

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 conceit.

II.

Editors are born, not made; but the best of them take a deal of making-over. While the polishing process is on, they drift into all sorts of places. One of these natural-born editors took charge of the Medville Bugle two years after the Samaritans' supper.

III.

It was a blow, nevertheless. He recovered from it to some extent in the few days that followed. When the time came round he squared himself for an effort and wrote another letter. It was more than commonly brilliant. Wisdom and Wit were artfully intermingled in it; there was a brief but striking poem at the end. He read it a second and a third time before he sealed the envelope, and felt strong and content. Such a paragraph would interest the minister. Such another would please Squire Bickford. The Samaritans would give thanks for that. The dramatic club would rejoice at this. The Samaritan letter was a salad, a dish of mixed pickles, a modley overture, a Chinese puzzle, a crazy quilt—anything that is comprehensive and complete.

Yet the unappreciative editor cut and carved as before, and left nothing better than a lonesome fragment!

Mr. Byslop was perceptibly crushed. All Pike's Corner sorrowed for and with him. "Doos seem 't' though that young feller 'd know much 'bout editin'!" Uncle Barker told the group around the post office stove. "El papers ain't for 't print what folks wants printed, what air they for? Hey?"

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 he very nearly bent backward.

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PROGRESS PRIZE CARTOON



1. 'Tisn't a circus advance agent. 'Tis the Chief of Police in full dress. 2. 'Tisn't the conductor of a horse car. 'Tis only the captain going to dinner. 3. 'Tisn't the forests of Canada. 'Tis Main street, North End. 4. 'Tisn't a St. John Alderman. 'Tis an old woman. 5. 'Tisn't the army of coachmen around the I. C. R. passenger station. 'Tis a molasses hoghead with its usual visitors. 6. 'Tisn't a black cloud, nor a white squall. 'Tis simply a Bugtown vote. 7. 'Tisn't here (the paving block). 'Tis gone to kindle the winter fires of a paid official. We are like the label on the bottle—not in it. 8. 'Tisn't Progress.

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.

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 gentler sex were known to cloud his record.

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 murderer, 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.

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.

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 Wasp and applied himself with considerable enthusiasm to an omelette spiced with chopped ham.

At last the strain became unbearable. He was further from sleep than before; and again his staring eyes saw in the darkness the face of Alexander Dale.

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.

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.

"I killed Alexander Dale. I had hated him for years. Together we had concocted a scheme whereby we could fleece investors who desired to gain a fortune in the twinkling of an eye.

"The rest was easy. For hours I awaited his return. When I heard his footsteps on the stairs, I concealed myself behind a portiere. After he had undressed and had fallen into a deep sleep I plunged a dagger into his heart.

Here the cylinder made an incoherent sound, and the confession ceased. Eugene Scranton's valet John, was not a genius but he possessed a good deal of shrewdness and a fair amount of common sense.

Scranton was constantly buying new cylinders; some with operatic music, others with banjo solos or recitations by famous authors. The much-used cylinder containing his confession he kept carefully locked in a drawer by itself and placed it on the machine only at the dead of night.

Scranton realized that his silence was worth a great deal of money, and he knew that Scranton could afford to pay well to escape the gallows.

John the valet was at heart a coward. He had long stood in awe of his master, and he reflected, a man who murders one unfortunate who holds his secret would not hesitate to sacrifice a second victim.

John the valet sailed for Europe that afternoon. Eugene Scranton has been condemned to death. He will die by electricity—the agent of his confession.

PROGRESS PICKINGS.

It is queer about society; the minute a man gets into it he expects to get asked out.—[Elmira Gazette.

Tommy (gazing after dude): When I get to be a man, papa, will I dress like that? Papa (severely): No, Tommy; not if you get to be a man.—Life.

Said Bobby to the minister at dinner—"Can a church whistle?" "Why do you ask?" "Cos pa owes £2 back pew rent, and he says he's going to let the church whistle for it."—[Ex.

Jack—there's an article on kissing in this paper. I should like to read it to you. Amy—Is it published with illustrations? Jack—No, but if you'll allow me I'll supply the deficiency.—New York Herald.

Jealousy. Ethel—"I think I ought to tell you, Edith, that I met your fiance in a dark hallway last night and he kissed me." Edith—"Indeed! the hallway must have been very dark."—[Munsey's Weekly.

Rev. Mr. Talmage says that we will sing better the second day we are in Heaven than we did the first. If some of us didn't sing any better the second day than on the first the music-loving angels would want to move out.—Norristown Herald.

Judge (bald headed): If half what the witnesses testify against you are true, your conscience must be as black as your hair. Prisoner: If a man's conscience is regulated by his hair, then your honor hasn't got any conscience at all.—Ex.

Bertha—Harry has proposed to me and I have accepted him. Maud—Indeed? He meant what he said then. Bertha—Meant what? Maud—He proposed to me yesterday, and when I refused him, he said he would do something desperate.—Ex.

Teacher—Now, Willie Wilkins, I want you to tell me the truth—did Harry Thomas draw that picture on the board? Willie Wilkins—Teacher, I firmly refuse to answer that question. Teacher—You do? Willie Wilkins—Because I gave Harry my word of honor I would not tell on him.—Ex.