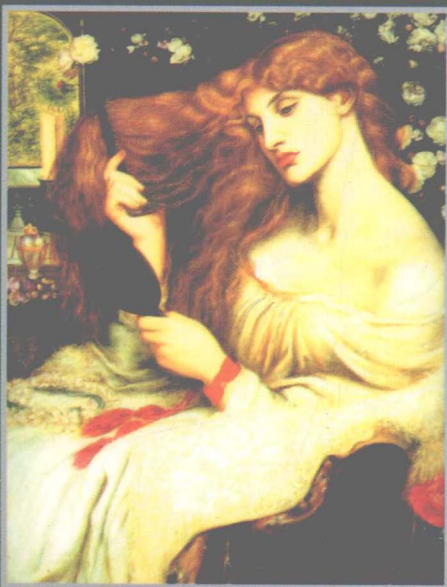


5元丛书

麦琪的礼物

The Gift of Maggie

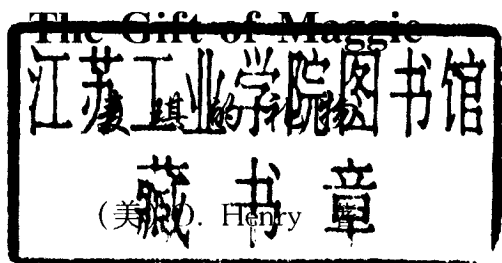
O. Henry



中國對外經濟貿易出版社

5 元丛书第八辑 英文经典名著丛书(II)

丛书主编 范希春 马德高



中国对外经济贸易出版社

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

麦琪的礼物:英文 / (美) 欧·亨利 (O. Henry) 著. —北京: 中国对外经济贸易出版社, 2000. 10

(5 元丛书. 第八辑. 英文经典名著丛书(Ⅱ) / 范希春, 马德高主编)

ISBN 7-80004-841-1

I. 麦... II. 亨... III. 英语-语言读物, 小说
IV. H319.4: I

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2000) 第 53285 号

5 元丛书第八辑	新华书店发行
英文经典名著丛书(Ⅱ)	山东省高唐县印刷厂印刷
丛书主编 范希春 马德高	787×1092 毫米 36 开本
--The Gift of Maggie	印张:46.5 字数:1 245 千字
麦琪的礼物	2000 年 10 月第 1 版
(美) O. Henry 著	2000 年 10 月第 1 次印刷
中国对外经济贸易出版社出版	ISBN 7-80004-841-1
(北京安定门外大街东后巷 28 号)	H·138
邮政编码:100710	全套定价:40.00 元

前 言

欧·亨利(O. Henry 1862—1910),原名威廉·西德尼·波特(William Sidney Porter),是美国现代短篇小说的创始人。他出身于社会底层,做过会计、出纳员、办事员,他的小说以擅长写城市平民小人物如店员、公务员、医生、画家、小偷等著名。欧·亨利的小说大概有近 300 篇,分别收入《白菜与国王》、《四百万》等小说集中。

欧·亨利的小说主要有以下几个特点:

一是描写小人物之间的辛酸但又温馨的情感生活。如,他的著名的小说《麦琪的礼物》便是这方面的代表。小说写了圣诞节前夜,一对贫穷的夫妻之间平淡而又深挚的爱情故事——妻子想为丈夫买一件圣诞礼物,她知道丈夫有一块祖传的金表,但是却没有与之相配的表链,平常,只是偷偷地看一眼这只金表。可是,她没有钱,为了给丈夫买表链,妻子忍痛卖掉了自己的满头秀发。丈夫呢,也希望给妻子一件圣诞礼物,他知道,妻子想要一套发梳已经很久了,于是,他卖掉了祖传的金表,为妻子买回发梳——欧·亨利的小说真实地描写了这对贫穷夫妻间的无奈和温情,表现出了一种浓郁的辛酸之中的慰藉、伤感之中的温馨。

二是描写了小人物生的无奈。如《警察与赞美诗》便十分典型地表现了这样一个主题,它描写了一个流浪汉因为饥寒交迫,想到监狱里去过冬,因此,他做出了一系列违法的举动,警察就是视而不见,不抓他。当他游荡到教堂门外,听见赞美诗后受到感动,想重新做人时,警察却将他当作无业游民抓起来送进了监狱。

三是对上流社会进行了辛辣的讽刺。如《黄雀在后》一篇

写的便是强盗、骗子、金融家的故事——强盗抢来的钱被骗子骗走，骗子将骗来的钱投到金融家那儿，金融家通过买空卖空把骗子的钱弄到了手。这种寓言式的小说，实际蕴含着这样的深意——强盗 = 骗子 = 金融家，其讽刺是十分辛辣的。

欧·亨利的小说总是寻找生活中的悖论来作为突破口和小小说的亮点，以情节取胜。他的短篇小说虽然只有近 300 篇，但却开创了美国文学短篇小说的先河和美国文学的新时代。为了纪念欧·亨利为美国文学所做出的卓越的贡献，1919 年，即在作者死后 9 年，美国设立了一年一度的欧·亨利奖，表彰在短篇小说创作上的优秀作家，其中，获 1949 年度诺贝尔文学奖的威廉·福克纳(William Faulkner 1897—1962)，便是其中的一员。

范希春

2000 年 7 月 18 日

于中国社会科学院研究生院

CONTENTS

Chapter 1	A Chaparral Christmas Gift	1
Chapter 2	The Gift of Maggie	6
Chapter 3	"The Rose of Dixie"	9
Chapter 4	The Third Ingredient	20
Chapter 5	Schools and Schools	44
Chapter 6	Thimble, Thimble	54
Chapter 7	Buried Treasure	75
Chapter 8	To Him Who Waits	84
Chapter 9	He Also Serves	94
Chapter 10	The Moment of Victory	105
Chapter 11	The Head-hunter	116
Chapter 12	No Story	127
Chapter 13	The Higher Pragmatism	137
Chapter 14	Best-seller	144
Chapter 15	Rus in Urbe	155

Chapter 1

A Chaparral Christmas Gift

The original cause of the trouble was about twenty years in growing.

At the end of that time it was worth it.

Had you lived anywhere within fifty miles of Sun-down Ranch you would have heard of it. It possessed a quantity of jet-black hair, a pair of extremely frank, deep-brown eyes and a laugh that rippled across the prairie like the sound of a hidden brook. The name of it was Rosita McMullen; and she was the daughter of old man McMullen of the Sundown Sheep Ranch.

There came riding on red roan steeds—or, to be more explicit, on a paint and a flea-bitten sorrel—two wooers. One was Madison Lane, and the other was the Frio Kid, But at that time they did not call him the Frio Kid, for he had not earned the honours of special nomenclature—his name was simply Johnny McRoy.

It must not be supposed that these two were the sum of the agreeable Rosita's admirers. The bronchos of a dozen others champed their bits at the long hitching rack of the Sundown Ranch. Many were the sheeps'-eves that were cast in those savannas that did not belong to the flocks of Dan McMullen. But of all the cavaliers, Madison Lane and Johnny McRoy galloped far ahead, wherefore they are to be chronicled.

Madison Lane, a young cattleman from the Nueces country, won the race. He and Rosita were married one Christmas day. Armed, hilarious, vociferous, magnanimous, the cowmen and the sheepmen, laying aside their hereditary hatred, joined forces to celebrate the occasion.

Sundown Ranch was sonorous with the cracking of jokes and sixshooters, the shine of buckles and bright eyes, the outspoken congratulations of the herders of kine.

But while the wedding feast was at its liveliest there descended upon it Johnny McRoy, bitten by jealousy, like one possessed.

"I'll give you a Christmas present," he yelled, shrilly, at the

door, with his gun in his hand. Even then he had some reputation as an offhand shot.

His first bullet cut a neat underbit in Madison Lane's right ear. The barrel of his gun moved an inch. The next shot would have been the bride's had not Carson, a sheepman, possessed a mind with triggers somewhat well oiled and in repair. The guns of the wedding party had been hung, in their belts, upon nails in the wall when they sat at table, as a concession to good taste. But Carson, with great promptness, hurled his plate of roast venison and frijoles at McRoy, spoiling his aim. The second bullet, then, only shattered the white petals of a Spanish dagger flower suspended two feet above Rosita's head.

The guests spurned their chairs and jumped for their weapons. It was considered an improper act to shoot the bride and groom at a wedding. In about six seconds there were twenty or so bullets due to be whizzing in the direction of Mr. McRoy.

"I'll shoot better next time," yelled Johnny; "and there'll be a next time." He backed rapidly out the door.

Carson, the sheepman, spurred on to attempt further exploits by the success of his plate-throwing, was first to reach the door. McRoy's bullet from the darkness laid him low.

The cattlemen then swept out upon him, calling for vengeance, for, while the slaughter of a sheepman has not always lacked condonement, it was a decided mis-demeanour in this instance. Carson was innocent; he was no accomplice at the matrimonial proceedings; nor had any one heard him quote the line "Christmas comes but once a year" to the guests.

But the sortie failed in its vengeance. McRoy was on his horse and away, shouting back curses and threats as he galloped into the concealing chaparral.

That night was the birthnight of the Frio Kid. He became the "bad man" of that portion of the State. The rejection of his suit by Miss McMullen turned him to a dangerous man. When officers went after him for the shooting of Carson, he killed two of them, and entered upon the life of an outlaw. He became a marvellous shot with either hand. He would turn up in towns and settlements, raise a quarrel at the slightest opportunity, pick off his man and laugh at the officers of the law. He was so cool, so dead-

ly, so rapid, so inhumanly blood-thirsty that none but faint attempts were ever made to capture him. When he was at last shot and killed by a little one-armed Mexican who was nearly dead himself from fright, the Frio Kid had the deaths of eighteen men on his head. About half of these were killed in fair duels depending upon the quickness of the draw. The other half were men whom he assassinated from absolute wantonness and cruelty.

Many tales are told along the border of his impudent courage and daring. But he was not one of the breed of desperadoes who have seasons of generosity and even, of softness. They say he never had mercy on the object of his anger. Yet at this and every Christmastide it is well to give each one credit, if it can be done, for whatever speck of good he may have possessed. If the Frio Kid ever did a kindly act or felt a throb of generosity in his heart it was once at such a time and season, and this is the way it happened.

One who has been crossed in love should never breathe the odour from the blossoms of the ratama tree. It stirs the memory to a dangerous degree.

One December in the Frio country there was a ratama tree in full bloom, for the winter had been as warm as springtime. That way rode the Frio Kid and his satellite aW co-murderer, Mexican Frank. The kid reined in his mustang, and sat in his saddle, thoughtful and grim, with dangerously narrowing eyes. The rich, sweet scent touched him somewhere beneath his ice and iron.

"I don't know what I've been thinking about, Mex," he remarked in his usual mild drawl, "to have forgot all about a Christmas present I got to give. I'm going to ride over tomorrow night and shoot Madison Lane in his own house. He got my girl—Rosita would have had me if he hadn't cut into the game. I wonder why I happened to overlook it up to now?"

"Ah, shucks, Kid," said Mexican, "don't talk foolishness. You know you can't get within a mile of Mad Lane's house tomorrow night. I see old man Allen day before yesterday, and he says Mad is going to have Christmas doings at his house. You remember how you shot up the festivities when Mad was married, and about the threats you made? Don't you suppose Mad Lane'll kind of keep his eye open for a certain Mr. Kid? You plumb make me tired, Kid, with such remarks."

"I'm going," repeated the Frio Kid, without heat, "to go to Madison Lane's Christmas doings, and kill him. I ought to have done it a long time ago. Why, Mex, just two weeks ago I dreamed me and Rosita was married instead of her and him; and we was living in a house, and I could see her smiling at me, and—oh! H—l, Mex, he got her; and I'll get him—yes, sir, on Christmas Eve he got her, and then's when I'll get him."

"There's other ways of committing suicide," advised Mexican. "Why don't you go and surrender to the sheriff?"

"I'll get him," said the Kid.

Christmas Eve fell as balmy as April. Perhaps there was a hint of far-away frostiness in the air, but it tingles like seltzer, perfumed faintly with late prairie blossoms and the mesquite grass.

When night came the five or six rooms of the ranch-house were brightly lit. In one room was a Christmas tree, for the Lanes had a boy of three, and a dozen or more guests were expected from the nearer ranches.

At nightfall Madison Lane called aside Jim Belcher and three other cowboys employed on his ranch.

"Now, boys," said Lane, "keep your eyes open. Walk around the house and watch the road well. All of you know the 'Frio Kid,' as they call him now, and if you see him, open fire on him without asking any questions. I'm not afraid of his coming around, but Rosita is. She's been afraid he'd come in on us every Christmas since we were married."

The guests had arrived in buckboards and on horseback, and were making themselves comfortable inside.

The evening went along pleasantly. The guests enjoyed and praised Rosita's excellent supper, and afterward the men scattered in groups about the rooms or on the broad "gallery," smoking and chatting.

The Christmas tree, of course, delighted the youngsters, and above all were they pleased when Santa Claus himself in magnificent white beard and furs appeared and began to distribute the toys.

"It's my papa," announced Billy Sampson, aged six. "I've seen him wear 'em before."

Berkly, a sheepman, an old friend of Lane, stopped Rosita as

she was passing by him on the gallery, where he was sitting smoking.

"Well, Mrs. Lane," said he, "I suppose by this Christmas you've gotten over being afraid of that fellow McRoy, haven't you? Madison and I have talked about it, you know."

"Very nearly," said Rosita, smiling, "but I am still nervous sometimes. I shall never forget that awful time when he came so near to killing us."

"He's the most cold-hearted villain in the world," said Berkly. "The citizens all along the border ought to turn out and hunt him down like a wolf."

"He has committed awful crimes," said Rosita, but—I—don't—know. I think there is a spot of good somewhere in everybody. He was not always bad—that I know."

Rosita turned into the hallway between the rooms. Santa Claus, in muffling whiskers and furs, was just coming through.

"I heard what you said through the window, Mrs. Lane," he said. "I was just going down in my pocket for a Christmas present for your husband. But I've left one for you, instead. It's in the room to your right."

"Oh, thank you, kind Santa Claus," said Rosita, brightly.

Rosita went into the room, while Santa Claus stepped into the cooler air of the yard.

She found no one in the room but Madison.

"Where is my present that Santa said he left for me in here?" she asked.

"Haven't seen anything in the way of a present," said her husband, laughing, "unless he could have meant me."

The next day Gabriel Radd, the foreman of the X 0 Ranch, dropped into the post-office at Loma Alta.

"Well, the Frio Kid's got his dose of lead at last," he remarked to the postmaster.

"That so? How'd it happen?"

"One of old Sanchez's Mexican sheep herders did it! think of it! the Frio Kid killed by a sheep herder! The Greaser saw him riding along past his camp about twelve o'clock last night, and was so skeered that he up with a Winchester and let him have it. Funniest part of it was that the Kid was dressed all up with white

Angora-skin whiskers and a regular Santy Claus rig-out from head to foot. Think of the Frio Kid playing Santy!"

Chapter 2

The Gift of Maggie

One dollar and eight-seven cents. That was all she had saved. Three times Della counted it. Only one dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.

There was clearly nothing left to do but drop herself onto the shabby little couch and weep. So Della did. You see, life is made up of sobs, sniffles, and smiles — but mainly of sniffles.

When Della had finished crying she went to the window and looked out sadly at a grey cat walking along a grey fence in a grey backyard. Tomorrow would be Christmas Day, and she had only \$1.87 with which to buy Jim, her husband, a present. She had been saving every cent she could for months, but twenty dollars a week—which was the total of their income — doesn't leave much for saving. Expenses had been greater than she had calculated. They always are. And now she had only \$1.87 to buy a present for Jim. Many happy hours she had spent planning for something nice for him. *Something fine and rare* — something worthy of the honour of being owned by Jim.

There was a mirror between the windows of the room. Suddenly she whirled from the window and stood before the glass. Her eyes were shining brilliantly, but soon her face lost its colour. Rapidly she pulled down her hair and let it fall to its full length.

Now, Della and Jim had two possessions in which they both took very great pride. One was Jim's gold watch, which had been his father's and his grandfather's. The other was Della's hair. It fell about her, rippling and shining like a brown waterfall. It reached below her knees and almost made a garment for her.

She did her hair up again nervously and quickly. She hesitated for a minute and stood still while a tear or two splashed on the worn red carpet.

On went her old brown jacket. On went her old brown hat. With a whirl of skirts and with the brilliant sparkle still in her eyes, she ran out of the door and down the stairs into the street.

She stopped at a sign that read: "Madame Sofronie. We Buy Hair Goods of All Kinds." One flight up Della ran, and paused for a moment, panting. She opened the door.

"Will you buy my hair?" asked Della.

"Take your hat off and let's have a look at it," said Madame.

Down came the long brown waves.

"Twenty dollars," said Madame, lifting the mass of hair with a practised hand.

"Give it to me quickly," said Della.

The next two hours sped by in a whirl of happiness. She searched shop after shop for Jim's present.

She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and no one else. It was a gold watch chain. It was even worthy of The Watch. As soon as she saw it she knew that it must be Jim's. It was just right for him. Twenty-one dollars they took for it, and she hurried home with the remaining 87 cents.

When Della reached home she looked at what was left of her poor hair and started to work on it.

Within forty minutes her head was covered with tiny curls that made her look wonderfully like a naughty schoolboy. She looked at herself in the mirror long, carefully, and critically.

At 7 o'clock the coffee was made and the frying-pan was on the back of the stove, hot and ready to cook the supper.

Jim was never late. Della held the gold chain tightly in her hand and sat on the corner of the table near the door by which he always entered. Then she heard his step on the stairs, and she turned pale for just a moment.

The door opened and Jim stepped in and closed it. He looked thin and very serious. Poor fellow, he was only twenty-two — and to be burdened with a family! He needed a new overcoat and his shoes were old and worn.

As soon as Jim stepped inside the door, he stood still. His eyes were fixed upon Della. There was an expression in them that she could not read, and it terrified her. It was not anger, nor surprise, nor disapproval, nor horror, nor any of the emotions that she had been prepared for. He simply stared at her with that peculiar expression on his face.

Della jumped off the table and went to him. "Jim!" she cried,

"don't look at me that way. I had my hair cut off and sold it because I couldn't have lived through Christmas without giving you a present. It'll grow again — you don't mind, do you? I just had to do it. My hair grows very fast, you know. Say 'Merry Christmas!' Jim, and let's be happy. You don't know what a nice — what a beautiful, nice gift I've got for you."

"You've cut off your hair?" asked Jim, slowly, as if he had not yet understood that obvious fact even after the hardest mental labour.

"I've cut it off and sold it," said Della. "It's sold, I tell you — sold and gone. It's Christmas Eve, Jim. Be good to me, for it went for you."

Jim seemed quickly to wake out of his trance. He drew a package from his overcoat pocket and threw it upon the table.

"Don't make any mistake about me, Della," he said, "I don't think there's anything about a haircut that could make me love you any less. But if you unwrap that package you will see why I was upset at first."

Della's fingers tore at the string and paper. Then came an excited scream of joy, and then, alas! a quick change to tears.

For there lay The Combs — the set of combs that Della had worshipped for many months in a shopwindow. Beautiful combs, pure tortoiseshell, with jewels set in — just the colour to wear in her beautiful hair. They were expensive combs, she knew, and her heart had longed for them without the least hope of possession. And now they were hers, but with her hair gone there could be no use for them.

But she hugged them to her chest, and at last she was able to look up with tearful eyes and a smile and say: "My hair grows so fast, Jim!"

Then Della remembered something else and cried, "Oh, oh!"

Jim had not yet seen his beautiful gift. She held it out to him eagerly in her open hand.

"Isn't it lovely, Jim? I hunted all over town to find it. You'll have to look at the time a hundred times a day now. Give me your watch. I want to see how it looks on it."

Instead of obeying, Jim dropped onto the couch, put his hands under the back of his head, and smiled.

"Della," said he, "let's put our Christmas gifts away and keep them a while. They're too nice to use just at present. I sold the watch to get the money to buy your combs. . . And now, let's have our supper."

Chapter 3

"The Rose of Dixie"

When The Rose of Dixie magazine was started by a stock company in Toombs City, Georgia, there was never but one candidate for its chief editorial position in the minds of its owners. Col. Aquila Telfair was the man for the place. By all the rights of learning, family, reputation, and Southern traditions, he was its fore-ordained, fit, and logical editor. So, a committee of the patriotic Georgia citizens who had subscribed the founding fund of \$ 100, 000 called upon Colonel Telfair at his residence, Cedar Heights, fearful lest the enterprise and the South should suffer by his possible refusal.

The colonel received them in his great library, where he spent most of his days. The library had descended to him from his father. It contained ten thousand volumes, some of which had been published as late as the year 1861. When the deputation arrived, Colonel Telfair was seated at his massive white-pine centre table, reading Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy. He arose and shook hands punctiliously with each member of the committee. If you were familiar with The Rose of Dixie you will remember the colonel's portrait, which appeared in it from time to time. You could not forget the long, carefully brushed white hair; the hooked, high-bridged nose, slightly twisted to the left; the keen eyes under the still black eyebrows; the classic mouth beneath the drooping white mustache, slightly frazzled at the ends.

The committee solicitously offered him the position of managing editor, humbly presenting an outline of the field that the publication was designed to cover and mentioning a comfortable salary. The colonel's lands were growing poorer each year and were much cut up by red gullies. Besides, the honor was not one to be refused.

In a forty-minute speech of acceptance, Colonel Telfair gave

an outline of English literature from Chaucer to Macaulay, refought the battle of Chancellorsville, and said that, God helping him, he would so conduct *The Rose of Dixie* that its fragrance and beauty would permeate the entire world, hurling back into the teeth of the Northern minions their belief that no genius or good could exist in the brains and hearts of the people whose property they had destroyed and whose rights they had curtailed.

Offices for the magazine were partitioned off and furnished in the second floor of the First National Bank building; and it was for the colonel to cause *The Rose of Dixie* to blossom and flourish or to wilt in the balmy air of the land of flowers.

The staff of assistants and contributors that Editor-Colonel Telfair drew about him was a peach. It was a whole crate of Georgia peaches. The first assistant editor, Tolliver Lee Fairfax, had had a father killed during Pickett's charge. The second assistant, Keats Unthank, was the nephew of one of Morgan's Raiders. The book reviewer, Jackson Rockingham, had been the youngest soldier in the Confederate army, having appeared on the field of battle with a sword in one hand and a milk-bottle in the other. The art editor, Roncesvalles Sykes, was a third cousin to a nephew of Jefferson Davis. Miss Lavinia Terhune, the colonel's stenographer and typewriter, had an aunt who had once been kissed by Stonewall Jackson. Tommy Webster, the head office-boy, got his job by having recited Father Ryan's poems, complete, at the commencement exercises of the Toombs City High School. The girls who wrapped and addressed the magazines were members of old Southern families in Reduced Circumstances. The cashier was a scrub named Hawkins, from Ann Arbor, Michigan, who had recommendations and a bond from a guarantee company filed with the owners. Even Georgia stock companies sometimes realize that it takes live ones to bury the dead.

Well, sir, if you believe me, *The Rose of Dixie* blossomed five times before anybody heard of it except the people who buy their hooks and eyes in Toombs City. Then Hawkins climbed off his stool and told on 'em to the stock company. Even in Ann Arbor he had been used to having his business propositions heard of at least as far away as Detroit. So an advertising manager was engaged—Beauregard Fitzhugh Banks, a young man in a lavender

necktie, whose grandfather had been the Exalted High Pillow-slip of the Kuklux Klan.

In spite of which *The Rose of Dixie* kept coming out every month. Although in every issue it ran photos of either the Taj Mahal or the Luxembourg Gardens, or Carmencita or La Follette, a certain number of people bought it and subscribed for it. As a boom for it, Editor-Colonel Telfair ran three different views of Andrew Jackson's old home, "The Hermitage," a full-page engraving of the second battle of Manassas, entitled "Lee to the Rear!" and a five-thousand-word biography of Belle Boyd in the same number. The subscription list that month advanced 118. Also there were poems in the same issue by Leonina Vashti Haricot (pen-name), related to the Haricots of Charleston, South Carolina, and Bill Thompson, nephew of one of the stockholders. And an article from a special society correspondent describing a tea-party given by the swell Boston and English set, where a lot of tea was spilled overboard by some of the guests masquerading as Indians.

One day a person whose breath would easily cloud a mirror, he was so much alive, entered the office of *The Rose of Dixie*. He was a man about the size of a real-estate agent, with a self-tied tie and a manner that he must have borrowed conjointly from W. J. Bryan, Hackenschmidt, and Hetty Green. He was shown into the editor-colonel's pons asinorum. Colonel Telfair rose and began a Prince Albert bow.

"I'm Thacker," said the intruder, taking the editor's chair—"T. T. Thacker, of New York."

He dribbled hastily upon the colonel's desk some cards, a bulky manila envelope, and a letter from the owners of *The Rose of Dixie*. This letter introduced Mr. Thacker, and politely requested Colonel Telfair to give him a conference and whatever information about the magazine he might desire.

"I've been corresponding with the secretary of the magazine owners for some time," said Thacker, briskly. "I'm a practical magazine man myself, and a circulation booster as good as any, if I do say it. I'll guarantee an increase of anywhere from ten thousand to a hundred thousand a year for any publication that isn't printed in a dead language. I've had my eye on *The Rose of Dixie*