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Cui Bono?

BY ROSS SMITH.

It is a tale told of a surgeon and a priest. And great honour was their lot, for each served mankind abundantly according to his own fashion.

Now it chanced that they met one day at the bedside of a dying soul. There they fell to discussing the existence of God.

“In no thing, living or dead,” cried the surgeon, “do I see the hand of the Lord. But hearken to me and you shall judge. In my youth I suffered greatly in spirit, yearning for a sign that my faith might not be shaken. And with all my soul I prayed for a certain leaf to fall that I might believe. But the leaf fell not and I ceased to vex myself concerning matters not of this world, determining to become a healer of the bodies of men. For there is much pain to be relieved.”

“Truly,” answered the priest, “this thing passeth all wonder. For in my youth I, too, was sorely troubled in spirit and I, too, yearned for a sign. And with all my soul I prayed for a certain leaf to fall that I might believe in Him. And, lo, the leaf fell. Then did I give myself wholly into the hands of the Lord, determining to become a healer of the souls of men. For there is much pain here below to be relieved.”

And each went his way, marvelling at the strangeness of it.

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Know that in the surgeon's hour it was spring, when the leaves blossom forth and fall not. But in the priest's hour autumn had fallen over the land, when the leaves are scattered abroad even as snow is driven before a wind.