

THE GOVERNOR'S SHOES

A Dramatic Reading

by
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From the one act play, The Governor's Shoes. Permission granted by the Author and by the Classmate to the WETMORE DECLAMATION BUREAU, Sioux City, Iowa.

The scene is Matthias' shop in Nazareth. Working at a bench on the right is Matthias, a sandal-maker, and nearby Enoch sits watching him.

ENOCH: A costly sandal, that, Matthias. Whose foot will it adorn?

MATTHIAS: You must know, old man, that none but rulers and their ilk wear shoes like these. Came a servant of the governor commanding me to fit his master's foot. Bah! I all but spat at him. The Roman vermin!

ENOCH: (Slyly) But why make shoes for vermin?

MATT: Because, my Enoch, vermin pay; and pay they will for every stitch I set in these fair sandals. Should one of a downtrodden race shrink from taking money from those who oppress him and his people?

ENOCH: (Gently) Then will the downtrodden and oppressed people profit from the price you will receive for these fine sandals?

MATT: Peace, old man! I will profit, and what more matters? Let each one persecuted, seize every opportunity, I say, to harm his enemy.

ENOCH: I hear there is One abroad who preaches "Love thine enemies and bless thy persecutors."

MATT: (Scornfully) A Roman, doubtless, who can persecute all beneath him, and cares not if he have enemies.

ENOCH: Nay; rather, I hear He is a Nazarene.

MATT: No doubt he is a country dolt, who never saw a Roman, and who knows not their swinish ways. Who comes?

EUNICE: (Enters timidly) 'Tis Eunice, Abram's wife. I came to see if my husband's sandals were ready.

MATT: (Crossly) Not done; not touched.

EUNICE: (Dismayed) He goes tonight. Must he go barefooted?

MATT: 'Tis nought to me how he goes, nor where, if he but find money to pay that which he owes.

EUNICE: (Hotly) You promised them to us, and we must have them. After his sickness, Abram must not go without them.

MATT: Would you were as prompt with my due as you expect me to be with my work!

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