

(editor's note: This paper was transcribed from a handwritten cursive copy with various difficulties. For a perfect rendition, the reader might wish to consult the original, itself a copy, in the volume entitled *Literary Club Papers* 2, 1886 – 1887 June 5, '86 to May 21, '87)

How I Lost a Friend

He was a pleasant looking fellow – one of those men that one warms to on sight. He came into the office with an air of assurance that is characteristic of a man of the world, and asked the office boy if Mr. Blank was in. Upon being directed to my door he stepped towards me with that air of cordiality and good-Fellowship that shows confidence in the good reception and which therefore obtains it. Courteously removing his hat as he addressed himself to me, he handed me his letter of introduction. The name it bore as his endorser was one that was very familiar to me, and was that of one of our best known citizens. It was a name that always commanded respectful attention under whatever circumstances it came up, and one that was a sufficient endorsement for the man who relied upon it at this time. With my most suave politeness I motioned him a chair which he at first with some show of modest embarrassment declined. He said that he had called to see me several times before, but had failed heretofore in finding me in; his business though being somewhat urgent he had persisted in his attempts to make my acquaintance with this successful result. After the first crust had been broken we conversed pleasantly on the business that brought him. He was a very pleasant spoken man and had a manner of presenting his views that was quite convincing. I remarked to myself his rather indifferent attire and wondered that a man of such pleasant address and business manner did not appear in better condition. However, after some little conversation, he took his leave, after arranging that he would call soon again to attend to the matter that brought him.

Soon again, he did call, and many times. Often as I came into my office, I would find him sitting in my padded chair with his feet on my desk quietly chatting with my office boy or refreshing his legal knowledge with a perusal of my office docket. Even with the boy his manners were the same as with me. The same suave politeness, the same cleverness of logic showed themselves at all times to all men. He began to be an institution. Day after day did he renew his acquaintance with me and our conversations were many. I regret that there were times when for the moment some temporary disagreement in our views, produced a slight asperity of manner in us both, but I daresay the fault was mine; besides the best of friends must disagree at times. However, his visits soon became so regular that I always expected him on particular days, and on my way to my office would ponder over new subjects for discussion with him, or perhaps I should say new methods of presenting the same subject – for he was a man of singular pertinacity and somewhat one-ideal. This was my only objection to him: that he was so prone to confine himself to one subject.

Matters ran on this way for a long time and I had become to believe that our relations would always remain the same and that his visits would continue to enlighten the darksome gloom of my private office, until one day in my rashness and inexperience I committed an act that terminated our relations, – perhaps not for ever, – but for some time at least. I should have known better and ought to have known the consequence of my extraordinary performance. It was an act of which I am very seldom guilty and one that I shall probably never repeat. It came about in this way. He came into the office and

was received with the usual kindly greetings that I accord to all men. It was apparent however that he was ill at ease. Soon our conversation took an acrimonious tone that was unworthy of us both. I seldom give weight to such feelings, but this time I was at fault, and therefore I fully realized my own action and its consequences, I got up from my chair, advanced toward him with perhaps rather a brusque manner – and paid him his confounded bill.

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