



The New Mayor Based on G. H. Broadhurst's Successful Play

THE MAN OF THE HOUR

Synopsis of Preceding Chapters.

Chapter I—At the suburban home of Charles Wainwright, "high financier," he and his broker, Scott Gibbs, hatch up a scheme to corner Borough Street railway stock. They rely upon the support of Dick Horrigan, boss of the neighboring city, who is coming to discuss matters. Alderman Phelan, the thorn in Horrigan's side, whom Wainwright is anxious to conciliate, is also coming. Among the members of Wainwright's household are his niece and nephew, Dallas and Perry Wainwright, and his secretary, Thompson, a secretive young man in whom the financier has implicit confidence. Judge Newman, a neighbor of Wainwright, whose continuance in office depends upon Horrigan's favor, requests Wainwright's intervention with the boss. Another visitor to the Wainwrights is Alwyn Bennett, in love with Dallas, who is calling to ask her about her rumored engagement to Gibbs. Perry is in love with Cynthia Garrison, also a neighbor. II—Cynthia is the daughter of a bank president who nine years before the opening of the story was ruined by the dealings of an unnamed dishonest financier and shot himself. His son thereupon disappeared. Mrs. Bennett congratulates herself upon the immaculate record of her son's defeated father. Dallas refuses to marry Alwyn unless he does something worthy of his family and education. Phelan and Horrigan face each other. III—Phelan defies Horrigan. Judge Newman is turned down by the boss, but at Wainwright's request Horrigan becomes suspicious of Thompson, but Wainwright scoffs at the idea. Horrigan and Wainwright make a corrupt deal whereby the former, for a big consideration, is to procure from the board of aldermen a perpetual franchise for the Borough street railway. The boss is worried by the reform movement threatening his power at the coming election and is casting about for a candidate for mayor with a clean record. He hits upon Bennett, who has had some slight political experience. The latter accepts, but warns Horrigan that, if elected, he will be absolutely honest and independent. IV—Bennett is elected and appoints Cynthia his private secretary. Phelan tells him that the financier who caused the ruin of the Garrisons was Wainwright, who is also the power behind the crooked Borough franchise bills, with Horrigan and Gibbs. Dallas and Mrs. Bennett visit the city hall. V—Gibbs tries to induce Bennett to sign the bill. The mayor's talk with Dallas is interrupted by Horrigan. VI—Bennett refuses to be bulldozed by Horrigan into signing the bill. The boss lacks one vote in the board of aldermen of the fourteen needed to pass the bill without the mayor's assent. Despite the fact that defeating the bill means impoverishing Dallas and Perry, whose fortune Wainwright has invested in Borough stock, Bennett vetoes the measure. VII—Bennett's plan to save Dallas and Perry is to have Perry sell Borough stock short. The mayor's opposition causes Horrigan and Wainwright to amend the bill, retaining however, some of the most objectionable features. VIII—Alwyn's love-making to Dallas at the Mayor's ball is interrupted by Horrigan. IX—Gibbs secretly plays false to Wainwright and Horrigan by buying Borough stock on his own account. Horrigan "fixes" Alderman Roberts, a wavering member of his "solid thirteen." X—Bennett warns Roberts against voting for the bill. In the presence of Cynthia, who is engaged to Perry, Phelan exposes Thompson as her brother, the long missing Harry Garrison, whereupon sister and brother embrace. Perry entering suddenly, is astonished at the sight. XI—Cynthia explains to Perry. Dallas is convinced by Wainwright that Bennett by vetoing the bill is trying to wreck her fortune. Thereupon Dallas promises to marry Gibbs. XII—Horrigan declares that if Bennett persists in his opposition to the bill he will publish indisputable proofs of granting by the mayor's father. Bennett's mother advises him to face the threatened disgrace and stick to his course. XIII—at the hearing on the bill Horrigan packs the aldermanic galleries with police to overawe the public. He bulldozes Roberts into consenting to vote for the measure, taking advantage of the alderman's financial necessities.

CHAPTER XV.

WILLIAMS entered with Roberts in tow. The latter wore a haggard, troubled look, and his natural nervousness had visibly deepened, so much so that he had not even noted Phelan's appearance in the corridor as he passed into Horrigan's private room. "Good evening, alderman," said Horrigan civilly. "Good evening, sir," answered Roberts palpably ill at ease. "I understand there's a full meeting today. Even Ellis came back from the south to be here. You're the only man missing."

"I couldn't get here sooner. I—"

"I see. That's all, Williams. You needn't wait. Roberts and I want a little talk before he goes in. Now, then," went on the boss, with a complete change of manner as Williams left the room. "What's the matter with you?"

"I—I can't!"

"Can't what? Speak out, man! Don't stand there and mumble at me!"

"I can't vote for the Borough franchise bill."

"Can't, hey?" roared Horrigan. "Why not?"

"Because—because—" faltered Roberts; then, with a rush of hysterical emotion that blotted out his fear, he cried:

"Have you heard what that man Bennett has done? He organized a voters' committee in my ward and sent them to ask me at my own house what I was going to do about that bill. They had been stirred up by Bennett till they looked on me as a crook and on the bill as a personal robbery. They told me if I voted for it they'd know I was a dirty thief and grafter and that they'd kick me out of the ward."

His quick eye taking in the nature of the slips of paper even as his alert brain grasped in full the meaning of the transaction in which they figured. "Do they belong to you?"

"They don't belong to you anyway," retorted Horrigan, "and if you dare read them—"

"I've already read them, Roberts," he added in a kinder voice, turning to the shaking alderman, "these were to have been your bribe, weren't they, for voting for the Borough bill?"

His quietly compelling tone and glance forced from Roberts a frightened "Yes" before Horrigan could interfere. "I thought so. Be quiet, Horrigan," he commanded as the infuriated boss sought to speak through his choking wrath. "This is between Roberts and me. Now, then—"

"I returned the notes to him!" pleaded Roberts in panic. "Honestly, I did! Just before you came in. I could have kept them, and he couldn't have prevented me even if I voted against the bill. But I'm square and—"

"You are square!" affirmed Bennett, gripping the alderman's cold, moist hand in friendly reassurance. "I knew all along you were honest at heart. Horrigan wanted to bribe you, and you wouldn't be bribed. Now, I want you to go into the council room and vote as your manhood tells you to."

Roberts, comforted, yet still trembling, obeyed, not venturing a second look at Horrigan.

"Now, my friend," said Bennett pleasantly when he and the boss were alone together, "what are you going to do about it? It seems to me your game is up."

"I want those notes!" panted Horrigan, finding coherent speech with an effort through his red mist of rage.

"Why? They're not yours. They aren't made over to you, and there is no cancellation stamp on them. They are the property of the Sturtevant Trust company, and I'll send them back there tomorrow—after I've had them photographed."

"You'll give them to me," shouted Horrigan, his mighty body vibrating with fury, "or you'll never leave this room alive!"

"You're a fool, Horrigan," remarked Bennett, with condescending calm, "for you don't even know the right man to bully!"

He gazed unflinchingly into the maddened little eyes of the boss, and so for a moment they stood—patrician and proletarian—in the world old struggle of the two for supremacy.

Horrigan's face was scarlet, distorted, murderous; Bennett's pale, cold, deadly in its repose.

And then standing motionless, waged the battle of wills, both men standing motionless, tense, vibrant with dynamic force.

Slowly, little by little, Horrigan's eyes dropped. He moved awkwardly to one side from his position in front of the door and Bennett, without so much as a backward look, passed out.

The boss, like a man in a daze, sank heavily into a chair and gazed straight ahead of him, his usually red face gray and pamy.

But he was not to enjoy even the scant boon of solitude. From the ante-room Gibbs strolled in. "They're going over some unimportant preliminary business," remarked the broker, "so I came out for a breath of fresh air. How are things going?"

"We're beat," grunted Horrigan, not looking up.

"Beat?" screamed Gibbs, ashen and inert at the news. "You don't mean it! You can't mean it! Great heaven!"

try to think out some way of—"Of what, you cur?"

"Isn't there any way even now to make Bennett let up on his fight?"

"If there was you couldn't be of use to us, so why should I talk about it to you?"

"But I'd do anything in the world—anything!"

"You would?" cut in Horrigan sharply.

"Yes, yes! Only give me a chance! I'd—"

Horrigan considered, then said reflectively:

"No chance is too slight to take at a time like this, and nobody's too rotten to be of use. I've found there are three things, one of which will always buy any man—a woman, ambition or cash. We've tried Bennett on ambition; he doesn't need money, so only the first of the three remains."

"A woman? I don't understand."

"Miss Wainwright."

"But—"

"Listen here. Bennett's in love with Wainwright's niece. You've cut him out. Go and tell him if he'll let our bill alone you'll smash the engagement and leave her free to marry him. See?"

"I can't! I—hold on, though! Afterward I could deny the whole thing, couldn't I? I'd be his word against mine, and she'd never believe I could do such a thing. I—I might try."

"Yes," growled Horrigan, "you might. A cur that's lost all his nerve can try things that even an ordinary crook would balk at."

But Gibbs did not hear. He had returned to the corridor in search of Bennett. The man scarcely deserved the opprobrium heaped on him by Horrigan. A brilliant, daring operator, he was, unknown to himself, a rank coward at heart. For the first time in his life the cowardice had cropped out, and, to do Gibbs justice, it had driven him temporarily insane. In his normal senses he would never have stooped to the plan he was now so eager to carry out. It was a putrid bit of jettison at which a financially drowning man did not scruple to clutch.

Horrigan followed him from the room, his own splendid nerve quite recovered from the crushing blow his hopes had received. He had staked heavily on the deal. Moreover, his failure, as he knew, meant the wreck of that mighty political prestige he had so long and wearisomely built up. It might even, if Alwyn fulfilled his threat about the notes, lead to graver personal consequences. Yet the bulldog pluck that had carried this man of iron from the gutter to the summit of political power did not desert him, nor did he show the loss of one iota of his customary monumental calm.

Scarcely had Horrigan quitted the room when Perry and Dallas entered it.

"You could cut the atmosphere in there with a cheese knife," Perry was saying. "Williams doesn't think the Borough bill will come up for half an hour or so. We'd better spend the time till then in here than to stay there and turn our lungs into a microbe zoo."

Dallas did not answer. She sat down by the table and rested her head dejectedly on one little gloved hand. The sight of Bennett, his grave, hopeless appeal to her; the calm, utter despair of his brave face—all these had affected her deeply. Perry noticed with brotherly concern her look and attitude.

"Feeling faint?" he asked.

"No, I'm all right, thanks."

"You look pretty near as blue as Alwyn. He—"

"Don't let's talk of him, please," she begged.

"Why not? He's the wisest chap this side of Whiteville."

"That's what I used to think, but I know better now."

"Then, miss," broke in a voice from the doorway, "you're entitled to another 'know.'"

Phelan, who, passing down the corridor, had heard her last words as he reached the threshold, turned into the room.

"Excuse me for buttin' in on a family chat," he remarked, coming forward, "but I'm pretty well posted on his honor's character, an' when I hear any one knockin' him it's me to the bat. What have you got against Mr. Bennett? 'None of your measly business,' says you. 'Quite so,' says I, an', that bel'n' the case, let's hear all about it."

Something that underlay the seeming impertinence of the alderman's bluff speech touched Dallas. On impulse she spoke:

"Mr. Bennett," said she, "is opposing the Borough bill, knowing we shall be paupers if he defeats it. He also sold Borough stock short before he announced his veto. What can one think of a man who enriches himself at the expense of his friends?"

"Gee," cried Perry, "that's a terrible thing! Bennett's the original man higher up, I'm afraid. I wonder he isn't afraid to wear the clothes of such a wicked geezer as himself!"

"Oh, Perry! Don't joke about it!" begged Dallas. "Can't you see the serious side of anything? We shall be penniless and dependent on our friends if he does that. I'm afraid!"

"Fear thou not, sister mine!" declared Perry in his best bluff manner. "Fingers, fingers! Don't be it so! Little Brother Perry will guard thee from the cold shivers, swats of a wintry wind. Money we can sell violets or start a hair club or—"

"Don't!" she urged, jirred by his bluntness. "You don't understand!"

"As for that story of his honor's sellin' stock short and makin' a pile of cash on his own veto," but in Phelan genuinely worried, "Horrigan's looked it up an' got enough facts to make him think he can prove it. He's goin' to

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invitation is extended to the public to attend. C. C. Rarick, pastor.

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Norwegian-Danish M. E.

Services at 11 a. m. and 8 p. m.; Sunday school, 10 a. m. Scandinavians are cordially invited. O. T. Field, pastor.

Grace Episcopal.

First Sunday after Trinity. Special service of intercession, 11 a. m.; Sunday school, 12:30 p. m.

Holy Innocents Chapel.

Sunday school, 11:15 a. m.; evening service, 7:30 p. m.

First Lutheran.

Morning service in Swedish at 10:45. There will be no evening service as the pastor will leave Sunday evening for Eastern Oregon.

Christian Science.

Services in I. O. O. F. building, 10th and Commercial street, rooms 5 and 6 at 10 a. m. Subject of the lesson sermon, "Is the Universe, Including Man, Evolved by Atomic Force?" All are invited. Sunday school, 11:30. Reading room same address, hours from 12 to 5 daily, except Sunday.

SUNDAY AT THE CHURCHES

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