

Tucholsky Wagner Zola Scott
Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydon Freud Schlegel
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen
Weber Freiligrath Frey
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliasberg Eliot Zweig Ebner Eschenbach
Feuerbach Maximilian I. von Habsburg Fock Ewald Vergil
Goethe Elisabeth von Österreich London
Mendelssohn Balzac Shakespeare Rathenau Dostojewski Ganghofer
Trackl Stevenson Lichtenberg Doyle Gjellerup
Mommsen Thoma Tolstoi Lenz Hambruch Droste-Hülshoff
Dach Thoma von Arnim Hägele Hanrieder Hauptmann Humboldt
Karrillon Reuter Verne Rousseau Hagen Hauff Baudelaire Gautier
Garschin Defoe Hebbel Hegel Kussmaul Herder
Damaschke Descartes Schopenhauer Bebel Proust
Wolfram von Eschenbach Darwin Dickens Grimm Jerome Rilke George
Bronner Campe Horváth Aristoteles Voltaire Federer Herodot
Bismarck Vigny Gengenbach Barlach Heine Grillparzer Georgy
Storm Casanova Lessing Langbein Gilm Gryphius
Chamberlain Schiller Lafontaine Iffland Sokrates
Brentano Strachwitz Katharina II. von Rußland Bellamy Schilling Kralik Raabe Gibbon Tschchow
Vulpius
Löns Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Wilde Gleim Morgenstern Goedicke
Luther Heym Hofmannsthal Klee Hölty Homer Kleist Mörike Musil
Roth Heyse Klopstock Puschkin Horaz Kraus
Luxemburg La Roche Kierkegaard Kraft Kraus Moltke
Machiavelli Navarra Aurel Musset Lamprecht Kind Kirchhoff Hugo Liebknecht
Nestroy Marie de France Laotse Ipsen Ringelnatz
Nietzsche Marx Nansen Lassalle Gorki Klett Leibniz Irving
von Ossietzky May vom Stein Lawrence Knigge Kock Kafka
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White Ashes

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TO
NATALIE STANTON KENNEDY
THIS BOOK
IS INSCRIBED BY THE AUTHORS
SIDNEY R. KENNEDY
ALDEN C. NOBLE

WHITE ASHES

CHAPTER I

On the top floor of one of the lesser office buildings in the insurance district of lower New York, a man stood silent before a map desk on which was laid an opened map of the burned city. No other man was in the office, for this was on a Sunday; but it would not have mattered to the man at the map had the big room presented its usual busy appearance. All that went on about him would have passed his notice; he only gazed stolidly from the map to the newspaper with flaring headlines, and from newspaper back to map, trying to gauge the measure of his calamity.

The morning papers had been able to print nothing save the bare facts that the fire had started near a large hotel, had spread with appalling rapidity to the adjacent buildings, and getting beyond the control of the fire department was sweeping southward under a wind of thirty miles an hour. The afternoon extras, however, gave fuller—and graver—details. The central business section of the city was entirely in ruins, and the conflagration had as yet shown no sign of a stay.

Sunday though it was, in many of the greater insurance offices on William Street the executives had gathered and were endeavoring to calculate the effect of this catastrophe on their assets.

But in the office on the top floor, where the man stood alone, there was no longer any doubt. Whether the fire was checked or whether it swept onward mattered now to him not at all; he was looking into the eyes of ruin utter and absolute. . . . But this, perhaps, is premature, since before this day was to arrive much water was to flow under many bridges, and it is with the flowing of some of that water that this story has to deal.

About five o'clock, Charles Wilkinson called, as he often did, through inclinations in which the gastronomic and the amatory were about evenly divided. Long since, after a series of titanic but perfectly hopeless struggles, he had abandoned all direct attempts to borrow money from his opulent step-uncle; subsequent efforts to achieve indirectly the same result by a myriad of methods admirably subtle and of marked ingenuity had resulted only in equal failure. To be sure, there had never been any really valid reason why his endeavors should have been successful unless as compensation for years of patient labor. He conceived his esteemed relation as a sort of safe-deposit box, to a share of whose contents he was entitled if he could contrive to open it. Farther back in the quest, he had approached Mr. Hurd with the dash and confidence of a successful burglar, but of late the pursuit had lapsed to a mere occasional half-hearted fumble at the combination.

However, he often came to tea. Tea was something—tangibly of no great importance, but from Wilkinson's viewpoint a sop to his self-respect in the reflection that he was getting it from old man Hurd. Besides, it kept the proximity established. Charles was as simple an optimist as a frankly predatory young man could be; some day the vault door might quite unexpectedly swing open, and it would be highly desirable to be close at hand and to have an intimate knowledge of the exits. Mr. Hurd was his only rich relation, and the step-nephew clung to him with tentacles of despair.

Tea at John M. Hurd's was something,—comparatively a more vital factor to Wilkinson, who lived in a cheap boarding house, than to its other partakers,—and Isabel Hurd was something more.

He felt a sincere admiration for Isabel, and his admiration had the substantial foundation of real respect. It happened that his step-cousin was what is kindly called a nice girl, but Wilkinson's regard passed hurriedly across any pleasing personal qualities she might have possessed. To him she was the daughter of a magnate who lived in a large house on Beacon Street and whose traction company gave its stockholders (whatever else might be said of its passengers) very little cause for complaint. To a young man whose creditors would have harried him nearly mad but for the fact that for several years past he had been able to secure scarcely any credit from any

one, Isabel assumed the calm and quiet attractiveness of a well-managed national bank. And had she seriously considered marrying him, she could have confidently relied on his loyalty so long as Mr. Hurd could sign his name to a check. This reflection might not have been a flattering one to her, but it should have been a comforting one. Had it been beauty that first attracted him, he might have wavered after the freshness faded, but the chance that the Massachusetts Light, Heat, and Traction Company would be obliged to discontinue its liberal dividends was so remote as to be negligible. And Wilkinson, at all events, was consistent.

Barnes, the stout butler, assisted him to remove his overcoat and took his hat, and he stepped unannounced into the drawing room.

John M. Hurd's drawing room reflected the substance of its master in so far that it appeared to represent lavish resources. In the rather dim light, the deep rose tapestry curtains, the really beautiful rugs on the highly polished floor, the heavy, stately furniture, and the big central crystal chandelier all made for dignity. Even the broad-framed pictures on the wall, although there were two or three old masters among them, looked above suspicion. Miss Hurd was seated near the window, talking to two young men who seemed on terms of informality in the house.

"Shall we have tea?" she asked, when her step-cousin had seated himself.

"By all means—but I hope you don't mean it literally," replied Wilkinson, promptly. "Tea, by all means, if necessary to preserve the conventionalities, but especially anything and everything else you like." He turned to Bennington Cole. "I feel rather proud of my success in this establishment, Benny. A year ago Isabel would have handed you out nothing except a couple of anemic sugar wafers with the cup; now you can get English muffins and all kinds of sandwiches and *éclairs*—which is at least a little better."

"Congratulate you," said Cole, with a laugh.

"Oh, I haven't finished," Wilkinson went on. "The next step in my missionary movement will be a popular demand for chicken salad. That's a big forward step—you eat it with a fork—and from there it will be an easy gradation up the *carte du jour* until finally I triumph

in the introduction of real food, so that when you ask for tea in this house you will get a full portion of porterhouse steak and French fried potatoes. But don't think me hypercritical, Isabel," he added. "Even now I can usually manage to part from you without reeling, faint with hunger, down your front steps and collapsing at their feet—I should say foot."

"I'm extremely relieved to hear you say so," replied the girl.

The third young man, who alone of the three wore a frock coat, and who retained on his hand his left glove while his right was laid smoothly across his knee, now entered the conversation.

"You talk as though you were really hungry, Charlie," he said.

"Well, I am, rather," the other rejoined. "And I can tell you, Stan, that if you lived in my boarding house, you never could have completed that charming still-life effect of the platter of fish that I recently saw in your studio. You would have eaten your model before you could have finished the picture."

"Why don't you change your boarding house, Charlie, if it's so bad?" Miss Hurd inquired.

"I did," her cousin replied. "Of boarding houses within my sadly circumscribed means there is a very wide but strictly numerical choice. They are all exactly alike, you understand. I changed once, twice, twenty, forty times. I grew positively dizzy caroming from one inferior boarding house to another. You would have thought I was trying a peripatetic preventative for dyspepsia. Finally the mental strain of remembering where to go home at night became so irksome that I decided to leave bad enough alone and stay where I was—one eleven Mount Vernon Place—at the sign of the three aces. It's no worse, you see, than anywhere else—it's merely a matter of living down to my painfully limited income. But," he added thoughtfully, "I sincerely wish some philanthropist would put me to the trouble of moving again."

The two men laughed at Wilkinson's frank exposition, but his cousin frowned a little.

"I wish father would do something for you," she said. "There are so many things he could do if he chose."

"He was good enough to offer me a job as conductor on one of his street cars, the last time I mentioned the subject," the other responded cheerfully. "But I told him that the company's system of espionage was reputed to be so nearly perfect that I doubted whether I could make the position pay—that is, pay as it ought. And you know, Isabel," he added, "that with all due respect to my esteemed relation, he's exceedingly awkward to get anything out of. Can either of you gentlemen," he turned to the others, "suggest anything along these lines? I would be willing to pay a liberal commission."

"Well," said the painter, "if he wanted to buy a Caneletto cheap, I know where you could pick one up for him. It would rather damage my reputation to recommend him to buy it, but you could do it all right, Charlie. Guaranteed authentic by European experts—they're easily fixed. And if he didn't like the Caneletto, you could get him a very fair Franz Hals—by the same artist."

Miss Hurd, whose feelings had not been in the least lacerated by the reference to her parent's notable eccentricity of retentiveness, but who had been amused at the suggestion, interposed.

"I'm afraid it couldn't be done," she said. "Louis von Glauber passes on every picture that father buys."

"That settles *that*, then," Pelgram rejoined.

"Well, Benny, anything to suggest?" Wilkinson inquired.

"I don't know," said Cole, slowly. The germ of an idea had flashed on him. "I don't know," he repeated. The impecunious one regarded him attentively.

"My dear Benny, an unconvincing prevarication is of less practical value than—" he began, but he was interrupted by the appearance of a young lady who came through the doorway.

The three men rose quickly, and even the languid face of Stanwood Pelgram took on a look of a little sharper interest than he had so far shown. From the tea table Miss Hurd cordially greeted the newcomer.

"Tea, Helen?" she asked. "You're quite late. What have you been doing?"

"Thank you, Isabel," the other replied. "Quite strong, and with sugar and lemon—both." She sat down and commenced to pull off her long gloves. "I've been helping Cousin Henrietta Lyons select wall papers for her new apartment. I still live, but I've had a very trying time."

"Was it so difficult?" Bennington Cole asked politely. He did not know her very well.

"Well," responded Miss Maitland, "I can think of nothing more difficult than selecting wall papers—excepting, perhaps, Cousin Henrietta Lyons. As I picked out her papers, I think I'm entitled to abuse her," she explained with some feeling. "Wall papers in themselves are bad enough." She paused.

"Well, they ought to be," Wilkinson cheerfully put in, adroitly diverting the attack from Miss Lyons. "I understand that most of them are designed by individuals who have failed to succeed as sign painters on account of color-blindness, or by draughtsmen who have lost their positions because of the paramount influence of epilepsy on their work."

"I should estimate that they have about twenty-eight thousand samples at Heminway and Shipman's," the girl continued. "Cousin Henrietta possesses a fine old spirit of thoroughness which made it necessary for us to see them all. We sat on a red plush sofa while a truly affable young man kept flopping the sheets of samples over the back of an easel. That is, he was truly affable for an hour or two; after that he grew a little reticent. At first some of the samples interested me. There was one design of a row of cockatoos, each one standing on a wreath of lilacs, that was fascinating, and I liked one that looked like a flock of nectarines hiding in the interstices of a steam radiator. The young man made encouraging suggestions at first, but at the last, scarcely,—although I was so nearly stupefied that I doubt whether I would have heard him even if he had said what he really thought." She took up her cup. "But the walk here did me a lot of good—I walked fast."

"Where your cousin made her mistake," Wilkinson observed, "was in going in for wall papers at all. She should have abandoned the idea of papering her walls, and retained our talented friend, Stanwood Pelgram, to paint them, instead. A splendid conception! How I should like to have attended the pirate view of Miss Lyons's flat, when the last coat of distemper had dried on the parlor ceiling and Stanwood had put the affectionate finishing touches on the decorative panel portrait of Lucretia Borgia in the oval above the kitchen stove! The whole thing would have been a magnificent and unusual symbol of the triumph of paint over paper—a new and vivid illustration of the practical value of true art."

"Oh, nonsense, Charlie!" said Pelgram, much annoyed at being made the rather vulnerable subject of Wilkinson's humor.

His tormentor was delighted at perceiving his victim writhe and went gayly on.

"But unhappily our Stanwood is so impractical. Probably he would have declined the commission. Atmospheric envelopes slowly en route to the dead letter office of dream pastels demand his whole attention. Painting is crass; he mildly cameos. Tonal nuances—shades of imperceptible difference in the shadowy debatable land between things colored exactly alike—claim his earnest interpretation. When he rarely speaks, it is usually an important contribution to the world's artistic knowledge on some such subject as 'The Influence of Rubens' Grandmother on his Portraits of his Second Wife' or 'The True Alma Mater of Alma Tadema.'"

The artist, whose round smooth face was pink with rage, almost choked, but was wholly unable to reply. That he should be made the gross butt of a man such as Wilkinson was bad enough, but that this should take place in the presence of ladies—and especially of Helen Maitland—was almost unendurable.

Miss Maitland, seeing the flames approaching the magazine with alarming rapidity, hastily started a back-fire, adapting Wilkinson's style to her purpose with a success which—repartee not being her strongest point—astonished even herself.

"Charlie's views on art," she said to the smoldering Pelgram, "are always interesting because they are so wholly free and natural.

Most art critics are checked and biased by having studied their subject and formed certain fixed impressions which are bound to come to the surface in their criticisms; some critics are influenced by having gone so far as to look at meritorious pictures in an endeavor to analyze and appreciate them intelligently; but Charlie labors under no such restraints. Once he went into the Louvre, but it was to get out of the rain. Except for an acute sense of smell, he could not detect an oil painting from a water color, even if he should try; and except for an abnormal self-confidence he would hesitate in the first step of criticism—a careful consideration of the value of the canvas as compared with that of the frame. It is therefore because Charlie is the only self-admitted art critic who knows nothing whatever of the subject, that his opinions are so interesting, for they are sure to be absolutely impartial and free from all bias of every kind. But where he heard of Alma Tadema is a puzzle to me, unless that name has been utilized by the manufacturer of some new tooth powder or popular cigar that has failed to attract my notice in the street car advertisements," she concluded thoughtfully.

The harassed artist turned with a look of almost abject canine gratitude toward his defender. Intervention from any source was welcome, but Miss Maitland's unexpected appearance as his belligerent partisan lifted him with a single swing from the abysmal humiliation of ridicule to the highest summit of hope. Helen had always been polite to him, but never before had she warmed to his outspoken defense. She had usually expressed an interest in his work, but as a matter of fact some of it was worthy of her quite impersonal interest. In his own set, men accustomed to formulate their opinions with complete independence and considerable shrewdness frequently remarked that Stan was an awful ass, but he could paint some. This was the common last analysis, the degree of qualifying favor being measured in each case by the comparative pause between the last two words and the accent and inflection upon the ultimate.

And even among those who considered Pelgram's asinine qualities plainly predominant, there was an admission of his certain artistic readiness, a cleverness in his grouping, a superficial dexterity in his brush work, a smartness and facility in the method of his pursuit of false gods. The irrepressible Wilkinson had struck true to

the mark of his weaknesses, but something could well be said for the unhappy poseur in whom his shaft had quivered. Some one had observed that Pelgram regarded the appearance of his person and of his studio as of more serious importance than that of his canvases, but his commissions withal came in sufficient numbers to permit his extensive indulgence in bodily and domestic adornment. Granting him to be an ass, he certainly was a reasonably successful one, and he was even generally held to be a talented one.

For all his work was cursed by his indecision, he was surprisingly steady along the line of personal relations. At one time he would devote himself wholly to the production of exotic-looking pastels; at another time to nothing but the strangest of nocturnes in which the colors were washed on in a kind of sauce so thin that the frames, instead of being placed on easels, had to be laid flat on table tops in order to keep the pictures from running off their canvases onto the floor while being painted. But with people, his first likes and dislikes were definite and usually final, and this quality of personal consistency had come to a fixed focus on Helen Maitland.

Helen, for her part, had never given him any other encouragement than to express her approval of some of his pictures that she honestly liked, but Pelgram needed no other encouragement. His cosmos bulged with ego of such density that he and his pastels and nocturnes were crowded together in it indistinguishably. Admiration of his work was necessarily admiration of himself. It was only a question of degree. With an extraordinary manifestation of good taste and common sense, amounting almost to inspiration, he had some time since decided that he would like to marry Miss Maitland, but his admiration for her was so deep that his self-assurance was shaken to the point of hesitation. Thus far he had not ventured to speak, but his heart bounded at her swift defense of him and her effective attack on Wilkinson.

In the brief pause, while Wilkinson was rallying his forces for another charge on Pelgram's tonal battlements, John M. Hurd entered the room.

Mr. Hurd was a thickset man with a firm, clean-shaven jaw and a face furrowed by deep lines, but with eyes that oddly enough looked comparatively youthful and capable not only of appreciating

humor, but even of manufacturing it. He appeared to be a man who, by the exercise of his pronounced talent for commercial strategy, could drive, without an atom of pity, his opponent into a corner, but who, after penning him there, could take an almost boyish amusement in watching the unfortunate's futile efforts to escape. The magnate was dressed in a dark cutaway coat with gray trousers, a pear-shaped turquoise pin adorned his black tie, and his dress fully reflected the solid respectability of the directors' meeting from which he had just come.

He took up his position, standing with his back to the window, stirring the sugar in the cup of tea which his daughter had given him. His entrance had snapped the tension between his impeccable step-nephew and the painter.

"Well, how are you all?" he remarked genially. "Really, Isabel, you have quite a salon. How is the portrait going, Helen?—or should I have asked the artist and not the subject? Glad to see you, Cole—is the fire insurance business good? Do you know, I made quite a lot of money out of insurance last year—had it figured out recently."

"In what way, sir?" Cole politely inquired, anticipating the answer.

"By not insuring anything," replied Mr. Hurd, with a short laugh. "Hello, Charlie, had a busy day?"

As Wilkinson's extreme disinclination for industry of any legitimate sort was well known to all the party, Mr. Hurd's innocently expressed but barb-pointed question brought a general smile, and Pelgram permitted himself the luxury of a suggestive cough.

"Well, no, Uncle John," replied the young man addressed, half apologetically. "Physically, to-day has been on the whole rather restful; however, my active mind has been running as usual at top speed," he added.

Mr. Hurd felt inclined to concede the activity of his nephew's mind, in so far that he had never known its headlong flight to be delayed by contact with an idea—that is to say, an idea of any particular value. Still, in the presence of the rest he spared his young relative, merely remarking dryly and in a manner intended to create

the impression of closing the incident with the honors on his own side, "I dare say if your mind runs long enough, Charlie, it will eventually be elected."

This rejoinder had no definite meaning, but that fact in itself made any retort comparatively difficult, and Wilkinson merely helped himself in silence to another sandwich.

Presently Bennington Cole announced that he must be going on, as he had an appointment with an out-of-town insurance agent who was leaving Boston that evening, and soon afterward Miss Maitland took her departure, escorted by Pelgram. Then Wilkinson went, having executed as much havoc as he could among the comestibles, and Isabel was left with her father. Mr. Hurd lit a cigar and looked thoughtfully at his daughter.

"Splendid appetite that young feller has," he observed, nodding toward the large tray which stood almost nude of food.

The girl moved a little uneasily in her chair.

"Now, father," she protested, "you shouldn't be so hard on Charlie. He's really in a very embarrassing position. He's never had a chance to show what he could do if he found something he liked and was suited for. He's as clever and amusing as he can be, but he just naturally isn't practical and no one has ever been able to make him so, and you yourself are so absolutely practical in everything that you can't excuse the lack of it in any one else. But he's really all right."

Mr. Hurd looked sharply up, and the lines around his eyes came a little closer together.

"You don't mean that you're interested in him—seriously, do you?" he said.

"Oh, no," replied his daughter. "Not at all—that way."

The traction magnate smiled indulgently, with manifest relief.

"I don't want to criticize your analysis of character, Isabel," he said, "but I think you're dead wrong on one point. In my opinion Mr. Charles Wilkinson is one of the most practical young men of my acquaintance."

Meanwhile Miss Maitland and her companion had crossed the Common, and when they came to Boylston Street the shop windows were all alit and the street lamps began to shine. It was the close of a cool September day, and a sharp wind whipped the skirt of Pelgram's frock coat around his legs and flecked the blood into the girl's cheeks as she stepped briskly westward, swinging along easily while her rather stout and soft escort, patting the walk with his cane, kept up with some little difficulty. As often as he dared, the artist glanced at her, and with hope kindled by gratitude, he thought her never so attractive. And no matter what might be said of the eccentricity of his artistic taste in pursuit of the ideal, his selection of the real was indisputably sound; Miss Maitland was well worth the admiration of any man.

As they came to Portland Street, waiting at the crossing for a motor-car to pass, Pelgram quite suddenly said, "I wish I could paint you here and just as you are looking now."

The girl flushed a little. The compliment was conventional enough, but there was a tone in his voice that she had never heard before and that carried its meaning clearly.

"Thank you. Is it because the atmosphere and background would be so ugly — wind and iron and dead leaves and raw brick walls and hideous advertising signs — and I should seem attractive by comparison?"

Her companion looked thoughtfully ahead, as they crossed the street and went on.

"No, not that," he said, more gravely than usual. "You don't need any comparison, but all this isn't really so bad. Perhaps the things you mention are ugly in themselves, but a certain combination of them caught at a certain moment can well be worthy of a painting, and I think we have that moment now. Beauty makes a more pleasant model for the artist — that is why I would have liked you in the foreground — but beauty is not the only province of art. If it were, no painter, for example, would find anything to occupy him in the foul stream that washes the London wharves — as some critic has said. Yet a great many beautiful pictures have come from the London wharves, and one, at least, could come from Boylston Street."

The girl was interested. Behind his intolerable pastels and nuances and frock coats and superficial pose the man actually had ideas; it was a pity they showed so seldom. And she wished he would confine himself to the abstract. She could tolerate his aerial monologues on art even when his pose seemed to her superficial and almost silly, for occasionally he said something which was not only clever in sound, but which, to her thinking, rang true. But on the personal side he was becoming unpleasantly aggressive. She regarded him with admittedly mixed feelings, and she was not at all sure just how well she liked him, but she felt quite certain that she did not wish to have him ask her to marry him.

When they came to the door of her apartment in Deerfield Street, where she lived with her mother, he held her hand perceptibly longer than was necessary in saying farewell.

"You will come to the studio Thursday morning at eleven?" he said tenderly.

"Yes, certainly," Miss Maitland answered in a matter-of-fact tone.

He hesitated.

"I never wanted to do anything well so much as I want to do your portrait well. I want to make your portrait by far the finest thing that I have ever done—or that I ever shall do," he said. "Truly beautiful—and truly you."

"That is extremely good of you," replied the girl in a perfectly level voice, manifesting no more emotion than she would have displayed had he dramatically announced that he purposed executing her likeness on canvas and that he intended to use oil paints of various colors. "Good-by," she added, and the door closed behind the artist.

Charles Wilkinson, returning from the Hurds' to his boarding house, opened the front door with his latch key and stepped into the dingy hall. On a small table beside the hatrack lay the boarders' mail. He picked out three envelopes addressed to him, walked upstairs, and entered his room. Seating himself in the only comfortable chair the apartment afforded, he gloomily regarded the three missives.

The first bore on its upper left-hand corner the mark of his tailor, a chronic creditor, once patient, then consecutively surprised, annoyed, amazed, and of late showing signs of extreme exasperation accompanied by threats; at the end of the gamut the contents of this would be more vivacious reading than merely the monotonous and colorless repetition of an account rendered. The second was from his dentist, a man spurred to fury, whose extraction of two wisdom teeth had been of trifling difficulty in comparison with the task of extracting from his patient the amount named in his bill, and who had found in Wilkinson's mouth no cavity comparable in gravity with that apparently existing in his bank balance. The third envelope carried the name of a firm of lawyers not unknown to the man addressed—a firm that specialized in the collection of bad debts; Wilkinson looked at this longer than at either of the others, for he was ignorant of its contents. Then, without opening any one of the three, he thoughtfully took out his fountain pen.

Crossing out his own Mount Vernon Place address from all three envelopes, he readdressed the tailor's communication in an alien hand to the Hotel Bon Air, Augusta, Georgia. On the dentist's missive he inscribed "Auditorium Annex, Chicago, Illinois." Over the lawyer's letter he hesitated a moment, and then boldly wrote "Chateau Frontenac, Quebec, P. Q." This would at least be a grateful reprieve. After five days all these epistles would be returned to their senders, who would probably not question the fact that their failure to reach him had not been purely accidental. Moreover his credit with this trio would positively be improved by the impression that his resources were at any rate sufficient to enable him to travel far and to stop at well-known hotels.

After he had dropped the three envelopes into the post-box it occurred to him that he might just as well—perhaps even better—have sent all three to the same place, but even allowing liberally for the incorrectness of this detail, Mr. Hurd's opinion of his step-nephew seemed in a fair way of being justified.