THE ALAMANCE GLEANER.

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The Honorable Senator Sagebrush

By FRANCIS LYNDE

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"YOU KNOW TOO MUCH—A GREAT DEAL TOO MUCH!"

CHAPTER XIII.

BARRIERS INVISIBLE.

BLOUNT drove himself back to the capital the following morning in the big roadster, and there was no opportunity for further confidential speech with Patricia before he left. But with the new day had come a new determination. To the best of his ability he would try to live up to the high standard set for him by the woman he loved, not only preaching the gospel of political righteousness, but doing his utmost to try to make it effective.

With this high purpose in view he drove on past the city garage and made an early call upon Gantry.

"Hello, old man! Come back to row me some more about that telegram?" was his greeting.

Blount shook his head. "No. If you have sent it, well and good; if you haven't, you may pitch it into the wastebasket. I came to talk about something else."

"Good, sound, sensible second thought," said Gantry, laughing. Then he took out his pocketbook and passed the suppressed telegram across to Blount. "Here it is. You can do the wastebasket act yourself. I couldn't let you commit harakiri without at least trying to get the cutting tool out of your hands. What is the other thing you've got on your mind this early in the morning?"

"It's this, Dick. You know what I've been doing—what I supposed I was hired to do—assuring everybody, right and left, that we were going into this campaign with clean hands?"

"I know," admitted the traffic manager, developing a sudden interest in the figures of the rug at his feet.

"I have been doing this in a business way at my office uptown in season and out of season, and night before last at Ophir I did it publicly. As the campaign progresses I shall doubtless put myself on record many times to the same effect."

"Good man!" applauded Gantry, striving to drag the talk down to some less portentous altitude. "I'm sure we need all the whitewashing anybody can give us."

"That is just the point," Blount went on gravely. "It mustn't be merely a coat of whitewash, Dick. It has got to be the real thing this time. I began by firing the 'little brothers,' as you called them, but I mean to go higher up if I am compelled to. I am here this morning to ask you to give me your word as a gentleman and my friend that you will not, directly or indirectly, do or cause to be done anything that will make me stand forth as a self convicted liar before the people of this state. I want you to promise me that you will cut out all the deals, all the briberies, all the bargainings, all the"—

"Oh, say, see here," protested the man under fire; "you've got the wrong pig by the ear, Evan. I'm not the Transcontinental Railway company."

"I know you are not. But to a greater degree than any other official in the management you have Mr. McVickar's confidence. If you don't feel competent to handle this thing on your own responsibility pass it up to those who can and have it understood that there must be no compromise."

"Great Scott!" murmured Gantry. "And you're on the pay sheets the same as the rest of us! But candidly, as man to man, Evan, the thing can't be done. We've got to play the game. They'll eat us alive if we don't. You needn't figure in it. It was a mistake letting Sim Hathaway go to you, and I said so at the time. But your—er—the powers that be said it had to be that way, and I had to let him go and ball you all up. It shan't happen again. I can promise you that much, anyway."

Blount caught quickly at the hesitant pause.

"Who were 'the powers that be' in Hathaway's case, Dick?" he demanded.

"I can't tell you that; honestly I can't, Evan," was the anxious refusal. "Don't ask me."

"All right; then I shall assume that Mr. McVickar was responsible," said Blount calmly, thus proving that he had not taken his degree in the law school for nothing.

"Oh, hold on; you mustn't do that, either," protested the unwilling occupant of the witness stand.

"Thank you," said the postgraduate, with the true Blount smile. "Now I know that it was my father. No; don't deny it. But we are wandering from the real issue. I've asked you for a promise, Dick. Will you give it?"

"I—I can't give it, Evan, and that's the truth."

"No; it isn't. But that was about what I expected you to say. Now hear my side of it. If you don't clean house—you and the other officials of the company—I shall not only resign; I shall take the field on the other side and tell what I know.

I have been telling everybody that this is to be a campaign of publicity. I shall keep my word."

"Oh, you would not do that!" protested Gantry, now thoroughly alarmed. "You know too much—a great deal too much!"

Blount got up and relighted his cigar with a match taken from the traffic manager's desk box.

"It's up to you," he said, with his hand on the doorknob. "Get into communication with whatever 'powers that be' there are that can give the necessary orders and see to it that the orders are given and that they are put in the way of being carried out. Dick, I mean what I say. It's a clean sheet—or an exposure that will make a lot of you wish that you had never been born."

"Hold on—one question before you go, Evan," pleaded Gantry, "and give me a straight answer. Is this another move of the honorable—of your father's?"

Blount's smile was as grim as any that Gantry had ever seen on the face of the Honorable David.

"My father is much more likely to take sides with you, I am sorry to say. No, Dick; you've got only one man to fight, but you mustn't forget that his name also is Blount. Go to it and send me word and let the first word be that you have scotched the head of this lumber company snake. That's all for today. Goodby."

Returning to his office in Temple court, Blount found that the morning mail had been busy with him also. There were three invitations from widely separated cities in the state, all based upon the newspaper reports of his Ophir speech, and the afternoon mail brought three more.

It was evident that the campaign of education had struck a popular chord, and the young political manager saw what a miraculous opportunity was opening for the railroad if only the "powers" that Gantry had refused to name could be broad enough and high minded enough to seize it.

After that for three weeks Blount scarcely saw his office in the capital. One appointment followed another in rapid succession, and everywhere there was a repetition of the welcome extended by the Ophir miners—a cordial welcome, generous applause and kindly hospitality at every turn.

It was not until he was deep into the fourth week of the hurryings to and fro that he began to admit a suspicion which grew like a juggler's rose when he had once given it place. These invitations, which were now coming from all parts of the state—could it be possible that they were all spontaneous? And if they were not—

If they were so many subtle moves in the great game he could see no possible end to be subserved by them save one—they were effectually keeping him away from the capital, which was the nucleus and center of the campaign activities.

Was there something going on at headquarters that "the powers" did not wish him to find out? Of one thing he was fairly well assured—Gantry was dodging him, was apparently keeping an accurate record of his movements, for whenever the hurryings to and fro permitted a flying visit to the capital Gantry was always out of town.

With the awakening suspicion came a rapid putting together of two and two. Wherever he went there was always the same pressing hospitality, with many urgings to delay his going. At the same time it became evident in many little ways that he was in reality merely skimming over the surface in his campaign work.

That a hot political fight was going on all around him he could not doubt. The newspapers were full of it, and in many sections of the state the fight had become acrimonious and bitter. But, although he was supposed to be in the fight, it began to be apparent that he was little more than an onlooker when it came to the really vital struggle of the moment.

It was as if everything had been carefully prearranged, like a sort of triumphal procession. None the less the invisible barrier, the barrier which was shutting him out from the inner workings of the campaign, was there, and he could neither surmount it nor push it aside.

Notwithstanding the hard work and the hard traveling he was doing he did not let the missionary effort outweigh the sturdier purpose, which was to hold his principals rigidly up to the mirror of a vigilant watchfulness.

Arguing that the opposition newspapers would be quick to seize upon any charge of corruption involving the railroad company, he read them faithfully. As yet there had been nothing more than spiteful innuendoes and a raking over of past misdeeds, though many of the editors were charging a secret alliance between his father and McVickar and warning their readers to look out for startling developments later on.

Not content with mere watchfulness however, Blount got his finger upon the pulse of occasions whenever he could. On his brief stopovers in the capital he kept his eyes and ears open for the earliest hint of any charge of chicanery, and, though he was unable to get hold of Gantry personally, he kept up a steady fire of letters and telegrams, all pointing to the same end—absolute and utter good faith and the upholding of his hands in the public plea for a square deal.

To these the traffic manager replied guardedly, but optimistically. The management was delighted with the good work done and doing by the new division counsel; public opinion was slowly but surely changing; it would be a landslide election, and Blount could take credit for his due.

In all this Blount did not fail to remark that there was never anything said about the Hathaway bargain, and the omission made him the more watchful. A little investigation unearthed other and similar bargains made in the past.

For example, there was a practical and very effective irrigation trust, an alliance, offensive and defensive, of the big irrigation companies. Controlling the water under proprietary rights, as most of them did, these companies could influence many votes among the beneficiary farmers. Land deals in the past with the railroad company had been the basis for corruption here, and, with the electric power people, preferential freight rates had been traded for the votes of employees, as with Hathaway.

Some of these special rates were still in force, as the quiet investigation on the ground developed, whereupon Blount's communications to Gantry took on a more emphatic tone. The tariffs must be revised and one of two things must be done—either the preferential of the favored corporations must be withdrawn or the public rates must be leveled down to meet the specials.

It was on a second speechmaking visit to Ophir that Blount had his first face to face chance at the traffic manager after the opening of the correspondence battle.

A meeting of the Mine Owners' association, moving for a readjustment of the classification on copper matte and bullion at a time when the railroad company might be supposed to be on the giving hand, took Gantry to the great camp in the Carnadine hills, and the first man he met at the hotel was the new dictator of policies for the Transcontinental company.

"Made a mistake, didn't you, Dick, coming while I was here?" said the reformer, with a very lifelike replica of his father's grim smile. "I suppose you've got an immediate engagement to go somewhere or see somebody."

"No; I wish I had," was the hearty admission. "Say, Evan, you are getting to be a perfect nightmare with your letters and telegrams. You've got me so I'm afraid to open my desk. Why can't you let well enough alone? You haven't heard of any skulduddery lately, have you?"

"Nothing new, no. But a housecleaning is supposed to take down all the old cobwebs. Those preferentials for United Electric and the Siwash Land and Improvement"—

"Heavens and earth! You call yourself a lawyer, and yet you ask us to set aside promises that are or ought to be as binding as so many written contracts, with penal attachments! It can't be done, Evan—that's all there is to it; it can't be done."

"'Can't' goes out of the window when 'must' comes in at the door, Dick. I've been digging into the records, and I have evidence enough to turn the people of this state into a mob that will tear up your tracks if I should publish it."

"But I tell you we can't withdraw the specials, you wild eyed fanatic!"

"All right; then level down the public's rate to fit them. And do it quickly, Dick. The time is growing fearfully short, and my patience isn't what it used to be."

"Anybody would think you owned the Transcontinental, lock, stock and barrel! Where under heaven did you get your nerve, Evan? Blest if I don't believe you could outbluff the old—er—your father himself if you once got the fool notion into your head that it was your duty to try."

This time Blount's smile was rather sorrowful, and he shook his head.

"Come and hear me speak tonight if you're staying over that long. Then you'll know why I must have the solid rock of good faith under my feet, Gantry. You spoke of my father just now. I bear the name, too, Dick. Don't you see that I've got to make good?"

It was during this hardworking interval that Blount saw, with keen regret, the gradual widening of the breach between him and his father. That the long arm of the machine of which his father was the acknowledged head was reaching out into all corners of the state there was ample evidence, and that the machine campaign was a thing to be reckoned with and fought against was a cardinal principle with the young reformer.

But it is hard to fight in the dark. The organization was so perfect that its very existence seemed mythical at times—a mere bugbear set up to be knocked down by the honest voter at the polls on election day.

Yet Blount knew that it was no myth. Sometimes he fancied that it was the machine which was interposing the invisible barrier beyond which he was not permitted to pass. With that thought came the old doubts and fears that his father and McVickar had consulted together to make him the fence behind which all the trickery of a venal campaign could be safely screened. But while this thought visibly widened the growing breach it made him only more determined to fight to the bitter end. What one man could do to herald the dawn of a new political epoch for his native state should be done.

It was on one of his short stopovers in the capital city that Blount found himself seated opposite his father at a table for two in the Inter-Mountain cafe. The meeting was purely accidental, as most of their meetings had come to be. Inquiring for his father at the desk, Blount had been told that the senator was out of town. But an hour later, when he had taken his seat at the dinner table, the supposed absentee had walked in to take the opposite chair.

For a time their talk was of the doings at Wartrace Hall, of the professes

wish I could say as much for other people."

The boss looked up quickly. "Somebody been trying to block you?"

Evan Blount met the gaze of the shrewd gray eyes without flinching.

"I don't know of any good reason why we shouldn't be frank with each other, dad," he said, using for the first time since his return the old boyhood father name. "You know better than any one else, I think, what the stumbling blocks are and who is putting them in my way."

Instantly the faraway look came into the gray eyes.

"I know a heap of things that I can't tell—not just yet, son. Has McVickar been calling you down?"

"No one has called me down, but some one or something is keeping me out of the real fight. There isn't any fight that I can get into. Everywhere I go there is the same cut and dried welcome, the same predetermined enthusiasm. Sometimes it seems as if all the people I meet had been instructed to make things pleasant and easy for me."

The senator's chuckle was barely audible.

"I wouldn't find much fault with that if I were you, son," he said. "You'll get enough of the real thing by and by."

Blount felt his anger rising. He was in precisely the right mood to believe that his father, failing to make him a cog in one of the wheels in the machine, had gone about in some mysterious way to insulate him, to make it impossible for him to get into the real tide of affairs. But he kept his temper.

"It's no use," he said, with a tang of abruptness in his tone. "We are diametrically opposed to each other—you and I, dad. I stand for democracy, the will of the people and its fullest and freest expression. You stand for"—

"Well, son, what do I stand for?" queried the father, and the question was accompanied by the quizzical smile that brought the hot blood boyishly to Blount's cheek.

"If I should say what all men say—what some of them are frank enough to say even to me"—He stopped short and then went on again with better self control:

"Let's keep the peace if we can, dad. I'm sorry that you are finding it necessary to fight me and a thousand times sorrier that I've got to fight you. But I'll tell you here and now that I'll never quit this state—this native state of mine—until it has had at least one decently clean election. I have told Gantry to pass the word that I shall show the railroad up if it doesn't play fair, and I've got to hand the same thing out to you, dad. I don't want to threaten, but it is only fair to say that I haven't been going about with my eyes shut. Whether you have authorized it or not, there is a lot of crooked work going on, and if I am driven to it I can print some things that would change the political map of this state so it won't be recognizable."

For some little time after his son had left the cafe the Hon. Senator Sagebrush sat absently toying with his dessertspoon. When he rose to go out the battle light in the fierce gray eyes was the signal which not even his most faithful henchmen could always interpret, but which most men feared.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The loafer is not afraid of spring fever germs.

It looks as if the harem skirt were to be hobbled.

The silk hat is threatened, but threatened hats live long.

In catching a street car a harem skirt has a hobble skirt skinned a block.

There ought to be no trouble in getting a little light on the so-called match trust.

New uses are continually being found for radium. All that is needed is some radium.

Sometimes when you think that opportunity is knocking at your door it turns out to be a collector.

The meanest man has been found in Texas. He was arrested for stealing milk from an orphan asylum.

A hospital physician declares that everybody is crazy now and then. So it isn't always the other fellow.

An unusual happening is reported from Connecticut. A woman found $3,000 in her dead husband's pockets.

To teach the young idea how to swim Chicago educators think is quite as important as teaching it to shoot.

The harm skirt has been causing riots in Rio Janiero, but Buenos Ayres appears to be making an effort to take it tranquilly.

In parts of Nova Scotia automobileing is allowed four days each week. The rest of the time the roads are perfectly safe.

You can send a day letter by telegraph now, but old-fashioned people will cling to the "arrived safety" and "am well" formula.

Property valued at upwards of $6,000,000 was destroyed, hundreds of people made homeless and almost the entire business section of Bangor, Me., devastated by fire Sunday night.

FOLEY'S ORINO LAXATIVE

FOR STOMACH TROUBLE and CONSTIPATION

North Carolina News.

Frost in Balden county a few days ago killed the young cotton and there was probably a similar result in other counties in that section.

While its mother was scouring the floor, the 2-year-old child of Mr. and Mrs. Will Davis, of Cleveland county, fell into a pail of boiling water and was fatally scalded.

A Cleveland county farmer lost a horse valued at $250 and when a post mortem was made it was found that a quart of sand clogged the animal's internal economy. The horse drank water at a shallow branch and thus took the sand into its stomach.

F. C. Watkins, charged with murder in the second degree for the killing of John Hill Bunting at the Gladstone hotel, Black Mountain, one night in August, 1909, was found guilty of manslaughter in Buncombe Superior Court last week.

Mr. W. B. Ferguson, a brother of Judge G. S. Ferguson and one of the oldest and best known members of the bar of the 16th judicial district, died suddenly at Franklin, Macon county, where he was attending court, Wednesday. Remains taken to Waynesville for burial.

The executive committee of home mission of the Southern Presbyterian Church is planning for a Statewide campaign in behalf of the Presbyterian mission schools of the State. A canvass of the churches will be made this month by ex-Gov. Glenn.

The residence and smokehouse of W. C. Taylor, in No. 1 township, Cabarrus county, were burned 26th, but most of the contents of the buildings were saved. A hay stack between the house and barn was burned and the barn was saved with difficulty. Fire was of accidental origin.

At King's Mountain the other day a bird dog walked into the bank and unknown to the bank people picked up a package and walked out. On the street the dog stopped and proceeded to tear open the package. A passerby observed this procedure and found that the package contained $18 in cash.

T. E. Pittillo was recently arrested and placed under bond in Henderson county to answer the charge of burning a mill. After the mill was berned it was circulated that bloodhounds would be brought to trace the incendiary, and it is alleged that Pittillo was seen placing pepper in tracks leading to and from the mill, the pepper being designed to throw the bloodhounds off the scent.

West Pulley has been placed in the penitentiary to serve 20 years for the murder of Henry Perry in Franklin county four years ago. He was declared insane soon after the killing was committed to the criminal insane department of the penitentiary without trial, remaining there until quite recently, when he was taken to Franklin county for trial. This resulted in the 30-year sentence.

The Tribune says the barn of Mr. C. Richmond Montgomery, in No. 2 township, Cabarrus county, and about five miles from Concord, was burned at 3 o'clock Thursday morning April 27th, five mules, a lot of corn, rough feed, three tons of fertilizer, wagon, gears, etc. One pair of mules was valued at $600. The property was insured for $590 and the loss is estimated at about thrice that amount. The fire was evidently of incendiary origin.

A dispatch from Waynesville says that Jim Davis, a groom of four weeks, is occupying a cell at the jail for brutally beating his stepdaughter of 15. He placed her head between his knees, then used three thorn switches on her nude body. Davis is trying hard to give bond, but public sentiment is wrought up to such a point that it might be well for him to remain in jail until court, for fear he might receive just as bad, or worse, chastisement than he gave the girl. The good citizens who live in the same part of the town as Davis put up the cash for a lawyer to prosecute him.

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Items Of All Sorts.

A revolution has broken out in Canton, China, and the situation is serious.

The engine of a passenger train overturned at Dayton, Ohio, Sunday night, killed three—including the engineer and fireman—and injured six.

Mrs. Catherine Hawk, of Baltimore, 26 years old, a bride of less than a year, smoked a cigarette as she lay in bed and was fatally burned as a result.

Gov. Wilson, of New Jersey, was a guest of honor at a banquet in Norfolk last week and was hailed as the probable Democratic presidential nominee in 1912.

A few drops of lemon juice in the water in which rice is boiled will help to keep the kernels whole. Plenty of water is another requisite.

The season is at hahd when the neighbors' hens constitute a perplexing problem with the one who takes pride in a well kept flower or vegetable garden.

A few days ago a shipload of dressed sheep were sold on the San Francisco market in prime condition. They were brought under refrigeration from Australia, a distance of 7,000 miles, and paid a duty of 5 cents a pound.

While fish make their homes in water they must have oxygen, which is always found in fresh water. It is a lack of this element that causes the death of fish in many a shallow pond and lake during the winter season when then the water freezes to a considerable depth and prevents its purification by contact with the air.

The Eagle dam, located 100 miles north of El Paso, on the Rio Grande, the building of which has already been started, will create, it is claimed, the largest storage reservoir in the world. The dam is to be 165 feet high and 1,400 feet long on top. It will flood an area of 48,000 acres to an average depth of sixty-two feet and will furnish water for the irrigation of 180,000 acres of land.

The Mecklenbury grand jury, which was charged by Judge Biggs to investigate the rumors of bribery and corruption at the recent municipal primary in Charlotte, finds that the "rumors were exaggerated, some of them totally false and the city in some respects slandered." While it is admitted that liquor was probably used corruptly, the grand jury was unable to fix the responsibility.

Boone Democrat: Mr. Noah Brookshire lost a fine mare in a rather peculiar way. His son, Sherman, was riding her to town and stopped to talk to some one, dropping the reins on the animal's neck. She got her foot entangled and the rider dismounted just in time to save himself, as she reared up, fell backwards and crushed her head against the hard ground.

R. L. Smith, a traveling man of Memphis, Tenn., en route to the home of his parents at Jubilee, Davidson county, accompanied by his wife and son, became unconscious just before the train reached Asheville Sunday afternoon. He was taken to a hospital there and died in a short time. His remains were returned to Memphis for burial. Bright's disease assigned as cause of death.

E. W. Grove

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John D. Rockefeller would go broke if he should spend his entire income trying to prepare a better medicine than Chamberlain's Colic Cholera and Diarrhoea Remedy for diarrhoea, dysentery or bowel complaints. It is simply impossible, and so says every one that has used it. Sold by all dealers.

The grand lodge of Odd Fellows meets in Winston next week. The secretary reports the value of property of subordinate lodges has increased from $193,725 to $239,148 during the past decade. In addition the orphanage property at Goldsboro is valued at $100,000, and 160 children are cared for at an annual cost of $15,000.

The splended work of Chamberlain's Stomach and Liver Tablets is daily coming to light. No such grand remedy for liver and bowel troubles was ever known before. Thousands bless them for curing constipation, sick headache, biliousness, jaundice and indigestion. Sold by all dealers.

A white boy, 17 years old, was lodged in Surry county jail last week, charged with criminally assaulting a 9-year-old white girl.

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