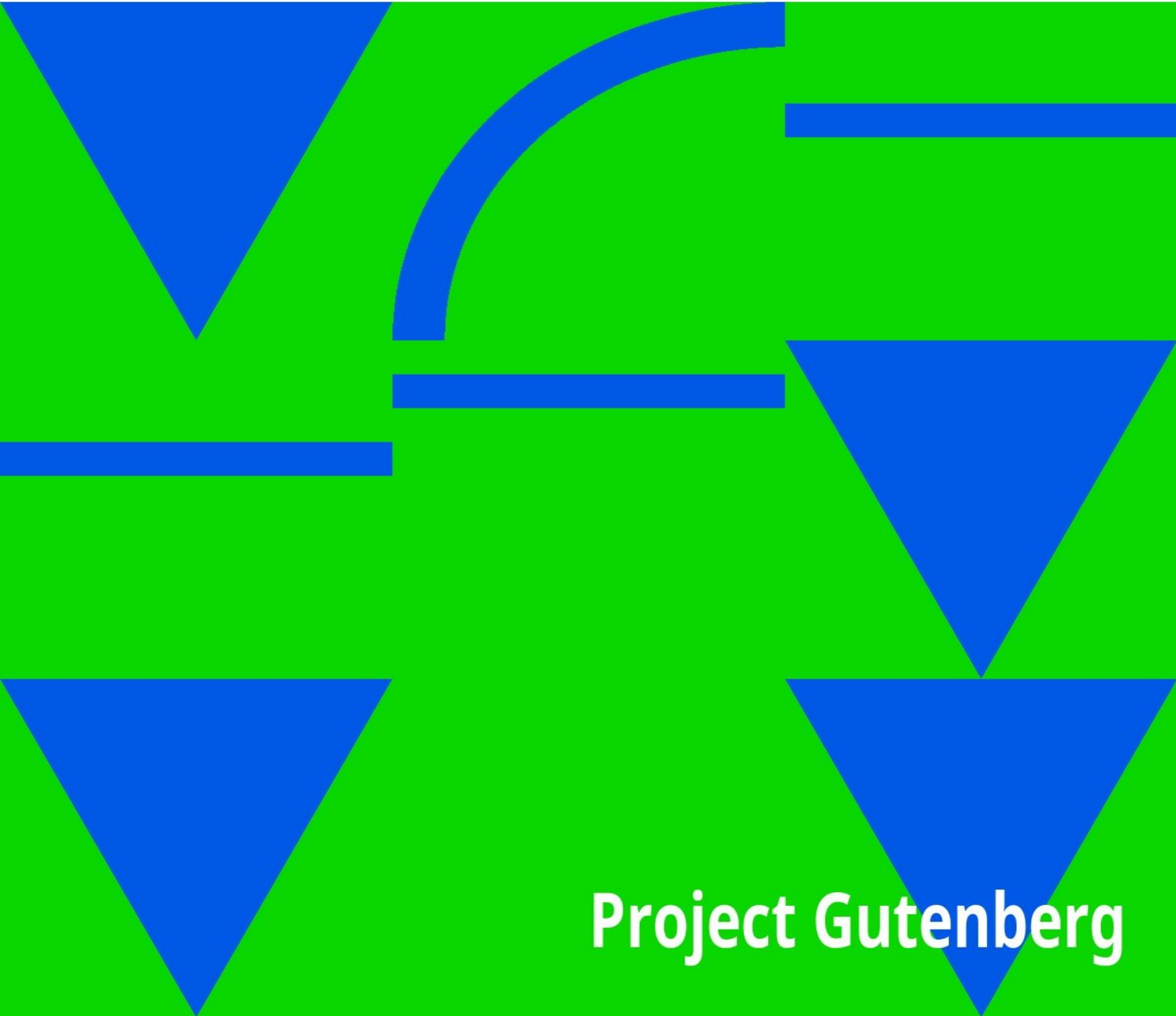


Success Story

Robert Turner



Project Gutenberg

The Project Gutenberg eBook of Success Story, by Robert Turner

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.net

Title: Success Story

Author: Robert Turner

Release Date: June 11, 2010 [EBook #32782]

Language: English

*** START OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK SUCCESS STORY ***

Produced by Greg Weeks and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at <http://www.pgdp.net>

*What is to be will be. Our only refuge
lies in that which might not have been.*

SUCCESS STORY

By Robert Turner

Illustrated by KELLY FREAS

December 8th, 1952, Two-Thirty A. M.

After awhile the blinding light was like actual physical pressure against his tightly squinched eyes. He tried to burrow deeper into the protectively warm, cave-like place where he'd been safe from them for so long. But he couldn't escape them. Their hands, their big, red, hideously smooth hands had him, now. They were tugging and pulling at him with a strength impossible to fight. Still he struggled.

He tried to cry out but there was no sound from his constricted throat. There were only the frightening noises from outside, louder, now. He tried to twist and squirm against the hands dragging him toward that harsh, blinding light. He was too small, too weak, compared to them. He couldn't fight them off. He felt himself being stretched and strained and forced with cruel determination. He didn't want to go *out there*. He knew what was waiting for him *out there*. He *couldn't* go. Not *out there*, where....



When Jeff McKinney was three years old he tipped a pot of scalding water from the stove onto himself. He was badly burned and scarred. He hovered between life and death for several weeks. Jeff's father was out of work at the time and they were living in a cold water tenement. Something about the case caught a tabloid's attention and it was played up as a human interest sob story. It came to the attention of a

wealthy man who volunteered to pay for plastic surgery. Then followed, long months of that kind of torture, but Jeff McKinney came out of it not too badly scarred. Not on the surface, anyhow. But his face had a strange hue. There was a frozen, mask-like cast to his features when he smiled.

He was eight when he saw his father killed. He was in the taxi the older McKinney now drove for a living when the father stepped out of the driver's side onto a busy street without looking back first. The speeding truck took the car door and Jeff's father with it for half a block, wedged between front wheel and fender. Jeff never forgot the sound of that, and the screaming. Nor his shock when he suddenly realized that the screams were his own.

Jeff was a strange boy. He didn't have an average childhood. The poverty was more extreme after his father's death. He stayed home alone while his mother was out working at whatever job she could get, reading too much and thinking too much. Once, he looked at her with haunted eyes and said: "Mother, why is life so bad? Why are people even born into a world like this?"

What could she say to a question like that? She said: "Please, Jefferson! Please don't talk that way. Life isn't all bad. You'll see. Some day, in spite of everything, you'll be somebody and you'll be happy. The good times will come."

They did, of course. A few of them. There was the day he went upstate on an outing for underprivileged boys and went fishing for the first time. He caught a whopping trout and won a prize for it. That was nice; that was fun. That was when he was thirteen. That was the year the gang of kids caught him on the way home from school and beat him unconscious because he never laughed; because they couldn't *make* him laugh. The year before his mother died.

At the orphanage he didn't mingle much with the other boys. He spent

most of his after-classes hours alone in the school's chemistry lab. He liked to tinker with chemicals. They were cold, emotionless, immune to joy and sadness, yet they had purpose. He played the cello, too, with haunting beauty, but not in the school band, only when he wanted to, when nobody was around and he could really feel the music.

Once, on the way home from his cello lesson in the music building, he saw some boys playing football on the orphanage athletic field. He was suddenly seized with a fierce determination to belong, to grab at some of the shouting, laughing happiness these boys seemed to have. He told them he wanted to join in and play, too. He didn't understand why they laughed so at this idea.

They stopped laughing, though, after the first time he ran with the ball, and they all piled up on him and he didn't get up. He lay there, looking so ghostly and breathing so harshly and with the trickle of blood coming out of his ears. But Jeff didn't know they had stopped laughing.

He recovered from that skull fracture, all right. Worse, though, than any of the unhappiness he suffered during his life, worse even than the shocks of his father's and mother's deaths, was the thing that happened to him when he was twenty and working at the laboratories of a big drug company.

He met and fell hopelessly in love with a girl named Nina, a girl a few years older than he was. They married and for the first few weeks Jeff McKinney had happiness he'd never known before. Until he came home from work sick, one afternoon and saw Nina with the man from the apartment over them. She didn't whine and beg for forgiveness, Nina didn't. She stood boldly while the other man laughed and laughed and she screamed invective upon Jefferson McKinney, telling him what she really thought of him, a gloomy, puny weakling who couldn't even make a decent living, telling him that she was through

with him.

A blank spot came into Jeff's life right then. When it was over, Nina and the other man were on the floor and there was blood on the kitchen carving knife in Jeff's hand.

They didn't find him for awhile. He changed his name and appearance and hid in the soiled seams and ragged fringes of society. He learned the anaesthetic powers of drugs and alcohol. He gave up trying to get anything out of this life. Then they finally picked him up, fished him from the river into which he'd jumped. There were days of torture after that, without the alcohol and drugs his wrecked system craved. Right there was the final hell that could have broken him completely. But it didn't. It was like the terrible crisis after a long illness. Things began to get better, to go to the other extreme after that.

A state psychiatrist brought Jeff's case to the attention of a noted criminal lawyer. Neither Nina nor her lover had died from their knife wounds. On the plea of the unwritten law, Jeff McKinney got off with a suspended sentence. The lawyer and psychiatrist learned of his interest and knowledge and talent for chemistry and got him another job in the experimental laboratory of a big university.

Later he married a girl named Elaine, who worked at the lab with him. They had two children, and lived in a small comfortable cottage just off the University campus. For several years, they had all they wanted of life—comfort, health, happiness. Jeff thought that life could never be more wonderful. All of his former, bitter, cynical views fell away from him. Hadn't he, with all odds against him, finally won out and acquired peace and contentment and a purpose in life? What was wrong with a world in which that could happen?

Then there was the topper. Jefferson McKinney discovered a new drug which would cure and eventually eliminate a disease that was one of the world's worst killers, the drug for which thousands of

scientists had been seeking for years.

He was feted and honored, became a national hero. The story of his life and his discovery temporarily pushed even the doleful forecasts of an early Third War, the Big War, off the front pages. And Jeff was humbly proud and grateful that he had paid now the debt he owed to a society that could make a final victory, like his, possible.

In a zenith of almost holy happiness, he stood one evening on a lecture platform in a huge auditorium in a great city, before thousands of worshipping people to make a thank-you speech after being awarded a world prize for his great scientific discovery.

But in the middle of his talk he broke off suddenly. A flash of blinding brilliance slashed through the windows. Horror painted his face. In a whisper, he cried: "No! No! It would make it all so senseless!" His eyes looked like the eyes of a man with flaming splinters jammed under his fingernails. His face seemed to pucker, and grow infantile. Then he screamed: "No! Leave me alone! I *told* you I didn't want to come *out here*, to be one of *you*! Damn you, why did you bring me *out here*? For—for *this*?..."

There were the shards of glass from the great auditorium windows, floating inward, turning lazily. There were the brick walls crumbling, tumbling inward, scattering through the air in the same seeming slow motion. The dust cloud and the sound, the flat blast-sound, came after that, as the entire building—perhaps the world—disintegrated in the eye-searing light....

December 8th, 1952, Two-Thirty A. M.

The flat of a rubber-gloved hand striking flesh made a splatting noise. A thin, breathless but concentrated crying followed. The doctor looked down at his charity clinic patient, the woman under the bright delivery room lights.

"Look at him—fighting like a little demon!" the doctor said. "Seemed almost as though he didn't want to come out and join us.... What's the matter, son? This is a bright, new, wonderful world to be born into.... What are you going to call the boy, Mrs. McKinney?"

The woman under the lights forced a tired smile. "Jeff. Jefferson McKinney. That's going to be his name," she whispered proudly.

The baby's terrified squalling subsided into fretful, whimpering resignation.

—THE END—

End of the Project Gutenberg EBook of Success Story, by Robert Turner

*** END OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK SUCCESS STORY ***

***** This file should be named 32782-h.htm or 32782-h.zip *****
This and all associated files of various formats will be found in:
<http://www.gutenberg.org/3/2/7/8/32782/>

Produced by Greg Weeks and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at <http://www.pgdp.net>

Updated editions will replace the previous one--the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from public domain print editions means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works to

protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG-tm concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for the eBooks, unless you receive specific permission. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the rules is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. They may be modified and printed and given away--you may do practically ANYTHING with public domain eBooks. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

*** START: FULL LICENSE ***

THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE
PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg-tm mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase "Project Gutenberg"), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg-tm License (available with this file or online at <http://gutenberg.net/license>).

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the

terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. "Project Gutenberg" is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation ("the Foundation" or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is in the public domain in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg-tm mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg-tm works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg-tm name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg-tm License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also

govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg-tm work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country outside the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg-tm License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg-tm work (any work on which the phrase "Project Gutenberg" appears, or with which the phrase "Project Gutenberg" is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.net

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work is derived from the public domain (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase "Project Gutenberg" associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs

1.E.1

through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg-tm License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg-tm License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg-tm.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg-tm License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg-tm work in a format other than "Plain Vanilla ASCII" or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg-tm web site (www.gutenberg.net), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original "Plain Vanilla ASCII" or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project

Gutenberg-tm

License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg-tm works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works provided that

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg-tm works calculated using the method

you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is

owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark, but he

has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments

must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such

and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the

address specified in Section 4, "Information about donations to

the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation."

- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies

you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he

does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg-tm License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg-tm works.

- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any

the money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in

electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90

days

of receipt of the work.

- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg-tm works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from both the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and Michael Hart, the owner of the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread public domain works in creating the Project Gutenberg-tm collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain "Defects," such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the "Right of Replacement or Refund" described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH F3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH

DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you 'AS-IS' WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the

trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg-tm work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg-tm work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg-tm

Project Gutenberg-tm is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg-tm's goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg-tm collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg-tm and future generations.

To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation web page at <http://www.pglaaf.org>.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Its 501(c)(3) letter is posted at <http://pglaf.org/fundraising>. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's principal office is located at 4557 Melan Dr. S. Fairbanks, AK, 99712., but its volunteers and employees are scattered throughout numerous locations. Its business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887, email business@pglaf.org. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's web site and official page at <http://pglaf.org>

For additional contact information:

Dr. Gregory B. Newby
Chief Executive and Director
gbnewby@pglaf.org

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg-tm depends upon and cannot survive without wide spread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations (\$1 to \$5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations

where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit <http://pglaf.org>

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg Web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: <http://pglaf.org/donate>

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works.

Professor Michael S. Hart is the originator of the Project Gutenberg-tm concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For thirty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg-tm eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg-tm eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as Public Domain in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our Web site which has the main PG search facility:

<http://www.gutenberg.net>

This Web site includes information about Project Gutenberg-tm, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary

Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.