

TILLOU FINE ART



Abstract 10077b, by Kim Keever, 2014. Chromogenic print, 40 x 60 inches.

and tore through, and in no time there was the most tremendous rout you ever saw, and the defeat of the allies was turned into a sweeping and splendid victory! Marshal Canrobert looked on, dizzy with astonishment, admiration, and delight; and sent right off for Scoresby, and hugged him, and decorated him on the field in presence of all the armies!

And what was Scoresby's blunder that time? Merely the mistaking his right hand for his left—that was all. An order had come to him to fall back and support our right; and instead, he fell *forward* and went over the hill to the left. But the name he won that day as a marvelous military genius filled the world with his glory, and that glory will never fade while history books last.

He is just as good and sweet and lovable and unpretending as a man can be, but he doesn't know enough to come in when it rains. Now that is absolutely true. He is the supremest ass in the universe; and until half an hour ago nobody knew it but himself and me. He has been pursued, day by day and year

by year, by a most phenomenal and astonishing luckiness. He has been a shining soldier in all our wars for a generation; he has littered his whole military life with blunders, and yet has never committed one that didn't make him a knight or a baronet or a lord or something. Look at his breast; why, he is just clothed in domestic and foreign decorations. Well, sir, every one of them is the record of some shouting stupidity or other; and taken together, they are proof that the very best thing in all this world that can befall a man is to be born lucky. I say again, as I said at the banquet, Scoresby's an absolute fool.

Mark Twain, "Luck." *"This is not a fancy sketch," Twain wrote in a headnote to this story, which was first published in Harper's Magazine in 1891. "I got it from a clergyman who was an instructor at Woolwich forty years ago, and who vouched for its truth." In his biography of Twain, Albert Bigelow Paine related that shortly after the story's publication, an Englishman suggested to the author that he travel with a tomahawk. "The hero of the sketch will naturally want your scalp," the man warned, "and will probably apply for it."*