

**THE TWO  
PHILOSOPHERS A  
QUAINT SAD COMEDY**

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The Two Philosophers a Quaint Sad Comedy by John Jay Chapman

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**JOHN JAY CHAPMAN**

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Two Philosophers  
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### **Dramatis Personæ.**

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REGIUS . . . . . *Professor of philosophy, ancient and modern.*

THEISTICUS . . . . . *Professor and practiser of modern philosophy.*

CAVEATOR . . . . . *A lawyer.*

FIRST STUDENT.

SECOND STUDENT, AND OTHER STUDENTS.

MARY . . . . . *A maid-servant.*

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The scene is laid in Cambridge, in a lecture-room, and in Regius's study.

## THE TWO PHILOSOPHERS :

A Quint, Far Comedy.

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### ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Lecture-room. REGIUS in his doctor's robes,  
and students before him.*

REGIUS.

I'VE studied every science round,  
And many a doctrine have I found ;  
Greek and German roots of thought  
In years of labor have I sought ;  
And every gnarled and eyed potato  
Out of Zoroaster and Plato  
Do I plant in your young heads,  
And watch 'em sprout as in hot-beds.  
The seed from Aristotle's patch  
(I tell you, t' get it I had to scratch)  
And all the living germs in Zeno,  
Precious as Mexican *oro fino*,  
Bottled I have for future culture :  
I pounced upon them like a vulture.  
I scooped the elusive Schopenhauer,  
And drained and strained and tried and dried him ;  
He's in my bag this many an hour,

With wizened Immanuel Kant beside him,  
Desiccated Hegel and Lotz, —  
None good without my name on the pots, —  
That's the use of us philosophers,  
That's the reason they make a fuss over us :  
We have picked the plums of learning,  
Dried 'em into raisins and prunes :  
Open your mouth and shut your eyes,  
And we give you something to make you wise,  
Liebig's Extract of Descartes  
— A syllabus worth a folio —  
An ounce goes as far as twenty quarts  
Of any other digest I know :  
Digested till it *won't digest*.  
— Any further you understand —  
My pickled Locke is the very best  
Condensed — evaporated — compressed —  
Heft it a moment in your hand.

CHORUS OF STUDENTS.

O such dainties: sublimated  
Essences of education.  
Since the world was first created,  
Since we called ourselves a nation,  
Was there ever joined before  
Modern thought and ancient lore !  
Master, master! only throw us  
Leavings — from the feast you show us.

REGIUS.

Good! This spirit I commend:  
It is a hopeful feature,



The soul of learning is to lend  
All reverence to the Teacher.

My last good gift before I am gone  
Over the seas, for go I must  
Not for very long, I trust  
Shall be a little thing of my own.  
For I am to take a holiday :  
God keep you while I am away.  
Now, listen with your sharpest ears,  
To catch my wisdom as it appears.

To be is to know :  
But to know is to be ;  
For knowing and being,  
Like looking and seeing,  
Are two very different things, seems to me.

FIRST SCHOLAR.

Would it give you much pain  
To say that again ?

REGIUS.

Apt scholars a few :  
But to gratify you,  
If you'll listen to me,  
I'll say the same thing in a different key ;

To drink is to live :  
And to live is to drink.

For living and drinking,  
Like sneezing and winking,  
Are two very different things, as I think.

FIRST SCHOLAR.

I think it is plain.  
Don't say it again.

REGIUS.

Why, novice, I've hundreds of themes in my head:  
Orphic sentences, embryo theses,  
Which, worked up in classical form, might be made  
Really great philosophical essays.  
*(He relapses into philosophical abstraction.)*

VARIATION I.

If to know — (what's to know?)  
Is to be — (what's to be?)  
The one seems involved in the other,  
It seems our conceptions of each,  
*(Pianissimo) what are they?*  
Must be much like sister and brother.

Coda: for, after all, we reach the same conclusion by  
whatever end we begin: for (leading back to theme)  
minor 2-4 time.

VARIATION II.

Knowing, as all men must, that they *but* know  
The things their being suffers them to see,  
How can their human wisdom cheat them so  
To think there's any knowledge save to be?

For what is knowledge save a larger life:  
More being the expansion of *what Is*,  
And what is learning but a constant strife  
Between the spirit and its boundaries?

VARIATION III.

*Therefore* (always a major chord)—  
*Therefore* to know is to be:  
O conquest! O glory! O joy!  
*Therefore* we eat of the fruit of the tree  
In ecstasy without alloy.  
*Therefore* your triumph is nigh,  
Philosophers, knowers, and sages,  
*Therefore* they lift ye on high  
And honor ye throughout the ages.

But to end thus would be vulgar and most unlike a man who knows the soft, descending cadences of romantic love and their philosophical significance: therefore I strike and hold a deep bass note.

VARIATION IV.

TO KNOW.

When the robins at eve in their nest  
Have twittered themselves to their feathery rest,  
Do they know, do you think  
Do they know, they are blest? (*Bass moves up*).

NOT KNOW.

—When they whisper at earliest dawn  
Before the white curtains of morning are drawn,  
When the dewdrops are gray in the mist on the lawn—