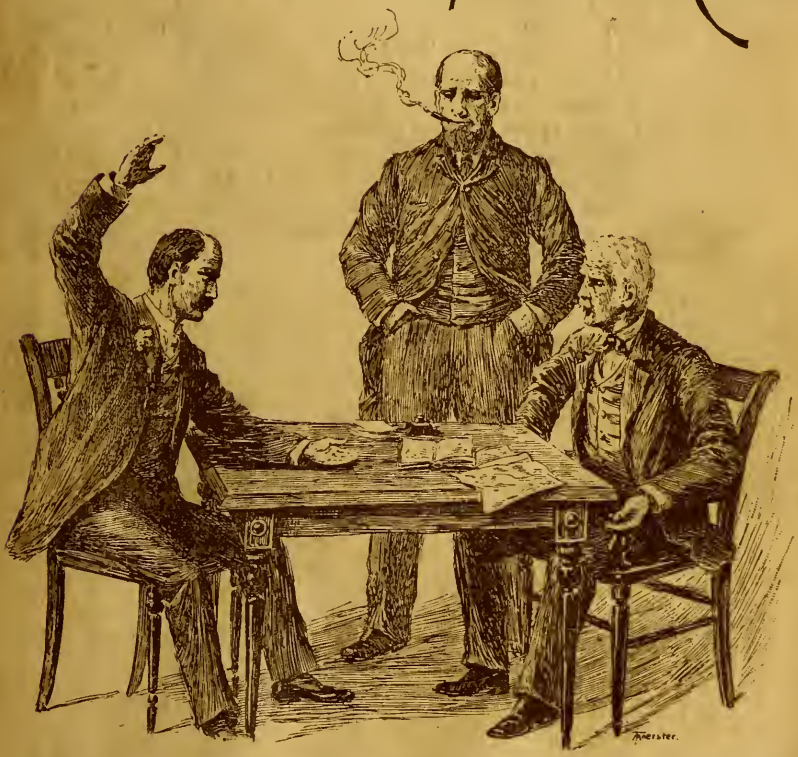
A Member of the Third House.

BY

HAMLIN GARLAND



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A Member of the Third House.

Hamlin Garland

A MEMBER OF THE THIRD HOUSE

A DRAMATIC STORY

By

HAMLIN GARLAND

Author of "Main Traveled Roads," "A Spoil of Office," etc.

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A MEMBER OF THE THIRD HOUSE.

Chapter I.

THE SCHOLAR IN POLITICS.

IT was a phenomenally hot day in June. The city pulsed with a suffocating heat like a kiln for steaming wood. The air was filled with moisture, and seemed momentarily on the point of precipitating rain, while the sun burned down from the cobalt-blue sky with terrific splendor. Heavy clouds drove in like great ships from the sea and fell in brief, heavy down-dropping showers, exactly as if a valve had been opened and shut. Then the sun burst out again, and from the hissing pavements a gray, suffocating steam arose in the faces of the hastening throngs of men.

These moments were terrifying, and in every doorway portly men could be seen standing with bared heads, panting with sudden weakness and vertigo, their faces vermilion with the rush of blood. The hack horses and dray teams labored to and fro, steaming with sweat

and breathing convulsively, their tremulous, eager nostrils like full-blown red trumpet-flowers. Their eyelids fell wearily and sleepily over their dim eyes, and they responded to the whip only by a weak thrusting of the neck or an impotent whisk of the tail.

A young man walking slowly along the street stopped to watch such a panting, struggling team. His fine, serious face clouded with sympathetic pain as the teams struggled past him. He had the look of a student. His brown beard was full and cut in an oval shape, and his rather prominent brown eyes were partly hidden by his spectacles, the bows of which went behind his ears.

A short man with a fat face came by, keeping close in the shadow, carrying his hat in his hand. "Hello, Tuttle," he called, "hot, ain't it? By jinks, my shirt sticks to me like the bark to a tree. Phew! What you looking at?"

"That team. It's terrible to see 'em labor so on a day like this."

"Aha! Moral,— Vote for the Consolidated and give the horses a rest. See?"

Tuttle looked at him gravely. "Holbrook, you're a confirmed lobbyist. So you have gone into the pay of the Consolidated? You talked just that way last year in favor of the" ——

Holbrook grinned. "Yes, sir. According to my lights. According to my lights. I see things different now. Say, your investigating order is going to raise the devil with you if you put it through." He laid his moist handkerchief over his bald head for a moment as one uses a blotting-pad.

"It may raise the devil with somebody else," said Tuttle, quietly.

"No, I guess not. Well, let 'er go, Smith! Nothin' like havin' fun these hot days." He winked and grinned and waddled gayly off to enter a horse-car moving toward the Capitol.

Tuttle gave a sigh of relief when the horses on the car reached a level and turned a corner. This sympathy for the suffering animals marked him as a man of rather keen sensibility. As he walked on the sun came out brilliantly again, the mists quickly disappeared, and life was a little more tolerable.

Two young ladies came out of a store just ahead. "Oh, there's Mr. Tuttle," cried one. She floated down upon him like a spray of cool salt foam. "Oh, Mr. Tuttle, isn't it warm?"

"Well, yes, I'd been thinking so until—until I saw you. You look as cool as a sherbet. I don't see how you ladies manage to keep so cool."

"Our looks deceive, I can assure you," said the taller and plainer girl of the two.

"Ah, Miss Ward," he greeted her; "I didn't find you at home when I called the other evening."

"No, father wasn't very well, and" —

"Oh, we've just been having an ice-cream soda. We stop every block or two — I've eaten three. Won't you come in and let me treat?" cried Miss Davis. "Oh, come. It'll be such fun."

"Well, I can stand one if you can a fourth." Tuttle smiled, as he followed them into a long and excessively clean confectionery store, where they took seats on slender revolving wooden stools in a long row before a polished marble counter.

Miss Davis chattered on like a jovial little blue-jay. She was pretty in a dainty, inconsequential sort of way, and was dressed in some light-colored, fluffy stuff that rustled as softly as a breeze in a poplar tree, and she looked deliciously comfortable. The little beads of perspiration on her white temples and chin seemed cool as the drops on a dainty vase.

"Ain't this heavenly?" she inquired, as she stirred the brown mixture with the long-handled, tiny spoon which went with the soda.

"Don't you like to hear the spoon as it goes through? Grau-u!" She made a funny little noise to imitate the sound of the spoon. "This makes the fourth. Ain't you going to try one, Evelyn? I believe I could live on ice-cream sodas and macaroons! Couldn't you?

"For a limited time—yes," Tuttle replied, looking into the sunny shallows of her blue eyes. "However, I prefer to go on in a grosser way for the present—steaks and things like that."

"What do you legislators do on such days as this?" inquired Helene.

"Adjourn, mainly," said Evelyn.

"That's what we should do, but we don't, and can't. Here it is June, and the business fairly mountainous before us."

"The sessions seem to be getting longer and longer, father says. Why is it?" asked Evelyn.

"The Third House. Things have reached such a state that a bill must pass the Third House before it can get fairly before the supposed law-makers, and even then"——

"What is the Third House?" asked Helene, looking up from her soda. "I see so many jokes in the newspapers about it."

"Yes, it is a joke—there. I should define

it"—he hesitated as if to be exact—"as a body of corrupt men who stand between the people and legislation." Helene, who had been eating her cream soda, had not heard a word. She was thinking what beautiful eyes he had, and what a really elegant Prince-of-Wales cut he had on his brown beard.

Evelyn said in her quiet way:

"Father says the Third House is a very dangerous element."

"Oh, I wish you'd take me to see it!" Helene cried out.

"Helene evidently thinks it a menagerie," said Evelyn.

"I guess I won't take you to see the Third House."

"Why not?" she asked with wide eyes.

"Because it ain't a fit place for women to go."

"Why, that's the reason I want to go."

"Why, Helene Davis!"

"I do—I like exciting things."

"Oh, Mr. Tuttle, you must come over and play tennis with us. I'm just all doubled up on tennis this year. I'm going to be a champion." Evelyn and Tuttle smiled at the slang. "Last year I didn't care very much about it, but that was because I was a beginner. And then I've

got the loveliest suit, the very latest, and my racquet is a regular dandy!"

"Helene, your sodas have gone to your head."

Tuttle smiled indulgently. Helene was too beautiful to reprimand. "I'll come if I can, but I expect to be very busy. I'm going to attack our national disgrace — this Third House you hear so much about — and the newspapers are likely to 'roast' me."

"Now who's talking slang?"

Tuttle laughed and rose. "Well, I must be going. I — I'm very sorry."

"Come over to-night, won't you?"

"I can't to-night, but — but I will to-morrow — the Third House permitting."

"I'll look for you, sure," smiled Helene, and audaciously waved a little kiss at him — after he had turned away.

Tuttle walked slowly up the street, in thought too deep to notice the heat. He felt indefinably a crisis approaching in his life, like the thunderstorm which the unusual smothering heat predicted in the weather. He smiled at first as his mind went back to the dainty girl stirring the soda. Then he grew grave again, as he studied his position before the public, and especially before Lawrence B. Davis, the great railway president, the father of Helene.

"Hold on there, Tuttle!" cried a voice, as a hand touched his elbow.

"Hel-lo, Radbourn!" he said, his face lighting into a beautiful smile. "By George, I'm glad to see you! Where'd you spring from?"

"Spring from? Didn't you hear me rap on the hotel window as you passed?"

"No, you see I was busy"——

"I should say so—going along in a perfectly black study. Well, you see I'm on my way to the West. Stopping over a day, and was just going out to look you up. But come in and sit down and tell me all about things."

They returned to Hilliard's and went up to Radbourn's room, which was high enough to get all the breeze, he explained. "Yes, I'm out on another one of my lecturing trips. How's everything with you?"

"Well, I've done it, Radbourn," Tuttle said, abruptly, as he dropped into a chair.

A faint smile lighted Radbourn's grave face. "You say that as if you expected me to know what you've done. So I infer that it has something to do with the land question." Tuttle's deprecatory air amused him. "Am I right?"

"Yes, I've put in my bill to charge an annual rent for street franchises."

"Good!" Radbourn said, rising and throwing off his coat.

"And I've carried a resolution to have the methods of the Consolidated Railway investigated. A joint committee has been appointed for the purpose. And the press and the monopoly are going to lift my hair."

"Good! We need a martyr. Am I to understand that all this — great — spreading tree has sprung — from that little mustard-seed talk we had last winter?"

Tuttle nodded. "Oh, I'm an apt pupil!"

"Well, I should say so. Your hand!" As they gripped hands, Tuttle said, with a comical look in his spectacled eyes:

"That spectral cat you fellows are always talking about practically made my bedpost its promenade for months, and has got me at last just where my enemies want me. I am practically fighting the Third House and the monopolists of all the houses alone."

"Well, tell me all about it. I've only just a hint of it from the newspapers!" He stretched himself on the lounge. "Excuse me, won't you? I was riding all night. Take off your coat if you feel too warm."

Tuttle had a curious air of being in the presence of a teacher as well as a friend. There was

a look of timidity in his eyes. "I don't need to explain the Third House," he began.

"No, it's a condition in every capital. Wherever there is public property to be voted into private pockets, in fact"——

"Well, we've got a monopoly in this State and city that has become a terrible power, partly with the consent of the people, partly against it. The Consolidated owns the Air-line road over which you came to-day, and the street railways in half a dozen of our cities. It has swallowed half the lines of road in this city, and is trying to secure a charter which will practically put every street into its hands."

"Oh, it's the universal movement!" sighed Radbourn. "But it can't last always."

"They came before the legislature last year, opposing the charter for a road of the very character which they now ask for themselves. It is claimed that they've put a hundred thousand dollars into the Third House, till there is no opposition. The papers, just now, are full of stories of their attack on the senate. Members of the lower house have told me that, at the Hilliard bar, twenty thousand dollars have been deposited by an agent of the Consolidated to pay bets with!"

"How's that?" Radbourn sat up. "Why, that's a new idea!"

"The member of the Third House is able to slip up to the bar with a senator, and say: 'Sam, I've just lost a bet of two thousand dollars to this gentleman.'"

"I see," said Radbourn. "He bets a bill won't pass."

"Yes. The road is said to have three centers of action — the Hilliard, the office of the attorney, Fox, and a den on some side street, a frightful place, reeking with liquor and all foulness. Men are trapped and debauched into service in that hole. At the other places they are bought genteelly."

"Well, who's at the head of all this? It's easy to infer a head."

"Its head is a powerful old man, who has a national reputation — the famous 'Iron Duke.' You've heard of him in connection with the Cedar Knob Mines and the Bitter River Railway deal — Lawrence B. Davis. I don't know how deep he is in this saturnalia of bribery that is reported to be going on. I wish I did," he ended, with a changed manner. A look of sadness came over his face, and his eyes fell in thought.

"Now what d'ye mean by that?" asked Rad-

bourn, rousing up on his elbows again to stare at him.

"Oh, nothing—that is, it's a purely private affair. Yes, I'll tell you about it," he went on, with an impulsive gesture. "The Iron Duke has—has a daughter."

A sympathetic shadow came into Radbourn's eyes.

"Ah! I see. Old story! Struggle of love and duty! The poor youth, the rich maiden, *et cetera.*"

"Yes, it does seem sort of theatrical to everybody but myself. But it's tremendously real life to me. I can't think her father is a full party to the corruption. It is done, I think, mainly by two of the trustees of the road, through a notorious lobbyist, Tom Brennan, and an attorney by the name of Fox."

"Well, brother Tuttle, that sounds a little—diaphanous, I'm afraid. A man of the character of Davis is not made use of in that way. But who is this man Brennan?"

"He's the cleverest Irishman I ever saw. He's a genius in many ways, a man with infinite resources, but a—a—a conscienceless cormorant."

"That's drawing it—rather strong, Tuttle."

"Well, *he* isn't a bit theatrical, if I am. He's

a real villain, and not a stage caricature. One of these laughing, handsome, successful, ingratiating, soulless"——

"Hold on! You are piling it up. He isn't a —he isn't a rival?" suggested Radbourn. Tuttle grew red and dropped his eyes. "Now, Tuttle, I don't want to drag the secret out of you, but if you want my honest advice, as I infer you do, give me the straight facts."

"Well, he's the Iron Duke's secretary and confidential agent, and he wants Helene, of course."

Radbourn was amused. "I understand the force of that 'of course,' but how about Helene?"

"I don't know. I suppose she likes him. He seems to have a singular fascination for the average woman, and lately she—she don't seem"—— He did not finish. It wasn't necessary. Radbourn was in possession of the main facts.

There was a little pause, and then Radbourn summed it up. "I think I see the whole situation. You have set on foot an investigation that is sure—no 'maybe' about it—to turn the Duke and Helene against you, while the real-life villain triumphantly bears away the spoils, as he generally does in life, to be honest about it."

There was a pause. The roar of the street came through the open window, softened, pulsing in the freshening breeze. Tuttle saw on his friend's face, which faintly resembled Napoleon's, a look that was both savage and lofty. "Now do you ask what my advice is?"

"I don't need to," Tuttle said in a low voice. "I see it all myself."

"Of course, there is just one thing to say — justice! The time has come when a stand must be made all along the line for justice."

"And freedom," added Tuttle.

"That's the whole of it," said Radbourn, with his infrequent smile. And I tell you the final outcome will be good. You know what Whitman says: 'Whatever is, is well. Whither I walk I cannot divine, but I know it is well.' Stand for the right thing, the conscientious thing, Wilson, and you will lose nothing in the end — that is my faith. Come, let's go down to dinner and talk it over."

Chapter II.

TOM BRENNAN'S AMBITION.

"OH, he *has* a jag!" commented the elevator boy, as he looked through the barred door of the descending car at the Honorables Tim Sheehan and Pat Murnahan, of the Eighth and Ninth Wards, respectively.

"This is the door," said Tim, as Murnahan shook his fist at the grinning boy disappearing down the shaft. They stood before a ground glass door on which was painted: *Samuel D. Fox, Thomas Brennan, Attorneys-at-Law.* "Shall I knock?"

"Naw! Gaw right in!"

Murnahan took off his pearl-gray plug hat, and, holding it in his hand, opened the door and walked in with elaborate but uncertain dignity. A young man with a grave, pale face that nothing (apparently) could cause to light into a smile or flush into color, rose from his desk in the outer office.

"Is Tom Brennan in?" asked Sheehan.

The young man approached very close and

spoke in that peculiar placid tone a deaf person uses :

"What did you say?"

Murnahan repeated his question.

"Right this way," said the grave young man, as he knocked on the door of the inner office. "A couple of gents to see Mr. Brennan."

A smiling, handsome man of about thirty appeared. He was dressed in a neat, youthful suit of cassimere. He was slightly bald, and had a fine mustache and smiling lips.

"Ah, my dear boys! Come in. What can I do for you?" He pushed them through the door, saying, "Be with you in a jiffy." He crossed the room, and said in a low voice to the young man, "Don't let anybody in, Robert." The young man nodded and took his seat at his desk beside his telephone and type-writing and telegraph machines, which made him resemble the man in the orchestra who plays several instruments.

Brennan pointed his thumb at the inner office and grinned broadly. "Their nibses tarried too long at the wine last night." Then he returned to his private office, which was, in fact, the private office of the Iron Duke.

"Well, gentlemen, how did you enjoy our little dinner last night? Eh?"

"First-rate, Tom," was their verdict.

"Your roses are a little passé," he said, indicating the flower each wore in the lapel of his gray Prince Albert frock. "Let me give you a fresh one. Just happen to have one. An' now what can I do for you? But wait — haven't had anything this p. m.?"

"I ain't. Tim, he's all balled up."

"Oh, ye blackguard! And him been loadin' up since breakfast!" roared Sheehan.

Brennan joined in the fun. As Murnahan kept his seat Tom didn't really perceive how intoxicated he was, and took from a snug little closet in the wall a couple of bottles of wine and some glasses.

"Well, Tom, we came down to thank you for your supper. It was gra-et!"

"That's all right now. Take a suup, just."

"We missed our thrains, the divil take ye! and had to stay at the Hoffman all night, an' this mornin' 'What's to pay?' sez I. 'Nuthin',' sez he. 'The divil,' sez I. 'It's all settled,' sez he. An' so we came up to say it's damned clever of ye when a poor feller visits his friends and forgets the thrain."

"Say!" said Brennan, suddenly, "this ain't biz. I want 'o hedge to-day. I'll bet you five hundred dollars apiece we lose our charter."

He lay back in his chair, put his thumbs behind his vest, and rocked to and fro, carelessly.

"O, ye're jokin' now, Tom."

"Am I?" he said, with the Irish inflection. "Here's a hundred dollars that says not."

Sheehan looked at the neat packet of bills. "I'll take yeh." They shook hands.

"Where'll it be paid?"

"Hilliard's."

"I guess I'll come in on that," said Pat.

"All right, my boy, I'll be glad to see you win. Here's y'r squids." He paid them each fifty dollars and showed by his manner that the interview was over. "Well, now, boys, I'm busy; you'll excuse my kicking you out."

They rose with effort. "All right, but mind ye now this don't bind us."

"Certainly not, me lads. All we want is to have ye understand the bill, see." He seemed to use this in something more than a jocular sense, as if he still retained the wish to give a tinge of honesty to a barefaced bribery.

"Av coorse," said Murnahan, with a drunken leer, trying with his stiffening fingers to button his coat. "Sez I, Tim, ye're wild, sez I. Tom is as straight a lad as ever lived, sez I. All that he wants is to give us a chance to hear the

bill discussed on its merits, sez I, and he ain't a-goin to lave us to pay bills when we lose our thrains, sez I."

"Well now, gentlemen," said Brennan, cutting short Murnahan's loquacity, "I'm very busy, but come again. I'm always glad to see two sons from the old sod."

"But wait. Just one more sup," he said, going back to the stand and getting a bottle. "We'll dispinse with the glasses, eh?"

"Av coorse!"

"Shure, we prefair the bottle."

They drank by turns and wiped their lips in a common sort of way, laughing loudly. Brennan ended it at last by hustling them out good-naturedly. "Well, now, good-by. Robert, show 'em the elevator. Come down and see us again. But don't carry away the taste o' the whisky," he called after them. "The byes 'll be down on me like a hod of brick on a Dutchman."

He returned to the office, replaced the bottles in the closet, singing as he did so in a perfectly youthful and lover-like fashion. He seemed all love and poesy.

Helene looked in at the door unobserved, saying, with a smile, "Did I hear you singing, Mr. Brennan?"

Brennan calmly but quickly closed the closet door. "You did, no doubt. Come in and I'll stop."

"How very kind of you? Where's papa?"

"Gone down to the superintendent's office. Expect him back every moment. Won't you sit down?"

"Who were those horrible, white-hatted men who just went out?"

"*Legislators*," said Brennan, with comic brevity.

"Those men?"

"Those men. Of such is the legislatures of our nation and the kingdoms of our city councils."

"Why, they looked like"—Helene wrinkled her brow in the effort to reach a synonym—"like prize-fighters."

"They're all that—they're daisies."

"What do they come here for? I'm glad they're gone," she said.

"So am I, but sit down. I want to see you."

Helene went to the door and called: "Evelyn! Come in, dear. We've got to wait. Papa isn't here."

Brennan greeted Miss Ward with his native, smiling ease, and the two girls took seats opposite him. There was something very engaging

about his frank face and pleasant brown eyes, and both girls seemed to like him very much. Helene, sitting in the big chair, fanned herself with a demoralized palm-leaf fan which she found on the table.

"How warm it is here in this office! And the streets are just like an oven. We met Mr. Tuttle — oh, did you know he had bought that old-fashioned cottage right opposite ours?"

"No, has he?"

Brennan looked more surprised than pleased.

"Yes, he's going to spend his summer there. Ain't that nice?"

"Oh, very — for him! I suppose he didn't know you lived opposite?"

Helene looked at him in a puzzled way, and Evelyn said quietly, "Sarcasms are always lost on Helene."

"I don't understand what you're saying," said Helene, going on with her plans. "We want you to come over and make up a set to play lawn-tennis to-night. Can't you do it?"

"I'll try to. But you see I'm awfully busy in the office just now, and, the Third House being in session, there's no getting away."

"Poor fellows! Wilson says the same thing. But I suppose laws have to be made. You work together, don't you?"

Brennan twisted his lips in an amusing way. "Well, not exactly. Well — yes," he went on, as if it were the shortest way out of it. "We both help to make the laws. Three houses with a single thought, you know."

"Now you're laughing at me — I won't have it!"

"But Mr. Tuttle said the other day that the Third House was a national disgrace," put in Evelyn, quietly.

"What did he mean by that?" inquired Helene, who really didn't know how many houses there were.

"Mr. Tuttle evidently doesn't consider the Third House a joking matter," Evelyn continued. She was studying Brennan closely.

"Oh, he was guying you! That's just one of our little jokes. You see we poke away at each other like a couple of lawyers in the court-room, and then laugh over it all in some other room! The Third House returns the compliment by calling the second house a band of bar-room loafers," he ended, laughing at the mystified expression on Helene's face, who turned toward Evelyn.

"Oh, ain't these men funny? They can call each other such names, and laugh and be good

friends just the same. Why is it women can't do that?"

"Because it ain't business with a woman; it's only form. A group of men can't all talk at once and interrupt each other and leave sentences unfinished, because it wouldn't be business, see!"

"Yes, I see. There's something in that phrase we women don't understand," Evelyn said. "Something magical."

"Sometimes it's anything but pleasant. Now I'd a good deal rather be down at the beach playing tennis than sweltering around the Capitol building."

"I thought you liked business?" put in Helene.

"I do, but I can't say I *hone* after some kinds." Under the influence of these clean, unsmirched women souls, Brennan really felt a touch of weariness with his unscrupulous work. "The trouble is a man can't always say what he will do and what he won't do. Success demands a good deal of a man."

"Papa thinks a great deal of your work. I heard him tell a man that you were his right-hand man."

Brennan was thoroughly in earnest now. "I hope I am. I like railroad management. Did

you ever think it's like controlling an army," he went on, his eyes kindling. "We sit here in the central office like officers in a tent." He leaned over to map it out on the table. "We mass cars here, hurry them up there and hurl them on a side-track there. There's an exhilaration about such business that lifts it above mere drudgery. It becomes command."

Evelyn's eyes were full of thought. "That's what comes of being a man — you can do things."

"You're almost like a colonel, then, ain't you?" Helene said. "You ought to wear a uniform — I like them; they're lovely."

"That's what we'll do soon. D'ye know, there's nothing like it for me." He rose and paced up and down the room. "If I'd been born before the war I'd have been a general, sure." He thrust out one powerful hand and clutched the air as if seizing a sword. "Power, command! That's why I like this railroad business. It's the next thing to war."

"I like your enthusiasm," sighed Evelyn. "I wish we women had — Mr. Davis trusts you fully, don't he?"

"Oh, perfectly," said Brennan, with a touch of his habitual sly fun. "He puts into my hands business he wouldn't do himself," he added

audaciously. "I'm his adjutant, the fellow that writes and carries the orders, you know. But the carrying of orders breeds the desire to give orders; the adjutant always aspires to be general. That's what I'm working for besides my board and clothes."

Brennan walked about excitedly as he talked, moved to it, perhaps, by the admiring gaze of Helene. Those who supposed they knew him best would have been surprised at his sincerity of passion.

"Why, Mr. Brennan, I didn't know you were so ambitious."

"To be superintendent of the Consolidated is one of my two great passions." As he said that he grew a shade paler, and his eyes darkened.

"What is the other?" asked Helene archly, as if she half guessed the truth. Both had forgotten Evelyn.

Brennan turned with a sudden impulse, a fine light in his brown eyes. "Can't you guess? *You* are!"

"Why, Tom Brennan, what are you saying?" She stared at him with wide blue eyes, the color coming into her cheeks. Evelyn leaned forward, studying his face eagerly. Was it Brennan who had won, and not Tuttle?

Brennan was scared at his precipitancy. "Don't mind me, Helene; I'm always puttin' me foot in me mout' like the wild Irishman I am. Don't you think it's gettin' warmer? It seems to me the mercury's on the rise!"

Then they all laughed.

"Yes, I think it is going to shower," said Evelyn gravely, from the window. There was an awkward pause — but only for an instant. Brennan turned the talk away to other themes.

Chapter III.

Can the Senate be Bought?

DAVIS came in briskly, followed by his attorney, Fox. He was a large man, with short side-whiskers, white as snow. His face was vivid-scarlet with the heat, and his mustache, close-cut, bristled with the motion of his lips. His eyes were keen and restless, and his voice fretful, harsh and imperious. He looked like a man of great energy beginning to break. He wore a short velvet coat, white trousers, a rather low-cut vest, and a flowing tie. A man of powerful individuality, as was evident from his dress.

"Oh, papa, we're waiting to go home. You know you promised to drive us down to-day."

Davis nodded at Miss Ward, and seated himself hastily at his desk.

"Yes, yes, yes, but I can't do it now, my dear. I've got some business — very important."

"Oh, dear! When can you go?" Helene pouted.

"Oh, I don't know," said Davis, impatiently, "In the course of half an hour, perhaps. Now, you take a drive up the avenue, and "——

"Oh, if you want to get rid of us," said Helene, in pretended anger. "Mr. Brennan, will you please help us into the carriage?"

"With pleasure," said Brennan, leaping forward. There was a gleam of coquetry in Helene's eyes that made his face radiant as they went out. Fox was a large man, with a full gray beard. His mustache was shaved. He looked like a Methodist deacon. His hair was close-clipped, and his eyes small and blue-gray. He looked after the young people while Davis lighted his cigar.

"Ain't she a little kittenish with Brennan?"

"Who?" said Davis, from the desk.

"Your daughter — Helene."

Davis looked at him closely.

"Are you a fool?" he asked, irascibly.

Fox took a seat in a chair, and softly exhaled a puff of smoke. His lips had curves at the corners like a baby's.

"I haven't that reputation, Lawrence," he said, in his oily, placating way, "and I know when a girl is kittenish. Now, you look out, or that young Irishman 'll be asking to be

a son-in-law to you. Know the symptoms. Raised a couple o' girls myself."

"Oh, nonsense! Tom knows his place."

Fox threw one leg over the arm of his chair.

"Unquestionably. But there is a good chance for disagreement between you and Brennan as to just what that place is. I've told you all along I didn't like the idea of letting that young fellow into our business so deep. It ain't safe — now, that's all."

"Yes, you've told me," said Davis, with a scowl on his face. "But somebody had to be used. I couldn't do the work."

"Well, use a man who cares more for money and — and less for power. You can handle a man that likes money, but you can't trust a man that likes power. Brennan's too ambitious."

Davis turned again to his work. "Oh, bosh! You needn't feel afraid of Tom. I know him better'n you do. Why, I've practically raised him right here in the office."

When Fox spoke again it was in a slow, significant way:

"I ain't afraid of any living man. I don't fear Tom Brennan, but I begin to *respect* him."

The way in which he said this attracted and held Davis' attention. As he returned Fox's gaze Brennan came in smiling and took a seat nea:

the table, opposite Davis. Fox arose and walked quietly up and down behind them, his hands in his pockets, his eyes on the floor. He was old enough to be venerable, but he was not.

"Well, Tommy," said Davis, quite jovially, "what's the result of your polling the senate to-day?"

"The bill is lost before it is read. Every amendment raises opposition," smiled Brennan, the memory of his last words with Helene in his mind.

"Smoke 'n' let's talk it over, my boy," returned Davis, handing him a cigar. They lit cigars, and Davis watched him while he puffed a few times. "No flies on that, my boy, eh? Twenty dollars per hundred. Trial box. Eh?" Davis had but lately taken to smoking "for his nerves," and he amused himself by assuming an old smoker's airs.

"They'll do, Governor," returned Brennan, puffing critically. "Who treated yeh?"

"Hear the man!" laughed Davis, much amused at the insinuation. "Do you think I'd"——

"The reason why I asked was — they taste very like *my* latest box."

"You extravagant cuss! You'll embezzle next." He became suddenly grave. "Well,

now about the senate — what do you propose to do, Tom?"

"Put in some more money. What do you propose to do?"

"Nothing," said Davis, shortly.

"Nothing, eh?"

"Nothing, I tell you," and then continued irritably: "I've spent a hundred thousand dollars already, and now you — you come to me with a scheme to practically buy the senate. Can't it be carried some other way?"

"I don't know any other way. Moral suasion is out of date in legislation."

"Well, we must find some other way. The cussed charter ain't worth the risk, Tom."

"Ain't it, now?" said Brennan jauntily. "Well, you wait till you find another road building along your very route, and then you'll see whether" ——

"It never'll be built," Davis burst out, slamming his fist down on the table. "I don't believe they ever intended to build. They're involved too deep with their newfangled motor. They never'll build, I tell yeh."

"Well, we can't tell that. And we can't take any risks."

"Risks! Well, now, let me tell you," said Davis, angrily. "I don't go into this thing

till I'm forced to, and if you don't use a different tone"——

Fox's soft, smooth voice insinuated itself into the conversation, like a gentle hand.

"Easy, Davis, easy! Now don't be rash! Don't make the mistake of your life here! We can't afford"——

Davis turned on him. "Who's the man in this thing, anyhow? Who represents the Consolidated Road? You or I?"

"You do, General," said Brennan, easily but dangerously cool. "But I'm the representative of the Third House, and I hold the balance of power. See? Now look here. I know you can't afford not to go into this last move. I tell you, if you don't, your charter is dead as the gates of Gehenna. Now, if you can't be sensible about this thing, be as sensible as you can. The Third House is all right. I've got the whole batch and bilin' of 'em, as the feller said, but the senators must be fixed."

"I'll be damned if I go into such a business." Davis settled back, angrily. "I'm done. Now, that settles it."

Fox was alarmed, and struck in, persuasively: "Oh, come, come, Davis! This is no time for you to get thin-skinned. You hadn't

any objection to buying the Third House. Now, why kick about the first or the second?"

Davis rose and walked nervously about. His highly colored face grew mottled in his excitement.

"Because it's dangerous. I don't care for the principle so much. My duty is to succeed. I believe we ought to succeed. Nobody can serve the public as well as we do. If we don't buy 'em I suppose somebody else will. But it's a different thing dealing with the senators. They're officials. It's a State-prison offense."

"No danger at all to you, Governor," said Brennan. "I'll take care of that. I make all the advances. They can't get hold of you."

"Certainly," said Fox. "You are to know nothing about it; Tom and I look after the whole matter. All is, you must disburse for the company—and Tom and I will go ahead. You can trust us."

Davis appeared to relent, and Brennan struck in jocularly, with a touch of the Irish dialect:

"It's as safe as smoken'. Just give Sammy discretionary power over me, and me discretionary power over the Third House and the

senate, and we'll have the bill t'roo like a weeny goet t'roo a garrden fence. See?"

"It's easy talkin'."

"It's easy doen'," said Brennan, lifting his right hand into the air and shaking it in a powerful gesture. "Give me a hundred thousand dollars, and I'll capture *anny* legislathur in this great and glohrious"——

Davis turned on him in distrust. "A hundred thousand dollars? It does very well for you to talk money so glibly. You've got nothing to lose. I begin to think I've put too much money into the hands of a man"——

Brennan interrupted him sternly, something ominous creeping into his voice:

"Aisy, now, Governor. Honor among—gentlemen, y' know. You'll give me money when I want it, and you'll give it without scratch of pen, or down goes your Air Line and up bobs the star of the Motor Line. Understand?"

Davis, unwontedly irritable, turned upon him with set teeth. "Are you threatening me, you cussed gutter-snipe? Damned if I don't begin to believe you stand in with that blackmailing crew. If I knew it, by heavens, I'd"——

Fox again came between them, with his soft, soothing hands and that marvelous voice.

"Now, now, wait a moment, brother. Now you — you're irritated to-day. You agreed to this yesterday. You came here to-day to go into this thing. Now wait a moment," he said, stopping Davis, who was about to speak. "You've already bought off two or three other lines. We've passed your bill through the Third House, Tommy and I — and the second house — we've carried it to the senate" ——

"Yes. Cost a hundred and fifty thousand dollars to do it, too. It's too much."

"It couldn't have been done cheaper. Tommy and I have worked like Trojans to pull yeh through. But suppose Tommy has been a little extravagant. See what we're getting — this charter that is worth millions. I tell you, Lawrence, we've got to grab this thing right now. The dear, damned public are waking up to the fact that they produce the value of these franchises, and not we, and they're going to charge us for them."

Brennan, who had mastered himself again, resumed his jocular air.

"You bet! And there's Tuttle opposing every step and putting in a bill to charge a graduated increasing annual rent for street privileges. I tell you, General, we've got to strike right now."

"What's the matter with that man Tuttle?" said Davis, his mind taking another direction for the moment. "Can't he be fixed?"

"Fixed? Naw! He's got his eyes on bigger boodle."

"What's that?"

"Congress and all that. See? He's doing the scholar in politics act. P. P.— purifying politics. He's a victim of the iridescent dream, as Ingalls called it."

"I know something else he's got his eyes on, Tommy," said Fox, with a sly look at Brennan, "and that's" ——

Brennan leaped to his feet, divining that Fox meant Helene.

"Stop that!"

"Aha, Tommy! That's what tickles yeh!"

"Just keep your tongue off my private affairs, will you?"

Fox was vastly amused at his success in irritating Brennan. He shook in silent merriment.

"Oh, all right, Tommy! I only wanted to warn yeh, that's all."

"You'd better warn him," replied Brennan darkly. Davis was impatient at all of this side conversation, in which he apparently had no share.

"Come, come! If you fellers have got

through gabbling, let's return to business. What are we to do next? Move on the senate? I don't like it, but if I" ——

"I propose to move on your nearest neighbor, Ward," said Brennan with quiet decision.

"On Rufus Ward?"

"On Rufus, of Schoharie."

Fox smiled in enjoyment of Brennan's attack. "Oh, Tommy is equal to anything."

"On Rufus Ward," continued Davis, dropping his eyes in sudden thought. "Do you think you can get him, reasonably?" he asked at last.

"What do you call reasonably?"

"Ten thousand, say."

"Just now, yes."

"What do you mean by just now?"

"Well, I happen to know he was in the copper trust and got dropped with a thickening sud, as the reporters say. He needs money bad."

"Is that so?" cried Davis, eagerly, pitilessly. "Then buy him — buy him! He's our trump — but don't waste money," he added.

Fox shook again with silent laughter.

"Ain't it curious that a man can turn right around on himself an'" ——

"Trust your Tommy, General," said Brennan, "and he'll carry the bill."

Davis brought his hand heavily down on the desk.

"Done! — That is," he exclaimed hastily, "consult with my lawyer, there. He has this thing in hand. Look to him. He represents me, you know."

"That's all right," laughed Brennan. "I understand your delicacy." Then he turned upon them both with a face transformed into something stern, masterful, almost ferocious. His words came slowly through his set teeth. He tapped the table softly with the tips of his fingers; his chin was thrust out and down in a terrible gesture.

"Gentlemen, don't fool yourselves. Tom Brennan knows the situation thoroughly. If I take all the risk, you may gamble I get my pay for it. Understand?"

An explosion and final settlement was postponed by Helene's voice sounding outside, and then her knock upon the door. "Come, poppa, haven't you got through your business yet? If you haven't, I'm going home alone." She opened the door and walked in.

Davis rose hastily, wiping the perspiration from his purple face. He was glad of the interruption. "Yes, yes, my dear, I'm ready to go.

Well, gentlemen, I'll leave you to talk that matter over alone."

As Davis bustled about collecting his papers, Helene turned to Brennan: "You'll come down, won't you, and bring your tennis suit?"

"Isn't it rather warm for tennis?" said Tom, in the tender tone with which lovers make utter commonplaces infinitely significant.

"Oh, no, not down by the sea. In the evening it's just delightful. You'll come?"

"Of course I'll come. I'd come if 'twere to me death," he said.

"Oh, that's nice," said Helene, with easy appreciation of his intent to be funny. "And you must be my partner, so I can beat. I like to be on the side that wins."

"So do I. I generally am."

"I know it. That's the reason I" ——

"Come, come!" said Davis, with an unusual touch of asperity in his voice. Brennan went out with them. Fox watched them go, then began whistling softly and looking at the ceiling. Brennan came back in a few minutes, humming a tune, the love-light in his pleasant brown eyes.

"Rather complaisant with you, my boy," said Fox. "You've made an impression there."

Brennan silenced him with a facile scowl and quick wave of his hand.

"Leave that. You're too fresh," he said, with an insolent tone. He went to the telephone, and rang.

"Hello! Capitol building? Give me Colonel Mott. Is that you, Colonel? Yes. Well, did you tell Ward I'd like to see him? All right; much obliged. Come down when you can; I want to see you. All right. Good-by." Ringing off, he turned and said in a cold, quick, business-like way: "Ward's on his way down here. Now, I want this whole thing in my hands. How much money you got with you? No more checks in this business. We're playing too big stakes now."

It was evident that Brennan was in a bad humor, and Fox did not care to cross him. He took some packages of money from his pocket. "There's ten thousand dollars in this packet, and five thousand dollars in each of these." He handed one of the smaller packages to Brennan, while he put the other small package back into his own pocket.

"Now, I'd like a memorandum of some kind."

"You shall have it. Robert, write this: 'Received ten thousand dollars on account, June 1st.'"

"No cipher signature?" asked Fox.

"Nothing more than that. We're getting into pretty close quarters. Honor among thieves, old boy. Now, you get out before Ward comes in and sees you."

Fox delivered the larger package of money, and went quietly out.

Chapter IV.

THE GUTTER-SNIPE MUST RISE.

BRENNAN was as much a product of our society, and especially of our government, as the electric railway or the telephone, or the milk trust. His like is to be seen in every hotel corridor. He comes into the city on the nine o'clock boat or train, reading the report of the stock market. His normal attitude in his office is leaning his ear to the telephone or running the stock reporter's ribbon through his hands deftly. He thinks in "schemes." His hands clutch money.

It is not true to say Brennan was conscienceless. There are things which he could not be brought to do by any pressure. The explanation is, that in his world the ordinary ideas of morality did not hold. He did not consider himself a villain, therefore, and the attack he was about to make on the honor of a senator figured itself to him as a piece of justifiable diplomacy. Isolated from the necessities of the day, the act might

have seemed a little "tough," but, as it stood, it did not give him a twinge.

He was a product of the necessity a poor Irish boy is under, to be smart and shifty, in order to succeed. He was a bright child at school, and a bright boy in the office of a commission merchant and broker. His big bright eyes saw everything that was going on, and his quick ears heard and returned the coarse expressions, and the cynical philosophy as well, which mark such places.

It could not have made of him other than a bold, quick and altogether able man of expedients. He had caught the eye of Davis a dozen years back, and, having taken him into his office and finding him efficient, and (as he believed) trustworthy, the great Railway Duke had, year by year, enlarged his confidence till no man in his employ had the same intimate knowledge of his most private affairs.

At his suggestion Brennan studied law, and he was an adroit lawyer when Davis began to intrust to him the important matter of lobbying in the interests of the road. For several years, therefore, Brennan had attended to the work of suppressing unwelcome legislation, and the equally important work of "inducing" legislation which was desirable. He had thus come to

know everybody, and especially to know any shady part of their lives, the knowledge of which would add to his control over them in case of need.

He went about all this as a skillful chess-player would plan for future moves. He had no malice, and the moral consideration had no place with him. He knew Senator Ward's vulnerable spot, and he aimed his spear there as remorselessly as Hagan upon Siegfried, but without envy or rage.

After Fox went out, he approached the young clerk in the outer office — Robert, his half-brother.

"Rob, I'm expecting Senator Ward. Of course, you won't be able to see him, and you'll be busy and won't hear him." A faint smile lighted Robert's eyes. "I'm going to take the old man into camp," Brennan added. "You know his little weakness. All's fair in love and — politics." He broke out into a song.

Robert went back to his work. He was slightly deaf, which exaggerated his naturally cold-blooded, methodical nature. He had not been secured because of this defect, but it was an admirable failing, as Davis recognized. While he had Tom's keen, analytical mind, he had too little emotion to be ambitious; his deafness

separated him at an early age from young people, and he lived a secluded, bookish life, when out of the office.

The telephone bell rang, and Brennan went to it. "Hello! Who is it? Oh, it's you, old boy — Horse race? — To-day? — Not much — Too hot — Hot, hot, hot! — No race in mine — What? — I don't care if it were Sunol and Wilkes — Is, eh? — Charlie's goin', of course. Oh, certainly — Who are the girls? — Oh, you infernal reprobates. Haven't you got any conscientious scruples? *Scruples* — Con-*sci*-entious scru-ples? No, I shouldn't say you had! — No use! — Oh, go chase yourself! — I say can't go, and that's all — Oh, go take a walk! — don't bother me about that — You told me that before — Yes, you did — The day we went out — Oh, go to — Good-by."

As he turned from the telephone he confronted Senator Ward, who had entered. "Ah, good afternoon, Senator! Glad to see you! Sit down. Pretty hot, ain't it?"

"Very warm. Don't think I can stay," replied Ward, who was a tall man with a long gray beard. He had a gentle face and a small round head.

"Oh, you must! How is Mrs. Ward and Evelyn?"

Ward replied a little stiffly: "Very well, thank you."

"Sit down, Senator, and have a glass of champagne. Just off the ice. Cold as Greenland." He poured a large glass for him, and extended it close to his face, as if to make the sight and smell irresistible.

Ward took it hesitatingly. "Thank you! The heat seems to take hold of me this year more than ever." He seemed to be already flushed with drinking, as Brennan's quick eye perceived.

"I saw your daughter to-day—lovely as a June rose. Take a cigar!"

Ward refused the cigar, but sat down tentatively in his chair.

"Yes, she's in town to-day. But never mind family affairs," he said, with a change of tone. "What's the business you want to see me about?"

"Ah, sure! don't plunge into that till you git y'r breath and cool off a little," laughed Brennan, with a touch of his Irish blarney. "Let me fill up y'r glass. Oh, it's quite like watther, Senator."

Ward ceased to protest and drank again, while Brennan went on: "It's mighty coolin' on the tongue. It's a day like this makes a man

want to be built like a crockery-crate, so the wind 'ud blow troo him. How's business beneath the Granite Goddess, anyhow?"

"Not much doing these hot days," replied Ward, getting more at his ease.

"When do you think the Consolidated bill will come up?"

"Possibly on Monday — by Tuesday, sure."

"You're one of the opposition?"

"Yes," said Ward, with a touch of his senatorial manner. "I think it's time we began to hedge the power of these great monopolies."

Brennan took an easy position in his chair. "On general principles that's true, and I'm with you, but in this particular case, it seems to me, it would be a great benefit to the public to have the charter granted to us. Take another glass. Try this stuff of Teck's. I think it's pretty good." He poured another glass and extended it as he glibly went on: "No other corporation can build a road in the same time. No other can give the same cheap fares and rates, because they ain't got the connection. Your idea's good, but the time ain't ripe for it. When the State's ready to buy our lines, we'll be ready to sell — at a reasonable figure, of course. But the time ain't ripe."

"That's true enough, but we mus' sacrifice

something for principle," said Ward, with a touch of elaborate gravity, which evidenced his growing intoxication. "The public demand"——

"The public!" exclaimed Brennan, in vast disgust. "Good God! You go ahead, vote against the Consolidated, and when a man has to pay ten cents where he might have paid but five, or travels an extra hour, you'll find out how much the public care for principle! Principle? The damned public wouldn't know a principle with a bell on it!"

"Come, come! Tha's too hard, Tom. The public know 'nough"——

"Enough to demand that its legislature shall bear all mistakes. They'll demand a bill they don't see the effects of, and then down their representatives for carrying out their will. The public be damned! It ain't business to follow their whims."

"Tha's true, in a measure." His eyelids fell over his eyes and clung together for just a perceptible instant. Brennan saw that the time was come to make his attack. He leaned over and tapped the senator on the knee. "Well, now, to come to business. I hear things are not going well with yeh, Senator."

"Who — who — told yeh?" said Ward, rousing up.

"Mrs. Ward just hinted it. Now, if I can be of any use to you, Senator—you know Mrs. Ward considers me an old friend."

Ward winked slowly. His voice was thick.

"Well, t-to tell the truth, Tom, things are goin' bad. I've got raise six'een thousan' by the firs' of July, and it's worryin' me. Yeh see, I wen' in'o copper."

"I understand. Well, now, why don't you let me step in here and help you out?"

"D'ye mean tha', Tommy?"

"Every word of it, Senator."

"You're a brick, Tom. Tha's what y' are, but I can't give you any s'curity."

"Oh, never mind about that. I'll let you have ten thousand in cash to-day."

"You will. On w-what conditions?"

"On condition you help me a little."

"How's that, Tommy? I don't un'erstan'."

"By not working against the Consolidated bill."

Ward stared at him in silence, slowly revolving Brennan's words in his mind. Then he rose unsteadily, buttoning his coat around his spare figure, in the attempt at dignified indignation. "D'ye mean to bribe me? If yeh do"——

"No, no, no! Sit down, sit down! No

bribe about it. Let me explain." He put his hand on the Senator's shoulder; but it was his voice, rather than touch, that caused the old man to yield and seat himself again. "That's one condition. Because, you see, Senator, I'm interested in the road. You didn't know that, of course?"

"Wouldn't 'a' made any difference. The principle"——

"But that's only one condition, and the one I care least about," went on Brennan, softly and persuasively. "You see, Senator, I—I admire your daughter very much, and Mrs. Ward has—seemed like a mother to me. Now, you see why I'm"——

"Is tha' so, Tom?" He was surprised and helpless before such graceless lying.

"That's so, that's so! I simply can't stand by and see them suffer. It ain't right." He took a package from his pocket. "Now, here's ten thousand dollars in cash. I'll lay it right here in this drawer, and step out into the other office a moment. I don't give it to you. I don't even lend it. All I ask you to do is to withdraw your opposition and speak a good word for me when the time comes. You're perfectly free to do as you like, you understand?" Ward was about to protest. "Hold on, now! Don't

be rash. Think it over, and if you need more to pull you out of your hole, draw on me as on a son."

Ward pulled himself together with a herculean effort, and buttoned up his coat tightly around him to the last button. "See here, Brennan, y-you can' talk t' me like that. I'm not tha' kind of a man. No ten thousand dollars can buy me."

"I'm not buying you. Don't you go off half-cocked!"

"Well, my vote — it's the same thing, 'xactly the same thing."

"No, it ain't. Now, hold on. Look at this thing sensibly. The case is this: I ask your vote for a bill. It's a good bill, you'll acknowledge that — nothing the matter with the bill. Now, you've been opposed. Possibly you've been wrong. A change of your vote is a little thing to you — a great thing to us. Here we stand asking a franchise which is vitally necessary to the people."

"It belongs to the people." When he began to argue Brennan felt sure of him.

"No, it don't. It belongs to us if we can get it. The people can't use it, only through us. Now, be reasonable; give us your vote"——

Ward burst forth in a weak explosion of

wrath. "By heavens, I'll go to the wall 'fore I take a bribe."

There was a dangerous pause, during which Brennan gazed straight into the Senator's eyes. A look came upon his face that took all the youth and good nature out of it. "Go to the wall, eh?"

"Yes, sir. Better die honest."

"And ruin your family?"

"Yes, sir," replied Ward; but he was visibly weakening. "My family rather have me"——

"Going to the wall ain't so funny as you imagine. So you kick against my offer, do yeh?"

"Yes, sir, I do. Of course, if I could consis'en'ly"——

"And ten thousand dollars is no object, eh?"

"No, sir — nor fifty thousand."

"All right, sir." He leaned over and spoke something in a low voice to Ward, who glared at him rigid with fear and shame. "Oh, it was nothing criminal, Senator; but it would make a spicy column in the newspaper, all the same."

"God A'mighty, Tom — you wouldn't — who told"——

Brennan faced him with a set look in his eye. "Never mind where I learned it. Mebbe the hackman told me. It's my business to know all

such things. That's the way a man succeeds in this world. Publish it? You bet your life I'll publish every detail. I tell you, I'm going to have this bill — fair means if possible, any means if necessary. That's business. Now, what are you going to do? Now, don't swear and make a fool of yourself. Think it all over carefully."

"Don't — don't press me, Tom. Give me a little time."

Brennan saw that he had gained his point, and was ready to yield one. "Certainly, Senator, only the bill comes up soon."

"A-all right, Tom. But — it's a serious thing." Davis looked in from the outer office, unseen by Ward, who had turned toward Brennan.

"Oh, nonsense, Senator; you're too old-fashioned about these things. It's just like finding something. Nothing at all after you get used to it. Now, I'll depend on you."

"Well, I'll see," said Ward, going unsteadily.

"All right. I'll see you to-morrow. Good-by!" He accompanied the Senator to the door of the inner office; then returned to his desk, leaving Robert to see him to the elevator. When Davis entered from Fox's office he was seated at the table, with his hat on, a cigar in his mouth, writing busily. As Davis spoke, he looked over his shoulder with an ominous

change of manner. "Oh, it's you, is it, Governor? Thought you'd gone home."

"I started to, but I met Binney, and the fact is, I'm worried. I want to have a word in private on this thing."

Brennan's smile still dimpled his smooth cheek, but the look in his eyes belied it, as the smile of the pugilist belies his lowering eyebrows and clenched fists. His voice had a tone in it that Davis had never heard before. "Well, now, I'm glad you come back. I want a word with *you*," he said, with a challenging inflection in his voice. "You and I've got to come to an understanding on this thing," he added, wheeling his chair about and facing Davis, his elbow on the table. "I'm a gutter-snipe, but I don't want it rubbed in."

"What do you mean?"

"Sit down an' I'll tell you just what I mean," said Brennan, in a tone that destroyed all difference in position between them. "You took me into this office ten years ago, and you've given me a chance to rise. I'm grateful, etc., etc., but I'm also aware that I give more than value received. To-day I'm your confidential man, your lobbyist and attorney at five thousand a year, and — perkesites. But the day has come for a rise. The gutter-snipe must rise."

Davis looked at him, his face purpling with rage. He thought he measured Brennan's intention. "Well, didn't I agree to your own proposition?"

"Yes, to all the proposition I cared to state in the presence of a third party. You're perfectly aware that we're engaged in what the laws of the United States call a crime"——

"Good God, man! Of course I know it!" Davis burst forth irritably. "That's the reason I"—— He stopped abruptly.

"Oh, go on! Don't hesitate!" said Brennan, with ferocious irony. "That's the reason you stay out of it and send me into it. Well, as I say, I'm ready to go, but I want pay for it."

"Well, well! Make your terms. I suppose that's what all this leads to. How much do you want?"

Brennan straightened up and looked him square in the face. His tone was low, but inflexible. "I want to be raised from the humble but lucrative position of member of the Third House to the distinction of being a member of the house of Davis & Company."

"What's that?" demanded Davis in amazement.

"I want to be recognized as a stockholder in the Consolidated Road."

"Why, man, that's out of the question!"

"No, it ain't. It's easy to Lawrence B. Davis. But that ain't all. I want to be general superintendent of this road, and son-in-law to its president."

Davis leaped up, his face mottled with blood. "*What?* Why, you infernal fool! You're crazy!"

Brennan's voice dropped a note lower, and became hard as iron. "Never saner, and never more in earnest, either. I know what I want, and how to get it. The gutter-snipe must rise."

"You — you — you — talk like an idiot."

"I'll make a good superintendent to you."

"I'll see you cold first," stormed Davis.

The smile faded out of Brennan's face, and his half-closed eyes had a sinister glare. "I'll see you in State's prison last, if you don't keep your temper and talk sense."

"You don't mean"——

"I mean just that," Brennan replied, coldly malignant. "I'll send you to hell, if necessary, and I can do it. I'm too deep in this thing to be left out of the calculations."

Davis looked at him in silence, his face filled with something like fear and astonishment. "Oh, bosh!" he said, recovering himself. "You ain't got any hold on me. Your word

won't count against mine. You'd only damn yourself."

"Try it and see, Governor. Remember, you're a father. I'd hate to antagonize my father-in-law."

"You damned scoundrel!" shouted Davis, trembling with rage. "You're not fit to touch her."

"Well, you're not exactly a monument of virtue," sneered Brennan. "You may disgrace me yet."

The two men stood facing each other in silence, Brennan smiling easily again, Davis struggling for control. His hands trembled as he gathered some papers off his desk and turned to face Brennan again, whose smile enraged him almost beyond measure. His hands shook. "I've a good mind to smash your face," he snarled at last, through his set teeth. His rage was not because of Brennan's villainy, but because it was directed toward him.

"Don't be rash! Take more time to think of it. I'm a good soldier, General, but when I scale a barricade and bring back a flag, I want promotion, not wages. The gutter-snipe must rise."

Davis went silently toward the door. His face was pale now, and set like granite, in anger.

He spoke through his set teeth. "I'll answer you to-morrow, you miserable"——

With a sudden impulse, Brennan threw himself against the door, his face grown ferocious, his voice terrible.

"By God! you'll answer me now — right *now*, before you go out of this door! D'ye un'erstand? You've worked this thing carefully, but I haven't studied your methods for nothing. You think I've got no hold on you, eh?"

"Open that door!" yelled Davis, impotently furious.

"I'll open another door for yeh," replied Brennan, leveling his finger at him, as if he presented a revolver. "I can prove that you paid, on May 28th, five thousand dollars to Senator Hol"——

"You lie! You know nothing about"——

"Don't I? I know enough to publish your name in headlines an inch deep to-morrow morning, and, by the eternal heavens, I'll do it if you don't come to terms."

The old man was seized with a sudden weakness. The set eyes and the inflexible voice of the younger man shook him strangely. In the pause which followed he felt he had met his master. "What do you want?" he said, hoarsely.

"I've told you. Is it peace or war?"

As Davis stood there, with clenched and restless hands, the blood went out of his face, leaving him white almost as paper. When he spoke, his voice was husky with fear and rage. "Peace! Don't be a fool!"

Brennan opened the door, Davis went out, and Brennan followed, saying, in a breezy tone: "Well, good evening, Governor. Don't worry about this at all. I'll see that it goes through." He closed the door, went to the table, and poured out some liquor with hands that trembled. As he took his seat in a chair opposite his brother, he said: "Holy smoke! It's tough on the nerves. I'll have to go to Europe soon for my health."

"What did you say?"

"I said I guessed I'd go over to Hilliard's awhile," Brennan replied, rising to go.

Chapter V.

THE THIRD HOUSE IN SESSION.

THE Hilliard House lobby and bar-room was filled with a throng of men whose easy attitudes, unconstrained laughter and absorbed attention upon each other's words denoted that this was their well-accustomed rendezvous after the sessions had closed for the day.

The high-salaried bartender served the drinks and sponged the bar with smiling and yet elaborate ease. Everybody knew him, and his chaff was highly relished by the distinguished lawmakers who came and went along the polished glass rod. The whole atmosphere was jovial, unconstrained, careless, and full of vitality.

All the men were well dressed and freshly barbered—many of them were handsome in a hard, superficial way—most of them were under forty, though here and there a man of fifty shook his purpling face and close-clipped pink and white head as some younger man told a "rich joke." On most faces the swollen veins suggested high living, which the increasing slope

of the waistcoat showed to a certainty. In their eyes an insatiate lust lay like a half-concealed ember.

Pearl-gray plug hats, dangling gold chains, snug, light-colored Prince Albert suits, and gay neckties were the common dress. Their hands, adorned with rings set with bizarre stones, gracefully raised and removed cigars, and the point of a story often came after a significant wait, while the little finger knocked the ashes from the end of the daintily extended cigar.

Many of the men were exchange gamblers, gentlemanly sellers of mining stock, men of expedients. Others were legislators of the purchasable sort — or, at least, of the sort capable of being influenced. Some were commercial travelers — knowing fellows, who never forget an acquaintance, nor how to use him — and percolating through this loosely grouped throng were the members of the Third House, the unknown lawmakers of the land.

These were not distinguishable by dress, only by manner. They were invariably the centers of small groups of listening legislators, talking eagerly with emphatic gesticulations of the right elbow, while they mapped out on the palm of the left hand the scheme which they believed "ought to go through."

Here a row of three were leaning upon the bar, while an extremely handsome man of large frame gave a mysterious order to the barkeeper. Over in the corner a short man in a cutaway coat laughed up at a group looking down at him, his broad face, with mutton-chop whiskers, making him look like a well-fed English curate. As one passed by a group of uproarious laughers he caught a few words which told him they were rehearsing the story of a senator who was taken home from a certain house, "all his money gone and his false teeth lost!"

Another group, as evidently composed of the third and second houses, was discussing the bill for the division of the town of Bradford, an act in the interests of the tax-dodgers, and there was not wanting here and there a scowling brow as some man rehearsed a grievance.

The business of the bar and the café adjoining filled the place with smell, as the ripple of talk did with sound, beneath which the constant click of heels and whisking scrape of soles came unceasingly as they came and went from the lobby to the bar and back to the lobby again.

The scene was essentially American and modern, Radbourn said to Tuttle as he sat in the café, which opened off the lobby.

"The Third House in session," said Tuttle.

"Discussing your next move, no doubt."

"Yes," said Tuttle, with a faint smile; "I suppose I'm the cause of some of that talk out there." He sat at a table near the door, with his back to the table. "That's the reason I prefer to sit with my back to the wall. My work in getting a joint committee appointed don't alarm them much, but they don't love me any better for it, I imagine."

"I understand. And that is your Third House?"

"Yes. Do you see a white-whiskered man, with a short coat and gay necktie?"

"Yes, but how can you see him?"

"'In my mind's eye, Horatio.' Well, he's an ex-senator. Next to Tom Brennan one of the strongest men in the lobby. You see, the more of a political pull a man has, the more valuable he is as a member of the Third House. He's a Republican, but that don't matter in the lobby. Party lines don't count for much."

"No; a vote's a vote here. Magnificent use to put suffrage to — eh?"

"Splendid! Do you see a short man with a broad face, mutton-chop whiskers?"

"I did a moment ago; he's out of range."

"Well, that's Bob Merritt, ex-mayor of Suncook, ex-representative from Suncook County,

and so it goes. You wouldn't think, to look and hear that merry group, that they were criminals and liable to incarceration."

"They probably differ with you about criminality. They consider themselves jolly good fellows. They are to be found in every great hotel lobby in America. I've studied them closely — no doubt you have. I don't imagine that they keep awake nights thinking of their sins."

"I should say not," laughed Tuttle. "Why, take that very Tom Brennan — I meet him in private life, and I can't help liking the man personally. At the same time I know he's just like those jolly fellows — clasps hands on an infamous bargain with the same smile and cordial word he'd use in extending a cigar-case."

"What appals me, Tuttle, especially, is the moral atmosphere they live in, which destroys well-meaning young legislators as malaria attacks and undermines the Northern man as he enters the swamps of the South. Many a well-meaning lawyer or merchant comes into this political world, intending to serve his people and not monopolists, but he loses his grip on right and justice. My four years in Washington showed me that. To many men, justice and

truth are not convictions of their own — they take moral color from their surroundings — and this world of the trickster is fatal to moral health."

"Yet they're happy," mused Tuttle, "and they succeed — that's the demoralizing thing. Business is like it — success is so much easier along conscienceless lines." His face grew sad. "I never could have succeeded as Brennan has, alone, unaided, uneducated. He'll go to the top, if he don't get into the hands of the law — and he'll do it in his own unscrupulous way, too, that's the worst of it. It makes me despondent sometimes."

Radbourn looked out into the lobby for a moment. "They are products. In their world is the latest survival of universal warfare. In their world there grow no flowers of pity and remorse — only the scentless roses of passion and greed. Life is a mock and a gibe. It is a ring where, if you throttle or knock out your opponent according to rules, no shadow of blame attaches to you. In their air no philosophy except the heartless cynicism of roués and gamblers gets a voice."

"And these men marry and have children," said Tuttle, as Radbourn paused.

"Yes, and their wives live on the money they

wrench or filch from others, and never question where it comes from. The consciences of women need awaking if"——

There was an outburst of voices in the bar-room.

"That must be Brennan," said Tuttle.

"A handsome young fellow, with a smiling face, has just come in. Big brown mustache"——

"That's Brennan—king of the Third House."

They all crowded around Brennan, calling jocularly:

"Hello, Tom! Now, what?"

"Take a bracer, Tom."

"Say, d' ye know what Tuttle's scheme is?"

"No, *what* is it?"

"He's got a joint committee appointed to investigate Consolidated doings this winter."

"Oh, is that all?" said Brennan carelessly. "No, I won't take anything." He moved away from the bar and out of hearing.

Tuttle's face took on a resolute look.

"You see how confident he is? They are organized. Every available point is defended. My only hope is to find a man within to unbar the gate."

Radbourn looked at his watch. "I wish I could stay and help you, but I can't. I must

be getting to my train. I shall read the papers carefully to see how you come out."

"I wish you could go down to the country with me, but if you must go"——

"Must—so good-by." He reached out his strong hand, and Tuttle took it, looking up into the stern, rugged face. "Keep pushing. Did you ever try to start a freight car? You put your shoulder to it and strain every muscle to its best—it seems like a rock—but wait! Hold your place—slowly, imperceptibly, it begins to move. Make your own moral. Good-by." Radbourn rushed away with a wave of the hand.

Tuttle passed out into the street and down toward the steamer. It was getting cooler, and the tide of suburban life was setting toward the depots and boats. The memory of Radbourn's hand was in his. "If I only had his help," he thought, as the magnitude of his struggle came before him.

He felt he could stand ridicule, but to fail now was to fail for twenty-five years. If the Consolidated got its charter, it might stop all legislation in the interest of the public.

It was a strange and beautiful experience to go from the hot air of the city, shaken with the jarring war and thunder of trade, down toward the

water-smell, where the boats came in to lap the mossy fringe of wharves. The moment his face felt the wind and his eye caught a glimpse of the yellow-green water, Tuttle's forehead smoothed out and he gave a sigh of relief. His care was gone.

Chapter VI.

A GAME OF TENNIS.

THE unusual heat of June had driven the leisurely classes to "Waterside" earlier than usual, and already the most of the cottages were opened, and the women and children settled for the summer. The restless fathers and husbands, however, simply came and went from the city, where the crush of business knew no heat or cold.

Men like Davis came down to supper — occasionally — more often came at eight or nine to sleep at home and eat breakfast, where they could look out upon the water; but their capacity for rest was lost. They could not throw off the business habit, and they returned to business on the eight o'clock boat, reading the stock markets, with no time to see the cool and restful face of nature.

Brennan was still young, and had not lost the power to throw aside his cynicism and his plans for control of men and money. He gave himself up occasionally to the enjoyment

of the sea and the flowers and Helene's coquetry. On these trips he grew light-hearted almost as a boy.

He had rooms at the hotel nearest Mr. Davis' cottage, and he was already on the most intimate terms—apparently—with everybody, from the elevator boy to the lonely old widow-woman whom everybody avoided because of her stories of aches and pains and whining recounts of deaths and funerals.

On these trips Brennan threw business literally to the winds. He sang, labored at the banjo, took part in every dance, helped the children mend their toys, and won, without conscious effort, the good will of them all.

Waterside was an old town, with quaint, winding, low-lying streets close to the water, where the floods sometimes came. It still retains many square-topped verandaed mansion-houses on the higher streets. Along the immediate waterfront the ancient fisher-cabins had been cleared away, and quaint cottages had taken their place.

Davis had built his house on the shore near Senator Ward, and his family had spent their summers for many years in an old house that belonged to his wife's father, and here had sprung up the friendship of Helene and Evelyn. Wilson Tuttle and his aged mother had taken a cottage

on the opposite side of the street, because he wished to be near Helene, though his mother aided him to conceal this by a careful statement of how much she had desired the sea-air at the point.

When Brennan left his hotel and walked across the road he had a tennis racquet in his hand. A gay sash about his lithe and powerful young body, a jaunty tennis hat and loosely knotted tie finished a transformation. He was facile as an actor. He seemed to change his nature with his dress. As he walked he sang under his breath. He was something more than handsome: there was character in his strong, straight nose, in his resolute yet merry brown eyes, and, as he met Helene, her eyes fell, and a quick flush on her cheek gave him instant exultation.

There was quite a group on the lawn lying between Senator Ward's house and the Davis cottage.

"Oh, Mr. Brennan," pouted Helene, "you're late."

"Sorry. Couldn't help it. Business, you know; but I'm ready to make up for it. Come," he said, taking possession of Helene, "we're partners. Who takes the opposite?"

"Evelyn and Mr. Tuttle—if he'll play," said Evelyn.

"I'll try," Tuttle replied, "but I'm not very"——

"Oh, you'll improve with age," Tom laughed, as he leaped the net.

Tuttle was in tennis suit also, but without the sash and flowing tie. He wore his glasses with the bows behind his ears. His slender frame was active enough, but awkward. Other young people were seated about on benches under the trees. Here and there a banjo tinkled, and boats out on the bay were moving slowly in the light wind, the red sunlight glinting on the sails Laughter and song came from every side—a magical time and place.

It was all deliciously far away from the hotel lobby and the Third House, and Brennan gave himself up to it with that facile adaptation which made him a mystery and a spur to Tuttle. He played tennis as he did everything—with ease and careless adroitness. The only thing that distracted him was Helene, who looked deliciously, inhumanly tempting in her easy flannels, her little blue cap pulled rakishly (and, perhaps, designedly) over one ear. Evelyn wore her cap straight, square as a policeman's helmet.

Tuttle, with that perversity which really fine

minds are often guilty of, struggled to match Brennan on this field, while Helene laughed merrily at his failures, and Evelyn smiled when he tried to half-volley and nearly broke his racquet by hitting the ground. He felt unconsciously that his knowledge of literature and languages didn't count with that laughing, flushed and careless little creature over the net.

At last Brennan shouldered his racquet and spoke alone to Helene. "I don't believe I can play any more. Let's go and sit down here, and give the rest a chance. I want to talk to you."

Helene knew what was coming, but she was fascinated with the idea of listening to his plea. Her natural coquetry made her quite uncertain whether she loved him or Wilson best. He was so handsome in his tennis suit. Wilson was surrounded by the other players; it would not do any harm anyhow.

"Come," insisted Brennan. "I haven't had a chance to talk with you for a week."

Helene hesitated a little, looking toward the house. "I ought to go and sit with poppa. He looks awfully lonesome sitting over there. He seems worried lately about something. Do you know what?"

"Oh, it may be this railway business. Noth-

ing you need worry about, though. We'll attend to it."

Helene leaned her hand on the end of her racquet and her chin on her hand, looking dreamily over the bay. "Isn't the bay just perfectly lovely, with the setting sun lighting its face?"

"It does very well for a—sea-face, but I know a girl-face that's lovelier."

Helene looked up at him roguishly without lifting her chin from her hand. "Does it hurt you to say those things?"

"Not much, no. Why?"

"I'd be concerned about you if it did; you say so many of them lately. Is it blarney you're talking?" she said, with an attempt at his dialect.

"It *is* not," Brennan replied, smiling down into her face. Somebody had fired the ball over the back net and Tuttle came running on after it. When he reached it he started to pick it up with his hands, and Brennan called sharply, "Hi, hi! Against the rules!"

Tuttle blushed guiltily. "Excuse me; didn't know you were watching." He then tried to pick the ball up with his racquet and failed, much to their amusement.

"Good fellow!" cried Helene, clapping her

hands, when he succeeded. As he ran after the ball, she looked after him meditatively. "How well Mr. Tuttle looks in a tennis suit, and I think he plays very well for one who is near-sighted. Don't you?"

"Well, never having been near-sighted myself, I can't say. I wish he'd give his whole time to tennis. He'd play better, and it would suit us just as well."

Helene opened her eyes wide, in a childish stare. "Now, why do you say that? I thought you liked each other. Thought you were chums at college, and all that."

"So we were, but ha!" he went on melodramatically. "Why did he cross me path? Why does he steal before me and wrest the treasure from me hands? Let him beware!"

Helene pretended to shudder. "Oh, you make me shiver. You sound exactly like the villain in the English melodrama."

"Thanks! That's what I meant to sound like. Oh, I *can* play the villain, but I wish my role of lover pleased you better, Helene," he added, soberly.

Helene rose in pretended *hauteur*.

"Mr. Brennan, what do you—how dare you?"

Brennan clapped his hands and laughed.

"Capital! Nobody could do it more to the life."

"I don't follow you, sir," she said, severely.

"*Ingenue!* They invariably call the lover 'Mister,' and ask what he means, when he finally says what they've tried to drag out of him for three whole acts."

Helene laughed in spite of herself. "Oh, it's a rehearsal, then!"

"No, it's a proposal, Helene." There was a sincerity in his voice that made her eyes waver and a flush rise to her cheeks. "Your father and I have come to an understanding. Now, what's your verdict, Helene? Can't you look at me?"

Brennan will always believe that young Pierce threw the ball over the net on purpose to send Tuttle after it, calling, "Hey, Brennan! Toss that ball down this way, will you, please?" At any rate, he picked up the ball and flung it back to Tuttle, who tried to catch it on his racquet, and, failing, paused to look at Helene, who was nervously twirling her racquet on the toe of her shoe.

"I wish you hadn't said that to me, Tom. I do," she added, as he came back.

"Why?" he said, sitting beside her again.

"Because I can't answer it as you'd like me

to. I like you, Tom, but I haven't thought of marrying anybody, hardly — yet."

"Not yet? I'm glad of that. Please, promise to begin on me. 'Tis all I ask."

"Oh, I can't, Tom. I don't like you well enough for that. What did you go spoil all our good times for?" she cried out, pettishly, to conceal her tears. "Why couldn't you keep quiet? Now, I won't dare to be alone with you an instant for fear you'll be saying"——

"Sorry! Won't do it again, but couldn't hold in any longer. Stood it just as long as I could. What with the sun on your hair, mavourneen, and the dress, and the cap, and the little shoon, acushla!"——

"Tom Brennan, you're crazy."

"Wid love! So I am." Then he added, seriously: "I wouldn't say this to you before because I hadn't got to the place where I could feel strong enough and successful enough. But now, you know, I'm the Iron Duke's lieutenant."

"Yes, I know. Poppa thinks a great deal of you. He was saying so last night. And so do I, Tom — only not enough to promise anything like what"——

"All right," said Brennan, cheerily. "Take your own time. I can wait."

"You mean you'll have to," laughed Helene.

"I do. I make a verrtue of necessity. That's the way I cover me defeats. Where to, now, please?" he asked, as Helene rose.

"I'm going to see poppa. Will you come?"

"Will I? I will. But hold on, you've forgotten something — one important thing."

"What is it?"

"You've forgotten the usual promise."

"Promise?"

"Yes," said Brennan, audaciously. "To be a sister to me." And then they both laughed so heartily that a row of heads appeared above the tennis net in eager curiosity.

"I'll do it now."

"I guess not."

"Why not?"

"Because you may want to change your mind." He saw the heads, made a gesture at them, and they disappeared. As Helene started to walk away, Tuttle came hastily across the ground.

"Are you going in?" he asked, an earnest, almost pleading look in his eyes. "I'd like to speak with you."

Helene gave Brennan her racquet. "Take this in, Tom. I'll be along soon."

As Helene turned to speak to Tuttle, the singing of the young people on the water swelled out

to a beautiful chorus, made marvelously sweet by distance. Standing there in the hush and color and growing coolness of the evening, looking upon the dainty and beautiful girl, her little cap pushed back from her halo of hair, her face flushed, her eyes soft with some vague passion, Wilson felt the common ground change to the velvet, sun-shot sward of some immemorial romance.

Helene spoke first — of the music. "Isn't it lovely? Life is so beautiful sometimes it almost makes me sad. Do you ever feel like that?"

"Yes, sometimes. That arises from the contrast of what life might be with what it is." The singers sang on the chorus again, and neither spoke till it died away. Then Helene sighed, and Tuttle spoke slowly, softly: "In the presence of beauty, beneath the stars, man's thoughts turn to love."

"Whom are you quoting?" she asked, archly, in self-defense.

"Jean Paul." Then he turned and spoke gravely, but bluntly: "I saw Brennan talking with you, and he acted like a lover. Was he? I saw you give him your hand. Have you given him your heart too?"

"I don't think you have any right to ask such questions," Helene said, rather stiffly.

"If you're not a coquette, I have a perfect right. You've given me that right. If not in words, certainly in actions."

"I have?" she asked, incredulously.

"You have, Helene."

She arched her eyebrows. "Where? When?"

Tuttle smiled a little. "You really don't mean to ask me to specify, do you?"

"Oh, good gracious, no!" she replied, coloring a little. "What did I mean by saying such things."

"What do you mean by such intimacy with Tom Brennan? That's what I'm waiting to hear. After our year of—of something more than friendship, are you going to"——

Helene was pouting, nearly crying. "I don't care," she said, helplessly. "He's nice, and I really never promised you, and he don't scold me."

"Is it scolding to ask you to be honest? No, you never promised me anything. But I'm afraid you're something I hate in a woman—a trifler. You make me afraid of it against my will." Helene no longer tried to look at him. "And I know Tom Brennan is a hypocrite and a scoundrel."

"Mr. Tuttle, how *dare* you say such a thing

to me, and about my father's secretary? It's outrageous in you."

"I dare because it's the truth, and I know it; and because I want you to know it, and because I don't want you to waste yourself on such a conscienceless"——

"How kind you are and how modest!" interrupted Helene, scornfully.

"I know what you mean. I *am* a better man than Brennan. If I wasn't, by heaven, I'd go hang! He has no conscience at all. He's a type of the modern business man, whose ideas of right and wrong are atrophied for lack of use. I can't stand by and see you caught by that man's reckless and insinuating grace. I *must* say what I think, even at the risk of offending you. I warn you"——

Helene was moved by his frankness and sincerity, but disowned it. "Many thanks! But do you suppose my father would keep such a man if"——

"No, I don't. I admire and respect the Iron Duke too much to believe that, and I firmly believe Brennan is using him, and Fox is even a worse type. He's involving them in a crime that will ruin you all."

"Why, Tom is only a boy," exclaimed Helene,

trying to laugh. "He can't — why, he's too jolly to be bad. It's too absurd."

"You see only one side of him — his social side. He can be — terrible. I grant you he's brilliant everywhere, but if you could see him as I see him, with men, in the fumes of whisky and tobacco, in his character as king of the lobby, he'd scare you. To be a leader in the Third House requires cunning and good humor, as well as power." He turned and threw out one hand in an impulsive gesture of appeal. "Don't throw me over, Helene, for a man like Brennan, just because I can't grin and flatter you and spend my time dancing about"——

She sprang up. "I won't stay to be lectured."

Tuttle stopped her with a gesture and a word. "Wait." When he spoke after a pause, it was in a tone of deep sadness. "I see now that you *have* trifled with me. I've lost you, but I can talk plainer now. Tom Brennan loves you; I give him credit for taste and sincerity there"——

She smiled and bowed cuttingly. "Thank you."

"But I tell you he'd ruin your father without a pang if necessary to gain power for himself. How faithful such a man can be to a woman — Wait!" he said, stopping her again. "Don't go away. I'll go. Now, I've said all I'm going to.

Only, for heaven's sake, believe in my sincerity!" His voice broke a little, his deep brown eyes looked into hers with the purity and strength of a man who is sure of his ground. "Don't draw away from me entirely. Try to act just as if I'd never said a word. It's childish to quarrel and pass by without speaking. Don't subject me to that."

Helene sank into the settee and covered her face with her hands. "It's horrible in you, that's what it is. Just horrible! You've spoiled our whole evening! I'll never forgive you!"

Evelyn came forward slowly from the other side of the ground and did not perceive Helene on the settee until she had reached Tuttle's side. Then a look of surprise and alarm came into her face. "Oh," she said, with a motion to retreat. "I hope I'm not — I thought you were alone, Mr. Tuttle. I didn't see you, Helene."

"Oh, never mind! Don't go — I'm just going."

There was an awkward pause, and then he spoke in a pitiful attempt to use his ordinary tone. "I brought a new song up from town. Shall we try it? Do you care to have me bring it over?"

"Of course I do," Helene replied, tearfully, without looking up.

"Very well, I'll go get it now."

Evelyn looked after him a moment, then took a seat beside Helene. "What's the matter, dear? Have you had a quarrel? Tell me all about it."

"Worse than that," replied Helene, giving way at the first touch of sympathy. "He's been sc-scolding me, and—and—talking mean about —Tom."

"Talking about Tom? What for? How?"

"Talking horribly, calling him a villain, and telling me that I—flirted."

"Oh, I see. Well, he must be jealous. You mustn't mind that. That's natural, and it really did look like a courtship from our point of view."

"I don't see what's the matter. It ain't a bit like him. He's always been so grave and kind, and that's what I liked, and now he talks like—like an—I d'know what."

"Good gracious! As bad as that? Well, now, you mustn't mind this little explosion. He loves you dearly, and he's—he's a splendid man, and I'm sure he's perfectly sincere, and loves you very—very dearly." Someway it was not easy to speak words of comfort.

"So—so does Tom." Evelyn looked at her sharply.

"How do you know?"

"He told me so to-day." She rose with another sudden impulse of anger. "I hate to be lectured, and he's always lecturing me. I won't stand it." The voice of Davis came loudly to their ears, and Helene said hastily: "Come in, I don't want to see poppa now." As they went off around the corner of the house, Davis and Fox came out on the lawn, bringing chairs in their hands. Davis had a bundle of newspapers. He seemed in bad humor, and his voice was aggressive.

"Oh, these newspapers! Never mind 'em."

"I tell you, these little newspapers do us harm. They manufacture public sentiment."

"But we can't get the earth on our side," returned Fox as he took his seat and looked out on the water.

"We must try. They must be fixed as well as the big dailies. Take them in the aggregate, they're a power."

Fox rolled over on one hip and looked at him with a grin. "Did you notice a change in the editorials of the *Evening Planet?*"

"I did. Rather singular, ain't it?"

"Very," replied Fox, with a dry cough. "I'm quite at a loss to understand it."

"As for Tuttle and his damned committee, I'm

going to have an understanding with him to-night, right now."

"Don't do it, Lawrence. He's a dangerous man. Better let me"——

"Will you let me manage a few of my affairs?" Davis turned on him angrily. "I'm not a boy."

Fox rose with more of anger than he had ever shown. His apparently inexhaustible patience was giving way. "Very well. I've got no more to say. I distinctly warn you that things are at a critical point."

"Oh, come now, sit down," said Davis, in a gentler tone. "I didn't mean to — Come, sit down! Haven't I taken your advice all along?"

"Yes, but lately somehow — I've always admired your coolness, Lawrence, but somehow you've lost control of yourself lately. Fact is, you're nervous; and, to be honest about it, I'm afraid you'll do us all harm in one of these tempers. You haven't put this thing through with your usual adroitness, to be frank."

Davis bowed his head in thought. "You're right, Fox. I'm losing my hold on myself. That row with Brennan showed me that. I'm getting irritable. If I get out o' this," he said with a certain pathetic resolution, "it ends it with me. I'll never go into another such fight. I can't

stand it. I'm getting old, and, well, I'm — I'm losing my sleep over these things. If I get out o' this hole, I'll take Helene and go to Europe."

He looked almost pitiful as he sat thus, his eyes full of a somber shadow.

Tuttle, coming by, brought him back to his usual self.

"Good evening, gentlemen," he said, about to pass.

Davis extended a newspaper. "Well, sir, what's all this row you've raised in the House against me?"

"I've raised no row against you, Mr. Davis, that I'm aware of," Tuttle replied, facing him.

"Bosh! I mean against the Consolidated. What are you trying to do, anyway?"

"Very well, sir, let it stand so," replied Tuttle, quietly. "I'm simply after the truth about the matter; that's all. I'm very sorry to bring even temporary reproach"——

Davis unfolded the paper, and pointed at the first page. "I'd like to know just what you said. Are you correctly reported? What have you said to raise all these headlines?"

"I said," replied Tuttle, rather formally, "that so much evidence had been brought to me that smirched the reputation of the legislators as to establish in my mind a belief that the Consoli-

dated Air Line, in its eagerness to secure the charter, had resorted to the use of money through both houses; that, the names of these senators having been handed to me"——

"It's a lie, every word of it!"

"That will be seen, sir, for a joint investigating committee has been formed to protect the honor of the legislators, and I have become personally responsible for the charges of corruption I have made, and I assure you I shall sift the whole matter to the last grain of evidence." He ended with a certain grim resolution.

"Sift away!" said Davis, contemptuously. "You'll find nothing. Not one cent has ever been paid by me to any member of the senate or the lower house."

"I believe that, Mr. Davis," said Tuttle, with frank eagerness. "And I want to see it proved, for the sake of your daughter — for my own peace of mind, I want to prove that."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I mean, sir," he replied, dropping into the orator's formal tone again, "that your honor, as the father of Helene and as my friend, is as dear to me as my own. I made those charges and welcomed that committee, because I felt that you were not connected directly with this business, and because I knew your good name

would stand all the better because of the test. It's a bath of flame, sir, but the honor of our senate demands it."

Davis was much moved, and he stood looking down at the grass, while Fox paced slowly up and down behind them.

"It's a bath of flame, my boy," he said, with a sigh.

Fox struck in. "A bath, young man, we business men can't afford. It takes the skin off."

Davis put his hand on Tuttle's shoulder. His voice was a little unsteady. "Wilson, I've had my eye on you ever since you left college. I've been pleased at your success. Of course, I've laughed at you as the scholar in politics; but, all the same, I've admired your grit and honesty. But you don't understand the pressure that comes on a man like me. A man can't always just do as he wants to. I ain't quite ready to give Helene away yet. But I'll say right now, I don't know a young man I'd trust her to quicker — that is, if"——

"Thank you! I appreciate your praise. I've tried to serve"——

"But this investigation is bad business. Hush it up as soon as you can. It may hurt us. It can't help but hurt us."

"In what way, Mr. Davis?"

"Lose us the charter. The people are ready and anxious to convict somebody of corruption. Monopoly and corporations are red rags to 'm, even when they're being served by the monopolies. Now, this investigation, Wilson, will do us harm. You should have fought it down."

"If the Consolidated is what you claim, the investigation will vindicate it. It must go on."

Davis was a little angered at his tone. "But it must not go on."

"It will go on. It can't be stopped. *I* can't stop it." The sun had left the grass; the men's faces were getting gray in the dusk. Davis stood in shadow.

"But you must. You must withdraw your charges."

"I didn't make the charges. I simply stated them, sir, as they came to me, and demanded their refutation for the honor of my colleagues, and for your honor."

Fox struck in in a slow, irritated tone. "You're so damned infernally solicitous about your honor, Tuttle. As if you didn't know"——

"You'll ruin us, that's what you'll do," said Davis, in rising anger. "Ruin us with your investigation!"

"If the light of day, sir, will ruin you," replied Tuttle, mounting his oratorical hobby, "very

well. Let it. We can't allow in this republic any corporation, no matter how good its intentions, to dominate legislation or shelter itself under the cloak of bribery."

"Do you charge me with bribery?" demanded Davis.

"I tell you, sir, I make no charges. It is whispered in my ears by men of character that the Consolidated has absolute control of all railway legislation. I want our Capitol purged of its Third House, and its honor vindicated. And, by heaven, it shall be done at any sacrifice!"

Davis raised his voice in terrible wrath. "By God, you sha'n't sacrifice me, sir! Go ahead with your twopenny investigation, and when your re-election time comes, you'll feel my hand. I want you to understand you can't ride me down. Now, go on! Try it! Do your worst!"

Helene, who had heard their loud voices from the piazza, came running up. "Why, father, how excited you are! Wilson, you're not quarreling with him?"

Wilson disregarded her. "No clean man will suffer if this investigation goes on. And it *shall* go on, or I'll resign my office. The scholar, sir, may be a fool, but he's going to stand for principle. Good heavens! The atmosphere of our legislative halls appalls me. Principles are

to be laughed at or aired only in spread-eagle speeches. I swear, sometimes I feel as if nothing but some cataclysm of nature would be powerful enough to cleanse our political dens, reeking with moral slime"——

"Listen to me, young man," interrupted Davis in deadly earnest. "You'll withdraw your charges to-morrow."

"I will *not*," replied Tuttle, with inexorable resolution. The men faced each other with set teeth, and at last Davis said:

"I'll fight this thing till I die or win."

Helene, awed and frightened, interrupted: "What does it all mean? What has happened? Father, can't you tell me?"

Davis put her aside, harshly. "Go away; you can't understand it. This is a man's affair. Yes, you can understand it," he said, with a sudden ignoble thought. "Your young man, there, calls me a briber, and threatens me with arrest." Helene gave a little cry of dismay. Tuttle made no sign, but stood looking straight at Davis, who went on:

"He has brought charges against me. He'd send me to State prison if he could."

"Oh, no! *You* wouldn't do that! It can't be true!" She appealed to Wilson.

"It *is* true, and he can't deny it," insisted Davis.

"Is it true, Wilson?" she insisted.

Tuttle's white wrath still kept its flame. "I say again I've brought charges against the Consolidated Road. Tell her, sir, why you shrink."

"If I do, she'll turn on you."

"No, she won't. And if she does, no matter. I say again, you're being drawn into a terrible vortex by wily and unscrupulous men, Mr. Davis. Get rid of that man," he said, indicating Fox. "Get rid of Brennan. Ship the whole business of the Third House. Ship Brennan, above all."

"I won't do that — I can't."

"Can't? The Iron Duke can't?"

"Damn it! What do you follow me up for? I say I won't and I can't. I must succeed in this to hold what I've got."

There was a pause, while Tuttle considered the meaning of this. When he spoke again it was in a tone that decided everything. His words came out slowly; his voice was low and tense with passion.

"*Now* I say, irrevocably, the investigation must go on, and I will testify."

Helene looked from one to the other in dismay and bewilderment. Brennan appeared on

the other side of the shrubs, listening to the conversation.

"You won't testify against father and Tom," said Helene.

"Against the Consolidated Road," reiterated Tuttle.

"*I'm* the Consolidated Road," said Davis.

"Very well, sir; against you, then."

"Then you're a fool," struck in Brennan, "and you'll have your folly for your pains." He threw away his cigar, and stepped with studied effect to the side of Davis. "As for me, I stand or fall with the Iron Duke."

"Do you hear what he says?" Helene asked Tuttle.

"Good heavens, Helene! Can't you see he's the very man proceeded against—the head and front of it all? Don't you see why he"——

"I know he stands by my father; that's what I know," replied Helene, obstinately blind, "and I know *you* are against us."

"And so you distrust me, too?" said Tuttle, despairingly. "Distrust me for being honest, and believe in him when he makes a theatrical, shameless bid"——

"I do," replied Helene, moving a little nearer her father and Brennan.

After a silence Tuttle mastered himself, and

raised his head in a lofty gesture. "Very well. This infamous attack on the senate shall be exposed and the whole matter investigated, no matter who suffers. Good night."

As he turned and walked slowly away in the yellow dusk, Helene put her arms about her father's neck.

Fox took Brennan one side. "Pretty well done, Brennan."

"Wasn't it? Saw my chance for a *coup de theatre*."

In the silence the far-away chorus was heard again, and the party of tennis-players marched off the lawn, laughing and singing.

In his exaltation Brennan took Fox's arm, and they went away together to the hotel.

Chapter VII.

SENATOR WARD AT HOME.

SENATOR WARD was country-born, and he retained a certain homely simplicity of accent, almost dialect, in his private speech, and a timidity of manner which at times betrayed him. He was a New England Scotch type, tall, spare, with a long beard, thin nose and deep, beautiful gray eyes. He wore his Prince Albert coat with dignity and kept the respect of those who knew him, in spite of his one terrible weakness. Like thousands of others, he was an example of the inexorable law of heredity.

In the good old days of "rum and barn-raisin's," his father, a carpenter, had been a man of whom every one said:

"Ben Ward is a good man, but a terrible drinker."

He was more than a good fellow — he was a thoughtful man, and he had bequeathed to his son a blessing, as well as a curse — the gift of oratory and a mind that, in its best moments, soon carried Rufus Ward to a very important

position in the business and local politics of his adoptive country.

But it was through his forced fraternizing with party politicians in offices and ward headquarters, reeking with liquor, that his inborn, latent appetite came to master him. The "boys" laughed at it, and said it "didn't matter," but they soon saw they had a weapon to use against him when he denounced some disgraceful deed of theirs. This added to his natural timidity.

As a business man he was irreproachable, and no one had ever charged anything worse than weakness against him. His wife, of New England descent, was an uneducated woman, but of great natural ability, and in Schoharie she was considered a worthy wife to the Senator, though at Waterside her plain speech and democratic manners provoked comment. She looked matronly, and had at the same time something masculine about her — wholesome and kind.

When the Senator came home that afternoon from his interview with Brennan, she received him as if his clouded eyes, purpled face and palsied legs were due to the excessive heat. She took him hurriedly to his room and silently bathed his face and hands, helped him off with his coat and shoes, and left him lying down ready to sleep.

"Has father come?" asked Evelyn, as Mrs. Ward closed the door behind her and came into the hall.

"Yes — he's come."

There were no tears in her eyes and no tremor in her voice. Only a patient, weary tone. She had got beyond tears or wailing. She accepted it as a necessity to be calmly met.

Evelyn sighed, put her arm about her mother's neck, and laid her face on her shoulder. She understood perfectly — no need of any further words.

"Poor mamma! Well! We must go down to dinner."

They didn't talk much. They never did on such nights. Evelyn sat with brooding eyes, her forehead full of knots. She had beautiful eyes — like her father's — sad now, as she listened to the sounds of merry life outside. They were playing tennis out there — lithe girls in gray flannels, slender youths in sashes and jaunty caps. The bay was flecked with sails, and from boats floating sleepily on the rose and blue of the water came the sound of young voices singing, and under it all, and back of it all, the soft, pulsing swash and snarl of the waves on the beach. They sat apart from it all — alienated from it by their trouble.

"Well," said Mrs. Ward at last, when the waiter was out of the room, "I hope they'll adjourn up there at the Capitol pretty soon; then father can be with us."

"I guess they will. Here it is first week in June. They can't go on much longer." Then they fell into silence.

"Good evening," said a familiar voice at the window.

"Oh, Mr. Tuttle; come in, won't you?" cried Evelyn, her face lighting up with a beautiful smile, which faded as he replied:

"Thank you. Is the Senator in?"

"Yes—but he isn't very well. Unless it is something very important, I'd rather not"——

"Oh, no! I'll wait till to-morrow. Don't disturb him." There was a quick interchange of glances, and Tuttle knew the truth, and Evelyn knew that he knew it.

"Let's take a walk. I'm a dismal failure at tennis," he said, after a pause.

"Very well—unless you need me, mother?" This question meant to Mrs. Ward: "unless father needs us both to take care of him."

"Oh, no—I don't need you, dear. Go along. It'll do you good."

Evelyn knew what this walk meant—that she would have an exquisite hour that would

leave her with a hunger in the heart that would not let her sleep — and yet she could not resist. She went to her room to put on an extra ribbon or flower. She stood for a moment before the glass, not in bitterness, but in a dumb, indefinable regret that she should be so unattractive.

They took their way down to the beach, where lovers and young wives and nurse-girls were promenading on the firm, smooth sand, over which the hissing laps of sea ran like green, silver-edged tongues. There was a fresh sea-wind blowing, salt and sea-weedy. In the far offing sun-tinted sails slanted and steamers were passing, leaving vast dun banners of smoke trailing along the upper air.

Tuttle was a little abstracted, but as he went on, he grew more in earnest. He was a man of wide reading and of deep enthusiasm, and he carried conversation to the plane of his own thought, or silenced his listener by the wealth of his diction and the wide reach of his perceptions.

Evelyn talked but little, but she always had the effect of bringing the best thoughts of her friends to the surface, and Tuttle always talked to her as to a comrade. Her replies and suggestions, brief as they were, showed how thor-

oughly she enjoyed him, and how closely she followed his thought.

When she came home an hour later, she went to her room and flung herself down on the sofa, crushing the flowers on her bosom. She could remember but little of what he had said — she remembered the shining sands, the music, the gay young voices and flexile forms, the clutch and snarl of the ocean, and, above all, or through it all, that grave, sweet man's-voice sounding in her ear.

She did not deceive herself. She knew he was not turning to her from Helene.

"He likes me — but he loves Helene," was the sentence that came over and over into her mind, as if she were explaining it all to her mother. It was nearly midnight when she arose and wearily undressed for sleep. She determined never to yield to such temptation again.

At breakfast the next morning, Senator Ward was pale and silent. Nothing was said to indicate that it was not the usual breakfast time. They greeted him as cheerily as possible, and Mrs. Ward placed a strong cup of coffee at his plate, which he drank at once.

"I guess you hadn't better go up to the Capitol to-day, Rufus. It's goin' to be warm."

"Oh, I must go, mother. It's a very important time just now — everybody's tryin' to rush bills through, and I must be there. I'll be home early, though. I'll come home right after the session."

"Well, now, don't worry — an' don't walk about them hot streets any more'n you can help."

"No, I'll come right home."

They moved about him, fixing his necktie and brushing his hat.

"Evy, it don't seem to me you're very well this mornin'?" he said, as he was about to go.

"Oh, I'm all right, father, just a little lazy; that's all. Run along, now, if you're going to catch that boat. If you lose that you'll have to ride in that hot train. Come, *skip!*" she ended, striking her hands together and smiling.

He stooped and kissed her. "You're my blessed little girl. I'll come back early, sure."

After he had gone, there were few smiles in the room. Mrs. Ward worked about the house — she couldn't sit still — while Evelyn sewed steadily as a seamstress, except once or twice she leaned back in her chair and closed her eyes wearily. Mrs. Ward saw her thus, but dared not speak to her. Once when she saw her leaning back thus with shut eyes, she detected a tear

slipping down the musing girl's cheek! It was too much for her to bear, and she rose and went out, leaving Evelyn alone.

Chapter VIII.

THE SUNDAY PAPERS.

THE Sunday morning papers were filled with the investigation — twenty-column shorthand reports of the proceedings, while the opinions of leading men and politicians and editorial comments filled pretty nearly the entire news department of the issues. But there was noticeable a great change in the editorials. On the first day or two of the hearing, even the papers opposed to Tuttle politically, breathed out a gentle defiance toward the "great corporations dominating our legislative halls," and had a good word for "the courage of the young radical who was determined to see just how much there was in this boasted power of the Third House."

It went further, this opposition press, and said: "*If* such use had been made of the Third House (which every legislator admitted existed) as had been charged, no punishment could be too severe for the debauchers of public morals."

But this righteous indignation grew more and more retiring from day to day, and, as Tuttle read the Sunday morning papers, he found him-

self characterized as a "self-sufficient young ass, who, on the mere hearsay evidence of blacklegs and heelers, had involved the Senate in a miserable investigation which would place the legislators as a body under the derision of the American people."

His own papers "regretted that he did not make himself more certain of his ground before entering into such a grave fight with a great corporation." They hurled back with scorn the imputation that it was partisan in effect, and left Tuttle to stand alone as the investigator and persecutor of the whole matter "against the advice of friends."

As Tuttle read these shifty, treacherous qualifyings and hedgings, he grew white with wrath.

"You see," he said, to Hill, one of the faithful, who was taking breakfast with him, "my own papers go back on me. That shows the power of money. I don't mean to say that these papers were bought outright, but I mean that the moment a doubt creeps in, they do the safest thing—condemn the man whose friendship is worth the least to them."

Hill was disposed to take a gloomy view of it.

"Give it up, Tuttle—no use! The people ain't ready to stand by us yet. Throw the

whole damn thing up. *We* can stand it if the public can."

"I won't throw it up," Tuttle cried, with a look of iron resolution on his face. "And I will convict."

"You can't unless you can get some member to swear he was approached by"——

"If I could involve Brennan, or Fox—he's just the man to squeak when he found himself in for it. Then the public"——

"Oh, you'd find the public with you fast enough then! They are terribly alarmed over injuries to vested rights, but a man has no vested rights the moment he is believed to be helpless. My idea is to corral Pat Murnahan—or one of the lesser fellows."

Sunday was a busy day with the members of the Third House also. The Hilliard lobby was full of men discussing the investigation, and in Brennan's office a council of war was being held.

Brennan was in his usual mood, but Fox was a little nervous, and the Hon. Robert Binney, the counsel for their defense, was businesslike. He was a short man, with a very bald head. He had been told at one time that he looked like Ingersoll, and thereafter he wore his face cleanly shaven. He was very able and vastly learned

in law, but he spoke with a drawling "York State dialect," as the Western people call it, that is, a strong nasal, with many elisions.

"Waal, now, don't tell me too much," he said, interrupting Brennan. "There's such a thing as bein' embarrassed with knowledge. You are willin' to admit you paid the Third House — I understand that. You considered that legitimate. What they did, you don't know, of course."

"That's the idea," said Brennan.

"Exactly. Well, naow, jest let me have a minute."

It was an interesting process this, of giving the attorney just enough of the truth to let him see their weak points, and yet not enough so that he could be charged with collusion. A long experience had made him an adept in this, and his really powerful mind seized the whole situation by that subtle "winged logic" which had made him one of the most famous lawyers of his day. Like thousands of others, he had come to take a pride in his power to defeat justice.

"Our plan of action must be like the ground-hog — stay in our hole an' let the daug paw dirt," he said at length. "Set still an' watch 'em."

"It's slow work," said Brennan. "I don't like the idea myself. Relatively it's all right, but it's wearin' on the nerves to sit at the end of a hole and listen to the dog pawing."

"Waal, I guess you'll haf to stand it," said Binney as he went out.

Left alone, the three men talked plainer. Davis was plainly very nervous. "I wish the whole thing was sunk," he said.

"Oh, no y' don't," said Fox. "You're a little worn, that's all. You'd better run down to the beach for the day and get a little rest. Tom and I will get hold of the other fellows and fix them ready for the testimony. Leave that in my hands. Our policy is to admit the payment of money to the Third House, pleading that circumstances made it necessary."

"And that's true, too," broke in Davis.

"Of course it's true," echoed Fox. "Now, that's all right. Tom and I will see that our front is unbroken. Every witness will be prepared. Not one of 'em but knows how to take care of himself. Nothing is easier than to fool the poor public."

While the "poor, feeble-minded fool of a public" was reading its Sunday newspaper or going to church with its wife and daughter, the Third House was organizing, toiling, with that zeal

which makes any toil a pleasure and a success, to perfect their defense. The easy-going, habit-mastered public is disorganized, nerveless, wordy and with little energy or concert of action, but the evil forces of society are always organized, always alert, and move as one man. It is the exceptional case where they can be caught off their guard, or surprised in a moment of relaxation.

Tuttle realized perfectly the position of the defense, and, as he sat alone after breakfast, he went all over the ground. He set his teeth in the resolve to vindicate himself. He determined that if he was to be held personally responsible for the charges which had really been made by everybody, he would have the honor of proving them true.

All day he thought upon his line of action — tried to discover some mode of attack not absolutely hopeless.

A few of his friends dropped in, but they could do very little; in fact, most of them advised him to give it up.

"They'll only make a laughing-stock of you, Wilson, and it will do no good. They're going to make it a political fight if possible. They're going to try to ruin you before your constituents."

Tuttle was roused. "Let 'em try it. I'll fight it to the bitter end. If you'd only stand by me. You believe them guilty?"

"Yes, no doubt of it."

"Then why don't you stand by me?" They shrugged their shoulders. "If you, and all like you, would stand by me," cried Tuttle passionately, "we could defy the power of the Consolidated or any other corporation. It's because people will not speak out"——

"What's the good of speaking out if you can't prove anything. You can't prove anything unless some fellow turns State's evidence, and there's no possibility of that."

They left Tuttle studying on that problem — how to get evidence that would convict. In the afternoon, as he took the boat for Waterside, he was still racking his brain upon the problem. He had half-formed a wild plan of going to Sheehan and attempting to buy his evidence. He was willing to sacrifice half of his little fortune. Nonsense! What an idea! He must be going crazy. He tried to throw it off by looking out upon the dazzling water, fringed with the green hills, which reached into the bay like the caress of a lover's hand. But he could not escape it. A group of men came by and asked him about the trial. Everybody pointed

him out—he thought he heard them laughing at him.

One fellow, a drummer, stayed a moment after the rest passed on.

"Tuttle, why don't y' strike old Senator Ward a little harder?" he said. "I heard the old man talkin' pretty loud the other day, and he said some pretty damaging things. Of course he was drunk, but he don't say such things just *because* he's drunk. Now, I ain't got any particular interest in this thing. I don't live here anyhow, but damned if I like to see the whole town jumpin' on a man's neck, 'specially when I'm dead sure he's right."

"How do you know I'm right?" Tuttle asked of the free-spoken drummer.

"In the nature of things a man who fights one o' these monopolies must be right—that's all. We're all down on 'em, but we ain't got sand to fight 'em. If he was approached, the Senator might be induced to talk. It's worth trying anyway."

"What kind of a plea could I make to Ward that would induce him to criminate himself?" replied Tuttle, not without sarcasm.

"Well, I don't think the old man was actually bribed, but I think he was approached, and I think he knows of others who were. In other

words, he's what I call the clue-end o' the whole snarl. He's y'r man. All you want is to find the loose end, and that will lead to the center of the thing. One man will criminate another."

This made a deep impression upon Tuttle, and he rode the rest of the way in deep thought along that definite line of action. If he could not reach some man like Ward, his case was desperate. He determined to see Ward that night, and make an appeal to him.

Chapter IX.

AN EVENING CALL.

IN an easy-chair, in the large plain sitting-room, Senator Ward was sitting that night when the sun went down behind the sharply-defined clouds, and darkness came over the water. The wind was blowing steadily, and the waves had a steady thundering roll that ended in an impatient swash and a clutching snarl. The lightning, distant and diffusive, came now and then to light the old man's gray head faintly.

He had been writing, but the portfolio had fallen to his knees, and, with his eyes fixed dreamily on the line where the clouds and the water met, he brooded over some sad thought. He looked very weak and old and humble as he sat there. He had only simple dignity at his best, and the name of Senator could not save him now from being the harassed old man that he was, with no son to share his toil and anxieties.

He was facing his almost hopeless future. He had gone over the ground for the hundredth time. He couldn't meet that payment, and it would mean a forced sale of all he had and a loss

so great, recovery would be impossible. Then his mind went back to his interview with Brennan, and he tried to remember what was said, but it was all hazy and vague.

On the floor beside him lay the morning papers, containing his own testimony and that of many others. He sat there till it grew too dusk to read, his eyes on the light outside. Mrs. Ward came in with a match to light the lamp. She gave a quick glance at him and hesitated a moment as if uncertain whether to speak or not.

"Why, Rufus, how quiet you are! What are you doing? I didn't know you was here."

"I've been writing a little, my dear."

"Why don't you go to your liberry?"

"Oh, I d' know. I kind o' wanted to be where I could look out on the water."

Mrs. Ward took a seat by his side. "You're worryin' again, Rufus, an' you promised us you wouldn't."

"Yes, I am worryin', Josephine, but not about my business. That is, not what you mean."

"You ain't a-worryin' about that investigatin' committee, are you?"

"Yes, I am, to tell the truth. I'm worried about that."

"But you've testified. Ain't that all you've got to do about it?"

"No, it ain't, Josephine. I ought to do somethin' else, but I—can't. I ain't got the courage." He rose and walked about unsteadily.

"There, there, Rufus! Set down. I didn't mean to stir you up. I wish 't Wilson Tuttle hadn't never been born."

"No, you don't, mother. You don't mean any such thing."

"I do, too! He don't do nothin' but make trouble everywhere he goes."

"He's all right, mother. He's only doin' his duty. If he hadn't started this investigation somebody else"——

"Oh, I don't mean that s'much—I don't mean that 't all!"

"What do you mean, then?"

"Don't you know? Ain't y' seen?" inquired his wife sharply.

"No. What? I ain't seen anything."

"Oh, dear! Men ain't got any eyes 'cept for business," she exclaimed in despair. "Evy has been cryin' her eyes out for that wooden-headed, dictionary-spoken thing all this week. I can't persuade 'er"——

Ward looked up at her helplessly. "You don't mean she's "——

"That's exactly what I do mean — just that," she replied, looking at him defiantly.

"Why, I was afraid she was kind o' taking up with Tom Brennan," exclaimed the Senator.

"Tom Brennan!" replied Mrs. Ward, in vast disdain. "Well, I give up, Senator Ward! I thought you had some sense. Tom Brennan! An' here she's be'n worshipin' that book-worm an' walkin' up an' down the beach with him, an' learnin' him to play tennis all this while! An' you ain't seen it! Course, she's kind o' held in, for she was afraid he liked Helene Davis, an' I guess he does, but Helene, she likes Brennan, though *why*, I can't see. He's too oily and good-natured, that man is, for me. He makes me think o' Cy Williams. I wouldn't be a bit surprised if he skipped out to Canada same as Cy did. He's in the parlor there now, he an' Helene both. Thank goodness! they're about ready to go. I wish he'd never come back, fur's I'm concerned."

"And so you think Evy kind o'" ——

"I don't *think* anything about it. I know it. She ain't one o' the kind that lets on, but she's just eatin' her heart out alone. An' she won't talk to me — hushes me right up." Her voice

broke, and she was obliged to wipe her eyes. "It does seem as if everything was criss-cross in this world, Rufus. After we've worked an' saved s' many years" —— She broke off to keep from sobbing. "If you hadn't gone into politics we'd 'a' be'n better off, a good sight."

Ward acknowledged the justice of her reproach with a sigh. "You're right, Josephine." Then he asked a question in a tone that seemed to ask assurance. "But now I'm in politics I ought to serve my State faithfully, hadn't I?"

"Course! They's nothin' else you can do. If, after all you've sacrificed, you don't serve your State faithfully, I don't see but what you'd be a reg'lar failure, Rufus. Elder White used to say: 'Long's a man's honest he ain't a failure. Guv'ment may be a failure, but he ain't." Ward groaned and dropped his head on his hands.

"Why, Rufus, what's the matter? What have I said now?"

"Nothin', mother. It's what I've said and done — I've been a failure and a disgrace to you, Josephine."

"You ain't neither, Rufus Ward, now! Don't you say that ag'in."

"If I was out o' this, I never'd go into politics ag'in. I'm afraid I never'll git out."

"There, there! Don't worry any more to-night, Rufus. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

Her own eyes were wet, and she put her hand tenderly on his shoulder. There was a burst of laughter in the hall, and Evelyn and Brennan, going by, stopped and looked in at the door-way.

"Ah, I fear we intrude upon a lovers' tete-a-tete," cried Brennan. "I'm sure of it. They're both blushing."

"I guess not," laughed Helene. "The blush is on the Senator's white hair, so it must be the shade of the lamp. I'm sorry to spoil your romance."

"We're more likely to be quarrelin' than courtin' at our time o' life," said Mrs. Ward, smilelessly. "The romance is pretty well faded out o' things with us."

"Why, mother! You know you never quarrel."

"Not that you see, probably."

"I try to quarrel sometimes," said the Senator, "but it takes two, you know, and so I can't."

"I generally find there's two of us when I want to quarrel," said Brennan. A distant light-

ning flash lighted the room, and was followed, after a moment, by a mutter of thunder.

"Oh, what a frightful flash!" Helene cried. "Tom, take me home this minute. Thunder makes me frantic."

"I like to escort girls home in a thunder-storm," said Brennan to Ward. "They're so confiding. They cling to one's arm like a barnacle. Come on! Now for a run! Good night, all."

Ward went with them into the hall and out on the porch as they ran across the lawn.

"She's pretty gay, ain't she?" said Mrs. Ward to Evelyn. "She don't have to worry over debts and investigatin' committees. Seems if everything was bearin' down on your father these days."

"But Helene ain't quite happy for all that. She's trying to be gay. I don't think she's sincere in it."

"Why, what makes you think that?"

"She's quarreled with Wilson, or, rather, broken with him."

"You don't say! What about, for pity's sake?"

"Oh, about this investigating committee."

"For Peter's sake! Well, I hope Wilson Tuttle feels he's right, for it's gettin' him into

hot water all round. So that's the reason she's so sweet on Tom Brennan? Well, well! An' now there won't neither of you have him."

"Hush! Why, mother, do you know how that sounds! Besides, I wish you wouldn't talk about it at all just now. I'll be able to bear it better after a while. But he's very noble in this. He told me all about it. He's simply standing for truth and justice; even the papers admit that."

"Well, I wish she was worth the trouble, but it's always the way with a man like that. Ten chances to one he takes up with some little bit of a rattle-headed"——

Evelyn stopped her again.

"Don't, mother! Helene isn't so petty as she seems. She's really noble at heart. With him she'd grow to be a good, true woman."

"Good, true fiddlesticks! All she'll ever grow into is a chatterbox. She ain't got brains enough for anything else." She ended full of maternal rebellion at the course of things.

"Why, mother, how can you say such dreadful things?"

Ward was heard talking to some one at the door. "Come in! come in!"

"Pa's got company. Guess we'd better va-

moose," said Mrs. Ward, "we ain't either of us fit to be seen."

Ward returned with Davis, whose quick eye caught a glimpse of the vanishing women.

"Hope I didn't scare anybody away."

"Oh, I guess not. Take a chair. I'll light another burner."

"Oh, no, no! This is all right. Just the kind of a light for two reminiscent old chaps to talk by."

He was in a peculiarly complaisant, almost tender, mood — not posing as a great financier, nor apparently concerned about his interests as a monopolist. He stretched his legs out before him in a restful position, leaned his head back on his chair, and talked familiarly as a neighbor. He was country-born himself, and knew that nothing was so flattering as this assumption of homely ease.

Ward was puzzled by it. For, although they had been neighbors here for two seasons, Davis had never before entered his house except in an entirely business way. They had nodded daily, of course, and discussed events of the morning, as they rode up on the boat or down on the train in the afternoon, but this neighborliness was something new, and had a disarming charm (coming from the great Iron Duke) which was

hard to resist, though he knew that he scrupled at nothing to carry his point.

"Ah, my bones ain't what they used to be, strange to say, Senator. I'm older than you are, d'you know it? I'm sixty. Come, now, that's two or three years more than you can record."

"Yes, I'm only fifty-nine."

"You're looking considerably under the weather, Senator," said Davis, after a little silence.

"I'm feeling that way. Fact is, business matters are worryin' me a little. Have been for some time."

"So I've heard. Well, I'm a little annoyed these days myself at this business up at the Capitol building. In fact, I'm a good deal disturbed. I don't like the way the public take it up. What did they do to-day, anyhow, at Tuttle's little farce-comedy?" he asked in an indifferent way.

"Not much of anything," replied Ward evasively. "Examined a few unimportant witnesses."

"Well, just how is the Senate feeling?"

Ward stiffened a little. "I don't think I'm at liberty to state."

Davis leaned over as if in a burst of confidence.

"I don't mind saying, Senator, that I'm *damnably* worried. It may lose us the charter. But you senators ought to see that we're the only men that can build the road. We're here on the ground. No other arrangement can serve the people as well. We make better connections, save fares. If you're working for the people's good, you'll work for us. You're bound to."

"That may be so, from your point of view, but from mine" ——

"There's no other point of view for you, as a representative of the public. If you refuse to work with us, you simply delay the building of a road for ten years. Now let's go over the ground" ——

Ward rose. "It's no use to argue with me, Davis. I've been all over the ground. There ain't anything more to say."

"Oh, yes, there is, Senator, lots to say. Now, I'd like to make a proposition to you. Sit down! Now, it's all nonsense to object to a thing like that. The public can't see ahead. They don't know what's the best thing to do. If they did, we wouldn't find it necessary to do this. Now, take these senators. Many of them are old grannies, superannuated country lawyers. You know that, and they need to be led by men like yourself. Now, if you'll — if you'll go into this thing

with us, I'll take half your business on my hands, and make you a stockholder to that amount in the road. Come! That's the way all business is carried on these days. Perfectly legitimate. I don't approach you as a senator, but as a man and a neighbor, and, besides, the thing I ask you to do is a real service to the public." It was astonishing how necessary, almost honorable, his voice made this appear, he was so frank and honest.

"Give me time to think, Davis," said Ward, weakly. "It's too much to expect of me off-hand."

Davis reached over and touched his knee.

"Senator, as man to man, I want to be perfectly frank with you. The loss of this charter may ruin my road. We've been building on our original line, changing grades, renewing bridges, and so forth, and we've borrowed largely this year — borrowed big money. If anything were to happen to make people — capitalists — lose confidence in the road, or in me, we'd be in the hands of a receiver in thirty days. It would be a terrible injustice to us, and especially to our small stockholders and employes. Just imagine the condition of things if we fail. Now, let's work together. Come, — what do you say?"

He waited while Ward mused with downcast head.

"Give me time, Davis. You press me too hard. I — I can't decide now."

"Very well. Only the vote comes soon. This investigation will fall through. It's annoying, but not dangerous. Can't you decide to-morrow?"

"Yes, I'll try. But I don't think I can influence anybody."

"I'll take the risk, Senator," said Davis, rising and extending his hand, which Ward took hesitatingly. "I'll see you to-morrow night. Come to my office at five, and we'll come down together. Good night."

Chapter X.

"I will testify."

WARD returned to his seat by the table. He sighed deeply, at last rose and walked to the window. As he stood there looking out into the night, watching the far-off display of silent lightning, a knock came on the door, and Evelyn asked:

"May I come in, father?"

"Yes, my dear."

"Are you alone?" she asked, looking about. She studied his face.

"Not now, dear; I've got you." He put his arm about her waist. Evelyn was very sober. "Wilson wishes to see you, father."

"To see me? Anything in particular?"

"I think so, but I don't know."

There was a little pause, and Ward said:

"Tell him to come in."

Evelyn went to the door and said, "Mr. Tuttle, father is alone now." The subtle change from "Wilson" to "Mr. Tuttle" was not lost upon the Senator, now that he was made sensi-

tive to the situation. His heart turned from his own trouble to hers.

Tuttle entered with hat and stick in his hand. The men greeted each other rather coldly, Ward pushing forward a chair.

"You want to see me?"

"Yes, alone," replied Tuttle, still standing.

"Oh, I'll go, then," exclaimed Evelyn.

Ward reached out a hand to detain her. He seemed to need her presence. "No, my girl knows all my business. There are — few secrets between us. Go on, sir, what is it?" Evelyn stood beside him. Her heart beat with apprehension.

Tuttle bowed and took a chair, and began to speak in a formal way, slightly oratorical, as if the echoes of his recent speech were still in his tone and words.

"Senator, when I rose in the House and charged the Senate with corrupt practices, you will remember I said that it was in the hope that the charge — which was not mine — would be refuted. Men and papers had clamored in my ear for some such open statement of what they were saying or hinting. Of course, I knew that you and your brethren would escape any taint; that as honest men you courted investigation. Your testimony last Tuesday was in

the main what I expected from you, but at the end of four days, the committee, without having found anything conclusive about bribery, have proved to the public and myself that the Consolidated Air Line Railway has bought its way boldly and adroitly to its present point."

"You don't mean to say Mr. Davis has"—— asked Evelyn.

"I don't know how much he knows of the work, but I regard Fox and Brennan as dangerous men. The public now comes back upon me, because I can find no case. Of course, we all know that, were the criminals actually before us, their only course would be to deny *in toto*." He paused an instant, looked straight at Ward, and said, in a low voice: "Senator, I think Miss Ward had better leave us."

"No, now I'm going to stay and hear you out," replied Evelyn.

Senator Ward shivered, as if a cold blast touched him. "Let her remain. Go on."

"Very well. Now, Senator, slander is busy with your name."

"My name? What do they say?"

"How dare they slander him?" demanded Evelyn, her face full of indignation.

Tuttle rose involuntarily, with the growing excitement. His fine, serious face was full of

pain. "They say you know of senators who have been bribed. They say that—under the influence of—of liquor"——

Ward turned his eyes for a moment upon Evelyn, then turned his head toward the window. His face, pathetically drawn, moved Tuttle almost to tears.

"Pardon me, Senator," Tuttle said, with deep feeling, "I'm only repeating"——

Ward faced him again. "Go on, sir; I understand."

Evelyn sprang to her feet. "The miserable creatures! How can they!" Angry tears were in her eyes.

Tuttle went on slowly. "They say that you have boasted of having been approached by an agent of the Consolidated; that, if you would, you could testify in such a way as to give us a hold upon the unscrupulous scoundrels who profess to carry both houses in their pockets. Senator," he went on, with a fervor of appeal, "I stand here to-night to say that if you can strike a blow at these men, you should do it, for God's sake and Truth's sake."

Ward, deeply affected, looked away again, and faltered in a low voice, "Betray my colleagues!"

"If you don't, you betray your State!" was

the young man's ringing reply. "The welfare of the people demands it. Public morality demands it. Unless we can break through this chain of denial, we can prove nothing. If we only had one little opening; if we could only force one petty member of the Third House to confess"——

"Father, I see it," cried Evelyn, her face lighted up with something of Tuttle's own enthusiasm. "If you can furnish evidence, it is your duty to the people."

Tuttle went on: "Every paper in the Union is commenting on the supineness of our great State under the heel of this corporation. We must break it down. I am appalled at the thought of failing to convict, so gigantic is the evil. If one act could be fixed on the railway, the whole stupendous fraud would fall to pieces. Senator," he said, flinging out his hand in a last appeal, "I felt that in your testimony last Tuesday you kept something back. If I recall you to-morrow, will you tell us all you know?"

"Of course he will," said Evelyn, placing her hand on her father's shoulder. There was a significant silence in the room.

"Suppose it sacrificed a dear friend," said Ward, in a low voice.

"Do it, father. Won't you? There is no other way."

"Suppose it robbed a wife and children of support?"

"The question should be what is right, not what is expedient," said Tuttle, with the inexorable logic of a moralist.

When Ward spoke again, his voice was in a higher key and trembled perceptibly. "Suppose it destroys the name of a man who has grown old in the service of his State?"

"The truth won't hurt such a hypocrite," cried Evelyn; "it would do him good. Stand up for justice, father. I'd do it if I were in your place."

"It's worth the cost, Senator. Think of its effect on future legislation."

There was another pause.

"Very well, sir; you've set me a hard task. I never had a harder one. You may recall me, and I will testify." He sank into his chair and bowed his head upon his hand.

"That's my brave Puritan father," Evelyn said, putting her hand about his neck.

When Ward lifted up his head to speak, his face had a set look. He spoke slowly, brokenly. "You don't understand what you ask, Evelyn. Let me put it to you in a new way. On one side is a monopoly, stronger than you can understand, reaching like a devil-fish into every man's

pocket, unscrupulous men everywhere at the head of it, doing its work of bribery with eyes shut, a corrupting influence which we cannot destroy without sacrificing some man, somebody with wife and children and friends, who love him and trust him. It will be ruin to many a man if I speak. Senators will be impeached."

"Then you must speak, father. Why, you terrify me by describing this power. If you can break down this wall that shields these robbers, do it, no matter what individual suffers."

"Suppose *I* am the individual?"

"What do you mean? Not that you — not that it is"——

"Good heavens, Senator! You don't mean that *you* have actually — *accepted*"——

Ward looked up at them both, with white, pathetic face. "I'm a disgraced and ruined old man. Help me to do my duty." He uttered a low cry that was like a sob. Evelyn put her arm about his neck with the action of a mother-bird sheltering its young. There was an accusing look on her face, but her out-flung hand had pleading in it. Tuttle rose and went hastily out, leaving father and child together.

Chapter XI.

BEFORE THE JOINT COMMITTEE.

THE interest in the investigation had grown from day to day, and long before ten o'clock on Monday people began to ascend to the committee-room and take the seats reserved for the spectators. A continuous stream from the incessantly rising and falling elevators clicked, shuffled and clattered along the halls. Tuttle was waiting out in the corridor for the coming of the committee and the principals, pacing back and forth just beyond the door on the marble flagging, unmindful of the curious glances of the crowd.

Strangers coming along saw him, whispered, smiled, for he was known to most of them. The members of the Third House came up in pairs, laughing gaily, and the hall echoed with quips and jests and laughter, like the lobby of a theater. Had there been more women its verisimilitude would have been complete.

Brennan came along, looking as fresh as the rose he wore in his coat. He nodded at Tuttle. "Hello, Tuttle! How's business?"

"Save your jokes till night," Tuttle replied, quietly.

"I'll have plenty left, and you'll be the biggest one of all," said Brennan, as he passed on.

Tuttle was waiting for Ward and Evelyn. Would he come? It was a terrible thing to ask of him. He was an old man and in financial straits; his testimony would ruin him in the face of the community. The more Tuttle thought of it, the more impossible it grew. It was more than any man was capable of.

The crowds streamed by him. He could hear them as they whispered to their companions: "There he is — that's Tuttle."

At every click of the elevator door he turned to look. Helene came in with young Brooks, a divinity student, an affected, brainless creature. She gave one quick glance at him, and then fell into a very deeply interested conversation with young Brooks, whom she hated, and so managed to pass Tuttle without seeing him.

Tuttle was braced to the shock, but he staggered under it. He had hoped it would not come to that. The practice of "cutting" friends had always seemed to him a weak and childish thing to do. It settled nothing. It served only to belittle and degrade both parties to it.

At last Senator Ward came in with Evelyn.

Tuttle was shocked at his looks. He absolutely leaned upon Evelyn's shoulder for support, and his face was white and full of shadows where the fallen muscles had left hollows. His eyes were wide and almost piteous. He smiled pathetically.

"I'm here, Wilson—ready to do my duty."

"I wish there was some other way, Senator," Tuttle said, giving them each a hand. "I'm ready to release you. I've thought it all over; it's too much to ask of you. I don't ask it of you."

Evelyn's set face relaxed into a smile. Her eyes filled with tears. "Oh, I'm so glad to hear you say that. He is so sick. It don't seem so easy here before this crowd."

"No, I shall do it," Ward replied. "I ain't got much longer to live anyway."

"Oh, father!"

"It's true, Evelyn. I don't care to-day. I'm ready, anxious to do it and have done with it." His eyes lighted with a desperate sort of enthusiasm. He had attained something of the martyr's mood.

"It may be avoided," Tuttle said to Evelyn. "We are going to re-examine some of the principals, and there are several almost desperate measures which we will use. If at the last we

find our case going by the board, and the Senator is willing"——

"I shall be willing," the old man cried.

Tuttle gave him his arm, and they entered the committee-room.

Chapter XII.

SENATOR WARD'S APPEAL.

COMMITTEE-ROOM A was a large vaulted room, whose windows looked away on the city and over the valley where the river lay at flood-tide, reflecting the burning light of the morning sun like burnished steel. The windows were open, and the curtains flapped intermittently as the wind gushed in, laving the crowd with delicious impartiality. The room was filled with a motley crowd, all sorts of reformers, and all sorts of people drawn merely out of curiosity to witness that most dramatic of all things in real life, a trial of justice.

At one end of the room were the seats of the spectators. On a semi-circular platform at the other end of the room were a series of desks arranged in shape like a horse-shoe, placed end to end. In the space inclosed was a long reporters' table. On either side, at the front, were two long tables. At one sat the Iron Duke, his attorney Binney, Fox and Brennan. At the other Tuttle took his seat with the Attorney-General.

At the back of the committee's chairs were other reporters and clerks writing busily. At the door, moving about and waiting upon the committeemen, were the assistant sergeants-at-arms. Immediately in front were the seats reserved for representatives, quite a number of whom were present, especially the younger members, who came in jauntily, with flowers in their buttonholes, and one or two wore sashes. They nodded to Brennan and laughed among themselves carelessly, some faces showing signs of liquor, but others were grave and anxious. The senators mainly talked among themselves, nodding their gray heads. The general feeling was that a crisis was reached. If Tuttle won nothing from this sitting, everybody said he must withdraw.

The sensation of the hour was the entrance of Senator Ward and Evelyn, accompanied by Tuttle. The people broke into applause at the sight of the young champion of the people's rights, who paid no attention to the clapping, but assisted Ward to a seat.

"Old gent's been on another bat," commented Merritt, breaking in on a story Brennan was telling.

"Rather rocky this morning. (I wonder what

brings him out in that condition)," said Brennan to himself. He gave little further thought to it.

"Well," he said, continuing his story, which he told capitally, "there were these two old girls looking across the back-yard fence, and this was the dialogue: 'Have you haird the news?' 'No, phwat is it?' 'Mrs. O'Flanigan has an increase in the family.' 'Naw.' 'Indade, yis.' 'Phwat is the six, bye or gurl?' 'Nayther.' 'Phwat? Naythe r?' 'Naw, it's twuns.'"

The group around Brennan laughed uproariously, till Chairman Smith silenced them by saying: "Say, Brennan is Irish. If you don't believe it from his brogue, let me tell you the bull he made the other day. He said to Wade, who wanted him to go yachting on Friday — 'All right,' says Tom, 'I'll go on Friday, if it dawn't rain. If it rains Friday, I'll go Thursday.'"

While they were all laughing at Brennan, the remaining members of the committee came in and took their seats, and, as he grinned in subsiding merriment, the chairman called the room to order by a blow of the gavel upon his desk.

"We are ready to proceed, Mr. Attorney-General," he said, and he leaned over and whispered something to his neighbor that convulsed them both, while his hard, bold eyes were

fixed on Helene's fresh face and dancing eyes. It was all very delightful for her. The whole affair was farcical or dull to most of the committee. They rejoiced when a breath of fun came in.

The first witness called was Robert Jenks, whose convenient deafness, somewhat exaggerated possibly, made interrogation difficult, as the Attorney-General's voice was not strong. He had been very busy at the office, Robert testified, and had not taken much notice who came in or out with his brother. He could not hear anything spoken in the office unless he could see the speaker's lips. Did not know the names of men who called. Could not recall faces.

"Call Thomas Brennan," said the Attorney-General, dismissing Robert, who rose impassively and went out.

"Mr. Brennan." Brennan came around to the witness-chair at the left. The clerk swore him in the usual perfunctory manner. "Hol' up y'r 'an'. You do so'mly swear 't w't you tes'fy s'll be wholetruth, nothin' but truth, s'help-ye-God." Brennan nodded and seated himself.

The Attorney-General picked up a scrap of paper from the desk, looked benevolently over his spectacles at Brennan, and asked in a perfectly indifferent manner: "Mr. Brennan, you're a member of the Third House, I believe?"

His voice seemed to come from a great interior distance and addressed itself to space.

"Accordin' to the noospapers, I have that honor," replied Brennan, blandly at his ease.

"A doubtful honor. In your opinion, Mr. Brennan, what constitutes the duties of a member of the Third House?"

"I don't know that they've been defined."

"What do you mean by that, sir?" said the Attorney-General, looking at him.

"Well, I don't know that I've sized it up yet myself. But I should say — greasing the wheels of legislation."

"That is to say" ——

"I mean instructing the country members, sir." The Attorney-General seemed mildly interested in this bit of information. His eyes returned to the slip in his hand.

"Ahem! That's the legitimate, I suppose. What is the illegitimate function?"

"Can't say; you'll have to ask the other feller. I'm not in it." This raised a laugh.

"Mr. Brennan," said the Attorney-General, leaning toward him and taking a little more interest in his questioning, "have you ever paid out any money to members of either house in the interests of the Consolidated?"

"No, sir."

"Or in your own interest?"

"No, sir, never."

The Attorney-General paused, took off his spectacles, polished them with his handkerchief, and asked: "You're employed here in the interests of the Consolidated?"

"Yes, sir."

"What do you do here? You must earn your salary," he said, going on in a curiously mechanical, automatic way. It didn't seem to involve any correlative thinking on his part.

Brennan winked jovially at the chairman, with the eye on the other side from the prosecution. "I try to, sir."

"Well, now, what do you do? Now, wait; I wish you'd state, carefully and briefly, just what you do."

Brennan replied, seriously, as if nothing was to be gained by further evasion: "I secure the services of the Third House, either by retaining them as lawyers or as lobbyists, pure and simple."

The Attorney-General looked at the ceiling meditatively. "Pay them money, of course?" he said, as if he saw the question posted on the ceiling.

"Of course; that's what they're here for."

"And that's what you're here for. That is to

say, you either pay them for doing certain work or retain them so they won't work against you?"

"Yes, sir; that's the exact idea." Brennan appeared delighted at his ready comprehension.

"How much money have you paid out to those members of the Third House?" pursued the Attorney-General.

"Can't say — too much."

"Don't keep an account, I suppose?"

"Not a regular book, no, sir; only a few memoranda."

Softly, without looking at Brennan: "Never paid, by mistake, any money to members of the *other* houses?"

"No, sir, not a cent."

Tuttle at this point whispered in the Attorney-General's ear, who then turned and asked: "Who arranged these — these dinners? Whose idea was that? Yours, or Mr. Davis'?"

"Mine. I suggested it as a good thing, and he agreed."

"Ah! What made you think it was a good thing?"

"Well, I thought it would give us a good chance to explain the bill, and then a man's always in better shape to listen when he has a good dinner, you know."

"Is your idea of a good dinner one costing ten dollars a plate?"

Brennan smiled broadly. "Well, yes, I should say that it was a"——

"Good workable dinner—eh?" struck in the attorney, dryly humorous. When the laughter had died away he returned to Brennan with a little more severity than he had yet shown.

"Now, sir, is it not a fact it was your design to unduly influence those men by that dinner and those wines?"

Brennan hesitated a little. "Well, I didn't suppose it would make 'em enemies," he admitted.

"You *thought* it would influence them favorably?"

"I did, yes, sir."

"You say you never paid one cent to any member of this legislature," pursued the Attorney-General, putting on his glasses again and referring to some notes. "Do I understand you to mean by that that no values of notes or stocks or bonds"——

"Yes, sir, once for all I say I've not spent one cent illegitimately for the interests of the Air Line."

"That doesn't answer my question, sir."

"Why not?"

"Because we don't agree on the meaning of the word 'legitimate.' Haven't you promised members of this legislature that if the bill passed they would be stockholders in the road to specified amounts."

"No, sir."

"You are under oath, Mr. Brennan," said the Attorney-General, quietly severe.

Brennan faced him undauntedly. "I am aware of it, sir." There was a little pause. Both parties studied each other.

"That's all, sir," said the Attorney-General. Brennan smiled.

The chairman looked around the circle. "Any one else a question?"

The first committeeman, a young man of great sincerity and power, known to be a distinct opponent of all monopoly, took up the questioning.

"Mr. Brennan, how much of your time do you give to the Third House?" he said, in a crisp, matter-of-fact voice.

"Just now, all my time."

"What do you get for it?"

"Five thousand per year."

"Does that include your expenses?"

"No, sir — that is, not all of them."

"If you should give a dinner to a dozen legis-

lators, the bill could safely be left to the Consolidated to pay?"

"Yes, sir."

"That's all, Mr. Chairman — for the present."

The chairman now took up the interrogation. "One moment, Mr. Brennan. Why were these invitations to dinner given out in blocks of ten? Was there any special significance in that?"

"Oh, no! Only a handy way of telling when we got round."

"Didn't want to treat the same fellow twice — eh? Had no political significance, I take it. Any one else a question? Mr. Binney?"

Binney, who had been apparently dozing, roused up, and asked in his peculiar, high, nasal, drawling, self-complacent tone:

"Mr. Brennan, did you ever pay, or promise to pay, one cent — in stocks, bonds, cash, or valuables of *any* kind — to *any* member — of this legislature?"

"No, sir."

"That's all," said Binney, settling down again, as if that settled the matter, while a ripple of laughter ran over the room. The Attorney-General at this point asked:

"One more question, Mr. Brennan. Do you consider the work you've done here for the Air

Line, this work of buying up the Third House, legitimate?"

"Yes, sir, and more, it was necessary," replied Brennan, with engaging frankness that raised a laugh.

The Attorney-General settled back in his chair. "Do you keep any accounts, check-books, stubs or vouchers for the amounts you pay out?"

"No, sir."

"Trust each other perfectly, I suppose?" put in the first committeeman, who never took his eyes off Brennan's face during the entire testimony.

"Are the promises to pay ever put into writing?"

"No, sir."

"So that, unless some one squeaked, there is no trace of the actual amounts passed?"

"No, sir, not unless we would give them, which we have freely done."

"Your openness doesn't extend to any criminating transactions, I've noticed," said the Attorney-General, dryly.

"Because there wasn't any, sir."

"That's what we're trying to convince ourselves."

"Success to ye!" was Brennan's audacious

answer, which started another murmur of laughter and applause from the Third House.

"That's all."

The chairman nodded. "That's all, Mr. Brennan."

"Call Mr. Davis."

"Mr. Davis," said the chairman, with a respectful tone of voice, "the committee ask your recall." Davis left his seat near Helene and came forward and took the chair. He held a fan in his hand, with which he played. "You've been sworn, I believe?" Davis nodded without speaking.

The Attorney-General, with his eyes on the bit of paper which he held in his hands, began his questioning from the same remote interior depth as before, with no appreciable access of interest.

"Mr. Davis, did you on the 24th of April meet a representative of the Electric Motor Line and pay him a certain sum of money?"

"As I testified on Wednesday, I did; yes, sir."

"What did you pay him that money for?"

"I — I bought him out."

"What do you mean by that? According to your previous testimony, he had no property to sell."

"I paid him to withdraw," replied Davis, in the tone of a man facing a critical question.

The Attorney-General again looked benignantly over his spectacles. "You heard that he was coming before this legislature with a plan for a road, asking a charter, and you thought it good business method to pay him to stay away?"

"That's it, exactly; I paid him to keep away. I felt that we were better able to build the road, that it was good policy to use all legitimate means to get our charter, and" ——

The Attorney-General interrupted him quietly but sternly. "Do you consider it a proper thing to step between a petitioning corporation and this legislature and buy it off?" Davis remained silent. "The legislature, representing the people of this State, should have a chance to see for itself the relative merits of each system. How much money did you pay?" At this question the room became still as death; the reporters waited with their pens in hand for this most important answer. Helene, without knowing what it all meant, was deeply interested. Davis partly rose, his face flushed with anger.

"I decline to answer."

This was the crisis that the defense had anticipated, and Binney rose and said:

"Gentlemen of the c'mittee, I 'bject. I don't

see by what *lee*–gal right Mr. Attorney-General *asks* that question. What Mr. Davis paid to the representative of the Motor Line is of a *pure*–ly *private* nature. It don't enter into the province of this committee to *ask* for this information. I 'bject to this question as impertinent and unwarrantable, having no basis in law."

The Attorney-General arose, impressively quiet by contrast. "Gentlemen of the committee, I want to say, right here, that under the laws of the State the Consolidated Air Line Railway is a creature of the State, and, by the force of section twenty-one, chapter sixteen, it is obliged to render up its accounts at any time to a committee of this character." He took up a book which Tuttle had opened and laid conveniently near. "I would call the committee's attention to the section where this is distinctly stated. I say, gentlemen, that my question is one which should be put and answered. I propose to show that that sum did not purchase five hundred dollars' worth of visible property; that it was a bribe substantially, and a fraud on this legislature. The Consolidated Road is a corporation; the Motor System was seeking a charter as a corporation. A transaction of the nature indicated was not a private one, and I insist on knowing." He took his seat amid a hush almost painful.

The first grand dramatic moment had arrived. The first genuine battle. After the legal fashion they had approached by zig-zag and tunnel as if to taste to the full the delight of the mine's exploding surprise. The reporters sharpened their pencils and plunged into a racy description of the scene. The flapping curtains became an annoyance.

The committee conferred a moment. The attorneys consulted each other. The crowd whispered their delight. Davis gnawed his bristling lip as Binney spoke in his ear.

The chairman at last said: "At this point we agree to postpone the answer on the amount. Proceed on other matters for the present. We desire to secure precedent cases for reference."

"I suppose you're willing to admit that it was a large sum, Mr. Davis," the Attorney-General said, in a kind, encouraging tone.

"I am," Davis replied, after a pause.

"Mr. Davis, according to your testimony on Wednesday, you did not know how many people had been retained. Since then a list has been made, and thirty-nine members of the lobby are known to have received money or promises of money from you. You admit that, I suppose?"

"It might be forty, or more."

"You have no hesitancy about admitting that you paid large sums of money to these *private* individuals?"

"No, sir; I found it necessary. I was forced into it by conditions."

"I admire your frankness, if not your sense of morality. If I should say that a man who would buy a private individual, would, in my estimation, buy an official, if he could do it safely, you couldn't blame me, could you?"

Again Mr. Binney came out of his doze to object. "Gentlemen of the committee, I object to such methods of procedure."

"You'll object to a good many of our methods before we are through with you," replied the Attorney-General, quietly. He asked the next question in the tone of a man who expects a certain answer. "Mr. Davis, you don't know, I suppose, of any money used to influence members of the House?"

"No, sir."

"Or any distribution of stocks or official position, or promises of such distribution at some future time?"

Davis gnawed his mustache. "No, sir; nothing of the kind."

Again the Attorney-General became slightly interested. "Do your books show the payment

of all these different sums of money — I mean the books of the railway, of course?"

"No, sir; except in a general account with me; there is always an open account with me."

"That is, you have full swing on these matters, and the company stands ready to pay?"

"If you put it that way — yes, sir."

"I do put it that way. And you, in your turn, gave the same discretionary power to Fox and Brennan?"

Davis hesitated, drumming nervously on the table. The Attorney-General went on softly, burnishing his glasses again: "I say, substantially the power to employ men in the interests of the road wherever they can find them, while you stood ready to pay without asking embarrassing questions."

Davis paused as if to trace out the leadings of this question. "Yes, sir."

"While you were to know nothing?"

Davis became irritated for the first time. "Of course, it was impossible for me to know everything."

The Attorney-General was ironically severe. "And of course you couldn't afford to be too curious." He then rose and addressed the committee. "Gentlemen, I insist on having the answer to my question, and I insist on having

the books of this corporation brought into this room. I believe that the money which went to the Motor Line also included money to be used in the interests of the Consolidated. I say that if you can find that fifty thousand dollars has been paid in one lump sum to an opposing petitioner, it is *prima facie* evidence of crime. I insist on the amount."

Binney sprang to his feet before the Attorney-General had taken his seat, exclaiming in his scornful drawl: "If my lear–ned brother real–ly believes that, he must have got a new vi–ew of law from some in–spired book. As matter o' fact, if the sum were a half mil–lion, it would prove nothing. I in–sist it is a private matter. I object to the question."

The chairman held up the ballots. "With a vote of five to two the committee demand the amount."

Davis and Binney sprang up together, Davis shouting: "Mr. Chairman, this is an outrage, an assault on my private affairs. I shall not reply."

"Gentlemen of the committee, I am astounded at such ign'rance, such injustice — it is without precedent."

The chairman pounded upon the table with his gavel, bringing the room to order. His

jovial face became stern. "Mr. Binney seems to forget that he is in the presence of one of the highest courts of the land."

"It is the committee's fault, sir, if that is so. There has been too little law and fairness."

"Sit down, sir! This committee is not to be lectured," shouted the chairman. "The committee, in anticipation of this question, have carefully examined the records for precedent. It was not a private and inviolable transaction. Proceed, Mr. Attorney-General. Mr. Davis will answer the question."

The crowd was tense with delighted suspense. The reporters wrote like lightning. Relays came and went from the large table in the center. The special artist of the *Planet* drew rapid sketches of the chairman and Binney as they faced each other. Helene clapped her hands as if it were a play. Ward leaned forward, forgetful of everything else but Evelyn, whose hands held his. He recognized this as a very important question.

Binney pulled Davis down and whispered some inaudible warning in his ear. Fox went over to them and added his counsel. Brennan walked the floor, his easy indifference for the first time disturbed. Tuttle and Russell consulted. The crowd waited with whispered col-

loquies, their eyes on Davis as the great actor in the drama. The Attorney-General, at length, with calm but fateful utterance, asked :

"Mr. Davis, what *was* the sum paid by you to the representative of the Motor Line?"

Binney arose. "At *my* request, Mr. Davis will reply, *because* it really has *no significance*, as I see, what the sum was, when the passage of *some* money is admitted."

Davis answered, with a touch of bravado : "I paid him a hundred thousand dollars."

There was a tremendous sensation in the room, much wagging of heads and mutterings : "I told you so!" "That cooks his goose," and the like. Instant silence followed that they might hear the next question.

"In cash?"

"I decline to answer that, sir."

"Is it not a fact, Mr. Davis," insinuated the Attorney-General, "that you paid him half in cash to be used in furthering the bill, and half in stock in the road?"

"I decline to answer."

"Will your books show the nature of this transaction?"

"No, sir."

"Or the amount?"

"No, sir."

"But they will show an account with you. Will you bring those books in?"

"The company's books — yes, sir.'

"This afternoon?" Davis nodded. "Very well, sir, that is all."

"Any one else a question?" asked the chairman.

Binney, who confined his examination of his principals to the single repeated question to bring out their innocence, asked with significant emphasis: "Mr. Davis — has there ever — by your consent — or with your knowledge — been paid — one cent of values in money or stock to any member of this legislature?"

"No, sir."

"That is all, sir," said Binney, with an air of vast satisfaction no actor could surpass.

"Any one else a question?" asked the chairman.

The first committeeman said: "As Mr. Davis will be recalled this afternoon, I will waive the questions which I had designed to ask him, till his recall. They refer to the transactions just mentioned."

"That is all, Mr. Davis."

Davis rose and went back to where Helene was sitting beside Evelyn, delighted with it all.

"Come, Helene, this is no place for you at all. You and Brooks go home. I'll come soon."

Helene and the young man rose and tiptoed out, while the committee conferred among themselves, and the sergeant-at-arms helped them to ice-water. The reporter at the central table rose with his hands full of copy. A colleague slid into his chair, and he made his way out of the room in order to have the testimony up to this point in the next edition.

The chairman called the room to order. "Mr. Attorney-General, we are ready for your next witness."

"I would like to ask Mr. Fox one or two questions."

The delighted spectators sent forth another rustle of pleased expectation. Those who had heard Fox testify before communicated with those who had not.

"He's a dandy! I tell yeh, you don't ketch him off his guard. He's fox by name an' fox by nature."

"Will Mr. Fox step forward?" said the chairman.

Fox went to the seat for witnesses, with a bland smile on his face.

"Mr. Fox, you knew, of course, all about the purchase of the motor scheme."

Fox replied glibly, very much at his ease: "In a general way I may say, yes — in a general way I did."

"At the time?"

"Yes, sir, in a general way."

"In a general way you approved of it, of course?"

He meditated an instant. "Well, yes — yes, I think I may say I did."

"You knew Mr. Mason personally, I believe?"

Fox threw one leg over his chair-arm. He had the appearance of loafing, as if he were telling stories in a grocery. "Yes, through his wife, I may say; she was a Burbank, of Lakeside. I used to teach school in Lakeside; recollect very well when I first saw her. My maiden shingle had just been hung"——

"Spare us your biography, please," said the Attorney-General, coldly. "We can read that after *you* are hung."

The crowd laughed. They were delighted to think the comedy element had begun to come in.

"I was about to say"—— began Fox.

The Attorney-General interrupted him impatiently. "I simply wanted to know if you knew him personally."

"I do, because I was in"——

"That is sufficient. You approved of the amount paid to Mr. Davis, I suppose?"

"No, sir; I considered it too much."

"You knew them better."

Fox settled himself lower down in his chair. "I didn't think there was any money back of his scheme. I considered the use of electric motors questionable. I think Mr. Davis overestimated the entire opposition. I think he overestimated the lobby."

"Very likely; one is apt to in such a case. Were you present when the transaction took place?"

"No, sir; I had a couple of cases in" ——

"You don't know anything about the particulars of the bargain, I suppose."

"No, sir; have no recollection of it."

"Your mind is a mere blank on all matters of real importance to this committee."

Fox smiled broadly. "I am unable to state, Mr. Attorney-General, what importance the committee places on my testimony."

"You'll find out, sir. You testified the other day that you had paid out to various private parties, members of the Third House and others, large sums of money. Did you keep any account of these things?"

"No, sir; no book account."

"No book account? It was paid mainly by private checks or bills, I suppose?"

"Mainly, I may say, by bills."

"Did you make any memoranda?"

"I kept private accounts with some of them, yes, sir."

"I take it you are in the habit of paying out a good deal of money in this manner for the Air Line."

"Yes, sir; as the attorney I have great liberty."

"Too much liberty." He took a sheet of paper from Tuttle. "Now, sir, if I should say that already your agents have, by your own admission, received nearly fifty thousand dollars, and expect more, you'd be surprised, wouldn't you?"

"What at?" replied Fox, coolly.

"You would say it was too much, I presume."

"I'd say it was fifty thousand dollars too much. We paid out this money from necessity, and it was not"——

"The Attorney-General faced him with a note of sternness in his voice. "Necessity is no excuse for violating the law, sir."

"I have violated no law."

"Can you say as much for your agents?" asked one of the committeemen.

"I'm not testifying for them, sir. I'm not responsible for their acts," replied Fox, facing in his direction.

"Let one of them turn State's evidence, and you'll have a chance to verify that," said the first committeeman.

The Attorney-General glanced at the chairman. "I think that is all, sir."

"Any one else a question?" asked the chairman.

During the pause Fox gazed around him smilingly, his thumb in his vest pocket, his leg over the chair-arm. He was a very willing witness; in fact, he embarrassed them with his confidence.

"That's all, Mr. Fox. We're ready for the next witness."

The Attorney-General meditated. Tuttle consulted with a scholarly young man who sat beside him. Once or twice he looked at Senator Ward and Evelyn. A look of pain, of apprehension came over his face as he rose and went to Ward's side.

"Do you feel strong enough to speak? If you don't, we will adjourn till to-morrow."

"No, I want to speak now. I never will be stronger," the old man replied, a look of high resolution on his face. Tuttle stood for an

instant irresolute. The dumb, appealing look in Evelyn's eyes shook him, but there seemed no other way, and he took his seat again.

"We will rest our case here, Mr. Attorney-General, unless the committee desire to recall Mr. Tuttle for interrogation."

"We thought that understood, Mr. Attorney-General," exclaimed the chairman, somewhat impatiently. "This committee is ready to hear Mr. Tuttle at any time, if he has anything more to state to the committee."

This brought Tuttle to his feet, and he spoke sharply. "I want to be distinctly understood, Mr. Chairman. I stand here as a witness, subject to the committee's will. I'm not responsible for the committee's action, and I don't propose to be. I'm responsible for my own conduct in this affair, simply. I'm ready to testify at any moment in answer to questions from this committee, but I have no statement to make. I will answer on the floor of the House for my conduct as a representative. I now await your action."

A deep hush fell upon the audience, who saw now the subtle situation. The attempt of the committee to throw the burden and calumny of defeat upon Tuttle's shoulders had failed.

"Mr. Tuttle, I don't know that the committee

has any questions to ask," replied the chairman, with considerable asperity.

"Very well, sir," replied Tuttle. "I have nothing more to say. I have one more witness, however, overlooked by the Attorney-General — Senator Rufus Ward."

The chairman looked surprised. The crowd murmured with interest. "You ask Senator Ward's recall?"

"Yes, sir — Senator Ward," said the Attorney-General.

"Senator Ward will please come forward."

Ward rose slowly and came forward, followed by Evelyn's anxious eyes. Tuttle looked at her, and his heart weakened.

"You've been sworn, I believe?"

"I have," he replied, in a low voice. Evelyn longed to go to his side and forbid him to speak, but there was a look on his face which awed her.

The crowd seemed to scent something dramatic in the air. Their interest hitherto was disorder compared to the straining attention which they now gave to every movement and inflection of the committee and to the Senator whose recall had been demanded.

"Will you be seated, sir?" said the chairman.

Ward bowed, formally. "With your permission, sir, I will stand."

"Certainly, sir," replied the chairman, politely. Ward stood with his fingers resting on the table, facing the committee. "I'd like to ask the permission of the committee to make a statement."

This request was understood to mean that he was not to be interrupted. "Very well, Senator; there is no objection. State what you have to say in your own way," said the chairman, nodding about to all the committee.

Again he bowed to the committee, and began speaking in a firm, but low monotone: "Gentlemen and fellow citizens, I have a confession to make." A deathly silence fell in the room. Men leaned forward, straining their ears to hear. "I stand here after a week of sleepless debate, rising from a sick-bed, with a duty to perform. The gentlemen on this committee know how the taint of corruption has been thrown upon me. Slander has been busy with me, and, since my testimony on Tuesday, my brain has about worn out with the trouble of it all. My own self-defense, if nothing more, demands that I should stand here and testify." He paused. "I am an old man, gentlemen, nearing the grave, and I've been an honest man, as near as I knew. I haven't been a strong man, like the young man who stands here at the head of this investigation. I had to take the world as I found it. I had not

his education, his easy position, and life has been a war. But never mind that. If I was weak, I never wronged or entertained the idea of wronging any human being, and I never failed in my duty till lately."

He presented a great picture as he stood speaking without a gesture. His eyes were hollow, but full of light; his face was very pale. He spoke with that natural eloquence, somewhat formal, which a man of his stamp uses in making a public speech. His phrases were gentle, free from dialect and simple in construction.

"Gentlemen, I stand here before you to-day bankrupt. My business, which I built up by a life of industry and enterprise, has passed out of my hands. To-day my wife and daughter are left without a cent."

His voice broke. In the pause which followed a strange, sweet shudder ran over the room, like that produced by a tense moment on the stage. The sobs of women could be heard, so sincere and penetrating was the emotion in his voice. Evelyn gazed at him steadily, the tears streaming down her cheeks, her lips parted, her eyes wide, her hands knotted and pressed between her knees.

"Won't you sit, Senator?" asked the chairman, gently. Brennan and Fox could only

glance at each other in wonder. Davis stared fixedly.

"No, thank you, sir," was Ward's formal reply.

"Pardon me, Senator," said the chairman softly, "but is it necessary to go into these sad personal facts?"

Ward bowed again.

"It is, sir. I need the palliation which they will bring to my offense. Gentlemen, it was while passing my sleepless nights, studying out these facts, trying to find a way out, that I was approached with a bribe."

There was a stir and a flutter in the room, silenced by the gavel of the chairman.

"My God, will he criminate himself?" asked Davis, his face turning a yellowish white. There was something in Ward's face that scared him.

"Why in hell didn't you tell me of this?" Binney replied.

The chairman's gavel silenced them both.

Ward continued:

"Of course I knew bribery was all about me, but it had not reached me. But, at last, when the bill passed into the Senate, I was approached by a celebrated member of the Third House, who knew of the crisis in my business and

counted upon my necessity. He made an offer of money to me."

There was a long pause, during which Ward turned his eyes upon Tuttle and then upon Evelyn, whose face was only a vague, luminous gray patch before his eyes. He tried to speak, and could not. His throat was dry; his voice failed him. There came such tension into the listening ears of the spectators that reaction must now come.

"Can you name that man?" asked Tuttle, in a tone that made the Senator straighten again.

Ward lifted his head defiantly. "I can and I will. It was Thomas Brennan."

After an instant of breathless silence a thunderous applause broke forth. Men leaped to their feet, white with excitement. Oaths of admiration broke from their lips. The whole matter was now clear. Ward was sacrificing himself.

Brennan leaped up, his eyes flaming with wrath. "He's a God-damned liar!"

Fox pulled him down.

The chairman rose, beating the table furiously. The reporters toiled like mad. The lightning sketch artist caught Brennan's tigerish leap with a few swift and powerful strokes of his pencil.

At last the chairman secured silence. "We must have order. Proceed, Senator."

Ward went on, still speaking without a gesture.

"He offered me ten thousand dollars cash if I would withdraw my opposition to the charter. He knew my terrible anxiety and counted upon it, and counted upon my — weakness, but I was stronger than he thought."

"He lies — he took it!" shouted Brennan, furiously, half rising from his seat, in spite of Fox, who had his hand upon his arm.

"Will you sit down, sir!" commanded the Attorney-General, lifting his tall form above Brennan, and facing him with a look that awed the king of the lobby.

Ward turned and faced Brennan with thrilling dignity.

"Stand before this committee and say that, if you dare! Say it under oath!"

He paused a moment, with the orator's instinctive knowledge of how to use a great dramatic moment. His burning eyes fell upon Brennan with accusing force.

"No, gentlemen of the committee, I did not take it, but I — I — temporized; in my desperation I entertained it. Yes, I promised it, in my hour of weakness. That's my shame, my dis-

grace, and it was while I was sleepless with my necessity and my temptation that another man came to me, came into my house, came to buy my vote and influence — the great leader of the corporation himself."

There was no need of the gavel now. Each man apprehended the entire situation.

"Whom do you mean by that, Senator?" said Tuttle, and his voice startled the old man into speech again.

"I mean the Iron Duke himself — Mr. Davis."

The pent-up excitement of the spectators broke out into cheers and frenzied applause, whose climax of intensity showed their thorough appreciation of this supreme moment in the case of the prosecution. The chairman's gavel was powerless to silence it.

Davis sprang to his feet, his face swollen, mottled red and purple with anger. He thrust his great fist into the air with a terrible gesture.

"Mr. Chairman, he lies! I swear to God he lies!"

"Sit down," yelled the crowd. "Sit down, you thief!"

The chairman waved his gavel in the air, screaming at the top of his lungs.

"*Silence!* Sit down. Clear the room. *Silence*, I say!"

The room fell silent only when it had exhausted its emotion through utterance.

"Keep your seat," said the Attorney-General, sternly, to Davis, as soon as he could be heard. "Go on, Senator. What proposition did Mr. Davis make?"

Ward's voice began to tremble a little. He passed his hand in a confused way across his face.

"He said he was willing to expend fifty thousand dollars more to carry the charter. It was worth that to him. He said he must secure his charter in order to save what he had. He urged me strongly, and at last offered me fifty thousand dollars as a definite proposition if I would change six votes, including my own."

Every word fell with terrible force upon Davis, whose white face and fixed eyes looked up at Ward as if he already sat a convicted criminal facing his judge.

"I thank God I had the power to put the temptation aside, for it was a terrible temptation to a ruined man. It was not my strength — it was the strength of my daughter and this young man here. I knew if I took that offer I could never look them in the face again. That saved me." He paused and put his hand to his head as if uncertain what to say next.

There was a note of sarcasm in the chairman's voice as he asked: "Will you state, Senator, why you make this statement to-day and refused last Tuesday?"

His tone roused the lion in the old man. He straightened up, and his eyes opened wide under his drawn brows, like a man who faces an assault. "The reason! You might well ask why a man would stand here and testify to his own shame. I am here to-day, sir, because it is my duty and because my wife and daughter have taught me the duty I owe my State. Because I saw that this committee and its work was a farce and a by-word in the land."

"What do you mean by that, sir?" demanded the chairman, with a distinct threat in his voice.

"I mean, sir, everybody said, 'They'll find nothing; they'll never prove a single charge, and the road will get its charter.' I'm here, gentlemen of the committee, to say that if the confession of a disgraced and ruined old man will bring these bribers to justice, I'll take whatever share of shame is coming to me."

The cheering broke out again, falling into instant silence as the old man went on, stretching out his hands appealingly to the audience, as if they represented the whole world, to whom he must send his case finally. There was a certain

majesty in his action, and a fire of deep moral conviction in his burning eyes.

"Citizens of our grand free State, shall it be said that one man or corporation rules our legislators?"

"No, no!" burst out fifty voices. They were rising to the level of his conviction.

"What is one man like myself compared to the purification that will come with the conviction of these wholesale bribers? Gentlemen of the committee, I'm ready to be questioned — ready to be impeached. I'm not fit to serve"—— His voice grew husky. Evelyn, in voiceless agony, saw his strength was failing, but she could not speak.

"I've told the truth, gentlemen. Those unscrupulous men *must* be defeated. The people's rights must be preserved. Cross-question me — I'm ready — I shall be satisfied if — if I shall be"——

His head swayed; he clung to the chair; his eyelids dropped a moment. Evelyn screamed. Wilson sprung to his aid. Everybody rose and rushed forward.

"Silence! Sit down! Sergeant, clear the room! Help the Senator to a chair!" shouted the chairman and committeemen.

"Out o' the way there! Let the girl through. Stand back! Dammit, don't crowd!"

Evelyn forced her way through while the committeemen fought the crowd back.

"Water! Stand off, there!"

Silence fell as quickly as the tumult had arisen, and Wilson, who held the insensible man in his arms, was heard to say, in very quiet, formal tone, strangely thrilling:

"Mr. Chairman, the Senator is in no condition to be examined further. I ask permission to take him from the room."

"Certainly. The sergeant-at-arms will see that the way is clear, and the room quiet."

The committeemen resumed their seats, all but the chairman, who remained standing, while Ward was assisted out, followed by Evelyn.

As the door closed on them, Davis leaped to his feet, furious with defeat, pitiless in his own extremity.

"Mr. Chairman, I ask to be recalled. I can prove that man a liar and a drunkard!"

"*Whack!*" sounded the gavel. "Mr. Davis will keep his seat. The committee will confer. The sergeant will clear the room at the first disturbance. It must be quiet."

The Attorney-General arose, fateful, introspec-

tive, inexorable. "In the light of Senator Ward's testimony, Mr. Chairman, I desire to re-examine Thomas Brennan, Robert Bennett, Timothy Sheehan and James Holbrook."

"The committee has decided to adjourn till to-morrow at two o'clock," said the chairman. The reporters seized their hats, swept their papers together, and rushed down the stairs.

Tuttle, assisted by two or three bystanders, carried Senator Ward into a private room, where, under their care, he soon revived. The doctor, who had come in answer to the telephone message, smiled encouragingly upon Evelyn as he felt the old man's pulse.

Evelyn flashed back upon him a faint smile of relief and gratitude.

"Is he going to be very ill?"

"Oh, no; I think not," said the young doctor, a handsome, smiling young man who had the absolute sureness of touch of a master, and an enthusiast in his art. "His pulse is growing in power; he'll be quite himself very soon. A rush of blood to his head. Has he been over-exerting himself in some way?"

"He's been speaking passionately lately," Tuttle replied.

"Ah, that explains it. He'll be all right pretty

soon. Get him home as quickly as possible, and keep him quiet."

As a matter of fact the Senator rested quite calmly on the steamer's deck on the way down to Waterside. Tuttle saw him safely seated in an easy-chair upon the boat, and said at parting: "I'll be down as early as possible to see you; perhaps to-night. I wish you would send word to my mother that I'm all right, in case the excitement of the day should reach her."

As he came back up the street the newsboys were crying: "Evenin' papers. All about 'vestigation," and everywhere men stopped him on the street with all sorts of wild suggestions as to the next step in the prosecution.

"Jump on 'em, Tuttle."

"You've made your point, sure as hell! Never thought you'd make it in the world."

"You never would if it hadn't 'a' been for Ward. Swipe 'em quick or you'll lose 'em sure."

"Somebody else must do the 'swiping,'" he replied. "I've done my part. I've carried the whole of this investigation on my neck, and now I propose to let the prosecution go forward by way of the regular machinery of the State."

"Oh, we'll *all* help you now, Tuttle," laughed one of the fellows whom Wilson knew to be friendly to the road.

Chapter XIII.

THE ROUT OF THE RATS.

IN a room situated above Sam Brady's saloon a group of the members of the Third House were gathered in an atmosphere dim with smoke and foul with the reek of tobacco-spittle and the smell of beer and whisky. Crop-headed waiters from the saloon below dashed deftly to and fro, bringing platters of drinks from the bar to the groups of talkers seated in confidential attitudes upon the red-leather sofas and bar-room chairs of the room.

The roar of the street outside made the din of talk within unintelligible. There had been no regular meeting called, but the general belief that this was the test day of the trial and that Tuttle was completely headed off brought them all together in a temper of general merriment. Sheehan was wildly drunk and was kept in check by Mark Brady, a shrewd, wiry little Irishman, the real owner of the saloon, who ran up occasionally to keep careful watch upon the rising

tide of intoxication, ready to utter a warning at the proper moment.

He called aside two or three of the more self-contained of the group and said: "Now see here, me Buccoes, it ain't safe. Yous don't want 'o git swiped when y'r tongues 'r' loose. See? I can't affoord it. Not jist now. See? I can't affoord it if yous can."

They promised to look after Sheehan and the others who had preferred to make a day and a night of it, and he went down below in answer to a telephone call. He came bounding up the steps, his weazened little face comical with fear and excitement. "The hell's t' pay now, sure!"

The rest made a rush for him.

"What is it, Mark?"

He jumped two feet into the air like a jumping-jack and uttered a string of Irish oaths before he could bring himself to intelligible speech. "Ward has squeaked. Skip, every domned mother's son o' yez!"

A chorus of oaths and wondering cries broke forth. The men stared at each other as a nest of rats might, feeling the shock of corn shake over their heads.

"They can't touch us," said one.

"Can't they?" sneered Mark, in unutterable scorn. "The newspaper men'll be down

on us like flies on a gum-bile. Hell! They'll jail ivery hell's spawn o' ye if y' don't skip."

"That's a fact," said old Cap. Baker. "If they git one and he squeaks, we're all ripped wide open. I calc'late I need a Nova Scotia voyage. My health, it ain't been s' good as 'twas."

"Scatter, iverybody!" cried another powerful voice from the stairway. "Fox ain't to be trusted a minute."

The most of them slipped out and down the stairway, and in less than ten minutes Mark was alone with his brother Sam, a man of large frame, with a prize-fighter's head and no features to speak of.

"What'll they do, Sam?" asked Mark.

"They'll arrest Brennan, Fox and the Governor and ivery cussed mother's son of us they can git their hands on. The air'll be full of impaichments and criminal suits. The big fellers'll be bailed out afterward, av coorse, but that won't save us if they git anny hold on Sheehan. You see that he gits off, and clane this thing up," he said, looking about the room. "Dawn't lit annybody see it like this. See? If Tom comes, tell'm he'll find me at home. Tell'm to skip quick as God'll let'm."

From the moment that Senator Ward fell, all was confusion and apparent rout. Nobody knew how much somebody else knew, and especially how much he would tell. All cohesive power was lost from the ranks of the Third House and their coadjutors. Instantly all the lesser men disappeared like rats when the last sheaf is lifted. Every one of them distrusted Brennan and Fox, and expected them to implicate others, while Brennan and Fox felt equally sure that these petty offenders would turn State's evidence upon the slightest provocation, and that, as usual, each confession would involve greater names and reach more dangerous inner circles. Therefore, all became a retreat — a Waterloo.

The papers, in each succeeding edition, continued to vociferate in half-columns of headlines: "Crushed at last!! Prosecute! The cry of the People! Let it be heard! Purge our Politics! Let every honest man throw aside party lines and help to banish bribery!" And one paper, the *Planet*, cried out furiously, "*No bail!* — Down with the traducers of our State!"

The arrest of Fox, Brennan and Davis followed quickly upon the return of the committee's report, and both houses were in a tumult as member after member became implicated. All

other business ceased. The public watched feverishly for each new edition of the paper, and read with savage delight of each succeeding arrest. But the scoop-net, thrown out just too late, brought in only a few insignificant and disreputable go-betweens, who hardly knew the parties to either side of the criminal transaction. They implicated others, however, and arrests followed slowly, and the law's approach, though gradual, hemmed Davis round like a wall of menacing fire.

There were plenty of people now to surround Tuttle and take the work of prosecution out of his hands, for which he was grateful. He was genuinely alarmed for Davis, and still believed him to be more of a victim than a conspirator. Leaving the matter of the prosecution, therefore, in the hands of the State, Tuttle hurried home to Waterside to see his mother and to reassure Helene.

He found Mrs. Tuttle knitting tranquilly on the piazza, her serene old face reflecting the sweetness and serenity of her mind. No noise of the battle had penetrated into her placid nook, warmed with the sunshine of ease and maternal pride. Officious neighbors had called her attention to the attacks made upon Wilson, but it

needed only a word and a smile from her boy to reassure her.

"Now don't you worry, mother," he had said to her, "no matter what people say or what the papers say. I am going to be perfectly honest with you. I'll tell you just how matters stand every time."

And with utter trust and pride she had lost all apprehension, and the evening paper with its scare-head first page lay unread, twisted like a doughnut, where the boy had flung it upon the piazza.

Her ear, however, detected excitement in the sound of Wilson's footsteps, and she rose with a touch of quick anxiety. "What is it, my son?"

"I've won, mother," he cried, joyously, as he ran up the steps. "Everybody is on my side now!"

She put her arms around his neck. She had a very vague idea of his victory, but thought it some sort of an election. "Well, I knew you would," she said, giving him a squeeze. "Now, come right in to supper."

"I must go over and see Senator Ward first. How is he? Have you heard?"

"No, I ain't heard nothin' except Nettie,

their girl, told our girl that he had come home again in a hack."

"Well, he didn't come home this time in the way you think. He's a hero, mother. I'll tell you all about it when I come back."

He found Evelyn sitting out under the trees, looking at the water, her large eyes full of bitter reverie. She rose as he came forward, and a quick flush rose upon her face.

"How is the Senator?" he asked before he reached her.

"Better," she replied, with appreciable effort. "I left him resting very easy. His mind seems calmer than — Oh, what will they do with him, Mr. Tuttle?"

The keen agony in her voice made him pause before he slowly answered: "I don't think he'll be proceeded against criminally. He'll be impeached, possibly, unless he resigns, which I suppose he will do. The impeachment will be a mere form. I firmly believe he has won respect for himself by his course. Everybody is speaking with admiration of his heroism. The papers"——

"I haven't dared to look at one," she replied, shrinking as if she expected a blow.

"You needn't be afraid to. They're pleading already for clemency. They recognize the moral

heroism of his position. Can I go in and see him? Is he lying down?"

"He was sleeping in his chair when I came out. I think he wants to see you. Perhaps you had better go in."

She led the way into the house. Senator Ward was seated in his arm-chair near the window, facing the sea. He turned his great dark eyes upon Tuttle inquiringly as Evelyn called his attention. There was something pathetic and full of pleading in the slow motion of his head.

"Well, Senator, how do you feel?"

"Like a man shipwrecked, Wilson," he replied, smiling a little and putting his right hand out feebly. Tuttle took his hand and drew a chair up close beside him.

"Don't be downhearted, Senator. Everybody has a good word for you to-night. The papers are full of it. In fact, you've quite robbed me of my laurels. Just listen to this!"

He read aloud from a paper which he took from his pocket: "If conviction follows, it will be due to the heroism of Senator Ward rather than to the work of Tuttle. The corruptionists presented a wall of brass to the enemy. The prosecution was helpless till Senator Ward, like another Winkelried, took the spears of the opposing rank in his own bosom, and opened the way

for the hosts of justice. No fair man believes that Senator Ward was himself when he touched the offered gold"——

Ward groaned and turned his head away. The memory of his ineffable disgrace came back upon him with crushing weight, conveyed like this in the editorial column of a great journal. Tuttle saw it and again tried to comfort him.

"Don't worry about the past, Senator," he said, putting his hand again into the old man's lax palm. "Look ahead. Things 'll straighten themselves. As soon as I get time, in a day or two, I want to sit down and go over your affairs and see if I can't help you."

Ward was about to reply despairingly, when Mrs. Ward came in.

"Good evenin', Mr. Tuttle," she said, a little stiffly. She had a sort of jealousy in her care of her husband, and she had an unreasoning repugnance to Wilson at the same time that she admired him. She could not forget that he was the apparent cause of all their trouble.

He did not resent this, but sat a moment watching her as she tried to induce her husband to eat.

"Now, father, you know food 'll do y' good. You know 'twill. This chicking I fried m'self, and it's jest as tender as it can be, and the tea's jest right. I never had better luck."

He submitted, and when she insisted on putting the napkin about his neck as if he were a baby, he was able to look out of the circle of her arms and smile faintly at Tuttle.

"I believe she enjoys havin' me sick," he said.

Tuttle laughed heartily, and the whole room seemed to lighten up. Mrs. Ward's ignorance of the political world was wonderfully wholesome, and, besides that, she carried with her an odor of comfort and home-cooking which was irresistible.

Evelyn, hearing Tuttle laugh, came in wonderingly.

Tuttle met her at the door. "The patient improves!" he said, with a tone of voice which had the effect of a joyful shout. "Have you seen Helene?" he asked of her, as they stood on the piazza.

"No; she has not been over lately. She had a lot of company from the Point to-day."

"I'm going over now to see her," he returned, as he stood on the steps looking up at her. "Now, when I can find time I want to go over your father's affairs and see if I can't help you straighten them out for him. Let me do that much for him, won't you?"

"Yes, if you think it worth your while. I am afraid there is little left," she replied, in somber

fashion. As he walked away up the street she wondered whether this political calamity would not bring Helene back to him.

Tuttle went to see Helene and was astonished by her action. She ran to him like a child and hid her face in his breast. It drove all questions of public policy out of his mind. He just put his arms about her and kissed her hair, and called her name in the voice of one whom sudden joy confuses. He said a good many things which were true, and some that were only comforting. He assured her that her father was safe; that his arrest was a mere form; that he would be released on bail at once, and would be at home soon. He said he knew Mr. Davis had not been guilty. Fox and Brennan — at Brennan's name he hesitated as if there were something to be explained, but she explained it all by simply nestling a little closer to him and putting her hands up about his neck.

At last she looked up at him with her tear-inflamed eyes.

"I know I'm a fright, but I can't help it. Everybody said he'd go to prison, and — and — I didn't have anybody — to — to cry to! and I wanted to see you so. Don't go away till poppa comes — will you?"

"I must go home to dinner."

"Oh, stay and take dinner with me! There ain't anybody with me. The girls all went home when the papers came. Please stay," she pleaded.

"Well, I will if you'll send word over to mother for me."

When they went out into the beautiful dining-room she looked quite like her usual self. Careful bathing and powdering had removed the effects of crying, and she was irresistibly attractive to poor Wilson in her remorseful tenderness and her childish, helpless trust in him. She had put on an exquisite robe whose color was surely intended to aid in removing the effects of tears.

They had a wonderful dinner, Tuttle thought. It made the events of the day seem like an opium dream. It seemed impossible that Davis should be connected with the Third House. It must be all a mistake. While they were eating their fish a telegram came to confirm this impression. Helene read it aloud:

"Don't worry, pet. This is simply a political game. I'll not be down to-night. I am all right. Never mind the newspapers.

"From PAPA DAVIS."

Helene kissed the telegram and laughed gaily when Tuttle suggested, with unnatural humor, that she might kiss the messenger boy too. She wrote a reply, and sent the boy away with an extra quarter instead of a kiss, and then they

went on with their dinner with incredibly light hearts.

Tuttle wondered where her aunt was, and said so. "It seems like a special dispensation of Providence that we are eating dinner in this cozy way."

"Well, it isn't!" she laughed. "I told auntie not to come down, and that's the reason why."

"How you must tyrannize over her. Are there any others waiting our superb leisure?"

"Not to-night — only auntie. She does just what I ask her. She's a perfect love for a chaperone. All the girls are perishing with envy over my freedom" ——

"And her slavery." Tuttle was like a man inebriated with some divine stimulant — some rare and potent perfume — which had power to drive out age and care. He was scarcely older than Helene during that glorious evening. He laughed when she chattered, and his talk was almost as gay as her own.

When he went away at night he promised to call and see her in the morning on his way to town, and when he walked off down the moonlit lawn it seemed as if there were to be no dirges for the slain mingled with the exultant songs of his great victory. He had Helene's love. Senator Ward was tranquil — happier than be-

fore his confession — and Davis, he still tried to believe, had been made use of by Fox and Brennan. He hummed a tune as he walked.

It was only as he lay down in the quiet of his room that a mysterious look in Evelyn Ward's eyes came back to disturb him. He knew what it was. It was something he had met before, and it always filled him with a bitter rebellion. Must it always be so — that beautiful souls in plain bodies must suffer alone — must love in silence and defeat?

The next morning, as he ate his breakfast, he read the leading papers, which were black with huge head-lines still crying out for prosecution. One entire page was given to interviews with the senators, most of whom said that Rufus Ward must be impeached, but not prosecuted. There were also rumors that one or two of the guilty legislators had disappeared. Brennan, Fox and Davis had been arrested, and bailed out, of course, almost immediately. He stopped as he went by Davis' house, and left a note for Helene, begging her not to go up to the city; that he would see the Iron Duke and bring him home to dinner sure.

When he entered the committee-room he found it impressively quiet. It was no longer the lobby of a variety show. The committee

had ordered the doors closed against the public. The prosecution now took its seat as master of the situation. The chairman now no longer laughed at jokes by Tom Brennan. The king of the Third House had been dethroned. Binney had waked from his dozing. Fox and Davis were absent. Most of the witnesses now had the solemn air of prisoners. The only men who appeared precisely the same as before were the first committeeman and the Attorney-General, who was as deliberate and apparently as benignantly uninterested in the case as ever. His face betrayed neither haste nor anxiety.

A few witnesses were examined swiftly and in deadly earnest by the first committeeman and the chairman, who had become ferociously opposed to the road. His zeal was unequaled.

At last the Attorney-General rose to speak. He balanced his glasses between his thumb and finger, and said with impressive placidity: "Our work, Mr. Chairman, is practically over." He put on his glasses, looked at a slip in his hand, then gazed about upon the committee over the tops of his glasses with kindly interest, as if to include them all in his triumph. "We have proved the guilt of the various gentlemen whom we named at the beginning as principals, and have shown that the Third House does exist and is

subsidized. The law of the State will now take care of it. We have proven that Senator Ward, Senator Holway and several legislators have been tampered with. Their impeachment lies with the members of this legislative body. An era of reformation has begun. The credit of its beginning and its success is due to this young man at my left. And now, gentlemen, I can't close without a word of moral. The cure of this is suggested in the conviction. So long as legislators have the power to vote public values into private pockets the lobby will continue to exist, and its damning work will be seen in the ruin of men like Senator Ward and Mr. Davis; for, as I conceive it, he is a victim of corruption as well as himself being a corrupting agent."

Chapter XIV.

THE IRON DUKE RECKONS WITH HIMSELF.

THERE come moments in a man's life when he sits down and reckons with himself. It is usually at night, just before going to bed, when the house is silent and the outside world very dim and insubstantial. At such moments a man wants to be alone; wife nor children nor mother is welcome. The soul is calling out for an unbroken moment of introspection, wherein to readjust values and start in anew.

In such an hour the man stands for what he really is, an infinitesimal insect, lost in a swarm of similar flecks of life produced by this decaying globe of ours. In such an hour Napoleon looked down at himself and saw that he was an undersized man with an abnormally developed head. In such moments it must be that the billionaire marvels at the conjunction of forces that has made for him hundreds of millions, and sees himself a small man, differing from the type, as one blackbird differs from another, by a fraction of an inch.

Sitting alone at night in a farm-house, with the whippoorwill's infinitely pathetic note floating in on the sweet summer wind, with the incomprehensible stars swinging their appalling circles in the silence of the upper air, Herbert Spencer's mighty brain might say, "What is it all? And what does it matter?"

Lawrence Davis was not a philosopher. He had not been a thinker. Like most men of his type, he had lived such a life of material activity and narrowness that his hours of reckoning with himself had been few and short. His life, momentous as it seemed to him, was narrow, grooved and fruitless. It returned upon itself. At sixty years of age he was breaking, evidenced by his purple face, his snow-white hair, his protruding stomach, and the clumsy use of his feet and hands—and all this at a time when his affairs were most insecure. Everything which he called his was at this moment out of his reach.

His whole business life and possessions were founded upon a vested wrong, which he persisted in arguing was a vested right. It could endure only so long as the conscience of the people slept. He was like a man whose vineyard is on the slope of Vesuvius, with this difference: that the voice of the thunder had

not spoken from this particular throat, but only threatened it now for the first time.

When the hand of the law was laid on his shoulder came the first great mental shock, and, indeed, a physical shock, which nearly laid him dead of apoplexy. For hours he lay like a man stupefied with drink, confused, and uncertain of action. When he appeared before the court he staggered. He was bailed out promptly, of course, by other officers of the road. His first care was to wire Helene that there was no danger. He fancied her alarmed, and he wished to spare her as long as possible. Every time he thought of her he shook.

He was appalled at the change in the tone of the press. There was something awful in the desertion of his aids, in the dispersion of those who had swarmed about him, eager for a share of the spoils. He knew that this was a common experience, but it appealed to him with startling power, nevertheless. Even the few friends who met him on the day following his arrest and release on bail, though they shook hands with him, carried something in their eyes which angered and irritated him, made him desire to be alone. As night fell, he sat in his great gloomy, silent house on Courtney Street, at his desk in his library, writing with a dogged

and persistent haste that told he had set himself a task which must be finished within a limited time.

It was cool and close in the house, but outside it was very hot, and the fat policeman walking the deserted streets wondered why it was that in one part of the city people should be sleeping in the gutters for the lack of room, and this part of the city be deserted, and miles of windows and doors boarded up. Luckily, he was able to shake his head and give it up as insoluble.

The curtains and blinds of the Iron Duke's superb library were closely drawn, and no light shone out into the hot murk of the night. It was about ten o'clock, and the house was very silent. The floor was littered with scraps of paper, and little tin boxes spilled their contents on chairs and carpet. Over his head the single flower-like electric lamp depended, and its pale blue light accentuated the bluish splotches on his face. His attitude and action denoted desperate haste.

A far-off train whistled, and he listened unconsciously, the pen held between his fingers. The clock striking ten aroused him, and he rose and walked to the private telephone near his desk, which he rang furiously.

"Hello! What's the matter? — Oh, is that

you, Mrs. Fox? Has he come in yet? — He hasn't? Didn't he send any word to me? —Well, that's singular! If he comes, will you tell him I'm at my house? I say, tell him I'm here. But — wait a moment, please. If any one else inquires, tell 'em I'm down to the beach. That's all."

He turned away with a muttered oath, clenching his hands and speaking through his teeth. "Damned coward! He's left me."

A knock was heard at the door, and, at his word, Robert entered. His face had the same calm, judicial expression, his voice soft and deep, his enunciation precise. His manner differed in no way from his usual manner in the office. Davis turned to him with pleasure.

"Ah, Robert! What's the latest news?"

"I can't find Fox or Tom, sir."

"What do you think of it? What does it all mean? Have they skipped?"

"It looks like it, but they may be keeping quiet here in the city. If they don't report tomorrow"——

"Well, what do you think? Have they gone back on me? Come now."

Robert mused a moment. "Well, I shall know by the time I get back to the office. I've sent out some detectives to various parts of the city

where they are likeliest to be found. I'll telephone you the result, and, by the way, be careful how you use the telephone. The damp air increases the induction. Our private wire isn't very private. I'll tell you through King's name. If I say Smith has gone to the beach, you'll know Fox has skipped. Brown will stand for Tom. See?"

"All right, Robert. It looks pretty bad for me, doesn't it, Robert?" he asked, with a sudden longing for sympathy, as the young man turned away.

"Yes, it does," admitted Robert. "But I think you'll pull through, all the same. I haven't been on the street to-day, but I hear — I hear there is great excitement up at the Capitol. Senators are being impeached. The papers are full of it, of course. Anyhow, there's nothing gained by getting worried," he concluded, in an attempt to be of comfort.

"I wish I had your head to-night, my boy," replied Davis. "Mine is almost useless. Well, now, keep me posted on all that goes on at the office. Let me know the worst, won't you? Don't keep anything from me at all."

"All right, sir. Everything is going on just as usual, and I think the public feel the effects of that. Good night, sir. You had better go to

bed and try to get some sleep. I shall stay at the office until twelve. In case anything important turns up, I'll let you know. Good night."

"Good night, Robert. I wish all were as trusty as you are. Good night."

After Robert had gone Davis returned to his desk and sat leaning with his head on his hands. While sitting thus there came another knock at the door, and the housekeeper entered.

"Shure is there annything more I *can* do, sir?"

"Nothing, Mary — only don't bother me."

"Then so be y' dawn't moind, sir, I'll be goin' to bed, shure."

"Very well. Where's Tim?"

"He went out to the theater, sir."

"Well, perhaps you had better stay up till he comes. Then be sure you lock up." As he talked he was searching among his papers and in his pockets as if he had lost some important document. He arose at last as if looking for something.

Mary looked around in wonder. She began to fear for her master. He was not like himself. The bell rang, and she started.

"Well, now! Who's callin' this time o' night?"

After she had gone out into the hall Davis came back into the room, feeling in his pockets

again, looking about the desk, and went out again, muttering to himself.

Mary re-entered, with Helene. "Shure, Miss, he's been jist at his desk since noon. It's crazy he do be gettin' wid his wroitin'. Not a drop o' tay nor a crumb o' bread has he had this noight, and me wid the supper all on the table for him. 'Don't bodder me,' says he, wavin' his hand. 'I'm a wroitin',' says he. 'You better be atin',' says I."

Helene, who looked radiantly happy, was drawing off her gloves. "Nothing to eat? Why, he must be awfully worried. I'll make him eat. You see if I don't."

"Mary, didn't I hear the bell?" said Davis, re-entering. He seemed startled and surprised at sight of Helene.

"What are you doing here this time of the night? Didn't I"——

Helene went up and put her arms about his neck. "Now, don't scold. I couldn't stay down there all alone with you up here in this gloomy, musty old house. Why, how pale you are! Are you sick?"

"No. Did you come alone? How'd you happen to come, anyhow?"

"Now, don't be cross, poppa. I came be-

cause Wilson said I'd better. He said you might need me."

Davis stared at her. "Wilson said I might need you? What else did he say? Tell me," he added, sternly.

"Don't look so cross. I'll shake you if you do," she said, with a pretty assumption of authority. "He said you were alone up here and worried, and—and so I came right up with him. Now you tell me all about it. Mary said you hadn't had any supper."

Davis turned away. "I've got something else to do besides eat. Besides, I don't feel like it."

Helene stamped her foot and wrinkled her brow. "But you must eat. Now, I'm going to get you something, and you've got to eat it, sir. I'm not going to have you write and write and go to bed without any supper."

"I can't eat, child. I'm too busy," Davis said, in a gentler tone. "Besides, you—you'll bother me."

"No, I won't. Just a cup of chocolate. I'm going to make it on that lovely little alcohol stove. Come, now; it will help you to sleep. And I'll roast some crackers"——

"Sleep! I wish I could sleep. Very well, bring in your things, and make it here by me

while I work. I've got some more writing to do."

Helene clapped her hands childishly. The novelty of camping down in this great house pleased her. "Oh, that'll be fun! And I know it'll do you good."

"Well, well; now go about it, and don't talk to me too much," Davis said, returning to his desk, after his concession.

Helene went out, and soon re-entered, accompanied by Mary, who carried a platter containing milk, hot water, etc. They arranged a little table, while Davis worked on at his writing.

"Now, poppa, the chocolate'll be ready in a few minutes, and we'll have a little supper here just as cozy as can be. I don't need you any more, Mary; you can go to bed now."

After the girl went out, Davis rose from his desk, came over, and seated himself in an easy-chair near Helene.

"Helene, my girl, I wish you'd stayed down at the beach with Evelyn and Tuttle. I think you ought to. Do you feel just right about your trouble with Tuttle?"

Helene tried to look very stern.

"Why, he's made all this trouble—how should I"——

Davis rose and walked the floor. "He wasn't

to blame. He was only doing what I should have done in his place. I wasn't to blame, either. I was obliged to do what I did. It's the cursed condition of things — that infernal band of highwaymen up there — that pushed me into it." He came back to her. "If I'd been successful, I don't believe I could have seen you marry Tom Brennan, and now — well, he's no man for you. Here's a man. Read that." He handed her a letter of Tuttle's which she read aloud:

"*Mr. L. B. Davis.*

"DEAR SIR: I write to say that I was deeply pained and sincerely surprised at the result of our investigation. I did not expect to involve *you* in any *criminal transaction*. I write now, hoping you will understand my position. This question is above personal friendship, above personal choice. But I would like to serve you in any honorable way, and as a friend, if I can do anything for you, or for Helene, make use of me. Believe me, yours,

"WILSON TUTTLE."

Helene wrinkled up her brows in a vain effort to fathom it all. "I don't understand it at all — it's a dreadful mix — only the spirit of it. It sounds noble, just like him, though."

She suddenly threw her arms again about his neck. "Poppa, I want you to do something for me. Will you? Will you?"

Davis took her tenderly on his lap, and said gravely:

"I can tell better after I know what it is."

Helene put her face down on his breast. For

some inscrutable reason she seemed to be embarrassed and timid. "But I'm afraid — I mean, I must tell you — that I saw Wilson to-day — alone."

"Well, I've no particular objection."

Helene sat up on his knee and pulled at his coat-buttons. "But, on the way up — I — have made it all up with him. Oh, I've been just about sick, poppa, ever since that day — you remember — but I begged his pardon — and he thought he was doing right — and I *had* to forgive him, though I didn't know *exactly* what he'd done."

She ended in her usual inconsequential way.

"And what about Tom? Didn't you"——

"That's just it," she went on, wildly. "I want you to tell Tom that I didn't really mean — that I didn't really know what I"——

Davis smiled a little in spite of himself. "I'm to tell him that you want to back out?"

"Oh, you make it so vulgar by saying that."

"Well, that's what we'd call it in business. Well, now, don't you worry. It'll come out all bright and happy for you." There was a touch of emphasis upon *you*, which, though lost upon Helene, had a world of meaning in it. "Now, you must go to bed and don't worry about me.

I'll come out all right. They ain't going to hurt me."

"Poor poppa! But you're so worried. I know you are. Your forehead is all wrinkled up. I'll smooth it out just as I used to, if you'll promise not to wrinkle it up again."

She touched with her lips the scowl of battle on his forehead, and then laid her cheek down on his shoulder. "It seems so selfish in me to be happy when you're in trouble, you dear, dear old poppa. But I'm just a little girl to-night. I can't think of anything, I'm so happy. I wonder if all girls act so silly when they"—— She sat up suddenly. "Wouldn't society stare to see me sitting in your lap like a baby? I don't care! You're all the poppa I've got, and I'm your little mother, you know, and I ain't going to let you worry. That's what I promised mamma, don't you remember?"

This completed the suggestion which began with the touch of her lips to his forehead. He broke down into a groan that was almost a wail. "Oh! my God! Don't talk that way, my child! You'll break my heart!"

He drew her convulsively down upon his breast, and laid his cheek upon her hair. "Don't chatter so like a child. You make me crazy, thinking of her. Oh, I wish the whole of

my damn business had sunk before I'd got into this! Why couldn't I have been contented?"

Helene started up again and looked into his face, with more of a realization of this trouble than before. "Why, father, wh—what's the the matter? Have I said anything?"

"No, no. Don't mind me. Put your head down on my shoulder again. I'll speak to Tom when I see him. I never felt right about that. I knew you didn't mean it. But Tom was useful to me, and so I — but no matter now. I'll sleep better to-night if I know that you and Wilson have come to an understanding. Now you better go to bed yourself. You need sleep."

"Oh, I can't sleep, I'm so happy. Only I'm worried for you." She leaped up at the sound of the water boiling and made him a cup of chocolate, talking, as she did so, with many gestures and attitudes. At last she handed him a cup and saucer, which he held, sipping while they talked.

"Now, I know that'll do you good."

"Well, now, don't worry about me. I'll come out all right. And, whatever happens to me — I mean whatever anybody says of me — don't you forget that I did what seemed the best thing."

"Of course not. But, oh, poppa, I'm so happy

and relieved! You know, when you've cared for one person, and didn't dare to think so, and then got angry and promised another person that you didn't care so much about, and then, at last, made up with the first person, and feel now that you can like him all you please — oh, it's so delicious and relieving, don't you know?"

"Yes, yes, I know. I've been a girl! And, now, run along like a good little child. I'll sip my chocolate while I write. It's been a great comfort to see you once more."

"Poppa, there's something in your voice that I can't understand. What are you thinking of?"

"Well, for one thing, I'm thinking you're engaged now, and you can't be my little mother much longer."

"It won't make the slightest difference, not the teeniest bit," she protested. But he knew the inevitable separation had already begun.

"You'll see. And now, good night."

He stood gazing after her for a long time, drew a deep sigh, and resumed his stern manner. He took up a bundle of papers and looked over one or two of them, glanced at a newspaper, crushed it in his hand, and thrust it violently into the waste-basket At last he took a revolver from his desk and looked at it in a curious, shrinking, yet fascinated, way. How easy it

would be to escape it all — if it were not for Helene — was the dark undercurrent of his thought. As he sat thus, Helene, with her hair unbraided and slippers on her feet, re-entered noiselessly and approached him in roguish stealth. She gave a gasp of instinctive fear. "What are you doing with that?"

Davis started like a criminal. His hands shook while putting the revolver back into the drawer. "Oh, I was just — I was just — looking to see if it was loaded — that was all. I — you see burglars are getting thick. Two or three houses were entered last night."

He overshot himself in his explanations. Helene clung to him in fright. "Burglars! Oh, horrors! I sha'n't sleep in my room to-night! — I shan't. You must let me sleep next to you in the blue room, won't you? — and leave your door open?"

"Now, now, don't be foolish," said Davis hastily. "I had no business to say a word about it. There ain't the slightest danger with Tim and me in the house. Sleep in the blue room if you wish. I'll leave the gas burning in my room, if it'll give you any comfort. What did you come back for, anyhow?"

Helene forgot her fear at this question, and grew rosy with some new thought. "I forgot

to tell you he made me promise for next spring."

"Who did?" inquired Davis, abstractedly.

"Why, Wilson, of course."

"Oh, yes, yes! I see, I see! Next spring, eh? Very well, I've no objections."

"But it seems to make you sad," pouted Helene. "I won't marry at all if you don't want me to."

"There, there! Don't mind. I was only thinking of your mother, and of Lawrence. He would be twenty-five now, and she forty-eight. Now go to bed this minute." He put his arm about her and half carried her out of the room.

Chapter XV.

BRENNAN SACRIFICES HIS MUSTACHE.

BRENNAN had the temperament of the gambler, who is able to play with impassive face whether he loses or wins. When luck is against him he stops, goes on a journey, or does some penance, and resumes play again when he thinks luck is appeased, without bitterness and without losing faith in himself or in his God. The possibility of defeat has been taken into account. Brennan, having played with luck on his side so long, did not consider everything lost because the tide now seemed to set the other way. He went into temporary retirement and studied affairs with vigilant eyes. He did not underestimate the gravity of the crisis, but he had confidence in himself and in fate. As a young man he could face darker hours with surer return of hopeful spirit than Davis.

He saw that this was no common storm. He was student enough to see that it was an outbreak of popular indignation. It could not be silenced ; it must be ridden out as ships ride out

a gale. He saw this because he came more into contact with the crowds of people who were thinking upon these reforms than Davis, and he saw their growing hate in their eyes as he passed them on the street. He read ominous prophecy in the changed tone of the press of the whole country, which he studied from day to day as a physician feels the pulse of his patient. He knew that these papers were sure indications of a revolt.

There came a moment when he abandoned retirement and sought obscurity. He thought a stranger in the hotel lobby one night was looking at him stealthily. It was an impression rather than a belief, and would have passed away had not the bartender uttered a friendly word.

"Say, Tom, what're y' doin' wid de Pinkerton daytective follerin' yeh like a body-gyard? Your riyal nibbs is gettin' to be a regular Jay Gould."

Tom looked at him sharply. "Detective? Where?"

"W'y, his nobs over dere in de w'ite pants. I never see him 'cept w'en"——

Brennan was startled. "Oh! don't notice him. I'm onto him. Say, where are the boys, Sam?"

"Ain't seen anny of 'em, Tom. Dey've skipped—gone up de river. See? If I was you I'd take a chase."

Brennan leaned against the bar carelessly, but he said:

"Is his leglets there yet?"

"He's stepped outside. He's talkin' wid a big duffer in a gray hat."

"Say, Sam, I'm going up-stairs. I won't be down till night. Here's what I owe yeh. If anybody asks where I'm gone, say I went out the side door. See?"

"I'm a-listenin', Tommy. Go to my house. Tell my wife I sent yeh, and I'll be up soon. I ain't a-goin' back on Tom Brennan. See?"

Brennan slipped back of the bar and through a side door, and when the man in the light-colored trousers looked in again Sam was mopping the bar and Brennan was gone.

Brennan saw the whole situation. His bondsmen were getting alarmed, distrustful, and had put a man on his track. He put a bill into Sam's hand when he came up to supper.

"If Fox comes in put him onto the game. Do it careful. All you need do is say, 'Tom says: "Bail no good,"' see!"

"Dat's all straight, Tom."

When it grew dark Brennan went to his own

room and packed his smaller articles into a trunk. This he marked to go by express to a point near the line, and, with a half-dollar to the janitor, got it carried down unnoticed. He then left the house with a cane in his hand, as if going for a stroll, and walked rapidly away into the poorer quarter of the city. He was quietly dressed in dark clothes, and wore the characterless Derby hat, and felt safe from espionage.

He walked on down into the region of cheap apartment hotels, hideous with their peeling plaster and their doorways like the mouths of caves. Reaching one of these square, hot and dingy brick structures, he mounted its dim and clammy stairway to Suite 20, and rang a bell. A woman came to the door. Her face was in the shadow, but the light shone through her fluff of yellow hair.

"Hello, Tom!" she said, in a pleasant contralto. "You're a pretty fellow. Come in. Why haven't you been down? You're a nice boy."

"Always knew it, Pat," he said, as he entered. She put his hand away from her neck.

"What're you doing these days? Sit down and tell me all about it."

She led the way into a tiny sitting-room, filled with cheap furniture, brilliant in color. She was a pleasant-faced woman, though worn

and no longer young. She smiled cheerily at Tom. Her wrapper was not at all tidy, but it trailed handsomely down her fine figure.

"Glad to see you, Tom. What's up?"

"You will persist in thinking the visit extraordinary, Pat."

"Why shouldn't I? When were you here last? Six months ago."

"Where's Sir John?"

"Gone to the theater with the girls."

She was looking at him sadly.

"You're in for it, my boy," she said. "Your young career is cut off. You must either endure the crisp Canadian air—or languish."

"I never languish. How do you know? What makes you think"——

"I read the papers, Tom. Well, now, what can I do for you? You never come to see me now unless you need help."

Her tone was curiously tender, a mixture of cameraderie and a sort of maternal regard. With that look on her face, she was beautiful in spite of her dingy lace and untidy hair.

"Cleopatra, you're a great woman! Well, I need a razor, some advice, a priest's cloak and hat and a safe messenger boy and some money. I can pull through all right on that. I must get word to some of the boys, Rob or Mart."

"All right, Tom. I can get it all but the money. Lucky the others are away. I'll get out Sir John's razor and things."

In a few moments Tom was standing before the glass, razor and scissors about him. He sighed comically. "Say, Pat, this is the most unkindest cut of all."

She understood him. "Too bad, Tom; your mustache is a daisy. What'll *she* say?"

"It'll be grown out again before she sees me."

In spite of himself there was a plaintive droop in his voice. Brennan snipped away while she sat watching him a moment.

"Terrible, terrible! Well, I'll slip over to your uncle's and see what I can swipe together for you." She pinned up her skirt and put on a waterproof cloak and went out.

When she returned Brennan sat reading a newspaper, his feet on a chair, his coat and vest hanging on the knobs of the bureau. She stood looking at him in amazement.

"Why, Tom, you look like a boy. My God, how old you make me look!"

She dropped the package which she held in her hands, and passed her fingers over her face as if to feel the hollows there. The tears started to her eyes.

"There, there, Cleo, don't go off like that; you make me *feel* like a boy on the point of blubbering. Say, Cleo, how would a Canadian excursion agree with you, eh?" He had an obscure idea of comforting her.

She shook her head sadly and grimly. "No more such talk to me. I'm sick of it — I suppose you don't know I've had a fever?"

He looked a little ashamed. "Yes, but I've been so busy"——

"Well, I've been thinking."

"Fact?" stared Tom.

"That's a fact," she replied without emotion, her eyes upon his upper lip, which was so singularly boyish, shorn of its mustache. "And when a woman like me really thinks, it changes her."

"Well," he said, with a sigh, after a pause. "If you won't, you won't, that's all. I'd like to have you go, because you're good company. You're a thoroughly good fellow, Cleo, that's what you are. You've got more brains than any woman I ever knew. Now that's straight goods. You may gamble on my sincerity. Well, now, just a sisterly hug, and then I'm off."

There was a grave sadness in her eyes as he rose to go. "Now don't get mixed up in any more of these infernal bribery cases," she said.

"You may gamble on that too," he said. "Well, now, take care of yourself. Oh, about getting word to Rob; can't you go down and see him yourself? He'll be at the private office in the Commercial building. It will be awful good of you, Cleo, because, you see, it's life or death, and if you took it in hand I'd feel certain it would be done."

"Yes, I'll go, Tom. I wouldn't go out of this house, though, for anybody else to-night."

"I know it, honey! Well, so long! If you ever feel like trying the Canadian air, let me know through Rob. Good-by!"

He had an irresistible desire to take a turn around Newspaper Corner and see what was going on. It was a distinct theatrical impulse to try the effect of this disguise, in which he took delight. He walked rapidly along the avenue leading toward Newspaper Corner. He was not sufficiently reckless to ride in a horse-car, though he actually stepped upon the platform of one before he remembered himself. His broad hat, round, smooth face and cloak made him look like a young divinity student.

He stood for a moment on the corner, looking up the crowded and brilliantly lighted thoroughfare, which was lined with newspaper offices. Everywhere before the bulletin-boards, bunches

of excited men were grouped, talking with much gesticulation. Others were reading the papers by the light of the shop windows. Serial waves of newsboys rushed every hour in every direction, yelling like little fiends. Brennan laughed with genuine pleasure to think that he was the main cause of all that turmoil. He was for the moment as big as Blaine. He stopped a boy who was passing. "Wait, my son," he said, with solemn intonation.

The boy stopped, and, seeing that he was addressing a priest, his manner changed to timid awe: "Paper, mister?"

Brennan bought several of the papers, and the boy, delighted with his sales, ran on down the street, his voice rising above the sound of the cars and passing cabs: "Midnight 'dishun! All about robbery!"

Brennan struck out at last in a steady, swift walk toward Davis' city home. He must have some money. As he went along he wondered when he would be able to walk these streets in daylight. The cloak he wore was oppressive, and he flung it back as he walked the cooler and more shadowy avenues of the city.

There was something impressive in the quiet of Courtney Street, and Brennan was contrasting the excitement of down town with the

solemn darkness of this avenue of lofty, close-shuttered houses. As he walked he was thinking over the letter he had written to Helene, and wishing he had not said some things just as they looked to him now with the whole letter before his eyes.

"You must not be alarmed at anything you hear," he had written. "We're not in any danger. This will all pass off in a few weeks. Wish I could see you before I go to a foreign land. I'm going now to see the Duke, and we'll go together. We'll send for you soon; so don't worry. You'd laugh to see me now. My mustache is gone! Yes, it was that or life — I preferred, on the whole, that the mus. should perish. I inferred you'd agree with me — anyhow I'm as safe as a night-watchman in the corner grocery. Good-by for a few days."

It was intended to make her smile. He knew that she had no realization of the gravity of his offense. She had no conscience, because she had no knowledge about such things. It is a woman's chiefest charm in the eyes of men like Brennan — this ignorance of all great moral and social issues, and this childlike acceptance of their code of morality from men. It has a delightful sureness of return and justification — this code of morality, like the logic of the Mohametans.

It is so much easier to maintain the respect and admiration of such childlike minds. They fear the self-poised, self-respecting woman for obvious reasons.

Tom wished he had not sent that letter so early. It might do him harm.

As he neared Davis' house, he went slower and kept a keen eye for watchers, studying every shadow on the other side of the street. On the opposite walk the darkness was reddened by a lamp, and in the deep shadow of the steps he thought he saw a man's Derby hat. It was safe to be suspicious, and he turned off and entered the alley and came out by the servant's door on a side street.

Mary came to the door. She was greatly astonished to see a priest instead of Tim.

"What news?" said Brennan. "I want to see Mr. Davis."

"Why, Mr. Brennan—an' is it you–u?"

"It *is*. Lave me to enter. I want to surprise the governor, Mary, mavourneen."

"Oh, you're a ro–gue," laughed the girl, who always enjoyed his banter.

"I *am*. Do I look it?"

"You look like Father McPhelan, sure! The livin' breath an' soul av 'im! An' you talk like 'im."

"I was so ed-u-cayted."

He went up the stairs, shaking his finger at the girl, to whom it was all a capital joke. He found no one in the library, but the open desk, the little table with its chocolate, the chairs filled with papers, all indicated that the Iron Duke was absent but momentarily. He was, evidently, preparing to leave.

Tom threw back the folds of his cloak and smiled at himself in the mirror. The Duke would not know him.

When Davis re-entered Brennan was sipping the chocolate, his hat on the back of his head. He was seated on the edge of the table.

Davis was startled. "Who're you?"

Brennan grinned with delight. "I knew it. I'm in it. I do it clear out o' sight."

Davis recognized the voice. His tone dropped to a surly growl. "Oh, it's you, is it? What you got that rig on for? Thought you'd left town."

"Not yet," replied Brennan, coldly.

"Well, what's up?"

"General, in the famous words of Danger Dick, 'The jig's up.'"

"You mean"——

"I mean that Holway has squeaked and skipped, or skipped and squeaked."

Davis dropped heavily into a chair. A hoarse, slow snarl came from his set teeth. "The damned traitor! I was afraid of him — and Fox?"

"Fox has emigrated too. The report is that we've skipped. Newspaper Corner swarms with newsboys and special editions. Here's the latest." He took several papers from his pockets. "I bought a collection as I came along."

Davis snatched one of the papers and read it while Brennan went on: "The town is simply wild. You'd think an election was going on. Great reading, ain't it?" He looked over Davis' shoulder. "'DAVIS DOWNED. THE IRON DUKE MEETS HIS WATERLOO. The Roused People Demand His Instant Incarceration.' Only one column to me, you see. This is one of the cases where to be lowly is to be happy."

Davis broke forth at last. His wrath was frightful to see. His voice was raucous as that of a tiger whose teeth are clinched in flesh. "The damned curs! Every one of 'em 'll come back on me now it's safe. When I had the public, they licked my feet."

He paced up and down the room, twisting and tearing the papers, his face livid with passion, his limbs weak. "But they'll see — God damn them to hell! I'll fight 'em! I'll fight —

fight until death. They'll see whether I can be stuck in the throat like a sheep!"

Brennan sat on the edge of the table, watching Davis in this convulsion of rage.

"No use, General," he said, gently, when Davis sank into a chair, shaking like a leaf from his paroxysm. "You can't fight this thing."

"I can't! Why can't I?"

"Because it's fighting the people of this State. The damned fools have gone off in a spasm of virtue, and we've got to be scapegoats. I never saw anything like it. The papers reek with it; the air is heavy with it. The legislature is paralyzed. Nothing since the Credit Mobilier compares with it. They'd sacrifice us like cockroaches to save their cussed necks. They're going to make us a dreadful example. An indignation meeting is being held this very night to denounce the legislature, exterminate the lobby and *down* the Iron Duke and his lieutenant."

Davis rose again. "That's what grinds me! After submitting to this thing for years — for fifty years — they must turn on me — single *me* out!"

"Well, I s'pose they had to draw the line somewhere."

"Draw the line! Yes, two generations of

bribery in all kinds of bad causes, and when I come to put a good cause through—a cause affecting millions of people—forced into bribery by the condition of legislation—they must draw the line on me, damn their miserable souls!"

"Set down, Governor. Take it easy."

Davis lifted his voice in a sort of roar. "Take it easy! By God, if I"—— He seemed to recollect himself suddenly, and went to the door and locked it.

Brennan watched him with a comical look of suspicion on his face. "Now—now, what'd you do that for?"

"To keep Helene out."

"Is she here?" asked Brennan, in a serious tone.

"Yes. Came up late. But never mind her. Sit down. This business must be studied," he said, with something of his old decision and control.

"That's right. Now you're talking sense. I'm in the soup, too, recollect."

Davis stared at him a moment. "You? Oh, yes! I forgot. Why don't you work Fox's game?" he asked, with a sneer.

Brennan took off his hat, and gave it a twirl. "How d' y' like me tile?" he inquired, to gain control of himself. He had risked a good deal

to see Davis, and this angered him. "Good idea, only it's a little late now," he added.

"What do you mean by that?"

"As I came up the street I saw a man stationed opposite. The house is watched. We are liable to be arrested any hour."

"They wouldn't do that!"

"Wouldn't they? Well, don't trust your bondsmen too far. They're going to drop you in less'n two days. They can't stand the pressure."

"You don't know the men who stand for us. They are"——

"Trustees in the road. Just the men to sacrifice us. I tell you we're in for it. The road is going to pieces. Got any cash about you?"

"A few hundred dollars; why?"

"We'll need it. Turn down that light a little."

Davis turned out the burner, and Brennan went to the window and looked out for several minutes.

"Aha! He's there in the cellar-way opposite. Oh, they have an eye on us! That man is paid by Deacon Hall, your bondsman. His orders are to see who comes and goes and to keep an eye on you. See? Now my plan is for you to put on an old coat and hat, slip out back"——

"I'll do nothing of the kind. I won't sneak away like a cat!"

Brennan was a little irritated. "Well, I ain't standing on my dignity a cent's worth. It's sneak or fifteen years at hard labor for each of us."

"Fifteen years. What do you mean?"

"I mean that when they arrest us again no bail will get us out. I tell you this fool public has an idea of making us examples, and they'll do it sure 's hell."

Davis sat staring into space. His eyes expanded and the blood fell slowly out of his face. "Fifteen years!"

"Nothing else—unless we take a sneak tonight. They may put us in the laundry or the harness-shop. It'll be terrible on Napoleonic business men like you and me. Isle of Elba racket to men who control the traffic of a great railway like a general commanding an army! *I* make one dash for liberty. Better a tramp in Arcadia than a compulsory harness-maker here. See?"

Davis sat with bowed head. "But Helene?" he muttered to himself.

"She'll be all right among friends here. Send for her by and by. If you don't you'll receive her in striped clothing, and talk to her

through a barred window. I'd leave a dying mother in a case like this," he said, his voice sinking to a low key. "I'll tell you I don't want any State's prison life in mine. I've been too free in my life. I've been my own master, and since being with you I've reached the point of commanding men. I don't want to go to breakfast lock-step with a murderer and a burglar. I don't care about changing the cut of my hair and clothes. Come; this won't do. We must make a break, right now."

Brennan was honestly trying to rouse Davis to the gravity of the situation.

Davis shuddered. "My God, what a picture you bring up!"

Brennan dropped all jocularity. His voice grew intense and husky. "It ain't the half of it! Why, man, for you and me it would be simply hell! To a man like you, handling daily hundreds of thousands of dollars, commanding a thousand cars and five thousand men; you, with your financial and executive ability, set to work punching holes in leather ten hours a day"——

"Stop!" cried Davis, his face white and twitching. "God Almighty, man, do you want to drive me crazy?"

"I am trying to rouse you. We must get away right now."

Davis again set his teeth. "I won't. I'll stay right here and fight them. Sit down ; give me the names of the other men you bribed — quick! I'll not go alone."

"I guess not," said Brennan, coldly.

"Why not?"

"Because they are interested in getting us away. I can't and won't turn on my friends till the last ditch. Besides, they are trump cards. It won't do to go back on them now."

"But you'd sacrifice me if necessary," said Davis.

This was another uncalled-for thrust, and Brennan said, in deadly earnest: "I tell you, I'd sacrifice my own brother to keep out of that stone wall. Say, did you ever see a man come out of jail after fifteen years?" he asked, in a new tone. "I have, twice, in my native town. Once, not four years ago, I saw a man come back to life ; that's what it is, *coming back to life*. I'll never forget how he looked if I live a thousand years. He kind of shambled when he walked. His hat was too wide for him ; his clothes seemed strange on him. His face had that sickly color called jail-white, and he winked and stared every time he lifted his head, and mumbled and burst out sobbing every little way as something familiar

came to his eyes. A crowd of jeering brats followed him."

He acted this, in his fervor, so vividly that Davis groaned and sank into his seat at the desk. Brennan went on, carried away with the picture and the emotion it called up: "I trembled like a leaf when he passed me. I'm an imaginative cuss. Nothing takes hold on me like confinement. I've always lived out of doors. I grew up in the open air. I like action, liberty, and one year in a cell would kill me. I tell you, if I couldn't escape, I'd —— But I ain't got to that yet. I'm going to make a break for tall timber, as they say out west. I'm scared. I'm free to admit that. Only I wanted to see you and Helene, or I wouldn't have come back here at all." He paused here as if another consideration came in. "Couldn't see her, could I?" he asked, almost timidly.

"No," answered Davis, in a low but decisive voice. "No, it's too late."

Brennan drew a quick sigh. "Well, I'll need a little money. Let me have what you can spare."

Davis mechanically handed him a roll of bills.

"Here, take this — take it all; I won't need it."

Brennan put the bills away. "This will come back to you by and by all right. I've salted

down a little barrel where I need it, but I couldn't get hold of it just now. Am very much obliged. I'll send a check. You'll need all you've got if you stay and fight this thing. Better come, Davis," he pleaded as he prepared to go.

Davis sat immovable. "No, I stay here."

"Well, good-by. I know we could get away all clear, if we reached the river. I'm all right. Some of the boys are there with a steam yacht." He turned in a last appeal. He hated to leave Davis alone to what he knew was certain destruction. He came back and put his hand on Davis' shoulder. "Better come, Governor. It's simply desperation staying here."

Davis shook his head harshly. "No, I tell you, I'll stay here."

"Well, all right. But, if you should change your mind, let Tim Sheehan know through Bob. He'll look out for you." He paused at the door, and a little tremor came into his voice. "Tell Helene I hope to see her again soon. I'll write. Good-by." He unlocked the door and went out, closing it softly behind him.

Davis sat at his desk for a long time in thought too deep for motion. He recognized the truth of all that Brennan had said. He was

in a *cul de sac*. His wealth, his social influence were alike swallowed up in the cataclysm of public indignation. His eyes fell on his papers, and he began to arrange them and pack them into the boxes. He worked rapidly and soon had them properly sorted. Then he locked the door and sat down to contemplate, at last, the desperate measure. He was like a man hemmed in by a burning forest, with this difference: he had very little inducement to live.

He faced the problem squarely. Helene was provided for, a little property secured in her own name, and then Tuttle was rich. He balanced the two evils in a singularly calm way. He could not survive imprisonment, and was a convict's death any more honorable to him than —— Would Helene be any more hideously smirched in the one case than in the other? And was there not infinitely less suffering for him in this?

He rose and went to a closet and brought back a valise, out of which he took a burglar's lantern, and a chisel or two, which he laid on the floor. He took a cap and shawl also from the bag, and threw them carelessly on the carpet. He went about this as if it all had been planned carefully. He overturned a chair at the desk as if to give the impression of a struggle. He opened the window at the back. He had a curiously

methodical air. He left on the window a thin bar of steel. This done, he went to the door and listened.

As he stood there he heard a fire-bell striking solemnly. He returned to the desk, took off his coat and vest and laid them on a chair by the closet door. At last he took up the revolver, looked into the barrel and pressed it first to his temple, then to the back of his head. He seemed to fear that the noise would alarm Helene, and he paused as if something unexpected had changed his mind.

He looked about the room slowly. At length the partly opened door of the closet attracted him, and he arose and stole softly across the room. He opened the door and entered, drawing it close to with his left hand. After an instant came a dull report, and, the door opening slightly, a faint gray smoke curled thinly out at the top. A moment later the door swung open, and the dead man fell back into the room and lay upon his face.

It was nine o'clock when Brennan came upon deck, and faced the beautiful morning breeze. They were just entering the sea. On each hand were dim, low promontories of grassy hills whose feet were buried in yellow sand. The sea was

blue as cobalt and lined with foam that glittered like ridges of snowy salt. Fishermen's sails, aslant in the cool wind, shone with the glancing light of the unclouded sun. The yachtsmen were singing; the captain, with hands shoved into the pockets of his snowy coat, was walking the deck, whistling in exultation.

Brennan leaped on deck with a burst of tenor song. The captain turned.

"Hello, old man! How do you feel this morning?"

"Like new," said Brennan, with a ready laugh and exultant whoop. "Ain't this great? Southwester; good for all day."

"Beats railroading these days, eh?"

"You bet your life!" Brennan agreed, and with shining face and merry voice he sang:

"'With the sea before,
And the wind ashore —
Then ho, lads, ho!
Oh, what care I?
Teedley dee, teedley die!
Yoho, my lads, yoho!'

Say, I'm ready for breakfast."

[THE END.]

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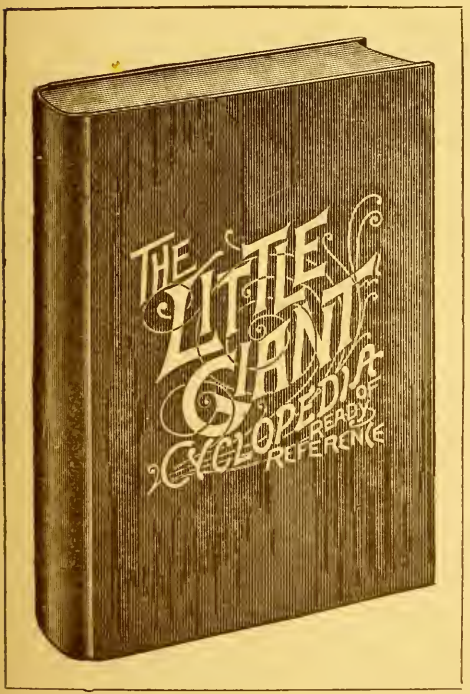

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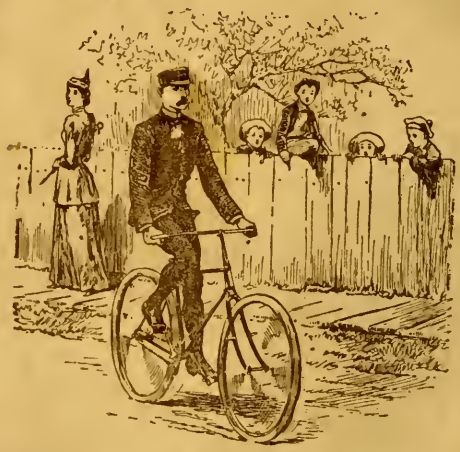

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