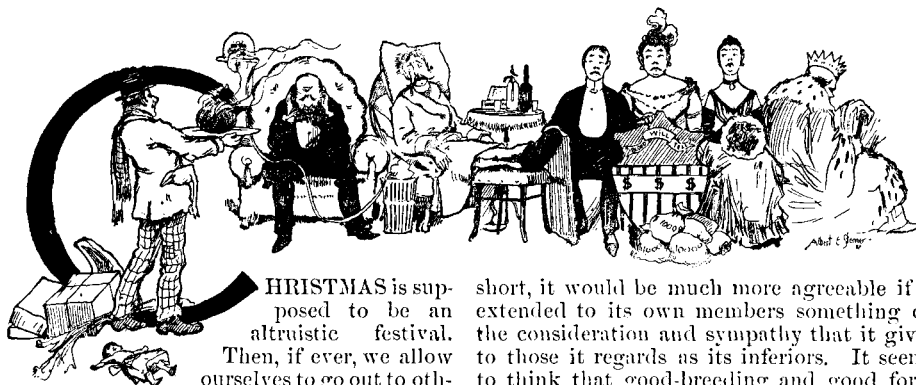


## Editor's Drawer.



CHRISTMAS is supposed to be an altruistic festival. Then, if ever, we allow ourselves to go out to others in sympathy expressed by gifts and good wishes. Then self-forgetfulness in the happiness of others becomes a temporary fashion. And we find—do we not?—the indulgence of the feeling so remunerative that we wish there were other days set apart to it. We can even understand those people who get a private satisfaction in being good on other days besides Sunday. There is a common notion that this Christmas altruistic sentiment is particularly shown toward the unfortunate and the dependent by those more prosperous, and in what is called a better social position. We are exhorted on this day to remember the poor. We need to be reminded rather to remember the rich, the lonely, not-easy-to-be-satisfied rich, whom we do not always have with us. The Drawer never sees a very rich person that it does not long to give him something, some token, the value of which is not estimated by its cost, that should be a consoling evidence to him that he has not lost sympathetic touch with ordinary humanity. There is a great deal of sympathy afloat in the world, but it is especially shown downward in the social scale. We treat our servants—supposing that we are society—better than we treat each other. If we did not, they would leave us. We are kinder to the unfortunate or the dependent than to each other, and we have more charity for them.

The Drawer is not indulging in any indiscriminate railing at society. There is society and society. There is that undefined something, more like a machine than an aggregate of human sensibilities, which is set going in a "season," or at a watering-place, or permanently selects itself for certain social manifestations. It is this that needs a missionary to infuse into it sympathy and charity. If it were indeed a machine and not made up of sensitive personalities, it would not be to its members so selfish and cruel. It would be less an ambitious scramble for place and favor, less remorseless toward the unsuccessful, not so harsh and hard and supercilious. In

short, it would be much more agreeable if it extended to its own members something of the consideration and sympathy that it gives to those it regards as its inferiors. It seems to think that good-breeding and good form are separable from kindness and sympathy and helpfulness. Tender-hearted and charitable enough all the individuals of this "society" are to persons below them in fortune or position, let us allow, but how are they to each other? Nothing can be ruder or less considerate of the feelings of others than much of that which is called good society, and this is why the Drawer desires to turn the altruistic sentiment of the world upon it in this season, set apart by common consent for usefulness. Unfortunate are the fortunate if they are lifted into a sphere which is sapless of delicacy of feeling for its own. Is this an intangible matter? Take hospitality, for instance. Does it consist in astonishing the invited, in overwhelming him with a sense of your own wealth, or felicity, or family, or cleverness even, in trying to absorb him in your concerns, your successes, your possessions, in simply what interests you? However delightful all these may be, it is an offence to his individuality to insist that he shall admire at the point of the social bayonet. How do you treat the stranger? Do you adapt yourself and your surroundings to him, or insist that he shall adapt himself to you? How often does the stranger, the guest, sit in helpless agony in your circle (all of whom know each other) at table or in the drawing-room, isolated and separate, because all the talk is local and personal, about your little world, and the affairs of your clique, and your petty interests, in which he or she cannot possibly join? Ah! the Sioux Indian would not be so cruel as that to a guest. There is no more refined torture to a sensitive person than that. Is it only thoughtlessness? It is more than that. It is a want of sympathy of the heart, or it is a lack of intelligence and broad-minded interest in affairs of the world and in other people. It is this trait—absorption in self—pervading society more or less, that makes it so unsatisfactory to most people in it. Just a want of human interest; people do not come in contact.

Avid pursuit of wealth, or what is called

pleasure, perhaps makes people hard to each other, and infuses into the higher social life, which should be the most unselfish and enjoyable life, a certain vulgarity, similar to that noticed in well-bred tourists scrambling for the seats on top of a mountain coach. A person of refinement and sensibility and intelligence, cast into the company of the select, the country-house, the radiant, twelve-button society, has been struck with infinite pity for it, and asks the Drawer to do something about it. The Drawer cannot do anything about it. It can only ask the prayers of all good people on Christmas Day for the rich. As we said,

we do not have them with us always—they are here to-day, they are gone to Canada to-morrow. But this is, of course, current face-tiousness. The rich are as good as anybody else, according to their lights, and if what is called society were as good and as kind to itself as it is to the poor, it would be altogether enviable. We are not of those who say that in this case charity would cover a multitude of sins, but a diffusion in society of the Christmas sentiment of good-will and kindness to itself would tend to make universal the joy on the return of this season.

CHARLES DUDLEY WARNER.

#### A PETITION TO THE QUEEN OF ENGLAND.

HARTFORD, Nov. 6, 1887.

MADAM: You will remember that last May Mr. Edward Bright, the clerk of the Inland Revenue Office, wrote me about a tax which he said was due from me to the Government on books of mine published in London—that is to say, an income tax on the royalties. I do not know Mr. Bright, and it is embarrassing to me to correspond with strangers; for I was raised in the country and have always lived there, the early part in Marion county Missouri before the war, and this part in Hartford county Connecticut, near Bloomfield and about 8 miles this side of Farmington, though some call it 9, which it is impossible to be, for I have walked it many and many a time in considerably under three hours, and General Hawley says he has done it in two and a quarter, which is not likely; so it has seemed best that I write your Majesty. It is true that I do not know your Majesty personally, but I have met the Lord Mayor, and if the rest of the family are like him, it is but just that it should be named royal; and likewise plain that in a family matter like this, I cannot better forward my case than to frankly carry it to the head of the family itself. I have also met the Prince of Wales once in the fall of 1873, but it was not in any familiar way, but in a quite informal way, being casual, and was of course a surprise to us both. It was in Oxford street, just where you come out of Oxford into Regent Circus, and just as he turned up one side of the circle at the head of a procession, I went down the other side on the top of an omnibus. He will remember me on account of a gray coat with flap pockets that I wore, as I was the only person on the omnibus that had on that kind of a coat; I remember him of course as easy as I would a comet. He looked quite proud and satisfied, but that is not to be wondered at, he has a good situation. And once I called on your Majesty, but you were out.

But that is no matter, it happens with everybody. However, I have wandered a little, away from what I started about. It was this way. Young Bright wrote my London publishers Chatto and Windus—their place is the one on the left as you come down Piccadilly,

about a block and a half above where the minstrel show is—he wrote them that he wanted them to pay income tax on the royalties of some foreign authors, namely, “Miss De La Ramé (Onida), Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, Mr. Francis Bret Harte, and Mr. Mark Twain.” Well, Mr. Chatto diverted him from the others, and tried to divert him from me, but in this case he failed. So then, young Bright wrote me. And not only that, but he sent me a printed document the size of a news paper, for me to sign, all over in different places. Well, it was that kind of a document that the more you study it the more it undermines you and makes everything seem uncertain to you; and so, while in that condition, and really not responsible for my acts, I wrote Mr. Chatto to pay the tax and charge to me. Of course my idea was, that it was for only one year, and that the tax would be only about one per cent or along there somewhere, but last night I met Professor Sloane of Princeton—you may not know him, but you have probably seen him every now and then, for he goes to England a good deal, a large man and very handsome and absorbed in thought, and if you have noticed such a man on platforms after the train is gone, that is the one, he generally gets left, like all those specialists and other scholars who know everything but how to apply it—and he said it was a back tax for three years, and no one per cent, but two and a half!

That gave what had seemed a little matter, a new aspect. I then began to study the printed document again, to see if I could find anything in it that might modify my case, and I had what seems to be a quite promising success. For instance, it opens thus—polite and courteous, the way those English government documents always are—I do not say that to hear myself talk, it is just the fact, and it is a credit:

“TO MR. MARK TWAIN: IN PURSUANCE of the Acts of Parliament for granting to Her Majesty Duties and Profits,” etc.

I had not noticed that before. My idea had been that it was for the Government, and so I wrote to the Government; but now I saw

that it was a private matter, a family matter, and that the proceeds went to yourself, not the Government. I would always rather treat with principals, and I am glad I noticed that clause. With a principal, one can always get at a fair and right understanding, whether it is about potatoes, or continents, or any of those things, or something entirely different; for the size or nature of the thing does not affect the fact; whereas, as a rule, a subordinate is more or less troublesome to satisfy. And yet this is not against them, but the other way. They have their duties to do, and must be harnessed to rules, and not allowed any discretion. Why if your Majesty should equip young Bright with discretion—I mean his own discretion—it is an even guess that he would discretion you out of house and home in 2 or 3 years. He would not *mean* to get the family into straits, but that would be the upshot, just the same. Now then, with Bright out of the way, this is not going to be any Irish question; it is going to be settled pleasantly and satisfactorily for all of us, and when it is finished your Majesty is going to stand with the American people just as you have stood for fifty years, and surely no monarch can require better than that of an alien nation. They do not all pay a British income tax, but the most of them will in time, for we have shoals of new authors coming along every year; and of the population of your Canada, upwards of four-fifths are wealthy Americans, and more going there all the time.

Well, another thing which I noticed in the Document, was an item about "Deductions." I will come to that presently, your Majesty. And another thing was this: that Authors are not mentioned in the Document at all. No, we have "Quarries, Mines, Iron Works, Salt Springs, Alum Mines, Water Works, Canals, Docks, Drains, Levels, Fishings, Fairs, Tolls, Bridges, Ferries," and so forth and so forth and so on—well, as much as a yard or a yard and a half of them, I should think—anyway a very large quantity or number. I read along—down, and down, and down the list, further, and further, and further, and as I approached the bottom my hopes began to rise higher and higher, because I saw that everything in England, *that far*, was taxed by name and in detail, except perhaps the family, and maybe Parliament, and yet still no mention of Authors. Apparently they were going to be overlooked. And sure enough, they were! My heart gave a great bound. But I was too soon. There was a foot note, in Mr. Bright's hand, which said: "You are taxed under Schedule D, section 14." I turned to that place, and found these three things: "Trades, Offices, Gas Works."

Of course, after a moment's reflection, hope came up again, and then certainty: Mr. Bright was in error, and clear off the track; for Authorship is not a Trade, it is an inspiration; Authorship does not keep an Office, its habita-

tion is all out under the sky, and everywhere where the winds are blowing and the sun is shining and the creatures of God are free. Now then, since I have no Trade and keep no Office, I am not taxable under Schedule D, section 14. Your Majesty sees that; so I will go on to that other thing that I spoke of, the "deductions"—deductions from my tax which I may get allowed, under conditions. Mr. Bright says all deductions to be claimed by me must be restricted to the provisions made in Paragraph No. 8, entitled "Wear and Tear of Machinery, or Plant." This is curious, and shows how far he has gotten away on his wrong course after once he has got started wrong: for Offices and Trades do not have Plant, they do not have Machinery, such a thing was never heard of; and moreover they do not wear and tear. You see that, your Majesty, and that it is true. Here is the Paragraph No. 8:

Amount claimed as a deduction for diminished value by reason of Wear and Tear, where the Machinery or Plant belongs to the Person or Company carrying on the Concern, or is let to such Person or Company so that the Lessee is bound to maintain and deliver over the same in good condition:—

Amount £ \_\_\_\_\_

There it is—the very words.

I could answer Mr. Bright thus:

It is my pride to say that my Brain is my Plant; and I do not claim any deduction for diminished value by reason of Wear and Tear, for the reason that it does not wear and tear, but stays sound and whole all the time. Yes, I could say to him, my Brain is my Plant, my Skull is my Workshop, my Hand is my Machinery, and I am the Person carrying on the Concern; it is not leased to anybody, and so there is no Lessee bound to maintain and deliver over the same in good condition. There. I do not wish to any way overrate this argument and answer, dashed off just so, and not a word of it altered from the way I first wrote it, your Majesty, but indeed it does seem to pulverize that young fellow, you can see that yourself. But that is all I say; I stop there; I never pursue a person after I have got him down.

Having thus shown your Majesty that I am not taxable, but am the victim of the error of a clerk who mistakes the nature of my commerce, it only remains for me to beg that you will of your justice annul my letter that I spoke of, so that my publisher can keep back that tax-money which, in the confusion and aberration caused by the Document, I ordered him to pay. You will not miss the sum, but this is a hard year for authors; and as for lectures, I do not suppose your Majesty ever saw such a dull season.

With always great, and ever increasing respect, I beg to sign myself your Majesty's servant to command,

MARK TWAIN.

HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN, LONDON.

# SHOT THROUGH THE HEAD.

A MUSICAL DRAMA OF 1864, AFTER THE FASHION OF A FRENCH VAUDEVILLE.

[WELL FOUNDED ON FACTS.]

BY EDWARD EVERETT HALE.

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## ACT I.

SCENE I.—MESSRS. PEPPER AND MUSTARD'S store.  
(Scene set for a country store.) YOUNG PEPPER,  
solus, behind the counter. To him enters L. H. L.  
E., as from the street, with hat and cane, Mr. FOR-  
TUNE.

*Mr. Fortune.* Good-morning, Harry.

*Young Pepper.* Good-morning, Mr. Fortune.

*Mr. For.* A good day at last—a good day. I think our friends Sickie and Longswath have rain enough this time. Ah, yes! I told them the rain would stop when the moon came into the third quarter. I told Sickie he would get in his oats all right. I know something of the weather, if I do not take the *Country Gentleman* or the *Buckeye Farmer*. Well, Harry, I am thinking of our friends at the front. We must not forget the Boys in Blue.

*Y. P. (much embarrassed).* Oh no, sir! I never forget them.

*Mr. For.* No, my boy, you do not, I know. I wish nobody did. That cursed copperhead Burdick, I met him last night as he came up from the creek. He said to me, "Good-night." And I said to him, "A good-night to all who are not traitors." I wanted none of his impudence.



*Y. P. (still embarrassed).* Did you— Have you— Will you— Shall I put up anything for you?

*Mr. For.* Why, my boy, you did not think I meant you, did you? Why, my poor Harry, I know you would have gone out with Frank, but the surgeon would not pass you. Never you fear, Harry. Peg

away on my friend Pepper's hog and hominy. Yes, Harry, make your mother give you her best cream on your oatmeal. We'll fatten you up. We'll put on an extra inch, and when Frank comes up in the spring to recruit the regiment, I'll squeeze you in somehow. Jove! you shall go, if it is only to pick up the old socks in the camp for the sewing circle to foot them. By Jove, you shall go, Harry!

*Y. P. (more embarrassed).* I hope so. What did you say you wanted?

*Mr. For.* Wanted? I did not say I wanted anything. All the same, I did want some things. Where's my list? My sisters made a list from Frank's last letter. But I have— Where is it? [*Unbuttons vest.*] Well, well, well, I shall remember most of the things. Where is that list? I have left it—yes, I left it on the corn box in the barn, when Jim brought out Griff, and I mounted. Well, no matter for the list. You see we want to send the Captain another box. We must not let the fine fellows go hungry.

*Y. P. (distressed).* No, sir; no, indeed.

*Mr. For.* And I tell you, Harry, hardtack and salt junk is poor picking three times a day. Well, take your own book, and I will tell you. There was cheese, I know. He likes your Dutch cheese better than he does Pamela's home-brew. Jove! so do I, if only I dared tell her so. But Frank does tell her, and she will let Frank do anything. Begin with cheese.

*Y. P. (hesitating).* Yes, sir, cheese.

*Mr. For.* But you do not write. Well, perhaps your head is better than mine. Now I like a list. Well, after cheese, say olives. No, not olives. The olive jars broke the last time, and made a mess of his night-gowns. What I was to say was "no olives." But you keep Bagley's Mayflower, do you not? That will hurt nobody. And what are these cigars? [*Examining.*] And I say, Harry, are there any of those Bordeaux prunes we had last week at the house?

*Y. P. (very nervous).* Oh yes, plenty, sir. But please sit down, sir. [*Comes from behind the counter and places a chair.*] Please wait a moment, sir; I think my father will like to fill your order. He understands about the prunes better than I—or perhaps Mr. Mustard. Excuse me. Let me fetch my pencil myself, and I can take your order. Won't you take a chair? Here's the paper—no, I forgot; my father wants the paper. Here's the Bible—no; you won't care for the Bible. Perhaps you would like the Directory? Excuse me. My father will be here in a moment. [*Exit.*]

*Mr. For. (laughing, steps to the front and addresses audience).* I came for cheese, and he offers me the Bible; I asked for prunes, and he gives me the Directory. [*Sings.*]

I offered the best that I had,

But see what a slip

'Twixt the cup and the lip!

For this very critical lad

Will not look at my greenbacks or scrip;

He despises my greenbacks and scrip.