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HE GOVERNOR'S SECRETARY.

HE STARTED OUT TO SHOW THE GOVERNOR HOW TO RUN THINGS, BUT THE SIGHT OF A PRETTY BRUNETTE DUMFOUNDED HIM.

BY WOOD RUFF CHARLES.

After two seasons of hard toil, and two winters spent in the cold seclusion of those Colorado mountains, we gave up our silver mine and abandoned the claim. I was quite ready to return. Two years away from a razor; two years of bacon, beans, syrup and canned corn; two years of struggle with sour dough; two years spent at an altitude where it takes six hours' boiling to cook potatoes (astonishing phenomenon to every tenderfoot) cured my mining fever for evermore. I joined that great procession which the railroads never advertise, the disgusted ones returning east or west from those silver lodes, with twisted backbones and empty pockets.

Home again, I learned to my amazement that cousin Brooks, one of the most stupid boys that ever gaped over his books, had just become Governor of the State! When I went West to find an opening for my money Brooks was a sedate, hard-working lawyer. I never supposed he would earn his salt.

After becoming tolerably well acquainted with mother again and the boys, and making brief vain quest for employment, I took a run up to the capital one day to see Brooks. He greeted me cordially. He alway did like me. I suppose because I used to help him out in his lessons between thrashings, although upon leaving school I bore a remorseful feeling that I had been unmerciful to poor Brooks.

He was in his official apartment at the State House, a lofty room with frescoed ceiling, huge plate windows, elaborate furniture, library and elegant writing desks. He was sequestered by ante-rooms and guarded by ushers, but I went straight through to his presence without a check, while the clerks stared in surprise. This was because I so resembled Brooks that I came upon them like an apparition, for he and I were of similar form, behind the same ancestral nose. Greeting over, he said:

'And how are the mines, Chug?'

'They are still there.'

'You have made your fortune West, I hope?'

'No. The West did pretty well, I didn't. The West kept all I took there.'

He looked at me doubtfully. Brooks never quite understood my way of talking. Yet I speak clear, classic English, always.

'You haven't lost every cent, Chug?'

'Oh, no. If I can sell my mine for a hundred thousand I am all right.'

'Is it good for anything?'

'Not that I know of.'

'Hum!' Brooks was a fine looking fellow, large, portly, benignant. A kind-hearted man, somewhat changed since I saw him last. He had aged greatly, far more than I, notwithstanding all the vicissitudes and bacon I had undergone. He seemed more serious, more fatherly, and tired. He looked at me with something of the old appeal in his face.

'Stay here and help me, Chug. I had to discharge my secretary yesterday. He was a schemer, more anxious to win outside friends than to do his duty by me. I want somebody who is reliable. It pays two thousand a year. Probably I can also put some perquisites in your way.'

As a kiedness to Brooks, I consented.

He led me over to a handsome desk charged with innumerable pigeon holes, rolls of red tape, seal stamps, wax and other vital elements of government. A pile of letters and documents already burdened it. I sat down before a half ream of selected mail, my brief instructions being for this heap, 'Say no to every want, but make a friend of every writer.' This mountainous task strained my early Sabbath school training severely. However, I evolved a general letter applicable to most of those cases and submitted it to Brooks. He was good enough to praise its conciliatory tact and gracious denial, and I proceeded to duplicate the form and scatter it broadcast.

An hour later Harold, our clerk, appeared at the door.

'Here is the prison delegation.'

Brooks put down his documents and straightened up with great concern.

'Let me see, what do they want? Chug, there is a memorandum on your desk somewhere.'

I searched and found the appointment slip: 'Tues. 11 a. m. Cedar County delegation to urge amelioration of convicts.'

Brooks ran his hand through his hair.

'Why do they bother me now? Why can't they torture those fellows in the Legislature, and after they get in their bill come and ask my approval? Why consume my time for an object so remote? What shall I do with 'em, Chug? I have more work here already than I can finish in good season.'

'Do!' I exclaimed, rising energetically and feeling something of the old scorn for him. 'Why, man, let 'em in. Say: 'Fellow citizens, I am proud to meet you, glad to see the cause of our criminals enlisting the sympathy of such able advocates, and anything I can do to further the good work be assured I shall rejoice to do. At the same time, all governments move by routine, and I must commend you to the usual procedures. Secure legislative action effecting the ends you aim at, and, as I feel sure the object will be justifiable, I shall take pleasure in signing your bill.' That's all. Remain standing, and let them stand. Fidget to and fro from your desk. Let them know you are in a hurry, although courteous, and get rid of 'em quick.'

'Cedar county,' mused Brooks. 'I don't know anybody up there likely to be in this delegation, Chug, you look a good deal like me. You may receive these people, and act as Governor.'

'Ho, thank you,' said I, bolting to my desk and catching up the pen.

'Ha-ha!' cried Brooks with slow sarcasm. 'You can brag but not perform, eh?'

This blunt reply stung me. It was quite unlike the Brooks of my school days. I used to pride myself on superior force. It would never do to let him find me lacking nerve, or my old ascendency would vanish wholly. So I promptly rose again.

'Why, I can receive the delegation if you really want me to, Brooks, but——'

'All right, Chug, you may receive them. Treat them well. That will give me time to go over this paper, and I must do it before noon.'

I was somewhat agitated. To confront these fellows face to face grew every instant more disagreeable to me. For two years I had rusted in the mines. Probably this delegation contained preachers, lawyers, practiced spokesmen, to answer whom would require more than mere audacity. But Harold stood looking on perplexed, and Brooks himself was peering up from his papers with a covert smile. I put a bold face on.

'Here, Harold, help me put these chairs in the private room.' And I seized an armchair in each hand.

Harold looked at Brooks with astonishment and protest.

'You will need the chairs, of course,' he said.

'No, I'll make 'em stand. I'll soon get rid of the prison delegation,' I cried emphatically. Brooks nodded and Harold unwilling joined in removing every chair to the inner apartment save the ones which Brooks and I had occupied.

'Now bring 'em!' said I, and while Harold was gone I threw off my coat, unbuttoned my neckband, put my watch in open sight upon the desk and took a pen freshly dipped in ink.

'I'll let those fellows know that time is precious here!' I said decisively, looking down at Brooks.

The door opening from the anteroom swung on its hinges. Harold appeared upon the threshold. He gave a look of dismay as he saw me in my shirt sleeves, but I stood erect and firm. There was a rustling of silks, a prophetic fragrance, soft murmuring voices and then a bevy of ladies plowered suddenly into the room. I started dumfounded.

'Great—— ! er——ladies!'

I dropped my pen, sprang to my coat and plunged my arms frenziedly into the sleeves.

'Excuse me, ladies, I—I had forgotten the—the sex of your delegation. It is such a hot day——'

I fumbled my necktie. The horrible fear came over me that I had failed to comb my hair that morning. Mother accused me of rank neglect since my return from Colorado. But I caught sight of a distracted phantom in the mirror; happily, my hair, although somewhat frowsy, bore suggestions of combing.

'Governor,' said Harold gravely, 'let me introduce Mrs. Miner, the head of this delegation.'

Now I ought to have bowed in a stately way and said: 'Madame, I am happy to meet you and to find that prison reform has on its lists advocates at once so fair and capable.'

But I did not say this. I observed that Mrs. Miner was a tall, matronly lady with gray hair, Roman features and pale complexion: very stylishly dressed in black with white lace about her throat and wrists. I observed that her companions were mostly elderly, wellbred, tastefully attired, self possessed and eminently ladylike. At the rear were some younger women, notably one brunette with flashing black eyes, wearing a broad-brimmed hat with a rich red plume and a brocaded dark red velvet dress with a profusion of ribbons. She looked demurely over the shoulders of her companions directly into my eyes, and I, but just returned from such a long exile, unused to feminine proximity, was instantly bereft of all senses.

I stood irresolute. Mrs. Miner also stood a moment hesitating. Then, as I made a halting movement forward, she held out her gloved hand, which I shook awkwardly.

'We ought to be old friends,' said I, glancing at Brooks, who buried his head in documents, while his chair shook suspiciously, 'for I was a miner myself until——'

The appalling reflection that in my impersonation as Governor all reference to my Colorado experience was out of place, now tripped the remark. I added, to complete the sentence, 'until I became of age.'

Brooks glanced up with agony in its face, a look which conjured me, whatever else I did, by all the gods not to profane his identity through such abhorrent puns.

Mrs. Miner introduced her companions to me, 'Mrs. Griffin, Miss Minx, Mrs. Qualter,' and she went through the group standing a little aside so as to keep the ladies and myself in our respective places. I felt perspiration trickle over my brow as I bowed to Miss Mulwine, the brunette, who was the last one presented. A desperate desire to do something gallant came over me.

'Take seats, ladies. Sit down. Er—Harold, where are the chairs? Bring in the chairs, sir! The chairs ought always to be here.'

Harold winked, put one hand over his jaws and staggered into the back room. He did not reappear, but handed forth the chairs behind the partly open door without showing his countenance. Then I heard him go out into the anteroom by way of the back corridor and became conscious from the shuffling feet that he had massed all the clerks against the communicating door so that they could overhear my speech.

There were not chairs enough for the party, so I took the chair from my desk and placed it for Miss Mulwine. I remained standing before them.

'Mr. Governor, we have come to ask your co-operation in ameliorating the condition of our convicts.'

Here was another great opportunity. If I had kept my head, if that paralyzing brunette had not eyed me so steadily, I might have said:

'Ladies, the condition of our convicts has long enlisted my anxious study. Nothing more stirs my sympathy, nothing seems to me of greater importance than improvement in facilities for their comfort and moral welfare. Any practical measure which you have matured will command my cordial support.'

But I didn't say that. Instead, I replied:

'Yes, there is too much laxity. Those frequent escapes remind me of our experience in Colorado. A drunken miner shot a fellow one night and the Sheriff took him up to the town jug and locked him in. The jug was only a log building set in the hillside. He got out so quick that he met the Sheriff on his return in front of the Welcome Bar and asked him to step in and take a drink. Then the crowd carried him off to the nearest tree. He didn't get away that time.'

'Perhaps you do not quite understand us,' said Mrs. Miner, gravely. She unfolded a large package and disclosed a mass of papers. 'Here are the petitions, circulated in every church in our county and signed by all the best people, asking that greater social and religious privileges be extended to our criminals.'

"You don't get them up as handy as we did in Colorado,' I rejoined. 'When we had our struggle for the county seat we strung the petition on an old wringer frame, so we could roll it up with a crank."

Here Brooks gave a loud 'Hem.' I looked across. He was glaring at me in warning wrath, and again I recollected that these Colorado reminiscences were inopportune. I stared around, caught the unfathomable eyes of that marvelous brunette, and lapsed into hopeless incapacity.

'Pardon me for interrupting you, Governor,' said Brooks in a cool, earnest voice which at once commanded silence and attention. 'But it is fitting these ladies should know that their petition ought to be given to their representative, and he should press for appropriate legislation. Until that time this office is powerless to act.'

Mrs. Miner replied: 'Oh, we quite understand that. We only wished to show the petitions for a moment here as evidence of their popularity, and ascertain the Governor's feelings toward the movement.'

'Entirely favorable madam,' said I.

'Then we will bid you good day and withdraw. I know your time is valuable. Many thanks for your kindness.' They bowed. The clerks scattered in the anteroom and the ladies retired gracefully. While I stood stupidly, not yet recovered from the surprise of their arrival, the door closed behind them.

There was silence a moment. Brooks sat with his back turned. He lifted up a page of manuscript and remarked, with fluttering emphasis:

'Chug, you made a beautiful speech.'

'Oh, shut up! shut up!' I cried, wildly, throwing myself into a chair.

Brooks' fortitude suddenly gave way. He cast himself forward on his desk and laughed hilariously. He rose and bowed himself shrieking over a chair. He dropped full length upon the sofa, on top of the pamphlets, helpless and uproarous. He hashaed all over the office, and crowded me with his outrageous mirth. When at last he was completely exhausted he sat down and faced me quizzically.

It dawned upon my mind that Brooks and I had changed positions; that the superior force of character perhaps now was his, that the coolness in emergencies, which is the test of strength, was most manifest in him. Inspired by this discovery, and by the occasion, I justly remarked:

'I believe I am the biggest fool of all our State officers.'

Ere I had concluded I became aware that the door was open. A perfume of jockey club floated to my senses, Harold, grinning, had shown in the beautiful brunette, and she was upon the threshold, looking and listening.

'Did I leave my parasol?' she asked, sweetly.

Harold picked it from the floor for her. She bowed and went away.

Once more Brooks hung himself in festoons over all the furniture, entirely careless of his own reputation in the matter. When this unseemly mirth subsided, he came to where I sat, with moist brow clasped in both hands upright before my desk, and said, soothingly:

'Never mind, Chug. Life is but a succession of mistakes with the best of us.'

'Yes,' I replied. 'So far as I am concerned I begin to observe that.'

The Northern paragraphers have been poking their jibes at Tennyson for several years because of his verse. But did he ever write anything below the following from Lowell's recent poem, and he is the best poet ever born in the North:

O, days endured to every muse,
When nobody had any Views,
Nor while the cloudscape of his mind
By every breeze was never designed,
Insisted all the world should see
Camels or whales where none
there be!
O happy days, when men received
From sire to son what all believed,
And left the other world in bliss,
Contented with bedeviling this!'

—*Steer.*

VENTRILOQUISM.

ITS ALMOST MIRACULOUS PHENOMENA—CONDITIONS OF THEIR DISPLAY.

The Scheme of an Ingenious Lover Who Turned His Talent to Good Account.

Ventriloquism has of late years exhibited so much improvement that it deserves to have a little attention directed towards its almost miraculous phenomena and the causes and conditions of their display. The art is of very ancient date. References in Scripture to 'the familiar spirits that peep and mutter" are numerous, and, on good authority, it has been stated that these "peepings and mutterings" mean the use of the vocal organs like the ventriloquist of to-day. In the early Christian Church the practice was also known, and a treatise was written on it in Greek by Eustathius, Archbishop of Antioch. The principal argument of the book is the evocation of the spirit of Samuel. By the Mosaic law the Hebrews were prohibited from consulting those who had a familiar spirit. It is stated that the witch of Endor was influenced by such a power in her divinations. In Hebrew the word "ob" designates those persons possessed of a familiar spirit, and "obath" the plural, corresponds to the word "ventriloquism." In the Septuagint it is associated with gastromacy, a mode of ancient divination, wherein the diviner replied without moving his lips, so that the listeners thought they actually heard the voice of a spirit. Many theologians have doubted whether Samuel's ghost really appeared, or whether the whole was not a superstitious imposition on the credulity of Saul.

To the Greeks, the Egyptians and the Assyrians ventriloquism was well known. In the Acts, Paul is described as depriving a young woman of a familiar spirit in the city of Philippi, in Macedonia. She is alluded to as "a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination which brought her master much gain by soothsaying." St Chrysostom and the early fathers mention divination as practiced in their day, and the art is still common in the East as it is also among the Esquimaux. Sir David Brewster writes that ventriloquists have made great additions to their art in the nineteenth century. He says: "Fitzjames and Alexandre were superior to their predecessors. Besides the art of speaking by the muscles of the throat and the abdomen, without moving the muscles of the face, these artists not only studied with great diligence and success the modifications which sounds of all kinds undergo from distance, obstructions, and other causes, but had acquired the art of imitating them in the highest perfection. The ventriloquist was able to carry on a dialogue in which the *dramatis voces* were numerous, and when out of outside of an apartment could persuade a mob, with its variety of noises and vociferations. Their influence over the minds of an audience was still futher extended by a singular power which they had obtained over the muscles of the body.

Fitzjames actually succeeded in making the opposite or corresponding muscles act differently from each other, and, while one side of his face was merry and laughing, the other side was full of sorrow and tears. At one time he would be tall and thin and melancholy, and after passing behind a screen he would come out bloxted and apparently staggering with drunkenness. M. Alexandre possessed the same power over his face and figure, and so striking was was the contrast between two of these forms that an excellent sculptor, M. Joseph, has perpetuated them in marble. This new acquirement of the ventriloquist of the nineteenth century enabled him in his own single person and with his own single voice to represent dramatic composition which would formerly have required the assistance of several actors. Although only one could be seen, numerous characters seemed to appear during the performance and the change of face and figure on the part of the ventriloquist was so perfect that his personal identity could not be recognized in the *dramatis personae*. This deception was also rendered still more complete by a particular construction of the costumes, which enabled the performer to appear in a new character after an interval so short that the audience necessarily thought it was the same person.

One Louis Brabant, once famed for his ventriloquial talent, began to good account to himself in this way. He was rejected by the parents of an heiress, as an undesirable match for their daughter. Louis, on the death of the father, paid a visit to the widow, and during this visit the voice of her deceased husband was suddenly heard to address her thus: "Give my daughter in marriage to Louis Brabant; he is a man of fortune and character, and I endure the pains of purgatory for having refused her to him. Obey my admonition and give repose to the soul of your departed husband." Of course the widow complied, but the difficulties were not all overcome. Brabant wanted money to defray the wedding expenses, and concluded he could work on the fears of an old usurer, one M. Cornu, of Lyons. He obtained an interview with him one evening, and contrived to turn the conversation to departed spirits and ghosts. During a little silence the voice of the miser's deceased father was heard complaining of his condition in purgatory and calling loudly upon his son to rescue him from his suffering by enabling Brabant to redeem the Christians, at that time enslaved by the Turks. Brabant did not succeed in the first trial, and was obliged to visit the miser a second time, when he brought not only the deceased father, but all the dead relations to make an appeal to the usurer in his behalf, and he succeeded in obtaining 1,000 crowns.

There have been but very few female ventriloquists. The effects produced by the female organs of speech have shown a deficiency of strength. The artificial voices have been few in number and not very strongly defined. There was a woman at Amsterdam, however, who possessed considerable power in this way. A Dutch doctor of medicine, Conrad Ammam, published a Latin treatise at Amsterdam, in 1700, in which of this woman as producing effects by a sort of swallowing of words, or forcing them to retrograde, as it were, by the touches, by using the voice during the inspiration of the breath and not during expiration as in ordinary speaking.

Different professors of ventriloquism have given different accounts of the manner in which they produce their illusions. One of the household of Prince Lichtenstein, at Vienna, Baron Mengen, said that it consisted in a passion for counterfeiting the cries of animals and the voices of different persons. M. St. Gille referred his art to mimicry, and the French Academy combines these views and defines the art as consisting in an accurate imitation of any given sound as it reaches the ear. Scientific solutions are numerous and varied. Mr. Nicholson, a writer on ventriloquism, says that artists in this line, by continual practice from childhood, could acquire the power of speaking during inspiration of the breath with the same intonation as the ordinary voice which is formed by expiration. M. Richer and, another writer on the subject, declares that every time a professor exhibits his peculiarities he suffers distention in the epigastric region, and that the mechanism of the art consists in a slow, gradual expiration, drawn in such a way that the artist either makes use of the influence exerted by volition on the parietes of the thorax, or that he keeps the epiglotis down by the base of the tongue, the apex of which is not carried beyond the dental arches. He says ventriloquists possess the power of making a strong inspiration just before the lung expiration and by so doing convey into the lungs an immense quantity of air, and by artistic arrangement of the egress of this they produce wonderful and astonishing effects upon the hearing and imagination of their auditors. Professor Love, in his account of himself, asserts a natural aptitude, a physical predisposition of the vocal organs, which in his case was discovered as early as the age of ten years, and gradually improved with practice without any artistic study whatever. He state that not only his pure ventriloquism, but nearly all his light vocal imitations of miscellaneous sounds were executed for the first time on the spur of the moment and without any premeditation. The artist must necessarily possess great flexibility of larynx and tongue. Polyphony is according to the modern professors, produced by the compression of the muscles of the chest, and is an act

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BIG LONDON

A recent London letter contained the following interesting information: Rome has [illegible] Roman Catholics [illegible] in his new Irish [illegible] dom. Edinburgh [illegible] and Dewsbury [illegible] one to [illegible] every day. Everybody [illegible] a birth—even while I spend [illegible] hours in writing this, [illegible] will have been born and [illegible] deaths will have taken place. You think of it: three [illegible] records the births [illegible] of the preceding hour [illegible] course must give 300 [illegible] Yorkshireman [illegible] mob [illegible] San Francisco. [illegible] twenty miles a day [illegible] 200 miles. We'll talk you 175 days on [illegible] make the trip. Put [illegible] 7,000 miles of [illegible] took them for a month [illegible] The rate of twenty miles [illegible] would have to walk [illegible] more than [illegible] years [illegible] always [illegible] And [illegible] [illegible] not [illegible] of [illegible]

How do these people [illegible] you die by eating [illegible] I can't go into figures, but you can take your [illegible] mince they swallow every day. [illegible] these London [illegible] low down. 5,000,000 [illegible] sheep, 200,000 [illegible] swine, 5,000,000 head of [illegible] million pounds of [illegible] pounds of oysters, 200,000 [illegible] —is that enough to [illegible] you? If not, there are some million tons of canned goods; no end of fish and other stuff; but not to spoil your appetite talking of beans and peas, and 50,000,000 bushels of wheat, we might as well forget. But how do they wash all this stuff down, you might ask? Look sharp! It takes 2,000,000,000 quarts of beer! A stream of beer about the size of the Wapsie would not suffice to quench the common thirst. But more than this, they drink 100,000,000 quarts of rum and [illegible] of wine—the wine, the rum, the beer—260,000,000 quarts!

Any water? Some for sprinkling streets, about 150,000,000 of gallons daily. Taking out the water used for sprinkling, cooking and fountains, and the actual drinking supply is desperately small. But it's English you know, and there is no use saying a word. Any beggars among people? Yes, plenty of them, but it only seems to make more drinking for those that are not. The supply is about as large and hard to be consumed. True, the government says there is a sad falling off of late in spirit revenues; but it is different to see where. You see more drunkenness in an hour in London than on the entire continent of Europe—all Asia thrown in, and Africa, too—in a year. But London is a great city—and very thirsty. You go to Liverpool or Glasgow [illegible] Edinburgh, or up to Birmingham, Manchester or Leeds, [illegible] just as bad—deep [illegible] deeper damning sin [illegible] ness, rampage in the streets. What can you say? This! On the Sabbath day. No such abstemiousness is found in all the world as in these places I have named—that is from midnight Saturday night, when all the dens and boozing kens are closed in front, till Sunday afternoon at 6. Sunday—you can't get a cup of coffee Sunday morning in any coffee place.

—*Exchange.*