they?"

"They certainly do," said Mollie gravely.

"Then it's natural to suppose they have a big fish somewhere to represent 'em," said the Unwiseman. "The King can't go sloshing around under the ocean saying howdido to porpoises and shad and fellers like that. It's too wet and he'd catch his death of cold, so I naturally thought the Prince of Whales looked after that end of the business, and now I find he's not even a sardine. It's perfectly disgusting."

[Pg 116]

"I knew-he-wasn't-a-fish," said Whistlebinkie.

"Well you always were smarter than anybody else," growled the Unwiseman. "You know a Roc's egg isn't a pebble without anybody telling you I guess. You were born with the multiplication table in your hat, but as for me I'm glad I've got something to learn. I guess carrying so much real live information around in your hat is what makes you squeak so."

The old gentleman paused a moment and then he went on again.

"What I'm worrying most about is that mock king," he said. "Here I've gone and invited him over to America, and offered to present him with the freedom of my kitchen stove and introduce him to my burgular. Suppose he comes? What on earth am I going to do? I can't introduce him as the real king, and if I pass him off for a bogus king everybody'll laugh at me, and accuse me of bringing my burgular into bad company."

[Pg 117]

"How did you find it out?" asked Mollie sadly, for she had already written home to her friends giving them a full account of their reception by his majesty.

"Why I went up to the Palace this morning to see why he hadn't answered my letter and this time there was another man there, wearing the same suit of clothes, bear-skin hat, red jacket and all," explained the Unwiseman. "I was just flabbergasted and then it flashed over me all of a sudden

that there might be a big conspiracy on hand to kidnap the real king and put his enemies on the throne. It was all so plain. Certainly no king would let anybody else wear his clothes, so this chap must have stolen them and was trying to pass himself off for Edward S. King himself."

"Mercy!" cried Mollie. "What did you do? Call for help?"

"No sirree—I mean no ma'am!" returned the Unwiseman. "That wouldn't help matters any. I ran down the street to a telephone office and rang up the palace. I told 'em the king had been kidnapped and that a bogus king was paradin' up and down in front of the Palace with the royal [Pg 118] robes on. I liked that first king so much I couldn't bear to think of his lyin' off somewhere in a dungeon-cell waiting to have his head chopped off. And what do you suppose happened? Instead of arresting the mock king they wanted to arrest me, and I think they would have if a nice old gentleman in a high hat and a frock coat like mine, only newer, hadn't driven up at that minute, bowing to everybody, and entered the Palace yard with the whole crowd giving him three cheers. Then what do you suppose? They tried to pass *him* off on me as the *real* king—why he was plainer than those muffins and looked for all the world like a good natured life insurance agent over home."

"And they didn't arrest you?" asked Mollie, anxiously.

"No indeed," laughed the Unwiseman. "I had my carpet-bag along and when the pleeceman wasn't looking I jumped into it and waited till they'd all gone. Of course they couldn't find me. I don't believe they've got any king over here at all."

"Then you'll never be a Duke?" said Whistlebinkie.

"No sirree!" ejaculated the Unwiseman. "Not while I know how to say no. If they offer it to me I'll [Pg 119] buy a megaphone to say no through so's they'll be sure to hear it. Then there's that other wicked story about London Bridge falling down. I heard some youngsters down there by the River announcing the fact and I nearly ran my legs off trying to get there in time to see it fall and when I arrived it not only wasn't falling down but was just ram-jam full of omnibuses and cabs and trucks. Really I never knew anybody anywhere who could tell as many fibs in a minute as these people over here can."

"Well never mind, Mr. Me," said Mollie, soothingly. "Perhaps things have gone a little wrong with you, and I don't blame you for feeling badly about the King, but there are other things here that are very interesting. Come with Whistlebinkie and me to the British Museum and see the Mummies."

"Pooh!" retorted the Unwiseman. "I'd rather see a basket of figs."

"You never can tell," persisted Mollie. "They may turn out to be the most interesting things in all the world."

"I can tell," said the Unwiseman. "I've already seen 'em and they haven't as much conversation as [Pg 120] a fried oyster. I went down there yesterday and spent two hours with 'em, and a more unapproachable lot you never saw in your life. I was just as polite to 'em as I knew how to be. Asked 'em how they liked the British climate. Told 'em long stories of my house at home. Invited a lot of 'em to come over and meet my burgular just as I did the King and not a one of 'em even so much as thanked me. They just stood off there in their glass cases and acted as if they never saw me, and if they did, hadn't the slightest desire to see me again. You don't catch me calling on them a second time."

"But there are other things in the Museum, aren't there?" asked Mollie.

The Unwiseman's gloom disappeared for a moment in a loud burst of laughter.

"Such a collection of odds and ends," he cried, with a sarcastic shake of his head. "I never saw so much broken crockery in all my life. It looks to me as if they'd bought up all the old broken china in the world. There are tea-pots without nozzles by the thousand. Old tin cans, all rusted up and [Pg 121] with dents in 'em from everywhere. Cracked plates by the million, and no end of water-pitchers with the handles broken off, and chipped vases and goodness knows what all. And they call that a museum! Just you give me a half a dozen bricks and a crockery shop over in America and in five minutes I'll make that British Museum stuff look like a sixpence. When I saw it first, I was pretty mad to think I'd taken the trouble to go and look at it, and then as I went on and couldn't find a whole tea-cup in the entire outfit, and saw people with catalogues in their hands saying how wonderful everything was, I just had to sit down on the floor and roar with laughter."

"But the statuary, Mr. Me," said Mollie. "That was pretty fine I guess, wasn't it? I've heard it's a splendid collection."

"Worse than the crockery," laughed the Unwiseman. "There's hardly a statue in the whole place that isn't broken. Seems to me they're the most careless lot of people over here with their museums. Half the statues didn't have any heads on 'em. A good quarter of them had busted [Pg 122] arms and legs, and on one of 'em there wasn't anything left but a pair of shoulder blades and half a wing sticking out at the back. It looked more like a quarry than a museum to me, and in a mighty bad state of repair even for a quarry. That was where they put me out," the old gentleman added.

"Put you out?" cried Mollie. "Oh Mr. Me—you don't mean to say they actually put you out of The British Museum?"

"I do indeed," said the Unwiseman with a broad grin on his face. "They just grabbed me by my collar and hustled me along the floor to the great door and dejected me just as if I didn't have any

more feeling than their old statues. It's a wonder the way I landed I wasn't as badly busted up as they are."

"But what for? You were not misbehaving yourself, were you?" asked Mollie, very much disturbed over this latest news.

"Of course not," returned the Unwiseman. "Quite the contrary opposite. I was trying to help them. I came across the great big statue of some Greek chap—I've forgotten his name—something like Hippopotomes, or something of the sort—standing up on a high pedestal, with a [Pg 123] sign,

**"HANDS OFF**

"hanging down underneath it. When I looked at it I saw at once that it not only had its hands off, but was minus a nose, two ears, one under-lip and a right leg, so I took out my pencil and wrote underneath the words Hands Off:

**"LIKEWISE ONE NOZE**

**ONE PARE OF EARS**

**A LEG AND ONE LIPP**

"It seemed to me the sign should ought to be made complete, but I guess they thought different, because I'd hardly finished the second P on lip when whizz bang, a lot of attendants came rushing up to me and the first thing I knew I was out on the street rubbing the back of my head and wondering what hit me."

"Poor old chap!" said Mollie sympathetically.

"Guess-you-wisht-you-was-mader-ubber-like-me!" whistled Whistlebinkie trying hard to repress his glee.

"What's that?" demanded the Unwiseman.

"I-guess-you-wished-you-were-made-of-rubber-like-me!" explained Whistlebinkie.

"Never in this world," retorted the Unwiseman scornfully. "If I'd been made of rubber like you I'd [Pg 124] have bounced up and down two or three times instead of once, and I'm not so fond of hitting the sidewalk with myself as all that. But I didn't mind. I was glad to get out. I was so afraid all the time somebody'd come along and accuse me of breaking their old things that it was a real relief to find myself out of doors and nothing broken that didn't belong to me."

"They didn't break any of your poor old bones, did they?" asked Mollie, taking the Unwiseman's hand affectionately in her own.

"No—worse luck—they did worse than that," said the old gentleman growing very solemn again. "They broke that bottle of my native land that I always carry in my coat-tail pocket and loosened the cork in my fog bottle in the other, so that now I haven't more than a pinch of my native land with me to keep me from being homesick, and all of the fog I was saving up for my collection has escaped. But I don't care. I don't believe it was real fog, but just a mixture of soot and steam they're trying to pass off for the real thing. Bogus like everything else, and as for my native land, [Pg 125] I've got enough to last me until I get home if I'm careful of it. The only thing I'm afraid of is that in scooping what I could of it up off the sidewalk I may have mixed a little British soil in with it. I'd hate to have that happen because just at present British soil isn't very popular with me."

"Maybe it's bogus too," snickered Whistlebinkie.

"So much the better," said the Unwiseman. "If it ain't real I can manage to stand it."

"Then you don't think much of the British Museum?" said Mollie.

"Well it ain't my style," said the Unwiseman, shaking his head vigorously. "But there was one thing that pleased me very much about it," the old man went on, his eye lighting with real pleasure and his voice trembling with patriotic pride, "and that's some of the things they didn't have in it. It was full of things the British have captured in Greece and Italy and Africa and pretty nearly everywhere else—mummies from Egypt, pieces of public libraries from Athens, second-story windows from Rome, and little dabs of architecture from all over the map except the United [Pg 126] States. That made me laugh. They may have had Cleopatra's mummy there, but I didn't notice any dried up specimens of the Decalculation of Independence lying around in any of their old glass cases. They had a whole side wall out of some Roman capitol building perched up on a big wooden platform, but I didn't notice any domes from the Capitol at Washington or back piazzas from the White House on exhibition. There was a lot of busted old statuary from Greece all over the place, but nary a statue of Liberty from New York harbor, or figger of Andrew Jackson from Philadelphia, or bust of Ralph Waldo Longfellow from Boston Common, sitting up there among their trophies—only things hooked from the little fellers, and dug up from places like Pompey-two-eyes where people have been dead so long they really couldn't watch out for their property. It don't take a very glorious conqueror to run off with things belonging to people they can lick with one hand, and it pleased me so when I couldn't find even a finger-post, or a drug-store placard, or a three dollar shoe store sign from America in the whole collection that my chest [Pg 127] stuck out like a pouter pigeon's and bursted my shirt-studs right in two. They'd have had a lump

chipped off Independence Hall at Philadelphia, or a couple of chunks of Bunco Hill, or a sliver off the Washington Monument there all right if they could have got away with it, but they couldn't, and I tell you I wanted to climb right up top of the roof and sing Yankee Doodle and crow like a rooster the minute I noticed it, I felt so good."

"Three cheers for us," roared Whistlebinkie.

"That's the way to talk, Fizzledinkie," cried the old gentleman gleefully, and grasping Whistlebinkie by the hand he marched up and down Mollie's room singing the Star Spangled Banner—the Unwiseman in his excitement called it the Star Spangled Banana—and Columbia the Gem of the Ocean at the top of his lungs, and Mollie was soon so thrilled that she too joined in.

"Well," said Mollie, when the patriotic ardor of her two companions had died down a little. "What are you going to do, Mr. Me? We've got to stay here two days more. We don't start for Paris until Saturday."

"O don't bother about me," said the old man pleasantly. "I've got plenty to do. I've bought a book [Pg 128] called 'French in Five Lessons' and I'm going to retire to my carpet-bag until you people are ready to start for France. I've figured it out that I can read that book through in two days if I don't waste too much of my time eating and sleeping and calling on kings and queens and trying to buy duke's clothes for $8.50, and snooping around British Museums and pricing specially appointed royal muffins, so that by the time you are ready to start for Paris I'll be in shape to go along. I don't think it's wise to go into a country where they speak another language without knowing just a little about it, and if 'French in Five Lessons' is what it ought to be you'll think I'm another Joan of Ark when I come out of that carpet-bag."

And so the queer old gentleman climbed into his carpet-bag, which Mollie placed for him over near the window where the light was better and settled down comfortably to read his new book, "French in Five Lessons."

"I'm glad he's going to stay in there," said Whistlebinkie, as he and Mollie started out for a walk [Pg 129] in Hyde Park. "Because I wouldn't be a bit surprised after all he's told us if the pleese were looking for him."

"Neither should I," said Mollie. "If what he says about the British Museum is true and they really haven't any things from the United States in there, there's nothing they'd like better than to capture an American and put him up in a glass case along with those mummies."

All of which seemed to prove that for once the Unwiseman was a very wise old person.

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# VIII. [Pg 130]

## THE UNWISEMAN'S FRENCH

The following two days passed very slowly for poor Mollie. It wasn't that she was not interested in the wonders of the historic Tower which she visited and where she saw all the crown jewels, a lot of dungeons and a splendid collection of armor and rare objects connected with English history; nor in the large number of other things to be seen in and about London from Westminster Abbey to Hampton Court and the Thames, but that she was lonesome without the Unwiseman. Both she and Whistlebinkie had approached the carpet-bag wherein the old gentleman lay hidden several times, and had begged him to come out and join them in their wanderings, but he not only wouldn't come out, but would not answer them. Possibly he did not hear when they called him, possibly he was too deeply taken up by his study of French to bother about anything else—whatever it was that caused it, he was as silent as though he were deaf and [Pg 131] dumb.

"Less-sopen-thbag," suggested Whistlebinkie. "I-don'-bleeve-hes-sinthera-tall."

"Oh yes he's in there," said Mollie. "I've heard him squeak two or three times."

"Waddeesay?" said Whistlebinkie.

"What?" demanded Mollie, with a slight frown.

"What-did-he-say?" asked Whistlebinkie, more carefully.

"I couldn't quite make out," said Mollie. "Sounded like a little pig squeaking."

"I guess it was-sfrench," observed Whistlebinkie with a broad grin. "Maybe he was saying Wee-wee-wee. That's what little pigs say, and Frenchmen too—I've heard 'em."

"Very likely," said Mollie. "I don't know what wee-wee-wee means in little pig-talk, but over in Paris it means, 'O yes indeed, you're perfectly right about that.'"

"He'll never be able to learn French," laughed Whistlebinkie. "That is not so that he can speak it. Do you think he will?"

"That's what I'm anxious to see him for," said Mollie. "I'm just crazy to find out how he is getting [Pg 132] along."

But all their efforts to get at the old gentleman were, as I have already said, unavailing. They knocked on the bag, and whispered and hinted and tried every way to draw him out but it was

not until the little party was half way across the British Channel, on their way to France, that the Unwiseman spoke. Then he cried from the depths of the carpet bag:

"Hi there—you people outside, what's going on out there, an earthquake?"

"Whatid-i-tellu'" whistled Whistlebinkie. "That ain't French. Thass-singlish."

"Hallo-outside ahoy!" came the Unwiseman's voice again. "Slidyvoo la slide sur le top de cette carpet-bag ici and let me out!"

"That's French!" cried Mollie clapping her hands ecstatically together.

"Then I understand French too!" said Whistlebinkie proudly, "because I know what he wants. He wants to get out."

"Do you want to come out, Mr. Unwiseman?" said Mollie bending over the carpet-bag, and whispering through the lock.

"Wee-wee-wee," said the Unwiseman. [Pg 133]

"More-pig-talk," laughed Whistlebinkie. "He's the little pig that went to market."

"No—it was the little pig that stayed at home that said wee, wee, wee all day long," said Mollie.

"Je desire to be lettyd out pretty quick if there's un grand big earthquake going on," cried the Unwiseman.

Mollie slid the nickeled latch on the top of the carpet-bag along and in a moment it flew open.

"Kesserkersayker what's going on out ici?" demanded the Unwiseman, as he popped out of the bag. "Je ne jammy knew such a lot of motiong. London Bridge ain't falling down again, is it?"

"No," said Mollie. "We're on the boat crossing the British Channel."

"Oh—that's it eh?" said the Unwiseman gazing about him anxiously, and looking rather pale, Mollie thought. "Well I thought it was queer. When I went to sleep last night everything was as still as Christmas, and when I waked up it was movier than a small boy in a candy store. So we're on the ocean again eh?"

"Not exactly," said Mollie. "We're on what they call the Channel." [Pg 134]

"Seems to me the waves are just as big as they are on the ocean, and the water just as wet," said the Unwiseman, as the ship rose and fell with the tremendous swell of the sea, thereby adding much to his uneasiness.

"Yes—but it isn't so wide," explained Mollie. "It isn't more than thirty miles across."

"Then I don't see why they don't build a bridge over it," said the Unwiseman. "This business of a little bit of a piece of water putting on airs like an ocean ought to be put a stop to. This motion has really very much unsettled—my French. I feel so queer that I can't remember even what *la* means, and as for *kesserkersay*, I've forgotten if it's a horse hair sofa or a pair of brass andirons, and I had it all in my head not an hour ago. O—d-dud-dear!"

The Unwiseman plunged headlong into his carpet-bag again and pulled the top of it to with a snap.

"Oh my, O me!" he groaned from its depths. "O what a wicked channel to behave this way. Mollie—Moll-lie—O Mollie I say."

"Well?" said Mollie. [Pg 135]

"Far from it—very unwell," groaned the Unwiseman. "Will you be good enough to ask the cook for a little salad oil?"

"Mercy," cried Mollie. "You don't want to mix a salad now do you?"

"Goodness, no!" moaned the Unwiseman. "I want you to pour it on those waves and sort of clam them down and then, if you don't mind, take the carpet-bag——"

"Yes," said Mollie.

"And chuck it overboard," groaned the Unwiseman. "I—I don't feel as if I cared ever to hear the dinner-bell again."

Poor Unwiseman! He was suffering the usual fate of those who cross the British Channel, which behaves itself at times as if it really did have an idea that it was a great big ocean and had an ocean's work to do. But fortunately this uneasy body of water is not very wide, and it was not long before the travellers landed safe and sound on the solid shores of France, none the worse for their uncomfortable trip.

"I guess you were wise not to throw me overboard after all," said the Unwiseman, as he came out of the carpet-bag at Calais. "I feel as fine as ever now and my lost French has returned." [Pg 136]

"I'd like to hear some," said Mollie.

"Very well," replied the Unwiseman carelessly. "Go ahead and ask me a question and I'll answer it in French."

"Hm! Let me see," said Mollie wondering how to begin. "Have you had breakfast?"

"Wee Munsieur, j'ay le pain," replied the Unwiseman gravely.

"What does that mean?" asked Mollie, puzzled.

"He says he has a pain," said Whistlebinkie with a smile.

"Pooh! Bosh—nothing of the sort," retorted the Unwiseman. "Pain is French for bread. When I say 'j'ay le pain' I mean that I've got the bread."

"Are you the jay?" asked Whistlebinkie with mischief in his tone.

"Jay in French is I have—not a bird, stupid," retorted the Unwiseman indignantly.

"Funny way to talk," sniffed Whistlebinkie. "I should think pain would be a better word for pie, or something else that gives you one."

"That's because you don't know," said the Unwiseman. "In addition to the pain I've had oofs." [Pg 137]

"Oooffs?" cried Whistlebinkie. "What on earth are oooffs?"

"I didn't say oooffs," retorted the Unwiseman, mocking Whistlebinkie's accent. "I said oofs. Oofs is French for eggs. Chickens lay oofs in France. I had two hard boiled oofs, and my pain had burr and sooker on it."

"Burr and sooker?" asked Mollie, wonderingly.

"I know what burr means—it's French for chestnuts," guessed Whistlebinkie. "He had chestnuts on his bread."

"Nothing of the sort," said the Unwiseman. "Burr is French for butter and has nothing to do with chestnuts. Over here in France a lady goes into a butter store and also says avvy-voo-doo burr, and the man behind the counter says wee, wee, wee, jay-doo-burr. Jay le bonn-burr. That means, yes indeed I've got some of the best butter in the market, ma'am."

"And then what does the lady say?" asked Whistlebinkie.

The Unwiseman's face flushed, and he looked very much embarrassed. It always embarrassed the poor old fellow to have to confess that there was something he didn't know. Unwisemen as a rule are very sensitive. [Pg 138]

"That's as far as the conversation went in my French in Five Lessons," he replied. "And I think it was far enough. For my part I haven't the slightest desire to know what the lady said next. Conversation on the subject of butter doesn't interest me. She probably asked him how much it was a pound, however, if not knowing what she said is going to keep you awake nights."

"What's sooker?" asked Mollie.

"Sooker? O that's what the French people call sugar," explained the Unwiseman.

"Pooh!" ejaculated Whistlebinkie, scornfully. "What's the use of calling it sooker? Sooker isn't any easier to say than sugar."

"It's very much like it, isn't it?" said Mollie.

"Yes," said the Unwiseman. "They just drop the H out of sugar, and put in the K in place of the two Gees. I think myself when two words are so much alike as sooker and shoogger it's foolish to make two languages of 'em."

"Tell me something more to eat in French," said Whistlebinkie. [Pg 139]

"Fromidge," said the Unwiseman bluntly.

"Fromidge? What's that!" asked Whistlebinkie.

"Cheese," said the Unwiseman. "If you want a cheese sandwich all you've got to do is to walk into a calf—calf is French for restaurant—call the waiter and say 'Un sandwich de fromidge, silver plate,' and you'll get it if you wait long enough. Silver plate means if you please. The French are very polite people."

"But how do you call the waiter?" asked Whistlebinkie.

"You just lean back in a chair and call garkon," said the Unwiseman. "That's what the book says, but I've heard Frenchmen in London call it gas on. I'm going to stick to the book, because it might turn out to be an English waiter and it would be very unpleasant to have him turn the gas on every time you called him."

"I should say so," cried Whistlebinkie. "You might get gas fixturated."

"You never would," said the Unwiseman.

"Anybody who isn't choked by your conversation could stand all the gas fixtures in the world." [Pg 140]

"I don't care much for cheese, anyhow," said Whistlebinkie. "Is there any French for Beef?"

"O wee, wee, wee!" replied the Unwiseman. "Beef is buff in French. Donny-moi-de-buff—"

"Donny-moi-de-buff!" jeered Whistlebinkie, after a roar of laughter. "Sounds like baby-talk."

"Well it ain't," returned the Unwiseman severely. "Even Napoleon Bonaparte had to talk that way when he wanted beef and I guess the kind of talk that was good enough for a great Umpire like him is good enough for a rubber squeak like you."

"Then you like French do you, Mr. Me?" asked Mollie.

"Oh yes—well enough," said the Unwiseman. "Of course I like American better, but I don't see any sense in making fun of French the way Fizzledinkie does. It's got some queer things about it like calling a cat a chat, and a man a homm, and a lady a femm, and a dog a chi-enn, but in the

main it's a pretty good language as far as I have got in it. There are one or two things in French that I haven't learned to say yet, like 'who left my umbrella out in the rain,' and 'has James currycombed the saddle-horse with the black spot on his eye and a bob-tail this morning,' and 'was that the plumber or the piano tuner I saw coming out of the house of your uncle's brother-in-law yesterday afternoon,' but now that I'm pretty familiar with it I'm glad I learned it. It is disappointing in some ways, I admit. I've been through French in Five Lessons four times now, and I haven't found any conversation in it about Kitchen-Stoves, which is going to be very difficult for me when I get to Paris and try to explain to people there how fine my kitchen-stove is. I'm fond of that old stove, and when these furriners begin to talk to me about the grandness of their country, I like to hit back with a few remarks about my stove, and I don't just see how I'm going to do it." [Pg 141]

"What's sky-scraper in French?" demanded Whistlebinkie suddenly.

"They don't have sky-scrapers in French," retorted the old gentleman. "So your question, like most of the others you ask, is very very foolish."

"You think you can get along all right then, Mr. Me?" asked Mollie, gazing proudly at the old man and marvelling as to the amount of study he must have done in two days. [Pg 142]

"I can if I can only get people talking the way I want 'em to," replied the Unwiseman. "I've really learned a lot of very polite conversation. For instance something like this:

"Do you wish to go anywhere?
No I do not wish to go anywhere.
Why don't you wish to go somewhere?
Because I've been everywhere.
You must have seen much.
No I have seen nothing.
Is not that rather strange?
No it is rather natural.
Why?
Because to go everywhere one must travel too rapidly to see anything."

"That you see," the Unwiseman went on, "goes very well at a five o'clock tea. The only trouble would be to get it started, but if I once got it going right, why I could rattle it off in French as easy as falling off a log."

"Smity interesting conversation," said Whistlebinkie really delighted.

"I'm glad you find it so," replied the Unwiseman.

"It's far more interesting in French than it is in English." [Pg 143]

"Givus-smore," whistled Whistlebinkie.

"Give us what?" demanded the Unwiseman.

"Some-more," said Whistlebinkie.

"Well here is a very nice bit that I can do if somebody gives me the chance," said the Unwiseman. "It begins:

"Lend me your silver backed hand-glass.
Certainly. Who is that singing in the drawing room?
It is my daughter.
It is long since I heard anyone sing so well.
She has been taking lessons only two weeks.
Does she practice on the phonograph or on her Aunt's upright piano?
On neither. She accompanies herself upon the banjo.
I think she sings almost as well as Miss S.
Miss S. has studied for three weeks but Marietta has a better ear.
What is your wife's grandmother knitting?
A pair of ear-tabs for my nephew Jacques.
Ah—then your nephew Jacques too has an ear?
My nephew Jacques has two ears.
What a musical family!"

"Spul-lendid!" cried Whistlebinkie rapturously. "When do you think you can use that?"

"O I may be invited off to a country house to spend a week, somewhere outside of Paris," said the Unwiseman, "and if I am, and the chance comes up for me to hold that nice little chat with my host, why it will make me very popular with everybody. People like to have you take an interest in their children, especially when they are musical. Then I have learned this to get off at the breakfast-table to my hostess: [Pg 144]

"I have slept well. I have two mattresses and a spring mattress.
Will you have another pillow?
No thank you I have a comfortable bolster.
Is one blanket sufficient for you?

Yes, but I would like some wax candles and a box of matches."

"That will show her that I appreciate all the comforts of her beautiful household, and at the same time feel so much at home that I am not afraid to ask for something else that I happen to want. The thing that worries me a little about the last is that there might be an electric light in the room, so that asking for a wax candle and a box of matches would sound foolish. I gather from the lesson, however, that it is customary in France to ask for wax candles and a box of matches, so I'm going to do it anyhow. There's nothing like following the customs of the natives when you can." [Pg 145]

"I'd like to hear you say some of that in French," said Whistlebinkie.

"Oh you wouldn't understand it, Whistlebinkie," said the Unwiseman. "Still I don't mind."

And the old man rattled off the following:

"Avvy-voo kelker chose ah me dire? Avvy-voo bien dormy la nooit dernyere? Savvy-voo kieskersayker cetum la avec le nez rouge? Kervooly-voo-too-der-sweet-silver-plate-o-see-le-mem. Donny-moi des boogies et des alloomettes avec burr et sooker en tasse. La Voila. Kerpensy-voo de cette comedie mon cher mounseer de Whistlebinkie?"

"Mercy!" cried Whistlebinkie. "What a language! I don't believe I *ever* could learn to speak it."

"You learn to speak it, Whistlebinkie?" laughed the old gentleman. "You? Well I guess not. I don't believe you could even learn to squeak it."

With which observation the Unwiseman hopped back into his carpet-bag, for the conductor of the train was seen coming up the platform of the railway station, and the old gentleman as usual was travelling without a ticket. [Pg 146]

"I'd rather be caught by an English conductor if I'm going to be caught at all," he remarked after the train had started and he was safe. "For I find in looking it over that all my talk in French is polite conversation, and I don't think there'd be much chance for that in a row with a conductor over a missing railway ticket."

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# IX. [Pg 147]

## IN PARIS

The Unwiseman was up bright and early the next morning. Mollie and Whistlebinkie had barely got their eyes open when he came knocking at the door.

"Better get up, Mollie," he called in. "It's fine weather and I'm going to call on the Umpire. The chances are that on a beautiful day like this he'll have a parade and I wouldn't miss it for a farm."

"What Umpire are you talking about?" Mollie replied, opening the door on a crack.

"Why Napoleon Bonaparte," said the Unwiseman. "Didn't you ever hear of him? He's the man that came up here from Corsica and picked the crown up on the street where the king had dropped it by mistake, and put it on his own head and made people think he was the whole roil family. He was smart enough for an American and I want to tell him so."

"Why he's dead," said Mollie.

"What?" cried the Unwiseman. "Umpire Napoleon dead? Why—when did that happen? I didn't see anything about it in the newspapers." [Pg 148]

"He died a long time ago," answered Mollie. "Before I was born, I guess."

"Well I never!" ejaculated the Unwiseman, his face clouding over. "That book I read on the History of France didn't say anything about his being dead—that is, not as far as I got in it. Last time I heard of him he was starting out for Russia to give the Czar a licking. I supposed he thought it was a good time to do it after the Japs had started the ball a-rolling. Are you sure about that?"

"Pretty sure," said Mollie. "I don't know very much about French history, but I'm almost certain he's dead."

"I'm going down stairs to ask at the office," said the Unwiseman. "They'll probably know all about it."

So the little old gentleman pattered down the hall to the elevator and went to the office to inquire as to the fate of the Emperor Napoleon. In five minutes he was back again.

"Say, Mollie," he whispered through the key-hole. "I wish you'd ask your father about the Umpire. I can't seem to find out anything about him." [Pg 149]

"Don't they know at the office?" asked Mollie.

"Oh I guess they know all right," said the Unwiseman, "but there's a hitch somewhere in my getting the information. Far as I can find out these people over here don't understand their own language. I asked 'em in French, like this: 'Mounseer le Umpire, est il mort?' And they told me he was *no* more. Now whether *no* more means that he is not mort, or *is* mort, depends on what language the man who told me was speaking. If he was speaking French he's not dead. If he was

speaking English he *is* dead, and there you are. It's awfully mixed up."

"I-guess-seez-ded-orright," whistled Whistlebinkie. "He was dead last time I heard of him, and I guess when they're dead once there dead for good."

"Well you never can tell," said the Unwiseman. "He was a very great man, the Umpire Napoleon was, and they might have only thought he was dead while he was playing foxy to see what the newspapers would say about him." [Pg 150]

So Mollie asked her father and to the intense regret of everybody it turned out that the great Emperor had been dead for a long time.

"It's a very great disappointment to me," sighed the Unwiseman, when Mollie conveyed the sad news to him. "The minute I knew we were coming to France I began to read up about the country, and Napoleon Bonaparte was one of the things I came all the way over to see. Are the Boys de Bologna dead too?"

"I never heard of them," said Mollie.

"I feel particularly upset about the Umpire," continued the Unwiseman, "because I sat up almost all last night getting up some polite conversation to be held with him this morning. I found just the thing for it in my book."

"Howdit-go?" whistled Whistlebinkie.

"Like this," said the Unwiseman. "I was going to begin with:

"'Shall you buy a horse?'

"And the Umpire was to say:

"'I should like to buy a horse from you.'

"And then we were to continue with: [Pg 151]

"'I have no horse but I will sell you my dog.'
'You are wrong; dogs are such faithful creatures.'
'But my wife prefers cats——'"

"Pooh!" cried Whistlebinkie. "You haven't got any wife."

"Well, what of it?" retorted the Unwiseman. "The Umpire wouldn't know that, and besides she *would* prefer cats if I had one. You should not interrupt conversation when other people are talking, Whistlebinkie, especially when it's polite conversation."

"Orright-I-pol-gize," whistled Whistlebinkie. "Go on with the rest of it."

"I was then going to say:" continued the Unwiseman,

"'Will you go out this afternoon?'
'I should like to go out this afternoon.'
'Should you remain here if your mother were here?'
'Yes I should remain here even if my aunt were here.'
'Had you remained here I should not have gone out.'
'I shall have finished when you come.'
'As soon as you have received your money come to see me.'
'I do not know yet whether we shall leave tomorrow.'
'I should have been afraid had you not been with me.'
'So long.'
'To the river.'"

"To the river?" asked Whistlebinkie. "What does that mean?" [Pg 152]

"It is French for, 'I hope we shall meet again.' Au river is the polite way of saying, 'good-bye for a little while.' And to think that after having sat up until five o'clock this morning learning all that by heart I should find that the man I was going to say it to has been dead for—how many years, Mollie?"

"Oh nearly a hundred years," said the little girl.

"No wonder it wasn't in the papers before I left home," said the Unwiseman. "Oh well, never mind ——."

"Perhaps you can swing that talk around so as to fit some French Robert," suggested Whistlebinkie.

"The Police are not Roberts over here," said the Unwiseman. "In France they are Johns—John Darms is what they call the pleece in this country, and I never should think of addressing a conversation designed for an Umpire to the plebean ear of a mere John."

"Well I think it was pretty poor conversation," said Whistlebinkie. "And I guess it's lucky for you the Umpire is dead. All that stuff didn't mean anything." [Pg 153]

"It doesn't seem to mean much in English," said the Unwiseman, "but it must mean something in French, because if it didn't the man who wrote French in Five Lessons wouldn't have considered it important enough to print. Just because you don't like a thing, or don't happen to understand it,

isn't any reason for believing that the Umpire would not find it extremely interesting. I shan't waste it on a John anyhow."

An hour or two later when Mollie had breakfasted the Unwiseman presented himself again.

"I'm very much afraid I'm not going to like this place any better than I did London," he said. "The English people, even if they do drop their aitches all over everywhere, understand their own language, which is more than these Frenchmen do. I have tried my French on half a dozen of them and there wasn't one of 'em that looked as if he knew what I was talking about."

"What did you say to them?" asked Mollie.

**"HAVE YOU SEEN THE ORMOLU CLOCK OF YOUR SISTER'S MUSIC TEACHER?"**

"Well I went up to a cabman and remarked, just as the book put it, 'how is the sister of your mother's uncle,' and he acted as if I'd hit him with a brick," said the Unwiseman. "Then I stopped a bright looking boy out on the rue and said to him, 'have you seen the ormolu clock of your sister's music teacher,' to which he should have replied, 'no I have not seen the ormolu clock of my sister's music teacher, but the candle-stick of the wife of the butcher of my cousin's niece is on the mantel-piece,' but all he did was to stick out his tongue at me and laugh." [Pg 154]

"You ought to have spoken to one of the John Darms," laughed Whistlebinkie.

"I did," said the Unwiseman. "I stopped one outside the door and asked him, 'is your grandfather still alive?' The book says the answer to that is 'yes, and my grandmother also,' whereupon I should ask, 'how many grandchildren has your grandfather?' But I didn't get beyond the first question. Instead of telling me that his grandfather was living, and his grandmother also, he said something about Ally Voozon, a person of whom I never heard and who is not mentioned in the book at all. I wish I was back somewhere where they speak a language somebody can understand."

"Have you had your breakfast?" asked Mollie.

A deep frown came upon the face of the Unwiseman.

"No—" he answered shortly. "I—er—I went to get some but they tried to cheat me," he added. "There was a sign in a window announcing French Tabble d'hotes. I thought it was some new kind of a breakfast food like cracked wheat, or oat-meal flakes, so I stopped in and asked for a small box of it, and they tried to make me believe it was a meal of four or five courses, with soup and fish and a lot of other things thrown in, that had to be eaten on the premises. I wished for once that I knew some French conversation that wasn't polite to tell 'em what I thought of 'em. I can imagine a lot of queer things, but when everybody tells me that oats are soup and fish and olives and ice-cream and several other things to boot, even in French, why I just don't believe it, that's all. What's more I can prove that oats are oats over here because I saw a cab-horse eating some. I may not know beans but I know oats, and I told 'em so. Then the garkon—I know why some people call these French waiters gason now, they talk so much—the garkon said I could order *a la carte*, and I told him I guessed I could if I wanted to, but until I was reduced to a point where I had to eat out of a wagon I wouldn't ask his permission." [Pg 155] [Pg 156]

"Good-for-you!" whistled Whistlebinkie, clapping the Unwiseman on the back.

"When a man wants five cents worth of oats it's a regular swindle to try to ram forty cents worth of dinner down his throat, especially at breakfast time, and I for one just won't have it," said the

Unwiseman. "By the way, I wouldn't eat any fish over here if I were you, Mollie," he went on.

"Why not?" asked the little girl. "Isn't it fresh?"

"It isn't that," said the Unwiseman. "It's because over here it's poison."

"No!" cried Mollie.

"Yep," said the Unwiseman. "They admit it themselves. Just look here."

The old gentleman opened his book on French in Five Lessons, and turned to the back pages where English words found their French equivalents. [Pg 157]

"See that?" he observed, pointing to the words. "Fish—poison. P-O-I-double S-O-N. 'Taint spelled right, but that's what it says."

"It certainly does," said Mollie, very much surprised.

"Smity good thing you had that book or you might have been poisoned," said Whistlebinkie.

"I don't believe your father knows about that, does he, Mollie?" asked the old man anxiously.

"I'm afraid not," said Mollie. "Leastways, he hasn't said anything to me about it, and I'm pretty sure if he'd known it he would have told me not to eat any."

"Well you tell him with my compliments," said the Unwiseman. "I like your father and I'd hate to have anything happen to him that I could prevent. I'm going up the rue now to the Loover to see the pictures."

"Up the what?" asked Whistlebinkie.

"Up the rue," said the Unwiseman. "That's what these foolish people over here call a street. I'm going up the street. There's a guide down stairs who says he'll take me all over Paris in one day for three dollars, and we're going to start in ten minutes, after I've had a spoonful of my bottled chicken broth and a ginger-snap. Humph! Tabble d'hotes—when I've got a bag full of first class food from New York! I tell you, Mollie, this travelling around in furry countries makes a man depreciate American things more than ever." [Pg 158]

"I guess you mean *ap*preciate," suggested Mollie.

"May be I do," returned the Unwiseman. "I mean I like 'em better. American oats are better than tabble d'hotes. American beef is better than French buff. American butter is better than foreign burr, and while their oofs are pretty good, when I eat eggs I want eggs, and not something else with a hard-boiled accent on it that twists my tongue out of shape. And when people speak a language I like 'em to have one they can understand when it's spoken to them like good old Yankamerican."

"Hoorray for-Ramerrica!" cried Whistlebinkie.

"Ditto hic, as Julius Cæsar used to say," roared the Unwiseman. [Pg 159]

And the Unwiseman took what was left of his bottleful of their native land out of his pocket and the three little travellers cheered it until the room fairly echoed with the noise. That night when they had gathered together again, the Unwiseman looked very tired.

"Well, Mollie," he said, "I've seen it all. That guide down stairs showed me everything in the place and I'm going to retire to my carpet-bag again until you're ready to start for Kayzoozalum——"

"Swizz-izzer-land," whistled Whistlebinkie.

"Switzerland," said Mollie.

"Well wherever it is we're going Alp hunting," said the Unwiseman. "I'm too tired to say a word like that to-night. My tongue is all out of shape anyhow trying to talk French and I'm not going to speak it any more. It's not the sort of language I admire—just full o' nonsense. When people call pudding 'poo-dang' and a bird a 'wazzoh' I'm through with it. I've seen 8374 miles of pictures; some more busted statuary; one cathedral—I thought a cathedral was some kind of an animal with a hairy head and a hump on its back, but it's nothing but a big overgrown church—; Napoleon's tomb—he is dead after all and France is a Republic, as if we didn't have a big enough Republic home without coming over here to see another—; one River Seine, which ain't much bigger than the Erie Canal, and not a trout or a snapping turtle in it from beginning to end; the Boys de Bologna, which is only a Park, with no boys or sausages anywhere about it; the Champs Eliza; an obelisk; and about sixteen palaces without a King or an Umpire in the whole lot; and I've paid three dollars for it, and I'm satisfied. I'd be better satisfied if I'd paid a dollar and a half, but you can't travel for nothing, and I regard the extra dollar and fifty cents as well spent since I've learned what to do next time." [Pg 160]

"Wass-that?" whistled Whistlebinkie.

"Stay home," said the Unwiseman. "Home's good enough for me and when I get there I'm going to stay there. Good night."

And with that the Unwiseman jumped into his carpet-bag and for a week nothing more was heard of him.

"I hope he isn't sick," said Whistlebinkie, at the end of that period. "I think we ought to go and find out, don't you, Mollie." [Pg 161]

"I certainly do," said Mollie. "I know I should be just stufficated to death if I'd spent a week in a carpet-bag."

So they tip-toed up to the side of the carpet-bag and listened. At first there was no sound to be heard, and then all of a sudden their fears were set completely at rest by the cracked voice of their strange old friend singing the following patriotic ballad of his own composition:

"Next time I start out for to travel abroad
I'll go where pure English is spoken.
I'll put on my shoes and go sailing toward
The beautiful land of Hoboken.

"No more on that movey old channel I'll sail,
The sickening waves to be tossed on,
But do all my travelling later by rail
And visit that frigid old Boston.

"Nay never again will I step on a ship
And go as a part of the cargo,
But when I would travel I'll make my next trip
Out west to the town of Chicago.

"My sweet carpet-bag, you will never again
Be called on to cross the Atlantic.
We'll just buy a ticket and take the first train
To marvellous old Williamantic. [Pg 162]

"No French in the future will I ever speak
With strange and impossible, answers.
I'd rather go in for that curious Greek
The natives all speak in Arkansas.

"To London and Paris let other folks go
I'm utterly cured of the mania.
Hereafter it's me for the glad Ohi-o,
Or down in dear sweet Pennsylvania.

"If any one asks me to cross o'er the sea
I'll answer them promptly, "No thanky—
There's beauty enough all around here for me
In this glorious land of the Yankee."

Mollie laughed as the Unwiseman's voice died away.

"I guess he's all right, Whistlebinkie," she said. "Anybody who can sing like that can't be very sick."

"No I guess not," said Whistlebinkie. "He seems to have got his tongue out of tangle again. I was awfully worried about that."

"Why, dear?" asked Mollie.

"Because," said Whistlebinkie, "I was afraid if he didn't he'd begin to talk like me and that would be perf'ly awful."

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# X.

[Pg 163]

## THE ALPS AT LAST

When the Unwiseman came out of the carpet-bag again the travellers had reached Switzerland. Every effort that Mollie and Whistlebinkie made to induce him to come forth and go about Paris with them had wholly failed.

"It's more comfortable in here," he had answered them, "and I've got my hands full forgetting all that useless French I learned last week. It's very curious how much harder it is to forget French than it is to learn it. I've been four days forgetting that wazzoh means bird and that oofs is eggs."

"And you haven't forgotten it yet, have you," said Whistlebinkie.

"O yes," said the Unwiseman. "I've forgotten it entirely. It occasionally occurs to me that it is so when people mention the fact, but in the main I am now able to overlook it. I'll be glad when we are on our way again, Mollie, because between you and me I think they're a lot of frauds here too, just like over in England. They've got a statue here of a lady named Miss Jones of Ark and I [Pg 164] *know* there wasn't any such person on it. Shem and Ham and Japhet and their wives, and Noah, and Mrs. Noah were there but no Miss Jones."

"Maybe Mrs. Noah or Mrs. Shem or one of the others was Miss Jones before she married Mr. Noah or Shem, Ham or Japhet," suggested Whistlebinkie.

"Then they should ought to have said so," said the Unwiseman, "and put up the statue to Mrs. Noah or Mrs. Shem or Mrs. Ham or Mrs. Japhet—but they weren't the same person because this

Miss Jones got burnt cooking a steak and Mrs. Noah and Mrs. Ham and Mrs. Shem and Mrs. Japhet didn't. Miss Jones was a great general according to these people and there wasn't any military at all in the time of Noah for a lady to be general of, so the thing just can't help being a put up job just to deceive us Americans into coming over here to see their curiosities and paying guides three dollars for leading us to them."

"Then you won't come with us out to Versailles?" asked Mollie very much disappointed.

"Versailles?" asked the Unwiseman. "What kind of sails are Versailles? Some kind of a French cat-boat? If so, none of that for me. I'm not fond of sailing." [Pg 165]

"It's a town with a beautiful palace in it," explained Mollie.

"That settles it," said the Unwiseman. "I'll stay here. I've seen all the palaces without any kings in 'em that I need in my business, so you can just count me out. I may go out shopping this afternoon and buy an air-gun to shoot alps with when we get to—ha—hum——"

"Switzerland," prompted Mollie hurriedly, largely with the desire to keep Whistlebinkie from speaking of Swiz-izzer-land.

"Precisely," said the Unwiseman. "If you'd given me time I'd have said it myself. I've been practising on that name ever since yesterday and I've got so I can say it right five times out of 'leven. And I'm learning to yodel too. I have discovered that down in—ha—hum—Swztoozalum, when people don't feel like speaking French, they yodel, and I think I can get along better in yodeling than I can in French. I'm going to try it anyhow. So run along and have a good time and [Pg 166] don't worry about me. I'm having a fine time. Yodeling is really lots of fun. Trala-la-lio!"

So Mollie and Whistlebinkie went to Versailles, which by the way is not pronounced Ver-sails, but Ver-sai-ee, and left the Unwiseman to his own devices. A week later the party arrived at Chamounix, a beautiful little Swiss village lying in the valley at the base of Mont Blanc, the most famous of all the Alps.

"Looks-slike-a-gray-big-snow-ball," whistled Whistlebinkie, gazing admiringly at the wonderful mountain glistening like a huge mass of silver in the sunlight.

"It is beautiful," said Mollie. "We must get the Unwiseman out to see it."

"I'll call him," said Whistlebinkie eagerly; and the little rubber-doll bounded off to the carpet-bag as fast as his legs would carry him.

"Hi there, Mister Me," he called breathlessly through the key-hole. "Come out. There's a nalp out in front of the hotel."

"Tra-la-lulio-tra-la-lali-ee," yodeled the cracked little voice from within. "Tra-la-la-la-lalio."

"Hullo there," cried Whistlebinkie again. "Stop that tra-la-lody-ing and hurry out, there's a-nalp in [Pg 167] front of the hotel."

"A nalp?" said the Unwiseman popping his head up from the middle of the bag for all the world like a Jack-in-the-box. "What's a nalp?"

"A-alp," explained Whistlebinkie, as clearly as he could—he was so out of breath he could hardly squeak, much less speak.

"Really?" cried the Unwiseman, all excitement. "Dear me—glad you called me. Is he loose?"

"Well," hesitated Whistlebinkie, hardly knowing how to answer, "it-ain't-exactly-tied up, I guess."

"Ain't any danger of its coming into the house and biting people, is there?" asked the Unwiseman, rummaging through the carpet-bag for his air-gun, which he had purchased in Paris while the others were visiting Versailles.

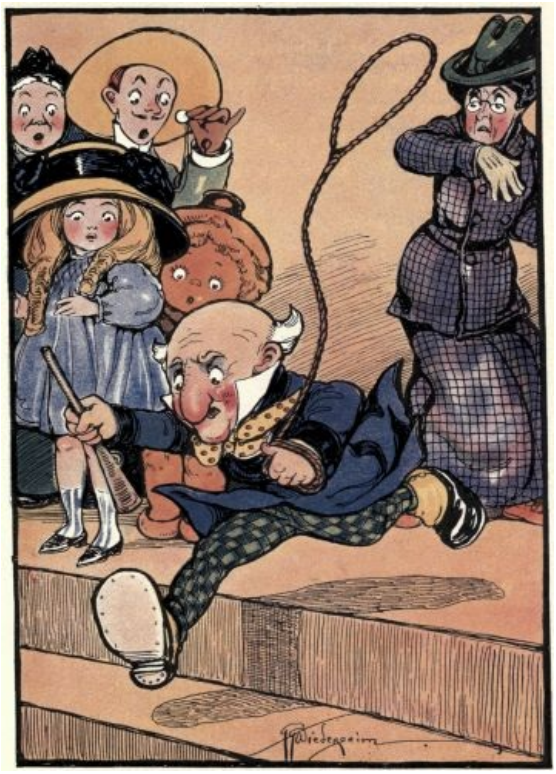
"No," laughed Whistlebinkie. "Tstoo-big."

"Mercy—it must be a fearful big one," said the Unwiseman. "I hope it's muzzled."

Armed with his air-gun, and carrying a long rope with a noose in one end over his arm, the Unwiseman started out.

"Watcher-gone-'tdo-with-the-lassoo?" panted Whistlebinkie, struggling manfully to keep up with [Pg 168] his companion.

"That's to tie him up with in case I catch him alive," said the Unwiseman, as they emerged from the door of the hotel and stood upon the little hotel piazza from which all the new arrivals were gazing at the wonderful peak before them, rising over sixteen thousand feet into the heavens, and capped forever with a crown of snow and ice.



**"OUT THE WAY THERE!" CRIED THE UNWISEMAN**

"Out the way there!" cried the Unwiseman, rushing valiantly through the group. "Out the way, and don't talk or even yodel. I must have a steady aim, and conversation disturbs my nerves."

The hotel guests all stepped hastily to one side and made room for the hero, who on reaching the edge of the piazza stopped short and gazed about him with a puzzled look on his face.

"Well," he cried impatiently, "where is he?"

"Where is what?" asked Mollie, stepping up to the Unwiseman's side and putting her hand affectionately on his shoulder.

"That Alp?" said the Unwiseman. "Whistlebinkie said there was an alp running around the yard and I've come down either to catch him alive or shoot him. He hasn't hid under this piazza, has he?" [Pg 169]

"No, Mr. Me," she said. "They couldn't get an Alp under this piazza. That's it over there," she added, pointing out Mont Blanc.

"What's it? I don't see anything but a big snow drift," said the Unwiseman. "Queer sort of people here—must be awful lazy not to have their snow shoveled off as late as July."

"That's the Alp," explained Mollie.

"Tra-la-lolly-O!" yodeled the Unwiseman. "Which is yodelese for nonsense. That an Alp? Why I thought an Alp was a sort of animal with a shaggy fur coat like a bear or a chauffeur, and about the size of a rhinoceros."

"No," said Mollie. "An Alp is a mountain. All that big range of mountains with snow and ice on top of them are the Alps. Didn't you know that?"

The Unwiseman didn't answer, but with a yodel of disgust turned on his heel and went back to his carpet-bag.

"You aren't mad at me, are you, Mr. Me?" asked Mollie, following meekly after. [Pg 170]

"No indeed," said the Unwiseman, sadly. "Of course not. It isn't your fault if an Alp is a toboggan slide or a skating rink instead of a wild animal. It's all my own fault. I was very careless to come over here and waste my time to see a lot of snow that ain't any colder or wetter than the stuff we have delivered at our front doors at home in winter. I should ought to have found out what it was before I came."

"It's very beautiful though as it is," suggested Mollie.

"I suppose so," said the Unwiseman. "But I don't have to travel four thousand miles to see beautiful things while I have my kitchen-stove right there in my own kitchen. Besides I've spent a dollar and twenty cents on an air-gun, and sixty cents for a lassoo to hunt Alps with, when I might better have bought a snow shovel. *That's* really what I'm mad at. If I'd bought a snow shovel and a pair of ear-tabs I could have made some money here offering to shovel the snow off that hill there so's somebody could get some pleasure out of it. It would be a lovely place to go and sit on [Pg 171] a warm summer evening if it wasn't for that snow and very likely they'd have paid me two or three dollars for fixing it up for them."

"I guess it would take you several hours to do it," said Whistlebinkie.

"What if it took a week?" retorted the Unwiseman. "As long as they were willing to pay for it. But

what's the use of talking about it? I haven't got a shovel, and I can't shovel the snow off an Alp with an air-gun, so that's the end of it."

And for the time being that *was* the end of it. The Unwiseman very properly confined himself to the quiet of the carpet-bag until his wrath had entirely disappeared, and after luncheon he turned up cheerily in the office of the hotel.

"Let's hire a couple of sleds and go coasting," he suggested to Mollie. "That Mount Blank looks like a pretty good hill. Whistlebinkie and I can pull you up to the top and it will be a fine slide coming back."

But inquiry at the office brought out the extraordinary fact that there were no sleds in the place and never had been.

"My goodness!" ejaculated the Unwiseman. "I never knew such people. I don't wonder these [Pg 172] Switzers ain't a great nation like us Americans. I don't believe any American hotel-keeper would have as much snow as that in his back-yard all summer long and not have a regular sled company to accommodate guests who wanted to go coasting on it. If they had an Alp like that over at Atlantic City they'd build a fence around it, and charge ten cents to get inside, where you could hire a colored gentleman to haul you up to the top of the hill and guide you down again on the return slide."

"I guess they would," said Whistlebinkie.

"Then they'd turn part of it into an ice quarry," the Unwiseman went on, "and sell great huge chunks of ice to people all the year round and put the regular ice men out of business. I've half a mind to write home to my burgular and tell him here's a chance to earn an honest living as an iceman. He could get up a company to come here and buy up that hill and just regularly go in for ice-mining. There never was such a chance. If people can make money out of coal mines and gold mines and copper mines, I don't see why they can't do the same thing with ice mines. Why don't [Pg 173] you speak to your Papa about it, Mollie? He'd make his everlasting fortune."

"I will," said Mollie, very much interested in the idea.

"And all that snow up there going to waste too," continued the Unwiseman growing enthusiastic over the prospect. "Just think of the millions of people who can't get cool in summer over home. Your father could sell snow to people in midsummer for six-fifty a ton, and they could shovel it into their furnaces and cool off their homes ten or twenty degrees all summer long. My goodness—talk about your billionaires—here's a chance for squillions."

The Unwiseman paced the floor excitedly. The vision of wealth that loomed up before his mind's eye was so vast that he could hardly contain himself in the face of it.

"Wouldn't it all melt before he could get it over to America?" asked Mollie.

"Why should it?" demanded the Unwiseman. "If it don't melt here in summer time why should it melt anywhere else? I don't believe snow was ever disagreeable just for the pleasure of being so." [Pg 174]

"Wouldn't it cost a lot to take it over?" asked Whistlebinkie.

"Not if the Company owned its own ships," said the Unwiseman. "If the Company owned its own ships it could carry it over for nothing."

The Unwiseman was so carried away with the possibilities of his plan that for several days he could talk of nothing else, and several times Mollie and Whistlebinkie found him working in the writing room of the hotel on what he called his Perspectus.

"I'm going to work out that idea of mine, Mollie," he explained, "so that you can show it to your father and maybe he'll take it up, and if he does—well, I'll have a man to exercise my umbrella, a pair of wings built on my house where I can put a music room and a library, and have my kitchen-stove nickel plated as it deserves to be for having served me so faithfully for so many years."

An hour or two later, his face beaming with pleasure, the Unwiseman brought Mollie his [Pg 175] completed "Perspectus" with the request that she show it to her father. It read as follows:

**THE SWITZER SNOW AND ICE CO.**

THE UNWISEMAN, *President*.

MR. MOLLIE J. WHISTLEBINKIE, *Vice-President*.

A. BURGULAR, *Seketary and Treasurer*.

I. To purchase all right, title, and interest in one first class Alp known as Mount Blank, a snow-clad peak located at Switzerville, Europe. For further perticulars, see Map if you have one handy that is any good and has been prepared by somebody what has studied jography before.

II. To orginize the Mount Blank Toboggan Slide and Sled Company and build a fence around it for the benefit of the young at ten cents ahead, using the surplus snow and ice on Mount Blank for this purpose. Midsummer coasting a speciality.

III. To mine ice and to sell the same by the pound, ton, yard, or shipload, to Americans at one cent less a pound, ton, yard, or shipload, than they are now paying to unscrupulous ice-men at home, thereby putting them out of business and bringing ice in midsummer within the reach of persons of modest means to keep their provisions on,

who without it suffer greatly from the heat and are sometimes sun-struck.

IV. To gather and sell snow to the American people in summer time for the purpose of cooling off their houses by throwing the same into the furnace like coal in winter, thereby taking down the thermometer two or three inches and making fans unnecessary, and killing mosquitoes, flies and other animals that ain't of any use and can only live in warm weather.

V. Also to sell a finer quality of snow for use at children's parties in the United States of America in July and August where snow-ball fights are not now possible owing to the extreme tenderness of the snow at present provided by the American climate which causes it to melt along about the end of March and disappear entirely before the beginning of May. [Pg 176]

VI. Also to sell snow at redoosed rates to people at Christmas Time when they don't always have it as they should ought to have if Christmas is to look anything like the real thing and give boys and girls a chance to try their new sleds and see if they are as good as they are cracked up to be instead of having to be put away as they sometimes are until February and even then it don't always last.

This Company has already been formed by Mr. Thomas S. Me, better known as the Unwiseman, who is hereby elected President thereof, with a capital of ten million dollars of which three dollars has already been paid in to Mr. Me as temporary treasurer by himself in real money which may be seen upon application as a guarantee of good faith. The remaining nine million nine hundred and ninety-nine thousand, nine hundred and ninety-seven dollars worth is offered to the public at one dollar a share payable in any kind of money that will circulate freely, one half of which will be used as profits for the next five years while the Company is getting used to its new business, and the rest will be spent under the direction of the President as he sees fit, it being understood that none of it shall be used to buy eclairs or other personal property with.

"There," said the Unwiseman, as he finished the prospectus. "Just you hand that over to your father, Mollie, and see what he says. If he don't start the ball a-rolling and buy that old Mountain before we leave this place I shall be very much surprised."

But the Unwiseman's grand scheme never went through for Mollie's father upon inquiry found that nobody about Chamounix cared to sell his interest in the mountain, or even to suggest a price for it. [Pg 177]

"They're afraid to sell it I imagine," said Mollie's father, "for fear the new purchasers would dig it up altogether and take it over to the United States. You see if that were to happen it would leave an awfully big hole in the place where Mount Blank used to be and there'd be a lot of trouble getting it filled in."

For all of which I am sincerely sorry because there are times in midsummer in America when I would give a great deal if some such enterprise as a "Switzer Snow & Ice Co." would dump a few tons of snow into my cellar for use in the furnace.

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# XI.

[Pg 178]

## THE UNWISEMAN PLANS A CHAMOIS COMPANY

The Unwiseman's disappointment over the failure of his Switzer Snow & Ice Company was very keen at first and the strange old gentleman was inclined to be as thoroughly disgusted with Switzerland as he had been with London and Paris. He was especially put out when, after travelling seven or eight miles to see a "glazier," as he called it, he discovered that a glacier was not a frozen "window-pane mender" but a stream of ice flowing perennially down from the Alpine summits into the valleys.

"They bank too much on their snow-drifts over here," he remarked, after he had visited the *Mer-de-Glace*. "I wouldn't give seven cents to *see* a thing like that when I've been brought up close to New York where we have blizzards every once in a while that tie up the whole city till it looks like one glorious big snow-ball fight."

And then when he wanted to go fishing in one of the big fissures of the glacier, and was told he could drop a million lines down there without getting a bite of any kind he announced his intention of getting out of the country as soon as he possibly could. But after all the Unwiseman had a naturally sun-shiny disposition and this added to the wonderful air of Switzerland, which in itself is one of the most beautiful things in a beautiful world, soon brought him out of his sulky fit and set him to yodeling once more as gaily as a Swiss Mountain boy. He began to see some of the beauties of the country and his active little mind was not slow at discovering advantages not always clear to people with less inquisitiveness. [Pg 179]

"I should think," he observed to Mollie one morning as he gazed up at Mount Blanc's pure white summit, "that this would be a great ice-cream country. I'd like to try the experiment of pasturing a lot of fine Jersey cows up on those ice-fields. Just let 'em browze around one of those glaciers every day for a week and give 'em a cupful of vanilla, or chocolate extract or a strawberry once in

a while and see if they wouldn't give ice-cream instead o' milk. It would be worth trying, anyhow."

Mollie thought it would and Whistlebinkie gave voice to a long low whistle of delight at the idea. [Pg 180]

"It-ud-be-bettern-soder-watter-rany-way!" he whistled.

"Anything would be better than soda water," said the Unwiseman, who had only tried it once and got nothing but the bubbles. "Soda water's too foamy for me. It's like drinking whipped air."

But the thing that pleased the Unwiseman more than anything else was a pet chamois that he encountered at a little Swiss Chalet on one of his tours of investigation. It was a cunning little animal, very timid of course, like a fawn, but tame, and for some reason or other it took quite a fancy to the Unwiseman—possibly because he looked so like a Swiss Mountain Boy with a peaked cap he had purchased, and ribbons wound criss-cross around his calves and his magnificent Alpen-stock upon which had been burned the names of all the Alps he had *not* climbed. And then the Unwiseman's yodel had become something unusually fine and original in the line of yodeling, which may have attracted the chamois and made him feel that the Unwiseman was a person to be [Pg 181] trusted. At any rate the little animal instead of running away and jumping from crag to crag at the Unwiseman's approach, as most chamois would do, came inquiringly up to him and stuck out its soft velvety nose to be scratched, and permitted the Unwiseman to inspect its horns and silky chestnut-brown coat as if it recognized in the little old man a true and tried friend of long standing.

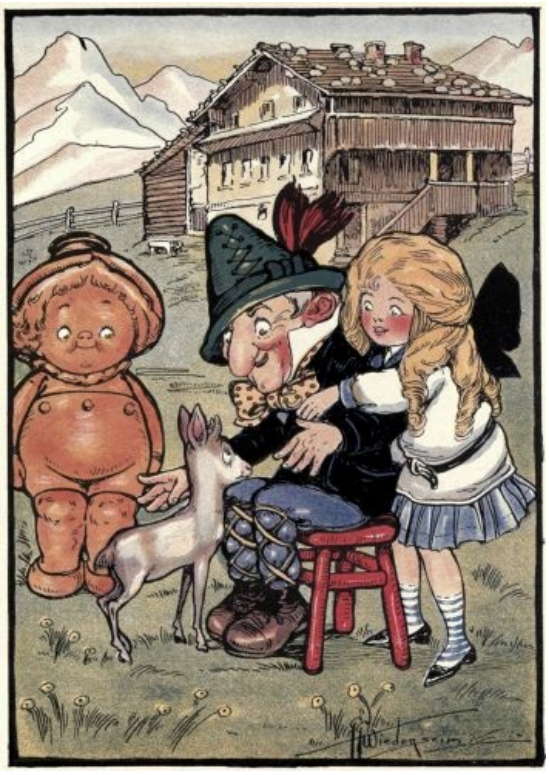
"Why you little beauty you!" cried the Unwiseman, as he sat on the fence and stroked the beautiful creature's neck. "So you're what they call a shammy, eh?"

The chamois turned its lovely eyes upon his new found friend, and then lowered his head to have it scratched again.

"Mary had a little sham
  Whose hide was soft as cotton,
And everywhere that Mary went
  The shammy too went trottin'."

sang the Unwiseman, dropping into poetry as was one of his habits when he was deeply moved.

[Pg 182]



**THE CHAMOIS EVIDENTLY LIKED THIS VERSE FOR ITS EYES TWINKLED**

The chamois evidently liked this verse for its eyes twinkled and it laid its head gently on the Unwiseman's knee and looked at him appealingly as if to say, "More of that poetry please. You are a bard after my own heart." So the Unwiseman went on, keeping time to his verse by slight taps on the chamois' nose.

"It followed her to town one day
  Unto the Country Fair,
And earned five hundred dollars just
  In shining silver-ware."

Whistlebinkie indulged in a loud whistle of mirth at this, which so startled the little creature that it leapt backward fifteen feet in the air and landed on top of a small pump at the rear of the yard, and stood there poised on its four feet just like the chamois we see in pictures standing on a sharp peak miles up in the air, trembling just a little for fear that Whistlebinkie's squeak would

be repeated. A moment of silence seemed to cure this, however, for in less than two minutes it was back again at the Unwiseman's side gazing soulfully at him as if demanding yet another verse. Of course the Unwiseman could not resist—he never could when people demanded poetry from him, it came so very easy—and so he continued: [Pg 183]

"The children at the Country Fair
  Indulged in merry squawks
To see the shammy polishing
  The family knives and forks.

"The tablespoons, and coffee pots,
  The platters and tureens,
The top of the mahogany,
  And crystal fire-screens."

"More!" pleaded the chamois with his soft eyes, snuggling its head close into the Unwiseman's lap, and the old gentleman went on:

"'O isn't he a wondrous kid!'
  The wondering children cried.
We didn't know a shammy could
  Do such things if he tried.

"And Mary answered with a smile
  That dimpled up her chin
'There's much that shammy's cannot do,
  But much that shammy-skin.'"

Whistlebinkie's behavior at this point became so utterly and inexcusably boisterous with mirth that the confiding little chamois was again frightened away and this time it gave three rapid leaps into the air which landed it ultimately upon the ridge-pole of the chalet, from which it wholly refused to descend, in spite of all the persuasion in the world, for the rest of the afternoon. [Pg 184]

"Very intelligent little animal that," said the Unwiseman, as he trudged his way home. "A very high appreciation of true poetry, inclined to make friendship with the worthy, and properly mistrustful of people full of strange noises and squeaks."

"He was awfully pretty, wasn't he," said Mollie.

"Yes, but he was better than pretty," observed the Unwiseman. "He could be made useful. Things that are only pretty are all very well in their way, but give me the useful things—like my kitchen-stove for instance. If that kitchen-stove was only pretty do you suppose I'd love it the way I do? Not at all. I'd just put it on the mantel-piece, or on the piano in my parlor and never think of it a second time, but because it is useful I pay attention to it every day, polish it with stove polish, feed it with coal and see that the ashes are removed from it when its day's work is done. Nobody ever thinks of doing such things with a plain piece of bric-a-brac that can't be used for anything at all. You don't put any coal or stove polish on that big Chinese vase you have in your parlor, do you?" [Pg 185]

"No," said Mollie, "of course not."

"And I'll warrant that in all the time you've had that opal glass jug on the mantel-piece of your library you never shook the ashes down in it once," said the Unwiseman.

"Mity-goo-dreeson-wy!" whistled Whistlebinkie. "They-ain't never no ashes in it."

"Correct though ungrammatically expressed," observed the Unwiseman. "There never are any ashes in it to be shaken down, which is a pretty good reason to believe that it is never used to fry potatoes on or to cook a chop with, or to roast a turkey in—which proves exactly what I say that it is only pretty and isn't half as useful as my kitchen-stove."

"It would be pretty hard to find anything useful for the bric-a-brac to do though," suggested Mollie, who loved pretty things whether they had any other use or not.

"It all depends on your bric-a-brac," said the Unwiseman. "I can find plenty of useful things for mine to do. There's my coal scuttle for instance—it works all the time." [Pg 186]

"Coal-scuttles ain't bric-a-brac," said Whistlebinkie.

"My coal scuttle is," said the Unwiseman. "It's got a picture of a daisy painted on one side of it, and I gilded the handle myself. Then there's my watering pot. That's just as bric-a-bracky as any Chinese china pot that ever lived, but it's useful. I use it to water the flowers in summer, and to sift my lump sugar through in winter. Every pound of lump sugar you buy has some fine sugar with it and if you shake the lump sugar up in a watering pot and let the fine sugar sift through the nozzle you get two kinds of sugar for the price of one. So it goes all through my house from my piano to my old beaver hat—every bit of my bric-a-brac is useful."

"Wattonearth do-you-do with a-nold beevor-at?" whistled Whistlebinkie.

"I use it as a post-office box to mail cross letters in," said the Unwiseman gravely. "It's saved me lots of trouble."

"Cross letters?" asked Mollie. "You never write cross letters to anybody do you?"

[Pg 187]

"I'm doing it all the time," said the Unwiseman. "Whenever anything happens that I don't like I sit down and write a terrible letter to the people that do it. That eases off my feelings, and then I mail the letters in the hat."

"And does the Post-man come and get them?" asked Mollie.

"No indeed," said the Unwiseman. "That's where the beauty of the scheme comes in. If I mailed 'em in the post-office box on the lamp-post, the post-man would take 'em and deliver them to the man they're addressed to and I'd be in all sorts of trouble. But when I mail them in my hat nobody comes for them and nobody gets them, and so there's no trouble for anybody anywhere."

"But what becomes of them?" asked Mollie.

"I empty the hat on the first Tuesday after the first Monday of every month and use them for kindling in my kitchen-stove," said the Unwiseman. "It's a fine scheme. I keep out of trouble, don't have to buy so much kindling wood, and save postage."

"That sounds like a pretty good idea," said Mollie.

"It's a first class idea," returned Mr. Me, "and I'm proud of it. It's all my own and if I had time I'd [Pg 188] patent it. Why I was invited to a party once by a small boy who'd thrown a snow-ball at my house and wet one of the shingles up where I keep my leak, and I was so angry that I sat down and wrote back that I regretted very much to be delighted to say that I'd never go to a party at his house if it was the only party in the world besides the Republican; that I didn't like him, and thought his mother's new spring bonnet was most unbecoming and that I'd heard his father had been mentioned for Alderman in our town and all sorts of disgraceful things like that. I mailed this right in my hat and used it to boil an egg with a month later, while if I'd mailed it in the post-office box that boy'd have got it and I couldn't have gone to his party at all."

"Oh—you went, did you?" laughed Mollie.

"I did and I had a fine time, six eclairs, three plates of ice cream, a pound of chicken salad, and a pocketful of nuts and raisins," said the Unwiseman. "He turned out to be a very nice boy, and his mother's spring bonnet wasn't hers at all but another lady's altogether, and his father had not [Pg 189] even been mentioned for Water Commissioner. You see, my dear, what a lot of trouble mailing that letter in the old beaver hat saved me, not to mention what I earned in the way of food by going to the party which I couldn't have done had it been mailed in the regular way."

Here the old gentleman began to yodel happily, and to tell passersby in song that he was a "Gay Swiss Laddy with a carpet-bag, That never knew fear of the Alpine crag, For his eye was bright and his conscience clear, As he leapt his way through the atmosphere, Tra-la-la, tra-la-la, Tralalolly-O."

"I do-see-how-yood-make-that-shammy-useful," said Whistlebinkie. "Except to try your poems on and I don't b'lieve he's a good judge o' potery."

"He's a splendid judge of queer noises," said the Unwiseman, severely. "He knew enough to jump a mile whenever you squeaked."

"Watt-else-coodie-doo?" asked Whistlebinkie through his hat. "You haven't any silver to keep polished and there aren't enough queer noises about your place to keep him busy."

"What else coodie-do?" retorted the Unwiseman, giving an imitation of Whistlebinkie that set [Pg 190] both Mollie and the rubber doll to giggling. "Why he could polish up the handle of my big front door for one thing. He could lie down on his back and wiggle around the floor and make it shine like a lookin' glass for another. He could rub up against my kitchen stove and keep it bright and shining for a third—that's some of the things he couldie-doo, but I wouldn't confine him to work around my house. I'd lead him around among the neighbors and hire him out for fifty cents a day for general shammy-skin house-work. I dare say Mollie's mother would be glad to have a real live shammy around that she could rub her tea-kettles and coffee pots on when it comes to cleaning the silver."

"They can buy all the shammys they need at the grocer's," said Whistlebinkie scornfully.

"Dead ones," said the Unwiseman, "but nary a live shammy have you seen at the grocer's or the butcher's or the milliner's or the piano-tuner's. That's where Wigglethorpe——"

"Wigglethorpe?" cried Whistlebinkie.

"Yes Wigglethorpe," repeated the Unwiseman. "That's what I have decided to call my shammy [Pg 191] when I get him because he will wiggle."

"He don't thorpe, does he?" laughed Whistlebinkie.

"He thorpes just as much as you bink," retorted the Unwiseman. "But as I was saying, Wigglethorpe, being alive, will be better than any ten dead ones because he won't wear out, maids won't leave him around on the parlor floor, and just because he wiggles, the silver and the hardwood floors and front door handles will be polished up in half the time it takes to do it with a dead one. At fifty cents a day I could earn three dollars a week on Wigglethorpe——"

"Which would be all profit if you fed him on potery," said Whistlebinkie with a grin.

"And if I imported a hundred of them after I found that Wigglethorpe was successful," the Unwiseman continued, very wisely ignoring Whistlebinkie's sarcasm, "that would be—hum—ha——"

"Three hundred dollars a week," prompted Mollie.

"Exactly," said the Unwiseman, "which in a year would amount to—ahem—three times three hundred and sixty-five is nine, twice nine is——"

"It comes to $15,600 a year," said Mollie. [Pg 192]

"Right to a penny," said the Unwiseman. "I was figuring it out by the day. Fifteen thousand six hundred dollars a year is a big sum of money and reckoned in eclairs at fifty eclairs for a dollar is —er—is—well you couldn't eat 'em if you tried, there'd be so many."

"Seven hundred and eighty thousand eclairs," said Mollie.

"That's what I said," said the Unwiseman. "You just couldn't eat 'em, but you could sell 'em, so really you'd have two businesses right away, shammys and eclaires."

"Mitey-big-biziness," hissed Whistlebinkie.

"Yes," said the Unwiseman, "I think I'll suggest it to my burgular when I get home. It seems to me to be more honorable then burguling and it's just possible that after a summer spent in the uplifting company of my kitchen stove and having got used to the pleasant conversation of my leak, and seen how peaceful it is to just spend your days exercising a sweet gentle umbrella like mine, he'll want to reform and go into something else that he can do in the day-time."

By this time the little party had reached the hotel, and Mollie's father was delighted to hear of [Pg 193] the Unwiseman's proposition. It was an entirely new idea, he said, although he was doubtful if it was a good business for a burgular.

"People might not be willing to trust him with their silver," he said.

"Very well then," said the Unwiseman. "Let him begin on front door knobs and parlor floors. He's not likely to run away with those."

The next day the travellers left Switzerland and when I next caught sight of them they had arrived at Venice.

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# XII. [Pg 194]

## VENICE

It was late at night when Mollie and her friends arrived at Venice and the Unwiseman, sleeping peacefully as he was in the cavernous depths of his carpet-bag, did not get his first glimpse of the lovely city of the waters until he waked up the next morning. Unfortunately—or possibly it was a fortunate circumstance—the old gentleman had heard of Venice only in a very vague way before, and had no more idea of its peculiarities than he had of those of Waycross Junction, Georgia, or any other place he had never seen. Consequently his first sight of Venice filled him with a tremendous deal of excitement. Emerging from his carpet-bag in the cloak-room of the hotel he walked out upon the front steps of the building which descended into the Grand Canal, the broad waterway that runs its serpentine length through this historic city of the Adriatic.

"'Gee Whittaker!'" he cried, as the great avenue of water met his gaze. "There's been a flood! Hi [Pg 195] there—inside—the water main has busted, and the whole town's afloat. Wake up everybody and save yourselves!"

He turned and rushed madly up the hotel stairs to the floor upon which his friends' rooms were located, calling lustily all the way:

"Get up everybody—the reservoy's busted; the dam's loose. To the boats! Mollie—Whistlebinkie—Mister and Mrs. Mollie—get up or you'll be washed away—the whole place is flooded. You haven't a minute to spare."

"What's the matter, Mr. Me?" asked Mollie, opening her door as she recognized the Unwiseman's voice out in the hallway. "What are you scaring everybody to death for?"

"Get out your life preservers—quick before it is too late," gasped the Unwiseman. "There's a tidal wave galloping up and down the street, and we'll be drowned. To the roof! All hands to starboard and man the boats."

"What *are* you talking about?" said Mollie.

"Look out your front window if you don't believe me," panted the Unwiseman. "The whole place is chuck full of water—couldn't bail it out in a week——"

"Oh," laughed Mollie, as she realized what it was that had so excited her friend. "Is that all?" [Pg 196]

"All!" ejaculated the Unwiseman, his eyebrows lifting higher with astonishment. "Isn't it enough? What do you want, the whole Atlantic Ocean sitting on your front stoop?"

"Why—" began Mollie, "this is Venice——"

"Looks like Watertown," interrupted the Unwiseman.

"Thass-swattit-izz," whistled Whistlebinkie. "Venice is a water town. It's built on it."

"Built on it?" queried the Unwiseman looking scornfully at Whistlebinkie as much as to say you can't fool me quite so easily as that. "Built on water?" he repeated.

"Exactly," said Mollie. "Didn't you know that, Mr. Me? Venice is built right out on the sea."

"Well of all queer things!" ejaculated the Unwiseman, so surprised that he plumped down on the floor and sat there gazing wonderingly up at Mollie. "A whole city built on the sea! What's the matter, wasn't there land enough?"

"Oh yes, I guess there was plenty of land," said Mollie, "but maybe somebody else owned it. [Pg 197] Anyhow the Venetians came out here where there were a lot of little islands to begin with and drove piles into the water and built their city on them."

"Well that beats me," said the Unwiseman, shaking his head in bewilderment. "I've heard of fellows building up big copperations on water, but never a city. How do they keep the water out of their cellars?"

"They don't," said Mollie.

"Maybe they build their cellars on the roof," suggested Whistlebinkie.

"Well," said the Unwiseman, rising from the floor and walking to the front window and gazing out at the Grand Canal, "I hope this hotel is anchored good and fast. I don't mind going to sea on a big boat that's built for it, but I draw the line at sailin' all around creation in a hotel."

The droll little old gentleman poised himself on one toe and stretched out his arms. "There don't seem to be much motion, does there," he remarked.

"There isn't any at all," said Mollie. "It's perfectly still."

"I guess it's because it's a clam day," observed the Unwiseman uneasily. "I hope it'll stay clam [Pg 198] while we're here. I'd hate to be caught out in movey weather like they had on that sassy little British Channel. This hotel would flop about fearfully and *I* believe it would sink if somebody carelessly left a window open, to say nothing of its falling over backward and letting the water in the back door."

"Papa says it's perfectly safe," said Mollie. "The place has been here more'n a thousand years and it hasn't sunk yet."

"All right," said the Unwiseman. "If your father says that I'm satisfied because he most generally knows what he's talking about, but all the same I think we should ought to have brought a couple o' row boats and a lot of life preservers along. I don't believe in taking any chances. What do the cab-horses do here, swim?"

"No," said Mollie. "There aren't any horses in Venice. They have gondolas."

"Gondolas?" repeated the Unwiseman. "What are gondolas, trained ducks? Don't think much o' ducks as a substitute for horses."

"Perfly-bsoyd!" whistled Whistlebinkie. [Pg 199]

"I should think they'd drive whales," said the Unwiseman, "or porpoises. By Jiminy, that would be fun, wouldn't it? Let's see if we can't hire a four whale coach, Mollie, and go driving about the city, or better yet, if they've got them well broken, get a school of porpoises. We might put on our bathing suits and go horseback riding on 'em. I don't take much to the trained duck idea, ducks are so flighty and if they shied at anything they might go flying up in the air and dump us backwards out of our cab into the water."

"We're going to take a gondola ride this morning," said Mollie. "Just you wait and see, Mr. Me."

**THEY ALL BOARDED A GONDOLA**

So the Unwiseman waited and an hour later he and Mollie and Whistlebinkie boarded a gondola in charge of a very handsome and smiling gondolier who said his name was Giuseppe Zocco.

"Soako is a good name for a cab-driver in this town," said the Unwiseman, after he had inspected the gondola and ascertained that it was seaworthy. "I guess I'll talk to him."

"You-do-know-Eye-talian," laughed Whistlebinkie. [Pg 200]

"It's one of the languages I *do* know," returned the Unwiseman. "I buy all my bananas and my peanuts from an Eye-talian at home and for two or three years I have been able to talk to him very easily."

He turned to the gondolier.

"Gooda da morn, Soako," he observed very politely. "You havea da prett-da-boat."

"Si, Signor," returned the smiling gondolier, who was not wholly unfamiliar with English.

"See what?" asked the Unwiseman puzzled, but looking about carefully to see what there was to be seen.

"He says we're at sea," laughed Whistlebinkie.

"Oh—well—that's it, eh?" said the Unwiseman. "I thought he only spoke Eye-talian." And then he addressed the gondolier again. "Da weather's mighta da fine, huh? Not a da rain or da heava da wind, eh? Hopa da babe is vera da well da morn."

"Si, Signor," said Giuseppe.

"Da Venn greata da place. Too mucha da watt for me. Lika da dry land moocha da bett, Giuseppe. [Pg 201] Ever sella da banann?" continued the Unwiseman.

"Non, Signor," replied Giuseppe. "No sella da banann."

"Bully da bizz," said the Unwiseman. "Maka da munn hand over da fist. You grinda da org?"

"Huh?" grinned Giuseppe.

"He doesn't understand," said Mollie giggling.

"I asked him if he ever ground a hand-organ," said the Unwiseman. "Perfectly simple question. I aska da questch, Giuseppe, if you ever grinda da org. You know what I mean. Da musica-box, wid da monk for climba da house for catcha da nick."

"What's 'catcha da nick'?" whispered Whistlebinkie.

"To catch the nickels, stoopid," said the Unwiseman; "don't interrupt. No hava da monk, Giuseppe?" he asked.

"Non, Signor," said the gondolier. "No hava da monk."

"Too bad," observed the Unwiseman. "Hand-org not moocha da good without da monk. Da monk [Pg 202] maka da laugh and catcha da mun by da cupful. If you ever come to America, Giuseppe, no forgetta da monk with a redda da cap."

With which admonition the Unwiseman turned his attention to other things.

"Is that really Eye-talian?" asked Whistlebinkie.

"Of course it is," said the Unwiseman. "It's the easiest language in the world to pick up and only requires a little practice to make you speak it as if it were your own tongue. I was never conscious that I was learning it in my morning talks with old Gorgorini, the banana man at home. This would be a great place for automobiles, wouldn't it, Mollie?" he laughed in conclusion.

"I don't guesso," said Whistlebinkie.

The gondolier now guided the graceful craft to a flight of marble steps up which Mollie and her friends mounted to the Piazza San Marco.

"This is great," said the Unwiseman as he gazed about him and took in its splendors. "It's a wonder to me that they don't have a lot of places like this on the way over from New York to Liverpool. Crossing the ocean would be some fun if you could step off every hour or two and [Pg 203] stretch your legs on something solid, and buy a few tons of tumblers, and feed pigeons. Fact is I think that's the best cure in the world for sea-sickness. If you could run up to a little piazza like this three times a day where there's a nice restaurant waiting for you and no motion to spoil your appetite I wouldn't mind being a sailor for the rest of my life."

The travellers passed through the glorious church of San Marco, inspected the Doge's Palace and then returned to the gondola, upon which they sailed back to their hotel.

"Moocha da thanks, Giuseppe," said the Unwiseman, as he alighted. "Here's a Yankee da quart for you. Save it up and when you come to America as all the Eye-talians seem to be doing these days, it will help start you in business."

And handing the gondolier a quarter the Unwiseman disappeared into the hotel. The next day he entered Mollie's room and asked permission to sit out on her balcony.

"I think I'll try a little fishing this afternoon," he said. "It isn't a bad idea having a hotel right on the water front this way after all. You can sit out on your balcony and drop your line out into the [Pg 204] water and just haul them in by the dozen."

But alas for the old gentleman's expectations, he caught never a fish. Whether it was the fault of

the bait or not I don't know, but the only things he succeeded in catching were an old barrel-hoop that went floating along the canal from the Fruit Market up the way, and, sad to relate, the straw hat of an American artist on his way home in his gondola from a day's painting out near the Lido. The latter incident caused a great deal of trouble and it took all the persuasion that Mollie's father was capable of to keep the artist from having the Unwiseman arrested. It seems that the artist was very much put out anyhow because, mix his colors as he would, he could not get that peculiarly beautiful blue of the Venetian skies, and the lovely iridescent hues of the Venetian air were too delicate for such a brush as his, and to have his straw hat unceremoniously snatched off his head by an old gentleman two flights up with an ordinary fish hook baited with macaroni in addition to his other troubles was too much for his temper, not a good one at best.

"I am perfectly willing to say that I am sorry," protested the Unwiseman when he was hauled before the angry artist. "I naturally would be sorry. When a man goes fishing for shad and lands nothing but a last year's straw hat, why wouldn't he be sorry?" [Pg 205]

"That's a mighty poor apology!" retorted the artist, putting the straw hat on his head.

"Well I'm a poor man," said the Unwiseman. "My expenses have been very heavy of late. What with buying an air-gun to shoot Alps with, and giving a quarter to the Ganderman to help him buy a monkey, I'm reduced from nine-fifty to a trifle under seven dollars."

"You had no business fishing from that balcony!" said the artist angrily.

"I haven't any business anywhere, I've retired," said the Unwiseman. "And I can tell you one thing certain," he added, "if I was going back into business I wouldn't take up fishing for straw hats and barrel-hoops in Venice. There's nothing but to trouble in it."

"I shall lodge a complaint against you in the Lion's Mouth," said the artist, with a slight twinkle in his eye, his good humor returning in the presence of the Unwiseman.

"And I shall fall back on my rights as an American citizen to fish whenever I please from my own balcony with my own bait without interruption from foreign straw hats," said the Unwiseman with dignity. [Pg 206]

"What?" cried the artist. "You an American?"

"Certainly," said the Unwiseman. "You didn't take me for an Eye-talian, did you?"

"So am I," returned the artist holding out his hand. "If you'd only told me that in the beginning I never should have complained."

"Don't mention it," said the Unwiseman graciously. "I was afraid you were an Englishman, and then there'd been a war sure, because I'll never give in to an Englishman. If your hat is seriously damaged I'll give you my tarpaulin, seeing that you are an American like myself."

"Not at all," said the artist. "The hat isn't hurt at all and I'm very glad to have met you. If your hook had only caught my eye on my way up the canal I should have turned aside so as not to interfere."

"Well I'm mighty glad it didn't catch your eye," said the Unwiseman. "I could afford to buy you a new straw hat, but I'm afraid a new eye would have busted me." [Pg 207]

And there the trouble ended. The artist and the Unwiseman shook hands and parted friends.

"What was that he said about the Lion's Mouth?" asked the Unwiseman after the artist had gone.

"He said he'd lodge a complaint there," said Mollie. "That's the way they used to do here. Those big statues of lions out in front of the Doggies' Palace with their mouths wide open are big boxes where people can mail their complaints to the Government."

"Oh, I see," said the Unwiseman. "And when the Doggies get the complaints they attend to 'em, eh?"

"Yes," said Mollie.

"And who are the Doggies?" asked the Unwiseman. "They don't have dogs instead of pleece over here, do they? I get so mixed up with these Johns, and Bobbies, and Doggies I hardly know where I'm at."

"I don't exactly understand why," said Mollie, "but the people in Venice are ruled by Doggies."

"They're a queer lot from Buckingham Palace, London, down to this old tow-path," said the Unwiseman, "and if I ever get home alive there's no more abroad for your Uncle Me." [Pg 208]

On the following day, Mollie's parents having seen all of Venice that their limited time permitted, prepared to start for Genoa, whence the steamer back to New York was to sail. Everything was ready, but the Unwiseman was nowhere to be found. The hotel was searched from top to bottom and not a sign of him. Giuseppe Zocco denied all knowledge of him, and the carpet-bag gave no evidence that he had been in it the night before as was his custom. Train-time was approaching and Mollie was distracted. Even Whistlebinkie whistled under his breath for fear that something had happened to the old gentleman.

"I hope he hasn't fallen overboard!" moaned Mollie, gazing anxiously into the watery depths of the canal.

"Here he comes!" cried Whistlebinkie, jubilantly, and sure enough down the canal seated on a small raft and paddling his way cautiously along with his hands came the Unwiseman, singing the popular Italian ballad "Margherita" at the top of his lungs. [Pg 209]

"Gander ahoy!" he cried, as he neared the hotel steps. "Sheer off there, Captain, and let me into Port."

The gondolier made room for him and the Unwiseman alighted.

"Where *have* you been?" asked Mollie, throwing her arms about his neck.

"Up the canal a little way," he answered unconcernedly. "I wanted to mail a letter to the Doggie in the Lion's Mouth."

"What about?" asked Mollie.

"Watertown, otherwise Venice," said the Unwiseman. "I had some suggestions for its improvement and I didn't want to go way without making them. There's a copy of my letter if you want to see it," he added, handing Mollie a piece of paper upon which he had written as follows:

29 Grand Canal St., Venice, It.

Ancient & Honorable Bow-wows:

I have enjoyed my visit to your beautiful but wet old town very much and would respectfully advise you that there are several things you can do to keep it unspiled. These are as follows to wit viz:

I. Bale it out once in a while and see that the barrel hoops in your Grand Canal are sifted out of it. They're a mighty poor stubstishoot for shad.

II. Get a few trained whales in commission so that when a feller wants to go driving he won't have to go paddling. [Pg 210]

III. Stock your streets with trout, or flounders, or perch or even sardines in order that us Americans who feel like fishing won't have to be satisfied with a poor quality of straw hat.

IV. During the fishing season compel artists returning from their work to wear beaver hats or something else that a fish-hook baited with macaroni won't catch into thus making a lot of trouble.

V. Get together on your language. I speak the very best variety of banana-stand Italian and twenty-three out of twenty-four people to which I have made remarks in it have not been able to grasp my meaning.

VI. Pigeons are very nice to have but they grow monotonous. Would suggest a half dozen first class American hens as an ornament to your piazza.

VII. Stop calling yourself Doggies. It makes people laugh.

With kind regards to the various Mrs. Ds, believe me to be with mucho da respecto,

Yoursa da trool,
Da Unadawisamann.

P.S. If you ever go sailing abroad in your old town point her nose towards my country. We'll all be glad to see you over there and can supply you with all the water you need.

Y da T,
Mister Me.

It was with these recommendations to the Doges that the Unwiseman left Venice. Whether they were ever received or not I have never heard, but if they were I am quite sure they made the "Doggies" yelp with delight.

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# XIII. [Pg 211]

## GENOA, GIBRALTAR, AND COLUMBUS

"Whatta da namea dissa cit?" asked the Unwiseman in his best Italian as the party arrived at Genoa, whence they were to set sail for home the next day.

"This is Genoa," said Mollie.

"What's it good for?" demanded the old gentleman, gazing around him in a highly critical fashion.

"It's where Christopher Columbus was born," said Mollie. "Didn't you know that?"

"You don't mean the gentleman who discovered the United States, do you?" asked the Unwiseman, his face brightening with interest.

"The very same," said Mollie. "He was born right here in this town."

"Humph!" ejaculated the Unwiseman. "Queer place for a fellow like that to be born in. You'd think a man who was going to discover America would have been born a little nearer the United States than this. Up in Canada for instance, or down around Cuba, so's he wouldn't have so far to travel." [Pg 212]

"Canada and Cuba weren't discovered either at that time," explained Mollie, smiling broadly at the Unwiseman's ignorance.

"Really?" said the Unwiseman. "Well that accounts for it. I always wondered why the United States wasn't discovered by somebody nearer home, like a Canadian or a Cuban, or some fellow down around where the Panama hats come from, but of course if there wasn't any Canadians or Cubans or Panama hatters around to do it, it's as clear as pie." The old gentleman paused a moment, and then he went on: "So this is the place that would have been our native land if Columbus hadn't gone to sea, is it? I think I'll take home a bottle of it to keep on the mantel-piece alongside of my bottle of United States and label 'em' My Native Land, Before and After.'"

"That's a very good idea," said Mollie. "Then you'll have a complete set."

"I wonder," said the Unwiseman, rubbing his forehead reflectively, "I wonder if he's alive yet."

"What, Christopher Columbus?" laughed Mollie. [Pg 213]

"Yes," said the Unwiseman. "I haven't seen much in the papers about him lately, but that don't prove he's dead."

"Why he discovered America in 1492," said Mollie.

"Well—let's see—how long ago was that? More'n forty years, wasn't it?" said the Unwiseman.

"I guess it was more than forty years ago," giggled Mollie.

"Well—say fifty then," said the Unwiseman. "I'm pretty nearly that old myself. I was born in 1839, or 1843, or some such year, and as I remember it we'd been discovered then—but that wouldn't make him so awfully old you know. A man can be eighty and still live. Look at old Methoosalum—he was nine hundred."

"Oh well," said Mollie, "there isn't any use of talking about it. Columbus has been dead a long time——"

"All I can say is that I'm very sorry," interrupted the Unwiseman, with a sad little shake of his head. "I should very much like to have gone over and called on him just to thank him for [Pg 214] dishcovering the United States. Just think, Mollie, of what would have happened if he hadn't! You and I and old Fizzledinkie here would have had to be Eye-talians, or Switzers, and live over here all the time if it hadn't been for him, and our own beautiful native land would have been left way across the sea all alone by itself and we'd never have known anything about it."

"We certainly ought to be very much obliged to Mr. Columbus for all he did for us," said Mollie.

"I-guess-somebuddyelse-wudda-donit," whistled Whistlebinkie. "They cuddn'-ta-helptit-with-all-these-socean steamers-going-over-there every-day."

"That's true enough," said the Unwiseman, "but we ought to be thankful to Columbus just the same. Other people *might* have done it, but the fact remains that he *did* do it, so I'm much obliged to him. I'd sort of like to do something to show my gratitude."

"Better write to his family," grinned Whistlebinkie.

"For a rubber doll with a squeak instead of brain in his head that's a first rate idea, Fizzledinkie," [Pg 215] said the old gentleman. "I'll do it."

And so he did. The evening mail from the Unwiseman's hotel carried with it a souvenir postal card addressed to Christopher Columbus, Jr., upon which the sender had written as follows:

GENOA, Aug. 23, 19—.

DEAR CHRISTOPHER:

As an American citizen I want to thank you for your Papa's very great kindness in dishcovering the United States. When I think that if he hadn't I might have been born a Switzer or a French John Darm it gives me a chill. I would have called on you to say this in person if I'd had time, but we are going to sail tomorrow for home and we're pretty busy packing up our carpet-bags and eating our last meals on shore. If you ever feel like dishcovering us on your own account and cross over the briny deep yourself, don't fail to call on me at my home where I have a fine kitching stove and an umbrella which will always be at your disposal.

Yours trooly,
THE UNWISEMAN, U. S. A.

Later in the evening to the same address was despatched another postal reading:

P.S. If you happen to have an extra photograph of your Papa lying around the house that you don't want with his ortygraph on it I shall be glad to have you send it to me. I will have it framed and hung up in the parlor alongside of General Washington and [Pg 216] President Roosevelt who have also been fathers of their country from time to time.

Yours trooly,
THE UNWISEMAN, U. S. A.

"I'm glad I did that," said the Unwiseman when he told Mollie of his two messages to Christopher, Jr. "I don't think people as a rule are careful enough these days to show their thanks to other people who do things for them. It don't do any harm to be polite in matters of that kind and some

time it may do a lot of good. Good manners ain't never out of place anywhere anyhow."

In which praiseworthy sentiment I am happy to say both Mollie and Whistlebinkie agreed.

The following day the travellers embarked on the steamer bound for New York. This time, weary of his experience as a stowaway on the trip over, the Unwiseman contented himself with travelling in his carpet-bag and not until after the ship had passed along the Mediterranean and out through the straits of Gibraltar, did he appear before his companions. His first appearance upon deck was just as the coast of Africa was fading away upon the horizon. He peered at this long and earnestly through a small blue bottle he held in his hand, and then when the last vestige [Pg 217] of the scene sank slowly behind the horizon line into the sea, he corked the bottle up tightly, put it into his pocket and turned to Mollie and Whistlebinkie.

"Well," he said, "that's done—and I'm glad of it. I've enjoyed this trip very much, but after all I'm glad I'm going home. Be it ever so bumble there's no place like home, as the Bee said, and I'll be glad to be back again where I can sleep comfortably on my kitchen-stove, with my beloved umbrella standing guard alongside of me, and my trusty leak looking down upon me from the ceiling while I rest."

"You missed a wonderful sight," said Mollie. "That Rock of Gibraltar was perfectly magnificent."

"I didn't miss it," said the Unwiseman. "I peeked at it through the port-hole and I quite agree with you. It is the cutest piece of rock I've seen in a long time. It seemed almost as big to me as the boulder in my back yard must seem to an ant, but I prefer my boulder just the same. Gibrallyper's too big to do anything with and it spoils the view, whereas my boulder can be rolled around the place without any trouble and doesn't spoil anything. I suppose they keep it there to keep Spain [Pg 218] from sliding down into the sea, so it's useful in a way, but after all I'm just as glad it's here instead of out on my lawn somewhere."

"What have you been doing all these days?" asked Mollie.

"O just keeping quiet," said the Unwiseman. "I've been reading up on Christopher Columbus and —er—writing a few poems about him. He was a wonderful man, Columbus was. He proved the earth was round when everybody else thought it was flat—and how do you suppose he did it?"

"By sailin' around it," said Whistlebinkie.

"That was after he proved it," observed the Unwiseman, with the superior air of one who knows more than somebody else. "He proved it by making an egg stand up on its hind legs."

"What?" cried Mollie.

"I didn't know eggs had hind legs," said Whistlebinkie.

"Ever see a chicken?" asked the Unwiseman.

"Yes," said Whistlebinkie.

"Well, a chicken's only an advanced egg," said the Unwiseman.

"That's true," said Mollie. [Pg 219]

"And chickens haven't got anything but hind legs, have they?" demanded the old gentleman.

"Thass-a-fact," whistled Whistlebinkie.

"And Columbus proved it by making the egg stand up?" asked Mollie.

"That's what history tells us," said the Unwiseman. "All the Harvard and Yale professors of the day said the earth was flat, but Columbus knew better, so he just took an egg and proved it. That's one of the things I've put in a poem. Want to hear it?"

"Indeed I do," said Mollie. "It must be interesting."

"It is—it's the longest poem I ever wrote," said the Unwiseman, and seeking out a retired nook on the steamer's deck the droll old fellow seated himself on a coil of rope and read the following poem to Mollie and Whistlebinkie.

**COLUMBUS AND THE EGG.**

"Columbus was a gentleman
  Who sailed the briny sea.
He was a bright young Genoan
  In sunny Italy
Who once discovered just the plan
  To find Amerikee."

"Splendid!" cried Mollie, clapping her hands with glee. [Pg 220]

"Perfly-bully!" chortled Whistlebinkie, with a joyous squeak.

"I'm glad you like it," said the Unwiseman, with a smile of pleasure. "But just you wait. The best part of it's to come yet."

And the old gentleman resumed his poem:

"He sought the wise-men of his time,
  And when the same were found,
He went and whispered to them, 'I'm

Convinced the Earth is round,
Just like an orange or a lime—
I'll bet you half a pound!'

"Each wise-man then just shook his head—
Each one within his hat.
'Go to, Columbus, child,' they said.
'*We* know the Earth is flat.
Go home, my son, and go to bed
And don't talk stuff like that.'

"But Christopher could not be hushed
By fellows such as they.
His spirit never could be crushed
In such an easy way,
And with his heart and soul unsquushed
He plunged into the fray."

"What's a fray?" asked Whistlebinkie.

"A fight, row, dispute, argyment," said the Unwiseman. "Don't interrupt. We're coming to the exciting part." [Pg 221]

And he went on:

"'I'll prove the world is round,' said he
'For you next Tuesday night,
If you will gather formally
And listen to the right.'
And all the wise-men did agree
Because they loved a fight.

"And so the wise-men gathered there
To hear Columbus talk,
And some were white as to the hair
And some could hardly walk,
And one looked like a Polar Bear
And one looked like an Auk."

"How-dju-know-that?" asked Whistlebinkie. "Does the history say all that?"

"No," said the Unwiseman. "The history doesn't say anything about their looks, but there's a picture of the whole party in the book, and it was just as I say especially the Polar Bear and the Auk. Anyhow, they were all there and the poem goes on to tell about it.

"Now when about the room they sat
Columbus he came in;
Took off his rubbers and his hat,
Likewise his tarpaulin.
He cleared his throat and stroked the cat
And thuswise did begin."

"There wasn't any cat in the picture," explained the Unwiseman, "but I introduced him to get a rhyme for hat and sat. Sometimes you have to do things like that in poetry and according to the rules if you have a license you can do it." [Pg 222]

"Have you got a license?" asked Whistlebinkie.

"Not to write poetry, but I've got a dog-license," said the Unwiseman, "and I guess if a man pays three dollars to keep a dog and doesn't keep the dog he's got a right to use the license for something else. I'll risk it anyhow. So just keep still and listen.

"'You see this egg?' Columbus led.
'Now watch me, sirs, I begs.
I'll make it stand upon its head
Or else upon its legs.'
And instantly 'twas as he said
As sure as eggs is eggs.

"For whether 'twas an Egg from school
Or in a circus taught,
Or whether it was just a cool
Egg of unusual sort,
That egg stood up just like a spool
According to report."

"I bet he smashed in the end of it," said Whistlebinkie.

"Maybe it was a scrambled egg, maybe he stuck a pin in an end of it. Maybe he didn't. Anyhow, he made it stand up," said the Unwiseman, "and I wish you'd stop squeakyrupting when I'm reading." [Pg 223]

"Go ahead," said Whistlebinkie meekly. "It's a perfly spulendid piece o' potery and I can't help

showing my yadmiration for it."

"Well keep your yadmiration for the yend of it," retorted the Unwiseman. "We'll be in New York before I get it finished at this rate."

Whistlebinkie promised not to squeak again and the Unwiseman resumed.

"'O wonderful!' the wise-men cried.
'O marvellous,' said they.
And then Columbus up and tried
The egg the other way,
And still it stood up full of pride
Or so the histories say.

"Again the wise-men cried aloud,
'O wizard, marvellous!
Of all the scientific crowd
This is the man for us—
O Christopher we're mighty proud
Of you, you little cuss!'"

"That wasn't very polite," began Whistlebinkie.

"Now Squeaky," said the Unwiseman. [Pg 224]

"'Scuse!" gasped Whistlebinkie.

And the Unwiseman went on:

"'For men who make an omlette
We really do not care;
To poach an egg already yet
Is easy everywhere;
But he who'll teach it etiquette—
He is a genius rare.

"'So if *you* say the Earth is round
We think it must be so.
Your reasoning's so very sound,
Columbus don't you know.
Come wizard, take your half-a-pound
Before you homeward go.'"

Whistlebinkie began to fidget again and his breath came in little short squeaks.

"But I don't see," he began. "It didn't prove——"

"Wait!" said the Unwiseman. "Don't you try to get in ahead of the finish. Here's the last verse, and it covers your ground.

"And thus it was, O children dear,
Who gather at my knee,
Columbus showed the Earth the sphere
It since has proved to be;
Though how the Egg trick made it clear,
I'm blest if I can see."

"Well I'm glad you put that last voyse in," said Whistlebinkie, "because I don't see either." [Pg 225]

"Oh—I guess they thought a man who could train an egg to stand up was a pretty smart man," said Mollie, "and they didn't want to dispute with him."

"I shouldn't be surprised if that was it," said the Unwiseman. "I noticed too in the picture that Columbus was about twice as big as any of the wise-men, and maybe that had something to do with it too. Anyhow, he was pretty smart."

"Is that all you wrote?" asked Whistlebinkie.

"No," said the Unwiseman. "I did another little one called 'I Wonder.' There are a lot of things the histories don't tell you anything about, so I've put 'em all in a rhyme as a sort of hint to people who are going to write about him in the future. It goes like this:

"When Christopher Columbus came ashore,
The day he landed in Americor
I wonder what he said when first he tried
Down in the subway trains to take a ride?

"When Christopher Columbus went up town
And looked the country over, up and down,
I wonder what he thought when first his eye
Was caught by the sky-scrapers in the sky? [Pg 226]

"When Christopher put up at his hotel
And first pushed in the button of his bell
And upward came the boy who orders takes,

I wonder if he ordered buckwheat cakes?

"When Christopher went down to Washington
To pay his call the President upon
I wonder if the President felt queer
To know that his discoverer was here?

"I wonder when his slow-poke caravels
Were tossed about by heavy winds and swells,
If he was not put out and mad to spy
The ocean steamers prancing swiftly by?"

"I don't know about other people," said the Unwiseman, "but little things like that always interest me about as much as anything else, but there's nary a word about it in the papers, and as far as my memory is concerned when he first came I was too young to know much about what was going on. I do remember a big parade in his honor, but I think that was some years after the discovery."

"I guess it was," said Mollie, with a laugh. "There wasn't anything but Indians there when he arrived."

"Really? How unfortunate—how very unfortunate," said the Unwiseman. "To think that on the few occasions that he came here he should meet only Indians. Mercy! What a queer idea of the citizens of the United States he must have got. Really, Mollie, I don't wonder that instead of settling down in New York, or Boston, or Chicago, he went back home again to live. Nothing but Indians! Well, well, well!" [Pg 227]

And the Unwiseman wandered moodily back to his carpet-bag.

"With so many nice people living in America," he sighed, "it does seem too bad that he should meet only Indians who, while they may be very good Indians indeed, are not noted for the quality of their manners."

And so the little party passed over the sea, and I did not meet with them again until I reached the pier at New York and discovered the Unwiseman struggling with the Custom House Inspectors.

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# XIV. [Pg 228]

## AT THE CUSTOM HOUSE

"Hi there—where are you going with that carpet-bag?" cried a gruff voice, as the Unwiseman scurried along the pier, eager to get back home as speedily as possible after the arrival of the steamer at New York.

"Where do you suppose I'm going?" retorted the Unwiseman, pausing in his quick-step march back to the waiting arms of his kitchen-stove. "Doesn't look as if I was walkin' off to sea again, does it?"

"Come back here with that bag," said the man of the gruff voice, a tall man with a shiny black moustache and a blue cap with gold trimmings on his head.

"What, me?" demanded the Unwiseman.

"Yes, you," said the man roughly. "What business have you skipping out like that with a carpet-bag as big as a house under your arm?"

"It's my bag—who's got a better right?" retorted the Unwiseman. "I bought and paid for it with my own money, so why shouldn't I walk off with it?"

"Has it been inspected?" demanded the official.

"It don't need to be—there ain't any germans in it," said the Unwiseman.

"Germans?" laughed the official.

"Yes—Mike robes—you know——" continued the Unwiseman.

"O, you mean germs," said the official. "Well, I didn't say disinfected. I said inspected. You can't lug a bag like that in through here without having it examined, you know. What you got in it?"

**THE UNWISEMAN LOOKED THE OFFICIAL COLDLY IN THE EYE**

The Unwiseman placed his bag on the floor of the pier and sat on it and looked the other coldly in the eye.

"Who are you anyhow?" he asked. "What right have you to ask me such impident questions as, What have I got in this bag?"

"Well in private life my name's Maginnis," said the official, "but down here on this dock I'm Uncle Sam, otherwise the United States of America, that's who."

The Unwiseman threw his head back and roared with laughter. [Pg 229]

[Pg 230]

"I do not mean to be rude, my dear Mr. Maginnis," he said, "but I really must say Tutt, Tush, Pshaw and Pooh. I may even go so far as to say Pooh-pooh—which is twice as scornful as just plain pooh. *You* Uncle Sam? You must think I'm as green as apples if you think I'll believe that."

"It is true nevertheless," said the official sternly, "and unless you hand over that bag at once——"

"Well I know better," said the Unwiseman angrily. "Uncle Sam has a red goatee and you've got nothing but a shiny black moustache that looks like a pair of comic eyebrows that have slipped and slid down over your nose. Uncle Sam wears a blue swallow-tail coat with brass buttons on it, and a pair of red and white striped trousers like a peppermint stick, and you've got nothin' but an old pea-jacket and blue flannel pants on, and as for the hat, Uncle Sam wears a yellow beaver with fur on it like a coon-cat, while that thing of yours looks like a last summer's yachtin' cap spruced up with brass. You're a very smart man, Mr. Maginnis, but you can't fool an old traveller [Pg 231] like me. I've been to Europe, I have, and I guess I know the difference between a fire-engine and a clothes horse. Uncle Sam indeed!"

"I must inspect the contents of that bag," said the official firmly. "If you resist it will be confiscated."

"I don't know what confiscated means," returned the Unwiseman valiantly, "but any man who goes through this bag of mine goes through me first. I'm sittin' on the lock, Mr. Maginnis, and I don't intend to move—no, not if you try to blast me away. A man's carpet-bag is his castle and don't you forget it."

"What's the matter here?" demanded a policeman, who had overheard the last part of this little quarrel.

"Nothing much," said the Unwiseman. "This gentleman here in the messenger boy's clothes says he's the President o' the United States, Congress, the Supreme Court, and the Army and Navy, all rolled into one, thinking that by so doing he can get hold of my carpet-bag. That's all. Anybody can see by lookin' at him that he ain't even the Department of Agriculture. The United States [Pg 232] Government! Really it makes me laugh."

Here the Unwiseman grinned broadly, and the Policeman and the official joined in.

"He's a new kind of a smuggler, officer," said Mr. Maginnis, "or at least he acts like one. I caught him trotting off with that bag under his arm, and he refuses to let me inspect it."

"I ain't a smuggler!" retorted the Unwiseman indignantly.

"You'll have to let him look through the bag, Mister," said the Policeman. "He's a Custom House Inspector and nobody's allowed to take in baggage of any sort that hasn't been inspected."

"Is that the law?" asked the Unwiseman.

"Yep," said the Policeman.

"What's the idea of it?" demanded the Unwiseman.

"Well the United States Government makes people pay a tax on things that are made on the other side," explained the Inspector. "That's the way they make the money to pay the President's salary and the other running expenses of the Government."

"Oh—that's it, eh?" said the Unwiseman. "Well you'd ought to have told me that in the beginning. [Pg 233] I didn't know the Government needed money to pay the President. I thought all it had to do was to print all it needed. Of course if the President's got to go without his money unless I help pay, I'll be only too glad to do all I can to make up the amount you're short. He earns every penny of it, and it isn't fair to make him wait for it. About how much do you need to even it up? I've only got four dollars left and I'm afraid I'll have to use a little of it myself, but what's left over you're welcome to, only I'd like the President to know I chipped in. How much does he get anyhow?"

"Seventy-five thousand dollars," said the Inspector.

"And there are 80,000,000 people in the country, ain't there?" asked the Unwiseman.

"About that?" said the Inspector.

"So that really my share comes to—say four and a quarter thousandths of a cent—that it?" demanded the Unwiseman.

"Something like that," laughed the Inspector.

"Well then," said the Unwiseman, taking a copper coin from his pocket, "here's a cent. Can you [Pg 234] change it?"

"We don't do business that way," said the Inspector impatiently. "We examine your baggage and tax that—that's all. If you refuse to let us, we confiscate the bag, and fine you anywhere from $100 to $5000. Now what are you going to do?"

"What he says is true," said the Policeman, "and I'd advise you to save trouble by opening up the bag."

"O well of course if *you* say so I'll do it, but I think it's mighty funny just the same," said the Unwiseman, rising from the carpet-bag and handing it over to the Inspector. "In the first place it's not polite for an entire stranger to go snooping through a gentleman's carpet-bag. In the second place if the Secretary of the Treasury hasn't got enough money on hand when pay-day comes around he ought to state the fact in the newspapers so we citizens can hustle around and raise it for him instead of being held up for it like a highwayman, and in the third place it's very extravagant to employ a man like Mr. Maginnis here for three dollars a week or whatever he [Pg 235] gets, just to collect four and a quarter thousandths of a cent. I don't wonder there ain't any money in the treasury if that's the way the Government does business."

So the inspection of the Unwiseman's carpet bag began. The first thing the Inspector found upon opening that wonderful receptacle was "French in Five Lessons."

"What's that?" he asked.

"That's a book," replied the Unwiseman. "It teaches you how to talk French in five easy lessons."

"What did you pay for it?" asked the Inspector.

"I didn't pay anything for it," said the Unwiseman. "I found it."

"What do you think it's worth?" queried the Inspector.

"Nothing," said the Unwiseman. "That is, all the French I got out of it came to about that. It may have been first class looking French, but when I came to use it on French people they didn't seem to recognize it, and it had a habit of fading away and getting lost altogether, so as far as I'm concerned it ain't worth paying duty on. If you're going to tax me for that you can confisticate it [Pg 236] and throw it at the first cat you want to scare off your back-yard fence."

"What's this?" asked the Inspector, taking a small tin box out of the bag.

"Ginger-snaps, two bananas and an eclair," said the Unwiseman. "I shan't pay any duty on them because I took 'em away with me when I left home."

"I don't know whether I can let them in duty-free or not," said the Inspector, with a wink at the Policeman.

"Well I'll settle that in a minute," said the Unwiseman, and reaching out for the tin-box in less than two minutes he had eaten its contents. "You can't tax what ain't, can you?" he asked.

"Of course not," said the Inspector.

"Well then those ginger-snaps ain't, and the bananas ain't and the eclair ain't, so there you are," said the Unwiseman triumphantly. "Go on with your search, Uncle Sammy. You haven't got much towards the President's salary yet, have you!"

The Inspector scorned to reply, and after rummaging about in the bag for a few moments, he [Pg 237] produced a small box of macaroni.

"I guess we'll tax you on this," he said. "What is it?"

"Bait," said the Unwiseman.

"I call it macaroni," said the Inspector.

"You can call it what you please," said the Unwiseman. "I call it bait—and it's no good. I can dig better bait than all the macaroni in the world in my back yard. I fish for fish and not for Eye-talians, so I don't need that kind. If I can't keep it without paying taxes for it, confisticate it and eat it yourself. I only brought it home as a souvenir of Genoa anyhow."

"I don't want it," said the Inspector.

"Then give it to the policeman," said the Unwiseman. "I tell you right now I wouldn't pay five cents to keep a piece of macaroni nine miles long. Be careful the way you handle that sailor suit of mine. I had it pressed in London and I want to keep the creases in the trousers just right the way the King wears his."

"Where did you buy them?" asked the Inspector, holding the duck trousers up in the air.

"Right here in this town before I stole on board the *Digestic*," said the Unwiseman. [Pg 238]

"American made, are they?" asked the Inspector.

"Yes," said the Unwiseman. "You can tell that by lookin' at 'em. They're regular canvas-back ducks with the maker's name stamped on the buttons."

Closer inspection of the garment proved the truth of the Unwiseman's assertion and the Inspector proceeded.

"Didn't you make any purchases abroad?" he asked. "Clothes or jewels or something?"

"I didn't buy any clothes at all," said the Unwiseman. "I did ask the price of a Duke's suit and a Knight gown, but I didn't buy either of them. You don't have to pay duty on a request for information, do you?"

"You are sure you didn't buy any?" repeated the Inspector.

"Quite sure," said the Unwiseman. "A slight misunderstanding with the King combined with a difference of opinion with his tailor made it unnecessary for me to lay in a stock of royal raiment. And the same thing prevented my buying any jewels. If I'd decided to go into the Duke business I [Pg 239] probably should have bought a few diamond rings and a half a dozen tararas to wear when I took breakfast with the roil family, but I gave that all up when I made up my mind to remain a farmer. Tararas and diamond rings kind of get in your way when you're pulling weeds and planting beets, so why should I buy them?"

"How about other things?" asked the Inspector. "You say you've been abroad all summer and haven't bought anything?"

"I didn't say anything of the sort," said the Unwiseman. "I bought a lot of things. In London I bought a ride in a hansom cab, in Paris I bought a ride in a one horse fakir, and in Venice I bought a ride in a Gandyola. I bought a large number of tarts and plates of ice cream in various places. I bought a couple of souvenir postal cards to send to Columbus's little boy. In Switzerland I didn't buy anything because the things I wanted weren't for sale such as pet shammys and Alps and Glaziers and things like that. There's only two things that I can remember that maybe ought to be taxed. One of 'em's an air gun to shoot alps with and the others a big alpen-stock engraved [Pg 240] with a red hot iron showing what mountains I didn't climb. The Alpen-stock I used as a fish pole in Venice and lost it because my hook got stuck in an artist's straw hat, but the air gun I brought home with me. You can tax it if you want to, but I warn you if you do I'll give it to you and then you'll have to pay the tax yourself."

Having delivered himself of this long harangue, the Unwiseman, quite out of breath, sat down on Mollie's trunk and waited for new developments. The Inspector apparently did not hear him, or if he did paid no attention. The chances are that the Unwiseman's words never reached his ears, for to tell the truth his head was hidden way down deep in the carpet-bag. It was all of three minutes before he spoke, and then with his face all red with the work he drew his head from the bag and, gasping for air observed, wonderingly:

"I can't find anything else but a lot of old bottles in there. What business are you in anyhow?" he asked. "Bottles and rags?"

"I am a collector," said the Unwiseman, with a great deal of dignity. [Pg 241]

"Well—after all I guess we'll have to let you in free," said the Inspector, closing the bag with a snap and scribbling a little mark on it with a piece of chalk to show that it had been examined. "The Government hasn't put any tax on old bottles and junk generally so you're all right. If all importers were like you the United States would have to go out of business."

"Junk indeed!" cried the Unwiseman, jumping up wrathfully. "If you call my bottles junk I'd like to know what you'd say to the British Museum. That's a scrap heap, alongside of this collection of mine, and I don't want you to forget it!"

And gathering his belongings together the Unwiseman in high dudgeon walked off the pier while the Inspector and the Policeman watched him go with smiles on their faces so broad that if they'd been half an inch broader they would have met behind their necks and cut their heads off.

"I never was so insulted in my life," said the Unwiseman, as he told Mollie about it in the carriage [Pg 242] going up to the train that was to take them back home. "He called that magnificent collection of mine junk."

"What was there in it?" asked Mollie.

"Wait until we get home and I'll show you," said the Unwiseman. "It's the finest collection of—well just wait and see. I'm going to start a Museum up in my house that will make that British Museum look like cinder in a giant's eye. How did you get through the Custom House?"

"Very nicely," said Mollie. "The man wanted me to pay duty on Whistlebinkie at first, because he thought he was made in Germany, but when he heard him squeak he let him in free."

"I should think so," said the Unwiseman. "There's no German in his squeak. He couldn't get a medium sized German word through his hat. If he could I think he'd drive me crazy. Just open the window will you while I send this wireless message to the President."

"To the President?" cried Mollie.

"Yes—I want him to know I'm home in the first place, and in the second place I want to tell him that the next time he wants to collect his salary from me, I'll take it as a personal favor if he'll come himself and not send Uncle Sam Maginnis after it. I can stand a good deal for my country's sake but when a Custom House inspector prys into my private affairs and then calls them junk just because the President needs a four and a quarter thousandth of a cent, it makes me very, very angry. It's been as much as I could do to keep from saying 'Thunder' ever since I landed, and that ain't the way an American citizen ought to feel when he comes back to his own beautiful land again after three months' absence. It's like celebrating a wanderer's return by hitting him in the face with a boot-jack, and I don't like it." [Pg 243]

The window was opened and with much deliberation the Unwiseman despatched his message to the President, announcing his return and protesting against the tyrannous behavior of Mr. Maginnis, the Custom House Inspector, after which the little party continued on their way until they reached their native town. Here they separated, Mollie and Whistlebinkie going to their home and the Unwiseman to the queer little house that he had left in charge of the burglar at the beginning of the summer. [Pg 244]

"If I ever go abroad again," said the Unwiseman at parting, "which I never ain't going to do, I'll bring a big Bengal tiger back in my bag that ain't been fed for seven weeks, and then we'll have some fun when Maginnis opens the bag!"

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# XV. [Pg 245]

## HOME, SWEET HOME

"Hurry up and finish your breakfast, Whistlebinkie," said Mollie the next morning after their return from abroad. "I want to run around to the Unwiseman's House and see if everything is all right. I'm just crazy to know how the burglar left the house."

"I-mall-ready," whistled Whistlebinkie. "I-yain't-very-ungry."

"Lost your appetite?" asked Mollie eyeing him anxiously, for she was a motherly little girl and took excellent care of all her playthings.

"Yep," said Whistlebinkie. "I always do lose my appetite after eating three plates of oat-meal, four chops, five rolls, six buckwheat cakes and a couple of bananas."

"Mercy! How do you hold it all, Whistlebinkie?" said Mollie.

"Oh—I'm made o'rubber and my stummick is very 'lastic," explained Whistlebinkie.

So hand in hand the little couple made off down the road to the pleasant spot where the Unwiseman's house stood, and there in the front yard was the old gentleman himself talking to his beloved boulder, and patting it gently as he did so. [Pg 246]

**"I'M NEVER GOING TO LEAVE YOU AGAIN, BOLDY," HE WAS SAYING**

"I'm never going to leave you again, Boldy," he was saying to the rock as Mollie and Whistlebinkie came up. "It is true that the Rock of Gibraltar is bigger and broader and more terrible to look at than you are but when it comes right down to business it isn't any harder or to my eyes any prettier. You are still my favorite rock, Boldy dear, so you needn't be jealous." And the old gentleman bent over and kissed the boulder softly.

"Good morning," said Mollie, leaning over the fence. "Whistlebinkie and I have come down to see if everything is all right. I hope the kitchen-stove is well?"

"Well the house is here, and all the bric-a-brac, and the leak has grown a bit upon the ceiling, and the kitchen-stove is all right thank you, but I'm afraid that old burgular has run off with my umbrella," said the Unwiseman. "I can't find a trace of it anywhere."

"You don't really think he has stolen it do you?" asked Mollie. [Pg 247]

"I don't know what to think," said the Unwiseman, shaking his head gravely. "He had first class references, that burgular had, and claimed to have done all the burguling for the very nicest people in the country for the last two years, but these are the facts. He's gone and the umbrella's gone too. I suppose in the burgular's trade like in everything else you some times run across one who isn't as honest as he ought to be. Occasionally you'll find a burgular who'll take things that don't belong to him and it may be that this fellow that took my house was one of that kind—but you never can tell. It isn't fair to judge a man by disappearances, and it is just possible that the umbrella got away from him in a heavy storm. It was a skittish sort of a creature anyhow and sometimes I've had all I could do in windy weather to keep it from running away myself. What do you think of my sign?"

"I don't see any sign," said Mollie, looking all around in search of the object. "Where is it?"

"O I forgot," laughed the old gentleman gaily. "It's around on the other side of the house—come on around and see it." [Pg 248]

The callers walked quickly around to the rear of the Unwiseman's house, and there, hanging over the kitchen door, was a long piece of board upon which the Unwiseman had painted in very crooked black letters the following words:

**THE BRITISH MUSEUM JUNIOR**

Admishun ten cents. Exit fifteen cents.

Burgulars one umbrella.

**THE FINEST COLECTION OF ALPS AND SOFORTHS**

**ON EARTH.**

**CHILDREN AND RUBER DOLLS FREE ON SATIDYS.**

"Dear me—how interesting," said Mollie, as she read this remarkable legend, "but—what does it mean?"

"It means that I've started a British Museum over here," said the Unwiseman, "only mine is going to be useful, instead of merely ornamental like that one over in London. For twenty-five cents a man can get a whole European trip in my Museum without getting on board of a steamer. I only charge ten cents to come in so as to get people to come, and I charge fifteen cents to get out so as to make 'em stay until they have seen all there is to be seen. People get awfully tired travelling abroad, I find, and if you make it too easy for them to run back home they'll go without finishing their trip. I charge burgulars one umbrella to get in so that if my burgular comes back he'll have to make good my loss, or stay out." [Pg 249]

"Why do you let children and rubber dolls in free?" asked Mollie, reading the sign over a second time.

"I wrote that rule to cover you and old Squizzledinkie here," said the old gentleman, with a kindly smile at his little guests. "Although it really wasn't necessary because I don't charge any admission to people who come in the front door and you could always come in that way. That's the entrance to my home. The back-door I charge for because it's the entrance to my museum, don't you see?"

"Clear as a blue china alley," said Whistlebinkie.

"Come in and see the exhibit," said the Unwiseman proudly.

And then as Mollie and Whistlebinkie entered the house their eyes fell upon what was indeed the most marvellous collection of interesting objects they had ever seen. All about the parlor were ranged row upon row of bottles, large and small, each bearing a label describing its contents, with here and there mysterious boxes, and broken tumblers and all sorts of other odd things that the Unwiseman had brought home in his carpet-bag. [Pg 250]

"Bottle number one," said he, pointing to the object with a cane, "is filled with Atlantic Ocean—real genuine briny deep—bottled it myself and so I know there's nothing bogus about it. Number two which looks empty, but really ain't, is full of air from the coast of Ireland, caught three miles out from Queenstown by yours trooly, Mr. Me. Number three, full of dust and small pebbles, is genuine British soil gathered in London the day they put me out of the Museum. 'Tain't much to look at, is it?" he added.

"Nothin' extra," said Whistlebinkie, inspecting it with a critical air after the manner of one who was an expert in soils.

"Not compared to American soil anyhow," said the Unwiseman. "This hard cake in the tin box is a 'Muffin by Special Appointment to the King,'" he went on with a broad grin. "I went in and bought one after we had our rumpus in the bake-shop, just for the purpose of bringing it over here and showing the American people how vain and empty roilty has become. It is not a noble looking object to my eyes." [Pg 251]

"Mine neither," whistled Whistlebinkie. "It looks rather stale."

"Yes," said the Unwiseman. "And that's the only roil thing about it. Passing along rapidly we come soon to a bottleful of the British Channel," he resumed. "In order to get the full effect of that very conceited body of water you want to shake it violently. That gives you some idea of how the water works. It's tame enough now that I've got it bottled but in its native lair it is fierce. You will see the instructions on the bottle."

Sure enough the bottle was labeled as the Unwiseman said with full instructions as to how it must be used.

"Shake for fifteen minutes until it is all roiled up and swells around inside the bottle like a tidal wave," the instructions read. "You will then get a small idea of how this disagreeable body of water behaves itself in the presence of trusting strangers." [Pg 252]

"Here is my bottle of French soil," said the Unwiseman, passing on to the next object. "It doesn't look very different from English soil but it's French all right, as you would see for yourself if it tried to talk. I scooped it up myself in Paris. There's the book—French in Five Lessons—too. That I call 'The French Language,' which shows people who visit this museum what a funny tongue it is. That pill box full of sand is a part of the Swiss frontier and the small piece of gravel next to it is a piece of an Alp chipped off Mount Blanc by myself, so that I know it is genuine. It will give the man who has never visited Swaz—well—that country, a small idea of what an Alp looks like and will correct the notion in some people's minds that an Alp is a wild animal with a long hairy tail and the manners of a lion. The next two bottles contain all that is left of a snow-ball I gathered in at Chamouny, and a chip of the Mer de Glace glazier. They've both melted since I bottled them, but I'll have them frozen up again all right when winter comes, so there's no harm done." [Pg 253]

"What's this piece of broken china on the table?" asked Mollie.

"That is a fragment of a Parisian butter saucer," said the Unwiseman. "One of the waiters fell down stairs with somebody's breakfast at our hotel in Paris one morning while we were there," he explained, "and I rescued that from the debris. It is a perfect specimen of a broken French butter dish."

"I don't think it's very interesting," said Mollie.

"Well to tell you the truth, I don't either, but you've got to remember, my dear, that this is a British Museum and the one over in London is chuck full of broken china, old butter plates and coffee cups from all over everywhere, and I don't want people who care for that sort of thing to

be disappointed with my museum when they come here. Take that plaster statue of Cupid that I bought in Venice—I only got that to please people who care for statuary."

"Where is it?" asked Mollie, searching the room with her eye for the Cupid. [Pg 254]

"I've spread it out through the Museum so as to make it look more like a collection," said the Unwiseman. "I got a tack-hammer as soon as I got home last night and fixed it up. There's an arm over on the mantel-piece. His chest and left leg are there on top of the piano, while his other arm with his left ear and right leg are in the kitchen. I haven't found places for his stummick and what's left of his head yet, but I will before the crowd begins to arrive."

"Why Mr. Me!" protested Mollie, as she gazed mournfully upon the scraps of the broken Cupid. "You didn't really smash up that pretty little statue?"

"I'm afraid I did, Mollie," said the Unwiseman sadly. "I hated to do it, but this is a Museum my dear, and when you go into the museum business you've to do it according to the rules. One of the rules seems to be 'No admission to Unbusted Statuary,' and I've acted accordingly. I don't want to deceive anybody and if I gave even to my kitchen-stove the idea that these first class [Pg 255] museums over in Europe have anything but fractures in them——"

"Fragments, isn't it?" suggested Mollie.

"It's all the same," said the Unwiseman, "Fractures or fragments, there isn't a complete statue anywhere in any museum that I ever saw, and in educating my kitchen-stove in Art I'm going to follow the lead of the experts."

"Well I don't see the use of it," sighed Mollie, for she had admired the pretty little plaster Cupid very much indeed.

"No more do I, Mollie dear," said the Unwiseman, "but rules are rules and we've got to obey them. This is the Grand Canal at Venice," he added holding up a bottle full of dark green water in order to change the subject. "And here is what I call a Hoople-fish from the Adriatic."

"What on earth is a Hoople-fish?" cried Mollie with a roar of laughter as she gazed upon the object to which the Unwiseman referred, an old water soaked strip of shingley wood.

"It is the barrel hoop I caught that day I went fishing from the hotel balcony," explained the Unwiseman. "I wish I'd kept the artist's straw hat I landed at the same time for a Hat-fish to [Pg 256] complete my collection of Strange Shad From Venice, but of course that was impossible. The artist seemed to want it himself and as he had first claim to it I didn't press the matter. The barrel-hoop will serve however to warn Americans who want to go salmon fishing on the Grand Canal just what kind of queer things they'll catch if they have any luck at all."

"What's this?" asked Whistlebinkie, peering into a little tin pepper pot that appeared to contain nothing but sand.

"You must handle that very carefully," said the Unwiseman, taking it in one hand, and shaking some of the sand out of it into the palm of the other. "That is the birth-place of Christopher Columbus, otherwise the soil of Genoa. I brought home about a pail-ful of it, and I'm going to have it put up in forty-seven little bottles to send around to people that would appreciate having it. One of 'em is to go to the President to be kept on the White House mantel-piece in memory of Columbus, and the rest of them I shall distribute to the biggest Museums in each one of the United States. I don't think any State in the Union should be without a bottle of Columbus birth- [Pg 257] place, in view of all that he did for this country by discovering it. There wouldn't have been any States at all of it hadn't been for him, and it strikes me that is a very simple and touching way of showing our gratitude."

"Perfectly fine!" cried Mollie enthusiastically. "I don't believe there's another collection like this anywhere in all the world, do you?" she added, sweeping the room with an eye full of wondering admiration for the genius that had gathered all these marvellous things together.

"No—I really don't," said the Unwiseman. "And just think what a fine thing it will be for people who can't afford to travel," he went on. "For twenty-five cents they can come here and see everything we saw—except a few bogus kings and things like that that ain't really worth seeing—from the French language down to the Venetian Hoople-fish, from an Alp and a Glazier to a Specially Appointed Muffin to the King and Columbus's birth-place. I really think I shall have to advertise it in the newspapers. A Trip Abroad Without Leaving Home, All for a Quarter, at the [Pg 258] Unwiseman's Museum. Alps a Specialty."

"Here's a couple of empty bottles," said Whistlebinkie, who had been snooping curiously about the room.

"Yes," said the Unwiseman. "I've more than that. I'm sorry to say that some of my exhibits have faded away. The first one was filled with London fog, and as you remember I lost that when the cork flew out the day they dejected me from the British Museum. That other bottle when I put the cork in it contained a view of Gibraltar and the African Coast through the port-hole of the steamer, but it's all faded out, just as the bird's-eye view of the horizon out in the middle of the ocean that I had in a little pill bottle did. There are certain things you can't keep even in bottles—but I shall show the Gibraltar bottle just the same. A bottle of that size that once contained that big piece of rock and the African Coast to boot, is a wonderful thing in itself."

In which belief Mollie and Whistlebinkie unanimously agreed.

"Was the kitchen-stove glad to see you back?" asked Whistlebinkie.

[Pg 259]

"Well—it didn't say very much," said the Unwiseman, with an affectionate glance out into the kitchen, "but when I filled it up with coal, and started the fire going, it was more than cordial. Indeed before the evening was over it got so very warm that I had to open the parlor windows to cool it off."

"It's pretty nice to be home again, isn't it," said Mollie.

"Nice?" echoed the old gentleman. "I can just tell you, Miss Mollie Whistlebinkie, that the finest thing I've seen since I left home, finer than all the oceans in the world, more beautiful than all the Englands in creation, sweeter than all the Frances on the map, lovelier than any Alp that ever poked its nose against the sky, dearer than all the Venices afloat—the greatest, most welcome sight that ever greeted my eyes was my own brass front door knob holding itself out there in the twilight of yesterday to welcome me home and twinkling in the fading light of day like a house afire as if to show it was glad to see me back. That's why the minute I came into the yard I took off my hat and knelt down before that old brass knob and kissed it."

The old man's voice shook just a little as he spoke, and a small teardrop gathered and glistened [Pg 260] in a corner of his eye—but it was a tear of joy and content, not of sorrow.

"And then when I turned the knob and opened the door," he went on, "well—talk about your Palaces with all their magnificent shiny floors and gorgeous gold framed mirrors and hall-bedrooms as big as the Madison Square Garden—they couldn't compare to this old parlor of mine with the piano over on one side of the room, the refrigerator in the other, the leak beaming down from the ceiling, and my kitchen-stove peeking in through the door and sort of keeping an eye on things generally. And not a picture in all that 9643 miles of paint at the Loover can hold a candle to my beloved old Washington Crossing the Delaware over my mantel-piece, with the British bombarding him with snow-balls and the river filled to the brim with ice-bergs—no sirree! And best of all, nobody around to leave their aitches all over the place for somebody else to pick up, or any French language to take a pretty little bird and turn it into a wazzoh, or to turn a good honest hard boiled egg into an oof, but everybody from Me myself down to the kitchen-stove [Pg 261] using the good old American language whenever we have something to say and holding our tongues in the same when we haven't."

"Hooray for us!" cried Whistlebinkie, dancing with glee.

"That's what I say," said the Unwiseman. "America's good enough for me and I'm glad I'm back."

"Well I feel the same way," said Mollie. "I liked Europe very much indeed but somehow or other I like America best."

"And for a very good reason," said the Unwiseman.

"What?" asked Mollie.

"Because it's Home," said the Unwiseman.

"I guess-thassit," said Whistlebinkie.

"Well don't guess again, Fizzledinkie," said the Unwiseman, "because that's the answer, and if you guessed again you might get it wrong."

And so it was that Mollie and the Unwiseman and Whistlebinkie finished their trip abroad, and returned better pleased with Home than they had ever been before, which indeed is one of the greatest benefits any of us get out of a trip to Europe, for after all that fine old poet was right [Pg 262] when he said:

"East or West
Home is best."

In closing I think I ought to say that the Unwiseman's umbrella turned up in good order the next morning, and where do you suppose?

Why up on the roof where the kind-hearted burglar had placed it to protect the Unwiseman's leak from the rain!

So he seems to have been a pretty honest old burglar after all.

**THE END.**

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