"And may I not come to Coniston?" he asked.

"My father and I should be glad to see you, Mr. Worthington," she answered.

He untied her horse and essayed one more topic.

"You are taking a very big book," he said. "May I look at the title?"

She showed it to him in silence. It was the "Life of Napoleon Bonaparte."

CHAPTER V

THE KING IS DEAD! LONG LIVE THE KING!

ISAAC WORTHINGTON came to Coniston not once, but many times, before the snow fell; and afterward, too, in Silas Wheelock's yellow sleigh through the great drifts under the pines, the chestnut Morgan trotting to one side in the tracks. On one of these excursions he fell in with that singular character of a bumpkin who had interested him on his first visit, in coonskin cap and overcoat and mittens. Jethro Bass was plodding in the same direction, and Isaac Worthington, out of the goodness of his heart, invited him into the sleigh. He was scarcely prepared for the bumpkin's curt refusal, but put it down to native boorishness, and thought no more about it — then.

What troubled Mr. Worthington infinitely more was the progress of his suit; for it had become a suit, though progress is a wrong word to use in connection with it. So far had he got, — not a great distance, — and then came to what he at length discovered was a wall, and apparently impenetrable. He was not even allowed to look over it. Cynthia was kind, engaging, even mirthful, at times, save when he approached it; and he became convinced that a certain sorrow lay in the forbidden ground. The nearest he had come to it was when he mentioned again, by accident, that life of Napoleon.

That Cynthia would accept him, nobody doubted for an instant. It would be madness not to. He was orthodox, so Deacon Ira had discovered, of good habits, and there was the princely four hundred a year — almost a minister's salary! Little people guessed that there was

no love-making — only endless discussions of books beside the great centre chimney, and discussions of Isaac Worthington's career.

It is a fact — for future consideration — that Isaac Worthington proposed to Cynthia Ware, although neither Speedy Bates nor Deacon Ira Perkins heard him do so. It had been very carefully prepared, that speech, and was a model of proposals for the rising young men of all time. Mr. Worthington preferred to offer himself for what he was going to be — not for what he was. He tendered to Cynthia a note for a large amount, payable in some twenty years, with interest. The astonishing thing to record is that in twenty years he could have more than paid the note, although he could not have foreseen at that time the Worthington Free Library and the Truro Railroad, and the stained-glass window in the church and the great marble monument on the hill — to another woman. All of these things, and more, Cynthia might have had if she had only accepted that promise to pay! But she did not accept it. He was a trifle more robust than when he came to Brampton in the summer, but perhaps she doubted his promise to pay.

It may have been guessed, although the language we have used has been purposely delicate, that Cynthia was already in love with — somebody else. Shame of shames and horror of horrors — with Jethro Bass! With Strength, in the crudest form in which it is created, perhaps, but yet with Strength. The strength might gradually and eventually be refined. Such was her hope, when she had any. It is hard, looking back upon that virginal and cultured Cynthia, to be convinced that she could have loved passionately, and such a man! But love she did, and passionately, too, and hated herself for it, and prayed and struggled to cast out what she believed, at times, to be a devil.

The ancient allegory of Cupid and the arrows has never been improved upon: of Cupid, who should never in the world have been trusted with a weapon, who defies all game laws, who shoots people in the bushes and innocent bystanders generally, the weak and the helpless and the

strong and self-confident! There is no more reason in it than that. He shot Cynthia Ware, and what she suffered in secret Coniston never guessed. What parallels in history shall I quote to bring home the enormity of such a mésalliance? Orthodox Coniston would have gone into sackcloth and ashes, — was soon to go into these, anyway.

I am not trying to keep the lovers apart for any mere purposes of fiction, — this is a true chronicle, and they stayed apart most of that winter. Jethro went about his daily tasks, which were now become manifold, and he wore the locket on its little chain himself. He did not think that Cynthia loved him — yet, but he had the effrontery to believe that she might, some day; and he was content to wait. He saw that she avoided him, and he was too proud to go to the parsonage and so incur ridicule and contempt.

Jethro was content to wait. That is a clew to his character throughout his life. He would wait for his love, he would wait for his hate: he had waited ten years before putting into practice the first step of a little scheme which he had been gradually developing during that time, for which he had been amassing money, and the life of Napoleon Bonaparte, by the way, had given him some valuable ideas. Jethro, as well as Isaac D. Worthington, had ambitions, although no one in Coniston had hitherto guessed them except Jock Hallowell — and Cynthia Ware, after her curiosity had been aroused.

Even as Isaac D. Worthington did not dream of the Truro Railroad and of an era in the haze of futurity, it did not occur to Jethro Bass that his ambitions tended to the making of another era that was at hand. Makers of eras are too busy thinking about themselves and like immediate matters to worry about history. Jethro never heard the expression about "cracks in the Constitution," and would not have known what it meant, — he merely had the desire to get on top. But with Established Church Coniston tight in the saddle (in the person of Moses Hatch, Senior), how was he to do it?

As the winter wore on, and March town meeting ap-

proached, strange rumors of a Democratic ticket began to drift into Jonah Winch's store, — a Democratic ticket headed by Fletcher Bartlett, of all men, as chairman of the board. Moses laughed when he first heard of it, for Fletcher was an easy-going farmer of the Methodist persuasion who was always in debt, and the other members of the ticket, so far as Moses could learn of it — were remarkable neither for orthodoxy or solidity. The rumors persisted, and still Moses laughed, for the senior selectman was a big man with flesh on him, who could laugh with dignity.

"Moses," said Deacon Lysander Richardson as they stood on the platform of the store one sunny Saturday in February, "somebody's put Fletcher up to this. He hain't got sense enough to act that independent all by himself."

"You be always croakin', Lysander," answered Moses.

Cynthia Ware, who had come to the store for buttons for Speedy Bates, who was making a new coat for the minister, heard these remarks, and stood thoughtfully staring at the blue coat-tails of the elders. A brass button was gone from Deacon Lysander's, and she wanted to sew it on. Suddenly she looked up, and saw Jock Hallowell standing beside her. Jock winked — and Cynthia blushed and hurried homeward without a word. She remembered, vividly enough, what Jock had told her the spring before, and several times during the week that followed she thought of waylaying him and asking what he knew. But she could not summon the courage. As a matter of fact, Jock knew nothing, but he had a theory. He was a strange man, Jock, who whistled all day on roof and steeple and meddled with nobody's business, as a rule. What had impelled him to talk to Cynthia in the way he had must remain a mystery.

Meanwhile the disquieting rumors continued to come in. Jabez Miller, on the north slope, had told Samuel Todd, who told Ephraim Williams, that he was going to vote for Fletcher. Moses Hatch hitched up his team and went out to see Jabez, spent an hour in general conversation, and then plumped the question, taking, as he said,

"'You be always croakin', Lysander.'"

that means of finding out. Jabez hemmed and hawed, said his farm was mortgaged; spoke at some length about the American citizen, however humble, having a right to vote as he chose. A most unusual line for Jabez, and the whole matter very mysterious and not a little ominous. Moses drove homeward that sparkling day, shutting his eyes to the glare of the ice crystals on the pines, and thinking profoundly. He made other excursions, enough to satisfy himself that this disease, so new and unheard of (the right of the unfit to hold office), actually existed. Where the germ began that caused it, Moses knew no better than the deacon, since those who were suspected of leanings toward Fletcher Bartlett were strangely secretive. The practical result of Moses' profound thought was a meeting, in his own house, without respect to party, Democrats and Whigs alike, opened by a prayer from the minister himself. The meeting, after a futile session, broke up dismally. Sedition and conspiracy existed; a chief offender and master mind there was, somewhere. But who was he?

Good Mr. Ware went home, troubled in spirit, shaking his head. He had a cold, and was not so strong as he used to be, and should not have gone to the meeting at all. At supper, Cynthia listened with her eyes on her plate while he told her of the affair.

"Somebody's behind this, Cynthia," he said. "It's the most astonishing thing in my experience that we cannot discover who has incited them. All the unattached people in the town seem to have been organized." Mr. Ware was wont to speak with moderation even at his own table. He said unattached — not ungodly.

Cynthia kept her eyes on her plate, but she felt as though her body were afire. Little did the minister imagine, as he went off to write his sermon, that his daughter might have given him the clew to the mystery. Yes, Cynthia guessed; and she could not read that evening because of the tumult of her thoughts. What was her duty in the matter? To tell her father her suspicions? They were only suspicions, after all, and she could make

no accusations. And Jethro! Although she condemned him, there was something in the situation that appealed to a most reprehensible sense of humor. Cynthia caught herself smiling once or twice, and knew that it was wicked. She excused Jethro, and told herself that, with his lack of training, he could know no better. Then an idea came to her, and the very boldness of it made her grow hot again. She would appeal to him: tell him that that power he had over other men could be put to better and finer uses. She would appeal to him, and he would abandon the matter. That the man loved her with the whole of his rude strength she was sure, and that knowledge had been the only salve to her shame.

So far we have only suspicions ourselves; and, strange to relate, if we go around Coniston with Jethro behind his little red Morgan, we shall come back with nothing but — suspicions. They will amount to convictions, yet we cannot prove them. The reader very naturally demands some specific information — how did Jethro do it? I confess that I can only indicate in a very general way: I can prove nothing. Nobody ever could prove anything against Jethro Bass. Bring the following evidence before any grand jury in the country, and see if they don't throw it out of court.

Jethro, in the course of his weekly round of strictly business visits throughout the town, drives into Samuel Todd's farmyard, and hitches on the sunny side of the red barns. The *town* of Coniston, it must be explained for the benefit of those who do not understand the word "town" in the New England sense, was a tract of country about ten miles by ten, the most thickly settled portion of which was the *village* of Coniston, consisting of twelve houses. Jethro drives into the barnyard, and Samuel Todd comes out. He is a little man, and has a habit of rubbing the sharp ridge of his nose.

"Haow be you, Jethro?" says Samuel. "Killed the brindle Thursday. Finest hide you ever seed."

"G-goin' to town meetin' Tuesday — g-goin' to town meetin' Tuesday — Sam'l?" says Jethro.

"I was callatin' to, Jethro."

"Democrat — hain't ye — Democrat?"

"Callate to be."

"How much store do ye set by that hide?"

Samuel rubs his nose. Then he names a price that the hide might fetch, under favorable circumstances, in Boston. Jethro does not wince.

"Who d'ye callate to vote for, Sam'l?"

Samuel rubs his nose.

"Heerd they was a-goin' to put up Fletcher and Amos Cuthbert, an' Sam Price for Moderator." (What a convenient word is *they* when used politically!) "Hain't made up my mind, clear," says Samuel.

"C-comin' by the tannery after town meetin'?" inquired Jethro, casually.

"Don't know but what I kin."

"F-fetch the hide — f-fetch the hide."

And Jethro drives off, with Samuel looking after him, rubbing his nose. "No bill," says the jury — if you can get Samuel into court. But you can't. Even Moses Hatch can get nothing out of Samuel, who then talks Jacksonian principles and the rights of an American citizen.

Let us pursue this matter a little farther, and form a committee of investigation. Where did Mr. Todd learn anything about Jacksonian principles? From Mr. Samuel Price, whom *they* have spoken of for Moderator. And where did Mr. Price learn of these principles? Any one in Coniston will tell you that Mr. Price makes a specialty of orators and oratory, and will hold forth at the drop of a hat in Jonah Winch's store or anywhere else. Who is Mr. Price? He is a tall, sallow young man of eight and twenty, with a wedge-shaped face, a bachelor and a Methodist, who farms in a small way on the southern slope, and saves his money. He has become almost insupportable since *they* have named him for Moderator.

Get Mr. Sam Price into court. Here is a man who assuredly knows who *they* are: if we are not much mistaken, he is *their* mouthpiece. Get an eel into court.

There is only one man in town who can hold an eel, and he isn't on the jury. Mr. Price will talk plentifully, in his nasal way; but he won't tell you anything.

Mr. Price has been nominated to fill Deacon Lysander Richardson's shoes in the following manner: One day in the late autumn a man in a coonskin cap stops beside Mr. Price's woodpile, where Mr. Price has been chopping wood, pausing occasionally to stare off through the purple haze at the south shoulder of Coniston Mountain.

"Haow be you, Jethro?" says Mr. Price, nasally.

"D-Democrats are talkin' some of namin' you Moderator next meetin'," says the man in the coonskin cap.

"Want to know!" ejaculates Mr. Price, dropping the axe and straightening up in amazement. For Mr. Price's ambition soared no higher, and he had made no secret of it. "Wal! Whar'd you hear that, Jethro?"

"H-heerd it round — some. D-Democrat — hain't you — Democrat?"

"Always callate to be."

"J-Jacksonian Democrat?"

"Guess I be."

Silence for a while, that Mr. Price may feel the gavel in his hand, which he does.

"Know somewhat about Jacksonian principles, don't ye — know somewhat?"

"Callate to," says Mr. Price, proudly.

"T-talk 'em up, Sam — t-talk 'em up. C-canvass, Sam."

With these words of brotherly advice Mr. Bass went off down the road, and Mr. Price chopped no more wood that night; but repeated to himself many times in his nasal voice, "I want to know!" In the course of the next few weeks various gentlemen mentioned to Mr. Price that he had been spoken of for Moderator, and he became acquainted with the names of the other candidates on the same mysterious ticket who were mentioned. Whereupon he girded up his loins and went forth and preached the word of Jacksonian Democracy in all the farmhouses roundabout, with such effect that Samuel

Todd and others were able to talk with some fluency about the rights of American citizens.

Question before the Committee, undisposed of: Who nominated Samuel Price for Moderator? Samuel Price gives the evidence, tells the court he does not know, and is duly cautioned and excused.

Let us call, next, Mr. Eben Williams, if we can. Moses Hatch, Senior, has already interrogated him with all the authority of the law and the church, for Mr. Williams is orthodox, though the deacons have to remind him of his duty once in a while. Eben is timid, and replies to us, as to Moses, that he has heard of the Democratic ticket, and callates that Fletcher Bartlett, who has always been the leader of the Democratic party, has named the ticket. He did not mention Jethro Bass to Deacon Hatch. Why should he? What has Jethro Bass got to do with politics?

Eben lives on a southern spur, next to Amos Cuthbert, where you can look off for forty miles across the billowy mountains of the west. From no spot in Coniston town is the sunset so fine on distant Farewell Mountain, and Eben's sheep feed on pastures where only mountain-bred sheep can cling and thrive. Coniston, be it known, at this time is one of the famous wool towns of New England: before the industry went West, with other industries. But Eben Williams's sheep do not wholly belong to him — they are mortgaged — and Eben's farm is mortgaged.

Jethro Bass — Eben testifies to us — is in the habit of visiting him once a month, perhaps, when he goes to Amos Cuthbert's. Just friendly calls. Is it not a fact that Jethro Bass holds his mortgage? Yes, for eight hundred dollars. How long has he held that mortgage? About a year and a half. Has the interest been paid promptly? Well, the fact is that Eben hasn't paid any interest yet.

Now let us take the concrete incident. Before that hypocritical thaw early in February, Jethro called upon Amos Cuthbert — not so surly then as he has since become — and talked about buying his wool when it should be duly cut, and permitted Amos to talk about the position of second selectman, for which some person or persons unknown to the jury had nominated him. On his way down to the Four Corners, Jethro had merely pulled up his sleigh before Eben Williams's house, which stood behind a huge snow bank and practically on the road. Eben appeared at the door, a little dishevelled in hair and beard, for he had been sleeping.

"Haow be you, Jethro?" he said nervously. Jethro nodded.

"Weather looks a mite soft."

No answer.

"About that interest," said Eben, plunging into the dread subject, "don't know as I'm ready this month after all."

"G-goin' to town meetin', Eben?"

"Wahn't callatin' to," answered Eben.

"G-goin' to town meetin', Eben?"

Eben, puzzled and dismayed, ran his hand through his hair.

"Wahn't callatin' to — but I kin — I kin."

"D-Democrat — hain't ye — D-Democrat?"

"I kin be," said Eben. Then he looked at Jethro and added in a startled voice, "Don't know but what I be — Yes, I guess I be."

"H-heerd the ticket?"

Yes, Eben had heard the ticket. What man had not. Some one has been most industrious, and most disinterested, in distributing that ticket.

"Hain't a mite of hurry about the interest right now — right now," said Jethro. "M-may be along the third week in March — may be — c-can't tell."

And Jethro clucked to his horse, and drove away. Eben Williams went back into his house and sat down with his head in his hands. In about two hours, when his wife called him to fetch water, he set down the pail on the snow and stared across the next ridge at the eastern horizon, whitening after the sunset.

The third week in March was the week after town meeting!

"M-may be — c-can't tell," repeated Eben to himself, unconsciously imitating Jethro's stutter. "Godfrey, I'll hev to git that ticket straight from Amos."

Yes, we may have our suspicions. But how can we get a bill on this evidence? There are some thirty other individuals in Coniston whose mortgages Jethro holds, from a horse to a house and farm. It is not likely that they will tell Deacon Hatch, or us, that they are going to town meeting and vote for that fatherless ticket because Jethro Bass wishes them to do so. And Jethro has never said that he wishes them to. If so, where are your witnesses? Have we not come back to our starting-point, even as Moses Hatch drove around in a circle. And we have the advantage over Moses, for we suspect somebody, and he did not know whom to suspect. Certainly not Jethro Bass, the man that lived under his nose and never said anything — and had no right to. Jethro Bass had never taken any active part in politics, though some folks had heard, in his rounds on business, that he had discussed them, and had spread the news of the infamous ticket without a parent. So much was spoken of at the meeting over which Priest Ware prayed. It was even declared that, being a Democrat, Jethro might have influenced some of those under obligations to him. Sam Price was at last fixed upon as the malefactor, though people agreed that they had not given him credit for so much sense, and Jacksonian principles became as much abhorred by the orthodox as the spotted fever.

We can call a host of other witnesses if we like, among them cranky, happy-go-lucky Fletcher Bartlett, who has led forlorn hopes in former years. Court proceedings make tiresome reading, and if those who have been over ours have not arrived at some notion of the simple and innocent method of the new Era of politics now dawning — they never will. Nothing proved. But here is part of the ticket which nobody started: —

For

SENIOR SELECTMAN, FLETCHER BARTLETT.

(Farm and buildings on Thousand Acre Hill mortgaged to Jethro Bass.)

SECOND SELECTMAN, AMOS CUTHBERT.

(Farm and buildings on Town's End Ridge mortgaged to Jethro Bass.)

THIRD SELECTMAN, CHESTER PERKINS.

(Sop of some kind to the Established Church party. Horse and cow mortgaged to Jethro Bass, though his father, the tithing-man, doesn't know it.)

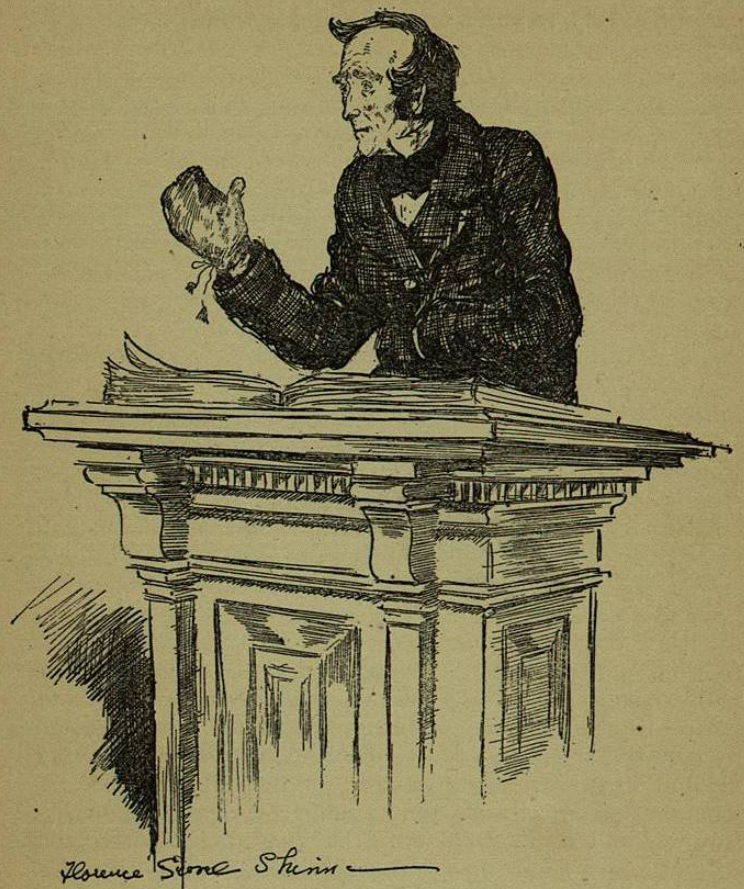
MODERATOR, SAMUEL PRICE.

(Natural ambition — love of oratory and Jacksonian principles.)

etc., etc.

The notes are mine, not Moses's. Strange that they didn't occur to Moses. What a wealthy man has our hero become at thirty-one! Jethro Bass was rich beyond the dreams of avarice — for Coniston. Truth compels me to admit that the sum total of all his mortgages did not amount to nine thousand dollars; but that was a large sum of money for Coniston in those days, and even now. Nathan Bass had been a saving man, and had left to his son one-half of this fortune. If thrift and the ability to gain wealth be qualities for a hero, Jethro had them — in those days.

The Sunday before March meeting, it blew bitter cold, and Priest Ware, preaching in mittens, denounced sedition in general. Underneath him, on the first landing of the high pulpit, the deacons sat with knitted brows, and the



"Priest Ware, preaching in mittens."

key-note from Isaiah Prescott's pitch pipe sounded like a mournful echo of the mournful wind without.

Monday was ushered in with that sleet storm to which the almanacs still refer, and another scarcely less important event occurred that day which we shall have to pass by for the present; on Tuesday, the sleet still raging, came the historic town meeting. Deacon Moses Hatch, his chores done and his breakfast and prayers completed, fought his way with his head down through a white waste to the meeting-house door, and unlocked it, and shivered as he made the fire. It was certainly not good election weather, thought Moses, and others of the orthodox persuasion, high in office, were of the same opinion as they stood with parted coat tails before the stove. Whoever had stirred up and organized the hordes, whoever was the author of that ticket of the discontented, had not counted upon the sleet. Heaven-sent sleet, said Deacon Ira Perkins, and would not speak to his son Chester, who sat down just then in one of the rear slips. Chester had become an agitator, a Jacksonian Democrat, and an outcast, to be prayed for but not spoken to.

We shall leave them their peace of mind for half an hour more, those stanch old deacons and selectmen, who did their duty by their fellow-citizens as they saw it and took no man's bidding. They could not see the trackless roads over the hills, now becoming tracked, and the bent figures driving doggedly against the storm, each impelled by a motive: each motive strengthened by a master mind until it had become imperative. Some, like Eben Williams behind his rickety horse, came through fear; others through ambition; others were actuated by both; and still others were stung by the pain of the sleet to a still greater jealousy and envy, and the remembrance of those who had been in power. I must not omit the conscientious Jacksonians who were misguided enough to believe in such a ticket.

The sheds were not large enough to hold the teams that day. Jethro's barn and tannery were full, and many other barns in the village. And now the peace of mind

of the orthodox is a thing of the past. Deacon Lysander Richardson, the moderator, sits aghast in his high place as they come trooping in, men who have not been to town meeting for ten years. Deacon Lysander, with his white band of whiskers that goes around his neck like a sixteenth-century ruff under his chin, will soon be a memory. Now enters one, if Deacon Lysander had known it — symbolic of the new Era. One who, though his large head is bent, towers over most of the men who make way for him in the aisle, nodding but not speaking, and takes his place in the chair under the platform on the right of the meeting-house under one of the high, three-part windows. That chair was always his in future years, and there he sat afterward, silent, apparently taking no part. But not a man dropped a ballot into the box whom Jethro Bass did not see and mark.

And now, when the meeting-house is crowded as it has never been before, when Jonah Winch has arranged his dinner booth in the corner, Deacon Lysander raps for order and the minister prays. They proceed, first, to elect a representative to the General Court. The Jacksonians do not contest that seat, — this year, — and Isaiah Prescott, fourteenth child of Timothy, the Stark hero, father of a young Ephraim whom we shall hear from later, is elected. And now! Now for a sensation, now for disorder and misrule!

"Gentlemen," says Deacon Lysander, "you will prepare your ballots for the choice of the first Selectman."

The Whigs have theirs written out, — Deacon Moses Hatch. But who has written out these others that are being so assiduously passed around? Sam Price, perhaps, for he is passing them most assiduously. And what name is written on them? Fletcher Bartlett, of course; that was on the ticket. Somebody is tricked again. That is not the name on the ticket. Look over Sam Price's shoulder and you will see the name — Jethro Bass.

It bursts from the lips of Fletcher Bartlett himself — of Fletcher, inflammable as gunpowder.

"Gentlemen, I withdraw as your candidate, and nominate a better and an abler man, — Jethro Bass."

"Jethro Bass for Chairman of the Selectmen!"

The cry is taken up all over the meeting-house, and rises high above the hiss of the sleet on the great windows. Somebody's got on the stove, to add to the confusion and horror. The only man in the whole place who is not excited is Jethro Bass himself, who sits in his chair regardless of those pressing around him. Many years afterward he confessed to some one that he was surprised — and this is true. Fletcher Bartlett had surprised and tricked him, but was forgiven. Forty men are howling at the moderator, who is pounding on the table with a blacksmith's blows. Squire Asa Northcutt, with his arms fanning like a windmill from the edge of the platform, at length shouts down everybody else — down to a hum. Some listen to him: hear the words "infamous outrage" — "if Jethro Bass is elected Selectman, Coniston will never be able to hold up her head among her sister towns for very shame." (Momentary blank, for somebody has got on the stove again, a scuffle going on there.) "I see it all now," says the Squire — (marvel of perspicacity!) "Jethro Bass has debased and debauched this town — " (blank again, and the squire points a finger of rage and scorn at the unmoved offender in the chair) "he has bought and intimidated men to do his bidding. He has sinned against heaven, and against the spirit of that most immortal of documents — " (Blank again. Most unfortunate blank, for this is becoming oratory, but somebody from below has seized the squire by the leg.) Squire Northcutt is too dignified and elderly a person to descend to rough and tumble, but he did get his leg liberated and kicked Fletcher Bartlett in the face. Oh, Coniston, that such scenes should take place in your town meeting! By this time another is orating, Mr. Sam Price, Jackson Democrat. There was no shorthand reporter in Coniston in those days, and it is just as well, perhaps, that the accusations and recriminations should sink into oblivion.

At last, by mighty efforts of the peace loving in both parties, something like order is restored, the ballots are in the box, and Deacon Lysander is counting them: not like

another moderator I have heard of, who spilled the votes on the floor until his own man was elected. No. Had they registered his own death sentence, the deacon would have counted them straight, and needed no town clerk to verify his figures. But when he came to pronounce the vote, shame and sorrow and mortification overcame him. Coniston, his native town, which he had served and revered, was dishonored, and it was for him, Lysander Richardson, to proclaim her disgrace. The deacon choked, and tears of bitterness stood in his eyes, and there came a silence only broken by the surging of the sleet as he rapped on the table.

"Seventy-five votes have been cast for Jethro Bass — sixty-three for Moses Hatch. Necessary for a choice, seventy — and Jethro Bass is elected senior Selectman."

The deacon sat down, and men say that a great sob shook him, while Jacksonian Democracy went wild — not looking into future years to see what they were going wild about. Jethro Bass Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, in the honored place of Deacon Moses Hatch! Bourbon royalists never looked with greater abhorrence on the Corsican adventurer and usurper of the throne than did the orthodox in Coniston on this tanner, who had earned no right to aspire to any distinction, and who by his wiles had acquired the highest office in the town government. Fletcher Bartlett in, as a leader of the irresponsible opposition, would have been calamity enough. But Jethro Bass!

This man whom they had despised was the master mind who had organized and marshalled the loose vote, was the author of that ticket, who sat in his corner unmoved alike by the congratulations of his friends and the maledictions of his enemies; who rose to take his oath of office as unconcerned as though the house were empty, albeit Deacon Lysander could scarcely get the words out. And then Jethro sat down again in his chair — not to leave it for six and thirty years. From this time forth that chair became a seat of power, and of dominion over a state.

Thus it was that Jock Hallowell's prophecy, so lightly uttered, came to pass.

How the remainder of that Jacksonian ticket was elected, down to the very hog-reeves, and amid what turmoil of the Democracy and bitterness of spirit of the orthodox, I need not recount. There is no moral to the story, alas — it was one of those things which inscrutable heaven permitted to be done. After that dark town-meeting day some of those stern old fathers became broken men, and it is said in Coniston that this calamity to righteous government, and not the storm, gave to Priest Ware his death-stroke.