

The Man and the Wart

by Ambrose Bierce

A Person with a Wart on His Nose met a Person Similarly Afflicted, and said:

"Let me propose your name for membership in the Imperial Order of Abnormal Proboscians, of which I am the High Noble Toby and Surreptitious Treasurer. Two months ago I was the only member. One month ago there were two. To-day we number four Emperors of the Abnormal Proboscis in good standing--doubles every four weeks, see? That's geometrical progression--you know how that piles up. In a year and a half every man in California will have a wart on his Nose. Powerful Order! Initiation, five dollars."

"My friend," said the Person Similarly Afflicted, "here are five dollars. Keep my name off your books."

"Thank you kindly," the Man with a Wart on His Nose replied, pocketing the money; "it is just the same to us as if you joined. Good-by."

He went away, but in a little while he was back.

"I quite forgot to mention the monthly dues," he said.