

The Judge and the Plaintiff

by Ambrose Bierce

A Man of Experience in Business was awaiting the judgment of the Court in an action for damages which he had brought against a railway company. The door opened and the Judge of the Court entered.

"Well," said he, "I am going to decide your case to-day. If I should decide in your favour, I wonder how you would express your satisfaction?"

"Sir," said the Man of Experience in Business, "I should risk your anger by offering you one half the sum awarded."

"Did I say I was going to decide that case?" said the Judge, abruptly, as if awakening from a dream. "Dear me, how absent-minded I am. I mean I have already decided it, and judgment has been entered for the full amount that you sued for."

"Did I say I would give you one half?" said the Man of Experience in Business, coldly. "Dear me, how near I came to being a rascal. I mean, that I am greatly obliged to you."