

Bangs John Kendrick

Mollie and the Unwiseman Abroad



John Bangs

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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.

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?"

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.

"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."

"Never-erd-o-sutch-a-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 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 burglars 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."

"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 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 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-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 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.

"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."

"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 –"

"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?"

"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."

"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 Adirondacks, 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."

"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 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 burglars 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," 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."

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.

II 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."

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.

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 ecstasy 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.
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 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 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 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. "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 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.

"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.

"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 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 horizons he ever saw was from ten to forty miles off. There's a 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 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 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 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 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.

III

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 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 burglar 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 burglar stole my kitchen stove. I'd have to eat all my bananas and 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. Burglar:

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 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? 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.

"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 horizon 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 horizon," 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 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.

"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 catterpillar."

"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 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."

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.

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

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

"Askem-something-geezer," 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?"

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.

"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.

"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."

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 today. 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 rather 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.

"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.

IV 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?"

"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."

"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."

"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."

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."

"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.

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.

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 merciful 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?"

"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.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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