

# WIND MACHINE

BY DUFF GILFOND

IT is just ten years since the Hon. Thomas Lindsay Blanton, A.B., 32°, the patriotic and garrulous Representative of the celebrated Jumbo district of Texas, waved his three-gallon hat to a band of cheering cowboys, and marched upon Washington. Since then, serving heroically in the halls of Congress, where Webster suffered and Calhoun withered and pined away, he has fought his great fight against the enemies of the Republic. No other Congressman since the Augustan Age has fought more valiantly, or against larger hordes of foes. He has fallen upon the anarchistic labor unions, he has fallen upon the anarchistic and infamous wets, and he has fallen upon the anarchistic, infamous and hellish vendors of legislative pork. In all these years, not a dollar has been expended without his scrutiny, and his alertness has saved the nation, at a modest estimate, at least \$100,000,000,000,000. Meanwhile, he has also reformed his colleagues. To the naked eye they may seem as vile as ever, but experts will tell you that they no longer flood their constituents with garden seed at the public expense, and no longer get their whiskey flasks from the House stationery-room. Such are some of the results of Mr. Blanton's self-sacrificing devotion to the commonweal.

Naturally enough, the other Congressmen have done nothing to celebrate his anniversary. John Hus was not popular in Prague, and there was no cheering for Savonarola in Florence. Mr. Blanton's enemies, despairing of stopping him in any other way, now attempt idiotically to prove that he has actually wasted more

public money than he has saved. The wet and immoral Baltimore *Sunpaper*, for example, recently calculated that his last Extension of Remarks in the *Congressional Record* stretched over eighty-seven pages and into \$4,350, the cost of the *Record* being \$50 a page. This long and unspoken speech, recounting his fine work in ousting a faithless District Commissioner, was denounced by the *Sunpaper* because the testimony in it had already been printed. But that was merely wet propaganda. Nobody with a taste for literary delicatessen has made any objection, for the hon. gentleman's version, transcending the bald record, transformed the case into a fascinating first person story with such alluring heads as "I defy the whole gang," "But I did not quit," and "Still I did not quit." The original was a witless legal document; the Blanton redaction was first-page stuff—and up to the highest mark of the tabloids.

What matter if many of Mr. Blanton's writhing colleagues rush from the chamber when he gets on his legs? The gallery revels in him. Leaning forward in his seat in the second row, his fingers twitching nervously and his daring blue eyes peering for an unexpected swoop on the Treasury, he is at once distinguishable from his sprawling and ambling brethren on the rear benches and in the aisles. These conscienceless fellows can saunter in and out of the cloak-room, whiling away the lazy afternoons in idle chat with their comrades. But, as Mr. Blanton once wrote to the Texas newspapers, "Someone must watch; someone must obstruct; someone must force

economy." Broad-shouldered and unmindful of criticism, even of threats of death or mutilation, he has nobly undertaken that task. Sensing a raid, he leaps to his feet, throws back his head, and in thunderous periods arouses the gallery from the coma produced by the soporific drone of his colleagues.

Sometimes, to be sure, his zeal induces him to tackle a bill with which he is not fully acquainted or to wrest the floor from a colleague without employing the traditional politeness of a Southern gentleman, but the gallery, knowing the man, always forgives him. It marvels as his mighty he-voice, sustained by mint-drops and raucous from its constant defense of the Republic, rises up above the confusion. It is caught by his gleaming eyes, his football hero's chin, and his celebrated *excalibur*, a rolled newspaper. It is thrilled as he dramatically demands that those colleagues who are not afraid to fight with him against pork barrels, labor unions and beer trusts shall stand up.

Unaccustomed to such eloquence, some of the other members of the House sometimes laugh outright, and slap their hams. But, as he has repeatedly told them, he is there to serve his people and not to curry favor with Congressmen. The good, wise Christian people of the Texan Republic stand by him. They have, in his own words, vindicated his record. And from all other parts of the country, wherever patriotism still lives, come congratulatory letters which he reads into the *Record* whenever he is disparaged. Surely the compliments of such eminent scholars as Professor William Starr Myers, Ph.D., of Princeton University and the New York *Journal of Commerce*, and the support of the great manufacturers of the country are adequate compensation and balm for the aspersions of envious colleagues.

Mr. Blanton never bears them malice. He is too good a Christian for that. Although he upbraids them when they deserve it, and writes to the Texas newspapers about them when their depravity becomes

overpowering, he is ever ready to caress them with his rolled newspaper or give them paternal advice. The following is a specimen, given after certain menacing government clerks had threatened that Congressmen who refused their demand for a raise in wages would hear from them in the next election:

I want to tell you whom else you are going to hear from beside the organized clerks of this country and the organized unions of this country when election time comes; you are going to hear from the people of the country. They are going to ask you how you stood on some of these many economy and good-government questions that Blanton has proposed here. They are going to pin you down as to whether or not you have stood for these things that Blanton has proposed here in behalf of the people, or whether you have voted for these threats and demands.

I am getting many letters from your districts now asking me how you stand and whether you are safe to be returned here. Of course, I answer them to the effect that you are my colleagues and that I like you, and that they will have to get your record from your votes. I am not giving you fellows away, but the *people* of this country are going to examine your records, as well as the organized government clerks and the unions of this country.

## II

In his office Mr. Blanton is as different from his colleagues as he is on the floor of the House. It is all very well for ordinary Representatives to keep their doors open or to display "Come In" signs for an idle and pestering public. A man with Mr. Blanton's herculean burden on his neck must be excused if he finds it necessary to keep himself under lock and key. Sometimes a knock will bring him, in shirtsleeves and suspenders, to the threshold, where, from an inhospitable opening, he informs the visitor that his constituents need all his time, and come first in his regard. The other day I heard a flaming college youth rant at his apparent gruffness. This youth, in quest of the hon. gentleman's recent attack on indecent literature, possibly for an insignificant college debate, came to him after many hours of futile search elsewhere, in the hope of obtaining a clue. He was astounded when

Mr. Blanton asked him how many hours he had slept the night before. What! So many? He (Blanton) had slept far fewer. So he slammed the door and the foolish lad was incensed. It is a pity that the public does not know how busy a conscientious Congressman, especially when there are so few, needs must be.

There is no wasteful levity in that office, no vain repartee between a far-from-home statesman and a pretty secretary. Typewriters click constantly, reeling out the true facts about Washington (not as the corrupt correspondents give them) for the Texas editors, and speeches for the appendix of the *Record* and the folks back home. The office adjoins the elevator, so that its illustrious occupant will not be delayed in his rushes to the floor. Other Representatives, less laborious, stroll about the corridors of the gloomy building, hobnobbing with the bootleggers and each other, but Mr. Blanton is working even while he waits impatiently for the elevator or the congressional subway. Other Representatives lunch in the House restaurant at voluptuous length and, according to Mr. Blanton, at great expense to the government, but he allots himself only a few minutes in a neighboring cafeteria, where even a handsome lady cashier cannot engage him.

When the public welfare demands it, lunch and, frequently, dinner are omitted altogether. But Mrs. Blanton, in the little house up the hill in Irving street, does not worry, for even the most slanderous newspapers and his maligning colleagues attest to the connubial purity of this eminent Texan. His devotion to his family is such that when he sent his son to Princeton he wrote to the president of the university for assurance that the curriculum contained no vile and atheistic isms. Insensible to this fidelity to Christian principles, a hostile organ for Federal employes, whose raids upon the Treasury Mr. Blanton was currently denouncing, revengefully alleged that he kept all his sons on the government payroll.

He has sacrificed more than occasional meals and the timbre of his voice for his country. At college he was a tennis champion and a member of the literary society. But such hobbies are not for men with missions. Today he has no time to play anything or to read aught save the newspapers, which, in their present state of corruption, afford him little satisfaction. While more carefree Congressmen junket to Panama on their vacations he sweats in Washington, scouring the government bureaux for evidences of waste. Many of his Sundays are dedicated to the people, with only the morning Presbyterian services for his soul. Providence has been appreciative of his ardor for righteousness. It saved him, he told a gaping House, when his automobile was mysteriously pierced by a bullet from "ten thousand of the brotherhood who had me marked for suffering." The Baptist and Methodist ministers and periodicals of Texas have always endorsed him. In gratitude he has sprinkled the *Record* with their pious letters, damning the wets to Hell.

Resentful of his righteous distrust of them, the sensational press boys of Washington, all of them in the pay of the Whiskey Trust and the American Federation of Labor, delight in crying him down. They would have the virgin lips, untouched by liquor, and frequently calling upon God in the House chamber, uttering His name in vain. When Mr. Blanton's automobile was recently found in a "no parking" area, they accused him of swearing at the official who remonstrated. Of course they would. The tale that profanity had issued from the lips of the decrifier of obscene literature was too good for them to let pass. But Mr. Blanton promptly nailed the lie, and was flooded with felicitations from Texas. Again, during the proceedings against former Commissioner Fenning, the correspondents covered up their professional incapacity to get the real news by filling column after column with the story of an epithet he flung at the defendant's exasperating attorney. Here, alas, they had him, but in their hypocritical concern for

the conventionally gasping ladies in the audience they completely disregarded the state of overwork responsible for the slip. The hon. gentleman made good, however. He told the ladies how exhausting and enervating the purification of their city had been, and to the pressmen's chagrin, they only loved him the more.

One may scan the newspapers for references to Mr. Blanton's solid work in defense of the Treasury for a whole year and, excluding the faithful *Abilene Daily Reporter*, his home town paper, they will not yield enough clippings to line the smallest garbage pail. Yet he is always in the headlines. To the boys of the Press Gallery his fights and other extra-curricular activities are of more importance than his legislating. A year or two ago, while he was chiding Representative Madden for wanting to attend a congressional reception at the White House, Congressman Zihlman, the bogus dry from the Maryland Free State, maliciously blurted out that he had seen Mr. Blanton in a dress-suit the night before. At once Mr. Blanton, who likes his clothes big and has a proper Texas loathing for dress-suits, asked Mr. Zihlman to expunge the lie from the *Record*. Mr. Zihlman accommodately did so, but the press boys bubbled over with it. Soon this dress-suit became as famous as Joseph's coat. One Washington newspaper even drew a picture of Mr. Blanton in a silk hat. All this nonsense, of course, was planned merely to dupe the hon. gentleman's good friends, the buckskin-breeched cowboys of Texas, into the belief that their hero was mixing in the vapid and immoral society he had always condemned. Finally, a patriotic columnist came to the rescue. He told the cowboys not to be disillusioned about their idol, that he was verily a striking figure in evening array. Reading this in the *Record*, the shaken cattlemen were happily reassured.

There is, indeed, no ground for any intimation that the soft life of Washington has paled Mr. Blanton's blood. He is as ready

to defend his good name and that of his constituents as he was a decade ago, when he and Representative Wilson of Texas were unlocked from an unbrotherly embrace. The prejudiced newspapers often imply that his tendency is to attack frailer men. They did this in their accounts of his recent grapple with the Hon. Sol Bloom, 32°, of New York, emphasizing Mr. Bloom's pince-nez and his white vest. But it was unfair, for in the numerous challenges of his congressional career Mr. Blanton has always shown a concern for duty and honor, not for might. His attitude is portrayed in the conclusion of a letter to the Texas editors after the fracas with the Hon. Mr. Bloom:

I don't like fights. I never engage in one unless it is forced on me. But when it is necessary to fight to perform one's duty, I don't run. If one didn't fight here once in a while, he wouldn't do very much.

### III

Do what they will, the intriguing newspapers cannot foil this heroic Texan. Since they insist on withholding all reference to his work when it is in behalf of the public, he furnishes the facts himself, and at any cost. He does not scruple to serve himself in a modest cafeteria so that he can pay to have his speeches reprinted for distribution. The Baltimore *Sunpaper*, in calculating the cost of his speechifying to the government, characteristically omitted mention of his own expenses. For disseminating that astounding prophecy entitled "Whither Are We Drifting?" he paid the Public Printer \$670.07; for the remarkable revelation called "Let the People Know" he paid \$452.98. "I deem the information worth the money," he said in emphatic print, below the captions. Lax and dubious Congressmen keep their constituents ignorant of events in Washington, but Blanton's are thoroughly informed. In "Effort Pays After All," which appeared as an Extension of Remarks in the *Record* and in the *Dallas News* at advertising rates (a newspaper too prejudiced to print it as news!) he wrote:

No one will swear that any other member has been more constantly on the floor than I have, making a vigorous, continuous, uncompromising fight against waste, extravagance, inefficiency, graft, anarchy, and class domination of government. Not merely to answer roll-calls, but during all business, for one can respond when the bell rings and answer all roll-calls and yet be absent from the floor most of the time. The pleasures of the cloak-room are enticing, but I have had to forego that entertainment.

I have not been a mere salary drawer or a bell-hop or a rubber stamp. I have never claimed that I was any smarter or more honorable or had deeper at heart the public welfare than my colleagues, but I have worked when they were asleep, have not followed the path of least resistance, and have dared to do things they have never dreamed of doing. I came here to serve constituents and not Congressmen. My people come first.

The people's Congressman was born in Houston fifty-four years ago of a family distinguished for its heroic services to the Republic. He is very proud of his lineage and at the outbreak of the World War, in offering his sword to his country in a letter to President Wilson, he wrote: "My father enlisted as a Confederate soldier at the age of sixteen. My great-grandfather, William Walker, of Cumberland county, Virginia, had the privilege of fighting for his country in the Revolution. My mother's uncle, James Monroe Hill, was a veteran of San Jacinto." These notables are also mentioned in his very complete autobiography in the Congressional Directory. It is, indeed, the longest in the book. In it we learn, too, that his parents were Thomas Lindsay and Eugenia Webb Blanton; that his sister is Miss Annie Webb Blanton, the first woman to hold a State office in Texas; and that his wife was Miss May Louise Matthews, "granddaughter of (Uncle) Joe B. Matthews and Watkins Reynolds, two pioneer frontiersmen of West Texas." Finally, that his children are Thomas Lindsay, Jr., John Matthews, Anne Louise, Joseph Edwin and William Watkins.

The Thomas Lindsay who is now so eminent was a poor boy. At ten, like Abraham Lincoln, he was helping to support his brothers and sisters by working on a farm; at eighteen he started to work his way through an Austin grocery and the celebrated University of Texas, the Sor-

bonne of the cow country. His adversaries are slanderous when they accuse him of a deep-seated hostility to labor. A self-made man, he is sympathetic to labor and only asks of it that it work as he did, and at the same rates. In 1897 he graduated from the law school of the university; in 1908 the cattlemen of the wilds recognized his juristic talent and elected him judge of the Forty-Second Judicial District. He became very popular. Lawyers who tried cases in his court say he browbeat them, but there is nothing the red-blooded he-men of Texas enjoy more than a squelched lawyer. Thus Mr. Blanton once discussed the matter in the long-suffering *Record*: "I enforced the law, expedited business to keep the dockets clear, treated everybody alike, forced the rich as well as the poor to serve on juries, entered fines against rich witnesses and jurors who did not appear promptly, and forced their attendance by bench warrant." Moreover, as an elder in the Presbyterian Church and as a Sunday-school teacher, he was a moral influence on his people. In 1917 they rewarded him with his first election to the halls of Congress.

The repeated manifestation of his constituents' devotion to him has always been an unfathomable mystery to his critics. What the people see in their Congressmen, indeed, is no easier to explain than what your best friend sees in his best girl. Love and politics are equally baffling. (Proverbs xxx, 19). Yet the statesman from Texas should present no problem. As a campaigner he tears picturesquely across his spacious, sparsely settled district in a modest Ford, visiting the voters in their remote kraals and calling them by their first names. From Washington he writes them long, encouraging letters, beginning: "I have just finished a two-hour conference with Director-General — and his bunch of attorneys." He is always delighted to return to them. "If you had lived among cold-blooded people as much as I have," he once told them, "you would appreciate getting back to a place where the milk of life really is enjoyed." He appears daily in



the *Record*—he is usually the first man to be heard from in the morning—and they are proud to have a leader in Congress, where great men swarm. He shows up fearlessly the crimes of his colleagues. His suitcase, when he goes home, frequently contains a useful souvenir from the Capital City. One such was a photograph of the House in action, with only seventeen members present, to make the laws of the nation—and Mr. Blanton to the fore among them.

#### IV

Despite his present eminence, his début in Washington was not a triumph. Some of the Congressmen were lying in wait for him. They had heard about his campaign speeches, in which he had promised to make them convene at nine instead of at noon, and had criticized them for their extravagant use of 38,000,000 envelopes a year at the expense of the government, and their abuse of the *Record*. "I denounce the pernicious practice in Congress," he had said, "of permitting Congressmen to print at the government's expense long speeches, upon no issue whatever, and never delivered, for the express purpose of mailing same to their constituents. Congressmen are now flooding the mails with Extension of Remarks speeches, which are clearly campaign addresses, sent out for campaign purposes, and annually cost our government an enormous sum."

The older members were convinced, however, that with a little more discipline than was ordinarily used on initiates, he would be subdued. They did not know Tom Blanton. Once he got to Washington he acquainted himself further with the iniquities of his brethren and suffered a vast increase in his heat to reform them. Of course, he could not persuade them to meet before noon, but he did his best to confine them to the chamber, once they came there. Periodically he would look about him, note the empty seats and make a point of no quorum. As a result the roll

was called and the truants pulled in. Unrepentant, they responded to their names and returned to their debaucheries, whereupon another roll-call was necessary. The gentleman's admirers at home exulted in the hell he was raising, but his colleagues sweated and swore. Some of the more obese ones, in fact, nearly died. When he persisted in his stunt they put their solemn gray heads together and conspired his downfall. It was disclosed that in his first year he had used over a million envelopes himself, at a cost of \$2500 to the government, and had compelled 126 roll-calls, costing at least \$3,000 and consuming twelve days of the House's time. The Public Printer, joining in the plot, produced a photostat copy of a check, signed by a Chicago organization of manufacturers, and used to pay for reprinting a Blanton harangue on the infamy of labor unions.

But the malicious scheme fell flat. The honest Christian folk of Texas knew that what really piqued the wicked legislators from the big cities was their obligation to hear the chaplain's daily prayer, before which the reverential Mr. Blanton invariably made a point of no quorum. Beside, the roll-calls were not really futile. "Every time I force a roll-call," Mr. Blanton explained, "I keep a private bill from passing and thereby prevent another raid on the Treasury."

The truth always hurts and these attacks naturally provoke virulent retorts from lathered colleagues. Congressman Crowther of New York once wished to God (in disrespectful mimicry of Mr. Blanton) that the man who invented the self-starter would be inspired again, produce a self-stopper, and present it to the gentleman from Texas. Manuel Herrick, that Congressional buffoon, compared him to a flea on the spare of an automobile, looking out and exclaiming: "Gee, what a dust I'm kicking up!" Appreciating what prompted these insults, the hon. gentleman let them roll off his broad back. "The few who dare must speak, and speak again," he once wrote in

one of his compositions for the *Record*, "to right the wrongs of the many."

In February, 1921, he so dared to speak. Congressmen, hungry for a raise in salary, had been stealthily watching the Treasury, in the hope that an unguarded moment would present itself, during which they could grab their loot. The vigilant Blanton wrote to the Texas newspapers: "For three years I have been forced to remain on the floor of the House constantly to prevent this proposal from being attached as a rider on appropriation bills. By making timely points of order I have kept it off of appropriation bills, and I have kept it from coming up as a separate legislative proposition solely by threats that I would force a record vote." Texas was in a bad way politically at the time, and the State delegation was infuriated at the exposure. The Hon. Hatton Sumners, its spokesman, denounced Mr. Blanton on the floor, amid cheers and hosannas from his colleagues. He said the bill to increase salaries had been thrown out twice on points of order, but that neither had been made by Mr. Blanton.

Never was the House, in all its chaotic history, the scene of such an uproar. Cat-calls and hisses for the people's champion penetrated even to the Senate chamber, shocking its austere and snoring occupants. The Hon. Mr. Blanton stood alone, unflinchingly, against these savage boys, broken loose just before vacation. They refused him a chance to defend himself and even his powerful voice could not soar above the tumult. But he could not be beaten. Unable to get the floor, he still had the *Record* and the Texas press. In the appendix of the former and in five columns of advertisement in the *Dallas News*, entitled "Please Read All Of It," he got his revenge. Sumners, he alleged, junketed; Sumners used all of his traveling allowance; Sumners accepted twenty-one cedar chests while in office; most pertinent of all, Sumners yearned for a seat in the Senate, with which dream his (Blanton's) own popularity would interfere. It did.

Nobody can transform the House chamber from a lounge into an arena so facilely as the hon. gentleman from Texas. He once created a dreadful uproar by accusing the members of truckling to labor, but they didn't dare accept his offer to go on the witness-stand to prove his charge. They simply won't give him his chance. But they always blame him if he goes wrong. Take the occasion when Representative Dewalt of Pennsylvania reprimanded him for blocking the House programme, as if he were an incorrigible schoolboy. They wouldn't let him reply. What could he do then, but insert his remarks in the typewritten copy of the proceedings, sent to members before it goes to the Government Printing Office? When his enemies saw the interpolation in the *Record* next day they accused him of falsifying the records of the House. But a man must get things off his chest somehow. How could he have sophisticated the *Record* if the custom of correcting their grammar and embellishing their language had not been long fostered by other Congressmen?

## V

This persistent, relentless curtain-lifting on their foibles eventually drove terror into the hearts of the members. Every election eve they borrowed Mr. Blanton's pious fervor and prayed to God for his defeat. But he was a man of long experience at prayer and so always won. Was there no way of getting rid of him? Avidly they seized an opportunity when, in October, 1921, he put some highly improper words into the *Record*. They were, it must be said, shockingly dirty, but they were not his own; he has always been a fierce opponent of obscene literature. They were the vile epithets of a union employé of the Government Printing Office, hurled at a helpless non-union fellow-worker, and they were quoted by Mr. Blanton in an Extension of Remarks address, only to portray the disadvantages under which a non-union man had to work there. They

became part of the *Record* late one Saturday night and would probably have wrought little corruption had not certain hostile Congressmen seen in them a chance to settle Mr. Blanton's hash. So there was an explosion, and on Monday morning the newspapers had a sensation. As soon as the public read that page 7420 of the *Record* contained some naughty words, the Government Printing Office was bombarded with requests for copies of that usually unread periodical, and as much as five dollars was offered for a copy.

The people's champion was addressing an association of Babbitts at the time of the discovery, and the expulsion proceedings had to be deferred until he could return. This postponement gave some of the members a chance to think things over. Was expulsion, after all, a wise course? What would the public think of mature men who expelled a colleague because he put bad words in the back of a book? Wouldn't they make a martyr of him? Good Heavens, suppose Texas should send him back; what wouldn't he tell about them then? Moreover, it wasn't a nice thing to do to the great State of Texas—and patriotic open-shop manufacturers throughout the country were telegraphing their protests. But it was difficult to give up the idea, and all the more bitter and more revengeful members remained as adamant.

The disgraceful day came. The chamber, so deserted on legislative days, was well filled; practically every member was on the floor. The galleries were packed; even the steps in the aisles were occupied. Instead of the customary hubbub a tensity pervaded the atmosphere. Spectators craned their necks and saw a silent, pale, heroic man in the second row. His hand delicately covering his eyes, Mr. Blanton listened for three hours while his cruel colleagues denounced him. At last he rose. He had been accorded an hour to defend himself before the vote disposing of him would be taken. Looking up into the galleries he said:

No man who ever went upon the scaffold and gave his life, when he felt that it was unjust, has been punished more than I have been. I want you to know something about the man who is going to be kicked out of Congress today.

For the first time in his life he had to be asked to speak louder. He was unable to do so. All night, he said, he had lain awake "with my conscience and my God as company," trying to decide whether he had done wrong. He told them about the house in Houston, which creditors had confiscated forty years ago. How he had been compelled to go to work on a farm at the age of ten. How he had later delivered groceries to every kitchen in Austin. How he had studied at night and began the practice of law with \$1.50 in his pocket. But "Effort Pays, After All." His profession became lucrative; he was able to buy a ranch for his family. Here he might have lived happily ever after, had he not yearned with an intolerable yearning to do something for his country. He entered politics. "In the fight that I have been making conscientiously and earnestly since I have been here to prevent this government from becoming sovietized, I have spent piece of property after piece of property."

Why had he printed those bawdy words? It was, it appeared, just another proof of his desire to acquaint the public with the facts. He wished he could afford to send every red-blooded man in the country a copy. Hadn't Shakespeare and Balzac used dirty words? He had done better than these great men: he had abbreviated them so that Christian women would not understand them. But he was willing to take his medicine. "When my adversaries' cold steel pierces my vitals I never squawk." He would go home on borrowed money.

But to the vengeful colleagues who had subjected him to this historic humiliation he was merciless. "I come from a State," he dramatically told them, "where, in 1836, in the historic old Alamo, at San Antonio, Colonel William B. Travis drew out his sword and said, 'Men who are brave, cross it in defense of your country. To cross it means death.' There was but



one man who failed to cross it. I am not such a man; I will not buy my seat in Congress at the expense of honor or the sacrifice of principle." He escaped expulsion, for which a two-thirds vote is necessary, by eight votes.

But the members' passion for revenge had not been sated. They unanimously voted to censure him. He was hauled back from his office, led down the long aisle by the sergeant-at-arms, and left alone at the bar of the House. His face was ashen as the Speaker pronounced judgment. In his subsequent flight from the chamber he fell, his head striking the marble of the lobby. Bleeding like Julius Cæsar, he was carried to a sofa and a medical Congressman mixed a stimulant for him. Pulling himself together, Mr. Blanton refused it with a lofty gesture, the tears streaming down his cheeks. Then he buffeted his way through the huzzahing crowds back to his office.

For several weeks after that, still prostrated, he sat in the last row of the chamber, crushed, almost broken. But soon complimentary letters began to flood in from his Texas customers, and blessings from the rev. clergy, and then he was fortified. Moreover, it became plain quickly enough, from his seat of observation in the rear, that the country still needed him. Taking advantage of his subjugation, the more immoral Congressmen were running amok.

The Treasury was pillaged daily; wets and tools of the labor unions thundered without check. There was not a man to replace him. So he throttled his sorrows and stalked down to the second row and the rescue of his country. He broke in with a five-minute speech. The next day he made two. By the Spring of the following year his confidence was fully restored and he read several hundred letters into the *Record* to convince his colleagues of the outrage they had imposed on him. By this time they were receiving many vituperative letters. The late Congressman Fuller was thus rebuked by the Rev. Harry E. Parinton of Denver:

You voted to expel Congressman Blanton. I recall, however, that you are the man who, when his country was assailed by a savage enemy, sinking our ships and drowning American men, women, and children, voted against America going to war. I still think you should have resigned in 1914.

Thus the conspiracy against the people's tribune collapsed at last, and he made a new start in his career. One day, on a visit to the House stationery-room, he noticed a number of whiskey flasks on display. A shiver undulated through his frame as it dawned on him that they were paid for out of the Congressmen's stationery allowance. A few days later the stationer was flabbergasted when Mr. Blanton returned and asked for a whiskey flask. Alas! the lips of his colleagues were not as chaste as his own and the flasks had all been sold. But the obliging stationer offered to order one for him. When it arrived he threw it into his suitcase and took it, as a souvenir, to Texas, to show to the moral cowmen. The ensuing indignation of the members caused another scene in the House. Once again Mr. Blanton stood under the congressional lash. But the success of his exposure made up for the pains of his ordeal. The people had been enlightened and were forevermore spared the expense and ignominy of supplying their Representatives with flasks.

Mr. Blanton is a professing Christian, and so his lust for reform is devoid of rancor. His attitude is that of a loving wife attempting to reclaim a boozy spouse. Regardless of her personal view of his habits, she will allow no stranger to belittle him. Some time ago, by some error of the police, a bootlegger was arrested in the Capitol grounds, with a jug of whiskey on him. To obtain his release, he offered the excuse that a Congressman had sent for him. Mr. Blanton, of course, was the last man to be thrown under suspicion, but to purge his colleagues of an unjust accusation he demanded that a committee be appointed to investigate the lie. "I do not believe there is a member in this House," he said, "whether there are any

who are addicted to drink or not, who would buy liquor from a bootlegger. I do not believe it. This is a reflection upon every member of the House of Representatives."

In league with his colleagues and the newspapers to undermine his eminence are the bullying forces of labor. Imbued with the misconception that he is their foe, they have clandestinely devoted themselves to his defeat. Matthew Woll, of the American Federation of Labor, once made public a letter from the Blanton campaign manager to the New England manufacturers, containing an appeal for funds. But this was only a spiteful attempt to belie the hon. gentleman's known aversion to campaign contributions. In the Congressional Directory he tells how his "uncompromising fight against anarchy and the growing autocratic domination of government by labor unions" consigned him to the head of Gompers' blacklist. In ten pages of the *Record* he once gave a thrilling account of his victory "despite the resultant vigorous and unprecedented opposition and attacks." Gompers, with all his money and support, was helpless beside this gifted man. All he could do was to bestow on him a foolish nickname, maliciously appropriated by his

enemies. "Bleating Blanton" was received with laughter and applause by the House. Mr. Blanton himself then prophesied:

Ten years from now the very men who sat over there and clapped their hands when they heard me called a bleating Congressman may say, back in their homes, "Blanton is still serving his people in Congress and doing his duty despite the threat of Mr. Gompers that he is going to be eliminated and kept at home." The only home that he can send me to is not my Texas home but my eternal home above.

Here Mr. Blanton was referring to the mysterious bullet whose course Providence had deflected. It may be that Providence has more in mind than the fulfillment of the above modest prediction. Recently the Texas delegation received a clipping from the *Abilene Daily Reporter*, in which the hon. gentleman's district convention branded Senator Mayfield as a luxury and endorsed Blanton as his successor. It is also rumored that the hon. gentleman has invited every ex-service man in Texas to write to him of his troubles. He has frequently said that he does not expect his reward on this earth. But surely in the Senate, where the reformer has the additional weapon of uncurbed speech, the people's champion would have a better and bigger opportunity to earn his post-mortem keep in Heaven.

# PINK

BY LEONARD HESS

**H**E ALREADY had a sturdy physique and he was only twelve hours of age. His father, Washington Jameson, a stalwart young Negro, lifted him from the padded wash-basket that served as a crib, and carried him to his mother's bed.

"Dinah," he chuckled, "yo can see how his muscles ah gwin to come on big and pow'ful, can't yo, Dinah?"

A wide grin of large, white teeth and thick lips garlanded Jameson's face as he saw his first-born snuggle greedily to feed. A huge man was Washington Jameson, and a huge man his son would be. A black man was Washington Jameson, but a milk-chocolate colored infant was his son.

"Dinah, we ain't gwin to call him Theodore——"

"Theodore Roosevelt," his wife corrected from the bed.

"Nuthin' doin' on that name, Theodore Roosevelt," said Jameson emphatically. "This heah boy, he's got to be called Samson. That Bible Samson, he was a big man, and ouh son, he'll be a big man too, big 'nuff to kill lions. Look at that ahm on him a'ready, will yo!"

The small woman in the bed smiled. She had a little, round face, pretty teeth, and soft, sloe-like eyes, and she was not utterly black, but a sort of mellow brown, with a tint of rose close under the skin. Before the birth of her son she had hoped that he, too, might have that tint of rose, that he might not be as black as his father. And this wish seemed not to have been denied her. "He's light!" she said to herself joyously. That, to her, was a more important fact than his strength of body. But the name of Samson pleased her.

"You is great on ideahs, Washington," she said. "A name out of the Bible; it shore will be a blessing to him."

"It's a name he will be proud of," said the father.

The June evening sent a warm flush into the bungalow. Outside the bedroom window the crude petals of a large sunflower were as a disc of gold. The boards of the neighboring bungalows were washed with pale gold and orange. The green of the pine grove that flanked the settlement swam in a clear, amber light. And in the soft, blue sky, where a sickle moon rode palely, a few wisps of cloud, puffy like lambs' wool, reflected the rays of the sun going down behind the hills of the Highlands. Suddenly all this tender, roseate air seemed to come into the bungalow and to concentrate itself upon the bed.

Washington Jameson, lighting his corn-cob, was not aware of the colorful transfiguration of his humble dwelling. He walked to the window and threw the charred match into the garden, as a man hustled officiously in at the gate. This man, thin and elderly, had just come from hoeing a potato-patch, and he wore soiled overalls. But as a symbol of his learning, he had perched on his wide, flanged nose a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles. From the distance of the gate, he greeted the new father.

"Evenin', Brothah Jameson."

"It's the minister." Jameson turned to his wife. "I s'pose he's comin' to find out what we're gwin to call the boy. Jest hit on Samson in time, ah did."

Dinah's eyes were fixed on her son.

"Washington," she murmured, with