

The other brother suddenly looked up from his note-book (in which I suspected were inscribed the forty-two-inch streets, the thirty-nine-inch street, and the thirty-seven-and-a-quarter-inch street and the twenty-nine-inch street that were still to be found) and waved his hand at a picture hanging over my head. He laid a bony finger on my knee persuasively.

"Say," he inquired, feverishly, "are you a judge of art?"

Modestly I disclaimed it.

"You know," he continued, "brother and me didn't know nothing about pictures back home, 'cepting bank calendars and harvester advertisements, but when we was in Florence some people told us to go and look at pictures—and you *know*, there's a lot of pictures in Florence; you wouldn't think there'd be so many in one town! We like cows, but there weren't many to speak of—and then, going around, we got so we liked the pictures of a feller named Nabbe. And every day when we was looking at pictures we looked to see if we could find a Nabbe, and sometimes brother'd say to me—'fore we'd looked at the name, 'John, I bet that's a Nabbe!' And we'd go up and look at it, and, sure enough, it would be. We got to feeling right proud."

The sun had come out, and it filled the dingy little drawing-room. Abner, with a glint in his pale-blue eyes, went to the window briskly. Then he called to his brother.

When I last saw the two of them they were hurrying along with mufflers around their throats, and black earmuffs over their ears, with overcoats and goloshes—Abner with a yellow yardstick grasped firmly in his right hand, like a sword, John with a steel tape-measure, the ring and a few inches of tape drawn out for immediate action.

A few weeks later, while engaging passage in a steamship-office in Rome, I found them again.

They greeted me with warmth, with effusion, with affection.

"We're going home," said Abner. "We think we might enjoy sitting around the hardware-store again and telling everybody about the pigeons in Venice that'll eat all the green peas you'll give them, and about the queer things we used to have for dinner in Europe, and about the railroad conductors and the queer money they have here."

"Will you tell them about Nabbe?" I asked.

"We bought a Nabbe," they both exclaimed, and Abner, who usually tried to be spokesman, went on:

"Brother and me talked it over, wondering whether we'd stay a month longer with the money we had, or whether we'd buy something, and we remembered we'd seen a Nabbe for sale in a picture-store in Florence. And so we went back to Florence, and, sure enough, there it was—two cows, and a man with a feather in his hand. And so we're taking it home, to hang in the parlor. Adoniram would think we'd wasted a lot of money, but we ain't just going to tell him how much!"

My friends lingered to chat with me. They were going on an earlier steamer, and I felt that I should never see them again.

"Did you ever find the thirty-inch street?" I asked, as I shook their trembling old hands.

Their faces clouded. "Thirty-one and three-quarters was the best we could do, but we think there must have been one," said Abner. "But when we get home, we're going to haul a lot of stones from up the river and build a wall along the side of the ice-house, *twenty-seven* inches away from it, to remind us of Venice."

A MODERN INSTANCE

BY FRANCIS HACKETT

IT was a carpeted office, with innumerable dusty signed photographs on the walls, uncounted ash-trays, and a general suggestion that hysteria rather than melancholia would be the penalty of its ways.

"You haven't stopped to figure all the money we got to put into it, my boy," the Producer was saying to the Playwright, "but I think we may be able to fix you. Hold on. We ought to call in Sol." A slab pitted with disks was at fat Mr. O'Grady's hand. He leaned over and pressed a disk repeatedly.

A lean man in shirt-sleeves appeared at a side door, where he stood regarding Jim O'Grady with disfavor. "Watcha want?"

"Meet Mr. Quiverlance, Sol."

The lean man came around and gave a cavernous look at the playwright, extending a hairy hand and a hoarse greeting.

"About this play, Sol. Just telling Mr. Quiverlance here we think we may be able to fix it. What do you say? You've read it, 'ain't you?"

"Sure I read it. Tell you frankly, Mr. Quiverlance, I don't see it. It's got a pretty good idea, but it'll take a lot more money than I can see in it now. You 'ain't stopped to consider the investment a thing like this means. It eats up money alive. What do you think we are running, a charitable institution? That cast of yours is a regular Lambs Club. Honest, I don't get your point of view. It's so unnecessary. But I wouldn't be discouraged if I was you. You have lots more talent than lots of people. But this is an impossibility, if you don't mind my being frank."

The Playwright examined Sol with puzzled eyes. Mr. O'Grady saved him the trouble of speaking.

"Lay off, Sol. Easy with the whip. It's all right, Mr. Quiverlance, but you don't realize how these costume plays run into money. We'll come back to that, but first we got to show you where it falls down. How about it?"

Sol pushed out his under lip rather disgustedly. Then he took a chair with his back to the Broadway light. Mr. O'Grady spoke persuadingly:

"Of course you can't hope to get away with this thing as it is. It's utterly im-paw-sible."

"Absopolutely," agreed Sol.

"The heroine passes out in the second act. Ain't that right? How about that, Sol? Pretty funny, eh? Drowns herself in the second act! It's certainly something different, but it can't be pulled off."

"Not paw-sibly," agreed Sol.

"And the hero—his line of talk to her is awful raw. Why does he turn her down, anyway? What has she done? I don't get it, really I don't. You'll lose all the sympathy if he raises Cain like that. That part's got to be toned down a lot. Why wouldn't something like this be better—? Wait, now. I guess we weren't right. After all, Sol, the ingénue can't fall for one of the other courtiers. But why couldn't he fix it so the climax comes along toward the middle of the last act—after the spat with the father? That's the dope. When she gets wise that he's killed, she passes out—see? Hang it onto that. She ditches herself; and then have her brought in just before the curtain."

Sol Katz champed at the exuberant Mr. O'Grady. "That's one item, but would you take a chance on investing in a play with the kind of characterization this has? Would any audience you ever saw be likely to get that hero? What's he driving at? I may be stupid—half the lines don't make sense, to me. Above all, Mr. Quiverlance, you've got to be clear. Why, I can get twenty plays tomorrow I'd love to produce, but they're not clear. You make this fellow out to be sort of a nut—always talking to himself. He doesn't get anywhere, that is the trouble. He's a failure. Who's interested in a failure? I'll tell you very quickly—*nobody*. 'The Fortune Hunter,' 'It Pays to Advertise'—that's what people want to go and see—clever, bright stuff with a fellow who wins in the end. You get me? This thing here—blaa! When it's all said and done—blaa! What you want is a curtain in the last act—a knockout. I took on this thing as promising, Jim, but, frankly, we hadn't ought to touch it."

"Sol, watcha talking about? This has class. If Mr. Quiverlance will work with us right we can make a star play out of it. There's one bit I'm not exactly keen about myself. The 'play within a play'—awful stuff. They're all copying it from the movies. The play's too long, anyway, so that can be canned. But I'm for most of it. Very strong."

Sol arose with some impatience and walked to the window.

"I can't see it. I'm highbrow, too, but what's the object of it? People can't be left in doubt in the theater. They *gotta* be entertained. They're tired, they're worried, they're sore. They want to forget it. You know you do yourself. Maybe a man's had a bad year in business, or took a flier, or lost his mother. One night he says, 'Let's forget our troubles and go and have a nice time in the theater,' and he comes to a show like this. What does he get? He gets a fellow on the stage in trouble like himself, just as tired and worried and sore as he is. And what does the fellow say to help him? He acts just simply rotten. He insults his girl. He sticks her father in the gizzard. He makes a mess of everything, and in the end he gets into a scrap in a graveyard and dies. That's a fine scene for Broadway, a graveyard! It's not common sense in the theater business. You pay a million dollars' rent, and then you give 'em a graveyard scene, skulls and gravediggers and a lot of undertaker talk. People won't stand for it. They get all the funerals they want as it is. Frankly, Mr. Quiverlance, I don't seem to see it."

The dramatist had not opened his lips. He had looked from O'Grady to Katz and from Katz to O'Grady.

"How about it, Mr. Quiverlance?" asked O'Grady. "What's your dope on all this?" And he looked at his watch to see if he could make his train. He had seven minutes. "Too bad—got to beat it. Oh, by the way, that title, 'Hamlet'! Seriously, old man, you got to do better than that. How about

'The Father Who Came Back'? Well, think it over."

And Mr. O'Grady bolted for his train.

BALLADE OF THE MODERN BARD

BY RICHARD LE GALLIENNE

THE day has gone of lovely things,
According to the modern bard;
Of dreariness and dross he sings,
And hymns the homely and the hard,
The sweat-shop and the engine-yard;
Of these he makes his doleful tune,
And plenteous slang doth interlard—
I still prefer to sing the moon.

Dry are the Heliconian springs,
And sere is Enna flower-bestarred;
Speak not of Pegasus his wings,
For all such ancientry is barred;
Yea! feathered shalt thou be and tarred
For such old nonsense in thy rune—
By Héloïse and Abélard!
I still prefer to sing the moon.

Nor dare to speak of queens and kings.
Democracy is now the card;
On the fair Past the poet flings
The flint, the pebble, and the shard;
The gospels of the Savoyard
Have wrought this sansculottish boon:
O for some frankincense and nard!—
I still prefer to sing the moon.

ENVOI

Ah! Prince—or, rather, I mean "pard"—
Let's to our lotus and lagoon,
And call for our Pretorian guard—
I still prefer to sing the moon.

THE CLASSICS AND THE "PRACTICAL" ARGUMENT

BY F. M. COLBY

IF I were a classical scholar, I should not rest my case on what is called the argument from practical life. It may be gratifying if one can cite a dozen bank presidents who are in favor of teaching the elements of Latin and Greek, but it is a short-lived joy. Some one before long will surely cite two dozen bank presidents who are against it. I have just finished reading the fifteenth article