CHIP of THE BLOCK

By RICHARD BARKER SHELTON

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The Southwest limited sped over the flat bottom lands about the Little Otter river.

Low clouds hung in the sky, and occasionally the sharp rattle of raindrops struck the windows of the special car on the rear of the train, where Governor Crawley stood with his hands in his pockets looking out across the monotonous landscape. From a little table at the forward end of the car, where a young, well groomed man sat before a pile of papers, came the staccato click of a typewriter.

The governor's brows were drawn, and he chewed fiercely the unlighted cigar between his teeth. He was hurrying southward to make a speech in a large manufacturing center. It would be the last speech of his present term, and he realized that his re-election depended largely upon it.

All the papers in the state had announced under headlines more or less prominent that Governor Crawley would speak at Vainboro on the evening of Oct. 15 and that it would be a

"THAT'S RIGHT I FOULED HIM AT THE TURN," SAID I.

speech of great political significance in that it would clearly determine the governor's attitude toward the labor problems which had arisen during the past year.

The click of the typewriter ceased; the young man rose from the table and began to arrange the sheets before him. Crawley strode up the car and stood looking over his shoulder. His face relaxed into a grim smile as he laid a hand lightly on the younger man's arm.

"Well, Tom," he said, "what do you think of it now it's done?"

Tom Ashley had not been private secretary to the governor for the past two years without gaining some insight into his superior's character. He knew well enough the effect his words would have. Nevertheless he said them.

"I think," said he, "you have composed your political death warrant."

Instantly the governor's face hardened. "At any rate," he said without turning his eyes from the window, "I have been honest in this one. I haven't tried to blind them with smooth words nor to cheat them with pretty turns of the language. This second speech is fair and square. The other isn't."

Ashley squared his shoulders. "This one is all you say of it," said he, "but the other deserves more of you than you admit. You say quite as much in the first one, but you say it more guardedly. If any one gets false ideas from it it is not your fault. Your own intentions and what people make of them will always differ. Don't misunderstand me as meddlesome if I say that it seems to me your consideration of the claims your party has on you will influence you to use the first."

"Perhaps you are right," he said at length. "Anyway, we'll keep them both for the present."

There was a rasp of brakes, and the train began to slow down. Crawley wiped the steam from the window and looked out. Familiar spires and a well known square greeted his eyes.

"We're at Exley, Tom," he said. "Ned joins us here to go down with us. Would you mind stepping out to see if he is at the station?"

A few moments later Ashley returned with a tall, muscular young fellow, who ran to the governor and clasped his hand, with a hearty "Hello, father!"

"There are a lot of fellows from the school up forward," young Crawley explained as the train drew out. "They're going down to hear you speak tonight. I told 'em I'd present 'em to you somewhere between here and there."

"I shall be very glad to meet them," the governor said, "after Tom and I have finished up a little work which will take an hour or so. Tell me, how did the meet with St. John's come out yesterday?"

"Oh," the young fellow's face fell. "We lost."

"Too bad," said the governor. "You got your half mile, I suppose?"

"No, I lost that, too," Ned replied. "Spencer, the St. John's man, is a caution and no doubt. Ran me clean off my feet the second time. That lost for us. We were tied, ten apiece, up to that, and that was the last event."

"The second time," the governor inquired, his brows contracting into a perplexed frown.

"Yes. We ran it twice. First time—well, I'll tell you about it, and I want to ask you what you think of it, though I know pretty well what you'll say. You see, it was a tie and everybody was crazy—our boys yelling at us, and St. John's howling at their men to go in and win. We got off at a pretty stiff pace and kept it up the first lap. Half way round the second lap Spencer had the lead, and I was loping along right at his heels. The others were bunched just behind us. I tried to pass him, and when we were going neck and neck I fouled him ever so little, but enough to swerve him into the board at the edge of the track. His ankle bent, and down he went. I finished first, and Oxford, our other man, came in second, and the boys went wild and howled and hugged each other and started to lug Oxford and me off the field on their shoulders. Then Spencer came up crying 'Foul!' but the judges hadn't seen it, so they said there was no foul.

"Well, for a minute I couldn't think of anything except we'd downed St. John's. Then all at once I felt queer, and I had to—just had to—slip off their shoulders and go over to the judges. 'That's right. I fouled him at the turn,' said I. The judges talked awhile and then announced we'd run it over, and Spencer ran me clean off my feet that time, and we lost."

"Good boy!" said the governor, almost inaudibly.

"Well," his son went on, "St. John's did all the cheering then, and our fellows were pretty hot; said it was the judges' place to see fouls, and if I'd had any thought for the rest of 'em I'd have kept my mouth shut. I guess it's lost me the captaincy of the track team next year all right, but anyway I'd rather run fair yesterday than have it.

"When I was going to the lockers after it was all over old Professor Sneed was right behind me with one of the instructors, and I heard him say: 'Chip off the old block! That's his daddy's spunk all over.'

"I'll go up ahead with the fellows. Shall I bring 'em back in an hour? All right. So long, Mr. Ashley."

Some time after the door had closed behind his son the governor rose and went over to Ashley's table.

"Tom," said he, "it's a poor father that can't live up to his son."

He picked up the manuscript of the first speech and laid it on the typewriter.

"Destroy it," he said and turned sharply on his heel.

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ANNIE L. WATKINS,

late of Kent county, Md., deceased.

All persons having claims against said deceased are hereby warned to exhibit the same, with the proper vouchers thereof, to the undersigned on or before the 15th day of March, 1904, otherwise they may be excluded by law from all benefits of said estate. All indebted to said estate are requested to make immediate payment to the subscriber.

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SHADRACK W. WATKINS, Administrator

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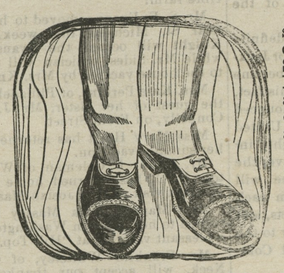

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