



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

THE MAN OF THE HOUR

BY
ALBERT PAYSON TERHUNE
COPYRIGHT, 1907 BY
GEORGE H. BROADHURST

CHAPTER IX.
THE moment of strained silence that ensued upon Horrigan's entrance was broken by the irrepressible Perry, who, having rescued Cynthia from Gibbs at the close of their dance, was escorting her triumphantly from the ballroom.

"This is my dance," he remarked happily to Alwyn as he came up, "and we're going to sit it out. If Mrs. Bennett in her capacity of chaperon should ask for Cynthia, you can tell her we're going 'into the glass house to stroll among the romantic vegetables.'

And he departed with his prize in the direction of the conservatory. The moment's interruption had sufficed for Wainwright to whisper an admonitory word in Horrigan's ear. Dallas, too, fearing a clash, took Bennett's arm.

"It's so warm in here!" she murmured. "Perhaps we can find better air in one of the other rooms. Shall we try?"

"Wainwright," exclaimed Horrigan, as the portieres closed behind the mayor and girl. "I don't like that! Is your niece on his side or with us?"

"I don't know," answered Wainwright disconsolately, "and I don't like to force an issue by asking her. It doesn't especially matter, I suppose. In any case, I can trust her."

"You're in luck!" sneered Horrigan. "That makes two people you say you can trust—first your secretary, Thompson, and then—Hello!" he broke off as a swarthy middle aged man hurried in. "Looking for me, Williams? What's up?"

The newcomer was visibly excited, and at first glance Horrigan had seen that something was amiss.

"What's up?" repeated the boss.

"Ellis has gone—deserted!" cried Williams.

"Ellis!" echoed Wainwright in dismay, for the man of whom Williams spoke was one of the aldermanic "solid thirteen" on whom Horrigan counted. The boss made no comment, but waited impatiently for his henchman to continue.

"Ellis has gone," repeated Williams. "He left a note for me saying his wife is very ill and the doctor's ordered him to take her south. So he can't attend Friday's meeting."

"Can't attend the meeting?" gasped Wainwright. "But everything depends on—"

"Oh, he'll be on hand, the cur!" growled Horrigan. "The rest are standing solid of course?"

"I think so," hazarded Williams, "but some of 'em are pretty scared. We've never had such a fight before as Bennett's putting up against us now, and—"

"I'll strengthen 'em up so as to knock out any weakening!" declared Horrigan confidently. "It's Ellis we've got to look after now. Go after him, Williams, on the first train south and haul him back. Have him here by Friday if you have to kidnap him. I'll stand for any damage or expense. Only see he's here for that meeting. It's up to you. Now jump!"

As Williams hastened toward the door Horrigan called after him:

"On your way out send word to Roberts that I want to see him here. Well, Wainwright," he resumed, turning back into the room, "it looks bad."

"Do you think?"

"I think we're in a tight place. If our aldermen found out about Ellis' quitting, there's no knowing how many of 'em would bolt. If we could only work Bennett!"

"Out of the question. He can't be turned."

"There's no man who can't be turned. I've one card up my sleeve that ought to land him. But I'd rather try something else first. I wish we could get a line on his price."

"He can't be bought! He!"

"Rot! Everybody can be bought. Only there's some that can't be bought with cash. I'm wondering what there is that'll buy him if money won't."

Gibbs, in search of an elusive partner, crossed the foyer and paused to greet them.

"What news?" he asked.

Wainwright surveyed the broker's well groomed figure with less approval than usual.

"You seem to be industrious enough tonight," said he. "It's a pity some of tonight's dancing energy couldn't have been devoted to your work this morning."

Gibbs flushed at the reproof in words and tone.

"I don't understand," he replied stiffly.

"Why didn't you notify me of the

big block of Borough stock that was bought up just before noon?"

"I hadn't heard about it," answered Gibbs, with not quite all his customary assurance.

"Everybody else heard of it. You'll have to keep better tabs on the market than that if you're to be any use to us. Do you know who bought it?"

"No," returned Gibbs, with growing uneasiness. "Of course I don't. How should I know? What are you driving at?"

"This is what I'm driving at: Several big blocks of the stock have been unloaded on the market during the past few days and have been quietly snapped up. Somebody's evidently tailing on to our game. You don't know who?"

"I've told you twice that I didn't know," blustered Gibbs, masking his concern under show of virtuous indignation.

The effort called forth all the astute young broker's nerve, for a certain shrewd scheme of his showed signs of failing through. By his original arrangement with Wainwright he was to have manipulated all the Borough stock purchases on the exchange floor and to receive 20 per cent of the profits on the condition that he invest not one dollar in the stock on his private account.

Having strong faith in the deal's success and having no equally strong incentive to keep faith with his partners, Gibbs had sought to swell his own profits by secretly buying up quantities of the stock for himself until every penny of his capital was involved.

His troubled mind could not now determine whether or not Wainwright suspected him. Gibbs, while possessing all the ambition, selfishness and lack of conscience that go toward the making of a great financier, lacked the one chief essentials for the part—namely,

a cold and unshaken nerve. It was this defect that now threatened to expose him.

"Well," resumed Wainwright, as though dismissing the topic, "you should have made it your business to know who is doing this private buying. That's what we brought you into the deal for. Anyhow, the mysterious purchaser is liable to find himself in hot water before long."

"Why?" queried Gibbs in a voice he tried to make indifferent.

"Only because the deal will probably fall through."

"Fall through!" cried Gibbs, dismayed. "What do you—Why, you told me Mr. Horrigan could win over a fourteenth alderman, and that with his solid thirteen!"

"Yes," drawled Horrigan, who had been unobtrusively eying Gibbs from the moment of his entrance, "we had some such notion, as you say. But my solid thirteen didn't happen to be as solid as he looked. He's bolted."

"Bolted! Then we—we will lose! We—"

"Say, Mr. Gibbs," observed Horrigan, "you seem to take this thing pretty hard for a man with only 20 per cent at stake. Mr. Wainwright stands to lose some millions. I'm interested to the extent of almost a million. Yet you don't see us getting pale and shaky, do you? If a man can't pay for the chips he has no right in a poker game. Brace up and act like a man, can't you? We haven't lost yet. I've sent after the fellow that bolted, and I think I can land the fourteenth alderman too."

"Good!" exclaimed Gibbs in wild relief. "And you'll do your very best to pull the deal through, won't you?"

"No!" snarled Horrigan in elephantine sarcasm. "I'm going to spend the time playing pingpong and diabolos with the kids or taking course of lessons in fancy knitting. Oh, buck up, can't you, and quit acting like a baby! Judge Newman's out there on the other side of the ballroom. Chase over and tell him to come here."

"Good!" exclaimed Gibbs in wild relief. "And you'll do your very best to pull the deal through, won't you?"

"No!" snarled Horrigan in elephantine sarcasm. "I'm going to spend the time playing pingpong and diabolos with the kids or taking course of lessons in fancy knitting. Oh, buck up, can't you, and quit acting like a baby! Judge Newman's out there on the other side of the ballroom. Chase over and tell him to come here."

"Good!" exclaimed Gibbs in wild relief. "And you'll do your very best to pull the deal through, won't you?"

"No!" snarled Horrigan in elephantine sarcasm. "I'm going to spend the time playing pingpong and diabolos with the kids or taking course of lessons in fancy knitting. Oh, buck up, can't you, and quit acting like a baby! Judge Newman's out there on the other side of the ballroom. Chase over and tell him to come here."

"Good!" exclaimed Gibbs in wild relief. "And you'll do your very best to pull the deal through, won't you?"

"No!" snarled Horrigan in elephantine sarcasm. "I'm going to spend the time playing pingpong and diabolos with the kids or taking course of lessons in fancy knitting. Oh, buck up, can't you, and quit acting like a baby! Judge Newman's out there on the other side of the ballroom. Chase over and tell him to come here."

"Good!" exclaimed Gibbs in wild relief. "And you'll do your very best to pull the deal through, won't you?"

"No!" snarled Horrigan in elephantine sarcasm. "I'm going to spend the time playing pingpong and diabolos with the kids or taking course of lessons in fancy knitting. Oh, buck up, can't you, and quit acting like a baby! Judge Newman's out there on the other side of the ballroom. Chase over and tell him to come here."

"Good!" exclaimed Gibbs in wild relief. "And you'll do your very best to pull the deal through, won't you?"

"No!" snarled Horrigan in elephantine sarcasm. "I'm going to spend the time playing pingpong and diabolos with the kids or taking course of lessons in fancy knitting. Oh, buck up, can't you, and quit acting like a baby! Judge Newman's out there on the other side of the ballroom. Chase over and tell him to come here."

"Good!" exclaimed Gibbs in wild relief. "And you'll do your very best to pull the deal through, won't you?"

"No!" snarled Horrigan in elephantine sarcasm. "I'm going to spend the time playing pingpong and diabolos with the kids or taking course of lessons in fancy knitting. Oh, buck up, can't you, and quit acting like a baby! Judge Newman's out there on the other side of the ballroom. Chase over and tell him to come here."

"Good!" exclaimed Gibbs in wild relief. "And you'll do your very best to pull the deal through, won't you?"

"No!" snarled Horrigan in elephantine sarcasm. "I'm going to spend the time playing pingpong and diabolos with the kids or taking course of lessons in fancy knitting. Oh, buck up, can't you, and quit acting like a baby! Judge Newman's out there on the other side of the ballroom. Chase over and tell him to come here."

"Good!" exclaimed Gibbs in wild relief. "And you'll do your very best to pull the deal through, won't you?"

"No!" snarled Horrigan in elephantine sarcasm. "I'm going to spend the time playing pingpong and diabolos with the kids or taking course of lessons in fancy knitting. Oh, buck up, can't you, and quit acting like a baby! Judge Newman's out there on the other side of the ballroom. Chase over and tell him to come here."

"Good!" exclaimed Gibbs in wild relief. "And you'll do your very best to pull the deal through, won't you?"

"No!" snarled Horrigan in elephantine sarcasm. "I'm going to spend the time playing pingpong and diabolos with the kids or taking course of lessons in fancy knitting. Oh, buck up, can't you, and quit acting like a baby! Judge Newman's out there on the other side of the ballroom. Chase over and tell him to come here."

"Good!" exclaimed Gibbs in wild relief. "And you'll do your very best to pull the deal through, won't you?"

"No!" snarled Horrigan in elephantine sarcasm. "I'm going to spend the time playing pingpong and diabolos with the kids or taking course of lessons in fancy knitting. Oh, buck up, can't you, and quit acting like a baby! Judge Newman's out there on the other side of the ballroom. Chase over and tell him to come here."

"Good!" exclaimed Gibbs in wild relief. "And you'll do your very best to pull the deal through, won't you?"

"No!" snarled Horrigan in elephantine sarcasm. "I'm going to spend the time playing pingpong and diabolos with the kids or taking course of lessons in fancy knitting. Oh, buck up, can't you, and quit acting like a baby! Judge Newman's out there on the other side of the ballroom. Chase over and tell him to come here."

"Good!" exclaimed Gibbs in wild relief. "And you'll do your very best to pull the deal through, won't you?"

"No!" snarled Horrigan in elephantine sarcasm. "I'm going to spend the time playing pingpong and diabolos with the kids or taking course of lessons in fancy knitting. Oh, buck up, can't you, and quit acting like a baby! Judge Newman's out there on the other side of the ballroom. Chase over and tell him to come here."

"Good!" exclaimed Gibbs in wild relief. "And you'll do your very best to pull the deal through, won't you?"

"No!" snarled Horrigan in elephantine sarcasm. "I'm going to spend the time playing pingpong and diabolos with the kids or taking course of lessons in fancy knitting. Oh, buck up, can't you, and quit acting like a baby! Judge Newman's out there on the other side of the ballroom. Chase over and tell him to come here."

"Good!" exclaimed Gibbs in wild relief. "And you'll do your very best to pull the deal through, won't you?"

"No!" snarled Horrigan in elephantine sarcasm. "I'm going to spend the time playing pingpong and diabolos with the kids or taking course of lessons in fancy knitting. Oh, buck up, can't you, and quit acting like a baby! Judge Newman's out there on the other side of the ballroom. Chase over and tell him to come here."

"Good!" exclaimed Gibbs in wild relief. "And you'll do your very best to pull the deal through, won't you?"

"No!" snarled Horrigan in elephantine sarcasm. "I'm going to spend the time playing pingpong and diabolos with the kids or taking course of lessons in fancy knitting. Oh, buck up, can't you, and quit acting like a baby! Judge Newman's out there on the other side of the ballroom. Chase over and tell him to come here."

"Good!" exclaimed Gibbs in wild relief. "And you'll do your very best to pull the deal through, won't you?"

"No!" snarled Horrigan in elephantine sarcasm. "I'm going to spend the time playing pingpong and diabolos with the kids or taking course of lessons in fancy knitting. Oh, buck up, can't you, and quit acting like a baby! Judge Newman's out there on the other side of the ballroom. Chase over and tell him to come here."

"Good!" exclaimed Gibbs in wild relief. "And you'll do your very best to pull the deal through, won't you?"

"No!" snarled Horrigan in elephantine sarcasm. "I'm going to spend the time playing pingpong and diabolos with the kids or taking course of lessons in fancy knitting. Oh, buck up, can't you, and quit acting like a baby! Judge Newman's out there on the other side of the ballroom. Chase over and tell him to come here."

"Good!" exclaimed Gibbs in wild relief. "And you'll do your very best to pull the deal through, won't you?"

"No!" snarled Horrigan in elephantine sarcasm. "I'm going to spend the time playing pingpong and diabolos with the kids or taking course of lessons in fancy knitting. Oh, buck up, can't you, and quit acting like a baby! Judge Newman's out there on the other side of the ballroom. Chase over and tell him to come here."

"Good!" exclaimed Gibbs in wild relief. "And you'll do your very best to pull the deal through, won't you?"

"No!" snarled Horrigan in elephantine sarcasm. "I'm going to spend the time playing pingpong and diabolos with the kids or taking course of lessons in fancy knitting. Oh, buck up, can't you, and quit acting like a baby! Judge Newman's out there on the other side of the ballroom. Chase over and tell him to come here."

"Good!" exclaimed Gibbs in wild relief. "And you'll do your very best to pull the deal through, won't you?"

"No!" snarled Horrigan in elephantine sarcasm. "I'm going to spend the time playing pingpong and diabolos with the kids or taking course of lessons in fancy knitting. Oh, buck up, can't you, and quit acting like a baby! Judge Newman's out there on the other side of the ballroom. Chase over and tell him to come here."

"Good!" exclaimed Gibbs in wild relief. "And you'll do your very best to pull the deal through, won't you?"

"No!" snarled Horrigan in elephantine sarcasm. "I'm going to spend the time playing pingpong and diabolos with the kids or taking course of lessons in fancy knitting. Oh, buck up, can't you, and quit acting like a baby! Judge Newman's out there on the other side of the ballroom. Chase over and tell him to come here."

"Good!" exclaimed Gibbs in wild relief. "And you'll do your very best to pull the deal through, won't you?"

"No!" snarled Horrigan in elephantine sarcasm. "I'm going to spend the time playing pingpong and diabolos with the kids or taking course of lessons in fancy knitting. Oh, buck up, can't you, and quit acting like a baby! Judge Newman's out there on the other side of the ballroom. Chase over and tell him to come here."

"Good!" exclaimed Gibbs in wild relief. "And you'll do your very best to pull the deal through, won't you?"

"No!" snarled Horrigan in elephantine sarcasm. "I'm going to spend the time playing pingpong and diabolos with the kids or taking course of lessons in fancy knitting. Oh, buck up, can't you, and quit acting like a baby! Judge Newman's out there on the other side of the ballroom. Chase over and tell him to come here."

"Good!" exclaimed Gibbs in wild relief. "And you'll do your very best to pull the deal through, won't you?"

"No!" snarled Horrigan in elephantine sarcasm. "I'm going to spend the time playing pingpong and diabolos with the kids or taking course of lessons in fancy knitting. Oh, buck up