



The reporter dashed up the pathway leading to the wigwam at a rate of speed that discounted the wind to such an extent that it fell out of the race in disgust and veered round in another direction. For the reporter was in an awful hurry. Several papposes who happened to be in the path got out of it with remarkable celerity. For the reporter's haste was something startling to behold. To have stood in his way would have been as foolhardy an act as to go into an election campaign without some ten or fifteen thousand dollars worth of patriotism in hard cash. In his hand he bore a roll of parchment, and his coat tails followed him at a respectful distance.



He dashed up to the wigwam door and jerked the blanket away, disappearing like a flash on the inner side. A moment later he had one arm around the neck of the sagamore, and with the other held the parchment unrolled before the old man's eyes, his tongue going at a rate of speed induced by throwing into that organ all the energy before exercised in reaching the wigwam.



"My brother," he said, "you have always been ready to do me a good turn—I have not asked many favors of you, but I want you to grant me one to-day—of course you know the collectorship of customs is vacant—I have never asked a favour of the government in my life—you know as well as I do how much I have done for the party—without ever getting a cent—or the value of a cent—but this office is vacant—somebody has got to get it—I might as well have it as anybody—I want you to sign this petition for me—of course I know you will—I only asked one other man before coming to you."

"Who you asked before?" demanded Mr. Paul, disengaging himself from the reporter's embrace.

"The late incumbent of the office," said the reporter. "I heard he was dying last night and I got up the petition as quick as I could and went round. I was just in time. If I had been fifteen minutes later he wouldn't have had strength enough to sign the petition. You can see that the signature is a little wobbly, as it is."

Mr. Paul folded his arms and looked at his visitor with a curious mixture of wonder and another feeling that was not so easily fathomed.

"That man's dead, eh," he presently remarked.

"He is," said the reporter cheerfully. "I have the doctor's certificate in my pocket. I have also a lock of the late gentleman's hair. Oh, the office is vacant all right enough. He died last night about twenty minutes after I left the house."

"You want his office," pursued Mr. Paul.

"Just so," assented the reporter.

"You went there when he's pooty near dead—ask him sign paper help you git that office," continued Mr. Paul.

"Yes," said the reporter, "and he signed it like a man. Then we had a few minutes prayer together before I left. He was a good man. I wish we were all as certain of happiness hereafter."

"Now you come here try to git me sign that paper," went on Mr. Paul, ignoring the reporter's last remark.

"I have," said the reporter. "You are my best friend. I want your influence. I will get a few more prominent people to sign to-morrow. Day after to-morrow the funeral takes place. I will be at the house and get the signature of the clergyman, the mourners and the pallbearers. That ought to be enough. I flatter myself that we need not go very far to make the acquaintance of the next collector of customs."

The reporter winked as he said this, and poked Mr. Paul in the ribs.

Mr. Paul apparently did not relish the poke, for he caught the reporter a thump under the ear that sent him sprawling. The latter pulled himself together again and demanded an explanation.

"You got any shame?" was the somewhat unexpected rejoinder.

"Any what?"

"Any shame."

"What's that?" queried the reporter in amazement.

"I thought you didn't know," said Mr. Paul contemptuously.

"What is it, anyhow?" asked the reporter. "I never heard the word before."

"That's what I think," said the sagamore. "Any man goes round after some other man's place 'fore that man's cold—he don't know much 'bout shame."

"As far as seeking the office is concerned," observed the reporter, "I am simply attending to business. Office hunting, my dear sir, is a legitimate occupation. And it is being rapidly reduced to a science. I have given the subject a good deal of careful attention of late years."

"Yes," commented Mr. Paul, "you been after good many offices lately."

"As I had a perfect right to do," loftily rejoined the reporter. "This is a free country. But I was verdant. I always got left. Other men out-manœuvred me. Experience has taught me valuable lessons and perfected me in modes of procedure. I flatter myself that the office seekers of the future can get some points from me. The collectorship is mine. The late incumbent was an estimable man and a valued officer. The government recognized his ability and reposed in him the highest confidence. He was frequently the recipient of tokens of esteem. I have his dying request in my behalf. Even a government can hardly refuse the last request of a dying man. If they did it might alienate the sympathy and support of the

mourners. And when you add to that the tear-stained signatures of the mourners themselves, the clergyman and the pall bearers, the combination is irresistible. You may congratulate me, old man."

The reporter held out his hand.

Mr. Paul's hands went deep into his pockets.

"That man's dead, eh," he queried.

"He is," said the reporter.

"You want his office," said Mr. Paul again.

"I do," said the reporter.

"What you know 'bout work in that office?"

"That has nothing to do with it," said the reporter.

"Kin you do that work in that office?" repeated the other.

"The work will be done all right," confidently asserted the reporter.

"You ever do any work like that?" persisted Mr. Paul.

"No—I didn't."

"Got any idea what you got to do there?"

"Oh, I don't bother my brains about that," said the reporter cheerfully.

"You jist want that office," said Mr. Paul.

"Just so," said the reporter.

"You make somebody else do that work," said Mr. Paul.

"Just so."

"You go round try to git that man's office 'fore he's buried," said Mr. Paul.

"You said that before," said the reporter. "What ails you, anyhow?"

"Ain't anything ails me," rejoined the old man. "Gonto be something ails you pooty soon. What you call that bird lives on bodies of dead people?"

"Do you mean the vulture?" asked the reporter.

"Ah hah."

"And what about it?" demanded the reporter.

"That's what you're gonto turn into right away," said Mr. Paul. "You better go 'way from here quick's you kin. If you stick your beak in this camp any more you git it chopped off pooty soon."

"Won't you sign the petition?" demanded the reporter.

Mr. Paul seized a war club and swung it around his head. Then he changed his mind, dropped the club and took the reporter, neck and heels, reduced him to a horizontal position and shot him headforemost through the door and into a slimy pool caused by the melting of snow and other substances.

It was a pitiful object that crawled out and ran down the path, chased by all the papposes and dogs in the settlement.



The collectorship is still vacant.

Stray Notes.

In an Ontario election case the other day it was decided by the judge that a cheque was not a legal deposit. Solvent candidates who are seeking a place where deposits of this kind will not be adjudged illegal are respectfully invited to call at this office.

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An effort is being made to banish tights from the stage in Minnesota. The legislature probably contemplates holding evening sessions and desires the presence of its members.