

THE STORY OF A MINE.

PART III.

IN CONGRESS.

CHAPTER X. WHO LOBBIED FOR IT.



GASHWILER.

It was a midsummer's day in Washington. Even at early morning, while the sun was yet level with the faces of pedestrians in its broad, shadeless avenues, it was insufferably hot. Later the avenues themselves shone like the diverging rays of another sun—the Capitol—a thing to be feared by the naked eye. Later yet it grew hotter, and then a mist arose from the Potomac and blotted out the blazing arch above, and presently filled up along the horizon delusive thunder clouds, that spent their strength and substance elsewhere, and left it hotter than before. Toward evening the sun came out invigorated, having cleared the heavenly bow of perspiration, but leaving its fever unabated.

The city was deserted. The few who remained apparently lurked somewhere from the garish light of day in some dim, cluttered recess of shop, hotel or restaurant, and the perspiring stranger, dazed by the outer glare, who broke in upon their quiet, sought repose, confronted collared and collared specks of the past, with men in their hands who after dreamily going through some perfunctory business, immediately retired to their chambers. Congressmen had long since returned to their several constituencies, with the various information that the country was going to ruin, or that the outlook never was more hopeful and cheering, as the tastes of their constituents indicated. A few cabinet officers still lingered, having by this time become convinced that they could do nothing their own way, or induce in any way but the old way, and getting gloomily resigned to their situation. A body of learned, cultivated men, representing the highest legal tribunal in the land, still lingered in a vague idea of earning the scant salary bestowed upon them by the economic founders of the government, and listened patiently to the arguments of counsel, whose fees for advocacy of claims before them would have paid the life income of half the bench. There was Mr. Attorney General and his assistants still protecting the government's millions from rapacious hands, and drawing the yearly public pittance that their wealthier private antagonists would have scarce given as a retainer to their junior counsel. The little standing army of departmental employees—the helpless victims of the most senseless and idiotic form of discipline the world has known—disciplined to made up of caprice, expensiveness, cowardice and tyranny that its reform meant revolution, not to be tolerated by legislators and lawgivers, or a despotism in which half a dozen accidentally chosen men interpreted their prejudices of preference as being that reform. Administration after administration and party after party had persisted in their desperate attempts to fix the youthful colonial garments, made by our fathers after a bygone fashion, over the expanded limits and generous outline of a matured nation. There were patches here and there; there were greivous rents and holes here and there; there were ludicrous and painful exposures of growing limbs everywhere; and the party in power and the party out of power could do nothing but mend and patch, and scamp and cleanse and scour, and occasionally, in the wilderness of despair, suggest even the cutting off the ridiculous limbs that persisted in growing beyond the swaddling clothes of its infancy.

It was a capital of contradictions and inconsistencies. At one end of the avenue sat the responsible high keeper of the military honor, valor and warlike prestige of a great nation, without the power to pay his own troops their legal dues until some selfish quarrel between party and party was settled. Hard by sat another secretary, whose established functions seemed to be the misrepresentation of the nation abroad by the least characteristic of its classes, the politicians—and only then when they had been defeated as politicians, and when their constituents had declared them no longer worthy to be even their representatives. The national absurdity was only equaled by another, wherein an ex-politician was for four years expected to uphold the honor of a flag of a great nation over an ocean he had never tempted, with a discipline the rudiments of which he could scarcely acquire before he was removed, or his term of office expired, receiving his orders from a superior officer as ignorant of his special duties as himself, and subjected to the revision of a congress of men of his own class as a politician. At the further end of the avenue was another department so vast in its extent and so varied in its functions that few of the really great practical workers of the land would have accepted its responsibility for ten times its salary, but which the most perfect constitution in the world handed over to men who were obliged to make it a stepping stone to future preferment. There was another department, more suggestive of its financial functions from the occasional extravagances or economies exhibited in its payrolls—successive congresses having taken other matters out of its hands—presided over by an official who bore the title and responsibility of the custodian and disburser of the nation's purse, and received a salary that a bank president would have sniffed at. For it was part of this constitutional inconsistency and administrative absurdity that in the matter of honor, justice, fidelity to trust and even business integrity, the official was always expected to be the superior of the government

he represented. Yet the crowning inconsistency was that, from time to time, it was submitted to the sovereign people to declare if these various inconsistencies were not really the perfect expression of the most perfect government the world had known. And it is to be recorded that the unanimous voices of representative, orator and unfettered poetry were that it was!

Even the public press lent itself to the great inconsistency. It was as clear as crystal to the journal on one side of the avenue that the country was going to the dogs unless the spirit of the fathers once more reanimated the public; it was equally clear to the journal on the other side of the avenue that only a rigid adherence to the letter of the fathers would save the nation from decline. It was obvious to the first named journal that the "letter" meant government patronage to the other journal; it was not to that journal that the "shakels" of Senator X really animated the spirit of the fathers. Yet all agreed that it was a great and good and perfect government—subject only to the predatory incursions of a hydra-headed monster known as a "ring." The ring's origin was wrapped in secrecy, its fecundity was alarming, but although its rapacity was preternatural, its digestion was perfect and easy. It circumscribed all affairs in an atmosphere of mystery; it clouded all things with the bestial ashes of distrust. All disappointment of place, of avarice, of incompetency or ambition, was clearly attributable to it. It even permeated private and social life; there were rings in our kitchen and household service; in our public schools, that kept the active intelligences of our children passive; there were rings of engaging, handsome, dissolute young fellows, who kept us moral but unengaging seniors from the favors of the fair; there were subtle, conspiring rings among our creditors which sent us into bankruptcy and restricted our credit. In fact it would not be hazardous to say that all that was calamitous in public and private experience was clearly traceable to that combination of power in a minority over weakness in a majority—known as a ring.

Hardly there was a body of demigods, as yet uninvoked, who should speedily settle all that. When Smith, of Minnesota, Robinson, of Vermont, and Jones, of Georgia, returned to congress from those rural seclusions so potent with information and so free from local prejudices, it was understood, vaguely, that great things would be done. This was always understood. There never was a time in the history of American politics when, to use the expression of the journals before alluded to, "the present session of congress" did not "bid fair to be the most momentous in our history," and did not, as far as facts go, leave a vast amount of unfinished important business lying hopelessly upon its desk, having "boiled" the rest as rashly and with as little regard to digestion or assimilation as the American traveler has for his railway refreshment.

In this capital, on this languid midsummer day, in an upper room of one of its second rate hotels, the Hon. Pratt C. Gashwiler sat at his writing table. There are certain large, fleshy men with whom the omission of even a necktie or collar has all the effect of an indecent exposure. The Hon. Mr. Gashwiler, in his trousers and shirt, was a sight to be avoided by the modest eye. There were such palpable suggestions of vast extents of unctuous flesh in the slight glimpse offered by his open throat that his dishabille should have been as private as his business. Nevertheless, when there was a knock at his door, he unhesitatingly said, "Come in!" pushing away a gilet crowned with a certain aromatic herb with his right hand, while he drew toward him with his left a few proof slips of his forthcoming speech. The Gashwiler brow became, as it were, intelligently abstracted.

The intruder regarded Gashwiler with a glance of familiar recognition from his right eye, while his left took in a rapid survey of the papers on the table, and gleamed sardonically.

"You are at work, I see," he said apologetically.

"Yes," replied the congressman, with an air of perfumery weariness, "one of my speeches. Those d-d printers make such a mess of it. I suppose I don't write a very fine hand."

If the gifted Gashwiler had added that he did not write a very intelligent hand, or a very grammatical hand, and that his spelling was faulty, he would have been truthful, although the copy and proof before him might not have borne him out. The near fact was that the speech was composed and written by one Expectant Dobbs, a poor retainer of Gashwiler, and the honorable member's labor as a proof-reader was confined to the introduction of such words as "anarchy," "oligarchy," "satrap," "palladium" and "Argus-eyed" in the proof, with little relevancy as to position or place, and no perceptible effect as to argument.

The stranger saw all this with his wicked left eye, but continued to beam mildly with his right. Removing the coat and waistcoat of Gashwiler from a chair, he drew it toward the table, pushing aside a portly, loud-talking watch—the very image of Gashwiler—that lay beside him, and resting his elbows on the proofs, said:

"Have you anything new?" asked the parliamentary Gashwiler.

"Much! a woman!" replied the stranger.

The astute Gashwiler, waiting further information, concluded to receive this fact gaily and gallantly. "A woman?—my dear Mr. Wiles—of course! The dear creatures," he continued, with a fat, offensive chuckle, "somehow are always making their charming presence felt. Ha! ha! A man, sir, in public life becomes accustomed to that sort of thing, and knows when he must be agreeable—agreeable, sir, but firm! I've had my experience, sir—my own experience!"—and the congressman leaned back in his chair, not unlike a robust St. Anthony who had withstood one temptation to thrive on another.

"Yes," said Wiles, impatiently. "But d—n

"The other side!" repeated Gashwiler, vacantly.

"Yes, she's a niece of Garcia's. A little she devil."

"But Garcia's on our side," rejoined Gashwiler.

"Yes, but she is bought by the ring."

"A woman!" sneered Mr. Gashwiler; what can she do with men who won't be made fools of? Is she so handsome?"

"I never saw any great beauty in her," said Wiles, shortly, "although they say that she's rather caught that d-d Thatcher, in spite of his coldness. At any rate she is his protegee. But she isn't the sort you're thinking of, Gashwiler. They say she knows, or pretends to know, something about the grant. She may have got hold of some of her uncle's papers. These greasers were always d-d fools; and, if he did anything foolish, like as not he laughed or didn't cover up his tracks. And with his knowledge and facilities, too! Why, if I'd—" but here Mr. Wiles stopped to sigh over the inequalities of fortune that wasted opportunities on the less skillful scamp.

Mr. Gashwiler became dignified. "She can do nothing with us," he said potentially.

Wiles turned his wicked eye on him. "Mannud and Miguel, who sold out to our man, are afraid of her. They were our witnesses. I verily believe they'd take back everything if she got after them. And as for Pedro, he thinks she holds the power of life and death over him."

"Pedro! life and death—what's all this?" said the astonished Gashwiler.

Wiles saw his blunder, but saw also that he had gone too far to stop. "Pedro," he said, "was strongly suspected of having murdered Concho, one of the original locaters."

Mr. Gashwiler turned white as a sheet, and then flushed again into an apoplectic glow. "Do you dare to say," he began as soon as he could find his tongue and his legs, for in the exercise of his congressional functions these extreme members supported each other—do you mean to say," he stammered in rising rage, "that you have dared to deceive an American lawgiver into legislating upon a



"Deceive an American lawgiver."

measure connected with a capital offense? Do I understand you to say, sir, that murder stands upon the record—stands upon the record, sir—of this cause to which, as a representative of Remus, I have lent my official aid? Do you mean to say that you have deceived my constituency, whose sacred trust I hold, in inveigling me to hiding a crime from the Argus eyes of justice?" And Mr. Gashwiler looked towards the bell-pull as if about to summon a servant to witness this outrage against the established judiciary.

"The murder, if it was a murder, took place before Garcia entered upon this claim, or had a footing in this court," returned Wiles, blandly, "and is no part of the record."

"You are sure it is not spread upon the record?"

"I am. You can judge for yourself." Mr. Gashwiler walked to the window, returned to the table, finished his liquor in a single gulp, and then, with a slight resumption of dignity, said:

"That alters the case."

Wiles glanced with his left eye at the congressman. The right placidly looked out of the window. Presently he said quietly, "I've brought you the certificates of the stock; do you wish them made out in your own name?"

Mr. Gashwiler tried hard to look as if he were trying to recall the meaning of Wiles' words. "Oh!—ah!—umph!—let me see—oh, yes, the certificates, certainly! Of course you will make them out in the name of my secretary, Mr. Expectant Dobbs. They will perhaps repay him for the extra clerical labor required in the prosecution of your claim. He is a worthy young man. Although not a public officer, yet he is so near to me that perhaps I am wrong in permitting him to accept a fee for private interests. An American representative cannot be too cautious, Mr. Wiles. Perhaps you had better have also a blank transfer. The stock is, I understand, yet in the future. Mr. Dobbs, though talented and praiseworthy, is poor; he may wish to realize. If some—ahem! some friend—better circumstanced—should choose to advance the cash to him and run the risk—why it would only be an act of kindness."

"You are proverbially generous, Mr. Gashwiler," said Wiles, opening and shutting his left eye like a dark lantern on the benevolent representative.

"Youth, when faithful and painstaking, should be encouraged," replied Mr. Gashwiler. "I lately had occasion to point this out in a few remarks I had to make before the Sabbath school reunion at Remus. Thank you, I will see that they are—ahem!—conveyed to him. I shall give them to him with my own hand," he concluded, falling back in his chair, as if the letter to contemplate the perspective of his own generosity and condescension. Mr. Wiles took his hat and turned to go. Before he reached the door Mr. Gashwiler returned to the social level with a chuckle: "You say this woman, this Garcia's niece,

is handsome and smart?"

"Yes." "I can set another woman on the track that'll outdo her every time!"

Mr. Wiles was too clever to appear to notice the sudden lapse in the congressman's dignity, and only said, with his right eye:

"Can you?"

"By G—d, I will, or I don't know how to represent Remus."

Mr. Wiles thanked him with his right eye, and looked a dagger with his left. "Good," he said, and added persuasively: "Does she live here?"

The congressman nodded assent. "An awfully handsome woman—a particular friend of mine?" Mr. Gashwiler here looked as if he would not mind to have been rallied a little over his intimacy with the fair one; but the astute Mr. Wiles was at the same moment making up his mind, after interpreting the congressman's look and manner, that he must know this fair incognito if he wished to sway Gashwiler. He determined to bide his time, and withdrew.

The door was scarcely closed upon him when another knock diverted Mr. Gashwiler's attention from his proofs. The door opened to a young man with sandy hair and anxious face. He entered the room deprecatingly, as if conscious of the presence of a powerful being, to be supplicated and feared. Mr. Gashwiler did not attempt to disabuse his mind. "Busy, you see," he said shortly, "correcting your work."

"I hope it is acceptable?" said the young man timidly.

"Well—yes—it will do," said Gashwiler; "indeed I may say it is satisfactory on the whole," he added with the appearance of a large generosity; "quite satisfactory."

"You have no news, I suppose," continued the young man, with a slight flush, born of pride or expectation.

"No, nothing as yet," Mr. Gashwiler paused as if a thought had struck him.

"I have thought," he said, finally, "that some position—such as a secretaryship with me—would help you to a better appointment. Now, supposing that I make you my private secretary, giving you some important and confidential business. Eh?"

Dobbs looked at his patron with a certain wistful, dog-like expectancy, moved himself excitedly on his chair set in a peculiar canine-like anticipation of gratitude, strongly suggesting that he would have wagged his tail if he had one. At which Mr. Gashwiler became more impressive.

"Indeed, I may say that I anticipated it by certain papers I have put in your charge and in your name, only taking from you a transfer that might enable me to satisfy my conscience hereafter in recommending you as my—ahem!—private secretary. Perhaps, as a mere form, you might now, while you are here, put your name to these transfers, and, so to speak, begin your duties at once."

The glow of pride and hope that mantled the cheek of poor Dobbs might have melted a harder heart than Gashwiler's. But the senatorial toga had invested Mr. Gashwiler with a more than Roman stoicism toward the feelings of others, and he only fell back in his chair in the pose of conscious rectitude as Dobbs hurriedly signed the paper.

"I shall place them in my portmanteau," said Gashwiler, smiling the word to the action, "for safe keeping. I will not inform you, who are now, as it were, on the threshold of official life, that perfect and inviolable secrecy in all affairs of state"—Mr. G. here pointed toward his portmanteau as if it contained a treaty at least—"is most essential and necessary."

Dobbs assented. "Then my duties will keep me with you here?" he asked doubtfully.

"No, no," said Gashwiler hastily; then, correcting himself, he added: "that is—for the present—no."

Poor Dobbs' face fell. The near fact was that he had lately had notice to quit his present lodgings in consequence of arrears in his rent, and he had a hopeful reliance that his confidential occupation would carry bread and lodging with it. But he only asked if there were any new papers to make out.

"Ahem! not at present; the fact is I am obliged to give so much of my time to callers—I have to-day been obliged to see half a dozen—that I must lock myself up and say 'Not at home' for the rest of the day." Feeling that this was an intimation that the interview was over, the new private secretary, a little dashed as to his near hopes, but still sanguine of the future, humbly took his leave.

But here a certain providence, perhaps mindful of poor Dobbs, threw into his simple hands—to be used or not, if he were worthy or capable of using it—a certain power and advantage. He had descended the staircase, and was passing through the lower corridor, when he was made the unwilling witness of a remarkable assault.

It appeared that Mr. Wiles, who had quitted Gashwiler's presence as Dobbs was announced, had other business in the hotel, and in pursuance of it had knocked at room No. 99. In response to the gruff voice that bade him enter, Mr. Wiles opened the door, and espied the figure of a tall, muscular, fiery-bearded man extended on the bed, with the bed clothes carefully tucked under his chin, and his arms lying flat by his side.

Mr. Wiles beamed with his right cheek, and advanced to the bed as if to take the hand of the stranger, who, however, neither by word or sign, responded to his salutation. "Perhaps I'm intruding?" said Mr. Wiles blandly.

"Perhaps you are," said Red Beard dryly. Mr. Wiles forced a smile on his right cheek, which he turned to the snifter, but permitted the left to indulge in unlimited malevolence. "I wanted merely to know if you have looked into that matter?" he said meekly.

"I've looked into it and around it and across it and over it and through it," responded the man gravely, with his eyes fixed on Wiles.

"And you have perused all the papers?" continued Mr. Wiles.

"I've read every paper, every speech, every affidavit, every decision, every argument," said the stranger, as if repenting a formula.

Mr. Wiles attempted to conceal his embarrassment by an easy, right handed smile, that went off sardonically on the left, and continued: "Then I hope, my dear sir, that, having thoroughly mastered the case, you are inclined to be favorable to us?"

The gentleman in the bed did not reply, but apparently nestled more closely beneath the coverlets.

"I have brought the shares I spoke of," continued Mr. Wiles, insinuatingly.

"Have you a friend within call?" interrupted the recumbent man, gently.

"I don't quite understand," smiled Mr. Wiles. "Of course, any name you might suggest—"

"Have you a friend, any chap that you might wait in here at a moment's call?" continued the man in bed. "No! Do you know any of them waiters in the house? That's a bell over you!" and he motioned with his eyes toward the wall, but did not otherwise move his body.

"No," said Wiles, becoming slightly suspicious and wrathful.

"Maybe a stranger might do? I reckon that's one passin' in the hall. Call him in—hell do!"

Wiles opened the door a little impatiently, yet inquisitively, as Dobbs passed. The man in bed called out, "Oh, stranger!" and, as Dobbs stopped, said, "Come here."

Dobbs entered a little timidly, as was his habit with strangers.

"I don't know who you be—nor care, I reckon," said the stranger. "This yer man," pointing to Wiles—is Wiles. I'm Josh Sibblee of Fresno, member of congress from the fourth congressional district of California. I'm just lying here with a derringer into each hand—just lying here livered up and holdin' in my eye to keep from blowin' the top o' this d-d skunk's head off. I kinder feel I can't hold in any longer. What I want to say to ye, stranger, is that this yer skunk—which his name is Wiles—beez bin tryin' his d—dest to get a bribe onto Josh, and Josh, out o' respect for his constituents, is just waitin' for some stranger to waltz in and stop the d—dest fight—"

"But, my dear Mr. Sibblee, there must be some mistake," said Wiles, earnestly.

"Mistake? Strip me!"

"Not No!" said Wiles, hurriedly, as the simple-minded Dobbs was about to draw down the coverlet.

"Take him away," said the Hon. Mr. Sibblee, before I disgrace my constituency. They said I'd be in jail afore I get through the session. If you've got any humanity, stranger, shake him out, and pow! quick, too."

Dobbs, quite white and aglnt, looked at Wiles and hesitated. There was a slight movement in the bed. Both men started for the door, and the next minute it closed very decidedly on the member from Fresno.

THE CHICAGO GRANT MONUMENT.

The Prize Design of Louis T. Rebbiso, of Cincinnati.

The \$500 prize offered for the best design for the Chicago Grant monument has been awarded to Louis T. Rebbiso, of Cincinnati. Chicago will probably have her memorial of the nation's hero finished before New York gets the money raised to build hers. New York has the tomb of the general, too, and it seems as if she would specify erect a monument to him, if only from a sentiment of local pride. But the town that heads off Chicago must get up early in the morning, earlier than any one has done yet.



GRANT STATUE AT CHICAGO.

The statue is to be equestrian, and will stand in the park on the north side in Chicago. It will crown a sort of two-story archway. There is an elevated roadway crossing a street underneath, in the fashion familiar in Central park, New York. Across the elevated roadway is an arch, and above, in the center of this, is to stand the statue. Those who pass the archway will look up at the hero sitting upon his horse.

The history of the sculptor who made the design is one of peculiar interest. He came to this country, not so many years ago, a brown skinned, bright-eyed young Italian. He was ready to work at anything his hand could find to do, but he had already a trade and a good one. He was a marble cutter with ideas and honor. For years he worked at graveyard statues. Not to put too fine a point upon it, he was a tombstone sculptor. But he made more artistic tombstones than anybody else could, and it was not long till his beautiful productions attracted the attention of rich Cincinnatians. He became known not as a mechanic, but as an artist. When the modeling class was started in the Cincinnati school of design, Louis Rebbiso was made teacher of it. Since then his career has been steadily upward. He is one of the rising sculptors of the country.

Fred. Douglass in England.

Fredrick Douglass, who has been traveling on the continent, wrote a letter to a citizen of Jefferson, Tex., in which he says: "I am again on the soil of dear old England. The contrast between my present visit and that of 1845 is striking. Then I came as a slave, now I come as a freeman; then as an alien, now as a citizen; then I was young, now I am comparatively old; then to plead the cause of my brethren in bonds, now to tell of their freedom and progress."—Exchange.

Jules Simon thinks the weak point of the French republic is its universal suffrage.