

A FABLE.

Once upon a time in a far country, there lived a good queen. It so happened that there was a vacancy in a high place in her kingdom, and she called for her subjects to come before her so that she might pick out the one most worthy to fill it. Now it was so that after she had made the proclamation, a man came pushing his way to the front and asked arrogantly for the office. He was an ill-favored, low-browed man and brushed by the guards at the gate and strode into the royal presence. The gracious queen did not deny him audience, but asked him what he had done for her kingdom that he should presume to ask for such a high and honorable place. Upon this, the man smiled a leering smile and jingling the gold in his pockets, began: "I? Well I have earned houses and lands. I have accumulated gold, gold! I have lived for gold, have turned everything I have touched into the yellow metal. It is true, that I have often wrung it from starving men and have oppressed the poor, yet this is fair in business and no one has ever caught me and put me in jail. It is true that I have never worked for the good of the kingdom. When it has been the pleasure of your majesty to have the people vote upon questions of state I have felt it beneath my dignity to go to the polls. I have been too busy to vote. There is no gold in voting. But I have riches, and with them I can do great good for the state, and I'll also admit that I can do myself great good also. In this high place there are untold opportunities for gain." And with this, he puffed himself out, flashed his diamonds before the queen's eyes, flung down a bag of gold with a jangle and strode from the queen's presence, out among the servile throngs about the door, who trembled as he scowled and walked by them.

Hardly had the great door swung to behind the first comer when the door again turned on its hinges and in there came a man of noble bearing. His head was white with years and in his eye there flashed the fire of great resolve and high aspiration. He bowed low before the queen and touched her hand with his lips. Her majesty bade him rise and asked him what was his mission. With a modest mien he asked that he might fill the high office she had bestowed. And the queen turning her pleased eyes upon him, asked what he had done for her kingdom: "Your majesty," answered the man, "I have done little I fear, and yet I have tried. I have earned this silver hair in service for you and your kingdom. I have served the state early and late. I have endeavored to aid in obtaining pure government, and have always worked for the interests of your kingdom. What your majesty has asked I have always tried to fulfill. It is little enough I have

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done and I have no gold to throw at the feet of my queen, nor rare presents to dazzle her with. I have an honest heart and clean hands." And the man bowed low and went out.

Others came with their stories and the queen listened to them and when the door was shut for the last time she sat long and still and spoke no word. The office is still vacant.

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