

BOWSER HIRES A HALL.

Plans to Deliver Telling Speech, but Audience Fails to Show Up.

PEOPLE DON'T WANT REFORM

Janitor and Two Reporters on Hand, but They Had to Be There, as It Was a Matter of Business With Them. Several Look In.

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For four consecutive evenings Mr. Bowser had spent two hours each evening in the library and had refused to explain his action to Mrs. Bowser. She knew that he had been writing and hunting up statistics, but could get no further. For four days and nights he went around with a determined and heroic look on his face, but as he came home on the fifth she saw that some sort of climax had been reached.

Had he invented a new style of balloon?

Had he bought a huckleberry farm? Had he found a substitute for butter?

Had he found a sure cure for hog cholera?

Had he solved the potato bug problem?

These and a hundred other questions flitted through her mind, but she was to ascertain that Mr. Bowser had done nothing foolish. Having announced at the dinner table that duty called him out that evening, he added:

"Mrs. Bowser, it may be something of a surprise to you, but I am going to make a public speech tonight. I hired Locust hall and gave out notices three days ago."

"Is that why you have been acting so mysteriously for the last few evenings?" she asked.

Had Been Posting Up.

"There has been no great mystery about it. I have had to have a lot of



"HUNDREDS PROBABLY TURNED AWAY," statistics to prove my case, and I know that if I mentioned the object you would discourage me."

"I might have encouraged you instead, although I confess that I see no reason for your making a speech. What is it about?"

"Am I a respectable, law abiding and patriotic citizen of America or not?" he asked in reply.

"Why, yes, of course."

"Am I an honest man?"

"Certainly."

"Then your question is answered. Mrs. Bowser, you read the papers. You know that we are passing through an era of corruption, political and otherwise. Patriotism and honor are dead, and graft and dishonesty reign. The people no longer have confidence in anything. As a matter of fact, any child ten years old can tell you that unless something is done at once this country is bound to go to the dogs."

"And you propose to keep it from such a calamity?"

"I do. I have hired a hall. I have invited the honest men in the community to come out. I am going to make a speech—a speech that will be the beginning of a new era. I shall show such an appalling state of affairs that men will tremble. I shall put their duty so plain that none will dare shrink from it. I shall sound the slogan of a new Bunker Hill. If my speech takes as well as I hope for I may organize a new political party then and there. I believe that a new party called the Bowserites would sweep this country from end to end and restore the lost confidence and patriotism."

"Yes, it might," replied Mrs. Bowser in tones betraying her doubt. "Do you expect a large crowd to hear you speak?"

"All the hall can hold and hundreds probably turned away. There is a widespread demand for reform. The people are ready for it. It must come or the country must return to barbarism."

"And—and have you got confidence in yourself as a speaker?"

"All the confidence in the world. It is the one theme on which I can turn myself loose. The papers tomorrow morning will tell you all about it. We have arranged to have five or six reporters present. They will put a large share of the speech in capitals and italics."

"Well, I hope you will come out all right, but I'm sorry you went into it. Hadn't you better run over your speech with me before you deliver it?"

"No, ma'am, I hadn't. I know what the speech is, and I know it's all right. I don't want you throwing cold water on it at the last hour. Neither do I propose that you shall take the credit

of it. I must now go and dress for the occasion."

When Mr. Bowser was finally ready to depart for Locust hall Mrs. Bowser rearranged his necktie and pulled down his coattails and said:

"Mr. Bowser, I have got \$1.75 that I have saved up."

"Well, what of it?"

"I'll give you the whole of it if you won't make a speech."

"By the seven spotted bulls, Mrs. Bowser, but do I find graft and bribery right here in my own house? How dare you make me such an offer? You try to bribe me not to make a speech, to let the country go to the dogs, to permit the Hydra head of corruption to be reared in every hamlet of America!"

"But I don't want you to make a failure, you know."

"A failure! I make a failure! Why, woman, have you suddenly lost the little brains you ever had? Failure! I shall come home borne on the shoulders of shouting, cheering Bowserites, and you had best send over for a hundred candles to illuminate the house. A dollar and seventy-five cents as a bribe!"

Mr. Bowser reached Locust hall to find it lighted, but the expected thousands had not gathered yet. In fact, only the janitor was present, and there was no look of anticipation on his face. In fact, there was a look of disappointment instead, and after a couple of minutes he approached Mr. Bowser and queried:

"Say, now, can't you put this thing amagig off for the night?"

"What do you mean, sir?" was asked.

"Why, let it go until some other time. I want to go to a scrapping match tonight, but if you are going to make a speech I've got to stay here."

Capital Oppressing Labor.

Mr. Bowser occupied five minutes in telling his side of the story, and when he got through the janitor felt that he had been talked to in three different languages. He went away and sat down, but he said it was another instance of capital oppressing labor and his union should hear of it. Ten minutes later a reporter arrived. He looked around the hall and then at Mr. Bowser and said:

"Going to be a fizzle, isn't it?"

"Um!"

"Who is this Bowser anyway?"

"Um!"

"He's probably some old fake, and I'll not stay to hear him bleat."

Five minutes passed, and then a lopsided, disreputable looking fellow lounged in and impudently queried:

"Say, old boss, is there to be a fandango here tonight?"

"What do you mean, sir?" demanded Mr. Bowser.

"Oh, an old speech or something by somebody or other?"

"Yes, sir; there is to be a speech here."

"And where's the beer?"

"There won't be any."

"Oh, a sawdust speech, eh? Well, I'm off. Let the old blowhard blow."

Then a second reporter entered and took a look around. The janitor winked at him, and he returned the wink and sat down and looked solemn for five minutes. Then he approached Mr. Bowser and respectfully asked:

"Can you tell me the name of the party that is or was to orate here this evening?"

"His name is Bowser, I believe."

"Well, his wife seems to have kept him at home and done a good thing. I'll just say that the meeting was a grand fizzle."

There was one more caller. He was a man that had attended a dance in the same hall a week before and lost a quarter out of a hole in his pocket. He had come back to look for it. After casting aspersions on the character of the janitor and telling Mr. Bowser that he ought to be in the bosom of his family the meeting broke up.

Mr. Bowser arose.

The janitor arose.

Mr. Bowser went downstairs.

The janitor turned out the gas and followed.

Mr. Bowser went home, not borne on the shoulders of shouting, cheering men.

The janitor went to the scrapping match.

And the kind and gentle Mrs. Bowser never said a word—not a word.

M. QUAD.

Looking For Revenge.



P. C. X1—Got his number?

P. C. Y2 (who has been standing on his head through some fault of his own)—No, confound it! I'd give a week's pay to know whether that car was M 69 or 96 W.—Sketch.

How a Woman Figures.

She had worked her leap year prerogative, but he was trying to dodge the issue.

"I appreciate your proposal," he said, "but my income is not sufficient for two."

"Oh, that's all right!" she replied.

"When we are married we'll be one, you know."—Puck.

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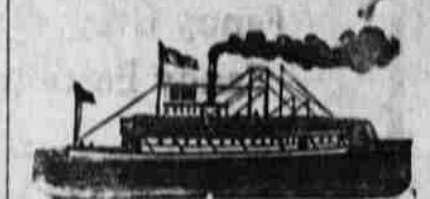
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