The Project Gutenberg EBook of Ripeness is All, by Jesse Roarke

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org

Title: Ripeness is All
Author: Jesse Roarke
Release Date: June 26, 2013 [EBook #43038]
Language: English

*** START OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK RIPENESS IS ALL ***

Produced by Greg Weeks, Mary Meehan and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at http://www.pgdp.net

Ripeness Is All
Shakespeare wrote it, in the tragedy of King Lear—a phrase to live by:

Men must endure
Their going hence, even as their coming hither;

He was disturbed, but he did not know it. Murky, agitated waters crept up in his vast subconscious world, and sought the threshold, the mouth of the pit, the slope of the clean shore; little rainbows of light now and then flashed over the waters. They heaved, and against the sluice-gates they beat, sullenly. There was a yielding, but the great force was contained.

He left his Pad, curiously mopping his brow a little, and furrowing it between the eyes. It came to him that he was hungry. He stepped to the curb, pushed the button, and leaned against the post, as if waiting, or in thought. Almost immediately a Car appeared, in a cheery orange and green. He almost shuddered, and he almost knew that he did so. Then he brightened, stepped into the car, and voiced his desire.

He was carried at a moderate pace through clean, broad streets and past bright, shiny buildings and smiling parks and gardens. He came to the top of a high hill, saw the sparkling blue bay in the distance, and thought vaguely of sailing upon it. On his face he felt a brisk spray, and the air was tanged with salt. Then a warmed, faintly perfumed glow dried and composed him, and the Car shut off all its machinery and glided to a stop. He got out, ever so comfortable, and entered a luxurious Kitchen, in which he had not dined for several days.

The doors opened automatically, and a smiling android, gaily featured and clothed, conducted him to a table. She was a soothing sight: yes, that's what it was. He ordered a sumptuous meal, rubbing his ample waistline in anticipation.

"Dig dig!" crooned the waitress.

He patted good-naturedly her well-moulded behind as she turned; she glowed sweetly back over her soft and delicate shoulder. He wondered if Meg was enough, and decided that, well, for the time being, he guessed she was. No use hurrying things. The waitress returned and served the meal. As always, it was excellent. He finished with a leisurely bottle of wine and a cigar, pinched the waitress's firm yet ever so yielding thigh, and departed.

Then a deep stirring almost took hold upon him. Yes, that was what he needed. It had been several months now. He pushed another button, and a rosy pink Car appeared to his service. "Take me to a House, you know what I mean?" he said, as he arranged himself upon the pearl grey cushions. The Car glided away.

On and on along the shore of the ocean they pleasantly careened. At length they turned into a rich garden bower, and stopped in front of a great mansion overlooking the waves. He alighted; the Car departed. Profusely bloomed scarlet and golden and azure flowers, everywhere; succulent and bright was the lavish green. The doors opened, and a Woman received him. She was past child-bearing, motherly, and smiling.
He smiled back, and said, "You got one, huh?"
"Of course," she answered.

He sat down to wait.

And while he waited, he almost thought. Meg was good, all right, but why wasn't she enough, sometimes? He tapped his thumb-nail against his teeth in a few moments of near perplexity, and then desisted. Soon a bevy of charming Girls entered the room and paraded for him, laughing and smiling. He settled upon a petite brunette with cherry lips. She stripped him of his clothes, and they went walking in a private garden.

In an inner bower they sat down to a rustic table, and were served by robot with a heady aphrodisiac wine. On the grasses and the petals of flowers, overlooking the sea, they entwined their limbs and their bodies, and he nearly enjoyed her. He thought that once he had enjoyed this activity indeed, and wondered whether it were so.

He sat looking over the waters, trying to muse. The androids were physically perfect, flesh meeting flesh, clinging to it, thrilling with it. They were warm, they whispered, they strained and cried. They were freely available, for every man and woman. None need be unsatisfied.

But he did not know all of this, history and psychology were lost to him and he could never keep a connected train of thought; his being unsatisfied could not penetrate to his consciousness. He did not quite know that flesh cried out for something more than flesh, and had always done so. He did know, more or less, that there was the matter of population, and that real men and real women had, at mysterious intervals, to copulate. That was the way it was. He had once spent some time in a House himself, meeting the requirements of an endless variety of Girls. He supposed that some of them had borne the issue of his seed, though he did not suppose it in these terms. But it was better not to know these things for certain, and not to have anything to do with the rearing of children, after the early mother-feeling was over. The Schools could take care of that better than people could.

She snuggled against him.
"What say, Man?" she said: "What's eatin yuh?"

He did not know how to answer. He tried to talk, tried to break through, to clarify.
"What's it, huh?" he nearly pleaded. "All this, I mean. Like what's it for?"

She stretched out on the grass and looked at him a moment.
"Search me," she ventured. "I guess maybe what you need's a Bed."

He guessed she was right.

They went back to the mansion through the twilight, and established themselves in one of the rooms. The soft curtains were drawn, the Bed was large, the sheets were silky and creamy. She reclined on her back, and the mattress moulded itself perfectly to her form.

He lay down beside her, and caressed her. She clasped him tight to her breast. And he was clasped also by an invisible but very palpable field of energy, that directed his movements and charged him with an inexhaustible and ceaseless power. He held her tight, and the force entwined them. They were one throbbing ecstasy, and only at the very last endurable moment were they given release.

Then the Bed slowly soothed them, massaged them, and invigorated them once again. Throughout the night it continued, activity and repose, until toward the dawn he fell into a dead sleep, which lasted until the following morning.

He did not know that he dreamed. He did not consciously remember any of it. He only knew, as he ate his ample breakfast, that he was not so thoroughly at peace as he should have been. And he knew that it was useless to ask the Woman, or one of the Girls.

But the Woman's androids did well by her; it seemed. Maybe he had better go home to Meg.

"What the square, anyhow?" he said to himself. A little more rest in his familiar surroundings, and he would be all right. A Bed always took a lot out of a man. He arose to
"Goodbye, dear," the Woman said, as he came to the head of the main path. She was serene and smiling.

He adjusted his tunic, and smiled in reply. Yes sir, the old world was in good shape, just like always. He signaled for a Car. The bright ocean again passed by him, and the broad sands, and he dozed.

The dreams were more importunate, this time. When he awoke, with a blank start, the Car was cruising aimlessly. He looked around, and broke into a sweat. There was a button he had to push, somewhere, there was a handle he had to take hold of. He stammered out "Stop—now!" and stepped onto the curb. The car sped away, to another summons. He was before an Emporium, but he did not enter. Instead, he did an unprecedented thing: he went for a walk, through the streets of the City. This was not done, and none of the occupants of the passing cars observed him.

He was really wondering, now. Could something be wrong? This possibility, with all its full horror, had never entered his mind before; indeed, he did not even have the conceptions of rightness and wrongness, and yet there was the inescapable word, "wrong". His agitation increased. He found himself with the hardly formulated idea that a school was a place where one learned something, and he did not know what this could mean.

He thought of the School that he had attended. All the young people of the District of Fransco attended it: they had been told that there were other Schools, in other districts, and that they were all the same. He had believed it, and forgotten about it. What did it matter? One district was as good as another. He had never travelled. He knew a Man who had gone to the District of Shasta, but he had not been interested in hearing about it. He remembered that the Man had said it was all the same thing, not worth the bother. One had everything he needed, in his own place. But now it seemed that he needed something more, something nobody had ever heard of. He walked on, thinking about the School.

Everybody was born in a House, and kept there till he was weaned, and could walk. Then he was taken to the School. There he grew up in an atmosphere of Group Living, and was gradually showed everything that he needed—everything that there was. The hes and shes played together; they were instructed in the Ways of Life.

As they grew older, they were taken around the City. They were showed the places that the Cars could take them; they were showed how to push the buttons. Of course the robots did a perfect job of instruction. There were Kitchens, in which one could eat. There were parks and gardens, in which one could stroll and lounge. There were Emporiums, in which one could get clothes and things. It was all—as it was.

When one reached puberty, he was taken from the School, and given a Pad. There he lived, listening to the soft music that came from the walls, eating and sleeping. And doing. He selected his android from an Emporium, and did her as he pleased. She was his company, the Warmth of his Pad. She shopped in the Emporium for him, she fixed him cozy little meals, and brought him his pipe or his cigar. She spread the depilatory cream upon his face in the morning, and wiped, with so soft a touch, his beard away; and she bathed him, in the scented waters.

He remembered that after a year or two, he had felt almost restless. From his touch, Meg had understood. She had whispered "House" to him, and he had gone out and instructed a Car. That had been his first experience of a Girl. He supposed that it had been the same with the others. He had never inquired. In the garden bower the idea of children had come to him, and his mind had been at rest. He had not tried a Bed until the fifth or sixth time. He had, he supposed, taken for granted that the Girls lived in the same way that he did. They had their own androids, their own Pads. They never associated with the Men, except in a House. Men got together sometimes, and ate and drank, and had android orgies; no doubt the Girls did likewise.

With a great effort, aided by hints from what he could remember of Life, he pieced an idea together, not knowing what he had done. Of course human copulation was too dangerous:
it might make one unhappy. He had learned, in the bowers, that Man and Girl were not of the same temper, and that their union was not always perfect. Somehow it was better, even so, but it was too difficult. It tended to be—painful.

He did not know the word. He did not know any of the words for these strange thoughts of his, but they were now very palpable to him, and very urgent. His android was his, and was never dissatisfied; and so, neither was he. It was a perfect and complete system. And what was happening to him? The word "happiness" came upon him, and he shuddered, almost in terror. What did it mean? Too many things were happening, all at once.

He turned into a street, and stopped. He had never seen it before. But why should this disturb him? The District was a big place. But he thought he had better get out of this street. Maybe pick up another android, maybe even take her home: have a redhead for awhile, maybe. Meg wouldn't mind. How could she? What was the matter with him? Other Men changed readily, or kept a whole Padful. The waitresses were much in demand. One did not even have to take them home: there were convenient rooms in every Kitchen.

Then suddenly all this was shaken from him. He was standing before a large building, and he did not know what it was.

He stood for a long time, looking at it. Now and then a Man seemed to pass, but he could not be sure. It was like a shadow, like the flickering of a breeze. He wondered what the building could be.

At length he seemed to hear a murmur as of the waters, and at last a voice broke upon him.

"This is a library," it said. "There are books here, and teachers, from whom you can learn."

It was too much. He screamed, and ran down the street.

After a few blocks he became calmer; forgetfulness rescued him. He pushed a button, and a Car conveyed him to his Pad.

Meg met him, all warmth and smiles. He sat down, and she brought him his slippers and a cold bottle of beer. He drank deeply. She sat on the arm of his chair, caressed him, and asked if he would like some dinner. She had—

He cut her short.

"Meg, honey," he said, "I'm a little tired, that's how. You go to bed now, huh, put on some of that jasmine perfume? You dig?"

"Sure, honey! Dig dig!" she replied.

The dark waters rose, and beat against him.

He finished his beer, and got himself another.

Meg whispered, "Say, honey!" The bed rustled softly.

He fought down his mind, and rapidly drank his beer. Almost as ever, he embraced the Warmth, and slid into a comfortable oblivion. Meg lay beside him in the darkness.

He awoke early, and she laid her hand upon him.

Abruptly, he squirmed away.

"Don't do that!" His voice was loud. "It's no good, all that stuff! Something's—wrong!"

He jumped out of bed, and began rapidly to put on his clothes.

Meg lay still for a moment. Her circuits were not built for such things. There was nothing wrong, and nothing registered. Then the cheery morning music started out of the wall, soothing and bright, and she began to hum with it. She arose, went lightly to her dressing, freshly and sweetly tripped into the kitchen.

"Scrambled eggs, honey?" she asked, in the most caressive of tones.

He had all but forgotten his outburst.
"Yeh, sure honey", he answered.
He ate copiously, and drank several cups of black coffee.
"Fine day!" he said, belching his appreciation.
He patted his companion good morning, exceptionally affectionately, and went out into the street.
There he met an old friend and drinking companion. He lived next door, it seemed. They were neighbors! He had seldom been so glad to see anyone, as this old friend.
"Hi there, Charlie!" he boomed. "How's it all? Like Man, I'm glad to see you! What's it, huh?"
Then he waited, with an expectant grin. He waited a considerable time after Charlie had sauntered past him and ridden off in a Car.
Then it came to him.
"He didn't see me! Like as if I wasn't here! Yeah!"
He hurried down the street, and did not think of a Car at all.
He slowed his pace, and walked for a long time. Nobody saw him. He tried to think. The effort was too much, and his mind was a strained blank, and almost pained him. This street: it seemed familiar. Yes, he had gone cruising here, several times. He began very nearly to regret his deficiency of memory. Wasn't there a nice park, up here a little way? He quickened his pace, perspiring freely. It was right here—no, it couldn't be! Not that again! He couldn't be invisible to other people! There couldn't be things all around him that he couldn't see! It wasn't right! What did that word mean? He fainted.
When he came to, the library was still there. He staggered to his feet, and stood still a moment, gazing. There was something cut in the stone over the large front doors. Why would anybody cut something like that in the stone? It didn't make sense. It wasn't comfy at all.
Then, in the back of his brain, a little light burst, and he heard the words, "All men by nature desire to know."
There it was again. Hadn't he dreamed it? What was this "know"? It wasn't eating or drinking or doing or anything.
Then there floated into his pulsating areas this "Aristotle".
No dig at all. But he knew that it was the inscription in the stone, and he walked up the broad front walk and entered the doors, which opened automatically for him.
He walked over the marble floor. Out of the corner of his eye he seemed almost to discern an occasional dim figure hurrying past. He walked up two flights of stairs, seemingly alone, and yet seemingly surrounded. It was strange, and it was perfectly natural. He had never felt so alive before. Not even in a Bed had he felt himself so much of a Man. And he did not think about doing. He had not the slightest interest in it. He wanted to know, whatever this might mean. He paused in front of a door. It opened, and he entered and eased himself into a chair.
"You must begin with the alphabet," the voice began. "This is the letter A."
It flashed upon the screen. He copied it on the plate before him. Over and over again he copied the letter, and heard its name repeated. He was on the way.

He remained for weeks, for months, in the library. His room was comfortable, his meals were tasty and well balanced. He lost weight, he gained continually an alert, aware sense of well-being and purpose. He was developing a mind, and beginning to know.
Throughout the day he studied consciously, or received hypnotic instruction; during the night, while his sleep was more keen and more restful than ever before, the instruction continued. He learned many things. He became aware of who Aristotle was, and what he had done. He developed an acquaintance with all the great men and cultures of the lost lands of Europa. He learned that he lived on the west coast of Ameru, and that this coast was one large City; he learned that the once large continent had dwindled greatly in the disasters, that the ocean waves now poured over the great plains, and all to the eastward.
He felt occasionally a longing to see the mountains, and the further waters.
He learned and thrrove. He began to see other figures more distinctly: once in the corridor he met a Man face to face, and they smiled and bowed to each other. It had been a small Man, with a funny beard, and very bright eyes. It had not been like anybody he had ever seen in the City. But suddenly he knew that he was not like anybody in the City, and that it could no longer be his home. The shock of the fact that the City was not everything, that there was existence, and desirable existence, outside of it, came to him strongly, but now he was ready for it. When the tumult was over, his mind was at last born, and he was a human being, ready to aim for high goals, and to co-operate with destiny.

That night much of a strange nature, called "Sunrise", came to him, and strange names, faces, and disciplines were vaguely lodged within him. He awoke with a most definite feeling of readiness, and with his breakfast he knew, beyond doubt, that "When the disciple is ready, the Master appears."

When he had finished eating, he left the library, and walked in thought. How dismal everything was! Nobody knowing, or caring about anything really important; nobody seeing anything. And certainly they did not see him: but he saw them very clearly. And how much was there, still to be seen, all around him? And what was it, what did it mean? He had to get out, he had to find an answer.

He pushed the nearest button, and slid into the suave black Car that noiselessly approached. He had never seen a black Car before. He wondered if his eyes were still playing tricks upon him, if he would ever see anything aright. Then he dismissed it from his mind.

"Take me out of the City", he said.

There was a slight hesitation; then they were moving, slowly and quietly, in a northeasterly direction.

It was a long ride, past all the familiar features of the City, multiplied many fold. At length the Car shuddered slightly, and the virtue seemed to go out of it in a gentle rush: it stopped, utterly still, and the silent door slid open with an eloquent finality. He got out, and the Car seemed to hasten away as from an undesired doom.

But his weird was upon him; he thought so, in the transfixing old terms; and he turned and beheld an open field, with mountains in the distance. And it came to him that he had ridden this way before, and seen nothing but City all around him. He thought then of enigmatic things that he had heard and read in the library: of how certain Tibetans rendered themselves invisible, or at least passed unseen, by shielding their thought waves —by giving out no handle for perception to grasp. So had this landscape hidden itself, it seemed: shielded itself from desecration.

Or perhaps there were beings, perhaps there was existence, that gave continual indication, bristled with handles, as it were: but handles that could not be grasped or made use of by an organism insufficiently developed. It seemed more of a truism, the more he thought of it.

But it did not seem to matter, on this bright new day. He dismissed the question and stepped forward, into the yielding grass.

What a great thing it was to have a mind, to feel alive on such a day! He tried to remember how dim, how crippled he had been; it seemed impossible. Could he have been only one poor, flickering candle, he who now blazed with the light of a hundred, or a thousand? Could he have rattled on one cylinder, he who now moved smoothly and noiselessly on sixteen or twenty? It was too marvelous for words, or for thoughts.

For a long time he walked, perspiring freely, then puffing, limping and laboring. It was hot, with no breezes from the sea. An occasional rill was refreshing, and a glade was cooling: the leaves rustled gently in the now and then quickened air, and the birds were sweet with song. But there was no sign of human life. At length he sat down on a fallen log, and rested.

He sat long, thinking and dozing. The sun was low in the sky when he arose, and followed some prompting to a ridge not too greatly in the distance. He had come without provision of any kind, and with no fear for his welfare: he would see. The ground seemed soft
enough, if he had to sleep there; he took off his shoes and socks, and enjoyed the cool grass.

He walked on toward the ridge, slowly and confidently, his shoes and socks in his hand. He had not eaten for many hours, but he did not seem hungry. Food was not the tremendously important thing that it used to be. He thought of his old esurience, and smiled. Whatever his god was, it was not his belly; it was not his body at all. He still had enough flab to live on for some time without inconvenience, and it would be better to live on it, than to keep stuffing himself. There were no women either, and no androids. They were tiresome, and tiring, things. He sighed almost with contentment.

Soon he crossed the ridge, and saw the smiling farmland in the valley not far below. This was where the old food supplies had come from: this had been the life of all but a few, for many centuries. There was a great peace over it all. With a sense as of treading on hallowed ground, he descended steadily, and soon came upon a large and rambling wooden house, unpainted, and comfortable. Really comfortable, in a human way, not in the sham way of the City. There was an elderly woman on the porch, serenely rocking. As he approached, she smiled.

"Welcome, stranger!" she said. "Come on up and rest awhile."

He was glad of the invitation, and he mounted the generous and solid steps with his shoes and socks still in his hand. He sat down and redounded them, under her friendly smile.

"It feels good, doesn't it?" she asserted. "The real earth, under real feet. Maybe you read the poet Hopkins before you got out. I did, right at the last. One poem has always stuck with me, and especially this one line of it:

Neither can feet feel, being shod.

I wanted to feel things; I was tired of being shod, and insulated, and deadened. I was just a young girl, then. I felt charged with the grandeur of God, as Hopkins put it, and I had to get out. I've seen a lot of God's grandeur, and a lot of His blessing, through a long life. It's been good, here in the real world.

"But it's no use chattering," she continued. "That doesn't really express or communicate anything. Nature has got a bigger and better voice than any of us, and the best thing to do is just to listen for it. I hope you'll stay with us awhile. The longer the better. We like to help people who've just escaped. But I still talk too much. Supper'll be ready pretty soon, and I have to go tend to it for a few minutes. Just you sit there and be calm: listen for the still voices."

He was glad to do so, and gladder still to see the men of the family returning from the fields. There were three of them, tall and strong, real human beings, healthy and alive, and little marked by unprofitable care. They had a faith, it seemed, a communion, a divine assurance, more or less fulfilled.

The older man, the father, welcomed him again, and they were soon seated at the supper table. He noticed that the men ate heartily, and had yet not an ounce of excess flesh. He rued his own bulk, and ate but sparingly, only out of politeness. But food had never tasted so good before.

The two sons were already approaching middle age, and were still unmarried. This occasioned their mother some concern. But, as she said, they didn't seem to care, and God or nature could take care of these things better than people could. There was no use straining.

"And there aren't so many young women around," she mused. "There aren't many people. Whatever love-making there may be, there's very little breeding. It's like the City, in that respect. It seems this just isn't a very good world these days, comparatively speaking, and people are being held back till it gets better. There seems to be a sort of a cloud over everything. I don't know. Anyway, we're contented. At least we have our minds and hearts, and our patience."
He stayed a week, a month: into the natural influences he vigorously and gratefully plunged. He helped with the farm work, and grew lean and hard, and mentally as well as physically strong. He stayed on, through the winter.

Then, with the spring, his own fertile ground began to burst and ache, and he was no longer satisfied. He was not nature itself, to endure unmoved the countless cycles of diversified sameness; he was rather a flower that faded with a season, a leaf that would soon fall. He was like a single wave of the vast ocean, and like that wave he must forever be moving on, questioning.

And so he left the farm very early one morning, and walked north, as he could tell by the stars. They would not be surprised, and it was better this way, without farewells. They would know that, for him, they had served their purpose, and would be glad. And so he walked north, before sunrise. For this direction he was conscious of no particular reason; but he felt it to be as good as any other.

He passed a farm or two, skirting them carefully, and breakfasted on the sunrise alone. It was so beautiful, thus breaking, rose and golden, over the hills. He remembered the last poet that he had read, before his deliverance: the great Sidney Lanier. "The Georgia gold mine," he thought facetiously; and was at once sorry, for his shallowness. No more would successive suns blaze upon the soft southern beauty. The warm blue Atlantic waves rolled over the home of this poet-prophet; whose promise, he fervently hoped, was not yet drowned. He also would be lit with the Sun. He stretched out his arms to the streaming gold, and then walked on vigorously, with a new purpose not yet defined.

He was getting into ruggeder country, and the going was more difficult. But yet he felt no inclination to break his fast, or to slacken his pace. The air was fresh, and good. He climbed around the spur of a hill, and found himself entering a wild valley with no sign of human habitation. There was a small stream close by, rippling down from the solitudes. He went to it, and knelt to drink.

As he arose, two ropes descended upon him, from opposite sides, and his arms were firmly pinioned. He looked around, and saw two bearded young men, of not unprepossessing aspect. Each wore tight-fitting clothing and a peaked hat with a long feather, and was armed with knife and sword. One of them motioned into the valley.

"Come on, thou varlet!" he said.

They proceeded, and were soon immersed in the rippling and jutting hills.

Near the head of the valley, and up a hollow to the side, they came to an expansive and well populated clearing. Many men, bearded and heavily armed, were lounging about, dressed fancifully, but for action. There were women also, sturdy and for the most part quite attractive. He found himself speculating briefly on the fierce joy of their dalliance in these invigorating wilds. Then his attention was abruptly drawn ahead, and he was forced to his knees before one who was obviously the leader.

He was in his middle years, and bore a long flaxen beard and leonine mane of hair; his eyes were large, and of a piercing but softly reassuring green. He sat, still and lordly, and surveyed his captive.

At length: "Arise!"

He obeyed, and stood calmly.

The leader continued, "Thou art doubtless but lately from the City, of abhorred name. Thou art but little acquainted with the usages of life. Do not speak! I know 'tis true."

He paused for a while, then went on with ruminative authority.

"Know that thou hast come into the hands of the Knights of Eld," he said. "As our name implies, and indeed our visible delimitations proclaim, we are no cut-throats, or vulgar
brawlers. Thou art safe here.

"But thou art not one of us. Though thou art healthy and strong, and might well prove a formidable adversary, thou takest no delight in combat. Do I speak sooth? Proclaim!"

He proclaimed that it was sooth indeed; with the silent reservation that, if the combat were sufficiently noble, and profound, and really, fundamentally necessary—but his thoughts were cut short.

"Then thou hast no place here, unless perchance thou comest for succour, or for sanctuary."

His answer being negative, the leader continued:

"Know that our life is combat. There be many bands, against whom we strive. We have made good escape from the emasculate life of yon City, and we have vowed not to let the spirit of gentle manhood perish. The elements strive together, and yet the strife is co-operative: and so should it be with men.

"I like thee," he continued, with a smile. "Say if thou wilt stay with us, and learn our ways. There is much that we can rede thee, and the benefit will be mutual, and I trust great."

He was briefly tempted, but still, clearly and promptly, he declined. The leader frowned slightly, and was silent. Then the imperious tones rang out:

"Thou art strong! And thou shalt be stronger, if ought of ours can aid to the achievement of this result, so much to be desired.

"Then hearken well. Thy food shall be taken from thee."

His knapsack was ripped rudely from his back.

"Thou shalt wander without guide, and no one of us shall take, in any case, further heed of thee. Go with our respect. And may it be that thou fallest not into the hands of those ruder and less magnanimous, like as the Snakes, perdie, or the Mountain Lions. Thou hast been honorably received, and thou art warned. Begone!"

He left with as much alacrity as he thought became him, and continued on his way. For the remainder of the day he wandered, without attempting to fix a course, or to avoid anything that might come to him. He was lost in thought, with a great sense of well-being that he felt that nothing could overcome.

As the shadows of evening began to lengthen, and the first stars to shine, he found himself ascending the side of a small but respectably rugged mountain. By the time of total darkness, he had reached the top, and seated himself beneath a redwood tree. He began to feel hungry, but not faint, and with a slight effort of his will the hunger passed away. He sank into a revery, he sat still and thought and contemplated through the long night hours. The cool dews came upon him, and the light winds were whispering in the pale first light, and he was undisturbed.

He remained on the mountain for three days, eating nothing, and not thinking of food. He felt the opposing forces of life within, through and around him. The harmonious, continually pulsing tension of existence became in a manner clear to him, its great necessity indubitable. He knew that the battle of opposites, the co-operative strife of elements, abilities, tendencies, must be fought within himself; he foresaw no gain from the struggle's objectification, or its transferral to his associations with others. He would have peaceful, profoundly and highly aspiring, adequate companions, or he would remain alone.

During the fourth night, just before the dawn, he saw a shimmering light over a higher crest in the distance. For an instant it seemed to become a finger, pointing; and then it faded. He arose, light but unfaint from fasting, and set out for the indicated mountain. He encountered no other person along the way.

It was in the late afternoon that he arrived. It was a large and beautiful valley, into which he slowly descended. It was thickly populated, and filled with a seething, a tremendous
activity. Waves of immense, ardent energy enveloped him, compound of great joy and great despair; heart-ravishing music, barely audible, came to him, spasmodically, on the faint breezes. And the weariness and the weakness came to him also, strongly, the exhaustion of his great efforts of the past several days. He lost consciousness, and sank in a seemingly almost boneless heap to the side of the mountain.

He awoke the following morning in a small hut, secluded, in the shade of a large tree and beside a stream. A spare old man, with a slight beard and twinkling eyes, nodded to him.

"Smells good, does it?" he asked.

It smelled very good, and it looked better when the old man brought him an ample breakfast, well prepared. He ate slowly, savoring each mouthful.

"If you don't know where you are," said the old man, "this is a community of artists. We don't always get along very well together," he smiled, "but usually we're minding our own business anyway; and it's good to exchange ideas and insights now and then, and see each other's work. And we co-operate too, especially on the stage productions, like Noh plays, or Wagner, or something contemporary. I can introduce you to a young man who has written some very powerful and apt music for the Aeschylean choruses.

"I'm a poet myself," he continued, "and a dramatist now and then. I'm pretty modest and easy-going, compared to most of the people here, but I have my moments, and I've done some pretty good things in my life. I'll probably show you some later on. It's a good thing for you I'm in a silent period just now: if the old touch had been on my lyre, I'd never have noticed you; or if I had, I'd not have attended to you. But come on, you look healthy enough: let me show you around."

He arose to dress, and the old man looked him over with frank admiration.

"You're a fine figure," he said. "And the beard does you justice: or you do justice to the beard. You're like one of the old Biblical patriarchs. Or like my idea of them, anyway; which may be far enough from the truth."

They left the hut, and walked beside the stream into the main valley.

They passed an occasional distracted figure, who paid them no heed. Painters were numerous: one of them, burly and covered with paint, had ostentatiously affixed his canvas to a rock wall, and was facing away from all the beauties of the scenery: with furious strokes he was nearing the completion of his vivid abstraction. One sat cross-legged, quite self-contained, and with a few strokes of the brush, black on white, achieved a bird that seemed almost ready to fly from the paper. Another was painting a meltingly beautiful portrait of his mistress, with flowers in her hair.

"When we get back, I'll show you a real picture," the old poet said. "It's called Vasuki. He's the king of the snakes, according to the Hindus. I don't know much about the man who did it, except that he's got the most wonderful eyes I ever saw. I tried to do him justice in a sonnet once, but I failed. He just appeared one day, and then disappeared one day, and that's all anyone seems to know. Two of our best young painters went out to look for him over a year ago, and they haven't returned."

There were musical concerts, operas and plays. There were potters at their wheels, and sculptors with their chisels and their clay. Every art seemed represented.

"In that hut over there," said the poet, "lives one of the greatest musical geniuses the world has ever known. Better even than Beethoven, I think. Maybe you'll have a chance to meet him, if he turns sociable while you're here. I trust you'll be here for a long time. Maybe you'll stay for good? You seem to have the mark in your forehead."

He stayed for several months. He luxuriated in the splendor and the beauty of this dedicated life. Great artistry of sound and word, color and form, filled him: but never to overflowing, and never, fully, to satisfaction. He grew weary of the continual reaching out, the perpetual feeding upon dreams. He shared the raptures and the tortments of the artists, he felt powerfully and saw deeply, more than ever before: but something was lacking. The occasional flashes of insight were not enough, and the labor, the aspiration, was heart-breaking. What he sought was still beyond, beyond art itself, beyond all possible creation. And yet, it must be attainable.
He aspired to poetry, he tried to give a voice to his aspiration and his need. But it was not in him. And what if it had been? Why should he write verses to complain that he was not Lit with the Sun? He thought briefly of the Twentieth Century poetry that he had read, the poetry of the Dark Ages, and shuddered at the thought of adding to that store. He would never attempt expression again, until he knew something to express. But when the time came, perhaps it would flow from him in such a golden stream as he remembered from the great masters. Perhaps the poet had not read too mistakenly the sign in his forehead.

He noticed that some of the artists, and those he considered the profoundest and the surest, were not permanent residents here. They came and went, with a light as of far peaks in their eyes. Like the painter of Vasuki, which was truly a marvelous picture, instinct with a spirit that made most other productions seem like mere daubs of paint. He felt that that man knew something, and that he did not learn it here, that he did not learn it as a painter at all. There must be other places, or another place, in which art and the artists were mature. He had had enough of this unquiet, the greatest ecstasies of which obviously fell below the peace and the assurance that called to him. He was weary of this perpetual straining with materials and methods inadequate to the task.

And so, reluctantly, he left the artists, and continued his pilgrimage. As he departed, a symphony orchestra was performing Mozart's Requiem, and this perfect artistry, serene and soaring, dedicated to the very Source, and, it seemed, instinct with something of its light, comprised a fitting and a reassuring farewell.

As the dying strains played upon him, he was filled again with the ravishing verses of Sidney Lanier. Out of the high beauty, these words mingled clearly with his consciousness:

O long ago the billow-flow of sense  
Aroused by passion's windy vehemence  
Upbore me out of depths to heights intense,  
But not to thee, Nirvana.

It was so true, and so much beyond him! The meaning was never clear, and yet, against it, all else was a deeper darkness. But it called him, and that was sufficient. He must continue, patiently, on the way.

The walk was pleasant, and the evergreens were soughing gently, as he passed. Midway in the afternoon he sat down by a convenient spring, and ate quickly a light meal. As he was resting, a man came through the trees before him: balding and rather stout, and apparently approaching the end of middle age. He did not know whether he cared to talk with this man. But he had little choice, for he hailed him with a sort of good-natured camaraderie, and came and sat beside him.

"You may consider me a philosopher," the man announced; "that is, in the fine old sense, a lover of wisdom. I don't think that will frighten you away," he chuckled. "I think I can see that you agree with Socrates: that you consider an unexamined life to be a life that is not worth living. Is this correct?"

He replied that it was, and that he was a seeker of wisdom, and hoped one day to prove to be a lover of it—after he had found it.

The philosopher smiled, and continued, "Perhaps it is best to be a lover of the search; perhaps, indeed, the search itself is the greatest wisdom. This used to be considered a platitude," he laughed, "when education was more wide-spread in the world. But I have never found anything bright and brand new that matches it. I do not want to be one of those who 'give to dust that is a little gilt more laud than gilt o'erdusted'. How about you?"

He smiled agreement. He was beginning somewhat to like this man: but still he could not respect him, either as an embodiment of wisdom or as a seeker of it. His mind seemed only clever, and rather lazy and complacent with its cleverness: it seemed quite incapable of any really deep probing, or high flight. This was not his idea of a philosopher.

The object of this scrutiny seemed somewhat to sense its import, and to shrug it off.

"I could tell it at a glance," he said. "You're one of the most intelligent men I've ever seen escape from that monstrosity of a City. Let me congratulate you! It's a terrible thing to live
like that.
"One immense mechanized mass! One big idiot's delight, full of nothing but idiots, or
morons at best. Everybody "happy": food, shelter and sex all taken care of, and real
human contact at a minimum: a true earthly paradise. A paradise for morons, that is, for
people who really prefer to live worse than hogs. God bless the dear technologists, who
keep it going: they as stupid as the majority, of course, just morons with a little
mechanical know-how, as the phrase was. And bless whatever powers there are, for the
library; and the chance to escape!

"I don't know how it came about, but there's something behind it. Just before the poor
little fools could blow themselves up, the Disasters hit them: and while they were still
traumatized, this system began to take care of them. It's a fine thing, I guess, for those
that aren't capable of a life worth living. And for those that are, too: it seems to take hold
of them at just the right time. It seems that it gives everyone just what he is best fitted for,
and then lets him go.

"It never really let go of me—or got rid of me. I alternate, from city to country: read
myself to a standstill, and then travel awhile. It's always pleasant, up here. It's like the
coast: the seasons don't change anymore. That is, there aren't any seasons—just hints of
them. But maybe you know that by now. Ah—yes. I guessed as much. You look like a man
that has been out long enough to—well, to look like a man.

"I wonder how it will end? The birth-rate's way down, and seems to continue decreasing,
even in the country. Maybe the race is gradually dying out: evolution getting rid of an
unfit species. But I wouldn't expect it to be so gentle about it.

"The more I think about it, the better I see what an infinite amount I've got to learn.
Another platitude: Newton picking up pebbles on the sea-shore. Maybe the craze for
sheer novelty is one of the things that made this mess. I don't know. But I think that there
is such a thing as truth, and that it doesn't adapt itself to conditions: conditions have to
adapt themselves to it. Do you agree? Yes, I thought so. I think I'll have to be heading
back to the library in a few days. I've seen enough this trek.

"There seems to be a guardian angel, somehow, if you believe in that. The explanation's
probably a purely natural one. But people come out and live as they like to, with no
hindrance, and they prosper. They do a little simple farming, and always have bumper
crops. The weather and the wild animals never hurt them, and they never hurt each other.
The ones that like to fight do it, but only with swords and knives, and nobody ever seems
to get killed. All the literature and art of the world is preserved, for those that want it: as
many copies as demanded. Sometimes I bring copies of books with me. It helps, to read
them out here. Nature's a lot vaster and more wonderful than we know.

"Everything seems to be taken care of. Nobody lives in want or fear anymore. Except," he
smiled ruefully, "want of understanding, and fear of death. But we can take things
philosophically, to use an old popular expression."

The philosopher paused awhile, thinking, observing his perplexing companion. He could
not make him out. Presently he returned to his long-standing provisional solution for all
problems.

"Well, why don't you come back to the library with me? Tramping around out here is all
right for a while, it relaxes you and keeps you in touch with things; but meanwhile, time
flies. Shall we go?"

"I think not," the bearded patriarch replied. "The usefulness of books is all but exhausted
for me. And even the greatest and fullest truth, set down in a book, I think must be
inadequate. It's not an intellectual thing I seek."

The philosopher smiled tolerantly.

"You have found that the physical is deadly," he replied. "And you do not appear to be a
man who enjoys emotional drunkenness. What is it you want?"

"Perhaps if I knew, I would have it. I suppose it might be called the spiritual, if there is a
word for it. But I know that it is calling me. If you care to come with me, perhaps I can begin to explain."

The philosopher almost laughed outright.

"No thank you," he said. "I do not care to take refuge in any vague mysticism. What I know I want really to know, intelligibly and clearly. I am no dreamer."

"Are they irresponsible dreamers, who are behind these historically unparalleled phenomena? Surely there must be someone there. You have seemed to think so yourself."

The philosopher smiled wryly, a little sheepishly.

"Sages in the mountains, eh? Yes, I'll admit having sought them. But they do not seem to want me to find them, and I am going back to the library to follow some leads that I have thought up for myself.

"I do not care to let my mind abdicate its high position," he concluded, with a slight sneer.

"Goodbye, then. I wish you well."

"And so do I wish you," rejoined the philosopher, with an attempt at mocking irony, as he arose. "Goodbye, my friend."

He began briskly down the path, stopped, and called back, "I hear that there is an island rising, in the Pacific: maybe you can find some wise mermaids out there!"

He laughed maliciously, and strode quickly out of sight.

And so the abused budding mystic was left alone, as he desired it.

"Goethe was right," he thought to himself; "men are all too predominantly wont to scorn what they do not understand. Goethe himself illustrated the tendency very well.

"There are so many things that cannot be understood by the ordinary intellectual-emotional-sensible mind, no matter how clever it may be, or how brilliant and vigorous, and broad and deep and strong. It lacks too much: it is not self-existent, and self-sustaining. And the things that it cannot understand are the only things of real, undying importance.

"May I soon find my teacher," he continued, "and be properly trained."

He stood up, restlessly. His last day among the artists was tumbling piecemeal upon him. Was it Shakespeare that the theatrical group had been performing? Yes, King Lear! Such magnificent art, and so futile. He paced about sadly, trying to remember a certain line—yes, this was it:
Men must endure
Their going hence, even as their coming hither;
Ripeness is all.

And that's true, too, he sighed with old Gloucester. And surely he was ripe now, if he was ever going to be. He was balanced in the midst of his various tendencies, and one-pointed for a great drive, a penetration to the depths. He would know himself truly, as infinitely more than that which comes and goes, and shines but briefly in the darkness.

He stood listening, and gazing into the distance. Yes! The call was clear now, and there would be no further stopping along the way. He strode out strongly, and cut due east, heading for the really high mountains, and the farther shore.

THE END
1.B. "Project Gutenberg" is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation ("the Foundation" or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If any individual work is in the public domain in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg-tm mission of providing free access to electronic works by actually using the Project Gutenberg-tm works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg-tm name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg-tm License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg-tm work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country outside the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg-tm License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg-tm work (any work on which the phrase "Project Gutenberg" appears, or with which the phrase "Project Gutenberg" is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work is derived from the public domain (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase "Project Gutenberg" associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg-tm License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg-tm License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg-tm.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg-tm License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg-tm work in a format other than "Plain Vanilla ASCII" or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg-tm web site (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon
request, of the work in its original "Plain Vanilla ASCII" or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg-tm License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg-tm works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg-tm works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, "Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation."

- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg-tm License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg-tm works.

- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.

- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg-tm works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from both the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and Michael Hart, the owner of the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread public domain works in creating the Project Gutenberg-tm collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain "Defects," such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the "Right of Replacement or Refund" described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further
opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you 'AS-IS', WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg-tm work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg-tm work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg-tm

Project Gutenberg-tm is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg-tm's goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg-tm collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg-tm and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state’s laws.

The Foundation's principal office is located at 4557 Melan Dr. S. Fairbanks, AK, 99712, but its volunteers and employees are scattered throughout numerous locations. Its business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's web site and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

For additional contact information:
Dr. Gregory B. Newby
Chief Executive and Director
gnewby@pglaf.org

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg-tm depends upon and cannot survive without wide spread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations ($1 to $5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To
SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg Web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations.
To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works.

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg-tm concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg-tm eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg-tm eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as Public Domain in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our Web site which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org

This Web site includes information about Project Gutenberg-tm, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.