

once to play the 'Star-spangled Banner,' then a Sousa march, and then the 'Star-spangled Banner' again. It must be an American millionaire, and he's evidently got a very big price for it; he's just beaming and chuckling with satisfaction."

"We must ask him who has bought it," said Mrs. Nougat-Jones.

"Hush! no, don't. Let's buy some of his sketches, quick, before we are supposed to know that he's famous; otherwise he'll be doubling the prices. I am so glad he's had a success at last. I always believed in him, you know."

For the sum of ten shillings each Miss Strubble acquired the drawings of the camel dying in Upper Berkeley Street and of the giraffes quenching their thirst in Trafalgar Square; at the same price Mrs. Nougat-Jones secured the study of roosting sand-grouse. A more ambitious picture, "Wolves and wapiti fighting on the steps of the Athenaeum Club," found a purchaser at fifteen shillings.

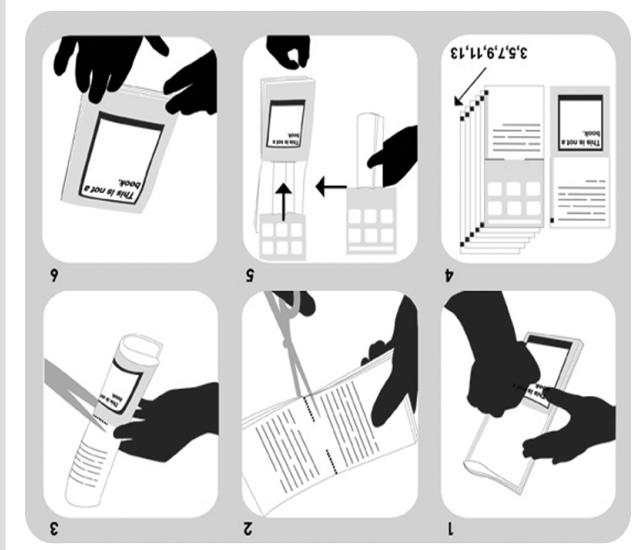
"And now what are your plans?" asked a young man who contributed occasional paragraphs to an artistic weekly.

"I go back to Stolpmunde as soon as the ship sails," said the artist, "and I do not return."

Of all the genuine Bohemians who strayed from time to time into the would-be Bohemian circle of the Restaurant Nuremberg, Owl Street, Soho, Gebhard Knopfschrank. He had no friends, and though he treated all the restaurant frequenters as acquaintances he never seemed to wish to carry the acquaintance beyond the door that led into Owl Street and the outer world. He dealt with them all rather as a market woman might deal with chance passers-by, exhibiting her wares and chattering about the weather and the slackness of business, occasionally about rheumatism, but never showing a desire to penetrate into their daily lives or to dissect their ambitions. He was understood to belong to a family of peasant farmers, somewhere in Pomerania; some two years ago, according to all that was known of him, he had abandoned the labours and responsibilities of swine tending and goose rearing to try his fortune as an artist in London. "Why London and not Paris or Munich?" he had been asked by the curious.

The weeks sped by, and Knopfschrank came more rarely to the restaurant in Owl Street, while his meals on those occasions became more and more meagre. And then came a triumphal day, when he appeared early in the evening in a high state of elation, and ordered an elaborate meal that scarcely stopped short of being a banquet. The ordinary resources of the kitchen were supplemented by an imported dish of smoked goosebreast, a Pomeranian delicacy that was luckily procurable at a firm of *dellikatessen* merchants in Coventry Street, while a long-necked bottle of Rhine wine gave a finishing touch of festivity and good cheer to the crowded table. "He has evidently sold his masterpiece," whispered Sylvia Strubble to Mrs. Nougat-Jones, who had come in late. "Who has bought it?" she whispered back. "Don't know; he hasn't said anything yet, but it must be some American. Do you see, he has got a little American flag on the dessert dish, and he has put pennies in the music box three times,

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Well, there was a ship that left Stolpmunde for London twice a month, that carried few passengers, but carried them cheaply; the railway fares to Munich or Paris were not cheap. Thus it was that he came to select London as the scene of his great adventure.

The question that had long and seriously agitated the frequenters of the Nuremberg was whether this goose-boy migrant was really a soul-driven genius, spreading his wings to the light, or merely an enterprising young man who fancied he could paint and was pardonably anxious to escape from the monotony of rye bread diet and the sandy, swine-bestrewn plains of Pomerania. There was reasonable ground for doubt and caution; the artistic groups that foregathered at the little restaurant contained so many young women with short hair and so many young men with long hair, who supposed themselves to be abnormally gifted in the domain of music, poetry, painting, or stagecraft, with little or nothing to support the supposition, that a self-announced genius of any sort in their midst was inevitably suspect. On the other hand, there was the ever-imminent danger of entertaining, and snubbing, an angel unawares. There had been the lamentable case of Sledonti,

the dramatic poet, who had been belittled and cold-shouldered in the Owl Street hall of judgment, and had been afterwards hailed as a master singer by the Grand Duke Constantine Constantinovitch -- "the most educated of the Romanoffs," according to Sylvia Strubble, who spoke rather as one who knew every individual member of the Russian imperial family; as a matter of fact, she knew a newspaper correspondent, a young man who ate *bortsch* with the air of having invented it. Sledonti's "Poems of Death and Passion" were now being sold by the thousand in seven European languages, and were about to be translated into Syrian, a circumstance which made the discerning critics of the Nuremberg rather shy of maturing their future judgments too rapidly and too irrevocably. As regards Knopfschran's work, they did not lack opportunity for inspecting and appraising it. However resolutely he might hold himself aloof from the social life of his restaurant acquaintances, he was not minded to hide his artistic performances from their inquiring gaze. Every evening, or nearly every evening, at about seven o'clock, he would make his appearance, sit himself down at his accustomed table, throw a

bulky black portfolio on to the chair opposite him, nod round indiscriminately at his fellow-guests, and commence the serious business of eating and drinking. When the coffee stage was reached he would light a cigarette, draw the portfolio over to him, and begin to rummage among its contents. With slow deliberation he would select a few of his more recent studies and sketches, and silently pass them round from table to table, paying especial attention to any new diners who might be present. On the back of each sketch was marked in plain figures the announcement "Price ten shillings."

If his work was not obviously stamped with the hall-mark of genius, at any rate it was remarkable for its choice of an unusual and unvarying theme. His pictures always represented some well-known street or public place in London, fallen into decay and denuded of its human population, in the place of which there roamed a wild fauna, which, from its wealth of exotic species, must have originally escaped from Zoological Gardens and travelling beast shows. "Giraffes drinking at the fountain pools, Trafalgar Square," was one of the most notable and characteristic of his studies, while even more sensational was the gruesome picture

of "Vultures attacking dying camel in Upper Berkeley Street." There were also photographs of the large canvas on which he had been engaged for some months, and which he was now endeavouring to sell to some enterprising dealer or adventurous amateur. The subject was "Hyænas asleep in Euston Station," a composition that left nothing to be desired in the way of suggesting unfathomable depths of desolation. "Of course it may be immensely clever, it may be something epoch-making in the realm of art," said Sylvia Strubble to her own particular circle of listeners, "but, on the other hand, it may be merely mad. One mustn't pay too much attention to the commercial aspect of the case, of course, but still, if some dealer would make a bid for that hyæna picture, or even for some of the sketches, we should know better how to place the man and his work."

"We may all be cursing ourselves one of these days," said Mrs. Nougat-Jones, "for not having bought up his entire portfolio of sketches. At the same time, when there is so much real talent going about, one does not feel like planking down ten shillings for what looks like a bit of whimsical oddity. Now that picture that he showed us last

"No good. It is too big to carry to Stolpmunde. I burn it."

In time he will be forgotten, but at present Knopfschrank is almost as sore a subject as Sledonti with some of the frequenters of the Nuremberg Restaurant, Owl Street, Soho.

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Transcribed from the 1914 John Lane, The Bodley Head edition by David Price,  
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week, 'Sand-grouse roosting on the Albert Memorial,' was very impressive, and of course I could see there was good workmanship in it and breadth of treatment; but it didn't in the least convey the Albert Memorial to me, and Sir James Beanquest tells me that sand-grouse don't roost, they sleep on the ground."

Whatever talent or genius the Pomeranian artist might possess, it certainly failed to receive commercial sanction. The portfolio remained bulky with unsold sketches, and the "Euston Siesta," as the wits of the Nuremberg nicknamed the large canvas, was still in the market. The outward and visible signs of financial embarrassment began to be noticeable; the half-bottle of cheap claret at dinner-time gave way to a small glass of lager, and this in turn was displaced by water. The one-and-sixpenny set dinner receded from an everyday event to a Sunday extravagance; on ordinary days the artist contented himself with a sevenpenny omelette and some bread and cheese, and there were evenings when he did not put in an appearance at all. On the rare occasions when he spoke of his own affairs it was observed that he began to talk more about Pomerania and less about the great

"It is a busy time there now with us," he said wistfully; "the schwinnes are driven out into the fields after harvest, and must be looked after. I could be helping to look after if I was there. Here it is difficult to live; art is not appreciate."

"Why don't you go home on a visit?" some one asked tactfully.

"Ah, it cost money! There is the ship passage to Stolpmunde, and there is money that I owe at my lodgings. Even here I owe a few schillings. If I could sell some of my sketches --"

"Perhaps," suggested Mrs. Nougat-Jones, "if you were to offer them for a little less, some of us would be glad to buy a few. Ten schillings is always a consideration, you know, to people who are not over well off. Perhaps if you were to ask six or seven shillings --"

Once a peasant, always a peasant. The mere suggestion of a bargain to be struck brought a twinkle of awakened alertness into the artist's eyes, and hardened the lines of his mouth.

"Nine schilling nine pence each," he snapped, and seemed disappointed that Mrs. Nougat-Jones did Never."

"But your work? Your career as painter?"

"Ah, there is nossing in it. One starves. Till to-day I have sold not one of my sketches. To-night you have bought a few, because I am going away from you, but at other times, not one."

"But has not some American --?"

"Ah, the rich American," chuckled the artist. "God be thanked. He dash his car right into our herd of schwinnes as they were being driven out to the fields. Many of our best schwinnes he killed, but he paid all damages. He paid perhaps more than they were worth, many times more than they would have fetched in the market after a month of fattening, but he was in a hurry to get on to Dantzig. When one is in a hurry one must pay what one is asked. God be thanked for rich Americans, who are always in a hurry to get somewhere else. My father and mother, they have now so plenty of money; they send me some to pay my debts and come home. I start on Monday for Stolpmunde and I do not come back. Never."

"But your picture, the hyaenas?"

world of art.