

# Democratic Watchman

Bellefonte, Pa., Feb. 15, 1895.

## FATE.

B. R. BURKHARDT IN "FUCK".  
A Western railroad through a farm  
Saw fit to cut its way,  
But for a fence, to shield from harm  
The cows, it wouldn't pay.

The farmer saw the iron horse  
His pasture line through:  
"If they shall kill a cow, of course,  
The company I'll sue."

And so he smoked his pipe in peace,  
And watched the cars go by;  
The railroad men would never cease  
To chaff him on the fly.

One day a freight train slowly curved  
Around the mountain's brow;  
Upon the track the men observed  
His ancient, useless cow.

The engineer shrill with glee,  
Took in the scene full soon,  
And then remarked: "Oh, now we'll see  
The cow jump o'er the moon."

He blew no whistle, while he let  
The steam have greater sway,  
And so the cow and engine met  
By chance—the usual way.

She sped not to the moon and stars;  
Beneath the wheels she sank;  
Sent engine, engineer and cars  
Demolished down the tank.

By thousands, lost upon the spot,  
The railroad's poorer now.  
The farmer sued the road and got  
Ten dollars for the cow.

## A PRESIDENTIAL OFFICE.

LAVINA H. EGAN.

It was a pleasant February morning, the twittering of birds on the pavement and in the big cottonwood trees making it seem quite gladsome than out, and by and by, the Judge began to feel the general stiffness of the close office, and pulled his chair a little jerkily across the floor to the open window. He had a book in his hand, and held its pages open with one long white finger till he was seated. It was the "Blue Book," containing the list of Presidential appointments which he seemed to be perusing so earnestly holding it well off at arm's length and running his finger along to note the salary attached to each office, now and then, perhaps a little unconsciously, marking one with his thumb nail. He paused a moment to turn over a leaf, and glanced out through the open window, peering over his glasses for a distant view. The street below was a quiet one, and the figure of a tall, spare man in a closely buttoned cutaway coat, with a high silk hat and dangling cane, was a conspicuous one in comparison to the few leisurely going passersby in simple morning attire.

"Yes, it's Everett," said the Judge to himself as the well-dressed man drew nearer, and he shut the book a little hastily and went across the room to put it on the table. He was still standing when the white silk hat appeared up his stairway, and he called out quite cheerfully:

"Good morning, Everett."

"Ah, as busy as ever I see, Judge," said the man, shaking hands a little obsequiously. "I hardly hoped to find you down so early."

"Why, it's 9 o'clock," said the Judge, pulling out his watch. "I've been down for an hour. I think you are the early bird; a thriving young Congressman like you has no need to look out for the proverbial worm. You ought to leave that for old fellows who are being laid on the shelf."

"O, well now, that is an idea," said the Congressman cheerfully, "but I think I should know how little likelihood there is of your being laid on the shelf."

The Judge laughed a little nervously at this kindly disclaimer, and the Congressman went on:

"Yes, I came out a little early this morning. I have only a few more days at home, and there's a good deal to be done. Thank you for taking care of this for me," and he picked up the book the Judge had put down so hastily. "Quite a number of my kindly constituents are to call on me this morning, and I'm afraid I shall have a difficult in placing some of them."

He seemed quite elated at his own mild joke, and the Judge joined in the laugh tentatively.

"Yes, sir," the Congressman continued, "when a man with absolutely no political record, a man who has been of no more use to the party than the gamin to the procession which he follows thro' the streets—when such a man, I say, comes and asks for a favor, it is nothing more nor less than unadulterated gall, and shows us the mighty wrong side of a campaign victory."

He was not looking at the Judge as he spoke, and seemed quite carried away by his own enthusiasm. "Now, there are men, deserving, honorable men, who have upheld the party and kept its standard waving above the slime of degradation, men whom we should be glad to reward"—he spoke quite naturally—"and glad to have to the front now, for, I tell you, we want to keep our forces well mustered, we want to keep our posts well guarded. This is our deal now, fair and square, and we don't want to play a losing game." He was not on the floor and seemed a little reckless of his metaphors. "The President is a mighty long-headed man, but the new bills are going to prove hard nuts to crack."

Everett spoke rapidly, but his quick eye had been glancing round the room meanwhile taking in all its details. There were holes in the matting on the floor, and dust on the books and the shelves and the tables. It had not been so once; it had not been so when he, a poor clerk in a grocer's store, had come at odd moments to borrow books of the Judge and to get him to explain difficult passages of Blackstone. He thought of it all now, and how prosperous and thriving the Judge was then, and how kindly and gracious

withal. He thought of his own first case, which the Judge had given him, and of his maiden speech which the Judge had coached him for; he remembered how he had brought down the laughter of the Court by beginning "Mr. Speaker," instead of "Gentlemen of the Jury," and how the Judge had patted him on the back when it was over and told him his *lapsus linguae* was a good sign, and that he would some day be saying "Mr. Speaker" in earnest from the floor. Yes, he remembered it all now, and it had come true for him—but the Judge? He felt sorry he had not kept up with him during the years he had been in Washington; perhaps he was being laid on the shelf. To be sure, he looked old and worn.

The Congressman was thinking of all this while he had been speaking, and his finger kept running over the leaves of the book which he held in his hand. He snapped the covers together nervously.

"I tell you what, Judge," he said, I wish you wanted an appointment and you'd let me get one for you. I'd like to wipe out some old scores we had in that way."

The Judge's eyes fell and he flicked a speck of dust from his worn coat-sleeve before he replied. There was a little nervousness in his manner, but his words were kindly.

"Well, now, I'm sure I'm glad to hear it, Judge," he said, "and I think we'll have no difficulty in arranging it."

He sat down on the straight office chair pressing his thin knees close together, and leaning his slender body forward, resting his elbows on the table.

"If you'll just go through this list with me," he went on, and there was a business-like briskness in his tone, "we might see what there is left."

He turned to the list of first-class appointments, running his bony finger down the line telling off names as he went.

"There's England now, that's for Massachusetts, of course, and France, Illinois will get that, and so on. No, there's nothing there. Let me see, how'd you like a consulate? some pretty good places, light work, enough salary, you know. Here, how's this? That's not bad. Got any choice of place Judge?

"Well, I don't know, I don't know; it just came into my head a moment ago before you came up. I think, on a venture, I should say I wanted a mild climate," said the Judge, a little vaguely.

"Yes, of course," continued the Congressman, still following the route of his finger. "Now there's Mexico, or Peru, or Bolivia—let me see, some good places on the other side, in Italy, perhaps, or Ireland—that's pretty good. I wish I'd known about this sooner; I've promised so many of the places. But here, now," holding the book to the Judge, "how's this? Right smart salary, ain't it? Suppose we see what we can do with that?"

He arose as he spoke, taking the Judge's assent for granted, but his graciousness returned as he got upon his feet and looked at the old man beside him.

He gave a very hearty hand-shake, saying: "Now, Judge, I want you to count upon my doing everything possible in this matter, and believe me, it will give me great pleasure. We'll send in a perfect reveal of letters and so on. Of course, everything will have to pass through the senior Senator's hands, but you know him, don't you? Yes; I thought so. Well, I think we may count upon him in this matter, and at any rate, you may upon me."

The Congressman had seemed willing and sincere enough, but the thing had not passed off just according to the Judge's desire. Accustomed as he was to granting favors he was new to the business of asking them and the unwonted effort galled him. He hoped the thing would not be talked about until it was quite settled, and it made him wince a few mornings later when the paper contained the announcement that "Judge Acton, of Louisiana, was prominently spoken for an important foreign post."

His friends were enthusiastic; the several local papers were exuberant in their laudation. One interesting thing about it, they said, was that the Judge's record did not have to be looked up. This was because everybody knew his private character to be of unparalleled purity, his private life to be one of unstinted philanthropy. His public career was unimpeachable; everyone who knew anything of the political history of Louisiana was familiar with the Judge's staunch adherence to party lines and party principles. So the community discussed it, were elated, and felt that the matter was settled. The Board of Trade, it is true, sent a testimonial in the Judge's behalf, not that they felt that it was needed at all, but just by way of showing their appreciation of the choice which they felt assured would be made. Thus summarily are many weighty matters settled by those who have no finger in the government pie. Numerous friends in other States wrote to the Judge, giving him hearty and previous congratulations, telling him they had written to their various Senators, each one of whom, it was always said, "had the ear of the President," giving the Judge what they usually called "a rouser." Thus it seemed that so far as might be seen all was done that could be, and there was

nothing left but to await the grinding of the mill of the gods.

The person who said least and doubtless thought most about the Judge's appointment was Ruth.

When Mrs. Acton looked up from her knitting to say: "Ruth since your father has asked for the appointment I want him to get it," that worthy lady had, and then there, as she would have expressed it, "said her say," Mrs. Acton was one who always spoke with reserves; reserves which grew by harboring and were, invariably, ready for emergencies. So Ruth had not discussed the matter with her mother. She simply awaited an emergency, hoping one would come to break from her reserves. She appreciated the sensitiveness her father might feel while the master was still in doubt, and went out of her way to respect it. But, as I have intimated, she did a deal of thinking, for Ruth was a young woman possessed of aspirations of that peculiar kind of restlessness which usually passes muster under the name of ambition, and one of her innermost desires had been to get away from the narrow confines of the small city wherein she had passed almost her whole life, and, added to this, was an overweening desire to go abroad. Now that there was a probability of it, she was forced to contend herself with only thinking of her desire, and strengthened her hope with her mother's decision that, since her father had asked for a place, she wanted him to have it.

Singularly enough, the only person whom she felt inclined to talk to about it was John—John Hume—and now he was gone, she knew not where, and it did not make things easier for her to reflect that she had herself been the cause of his going. But with all of her reflections she could not bring herself to think it was anything but stupid of John to go as he had done. Hadn't he been asking her to marry him once a year ever since she could remember, and hadn't she always given him the same answer? And now, it did seem too utterly stupid of him to say that since she was older, he supposed she knew her own mind and that he would go away and not trouble her any more. Just as tho' she hadn't known her own mind all along! John was a deal too masterful and, be sure, she was not sorry she had said "no" to him, but she couldn't help wishing he hadn't gotten in a huff and gone off like that to nobody knew where, just at a time when she most wanted him. Ruth kept thinking of this after she had looked up her Meisterschaft and set to studying in case she did have to go abroad; perhaps that's the reason she made so little progress with her grammar.

"Pew!" said Jessup, "sits the wind in that quarter yet? I didn't know you would feel interested, as all was over twixt you and Ruth." Hume winced. "Besides," Jessup went on, "she hasn't got it yet, and, probable never will. Kissing goes by favor, and things seem to be moving slowly in Washington."

"Do you suppose such a man as Judge Acton wouldn't get what he asked for?" demanded Hume.

"I've seen as good men as he refused what they asked for," said the little fellow significantly.

"Stop that Jessup," said Hume doggedly. "You know I wasn't even worthy to fasten her shoe-latchet."

"O, I know," answered the loyal little man, looking up at his big friend, "you're not worth wiping up the floor with. If you were I'd do it, sir, I'd do it."

"Well, well, we shall make it all right, Jessie old boy," said Hume slipping off his slipper and throwing one arm carelessly about the little fellow's shoulders. "Would you mind sitting up for me a bit? I shall not be gone long, and I'll get you to call me early in the morning, please, Jess; I've got to go to Washington."

"You have, have you? What did you come for?"

"To see you, Jessup, of course," broke in Hume softly; but the little fellow didn't feign to notice the interruption.

"What did you come for? A chunk of fire? Well, I'll 'fire' you early enough in the morning, be sure."

Hume ran down stairs and hurried up the street to the telegraph office in a vague kind of way, feeling so right John had decided to shut up his Washington apartments sooner than was necessary and to run down home for a brief visit he did not quite acknowledge to himself, but merely said he felt that he would like a last glimpse of the old place to carry away with him—to remember when he was so far away and so long gone. There was no one to say good-bye to—no one except Ruth, and he should not see her, probably.

He was thinking of all this the night he got home and was walking up from the station to his old quarters. He calculated that none of the boys would have come in at that hour, and that he could look up a few papers that he wanted, and have a good, quiet, cosy time of it. He knew that Jessup, his old room-mate, would have left plenty of coal in the grate, and he felt quite gratified that a comfortable glow stole out beneath the door to greet him as he mounted the dusty stairway.

Everything was just as he had expected to find it; even his individual post box on the door was full of the things Jessup had neglected to send. He took them out, the bundles of newspapers and a few letters, carrying them in with him and dumping them down on the table along with his grip.

Within, too, all seemed quite as of old, but somehow he couldn't help feeling sorry, after all, that he hadn't wired Jessup he was coming. The little fellow's cheerfulness would have made his home-coming happier, his last glimpse of the old place brighter. He was passing thought of going out to look the boys up, but his trip had been a fatiguing one, so he emptied Jessup's tea kettle and got the cinders and dust from his face and hands, found his own big slippers in their accustomed corner and drew up a chair close to the table, stretching his long limbs to the fire's cheerful warmth.

At least she kept telling herself over and again that she was enjoying all the craze and rush, the meeting so many charming people, but she was haunted by the dreadful thought that she was going to break down in the midst of it and cry. There was a man standing with his back to her just behind a group of palms; he had been there a long time, and he reminded her of John. If only it were John she would feel better; then, after a while, she could see him and tell him good-bye.

The Congressman himself was talking to her, and when he stopped she thought she had better thank him for having gotten the appointment for her father. Somehow the echo of her words sounded very insincere, and looking up at him a little pleadingly, she said:

"Indeed, I am very grateful to you, and I know it is all owing to you that the place was given father, the Senator was very lagging."

The Congressman began to say something in reply, but she did not hear what it was. The man behind the palms had moved, and—yes—it was John, and he was coming to her; it had been so long since she saw him, and she wanted to tell him good-bye. No, he was going the other way; but surely he had seen her. What could it mean? For John Hume's kind, gray eyes looked full into hers for a brief second, he bent his head a little stiffly and was gone.

He brushed his hand across his eyes as if to shut out a vision, and picking up one of the dusty papers he had brought in, began to open it listlessly. The first that caught his eye was Judge Acton's name at the head of a column, and, like one awakening from a dream, he read on his probable appointment. He had heard nothing of it, and he read the whole thing twice over before he seemed to understand, then, blowing long, low whistle while he threw the paper down beside him on the floor.

Jessup's step was heard mounting the stairs, and in a moment the little fellow burst in, fairly kissing Hume in the exuberance of his delight at seeing him. "There seems to be a little lull just now," he said, bending to offer his arm, "and I'm afraid I shall not have another opportunity of showing you my orchids. Will you let me take you now?"

"Why didn't you let a man know you were coming," he said, frisking about the room in his nervous little

way. "I'd have had the boys in to glorify. Why didn't you write to a fellow, anyhow? Why, you had me pinning my young life away, believing you had gone to that nether region you casually mentioned that night you flew off like a shot out of a shovel to the Lord knows where. Say, why didn't you write me?"

"Write?" said Hume. "You are a great one to talk about writing; why in the mischief didn't you write?"

"I? Why had nothing to write," said Jessup helplessly.

"Oh, you didn't? Well, why didn't you send the papers?" said Hume, picking up the one at his feet.

"O, come now, but that is a good one," said Jessup, going off into a fit of laughter. "Where out of the world have you been that you wanted to see our papers? Did you want to know what we thought of the Toronto question? Did you want to see us settle the free art bill with one stroke of our mighty pen? Or did you want to know that Bill Jones was adding a new coat of paint to his palatial residence, that the honorable Mayor was out again after a protracted spr—beg pardon-illness, that our old friend, John Smith, from Hog Thiel Point, was in town yesterday, and, last but not least, that there are no files on—"

"Hush, Jessup can't you?" said Hume, breaking in a little sharply. "I think you might have written me about Judge Acton's appointment, for instance."

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