



BY  
**ALBERT  
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GEORGE H. BROADHURST

#### CHAPTER IX.

THE moment of strained silence that ensued upon Horriggan'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 Horriggan'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 Horriggan, 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 discontentedly, "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 Horriggan. "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 Horriggan 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 Horriggan 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 Horriggan. "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 Horriggan 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 Horriggan 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 yet 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 reproach 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, but 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 talking 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 a 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 falling 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. Horriggan could win over a fourteenth alderman, and that with his solid thirteen!"

"Yes," drawled Horriggan, 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!"

"Say, Mr. Gibbs," observed Horriggan, "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 Horriggan in elephantine sarcasm. "I'm going to spend the time playing pingpong and diabolo with the kids or taking a 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."

"Too confused to resent the boss' words, Gibbs meekly set out on his errand."

"That chap's got a streak of yellow a yard wide," commented Horriggan, gazing after him.

"Not as bad as that," replied Wainwright. "He's young and not used to reverses. You'll find he is game, all right, when it comes to a pinch. What did you want of Newman?"

"You'll see. Here he comes."

"You wished to speak to me, Mr. Horriggan?" piped the little judge, hurrying into the foyer. "Good evening, Mr. Wainwright. What a success the ball is! My daughters have been dancing all evening. And Mrs. Newman is so—"

"Never mind Mrs. Newman just now," broke in Horriggan. "There's something important I want you to do for me."

He spoke, as he always did to Newman, in the manner of one addressing an incompetent servant. The judge, for all his pomposity, deemed it wise to ignore the politician's mode of address.

"I want you to hunt up Bennett," went on the boss, "and persuade him to stop fighting the Borough franchise bill. Tell him—"

"Oh," gasped the judge in genuine alarm. "I really don't think I could presume to—"

"Yes, you can," contradicted Horriggan. "You can do it, and, what's more, you will. You don't feel shy about asking favors of me, and when it's the other way around you've got to come down or—"

"I know! I know!" protested the frightened little judge soothingly. "But you don't understand how—"

"I got you the nomination last fall. Are you going to be a white man or a welcher?"

"But I'm sure that Mrs. Newman—"

"To blazes with Mrs. Newman! New listen to me. Go to Bennett and do what you can to make him keep his hands off our Borough bill. If he's difficult offer him, in my name, the nomination for governor next year. If you can get him—well, there's a vacancy next year in the supreme court and—"

"I'll do what I can," assented the judge. "I'm sure you are right, Mr. Horriggan, even if your way of putting matters is just a little ragged. I'll see Mr. Bennett tonight and use all the persuasion in my power. I'm quite sure civic welfare will be best served if he will cease his unseemly opposition to the Borough bill. Thank you, Mr. Horriggan. I'm very sure that Mrs. Newman—"

"I'm sure, too," cut in Horriggan. "Now run on. We're busy. Remember, now—the very next supreme court vacancy—"

"Do you really think he has any influence with Bennett?" asked Wainwright as the judge vanished.

"Can't do any harm to try. They're neighbors in the country and in the same crowd in society and all that. If it fails, I've another card that's even stronger. Roberts ought to be here by now. You found out about those notes of his?"

"Yes; both of them. One for \$7,000, one for \$15,000. Both secured by mortgaging his factory. Roberts can't meet them. They've been extended twice, though the security must have been fairly good or the Sturtevant Trust company wouldn't have lent."

"Williams said you wanted to speak to me, Mr. Horriggan," said a nervous voice from the door, and a pale, middle aged man came forward. He wore worry's stamp between his perplexed eyes, and care had bent his narrow shoulders.

"Yes. Good evening, Roberts," replied Horriggan cordially. "See you later, Wainwright."

The financier took the hint and walked toward the ballroom, on his way out nearly colliding with Phelan, who was entering the foyer. At sight of Horriggan and Roberts together Phelan's eyebrows went upward, with a jerk, and he tiptoed out in the opposite direction as fast as his stout legs could carry him in search of Bennett. Meantime Horriggan had come directly to the point, as usual, in his appeal to Roberts.

"Look here, alderman," said he, "you've been trying for years to get through a park bill for your ward. Still want it?"

"Yes," returned Roberts. "My constituents are at me all the time about that park. They—"

"It would make your ward's property values go up 50 per cent, and it would make you solid there forever. Hey?"

"Yes, but—"

"Introduce that bill again, and I'll guarantee it will go through."

"Are you in earnest?"

"There's my hand on it. Only, of course, it's understood that your park bill won't come up until after the Borough Street railway franchise is passed. Understand?"

"I'm afraid I do," said Roberts after a pause, "but I voted against that bill, and—"

"You voted against the bill in its original form," Horriggan interrupted reassuringly, "and you were right, too. It had a lot of clauses that you thought weren't square. But all those have been cut out."

"But I still—"

"But you'll be doing what's best for your own constituents by looking at—"

er their interests in the matter of the park. You'll be their hero for that. Of course if I wanted to put it another way I could remind you that your business is in a bad way and that a friend of mine has bought up your notes at the Sturtevant Trust company and means to send them to you tomorrow. But that has nothing to do with the case. So I just—"

"I'm honest, Mr. Horriggan," faltered Roberts. "I—"

"Sure you're honest! That's why you'll have the courage to vote for the bill when you see it's been amended so as to be a good thing for the city. That's being honest, isn't it?"

"I—I suppose so. And the notes—the—"

"They'll be sent you by registered mail tomorrow if you want them. Do you?"

"Y-yes. That is, I—"

"That's settled, then. You've got a level head. Good night."

The boss strode out, a grim smile of victory on his big face, leaving Roberts standing confused, doubtful, his brain awl. How long the tempted alderman stood thus—oblivious to the music, his surroundings and all else—he could never remember, but a voice at his elbow brought him to his senses with a start that was followed by a thrill of fear as he wheeled and recognized the speaker.

(To be continued.)

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#### WHO IS JOHN W. KERN?

[Albany (N. Y.) Daily Press-Knickerbocker, Ind. Republican.]

"Who is John W. Kern?" asks William E. Corey, the multimillionaire steel magnate, who gained notoriety by marrying Mabelle Gilman, the actress.

In the first place, John W. Kern is an old fogey. He has such old-fashioned notions that he despises a man who would divorce his wife and the mother of his children in order to gratify an insane passion for an actress. John W. Kern is one of those back numbers who place honor above dollars. He would not sell his soul for gold, even though the devil offered him all the yellow metal there is in the bowels of the earth. He has remained a comparatively poor man all his life rather than enter a combine to rob the people and drive competitors out of business. He never, so far as we have been able to learn, either founded a public library or endowed a college. Having lived an upright, wholesome, God-fearing life all his days, he has never felt the necessity of apologizing to his Maker or offering penance in the form of lucre for his sins.

William E. Corey is about as sharp a contrast to John W. Kern as could be found within the boundaries of the United States, with the possible exception of James S. Sherman, the other candidate for vice president. No man who holds dear the honor of this country can contemplate the possibility of James S. Sherman becoming, through an act of Providence, the president of the United States without shuddering, whereas, if John W. Kern should be called upon to step into the highest office he would grace it.

"Who is John W. Kern?" asks the faithless nabob who cast off his faithful wife, the woman who had bravely shared his days of poverty and had struggled with him to build up his fortunes, as a man throws away a lemon after he has squeezed all the good out of it. Such impertinence deserves no answer, were it not for the sake of calling attention to the brazen effrontery of men of Corey's stamp who had, through the medium of protected monopoly, grown to be the greatest menace that confronts this nation today. Anarchy can be stamped out by force, but the insidious evil imposed upon this long-suffering people by men whom President Roosevelt designates very forcibly as "malefactors of great wealth," is even more to be dreaded than anarchy.

"Who is John W. Kern?" Why, a plain, honest American citizen of the highest type, an unpretentious, clean-living man, yet of scholarly attainments and commanding intellect. Had that purse-proud Pittsburg millionaire read John W. Kern's masterly reply to the apology of James S. Sherman, he would have no need to ask, "Who is John W. Kern?"

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