



BACK-BONE FETCHES THE GOVERNMENT.

SIR JOHN.—Hello! Greenway! Martin!! Stop! Come back, and you can have what you demand! For goodness' sake, don't go home and tell the people I refused to grant your request! Hi there! Come back. Oh, come back!!

HE WAS LOOKING FOR AN OPENING.

I LIVE in a little town which, like most places from which the returns have come in, has been engaged in a mill with Hard Times during the last twelvemonth, and been worsted in almost every round. It is also a Prohibition town, which, I think, is a good thing. But it is very near an able-bodied young city where there is no Prohibition, which, I think, is a bad thing.

As I sat in the office, the other day, calculating on the prospects of a new run of advertising trade, when the sheriff, the assignee, the composition creditors and other official and commercial relatives had taken leave of my old customers, a young man came in who had a respectable business air about him that assured me he was no wholesale paper-house drummer. He also wore clothes which I know from personal experience, were not the ready-made variety. Furthermore, he was intelligent-looking and self-possessed.

Casting a search-warrant look at a big map on the wall, which had cost me \$5 trade and which I was daily prepared to sacrifice at \$2 cash, my young friend abruptly said: "What kind of a place is the Soo?"

For a brief moment I was tempted to cast care to the winds and declare with an angelic smile, that if he would only give the place its strictly Parisian name, he would call it about So-So.

But a glance at my calendar sheet, on which I put X's to denote little bank engagements, checked the rising hysteria, and I calmly replied:—"Sault Ste. Marie is reported to be going ahead wonderfully. Are you thinking of moving out there?"

"Well, I dunno," he answered, sinking into the other chair, and taking a match to light a fresh cigar in a familiar sort of a way as though I had a companion picture to it, and we were on a perfect equality in the possession of these luxuries. As a simple act of courtesy I re-lit my clay pipe and thoughtfully awaited hostilities.

"Business in this town," said my distinguished guest, "is flatter'n flat!"

I didn't quite fall in love with the *modus operandi* of expression, but the patent-secured truth of the observation led me to warmly endorse it.

"Yessir. Our trade is clean gone to eternal smash, fur a fact. Where's the farmer business we used to do here? What's come of the manufacturin' that made things boom one time? Who's got our dry-goods trade, our grocery biz., our butcher dealin', our grain buyin'? Why, sir, the city has the hull of it. This town is too old, too slow, too snailish to live; and the sooner the go-ahead business men in it pack up and strike a civilized, moving place, the better fur 'em all. Business! pshaw! I'm sick and tired of lookin' for it. The old town is dead, I tell you, and never will liven up. I'm droppin' money every day I stay in it, and I mean to git to some town where a young feller that wants to work and make his way

in the world is goin' to stand some chance. What about the Soo? You noospaper men know all these things I guess."

Involuntarily my sympathies went out to this ambitious young man. I said to myself, here is a youth who has an aim in life. Rough and uncultured he may be, but he has manly stuff in him. Adverse fortune he has buffeted with nobly. The times have been hard with him, but he means to rise superior to the times. Not being cumbered with a newspaper establishment, he will leave the scene of his present unrequited labors, regretfully it is true, but yet resolute and hopeful that in a new part of the country just waking into vigorous and promising existence, he will, by energy, application, and lofty aspirations, strive to achieve fame and fortune. So I opened out my heart to him there and then, as if he were a banker I was trying to negotiate a small loan with. I told him I believed he had the right field in view. I said it was tough to find he had been frittering away precious time in a town that really didn't hold out a show to an active, progressive, wide-awake young man with apparently good business capacity. I continued that I fancied the Sault was attracting men and money from all quarters, and that if he contemplated moving he might safely do so at once—and good luck to him.

He lit another cigar, thanked me for my information and rose to go. Then it casually dawned on me to ask him his intentions in the Land of Promise. A dim suspicion haunted me that I had seen him before; but whether he clerked, or ran a butcher shop, or was an artisan, or an agent, or what, was bothering me.

With his hand on the door-knob, my ambitious and noble young visitor carelessly answered my enquiry in these words:—

"Well, if biz. at the Soo looks anything like, I'll open in the old line. Ever since this cussed Scott Act struck this town it has knocked us all silly. I've been tendin' bar for Jack Ealand while he took in California. When I prospect at the Soo for a few days, if it's anything near what you make it out I'll stay—and start a saloon. Good-bye!"

T. T.