

Uncle Walt

*The
Beggar*

HE HAD a little organ there, the which I watched him grind; and oft he cried, as in despair: "Please help me—I am blind!" I muttered, as his music rose: "He plays in frightful luck!" And then I went down in my clothes, and gave him half a buck. A friend came rushing up just then, and said: "You make me ache! You are the easiest of men—that beggar is a fake! The fraud has money salted down—more than you'll ever earn; he owns a business block in town, and he has farms to burn." I answered: "Though the beggar own a bankroll large and fat, I don't regret the half a bone I threw into his hat. I see a man who looks as though the world had used him bad; it sets my jaded heart aglow to give him half a scad. And though that beggar man may be the worst old fraud about, that makes no sort of odds to me; that isn't my lookout. I'll stake Tom, Harry, Dick or Jack, whene'er he comes my way; my conscience pats me on the back, and says that I'm O. K. But if a busted pilgrim came to work me, in distress, and I inquired his age and name, his pastor's street address, and asked to see the documents to prove he told no lies, before I loosened up ten cents, my conscience would arise and prod me till I couldn't sleep, or eat a grown man's meal; and so the beggar man may keep that section of a wheel."