POOR DOCUMENT

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THE CHOICE

By E. R. PUNSHON

CHAPTER XXII—(Continued.)

"Yes, he said, speaking now more clearly and distinctly, but avoiding looking at her. "When you went away and I found out where you were—well, I planned all kinds of things. I tried to tell myself I hated you, but I still loved you, and that was what made me so bitter. I guessed pretty soon you had some reason for what you had done, but that didn't make it any easier for me. I had the most awful headaches—I think they prevented me from thinking quite clearly. Well, I told myself I had a right to test you—to find out—God!" he exclaimed suddenly, "I so wanted to know. There, that is just it." He paused, and seemed a little surprised, as if only now had he made his own motives clear to himself. "Yes, I wanted to know," he continued, "to get at the truth, if I had to tear it out of you . . . out of myself, too—I'll say that, anyhow. I suffered, too. Then there was that evening—you'll remember?" She put out her hands quickly as she realized that he meant that time when she had said to Nickolas that she loved no one; but he went on rapidly, misunderstanding her gesture; "Oh, I don't blame you. I had been thinking for some time it was hardly likely you would go on caring for me when I was torturing you. Oh, I knew it was torture . . . for me, too. When I heard you say that, it was what I expected; and I made up my mind to clear off. You see, it was either clearing off—or murder. I felt like murder. It's a rummy feeling to think about killing someone . . . hot and cold, only lots worse, you understand? No," he went on very slowly, "it was the thinking about it stopped me. If I had done it, it would have had to be in a hurry. That and the paper—those beastly papers. So, you see, I just had to clear."

He had spoken in abrupt broken sentences; and as she watched him she understood how near the wings of dreadful tragedy had fluttered then above her, so that even now she could almost feel their chill wind. Only some remnant of respect for law and order, as the phrase goes—only some thin remnant of the teachings of civilization—had restrained him. She shuddered again as she realized what so nearly might have been.

"Fred, she said quickly, "that night . . . it was only that I dared not give the least hint, the least suggestion there was any man, for fear they might guess you were he. If they had, they would have thought you were a spy."

"Yes, I know," he agreed; "that is partly why I thought of coming to you tonight. It wasn't playing the game square with you to drive you so, when all you had to do was just to drop a whisper to any of that lot to be rid of me for good and all. No, it wasn't cricket," he said, shaking his head. "So I cleared off. I felt pretty sick, Annie, I can tell you that. Then I made up my mind to come back tonight just to explain a bit. Things have gone jolly wrong, there's no denying it; but perhaps they'll get squared up in a day or two."

"What do you mean?" she exclaimed, forgetting everything else, as behind his words she discerned a dim horror of great peril.

"Well, it's this way," he said, awkwardly. "It seems these people here got suspicious—would have been rather a blind lot if they hadn't. So, when I cleared off that old beggar they call Ivanovitch met me and asked where I was going. I said I was going to the devil, and asked him if he would come along, and he said yes, certainly, and hailed a cab that was passing. Well, that jumped with my humor, and I got into the cab, too, and drove with him to Poplar. Of course, I knew all the time what it meant was they didn't want to let me go; but when he explained they were on the point of trying to run a lot of rifles across to Russia in a yacht belonging to some Count or another, I said I was more than willing to take a hand."

"Fred," she cried in horrified surprise, "you have never been so mad as to mix yourself up with those wild men again."

"Why not?" he said, with the first touch of bitterness and passion he had yet shown. "I'll match Nickolas Kampff in his own line, and we'll see who is the better man there."

She gave him a quick and frightened glance, and she understood that in these last words lay the true motive of what he had done. He continued in the same jerky and hurried manner.

"It's rather a risky kind of a job in some ways, I understand. So I thought I would take my chance while I had it, and tell you I felt I hadn't done quite the fair thing by you. I ought just to have made you come away, but when I did what I did—well, if I had been you I would have split. Mind, I don't say you didn't treat me pretty crookedly, too; but I've thought since the way I took wasn't quite—decent—wasn't a man's way. There must be a touch of the woman in me, I think. It was spiteful, cattish. So, you see, you were right when you said there would have to be talk of forgiveness for me, too."

Annie had been able to recover herself to some degree, while Fred was jerking out all this, and now she said in a low tone:

"Well, and you—do you forgive me?"

He had not expected this question, and he was silent. And because she in her turn had not expected this silence, it dismayed her. She said:

"Fred, you do not, cannot think I care for Mr. Kampff?"

He appeared to consider the question, brooding over it with an aspect of deep and heavy thought.

"No," he said at last, "but I think you are on the way."

In this there was so much truth that she was staggered. He saw the change in her countenance, and the bitterness came back into his heart and into his eyes. She burst out with an accent of pain:

"No—no, I tell you."

"You'll find it easier," he said, grimly and hardly, "when I am out of the way."

Just at that moment they heard a door close below, and immediately after a footstep in the hall, and at once Annie forgot everything but her fear for Fred's safety if he were discovered there.

"Oh, listen; you must go," she exclaimed quickly.

"Yes, I think I had better be off," Fred muttered in a lowered voice. "We must have disturbed someone."

"It is Mr. Kampff," said Annie, her right hand raised as if commanding silence. "His step is so heavy. Oh, yes, you must go."

"I suppose I must," Fred agreed again, though somewhat reluctantly. "They don't half trust in me, as it is; and if they found me here, most likely they would suspect you as well. There's someone—a Nobby-something or other—they are frightened out of their lives about already; they have had some warning about him."

"Go quickly," muttered Annie, listening intently with her ear to the door. "He is coming upstairs, and there is someone with him. Oh, can you have been seen?"

Her terror was so great as she crouched by the door that she had not realised he was already half-way out of the window and reaching for the water-spout by which he had ascended. She rose and ran across the floor to him, thankful for the strong bolts on the door.

"Fred," she whispered, "one instant—you are at Poplar—it is not till to-morrow they begin with these rifles?"

Before he could say anything there came a light tap at the door. She ran back to it in a panic.

"Who is there? What is it?" she called, in a voice she vainly endeavored to make steady.

"Do not be alarmed," the answer came in Nickolas' full tones. "A loafer has come to tell us he saw someone climbing over the garden wall a little time ago. Probably it is only a trick to get a shilling, but I am just looking round. I thought I would tell you, in case you wondered what the noise was about."

"Yes, thank you," she answered; and heard him move on.

She ran back to the window, but Fred had disappeared. For a long time she remained listening fearfully; but, hearing nothing further, she presently lay down on the bed with a heart lighter than it had been for many days. It seemed to her the morrow would see all her troubles ended; on the morrow she would tell Nickolas of her marriage, and he would trouble her no more; she would seek out Fred, and between them also all would now be well—on the morrow; and, thirdly, she would explain to her stepmother and sister who really was the secret friend who had helped them, and she would endeavor then to effect, on the strength of her services, some kind of reconciliation with them also. She fell asleep and did not wake till late.

She dressed hurriedly, and on going downstairs was half relieved and half disappointed to find Nickolas had been summoned away by a pressing telegram.

"He said he would be back as soon as he possibly could, ma'am," the daffy growing thinner Bassett told her.

"Well, I must go out myself," Annie replied. "But if he comes in, ask him to wait if he can, as I wanted to see him."

And this message Bassett duly delivered to Nickolas when he returned in the company of Ivanovitch only a few minutes after Annie had set out to walk across to Notting Hill.

Neither man was in a particular good temper; for Nickolas was vexed at having been summoned so imperatively to attend to what he considered had been but a matter of trifling importance; while Ivanovitch was still more angry at Nickolas' vexation. He himself considered the affair had been of the utmost interest and importance, but his point of view and that of Nickolas were no longer the same. But the message Bassett had given to Nickolas swept away in a moment all his ill-temper.

"You heard that?" he said exultingly, when Bassett had retired, and he turned to Ivanovitch with a face shining with pleasure like a child's. "Never before has she left a message for me, or said she wished to see me. But she promised her answer today, and, you see, see has not forgotten."

"Not all answers are always kind," muttered Ivanovitch. "Well, I wish you health and good luck, brother. I mentioned I should not be seeing you again for a few days, perhaps?"

"There you are!" cried Nickolas laughing. "You grumble at me and then go off for two or three days' holiday yourself."

"It would not have happened but for this," grumbled Ivanovitch, making for the door.

But in a moment Nickolas was after him and had taken him by the arm, suddenly suspicious.

"Now, papa," he said with a rather set smile, "no tricks—you play me no tricks. If anyone came between me and her——"

"Why do you say this to me?" protested the old man, genuinely indignant. "I wish you health, and good luck and a speedy return to sense. All the rest is nothing to me."

"If you are wise," said Nickolas very gently, "you will let it remain nothing to do with you."

He nodded and went back into the room, while Ivanovitch, rather pale, took his departure, and made arrangements to remain in the background till the first force of Nickolas' anger, to be expected after Annie's forthcoming disclosure, had spent itself. Nickolas, finding Misha, inquired more particularly how long Annie had been gone, and then set out to walk slowly across the park to wait for her outside the hotel, according to his custom. It was just at the moment he set out that Madam Ross was telling Annie how much better her father seemed that morning.

"The improvement is wonderful," she said. "He has asked about you several times."

"I am very glad," said Annie, relieved that with so much before her her mind should be free of anxiety concerning her father.

"He has been anxious, too," Madam Ross continued, "that you should be informed on a certain point. When you left us to live what you chose to call your own life in London I made—and have made since—no attempt to interfere with you."

"No," thought Annie to herself, "you have not so much as asked where I am living or anything about me."

"Your choice was to be independent," Madam Ross continued. "Catherine, I am glad to say, has other ideas, and now I am pleased to announce to you that she has contracted an alliance which has my most cordial approval as well as that of your father."

"Catherine married!" exclaimed Annie, very much astonished.

"As I say," returned Madam Ross. "I have now to tell you something else. You will remember I have spoken to you of a secret but powerful friend of ours to whom we owe life and everything?"

"Yes," answered Annie with the touch of amusement she always felt when her step-mother referred to this really very much unknown deliverer. She decided to speak out now, and she smiled faintly as she pictured her mother's astonishment, and she even hoped what she had to say would lead to kinder feelings between them. "Yes," she repeated, "and there was something I was going to say about that. Have you no idea who this friend may be?"

"In point of fact," said Madam Ross, "I have known all along. It is he who has married Catherine, and if you will come into the next room I will present you to him."

"But—what?" stammered Annie. In her bewilderment she touched herself on the breast. "But it was me—me," she said, blinking her eyes in her astonishment.

Her step-mother looked at her with sour disapproval.

"I fail to follow you," she said. "If you will be so good as to come with me, I will present him to you."

CHAPTER XXIII.

Wasted Efforts.

Madam Ross went out of the room and Annie followed her mechanically. Her first impression was of sheer bewilderment and then she imagined that possibly her step-mother was playing some joke or trick on her. This idea made her feel very indignant. Her mind alternated in violent oscillation between such indignation and her first feeling of pure bewilderment. Madam Ross opened the door of a room adjoining, and Annie entered close behind her. It occurred to her now that perhaps they wished to cheat her of her reward of gratitude due for the peril and the suffering she had undergone to save them, and then by an effort she composed her mind and endeavoured to become cool and collected.

In the apartment they had now entered there was one man who was sitting comfortably by the fire, smoking a cigarette and reading a newspaper. As the two ladies entered, somewhat abruptly, he rose quickly, laid down his paper, and flung his cigarette into the fire. He was a small, rather stout man, dressed with great precision and with his moustache carefully waxed. His cheeks were full, his eyes small and close together, and so veiled by their lids that one could hardly make out their colour, but he had a constant and amiable smile which he cultivated with great care, and which gave him a very pleasant appearance. As he rose he put his heels together and bowed deeply, first to Madam Ross and then to Annie. Annie, standing by the door where she had paused, had a vague impression of having seen him before, and then she guessed that this was he who had watched her and avoided her on the hotel steps. But another and vaguer recollection troubled her, and in the depths of her mind floated a hazy picture of a ballroom and a smiling gentleman in uniform who was her partner and most polite to her.

"Major Nobrikoff!" she exclaimed. "Oh, impossible!"

The smart and smiling stranger bowed again with one hand on his heart, and Madam Ross said—

"I am glad you remember, Annie. You met Major Nobrikoff—Boris Consantinovitch Nobrikoff—of the Cossacks at the Governor's ball and danced with him. Borinka," she added to Nobrikoff, using, after the kindly Russian fashion, a diminutive of his first name, "you remember Anna, of course?"

"Assuredly," said the Major with a third and still deeper bow, "it is not possible I should forget."

He advanced towards Annie, and halting opposite to her brought his heels together with a military click. He was about to take her hand when she moved suddenly and turned towards her stepmother.

"But—but—but," she stammered, her tongue tripping in her bewilderment and excitment. "Oh, what was it you said?" she burst out imploringly.

"Whatever is the matter with you?" asked Madam Ross crossly. "Really, Anna, you are the most unaccountable girl. Why, are you staring so? What is the matter with you?"

"But you said," began Annie, and then stopped once more. "Well, you did say," she declared.

"I told you," said Madam Ross, while Nobrikoff looked on in smiling and good-tempered surprise, "I told you that Major Nobrikoff was the powerful and unknown friend who saved your father from death, and Catherine from a fate too awful to contemplate, if that is what you mean."

"I had, it is true," said the Major, pulling his moustache and trying to assume a modest and deprecatory bearing without much success, "the good fortune to render some slight services, to Monsieur Ross and Catherine Paolovna after their arrest, but our dear and respected mama exaggerates perhaps to some degree."

"It would be difficult to exaggerate," said Madam Ross. "Why, Paul was actually facing the rifles of the firing party when you intervened, and sentence of flogging had already been passed upon our poor Catherine. But for you," she said, and completed her sentence with a gesture of more genuine and of deeper feeling than she often showed.

"But this is all lies!" declared Annie despairingly.

"My dear Anna," cried Madam Ross, "are you quite mad?"

The Major looked offended, and though the smile remained on his lips his eyes grew ugly for a moment. Then he drew himself to his full height, clicked his heels together, made another and very stiff bow, and said, with just the right mingling of surprise, indignation, and rebuke in his voice—

"Of course it is not permissible for one to contradict a lady."

"But it is not possible what you say," declared Annie, both hands pressed to her heart. She turned quite fiercely on her indignant step-mother, but seemed to check herself and turned away again without saying anything. A chair was near, and she sat down upon it, still keeping both her hands pressed hard against her beating heart. "There has been some mistake," she said. "Perhaps I have been deceived." She paused abruptly as she said this, for the mere suggestion seemed to her so appalling she could not face it. "Kindly tell me what it is you have done," she said sharply.

"Really, very little; a mere trifle," returned Nobrikoff promptly, always delighted, however, at any chance to dilate on his own performances. "It would indeed have been too trifling even to be mentioned but for one unhappy circumstance. Your father most rashly and unluckily betrayed, a few days after his arrest, a knowledge of the whereabouts of a bomb factory carried on under the guise of a furniture factory in the suburbs of Moscow. The police had been watching the place for some time, and of course they took the statement of your father's as a proof of his guilt. He was again court-martialled on the spot and condemned to death."

"Now I know you are not telling me the truth!" cried Annie excitedly. A chill and dreadful doubt had come upon her at Nobrikoff's mention of how her father's action in giving the police information about the bomb factory had been taken as a proof of his guilt, for she remembered very well that that was the very fact Ivanovitch had promised should be communicated to him to use as a bribe to secure a reprieve. But these last words of Nobrikoff's changed her impression of his truth again, and she exclaimed exultantly, "Now I know you are not telling me the truth, for the note my father sent me said he had then already been condemned to be shot. I will not listen to you any more," she said, fearful and trembling.

"Well, now, what are girls coming to?" cried Madam Ross shrilly, taken altogether by surprise at Annie's outburst. "Child, have you gone mad? What can you be thinking of? Never in all my——"

"Pardon me, dearest mama," interrupted Nobrikoff; "let me explain; evidently there is some misapprehension." He turned to Anna. "You have accused me of falsehood and attempting to deceive you. Anna Paolovna," he said. "I make no complaint about that, but I am sure you will appreciate my feelings and understand I have a right to ask you to listen to my reply."

"Yes, yes—go on!" said Annie hoarsely, wishing he would not use many words, and wondering dreadfully what she would do if he proved to have spoken truly.

"When I heard of Mr. Ross' arrest," Nobrikoff continued, "I at once hurried to headquarters. I thank heaven I am not quite unknown. I have an aunt who has placed under deep obligations the wife of a brother to the secretary to a general who is married to the sister of the head of one of the chief departments of the secret police. My own sister, too, occupied a position in the household of the Grand Duchess Olga, and can secure her Highness' ear at almost any minute. This is known, and makes it well understood that I am not a man to be trifled with. Alas, I found, however, speedy as I had been, that I was not in time to save Mr. Ross from having been beaten; but then, as the old proverb says, though the wife tastes the stick often enough, few are the husbands who escape. A beating is not much, and though he had been at first condemned to death, the sentence had already been reduced to fifteen years' imprisonment, and the loss of all civil rights. Well, I went at once to the Governor—oh, I was bold, I assure you; I spoke to him as I speak to you now—and I ventured to hint to him that if his wife's nephew wished for the appointment he was asking for in the train of the Grand Duke, a word from my sister to the Grand Duchess Olga would go far. Well, the Governor was most agreeable. He commended his wife's nephew to my sister's kindness, and he transferred your father's case to the ordinary courts, giving me at the same time the name of the judge on one of his cards. Naturally, I thought all was well—I saw the judge, a most reasonable and amiable gentleman—and then your father blurted out to the police that he knew of this bomb factory. Now the Chief of the Police and the Governor are not friends, and knowing that the Governor was interested in your father, the Chief of the Police sent him for immediate trial by fresh court-martial, and all the Governor dared or could do was to give me permission to see Mr. Ross. I learned from him that some fellow prisoner had communicated to him the position of this bomb factory to give to the police in exchange for his life. Imagine such folly if you can. My sole hope rested now in my aunt, my tears and my despair moved her, the good soul. We went together to her friend, the wife of the brother to the secretary to the General. She joined her lamentations to ours and together we flung ourselves at the feet of the sister of the Police Department Chief. Ah, what grief, what outcries, what appeals! She hesitated, we redoubled our efforts, she yielded—all was won. I left for Moscow that evening, with, in my pocket, a free pardon for Catherine—that had been easy—and a reprieve for Mr. Ross till further inquiry should be made into his case. I was only just in time. He was facing the firing party when I rushed before their rifles. I had been able, too, to obtain his transfer to a lunatic asylum instead of to an ordinary jail, and after that all went well. I was able to prove that Mr. Ross knew nothing of the bomb factory, but had only repeated what had been said to him in gaol. The only difficulty was that the Revolutionary party, imagining, I suppose, that as he was arrested he must be in sympathy with them, put him again in grave peril by their efforts to help him. There was even an attempt to rescue him, but fortunately he was wise enough to refuse to go."

"Oh—he refused!" murmured Annie.

"Yes," said Nobrikoff, who had much enjoyed this recital of his achievements, "wisely and fortunately. Really, the behaviour of the Revolutionaries was unaccountable. One would have thought their whole cause depended on him. A message was even given to me that I should be blown up with a bomb if any harm came to Catherine. I took no notice the first time, as Catherine was safe out of the way in Petersburg with my aunt; but when I received another message placed inside an unloaded bomb I found in my bed one night, I decided it would be more prudent to answer it. So I informed them plainly that Catherine Paolovna had done me the honor to promise to marry me, and after that they left me alone. Really, they made such a fuss about Mr. Ross and Catherine that it is no wonder the authorities quite thought at first they had got hold of somebody most important."

Annie had listened intently, and gradually the conviction forced itself into her mind that all that she had done had been useless, all her anguish wasted, all her suffering of no avail. She could not doubt Nobrikoff's narrative, told, as it was, in complete ignorance of the claims it was demolishing. Yet she still clutched at one vague hope.

"But then," she said, "why has not all this been told me before?"

"It was kept back at my request," Nobrikoff explained. "I have been trusted by our Imperial government with a most important mission. We know a rising is projected in Moscow—the barricades may be up there at any moment—and we believe it is being planned from London. There is talk of a cargo of rifles and ammunition, which I myself do not believe but which is too serious not to be investigated. Just for the first I wished my presence in London to be unknown even to my new God-given sister"—he bowed to her again as he used the pretty Russian phrase employed to distinguish relatives by marriage—"but now I rejoice to be able to announce myself."

Annie still had her hands pressed to her heart, which burned and throbbed strangely.

"I must speak to my father," she announced, and moved towards the door. Madam Ross made as if to stop her, but Annie swept her out of the way with a fierce gesture. "It is necessary I should see my father," she declared.

She went out of the room quickly, while it seemed to her that a voice clamoured incessantly in her ear that she had been fooled, deceived, betrayed—that all her suffering had been for nothing. Madam Ross held her hands up with a kind of resigned protest.

"There, that is the kind of girl she is," she said to her new son-in-law. "She is shameless, absolutely shameless—and independent." Madam Ross's features expressed very clearly the opinion that independence was several degrees worse than shamelessness. "I don't know what to do with her," she declared.

Upstairs Annie found her father quite unconscious, and a brief question or two put to him confirmed fully Nobrikoff's account, both in the service he had rendered and of the dangers the well-meant assistance of the Revolutionary party had involved Mr. Ross in. Annie found also that it was quite true Nobrikoff had informed the Revolutionary emissary of his projected marriage with Catherine, and she remembered the impression she had once had when, with Ivanovitch, that the old man was holding something back from her he knew about Catherine. "See how they fooled you and played with you—all of them," the voice seemed to her to whisper in her ear.

"What was so nearly fatal to me," her father remarked in his weak and low tones, "was the knowledge I showed of that bomb factory. The information was smuggled into me, you know, with the suggestion I should use it to bribe the police to give me a reprieve. Unfortunately I tried to do so, and, instead, the police at once took it as proof of my guilt. I was court-martialled for the second time, and again condemned to death; and that time there would have been no escape for me but for Boris."

Annie kissed him and thanked him, and then, as he was beginning to get restless and excited with her questions, she went downstairs with the drear conviction in her heart that all that she had done had been worse than useless, that, in fact, she had simply permitted herself to be used as a tool for the purposes of the Revolutionaries. How easily they had beguiled her! how readily she had fallen into their trap! it seemed to her, anguish was wrung from her soul as water from a dripping cloth. It happened she met Madam Ross on the stairs.

"Mother," she said, "I am sorry, but I am not well; all this has upset me. Will you please give my love and my congratulations to Major Nobrikoff and to Catherine, but I cannot stay now—indeed I cannot!" she said vehemently, as she saw her step-mother about to remonstrate, and she pushed past her and downstairs and ran out of the hotel into the street.

Madam Ross went back to Nobrikoff, who seemed very vexed to hear of this unexpected departure. He hesitated for a few minutes, explaining that he had pressing business that evening in Poplar near the river, which would keep him away for a day or two so that he could not wait to see if Annie returned, as Madam Ross suggested she might do. Finally he went out to see if he could overtake her. But in this he failed as he went straight across Kensington Gardens, while Annie, having been met by Nickolas, as usual, had turned off with him towards Hyde Park.

"There is something I wish to say to you," she told him.

"Yes," he said eagerly, his heart beating high with hope as he wondered if she were at last intending to give him her answer which he anticipated with such confidence.

"Yes," she repeated, "I wish to tell you, Nickolas Andreivitch, that I have found out the truth at last!"

"What truth?" he asked, bewildered alike by her manner and words.

"The truth," she said again, and then, losing all her self-control that had been tried so highly, she raised her hand, and a park-keeper, a couple of stray nurses with babies, and a casual passer-by or two enjoyed the astonishing spectacle of a young lady striking twice with all her force, with her open palm across his face, the distinguished-looking gentleman accompanying her.

(To be continued.)

BRYAN SAYS MONEY IS BEING USED TO BEAT HIM.

New York, April 27.—Although refusing to say by whom it is being raised or where it is being expended, William J. Bryan declared there was no doubt that money was being used to control one-third of the delegates to the Denver Convention, and in that way dictate the nomination for President.

Mr. Bryan is in the city primarily to meet Mrs. Bryan, who will arrive from Europe on the Minnehaha. He is at the Hoffman House, and started his day with breakfast with Henry Watterson, of Kentucky. He remained in his rooms all day conferring with persons of more or less political prominence, and in the evening delivered one of his non-political lectures in the Bronx.

Mr. Bryan refused to discuss the chaotic political situation in New York, and with one exception no person of political prominence in the city discussed the situation with him. That was Lewis Nixon, one of the delegates at large to the Denver Convention, but, as Mr. Bryan explained, a friend of long standing. Charles F. Murphy did not call to see Mr. Bryan or try to arrange an interview with him.

When the attention of Mr. Bryan was called to an editorial comment on an alleged interview in which he was quoted as saying that corrupt influences prevented his endorsement by the Michigan state committee he denied that he ever said it.

"Have you ever said that money was being used to defeat you?" he was asked.

"I never have, but the Commoner has stated that money is now being used to obtain uninstructed delegations with a view of obtaining one-third of the delegates with the purpose of using the one-third to control the nomination. The Commoner said that: I am the editor of the Commoner and know whereof I speak."

"Will you give the names of persons raising the money, tell where it is being used or whether it is being raised in New York?"

"I do not care to say anything further about it. I only repeat I know money is being used."

Dr. John W. Cox was present and Mr. Bryan was told that Dr. Cox was a wealthy man and asked if he knew if any of his wealthy friends were using money to help him.

"I certainly know nothing of it, but I am convinced they are not," he replied. "Most of my friends are so poor that they are above that suspicion."

One of Mr. Bryan's callers was W. G. Conrad, of Montana, who has publicly declared that he would not be adverse to taking the nomination himself if it was needed to harmonize the party, and in any event he could be considered as a candidate for the nomination of vice-president.

"I assured Mr. Bryan that the mountain states are for him," he said when he returned to the hotel corridor after the interview. "Of course, I am being mentioned by my friends for vice-president, but there has been nothing settled about that yet."

CANADIAN COTTON MILLS CUT WAGES

Montreal, April 29.—A bombshell was thrown into the ranks of the Canadian cotton operatives this afternoon, when notices were posted on the doors of all the big mills notifying the employes that a general reduction of 10 per cent. in wages would go into effect on May 1.

All the big Canadian companies have joined in this movement, and declare that they will stand together, and, if there is trouble the mills will be shut down. For some time the managers of the companies have been considering this move, and it was decided upon at a meeting last Saturday.

The cotton men state that wages today are twenty-five per cent higher than two years ago, having been forced up during the good times by a series of strikes. Since the present trade depression set in, the cotton industry has borne its full share, while in addition they had to meet the competition of the New England mills, which are now working on a reduced pay scale. Under these circumstances it was determined that there was not sufficient profit in the business to keep the mills going at present rates of pay, and that it would be better for all concerned to go on with a 10 per cent. reduction rather than close the mills down.

So far the federation of textile workers has not been approached, nor has it taken any official action in the matter. It is not likely that the cut in wages will be accepted without at least a protest, as it is only a few weeks since the employes at the Hochelaga mills struck for an improvement in their working conditions and the cotton industry in Canada has been marked by a series of strikes for years past.

TERRIBLE TRAGEDY NEAR SACKVILLE

Six-Year-Old Boy Got Shotgun During Parents' Absence and Blew Top of Little Sister's Head Off, Killing Instantly

Sackville, N. B., April 29—News has reached here of a terrible tragedy at Upper Rockport this afternoon, whereby the three-year old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Tower had the top of her head blown off through the discharge of a gun in the hands of her six-year old brother.

Details are lacking, but it is understood that in the absence of his parents the boy took the gun from its place, and some way discharged it, the charge striking his baby sister.

The whole top of the girl's skull was blown off and death was instantaneous.

Coroner J. M. Baird will inquire into the accident.

CONSERVATIVE SWEEP IN HALIFAX ELECTIONS

Halifax, N. S., April 29.—William Roche and Michael Carney, the two Liberal members for Halifax in the Dominion parliament did not profit by the experience of Hon. William Pugsley in New Brunswick. The minister came to that province and managed a campaign that proved disastrous to the Liberals. Roche and Carney have been absenting themselves from Ottawa to assist Dr. A. C. Hawkins in his contest for the mayoralty of this city in opposition to A. B. Crosby and in civic affairs the M.P. bore a fate similar to that of Dr. Pugsley in the provincial arena.

A. B. Crosby (Conservative) was today elected mayor over A. C. Hawkins (Liberal) with a majority of 942. It was a tremendous sweep for Crosby, in which he carried every ward in the city except Ward 6, which was known to be the Hawkins stronghold.

Roche and Carney made the fight their own, the Liberal machine having formally decided that it must be made a party fight. Every influence that could be brought to bear by the members and by the machine on the government employes, who are a large factor in Ward 6, was utilized. They were threatened with dismissal if they did not vote for Hawkins, and in a number of the booths Hawkins' representatives were officials of the government.

It is a severe blow to the Liberal party. The importance of the contest from a political point of view is emphasized by the fact that not only is a Conservative mayor thus elected, by nearly 1,000 majority but of the six aldermen elected in the various wards every one of them is a Conservative. The Liberal machine nominated the six defeated candidates.

Mayor-elect Crosby is having a big meeting tonight with his friends to rejoice over his victory and that of the Conservative aldermen in this memorable contest.

ROCHETTE, QUEBEC WIFE POISONER SENTENCED TO DEATH

Quebec, April 28.—Omer Rochette, the Quebec hotel-keeper who killed his wife by giving her poison, and then skipped out with another woman whom he married shortly after, was found guilty today, and was sentenced to be hanged on June 27th. Rochette and his new wife were found in Chicago, and came back to Canada voluntarily.

INTRUDER SHOT DEAD BY QUEBEC MAN

Montreal, April 28—A man named George Wilson shot and killed another named Wenseslas Fortin, at Chambly Canton last night. Fortin had gone there a few weeks ago and tried to get a license to sell liquor in a store. He was not successful and drank heavily. He went to the Wilson home and asked admission; being refused this he broke in the door and on entering the house he was shot dead by Wilson with a shot gun.

A horse will carry from 200 to 250 pounds; a donkey, 100 to 200 pounds; a camel, 350 to 500 pounds; and an elephant 1,800 to 2,500 pounds.

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