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Mark Twain loves to write stories about lies. He shows us that our lives are filled up with it, but not all of the stories show its bad aspect or influence. For example, in a story "Is He living or is He Dead?" we can see young artists, that are very talented, but yet don't have money to survive. So at the critical point of their lives where they don't have anything to eat - a genius idea comes to the mind of one of the boys - how to make money. The idea was based on a lie, but when your life is at the stake - what wouldn't you do to survive?

As for me it is more than just a story. Author show us that mostly people don't think about who actually famous artists are, what made them famous, they don't care about the value of his or her paintings at all. What is important for people to know is that no one doubts their good education, their intelligence, no one sees them as ignorant. So this is exactly what the artists in our story played at.

One of the boys brought up a well-known statement that some painters only get famous after their death no matter how good their works were while they were still alive. And sadly, in most of these stories artists are dying of poorness and hunger. So the idea was to advertise the "famous" artist, to share his works and his story of a coming death to people in different regions, to make them believe how brilliant this artist is. And as expected, the trick worked, and boys earned a lot of money and respect.

I really liked the story. It teaches you how poor the sight of people in general, how they only care about their status among others, how easy it is to trick them using their own weaknesses and vanity.