

# A GREAT MAN.

I.

He had a Presence, and a Manner, as the Paris critics would say. There was power of command in his deep gray eyes. His firm chin accentuated it. The dignified sweep of his abundant moustache helped to fascinate attention and to hold it—as though each separate hair had been a cable to anchor one to its possessor's immovable countenance.

When this majestic figure first rose on my horizon, I was at the age when one needs something to wonder at and admire. I might have grovelled before the Constable. Or I might have burnt incense to Johnny Osgood, who has an ingrowing nail. Or I might have stood afar off and worshipped Mr. Gilweed, just back from Texas with a sombrero and a talent for lies, profanity and whiskey. Each of these exceptional creatures served to develop some boy's bump of veneration. As for me it chanced that I came under the spell of Mr. Byslop.

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Mr. Byslop was perceptibly crushed. All Pike's Corner sorrowed for and with him.

"Does seem 's though this young feller d'know much 'bout edidin'?" Uncle Barker told the group around the post office stove.

"El papers ain't fer 't print what folks wants printed, what air they fer? Hey?"

Uncle Norris Dobbs unwound the red comforter from his neck and thrust his mittens across the top of the stove and holding his purple hands close to the open door. "Yes, brother, yes!" he said, with a sing-song intonation. "But th' Bugle wouldn't print a pome 'bout th' Second Advent, though I've took it twelve year. What does these passin' concerns of a mounant amount ter?"

"We must be patient, brother!"

The oldest Inhabitant spat and gesticulated fiercely. Uncle Norris had seemed to include him in the passing concerns of a moment, and he wanted it understood that he was not that kind of a man.

"Spose Byslop 'll quit writin'!" said the postmaster, slowly snapping his knife-blade back and forward. "Praps he'll go ter writin' fer h' Banner. What'd become o' the Bugle, then?"

Nobody ventured to guess.

Uncle Norris Dobbs took his mittens off the stove and rubbed them meditatively across his nose. "We might help the brother," he chanted nasally. "We might—Haddick? Yes, Cap'n Sally, nice fresh ones, bless the Lord! Three pound?"

Yes'm!—Might stop takin' th' paper," he finished as he lured out of the door in pursuit of the bearded woman who called him.

The oldest Inhabitant chuckled and choked. Uncle Barker grinned. The postmaster sat upright and nodded around the circle. "That's th' ticket!" he said.

"Ther's many 's five Bugles comes 't this office. S'pose I send 'em all back till th' editor 'grees 't print what Byslop writes?"

"Stick up fer our town, sez I," the First Selectman put in, with a wise shake of the head.

"Medville folks won't stick up fer us!"

"Do it, Henry!" Uncle Barker commanded.

And it was done.

IV.

When he heard of the action of the post-office council, Mr. Byslop was profoundly touched. He breathed hard, inflated his chest, and stood up so straight that his very nearly bent backward.

"They do 'preciate Brains!" he said with the mournful joy of a man who has lost his cherished grievance. "They 'preciate Me! I never felt so glad that I live at Pike's Corner."

When the news came to him the editor also was deeply affected. The postmaster's letter stirred his torpid liver and improved his degenerate digestion. It did him so much good that he gratefully took it up in a corner of his office. Then he told the business manager of the Bugle to send the boycotters five bills for "subscription due."

That was the end of the boycott.

The Bugle lived through all. So did Mr. Byslop. But the latter experienced certain fluctuations of feeling in the course of a month.

During the first week he was feverishly active. He attended four school "examinations," a Sunday-school concert, a special meeting of the Union Hall company, an "entertainment and supper" given by Siloam Lodge of Good Templars, a "Willing Workers' fair and several other functions of like nature. He still demanded free entrance and the seat of honor. He made copious notes, as usual, frowning portentously all the while. When the chairman called upon "our talented citizen" he pumped up "improvin' addresses" charged through and through with solemn humbug, awe-inspiring pathos and bombast. He was as great as he had ever been.

But during the second week he was invisible. He stayed at home and nursed his blighted hopes. Apparently they would not revive; and he was too proud to expose the withered things to the light of day.

In the third week, however, he conceived an idea. He brooded it over seven days, still housing himself. It was quite ready to be set free when Uncle Barker opportunely called.

"Ain't 'en sick, hev ye?"

"No."

"Why don't ye take 't writin' ter the Banner? Ev'rybody misses them pieces o' yours. We can't seem 't tell where we air, 'bout havin' suthin' like thet 't read Sunday!"

"My writin' dairs air over!" said Mr. Byslop with calm decision. "I hev had a Shock. I hev learned the meanin' o' Ingratitude. Let 't papers git along 's best they may; no editor needn't look fer any more help from me!"

"We'd oughter see ye round as ye used ter be," Uncle Barker ventured. "Ye've always b'en kind of a Public Man—leadin' citizen—" his voice trailed weakly off into silence.

Mr. Byslop inflated his chest in the old, familiar fashion.

"I'm goin' to be a Justice o' the Peace!" he said, with the air of one who confers a boon.

"Sho! Ye don't say! Be a bigger man 'n ever, won't ye? Be ye, though?"

"I be."

And he is, even at this day.—Walter L. Sawyer, in the Boston Times.

This is Meant for You.

It has been truly said that half the world does not know how the other half lives. Comparatively few of us have perfect health, owing to the impure condition of our blood. But we rub along from day to day, with scarcely a thought, unless forced to our attention, of the thousands all about us who are suffering from scrofula, salt rheum and other serious blood disorders, and whose agonies can only be imagined. The marked success of Hood's Sarsaparilla for these troubles, as shown in our advertising columns frequently, certainly seems to justify urging the use of this excellent medicine by all who know that their blood is disordered. Every claim in behalf of Hood's Sarsaparilla is fully backed up by what the medicine has done and is still doing, and when its proprietors urge its merits and its use upon all who suffer from impure blood, in great or small degrees, they certainly mean to include you.—Adet.

She (piqued)—I don't know exactly what to make of you, Mr. Bland.

He (eager to suggest)—Er—why not try a husband.—Er.

## PROGRESS PRIZE CARTOON.

By W. H. BRATLEY.



1. The circus advance agent. "Is the Chief of Police in full dress?"  
2. The circus conductor of a horse car. "Is only the captain going to dinner?"  
3. The circus conductor of a horse car. "Is only the captain going to dinner?"  
4. The circus conductor of a horse car. "Is only the captain going to dinner?"  
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10. The circus conductor of a horse car. "Is only the captain going to dinner?"

## A STRANGE CONFESSOR.

A great mystery surrounded the sudden death of Alexander Dale. Certain metropolitan newspapers claimed that he had committed suicide, while others contended that a murder had been perpetrated. The detectives were all at sea in the matter and refused to express an opinion.

So far as the public knew, the facts of the case were these: Alexander Dale, president of the Western Land Improvement Company, with offices in the Hollis building, New York city, had been for years a prominent and respected business man of the metropolis. He had been a member of several exclusive clubs and had kept bachelor's hall in handsome style.

One morning he was found dead in bed, a dagger through his heart. The weapon was so situated that two theories regarding his demise were tenable. Either his own hand or that of a murderer had wielded the fatal blow.

The weakness of the position held by those who considered him a suicide lay in the fact that no motive for self-destruction seemed to exist. His financial affairs appeared to be in a flourishing condition, and no complications with the gentle sex were known to cloud his record.

His fellow clubmen testified unanimously that he had been a consistent woman-hater; that he was not prone to melancholia, and that on the night preceding his death he had left their company in unusually high spirits.

On the other hand there was not the slightest clue to a murderer. His apartments were on the second floor of a large building on Fifth Avenue, and he was in the habit of remaining out so late at night that his incomings were never noted by the janitor who usually retired long before Dale left his club.

The mystery caused much gossip and discussion for a few days and was then practically forgotten. Some new sensation had turned the attention of the metropolis away from the Dale case.

There was only one man in the world who knew how Alexander Dale died; that was the valet, Eugene Scranton.

Secretary and Treasurer of the Western Land Improvement Company, had killed the President. Why? Because Dale and Scranton were scoundrels of a strictly modern type. They both knew that the W. L. I. C. was a gigantic fraud.

No one else knew. So Scranton murdered Dale in order that he might alone reap the profits of a great swindle and retain in his own keeping a dangerous secret. Greed and fear were the monsters that urged him to commit the worst of all crimes.

Eugene Scranton sat at his breakfast table, sipping his coffee and glancing over the morning newspapers. He was a tall spare man, about forty years of age. His gray hair and black moustache formed a combination pleasing to the eye. To the close observer, however, there was something about the man's face that chilled the heart and awakened suspicion. Was it in the mouth or in the eyes that this father of distrust was born? It was hard to tell. Nevertheless, his was a bad face though a handsome one.

Alexander Dale had been dead a month. Eugene Scranton smiled as he realized that the newspapers made no reference to the mystery that had caused such a furor some weeks before. He laid down the Morning Watch and applied himself with considerable enthusiasm to an omelette spiced with chopped ham. He had been made President of the Western Land Improvement Company and had placed the affairs of that organization in such shape that he would reap most of the profits and stand in no peril from any man's knowledge that he was a high-toned "crook."

The study of this man's life had been to make selfishness a science. He perceived that the modern world pays world to him who holds the golden keys of power. Cold, remorseless as an iceberg he had aimed at the target of wealth. He had found that between him and the bull's eye of his ambition stood the form of Alexander Dale. A well directed dagger had removed the obstacle, and Eugene Scranton found himself a millionaire.

"Well, what do you want?"

Scranton threw down his newspaper testily and turned toward his valet who had just entered the breakfast room.

"Beg pardon, sir," said John, "but a man is outside with a queer-looking machine. He says you ordered a funny-graph sent here. I don't know what it is, but it's very positive, sir."

"Tell him to put it in the drawing-room," commanded the master. "Place it near the piano, do you hear?"

"Yes, sir."

The valet left the room and Eugene Scranton reapplied himself to his breakfast, his newspapers and his self-congratulations.

It was midnight and Eugene Scranton lay awake, tossing restlessly upon his bed. The world was treating him well, but his conscience, that most obnoxious organ of the human make-up, had become so aggressive that sleep had deserted his feverish couch.

In the silent, dark, mysterious hours of night it makes little difference to a man what his fellow creatures may think of him. At that solemn time what he thinks of himself is all that is essential. Eugene Scranton knew that he was a murderer. In the bustle and excitement of the day this self-conviction was not powerful nor poignant. In the silent watches of the night, however, it became unbearable. From the shadows of his room one face gazed at him—the face of Alexander Dale. He arose, dipped a handkerchief in ice water and placed the refreshing cloth against the base of his brain. For a few moments he appeared to doze. The blood that surged upward was cooled for a time and a simple device seemed about to triumph over the insomnia that had driven him well-nigh mad.

It is not easy, however, to escape the punishment that follows sin. Eugene Scranton did not fall asleep. The blisful unconsciousness that he had craved for, then, died from him as though in horror. He was further from sleep than before; and again his staring eyes saw in the darkness the face of Alexander Dale.

An hour had passed; an hour of agony to Scranton. Twice had he pressed his revolver against his throbbing temples. Twice had he realized that he dared not rush to a state that frightened Hamlet and made Cato pause. A man who commits murder from greed seldom commits suicide from choice.

At last the strain became unbearable.

Scranton sprang from his bed and rushed to the window.

"O God, I must confess my crime. I must confess. I must confess." He threw up the sash. A belated citizen was hurrying homeward on the opposite side of the street. "I'll call to him and tell him the awful secret of my soul," thought Scranton.

"Wait."

The cry startled the silent street and echoed weirdly through the dismal night. Alarmed by his voice, Scranton shut the window with a crash and rushed into the outer room. In the dim light he saw before him the outlines of his phonograph. Hysterically he threw his arms around the machine and kissed it.

"I'm saved," he whispered. "I'll tell you the history of my fall."

Night after night the fatal cylinder gave comfort to Eugene Scranton. If the murderer awoke in the still, dark hours and the shadow of his crime crossed his soul, he laid stealthily leave his bed-room and place in effective position the ear-pieces of the accusing machine. Then with ghastly satisfaction he would listen to the following repetition of the tale he had told the sympathetic wax.

"I killed Alexander Dale. I had hated him for years. Together we had concocted a scheme whereby we could fleece investors who desired to