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sin who sells it to him, that he is buying it for a sick sister. And the assassin knows he lies. And in the guilty silence and solitude of his own room, with the curtains drawn and the door locked, Tom tries the virtues of that magic dye. It gets on his fingers and turns them black, to the elbow. It burns holes in his handkerchief when he tries to rub the malignant poison off his ebony fingers. He applies it to his silky mustache, real camel's hair, very cautiously and very tenderly, and with some misgivings. It turns his lip so black it makes the room dark. And out of all the clouds and the darkness and the sable splotches that pall every thing else in Plutonian gloom, that mustache smiles out, grinning like some ghastly hirsute spectre, gleaming like the moon through a rifted storm cloud unstained, untainted, unshaded; a natural, incorruptible blonde. That is the last time anybody fools Tom on hair dye.

The eye he has for immaculate linen and faultless collars. How it amazes his mother and sisters to learn that there isn't a shirt in the house fit for a pig to wear, and that he wouldn't wear the best collar in his room to be hanged in.

And the boots he crowds his feet into! A Sunday-school room, the Sunday before the picnic or the Christmas tree, with its sudden influx of new scholars, with irreproachable morals and ambitious appetites, doesn't compare with the overcrowded condition of those boots. Too tight in the instep; too narrow at the toes; too short at both ends; the only things about those boots that don't fill his very soul with agony, are the straps. When Tom is pulling them on, he feels that if somebody would kindly run over him three or four times, with a freight train, the sensation would be pleasant and reassuring and tranquilizing. The air turns black before his starting eyes, there is a roaring like the rush of many waters in his ears, he tugs at the straps that are cutting his fingers in two and pulling his arms out by the roots, and just before his bloodshot eyes shoot out of his head, the boot comes on—or the straps pull off. Then when he stands up, the earth rocks beneath his feet, and he thinks he can faintly hear the angels calling him home. And when he walks across the floor the first time his standing in the church and the Christian community is ruined forever. Or would be if anyone could hear what he says. He never, never, never gets to be so old that he cannot remember those boots, and if it is seventy years afterward his feet curl up in agony at the recollection. The first time he wears them, he is vaguely aware, as he leaves his room that there is a sort of "fixy" look about him, and his sisters' titter-

ing is not needed to confirm this impression. He has a certain, half-defined impression that everything he has on is a size too small for any other man of his size. That his boots are a trifle snug, like a house with four rooms for a family of thirty-seven. That the hat which sits so lightly on the crown of his head is jaunty but limited, like a junior clerk's salary; that his gloves are a neat fit, and can't be buttoned with a stump machine. Tom doesn't know all this; he has only a general, vague impression that it may be so. And he doesn't know that his sisters know every line of it. For he has lived many years longer, and got in ever so much more trouble, before he learns that one bright, good, sensible girl—and I believe they are all that—will see and notice more in a glance, remember it more accurately, and talk more about it, than twenty men can see in a week. Tom does not know, for his crying feet will not let him, how he gets from his room to the earthly paradise where Laura lives. Nor does he know, after he gets there, that Laura sees him trying to rest one foot by setting it up on the heel. And she sees him sneak it back under his chair and tilt it up on the toe for a change. She sees him ease the other foot a little by tugging the heel of the boot at the leg of the chair. A hazardous, reckless, presumptuous experiment. Tom tries it so far one night, and slides his heel so far up the leg of his boot, that his foot actually feels comfortable, and he thinks the angels must be rubbing it. He walks out of the parlour sideways that night, trying to hide the cause of the sudden elongation of one leg, and he hobbles all the way home in the same disjointed condition. But Laura sees that too. She sees all the little knobs and lumps on his foot, and sees him fidget and fuss, she sees the look of anguish flitting across his face under the heartless, deceitful, veneering of smiles, and she makes the mental remark that Master Tom would feel much happier, and much more comfortable, and more like staying longer, if he had worn his father's boots.

But on his way to the house, despite the distraction of his crying feet, how many pleasant, really beautiful, romantic things Tom thinks up and recollects and compiles and composes to say to Laura, to impress her with his originality, and wisdom, and genius, and bright exuberant fancy and general superiority over all the rest of Tom kind. Real earnest things, you know; now hollow, conversational compliments, or nonsense, but such things, Tom flatters himself, as none of the other fellows can or will say. And he has them all in beautiful order when he gets at the foot of the hill. The remark about the weather, to begin with; not the stereotyped