

Uncle Walt's Story

STAND ON THE FENCE

It is a story of a man who stands on the fence between right and wrong. He is a man of many faces, and his story is a story of many hearts.



"I hope so," said the hotelkeeper. "Such a poem as 'Annabel Lee' deserves better treatment than you are qualified to give it. You have a voice like a silver bell, and you telescope your words, and you don't know any more about poetry than a potato knows about potatoes. If you would stand up and recite a few poems from a standard catalogue I have no doubt you'd put the proper feeling into it, and show your audience to think, but it's a shame for a man like you to recite a beautiful poem, full of sentiment and melody."

"There ought to be a law against that sort of thing," some of the boys in the vicinity have been raised by common or garden education. Nowadays people smile when you mention Turkey Must Not Bring To Light. It has been recited so much by people with cracked voices that it has become a joke. Yet if you recite the poem calmly and impartially you will find that it has a great deal of merit.

"In the schools the pupils are permitted to recite some of our best poems, and the poems are read for anything after it. The school authorities should prohibit this sort of thing, and require a volume of cheap poetry which is not so good as the poetry that is so easily spoiled."

"When I went to school, about a hundred years ago, there was a tall, freckled, smiling boy, who talked through his nose with a sort of whine that sounded like 'llie & out. There was to be a school entertainment, and this boy was chosen for a recitation. The teacher never asked him what he was going to recite, but gave him the right of way. Teachers continue to do the same mistake, even as we go to press. They should choose the poems which are to be recited to make a Roman holiday and select something that won't slip, based on the poem at the school."

"This boy stood up before the crowd and recited through Gray's 'Blow,' Now, that's one of the best rhymes ever composed. It was written by a journeyman poet who put in seven years at it in the time when they had to learn their trade. He wanted to leave behind him a poem that would stand the test of time, and the government inspectors had to be paid. In my opinion there is nothing better in any language. It is rather melancholy, but it has a sort of lugubrious something quality, that is a harm to the trained ear of a landlord when he finds that the results of his labor stand equal to the equipment."

"Time and again, when I recited and played out, I have started to recite that poem, and as soon as I get into it, I seem to see that blessed marching schoolboy, in his high-water garments, and how he has slung through those verses, and how he looks more than forty years old. He looks like a violent, impulsive fellow, but it seems like yesterday. It's the same way with Hamlet's 'To be or not to be.' Every time I hear it, I think of a fat youth who recited it in our school, and then I burst into tears."

"There's no sense in such a huge mass, and concrete ought to do something, doesn't it?"

Frank of Acquaintance

In the whispering gallery of St. Patrick's cathedral in London the faintest sound is faithfully conveyed from one side of the dome to the other, but can not be heard at any intermediate point.

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