

The Wymington Hospital applied for their annual donation.

"You generally give a tenner," said Dale.

"This time I'll give them a couple of hundred," said I.

Dale earmarked the amount wonderingly; but when I ordered him to send five pounds apiece to the authors of various begging letters he argued vehemently and quoted the Charity Organisation Society.

"They're frauds, all of them," he maintained.

"They're poor necessitous devils, at any rate," said I, "and they want the money more than I do."

This was a truth whose significance Dale was far from realising. Of what value, indeed, is money to me? There is none to whom I can usefully bequeath my little fortune, my sisters having each married rich men. I shall not need even Charon's obolus when I am dead, for we have ceased to believe in him—which is a pity, as the trip across the Styx must have been picturesque. Why, then, should I not deal myself a happy lot and portion by squandering my money benevolently during my lifetime?

It behooves me, however, to walk warily in this as in other matters, for if my actions too closely resemble those of a lunatic at large, trustees may be appointed to administer my affairs, which would frustrate my plans entirely.

When my part in the morning's work was over, I informed my secretary that I would go out and take the air till lunch-time.

"If you've nothing better to do," said he, "you might run round to Eccleston Square and see my mother."

"For any particular reason?"

"She wants to see you. Home for inebriate parrots or something. Gave me a message for you this morning."

"I'll wait," said I, "on Lady Kynnersley with pleasure."

I went out and walked down the restful covered way of the Albany to the Piccadilly entrance, and began