

THE HAUNTED BOOKSHOP

BY

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

TO THE BOOKSELLERS

Be pleased to know, most worthy, that this little book is dedicated to you in affection and respect.

The faults of the composition are plain to you all. I begin merely in the hope of saying something further of the adventures of ROGER MIFFLIN, whose exploits in "Parnassus on Wheels" some of you have been kind enough to applaud. But then came Miss Titania Chapman, and my young advertising man fell in love with her, and the two of them rather ran away with the tale.

I think I should explain that the passage in Chapter VIII, dealing with the delightful talent of Mr. Sidney Drew, was written before the lamented death of that charming artist. But as it was a sincere tribute, sincerely meant, I have seen no reason for removing it.

Chapters I, II, III, and VI appeared originally in *The Bookman*, and to the editor of that admirable magazine I owe thanks for his permission to reprint.

Now that Roger is to have ten Parnassuses on the road, I am emboldened to think that some of you may encounter them on their travels. And if you do, I hope you will find that these new errants of the Parnassus on Wheels Corporation are living up to the ancient and honourable traditions of our noble profession.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

Philadelphia,
April 28, 1919

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The Haunted Bookshop

Chapter I

The Haunted Bookshop

If you are ever in Brooklyn, that borough of superb sunsets and magnificent vistas of husband-propelled baby-carriages, it is to be hoped you may chance upon a quiet by-street where there is a very remarkable bookshop.

This bookshop, which does business under the unusual name "Parnassus at Home," is housed in one of the comfortable old brown-stone dwellings which have been the joy of several generations of plumbers and cockroaches. The owner of the business has been at pains to remodel the house to make it a more suitable shrine for his trade, which deals entirely in second-hand volumes. There is no second-hand bookshop in the world more worthy of respect.

It was about six o'clock of a cold November evening, with gusts of rain splattering upon the pavement, when a young man proceeded uncertainly along Gissing Street, stopping now and then to look at shop windows as though doubtful of his way. At the warm and shining face of a French rotisserie he halted to compare the number enamelled on the transom with a memorandum in his hand. Then he pushed on for a few minutes, at last reaching the address he sought. Over the entrance his eye was caught by the sign:

PARNASSUS AT HOME
R. AND H. MIFFLIN
BOOKLOVERS WELCOME!
THIS SHOP IS HAUNTED

He stumbled down the three steps that led into the dwelling of the muses, lowered his overcoat collar, and looked about.

It was very different from such bookstores as he had been accustomed to patronize. Two stories of the old house had been thrown into one: the lower space was divided into little alcoves; above, a gallery ran round the wall, which carried books to the ceiling. The air was heavy with the delightful fragrance of mellowed paper and leather surcharged with a strong bouquet of tobacco. In front of him he found a large placard in a frame:

THIS SHOP IS HAUNTED by the ghosts
Of all great literature, in hosts;

We sell no fakes or trashes.
Lovers of books are welcome here,
No clerks will babble in your ear,

Please smoke--but don't drop ashes!

Browse as long as you like.
Prices of all books plainly marked.
If you want to ask questions, you'll find the proprietor
where the tobacco smoke is thickest.
We pay cash for books.
We have what you want, though you may not know you want it.

Malnutrition of the reading faculty is a serious thing.

Let us prescribe for you.

By R. & H. MIFFLIN,
Proprs.

The shop had a warm and comfortable obscurity, a kind of drowsy dusk, stabbed here and there by bright cones of yellow light from green-shaded electrics. There was an all-pervasive drift of tobacco smoke, which eddied and fumed under the glass lamp shades. Passing down a narrow aisle between the alcoves the visitor noticed that some of the compartments were wholly in darkness; in others where lamps were glowing he could see a table and chairs. In one corner, under a sign lettered ESSAYS, an elderly gentleman was reading, with a face of fanatical ecstasy illumined by the sharp glare of electricity; but there was no wreath of smoke about him so the newcomer concluded he was not the proprietor.

As the young man approached the back of the shop the general effect became more and more fantastic. On some skylight far overhead he could hear the rain drumming; but otherwise the place was completely silent, peopled only (so it seemed) by the gurgitating whorls of smoke and the bright profile of the essay reader. It seemed like a secret fane, some shrine of curious rites, and the young man's throat was tightened by a stricture which was half agitation and half tobacco. Towering above him into the gloom were shelves and shelves of books, darkling toward the roof. He saw a table with a cylinder of brown paper and twine, evidently where purchases might be wrapped; but there was no sign of an attendant.

"This place may indeed be haunted," he thought, "perhaps by the delighted soul of Sir Walter Raleigh, patron of the weed, but seemingly not by the proprietors."

His eyes, searching the blue and vaporous vistas of the shop, were caught by a circle of brightness that shone with a curious egg-like lustre. It was round and white, gleaming in the sheen of a hanging light, a bright island in a surf of tobacco smoke. He came more close, and found it was a bald head.

This head (he then saw) surmounted a small, sharp-eyed man who sat tilted back in a swivel chair, in a corner which seemed the nerve centre of the establishment. The large pigeon-holed desk in front of him was piled high with volumes of all sorts, with tins of tobacco and newspaper clippings and letters. An antiquated typewriter, looking something like a harpsichord, was half-buried in sheets of manuscript. The little bald-headed man was smoking a corn-cob pipe and reading a cook-book.

"I beg your pardon," said the caller, pleasantly; "is this the proprietor?"

Mr. Roger Mifflin, the proprietor of "Parnassus at Home," looked up, and the visitor saw that he had keen blue eyes, a short red beard, and a convincing air of competent originality.

"It is," said Mr. Mifflin. "Anything I can do for you?"

"My name is Aubrey Gilbert," said the young man. "I am representing the Grey-Matter Advertising Agency. I want to discuss with you the advisability of your letting us handle your advertising account, prepare snappy copy for you, and place it in large circulation mediums. Now the war's over, you ought to prepare some constructive campaign for bigger business."

The bookseller's face beamed. He put down his cook-book, blew an expanding gust of smoke, and looked up brightly.

"My dear chap," he said, "I don't do any advertising."

"Impossible!" cried the other, aghast as at some gratuitous indecency.

"Not in the sense you mean. Such advertising as benefits me most is done for me by the snappiest copywriters in the business."

"I suppose you refer to Whitewash and Gilt?" said Mr. Gilbert wistfully.

"Not at all. The people who are doing my advertising are Stevenson, Browning, Conrad and Company."

"Dear me," said the Grey-Matter solicitor. "I don't know that agency at all. Still, I doubt if their copy has more pep than ours."

"I don't think you get me. I mean that my advertising is done by the books I sell. If I sell a man a book by Stevenson or Conrad, a book that delights or terrifies him, that man and that book become my living advertisements."

"But that word-of-mouth advertising is exploded," said Gilbert. "You can't get Distribution that way. You've got to keep your trademark before the public."

"By the bones of Tauchnitz!" cried Mifflin. "Look here, you wouldn't go to a doctor, a medical specialist, and tell him he ought to advertise in papers and magazines? A doctor is advertised by the bodies he cures. My business is advertised by the minds I stimulate. And let me tell you that the book business is different from other trades. People don't know they want books. I can see just by looking at you that your mind is ill for lack of books but you are blissfully unaware of it! People don't go to a bookseller until some serious mental accident or disease makes them aware of their danger. Then they come here. For me to advertise would be about as useful as telling people who feel perfectly well that they ought to go to the doctor. Do you know why people are reading more books now than ever before? Because the terrific catastrophe of the war has made them realize that their minds are ill. The world was suffering from all sorts of mental fevers and aches and disorders, and never knew it. Now our mental pangs are only too manifest. We are all reading, hungrily, hastily, trying to find out—after the trouble is over—what was the matter with our minds."

The little bookseller was standing up now, and his visitor watched him with mingled amusement and alarm.

"You know," said Mifflin, "I am interested that you should have thought it worth while to come in here. It reinforces my conviction of the amazing future ahead of the book business. But I tell you that future lies not merely in systematizing it as a trade. It lies in dignifying it as a profession. It is small use to jeer at the public for craving shoddy books, quack books, untrue books. Physician, cure thyself! Let the bookseller learn to know and revere good books, he will teach the customer. The hunger for good books is more general and more insistent than you would dream. But it is still in a way subconscious. People need books, but they don't know they need them. Generally they are not aware that the books they need are in existence."

"Why wouldn't advertising be the way to let them know?" asked the young man, rather acutely.

"My dear chap, I understand the value of advertising. But in my own case it would be futile. I am not a dealer in merchandise but a specialist in adjusting the book to the human need. Between ourselves, there is no such thing, abstractly, as a 'good' book. A book is 'good' only when it meets some human hunger or refutes some human error. A book that is good for me would very likely be punk for you. My pleasure is to prescribe books for such patients as drop in here and are willing to tell me their symptoms. Some people have let their reading faculties decay so that all I can do is hold a post mortem on them. But most are still open to treatment. There is no one so grateful as the man to whom you have given just the book his soul needed and he never knew it. No advertisement on earth is as potent as a grateful customer.

"I will tell you another reason why I don't advertise," he continued. "In these days when everyone keeps his trademark before the public, as you call it, not to advertise is the most original and startling thing one can do to attract attention. It was the fact that I do NOT advertise that drew you here. And everyone who comes here thinks he has discovered the place himself. He goes and tells his friends about the book asylum run by a crank and a lunatic, and they come here in turn to see what it is like."

"I should like to come here again myself and browse about," said the advertising agent. "I should like to have you prescribe for me."

"The first thing needed is to acquire a sense of pity. The world has been printing books for 450 years, and yet gunpowder still has a wider circulation. Never mind! Printer's ink is the greater explosive: it will win. Yes, I have a few of the good books here. There are only about 30,000 really important books in the world. I suppose about 5,000 of them were written in the English language, and 5,000 more have been translated."

"You are open in the evenings?"

"Until ten o'clock. A great many of my best customers are those who are at work all day and can only visit bookshops at night. The real book-lovers, you know, are generally among the humbler classes. A man who is impassioned with books has little time or patience to grow rich by concocting schemes for cozening his fellows."

The little bookseller's bald pate shone in the light of the bulb hanging over the wrapping table. His eyes were bright and earnest, his short red beard

bristled like wire. He wore a ragged brown Norfolk jacket from which two buttons were missing.

A bit of a fanatic himself, thought the customer, but a very entertaining one. "Well, sir," he said, "I am ever so grateful to you. I'll come again. Good-night." And he started down the aisle for the door.

As he neared the front of the shop, Mr. Mifflin switched on a cluster of lights that hung high up, and the young man found himself beside a large bulletin board covered with clippings, announcements, circulars, and little notices written on cards in a small neat script. The following caught his eye:

RX

If your mind needs phosphorus, try "Trivia," by Logan Pearsall Smith.

If your mind needs a whiff of strong air, blue and cleansing, from hilltops and primrose valleys, try "The Story of My Heart," by Richard Jefferies.

If your mind needs a tonic of iron and wine, and a thorough rough-and-tumbling, try Samuel Butler's "Notebooks" or "The Man Who Was Thursday," by Chesterton.

If you need "all manner of Irish," and a relapse into irresponsible freakishness, try "The Demi-Gods," by James Stephens. It is a better book than one deserves or expects.

It's a good thing to turn your mind upside down now and then, like an hour-glass, to let the particles run the other way.

One who loves the English tongue can have a lot of fun with a Latin dictionary.

ROGER MIFFLIN.

Human beings pay very little attention to what is told them unless they know something about it already. The young man had heard of none of these books prescribed by the practitioner of bibliotherapy. He was about to open the door when Mifflin appeared at his side.

"Look here," he said, with a quaint touch of embarrassment. "I was very much interested by our talk. I'm all alone this evening—my wife is away on a holiday. Won't you stay and have supper with me? I was just looking up some new recipes when you came in."

The other was equally surprised and pleased by this unusual invitation.

"Why—that's very good of you," he said. "Are you sure I won't be intruding?"

"Not at all!" cried the bookseller. "I detest eating alone: I was hoping someone would drop in. I always try to have a guest for supper when my wife is away. I have to stay at home, you see, to keep an eye on the shop. We have no servant, and I do the cooking myself. It's great fun. Now you light your pipe and make yourself comfortable for a few minutes while I get things ready. Suppose you come back to my den."

On a table of books at the front of the shop Mifflin laid a large card lettered:

PROPRIETOR AT SUPPER
IF YOU WANT ANYTHING
RING THIS BELL

Beside the card he placed a large old-fashioned dinner bell, and then led the way to the rear of the shop.

Behind the little office in which this unusual merchant had been studying his cook-book a narrow stairway rose on each side, running up to the gallery. Behind these stairs a short flight of steps led to the domestic recesses. The visitor found himself ushered into a small room on the left, where a grate of coals glowed under a dingy mantelpiece of yellowish marble. On the mantel stood a row of blackened corn-cob pipes and a canister of tobacco. Above was a startling canvas in emphatic oils, representing a large blue wagon drawn by a stout white animal—evidently a horse. A background of lush scenery enhanced the forceful technique of the limner. The walls were stuffed with books. Two shabby, comfortable chairs were drawn up to the iron fender, and a mustard-coloured terrier was lying so close to the glow that a smell of singed hair was sensible.

"There," said the host; "this is my cabinet, my chapel of ease. Take off your coat and sit down."

"Really," began Gilbert, "I'm afraid this is——"

"Nonsense! Now you sit down and commend your soul to Providence and the kitchen stove. I'll bustle round and get supper." Gilbert pulled out his pipe, and with a sense of elation prepared to enjoy an unusual evening. He was a young man of agreeable parts, amiable and sensitive. He knew his disadvantages in literary conversation, for he had gone to an excellent college where glee clubs and theatricals had left him little time for reading. But still he was a lover of good books, though he knew them chiefly by

hearsay. He was twenty-five years old, employed as a copywriter by the Grey-Matter Advertising Agency.

The little room in which he found himself was plainly the bookseller's sanctum, and contained his own private library. Gilbert browsed along the shelves curiously. The volumes were mostly shabby and bruised; they had evidently been picked up one by one in the humble mangers of the second-hand vendor. They all showed marks of use and meditation.

Mr. Gilbert had the earnest mania for self-improvement which has blighted the lives of so many young men—a passion which, however, is commendable in those who feel themselves handicapped by a college career and a jewelled fraternity emblem. It suddenly struck him that it would be valuable to make a list of some of the titles in Mifflin's collection, as a suggestion for his own reading. He took out a memorandum book and began jotting down the books that intrigued him:

The Works of Francis Thompson (3 vols.)
Social History of Smoking: Apperson
The Path to Rome: Hilaire Belloc
The Book of Tea: Kakuzo
Happy Thoughts: F. C. Burnand
Dr. Johnson's Prayers and Meditations
Margaret Ogilvy: J. M. Barrie
Confessions of a Thug: Taylor
General Catalogue of the Oxford University Press
The Morning's War: C. E. Montague
The Spirit of Man: edited by Robert Bridges
The Romany Rye: Borrow
Poems: Emily Dickinson
Poems: George Herbert
The House of Cobwebs: George Gissing

So far had he got, and was beginning to say to himself that in the interests of Advertising (who is a jealous mistress) he had best call a halt, when his host entered the room, his small face eager, his eyes blue points of light.

"Come, Mr. Aubrey Gilbert!" he cried. "The meal is set. You want to wash your hands? Make haste then, this way: the eggs are hot and waiting."

The dining-room into which the guest was conducted betrayed a feminine touch not visible in the smoke-dimmed quarters of shop and cabinet. At the windows were curtains of laughing chintz and pots of pink geranium. The table, under a drop-light in a flame-coloured silk screen, was brightly set with silver and blue china. In a cut-glass decanter sparkled a ruddy

brown wine. The edged tool of Advertising felt his spirits undergo an unmistakable upward pressure.

"Sit down, sir," said Mifflin, lifting the roof of a platter. "These are eggs Samuel Butler, an invention of my own, the apotheosis of hen fruit."

Gilbert greeted the invention with applause. An Egg Samuel Butler, for the notebook of housewives, may be summarized as a pyramid, based upon toast, whereof the chief masonries are a flake of bacon, an egg poached to firmness, a wreath of mushrooms, a cap-sheaf of red peppers; the whole dribbled with a warm pink sauce of which the inventor retains the secret. To this the bookseller chef added fried potatoes from another dish, and poured for his guest a glass of wine.

"This is California catawba," said Mifflin, "in which the grape and the sunshine very pleasantly (and cheaply) fulfil their allotted destiny. I pledge you prosperity to the black art of Advertising!"

The psychology of the art and mystery of Advertising rests upon tact, an instinctive perception of the tone and accent which will be en rapport with the mood of the hearer. Mr. Gilbert was aware of this, and felt that quite possibly his host was prouder of his whimsical avocation as gourmet than of his sacred profession as a bookman.

"Is it possible, sir," he began, in lucid Johnsonian, "that you can concoct so delicious an entree in so few minutes? You are not hoaxing me? There is no secret passage between Gissing Street and the laboratories of the Ritz?"

"Ah, you should taste Mrs. Mifflin's cooking!" said the bookseller. "I am only an amateur, who dabbles in the craft during her absence. She is on a visit to her cousin in Boston. She becomes, quite justifiably, weary of the tobacco of this establishment, and once or twice a year it does her good to breathe the pure serene of Beacon Hill. During her absence it is my privilege to inquire into the ritual of housekeeping. I find it very sedative after the incessant excitement and speculation of the shop."

"I should have thought," said Gilbert, "that life in a bookshop would be delightfully tranquil."

"Far from it. Living in a bookshop is like living in a warehouse of explosives. Those shelves are ranked with the most furious combustibles in the world—the brains of men. I can spend a rainy afternoon reading, and my mind works itself up to such a passion and anxiety over mortal problems as almost unman me. It is terribly nerve-racking. Surround a

man with Carlyle, Emerson, Thoreau, Chesterton, Shaw, Nietzsche, and George Ade—would you wonder at his getting excited? What would happen to a cat if she had to live in a room tapestried with catnip? She would go crazy!"

"Truly, I had never thought of that phase of bookselling," said the young man. "How is it, though, that libraries are shrines of such austere calm? If books are as provocative as you suggest, one would expect every librarian to utter the shrill screams of a hierophant, to clash ecstatic castanets in his silent alcoves!"

"Ah, my boy, you forget the card index! Librarians invented that soothing device for the febrifuge of their souls, just as I fall back upon the rites of the kitchen. Librarians would all go mad, those capable of concentrated thought, if they did not have the cool and healing card index as medicament! Some more of the eggs?"

"Thank you," said Gilbert. "Who was the butler whose name was associated with the dish?"

"What?" cried Mifflin, in agitation, "you have not heard of Samuel Butler, the author of *The Way of All Flesh*? My dear young man, whoever permits himself to die before he has read that book, and also *Erewhon*, has deliberately forfeited his chances of paradise. For paradise in the world to come is uncertain, but there is indeed a heaven on this earth, a heaven which we inhabit when we read a good book. Pour yourself another glass of wine, and permit me——"

(Here followed an enthusiastic development of the perverse philosophy of Samuel Butler, which, in deference to my readers, I omit. Mr. Gilbert took notes of the conversation in his pocketbook, and I am pleased to say that his heart was moved to a realization of his iniquity, for he was observed at the Public Library a few days later asking for a copy of *The Way of All Flesh*. After inquiring at four libraries, and finding all copies of the book in circulation, he was compelled to buy one. He never regretted doing so.)

"But I am forgetting my duties as host," said Mifflin. "Our dessert consists of apple sauce, gingerbread, and coffee." He rapidly cleared the empty dishes from the table and brought on the second course.

"I have been noticing the warning over the sideboard," said Gilbert. "I hope you will let me help you this evening?" He pointed to a card hanging near the kitchen door. It read:

ALWAYS WASH DISHES
IMMEDIATELY AFTER MEALS
IT SAVES TROUBLE

"I'm afraid I don't always obey that precept," said the bookseller as he poured the coffee. "Mrs. Mifflin hangs it there whenever she goes away, to remind me. But, as our friend Samuel Butler says, he that is stupid in little will also be stupid in much. I have a different theory about dish-washing, and I please myself by indulging it.

"I used to regard dish-washing merely as an ignoble chore, a kind of hateful discipline which had to be undergone with knitted brow and brazen fortitude. When my wife went away the first time, I erected a reading stand and an electric light over the sink, and used to read while my hands went automatically through base gestures of purification. I made the great spirits of literature partners of my sorrow, and learned by heart a good deal of Paradise Lost and of Walt Mason, while I soused and wallowed among pots and pans. I used to comfort myself with two lines of Keats:

'The moving waters at their priest-like task
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores——'

Then a new conception of the matter struck me. It is intolerable for a human being to go on doing any task as a penance, under duress. No matter what the work is, one must spiritualize it in some way, shatter the old idea of it into bits and rebuild it nearer to the heart's desire. How was I to do this with dish-washing?

"I broke a good many plates while I was pondering over the matter. Then it occurred to me that here was just the relaxation I needed. I had been worrying over the mental strain of being surrounded all day long by vociferous books, crying out at me their conflicting views as to the glories and agonies of life. Why not make dish-washing my balm and poultice?

"When one views a stubborn fact from a new angle, it is amazing how all its contours and edges change shape! Immediately my dishpan began to glow with a kind of philosophic halo! The warm, soapy water became a sovereign medicine to retract hot blood from the head; the homely act of washing and drying cups and saucers became a symbol of the order and cleanliness that man imposes on the unruly world about him. I tore down my book rack and reading lamp from over the sink.

"Mr. Gilbert," he went on, "do not laugh at me when I tell you that I have evolved a whole kitchen philosophy of my own. I find the kitchen the shrine of our civilization, the focus of all that is comely in life. The ruddy

shine of the stove is as beautiful as any sunset. A well-polished jug or spoon is as fair, as complete and beautiful, as any sonnet. The dish mop, properly rinsed and wrung and hung outside the back door to dry, is a whole sermon in itself. The stars never look so bright as they do from the kitchen door after the ice-box pan is emptied and the whole place is 'redd up,' as the Scotch say."

"A very delightful philosophy indeed," said Gilbert. "And now that we have finished our meal, I insist upon your letting me give you a hand with the washing up. I am eager to test this dish-pantheism of yours!"

"My dear fellow," said Mifflin, laying a restraining hand on his impetuous guest, "it is a poor philosophy that will not abide denial now and then. No, no—I did not ask you to spend the evening with me to wash dishes." And he led the way back to his sitting room.

"When I saw you come in," said Mifflin, "I was afraid you might be a newspaper man, looking for an interview. A young journalist came to see us once, with very unhappy results. He wheedled himself into Mrs. Mifflin's good graces, and ended by putting us both into a book, called Parnassus on Wheels, which has been rather a trial to me. In that book he attributes to me a number of shallow and sugary observations upon bookselling that have been an annoyance to the trade. I am happy to say, though, that his book had only a trifling sale."

"I have never heard of it," said Gilbert.

"If you are really interested in bookselling you should come here some evening to a meeting of the Corn Cob Club. Once a month a number of booksellers gather here and we discuss matters of bookish concern over corn-cobs and cider. We have all sorts and conditions of booksellers: one is a fanatic on the subject of libraries. He thinks that every public library should be dynamited. Another thinks that moving pictures will destroy the book trade. What rot! Surely everything that arouses people's minds, that makes them alert and questioning, increases their appetite for books."

"The life of a bookseller is very demoralizing to the intellect," he went on after a pause. "He is surrounded by innumerable books; he cannot possibly read them all; he dips into one and picks up a scrap from another. His mind gradually fills itself with miscellaneous flotsam, with superficial opinions, with a thousand half-knowledges. Almost unconsciously he begins to rate literature according to what people ask for. He begins to wonder whether Ralph Waldo Trine isn't really greater than Ralph Waldo

Emerson, whether J. M. Chapple isn't as big a man as J. M. Barrie. That way lies intellectual suicide.

"One thing, however, you must grant the good bookseller. He is tolerant. He is patient of all ideas and theories. Surrounded, engulfed by the torrent of men's words, he is willing to listen to them all. Even to the publisher's salesman he turns an indulgent ear. He is willing to be humbugged for the weal of humanity. He hopes unceasingly for good books to be born.

"My business, you see, is different from most. I only deal in second-hand books; I only buy books that I consider have some honest reason for existence. In so far as human judgment can discern, I try to keep trash out of my shelves. A doctor doesn't traffic in quack remedies. I don't traffic in bogus books.

"A comical thing happened the other day. There is a certain wealthy man, a Mr. Chapman, who has long frequented this shop——"

"I wonder if that could be Mr. Chapman of the Chapman Daintybits Company?" said Gilbert, feeling his feet touch familiar soil.

"The same, I believe," said Mifflin. "Do you know him?"

"Ah," cried the young man with reverence. "There is a man who can tell you the virtues of advertising. If he is interested in books, it is advertising that made it possible. We handle all his copy—I've written a lot of it myself. We have made the Chapman prunes a staple of civilization and culture. I myself devised that slogan 'We preen ourselves on our prunes' which you see in every big magazine. Chapman prunes are known the world over. The Mikado eats them once a week. The Pope eats them. Why, we have just heard that thirteen cases of them are to be put on board the George Washington for the President's voyage to the peace Conference. The Czecho-Slovak armies were fed largely on prunes. It is our conviction in the office that our campaign for the Chapman prunes did much to win the war."

"I read in an ad the other day—perhaps you wrote that, too?" said the bookseller, "that the Elgin watch had won the war. However, Mr. Chapman has long been one of my best customers. He heard about the Corn Cob Club, and though of course he is not a bookseller he begged to come to our meetings. We were glad to have him do so, and he has entered into our discussions with great zeal. Often he has offered many a shrewd comment. He has grown so enthusiastic about the bookseller's way of life that the other day he wrote to me about his daughter (he is a widower).

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