

and the stooping old shoulders would even unconsciously heave with a sigh.

As a rule, however, the great green-clad figure with its fringe of white hair—the fringe that stood blithely out from the faded hat brim like the halo of some medieval saint on a missal—did not permit his gaze to wander so far afield.

For, idle as that figure seemed, the brain behind it was forever active, forever vigilant and alert. The deep-set eyes under their lids that hung as loose as old parchment were always fixed on the life that flowed past them. No face, as those eyes opened and closed like the gills of a dying fish, escaped their inspection. Every man who came within their range of vision was duly examined and adjudicated. Every human atom of that forever ebbing and flowing tide of life had to pass through an invisible screen of inspection, had in some intangible way to justify itself as it proceeded on its unknown movement towards an unknown end. And on the loose-skinned and haggard face, had it been studied closely