



The New Mayor Based on G.H. Broadhurst's Successful Play THE MAN OF THE HOUR

CHAPTER XII.

ALWYN BENNETT sat in his own study at home in the big Bennett house that remained as almost the last landmark of that solid middle nineteenth century wealth and fashion which had once dominated a neighborhood now given over to office buildings and apartment houses.

The hour was late. An hour and more had passed since the young mayor and his mother had returned from the administration ball. The house was silent, and even the usually busy streets outside were wrapped in the hush that never falls until after midnight and is dispersed by the gray of dawn. Late as it was Alwyn had made no move to discard his evening clothes. Alone he sat, his head resting between his crossed arms on the desk before him.

Motionless, inert, hopeless, he had remained there ever since his arrival from the ball. But if his body was motionless, his brain was awfully busy. He would be could see no light in the tangle of events into which his own sense of right had plunged him. He saw the future stretching out before him dreary and barren as a rainy sea.

Through all of his months of battling he had ever struggled forward through increasing difficulties toward one bright goal—Dallas' love. And now that love was snatched from his grasp, through no fault of his own, and bestowed on a man unworthy to kiss the hem of her garment.

At each step in the long climb Alwyn had asked himself, "Would she approve?" And now through trying to be worthy that approval he had forever lost it, for Dallas, he knew, had not only rejected him and engaged herself to Gibbs, but had done so with the belief that Bennett was a heartless, unscrupulous intriguer, undeserving of a good woman's regard.

A rap at the door aroused Bennett from his bitter thoughts. He lifted his head wearily and gave word to enter. A drowsy servant came in with a card. "He says it's important business, sir," said the footman. "And he wishes to see you at once, if possible."

"Show him up," answered Bennett, dropping his voice so as not to disturb his mother, who slept on the same floor. "I will see him here."

A minute later Horrigan's bulky form blocked the threshold.

"Queer time of night for a call," he observed casually, as he entered uninvited, closed the door behind him and took a chair, "but my business wouldn't wait."

"Then state it as briefly as you can," directed Bennett, making no move to rise or welcome his unbidden guest. "It is very late, and I am tired."

"I've come to see you about our Borough bill."

"So I supposed."

"You won't call off your dog against us?"

"That question is hardly worth answering. No."

"I thought not. Well, Mr. Alwyn Bennett, I've got you; I've got you! Do you understand me?"

"Perfectly. Is that all?"

"No, it ain't all," mimicked the boss. "And I'm in earnest. I've got you where I want you."

"That doesn't interest me. If you've nothing else to say—"

"But I have," chuckled Horrigan. "When it came to a showdown between us two I put a staff of men to looking up your record."

"You found nothing you could use is that?"

"No; it isn't even the beginning. Then I remembered about your father."

"About my father?"

It grated on Bennett that his dead father's honored name should be spoken by this low politician, but before he could protest more forcibly Horrigan went on:

"What if you think if I said your father was a grafter—one of the worst of his time?"

"I'd say you lied," answered Bennett calmly, "and I'd drive the foul lie down your throat with my fist. You'll have to think of some better scheme than that."

"Do you think I'd be idiot enough to come here with the story if I didn't have full proof of it?" asked Horrigan in contempt.

And, despite himself, Alwyn saw the man was speaking what he believed to be the truth. He paused in his impulsive forward move, re-seated himself and asked coldly:

"What so called 'proof' have you been fooled by your hewers into thinking?"

"Don't believe me, hey? Well, you will fast enough before I'm done. Unless you're afraid of what I've got to say."

"I'm not afraid of anything you can say. The highest tribute to my father's memory is the fact that a cur like you cannot defile it. Go on. I'll listen to you."

"Very good," said Horrigan, quite unmoved. "I'll make it as short as I can. I remembered your father got rich pretty quick. He was a member of the organization, and his firm got the job of building the aqueduct and the new library. That gave me my

claw. I looked up the specifications for both jobs, and I turned them over to the old engineering firm of Morris & Cherrington. You know the firm, perhaps. If you don't, you can look them up. They don't belong to the organization; they're the best experts in their line, and they can't be juggled with."

"I know them. Go on."

"I paid them a fancy sum to go over those specifications and then examine the library and the aqueduct and see if they were up to the mark or if the city had been cheated by the Bennett Contracting company. I had a strong idea I was right, but I wouldn't speak till I had the proof. When I got home after the ball tonight I found the Morris & Cherrington report waiting for me. I brought a copy of it along with me."

"Well," asked Bennett indifferently, "what then?"

"Here's the copy of the report. Look it over for yourself. The crookedest job ever pulled off in this city! Third rate material, when the material called for in the specifications was used at all. Granite shell filled with mortar instead of solid granite; foundations barely half the depth called for; inferior tiles in place of fireproof ones; cheap, crumbly iron and steel instead of first quality—oh, there's fifty such substitutions and frauds! It's the rawest, bummiest job I ever heard of. If any of the organization tried it now—days the men who did it would be wearing stripes in a week. Graft, hey? Why, your father was the boss grafter of the century, the star graft getter of the bunch! He—"

"Hush! For God's sake, hush!" pouted Alwyn. "My mother sleeps only a few rooms beyond. I—"

"What do I care?" roared Horrigan in triumph. "Let everybody hear! The whole world is going to hear it unless that Borough franchise bill goes through. Beat that! And every paper in the country will have that report to publish. Stop your fight against us and the report is buried. That goes! Go! Now, do as you please about the bill. You're a fine man to preach about graft, you are! The very roof over your head, the clothes on your back, were bought with graft money!"

Bennett scarcely heeded the coarse insult, nor did he note Horrigan's grant of good-bye and the clump of his departing feet on the stairs. The young man sat, lost, hopeless, horror gripped, his eyes roaming mechanically over the closely typewritten pages of the engineer's report. Outside as he was in matters of practical business, Alwyn could see that Horrigan had in no way exaggerated the document's contents. He knew, too, that the firm of engineers who had drawn up the report were the foremost of their sort and above all shadow of suspicion.

Little by little the numbness lifted from his brain, and in its place crept a horrible conviction of the truth. His father—the gallant young soldier who had won a nation's applause in the civil war—the man who, poor and unaided, had built up a fortune against keener competition and had earned a reputation for sterling probity which had even been the delight and model of his son—this was the man whom a low blackguard like Horrigan now had the right to revile—a man apparently no better than the boss himself—than any dishonest beaver in the organization!

And, as if it were not enough that the idol of a lifetimes were buried, crushed and defiled, from his bright pedestal, the family name must next be dragged through the mire of political filth and ill repute and the dead man's memory forever blasted. Either that or his son must withdraw from the gallant fight he was waging against civic corruption, for that Horrigan would carry out his threat and blazon forth to the world the story and proofs of the elder Bennett's shame Alwyn had no doubt. With all his faults the boss was a man of his word.

"Stop your fight against us," Horrigan had said, "and the report is buried."

Yes, the boss was a man of his word. Even Bennett admitted that. He would fulfill his promise in either event.

Listlessly Alwyn began to review the case. On the one side a perhaps Quixotic fight for an abstract principle—a fight whose reward was political death, loss of the woman he adored, family shame that might crush his fragile old mother to the very grave. On the other, wealth, honor, love, the governorship, a future happy and glorious.

Was he not a fool to hesitate? Had he not saved his conscience sufficiently by vetoing the Borough franchise bill? Had he the right to bring this new shame upon his mother's gray head? Where lay his highest duty?

The soft rustling of silk and a hand laid in light caress upon his head aroused the miserable man from his reflections.

Bennett looked up to see his mother standing beside him. She had thrown on a wrapper and in slippers feet had stoiled noiselessly into the study.

"I was awakened by voices," she explained. "I thought I heard some one talking excitedly in here. Is anything the matter?"

"Nothing, nothing dear," he answered gently, drawing the little old lady affectionately down to a seat on his knee and smiling manfully into her sleep flushed face; "nothing is the matter. Only a business call."

"A business call at 2 o'clock in the morning!" she exclaimed. "Dear boy, you are working too hard. Your father never brought his business worries and work home. He always left them at the office. Can't you do the same? You'll wear yourself out."

"My father"—began Bennett, but the name choked him.

"You are growing to be so much like him," went on Mrs. Bennett fondly. "And it makes me so happy that you are. Your splendid fight against that infamous Borough bill, for instance. How proud he would have been of that! It is just the sort of thing he himself would have done in your place. He was surrounded with wicked and dishonest men just as you are. But through it all he remained true, honorable, incorruptible. What a grand heritage for my son! He—Alwyn!"

She broke off, alarmed, "why do you look at me that way? I never saw such a look in your eyes before. Are you ill? Has something happened that you are keeping from me?"

"No, no," evaded Bennett. "I only—"

"You had a caller here before I came in," pursued the mother, refusing to abandon the clue to which her womanly intuition had led her. "He brought you bad news? Tell me, dear! I'm your mother, and I love you."

"You are making my course more difficult for me by asking such questions, mother," he answered wretchedly, "and I—"

"I only want to help you, Alwyn. I can't bear to see you miserable. A woman's wit and a mother's love are often a combination that can solve problems beyond even the wisest man's powers of logic. Let me help you."

"I was trying to make up my mind," vaguely replied Bennett, sorely distressed by her pleading, "whether a man ought to follow his conscience, even if it leads to heartbreak for those he loves, or whether he ought to let conscience go by the board for once and protect the happiness of his loved ones."

"Alwyn! How can you hesitate a second over such a question. One must do right, no matter what the consequence."

"I don't know about that," he said moodily.

"You know it perfectly well. It is what your father would have advised and—But, Alwyn, you surely are not making yourself unhappy over a mere supposititious case?"

"Well," he continued, "let us take a 'mere supposititious case' if you like. Suppose, for instance, that a man holding a position of trust had had a father whose memory he honored and revered as I do my own father's?"

"Yes!" prompted Mrs. Bennett as he paused.

"Suppose some one tempts him to betray his position of trust, even as I have lately been tempted, and threatens in case of his refusal to make public certain facts which would prove his dead father to have been a scoundrel. Now, what should the man do? Should he let his father's sacred memory be trampled in the mud, let his duty go by default and save?"

"It would be an awful responsibility to decide such a question," said Mrs. Bennett, with a little shudder, "but there could be only one reply."

"And that is?"

"He must do his duty, be the results what they may."

"You really think so?"

"There can be no doubt. Right is right and—"

"It shall be as you say," groaned Alwyn.

"What?" queried Mrs. Bennett, started at the despair in his voice. "Do you mean it is an actual case? Some friend of yours, perhaps?"

Bennett nodded.

"Oh, the poor, poor fellow!" she sympathized. "What a terrible position for him! It was he, perhaps, that I heard talking to you in here just now. No wonder he seemed excited! The sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the children even unto the third generation."

"It is something less hard on the children than on the wives," mused Bennett, half to himself.

"The wives? Your friend has a mother living? That makes it doubly hard. Oh, my son, every day I thank God in all humility that my husband lived so blameless a life and left so honored a name! How grateful you and I both ought to be for—"

"It is easy enough to decide for some one you have never seen," retorted Bennett almost rudely, "but suppose the dishonest man in my story had been father and—"

"I refuse to suppose anything of the

sort!" Interrupted his mother indignantly, rising to her feet. "I wonder that you can speak so! How can you suggest so horrible a thing?"

"Just a thoughtless, tactless speech of mine. That's all," lied Alwyn. "It's very late. You'll have a headache, I'm afraid. Won't you go to bed?"

"Yes. It is late, and I'm keeping you up. Good night, dear. I wish your friend—"

She checked herself suddenly, with a little gasp. Bennett, glancing up to

her, saw that her eyes were riveted on a bit of pasteboard lying on the corner of his desk directly beneath the reading lamp.

It was Horrigan's card.

Slowly the mother's gaze shifted from the card to her son. From her face the color had been crushed by some swift emotion that left it very old, pale and sunken.

"Mr. Horrigan!" she murmured. "It was he who was your visitor tonight? Surely he isn't the sort of a man to care about his father's reputation for honesty. He—"

"You're tired, mother," interrupted Bennett in haste. "Won't you—"

"Wait!" she panted. "His visit here—Alwyn!" her voice rising to a wall of panic-stricken appeal. "Did—did that man dare to hint anything against your father? Tell me the truth! I've a right to know. Did he?"

Alwyn bowed his head in silence. "Tell me what he said!"

"He said," muttered Bennett, almost incoherently, "he said my father made his fortune by—graft!"

"And you thrashed him and threw him out of the house?" she cried, her old eyes ablaze.

"Alwyn!"

"He—he proved what he said!"

"It is a lie! A wicked, abominable lie!"

"It is the truth, mother. Would I have told you such a thing—would Horrigan have left this room alive—if it were not true?"

A silence—dreadful in its intensity—fell over the room. Alwyn dared not look at his mother. At last she spoke: "I must know more. I refuse to believe one word. You spoke of proofs. What are they?"

Without a word, Bennett handed her the report left by Horrigan. For a time silence brooded over the study, broken only by the occasional turning of a page of the report. Then, after what seemed to Alwyn an eternity of waiting, the document slid to the floor. Bennett glanced at his mother. She was a standing rigid, her face cold and hard as granite.

"Horrigan has ferreted this out," he said, not daring to draw nearer or proffer comfort to the woman whom the boss' disclosure had turned to stone. "He has secured the proofs and says he will publish them broadcast unless I withdraw my opposition in the Borough franchise matter. If I let that bill pass, Friday he will burn the report, and—"

"There is only one thing to do," interposed the mother, speaking with slow decision, her voice as cold and colorless as her face. "Right must prevail, no matter what—"

"Mother!" cried Alwyn, trembling. "You advise me to— You advise me to—"

"I do not advise, I command. Do right!"



Cynthia Garrison.

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CHAPTER XIII.

THE momentous Friday had arrived: the day when on the famous—or infamous—Borough Street railway bill in its amended form was to come up for the aldermen's consideration.

Every paper in the city devoted columns to the situation. Everywhere it was known that the "big mayor" was fighting with all his might the bill he had already vetoed. Equally well was it understood that Horrigan was making the battle of his whole career in behalf of the measure. If he could but induce his "solid thirteen" aldermen to stand firm and could maintain his hold on Roberts for the fourteenth, all would be plain sailing and the bill would pass by a two-thirds vote in spite of the mayor's veto.

More than the mere bill and his price for it were included in Horri-

gan's reasons for his present activity. He recognized that his prestige as boss was at stake—that in case of failure his hold on the organization would be considerably weakened, perhaps almost so much shaken as to permit Phelan to fulfill his once absurd threat to tear him down from his eminence. For the whole organization was viewing with breathless interest the duel between Horrigan and the youthful mayor of the boss had "made." In such circles a beaten man commands scant respect.

The board of aldermen were in session in the city hall. Off the antechamber of the great room where they met was a small, snugly furnished apartment, first of a series of similar rooms that stretched away, with connecting doors, to the far end of the main corridor. This place, with the room adjoining, had once been the comptroller's office. Of late, however, that official had changed his quarters and the room nearest the antechamber had been appropriated by Horrigan himself as a sort of unofficial surgery, where he could sit at ease and transact business at close quarters whenever the organization's secret interests demanded his presence at the city hall.

Here, his whereabouts known only to his intimate and personal lieutenants, the boss was wont to sit at ease, like some fat, rubicund spider in the center of a web of intrigue, and issue his orders or plans of campaign. Some of these were carried by word of mouth through the anteroom into the aldermanic chamber. Others he transmitted by means of a telephone that stood ready on the center table, before which his great easy chair was always placed.

Around this table as the board of aldermen were about to convene on the fateful Friday of the Borough bill's final consideration sat three men—Wainwright, Gibbs and Horrigan. The former, in spite of his habitual steady coolness, was plainly uneasy. Gibbs made no effort to deny his anxiety. His eyes were bloodshot, his manner abstracted and his nerves evidently strung to breaking point. Horrigan alone of the trio had abated not one jot of the colossal calm and brutal power that were part and parcel of the man's mighty character.

"When will our bill come up, do you suppose?" asked Gibbs, breaking a brief silence.

"In half an hour or so probably," answered Horrigan, glancing at his watch. "I thought it was better for us to get here ahead of time."

"Half an hour," fumed Gibbs, "and neither Ellis nor Roberts here yet! Suppose they don't get here on time?"

"They will," granted Horrigan placidly.

"Do you think it is possible either of them has come yet?" went on Gibbs, with a glance at the antechamber door.

"No."

"How do you know? Perhaps—"

"Williams would have told me. He knows where I'm to be found."

"You're sure Ellis and Roberts will show up?"

"Yes."

"How soon?"

"In good time."

"But suppose they don't?" insisted Gibbs nervously. "What then?"

"Why, if they don't, then they won't. What do you suppose?" snapped Horrigan. "What's the matter with you, anyhow? Are you looking for a museum job as the 'human question mark'?"

"Gibbs is naturally nervous," explained Wainwright. "He's not so old at this game as you and I, Horrigan, and we must make allowances."

"Nervous?" granted the boss. "I should say he is! Just look at that cigar I gave him. He's been chewing it as if it was a sausage. That's no way to treat a fifty cent cigar, man! Here, try another, and see if you can't smoke it instead of eating a free lunch off it. Nothing like a good smoke to steady your nerves."

(Continued Next Week.)

PLEASANT HILL ITEMS

(Special Correspondence.)

Pleasant Hill, July 15.—Haying is nearly completed. The crop is an average one, better than expected, but not so heavy as last year. Two balers begin work tomorrow. A. C. Sherwood will operate the Mulkey baler, while Hemphill & Renwick have a new steam baler with a capacity of a bale a minute.

Mr. and Mrs. William Riggs, of Harrisburg, are visiting the family of his sister, Mrs. Robert Drury. Mr. Riggs is a rural carrier and is taking his annual vacation.

Wild blackberries are unusually scarce in this section.

Mrs. Borsife, of Independence, who came up last week accompanying the remains of her son, Truman Baughman, which were interred in the family burying ground here, remained for a short visit with relatives.

Mrs. Pearl Hadley and little son, of Jasper, spent last week with her mother, Mrs. Lucretia Baughman.

The ladies of the Christian church are raising money to re-paint the building, which is beginning to look shabby.

Charles Teeters and wife, of Cottage Grove, were over Sunday visitors at the Mitchell home.

James Ahwrey, who recently bought P. M. Shelby's 80-acre farm, will move onto the same as soon as the present tenants' time expires, which will be October 1st.

J. L. Kirkley seems to be doing an extensive fresh meat business, supplying the country from Jasper to Goshen and Creswell.

A. C. Stutzer has gone on a trip to the mountains.

Roney's delivery wagon is a great convenience to the farmers these busy times.

P. N. Shelley and wife are preparing to spend the summer in the mountains. They will be accompanied by Mrs. James Buchanan, of Eugene.

The Pleasant Hill blacksmith shop is running over time with two or three hands busy as bees.

DEER-HUNTING SEASON HAS COMMENCED

(From Thursday's Daily Guard.)

Yesterday the season of 1908 opened for the killing of deer in this state, and many sportsmen are making ready to take to the mountains after the elusive buck. A number of parties are already in the hills and doubtless there are many out with their 30-30's today.

It is highly probable, however, that there will not be a great number of the old hunters out for some time yet.

For the last two years conditions have been exceedingly favorable for the breeding of deer; the water holes were numerous, and the ranges covered with thick brush, making the access to deer haunts quite difficult; the large number of watering and feeding places scattered the attention of the hunters, affording added protection to the deer.

Yet rangers and trout fishermen returning from the higher reaches and ranges of the surrounding country have not reported the number of deer signs as numerous as was to be expected in the existing circumstances, and sportsmen are at a loss to explain the apparent absence of the game. Some attribute the scarceness of the deer to the recent wave of hot weather, saying that the deer have retreated to the cooler fastnesses of the higher mountains, where the water is still more plentiful and forage better. Certain it is that a tramp in the right direction and an observance of proper precaution should take the hunter to productive territory; and several parties at least have faith to believe that a well-planned excursion to the well-known deer haunts will bring the desired reward.

A number of the more experienced hunters will delay their operations until the weather is more inviting, and rest on the assertion that the damage done by the early season hunter will not materially affect the game field.

The choice of the local sportsmen in regard to deer hunting is in the direction of Crescent and Odell lakes. Here is one of the best ranges in Oregon and probably a large number of successful hunts will be conducted in that section this summer. There is also an abundance of trout streams in that neighborhood and the news that the trout are beginning to take the flies comes as good tidings to the local Nimrods. No camping party will take to the hills this year without fishing tackle.

Junction City, July 17.—Two Portland business men have invested heavily in Lane county farm land. J. R. Smith, wholesale cigar merchant, F. D. Stephenson, wholesale grocery merchant, and F. D. Gilbert, traveling salesman, were here this week and closed a deal whereby Messrs. Smith and Stephenson became owners of what is known as the John Connor farm, located four miles west of this place.

The farm consists of 1149 acres of fine rolling land. Last year it was sold by the heirs of John Connor to Peter Murray, of Elmer, Wash., for \$18,000. Mr. Murray sold the farm to the Portland merchants for the sum of \$36,000. With the land they got 150 head of sheep, 50 head of goats, 40 head of cattle, 6 work horses, three wagons and all other machinery on the farm. It is considered one of the best farms in the Willamette valley. It is said they intend to plant quite a large acreage of apples and other fruits, also a large acreage of English walnut trees.

Next Sunday at Association Park the