

## **The Noser and the Note**

by Ambrose Bierce

The Head Rifler of an insolvent bank, learning that it was about to be visited by the official Noser into Things, placed his own personal note for a large amount among its resources, and, gaily touching his guitar, awaited the inspection. When the Noser came to the note he asked, "What's this?"

"That," said the Assistant Pocketer of Deposits, "is one of our liabilities."

"A liability?" exclaimed the Noser. "Nay, nay, an asset. That is what you mean, doubtless."

"Therein you err," the Pocketer explained; "that note was written in the bank with our own pen, ink, and paper, and we have not paid a stationery bill for six months."

"Ah, I see," the Noser said, thoughtfully; "it is a liability. May I ask how you expect to meet it?"

"With fortitude, please God," answered the Assistant Pocketer, his eyes to Heaven raising--"with fortitude and a firm reliance on the laxity of the law."

"Enough, enough," exclaimed the faithful servant of the State, choking with emotion; "here is a certificate of solvency."

"And here is a bottle of ink," the grateful financier said, slipping it into the other's pocket; "it is all that we have."