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A BALE OF WOE

While wandering across centuries past, o'er hill and vale, came I upon an ass, so thin, so scraggy, that I felt concern, so overwhelming, for its health. 'Oh, Ass,' said I, 'you are so thin, so forlorn, so pale; why eat you not? Are you blind? There is, just here, right here, towards your left, a bale of hay – the straws are golden – and, with steps a few, that whole bale yours will easily be.' As I spoke, I noticed how his eyes swivelled repeatedly from left to right, from right to left.

'Kind sir,' replied Ass, 'would that things were as simple as that. Indeed, I can see that golden bale of succulent hay to my left so well but, can you not see? There is another bale, equally golden and with a degree of succulence the very same, exactly the same, to my right.'

'That is true,' replied I, 'but that is all the better – is it not? – for poor starving and skinny you. You have two bales upon