

THE  
GOLD  
BRICK  
BY  
BRAND  
WHITLOCK

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BRICK \*\*\*

# **THE GOLD BRICK**

# **THE GOLD BRICK**

*By*

**BRAND WHITLOCK**

*Author of*

**THE THIRTEENTH DISTRICT**

**HER INFINITE VARIETY THE HAPPY AVERAGE**

**THE TURN OF THE BALANCE**

**INDIANAPOLIS**

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# **THE GOLD BRICK**

## THE GOLD BRICK

TEN thousand dollars a year! Neil Kittrell left the office of the *Morning Telegraph* in a daze. He was insensible of the raw February air, heedless of sloppy pavements; the gray day had suddenly turned gold. He could not realize it all at once; ten thousand a year—for him and Edith! His heart swelled with love of Edith; she had sacrificed so much to become the wife of a man who had tried to make an artist of himself, and of whom fate, or economic determinism, or something, had made a cartoonist. What a surprise for her! He must hurry home.

In this swelling of his heart he felt a love not only of Edith but of the whole world. The people he met seemed dear to him; he felt friendly with every one, and beamed on perfect strangers with broad, cheerful smiles. He stopped to buy some flowers for Edith—daffodils, or tulips, which promised spring, and he took the daffodils, because the girl said:

“I think yellow is such a spirituelle color, don’t you?” and inclined her head in a most artistic manner.

But daffodils, after all, which would have been much the day before, seemed insufficient in the light of new prosperity, and Kittrell bought a large azalea, beautiful in its graceful spread of pink blooms.

“Where shall I send it?” asked the girl, whose cheeks were as pink as azaleas themselves.

“I think I’ll call a cab and take it to her myself,” said Kittrell.

And she sighed over the romance of this rich young gentleman and the girl of the azalea, who, no doubt, was as beautiful as the young woman who was playing *Lottie, the Poor Saleslady* at the Lyceum that very week.

Kittrell and the azalea bowled along Claybourne Avenue; he leaned back on the cushions, and adopted the expression of ennui appropriate to that thoroughfare. Would Edith now prefer Claybourne Avenue? With ten thousand a year they could, perhaps—and yet, at first it would be best not to put on airs, but to go right on as they were, in the flat. Then the thought

came to him that now, as the cartoonist on the *Telegraph*, his name would become as well known in Claybourne Avenue as it had been in the homes of the poor and humble during his years on the *Post*. And his thoughts flew to those homes where tired men at evening looked for his cartoons and children laughed at his funny pictures. It gave him a pang; he had felt a subtle bond between himself and all those thousands who read the *Post*. It was hard to leave them. The *Post* might be yellow, but, as the girl had said, yellow was a spiritual color, and the *Post* brought something into their lives—lives that were scorned by the *Telegraph* and by these people on the avenue. Could he make new friends here, where the cartoons he drew and the *Post* that printed them had been contemned, if not despised? His mind flew back to the dingy office of the *Post*; to the boys there, the whole good-natured, happy-go-lucky gang; and to Hardy—ah, Hardy!—who had been so good to him, and given him his big chance, had taken such pains and interest, helping him with ideas and suggestions, criticism and sympathy. To tell Hardy that he was going to leave him, here on the eve of the campaign—and Clayton, the mayor, he would have to tell him, too—oh, the devil! Why must he think of these things now?

After all, when he had reached home, and had run up-stairs with the news and the azalea, Edith did not seem delighted.

“But, dearie, business is business,” he argued, “and we need the money!”

“Yes, I know; doubtless you’re right. Only please don’t say ‘business is business;’ it isn’t like you, and—”

“But think what it will mean—ten thousand a year!”

“Oh, Neil, I’ve lived on ten thousand a year before, and I never had half the fun that I had when we were getting along on twelve hundred.”

“Yes, but then we were always dreaming of the day when I’d make a lot; we lived on that hope, didn’t we?”

Edith laughed. “You used to say we lived on love.”

“You’re not serious.” He turned to gaze moodily out of the window. And then she left the azalea, and perched on the flat arm of his chair.

“Dearest,” she said, “I am serious. I know all this means to you. We’re human, and we don’t like to ‘chip at crusts like Hindus,’ even for the sake

of youth and art. I never had illusions about love in a cottage and all that. Only, dear, I have been happy, so very happy, with you, because—well, because I was living in an atmosphere of honest purpose, honest ambition, and honest desire to do some good thing in the world. I had never known such an atmosphere before. At home, you know, father and Uncle James and the boys—well, it was all money, money, money with them, and they couldn't understand why I—”

“Could marry a poor newspaper artist! That's just the point.”

She put her hand to his lips.

“Now, dear! If they couldn't understand, so much the worse for them. If they thought it meant sacrifice to me, they were mistaken. I have been happy in this little flat; only—” she leaned back and inclined her head with her eyes asquint—“only the paper in this room is atrocious; it's a typical landlord's selection—McGaw picked it out. You see what it means to be merely rich.”

She was so pretty thus that he kissed her, and then she went on:

“And so, dear, if I didn't seem to be as impressed and delighted as you hoped to find me, it is because I was thinking of Mr. Hardy and the poor, dear, common little *Post*, and then—of Mr. Clayton. Did you think of him?”

“Yes.”

“You'll have to—to cartoon him?”

“I suppose so.”

The fact he had not allowed himself to face was close to both of them, and the subject was dropped until, just as he was going down-town—this time to break the news to Hardy—he went into the room he sarcastically said he might begin to call his studio, now that he was getting ten thousand a year, to look for a sketch he had promised Nolan for the sporting page. And there on his drawing-board was an unfinished cartoon, a drawing of the strong face of John Clayton. He had begun it a few days before to use on the occasion of Clayton's renomination. It had been a labor of love, and Kittrell suddenly realized how good it was. He had put into it all of his belief in Clayton, all of his devotion to the cause for which Clayton toiled and sacrificed, and in the simple lines he experienced the artist's ineffable

felicity; he had shown how good, how noble, how true a man Clayton was. All at once he realized the sensation the cartoon would produce, how it would delight and hearten Clayton's followers, how it would please Hardy, and how it would touch Clayton. It would be a tribute to the man and the friendship, but now a tribute broken, unfinished. Kittrell gazed a moment longer, and in that moment Edith came.

"The dear, beautiful soul!" she exclaimed softly. "Neil, it is wonderful. It is not a cartoon; it is a portrait. It shows what you might do with a brush."

Kittrell could not speak, and he turned the drawing-board to the wall.

When he had gone, Edith sat and thought—of Neil, of the new position, of Clayton. He had loved Neil, and been so proud of his work; he had shown a frank, naïve pleasure in the cartoons Neil had made of him. That last time he was there, thought Edith, he had said that without Neil the "good old cause," as he called it, using Whitman's phrase, could never have triumphed in that town. And now, would he come again? Would he ever stand in that room and, with his big, hearty laugh, clasp an arm around Neil's shoulder, or speak of her in his good, friendly way as "the little woman?" Would he come now, in the terrible days of the approaching campaign, for rest and sympathy—come as he used to come in other campaigns, worn and weary from all the brutal opposition, the vilification and abuse and mud-slinging? She closed her eyes. She could not think that far.

Kittrell found the task of telling Hardy just as difficult as he expected it to be, but by some mercy it did not last long. Explanation had not been necessary; he had only to make the first hesitating approaches, and Hardy understood. Hardy was, in a way, hurt; Kittrell saw that, and rushed to his own defense:

"I hate to go, old man. I don't like it a little bit—but, you know, business is business, and we need the money."

He even tried to laugh as he advanced this last conclusive reason, and Hardy, for all he showed in voice or phrase, may have agreed with him.

"It's all right, Kit," he said. "I'm sorry; I wish we could pay you more, but—well, good luck."

That was all. Kittrell gathered up the few articles he had at the office, gave Nolan his sketch, bade the boys good-by—bade them good-by as if he were

going on a long journey, never to see them more—and then he went.

After he had made the break it did not seem so bad as he had anticipated. At first things went on smoothly enough. The campaign had not opened, and he was free to exercise his talents outside the political field. He drew cartoons dealing with banal subjects, touching with the gentle satire of his humorous pencil foibles which all the world agreed about, and let vital questions alone. And he and Edith enjoyed themselves: indulged oftener in things they loved; went more frequently to the theater; appeared at recitals; dined now and then down-town. They began to realize certain luxuries they had not known for a long time—some he himself had never known, some that Edith had not known since she left her father's home to become his bride. In more subtle ways, too, Kittrell felt the change: there was a sense of larger leisure; the future beamed with a broader and brighter light; he formed plans, among which the old dream of going ere long to Paris for serious study took its dignified place. And then there was the sensation his change had created in the newspaper world; that the cartoons signed "Kit," which formerly appeared in the *Post*, should now adorn the broad page of the *Telegraph* was a thing to talk about at the press club; the fact of his large salary got abroad in that little world as well, and, after the way of that world, managed to exaggerate itself, as most facts did. He began to be sensible of attentions from men of prominence—small things, mere nods in the street, perhaps, or smiles in the theater foyer, but enough to show that they recognized him. What those children of the people, those working-men and women who used to be his unknown and admiring friends in the old days on the *Post*, thought of him—whether they missed him, whether they deplored his change as an apostasy or applauded it as a promotion—he did not know. He did not like to think about it.

But March came, and the politicians began to bluster like the season. Late one afternoon he was on his way to the office with a cartoon, the first in which he had seriously to attack Clayton. Benson, the managing editor of the *Telegraph*, had conceived it, and Kittrell had worked on it that day in sickness of heart. Every lying line of this new presentation of Clayton had cut him like some biting acid; but he had worked on, trying to reassure himself with the argument that he was a mere agent, devoid of personal responsibility. But it had been hard, and when Edith, after her custom, had asked to see it, he had said:

“Oh, you don’t want to see it; it’s no good.”

“Is it of—him?” she had asked.

And when he nodded she had gone away without another word. Now, as he hurried through the crowded streets, he was conscious that it was no good, indeed; and he was divided between the artist’s regret and the friend’s joy in the fact. But it made him tremble. Was his hand to forget its cunning? And then, suddenly, he heard a familiar voice, and there beside him, with his hand on his shoulder, stood the mayor.

“Why, Neil, my boy, how are you?” he said, and he took Kittrell’s hand as warmly as ever. For a moment Kittrell was relieved, and then his heart sank; for he had a quick realization that it was the coward within him that felt the relief, and the man the sickness. If Clayton had reproached him, or cut him, it would have made it easier; but Clayton did none of these things, and Kittrell was irresistibly drawn to the subject himself.

“You heard of my—new job?” he asked.

“Yes,” said Clayton, “I heard.”

“Well—” Kittrell began.

“I’m sorry,” Clayton said.

“So was I,” Kittrell hastened to say. “But I felt it—well, a duty, some way—to Edith. You know—we—need the money.” And he gave the cynical laugh that went with the argument.

“What does *she* think? Does she feel that way about it?”

Kittrell laughed, not cynically now, but uneasily and with embarrassment, for Clayton’s blue eyes were on him, those eyes that could look into men and understand them so.

“Of course you know,” Kittrell went on nervously, “there is nothing personal in this. We newspaper fellows simply do what we are told; we obey orders like soldiers, you know. With the policy of the paper we have nothing to do. Just like Dick Jennings, who was a red-hot free-trader and used to write free-trade editorials for the *Times*—he went over to the *Telegraph*, you remember, and writes all those protection arguments.”

The mayor did not seem to be interested in Dick Jennings, or in the ethics of his profession.

“Of course, you know I’m for you, Mr. Clayton, just exactly as I’ve always been. I’m going to vote for you.”

This did not seem to interest the mayor, either.

“And, maybe, you know—I thought, perhaps,” he snatched at this bright new idea that had come to him just in the nick of time, “that I might help you by my cartoons in the *Telegraph*; that is, I might keep them from being as bad as they might—”

“But that wouldn’t be dealing fairly with your new employers, Neil,” the mayor said.

Kittrell was making more and more a mess of this whole miserable business, and he was basely glad when they reached the corner.

“Well, good-by, my boy,” said the mayor, as they parted. “Remember me to the little woman.”

Kittrell watched him as he went on down the avenue, swinging along in his free way, the broad felt hat he wore riding above all the other hats in the throng that filled the sidewalk; and Kittrell sighed in deep depression.

When he turned in his cartoon, Benson scanned it a moment, cocked his head this side and that, puffed his brier pipe, and finally said:

“I’m afraid this is hardly up to you. This figure of Clayton, here—it hasn’t got the stuff in it. You want to show him as he *is*. We want the people to know what a four-flushing, hypocritical, demagogical blatherskite he is—with all his rot about the people and their damned rights!”

Benson was all unconscious of the inconsistency of having concern for a people he so despised, and Kittrell did not observe it, either. He was on the point of defending Clayton, but he restrained himself and listened to Benson’s suggestions. He remained at the office for two hours, trying to change the cartoon to Benson’s satisfaction, with a growing hatred of the work and a disgust with himself that now and then almost drove him to mad destruction. He felt like splashing the piece with India ink, or ripping it with his knife. But he worked on, and submitted it again. He had failed, of course; failed to express in it that hatred of a class which Benson

unconsciously disguised as a hatred of Clayton, a hatred which Kittrell could not express because he did not feel it; and he failed because art deserts her devotees when they are false to truth.

“Well, it’ll have to do,” said Benson, as he looked it over; “but let’s have a little more to the next one. Damn it! I wish I could draw. I’d cartoon the crook!”

In default of which ability, Benson set himself to write one of those savage editorials in which he poured out on Clayton that venom of which he seemed to have such an inexhaustible supply.

But on one point Benson was right: Kittrell was not up to himself. As the campaign opened, as the city was swept with the excitement of it, with meetings at noon-day and at night, office-seekers flying about in automobiles, walls covered with pictures of candidates, hand-bills scattered in the streets to swirl in the wild March winds, and men quarreling over whether Clayton or Ellsworth should be mayor, Kittrell had to draw a political cartoon each day; and as he struggled with his work, less and less the old joy came to cheer and spur him on. To read the ridicule, the abuse, which the *Telegraph* heaped on Clayton, the distortion of facts concerning his candidature, the unfair reports of his meetings, sickened him, and more than all, he was filled with disgust as he tried to match in caricature these libels of the man he so loved and honored. It was bad enough to have to flatter Clayton’s opponent, to picture him as a noble, disinterested character, ready to sacrifice himself for the public weal. Into his pictures of this man, attired in the long black coat of conventional respectability, with the smug face of pharisaism, he could get nothing but cant and hypocrisy; but in his caricatures of Clayton there was that which pained him worse—disloyalty, untruth, and now and then, to the discerning few who knew the tragedy of Kittrell’s soul, there was pity. And thus his work declined in value; lacking all sincerity, all faith in itself or its purpose, it became false, uncertain, full of jarring notes, and, in short, never once rang true. As for Edith, she never discussed his work now; she spoke of the campaign little, and yet he knew she was deeply concerned, and she grew hot with resentment at the methods of the *Telegraph*. Her only consolation was derived from the *Post*, which, of course, supported Clayton; and the final drop of bitterness in Kittrell’s cup came one evening when he realized that she was following with sympathetic interest the cartoons in that paper.

For the *Post* had a new cartoonist, Banks, a boy whom Hardy had picked up somewhere and was training to the work Kittrell had laid down. To Kittrell there was a cruel fascination in the progress Banks was making; he watched it with a critical, professional eye, at first with amusement, then with surprise, and now at last, in the discovery of Edith's interest, with a keen jealousy of which he was ashamed. The boy was crude and untrained; his work was not to be compared with Kittrell's, master of line that he was, but Kittrell saw that it had the thing his work now lacked, the vital, primal thing—sincerity, belief, love. The spark was there, and Kittrell knew how Hardy would nurse that spark and fan it, and keep it alive and burning until it should eventually blaze up in a fine white flame. And Kittrell realized, as the days went by, that Banks' work was telling, and that his own was failing. He had, from the first, missed the atmosphere of the *Post*, missed the *camaraderie* of the congenial spirits there, animated by a common purpose, inspired and led by Hardy, whom they all loved—loved as he himself once loved him, loved as he loved him still—and dare not look him in the face when they met!

He found the atmosphere of the *Telegraph* alien and distasteful. There all was different; the men had little joy in their work, little interest in it, save perhaps the newspaper man's inborn love of a good story or a beat. They were all cynical, without loyalty or faith; they secretly made fun of the *Telegraph*, of its editors and owners; they had no belief in its cause; and its pretensions to respectability, its parade of virtue, excited only their derision. And slowly it began to dawn on Kittrell that the great moral law worked always and everywhere, even on newspapers, and that there was reflected inevitably and logically in the work of the men on that staff the hatred, the lack of principle, the bigotry and intolerance of its proprietors; and this same lack of principle tainted and made meretricious his own work, and enervated the editorials so that the *Telegraph*, no matter how carefully edited or how dignified in typographical appearance, was, nevertheless, without real influence in the community.

Meanwhile Clayton was gaining ground. It was less than two weeks before election. The campaign waxed more and more bitter, and as the forces opposed to him foresaw defeat, they became ugly in spirit, and desperate. The *Telegraph* took on a tone more menacing and brutal, and Kittrell knew that the crisis had come. The might of the powers massed against Clayton

appalled Kittrell; they thundered at him through many brazen mouths, but Clayton held on his high way unperturbed. He was speaking by day and night to thousands. Such meetings he had never had before. Kittrell had visions of him before those immense audiences in halls, in tents, in the raw open air of that rude March weather, making his appeals to the heart of the great mass. A fine, splendid, romantic figure he was, striking to the imagination, this champion of the people's cause, and Kittrell longed for the lost chance. Oh, for one day on the *Post* now!

One morning at breakfast, as Edith read the *Telegraph*, Kittrell saw the tears well slowly in her brown eyes.

"Oh," she said, "it is shameful!" She clenched her little fists. "Oh, if I were only a man I'd—" She could not in her impotent feminine rage say what she would do; she could only grind her teeth. Kittrell bent his head over his plate; his coffee choked him.

"Dearest," she said presently, in another tone, "tell me, how is he? Do you—ever see him? Will he win?"

"No, I never see him. But he'll win; I wouldn't worry."

"He used to come here," she went on, "to rest a moment, to escape from all this hateful confusion and strife. He is killing himself! And they aren't worth it—those ignorant people—they aren't worth such sacrifices."

He got up from the table and turned away, and then, realizing quickly, she flew to his side and put her arms about his neck and said:

"Forgive me, dearest, I didn't mean—only—"

"Oh, Edith," he said, "this is killing me. I feel like a dog."

"Don't dear; he is big enough, and good enough; he will understand."

"Yes; that only makes it harder, only makes it hurt the more."

That afternoon, in the car, he heard no talk but of the election; and downtown, in a cigar store where he stopped for cigarettes, he heard some men talking mysteriously, in the hollow voice of rumor, of some sensation, some scandal. It alarmed him, and as he went into the office he met Manning, the *Telegraph's* political man.

"Tell me, Manning," Kittrell said, "how does it look?"

“Damn bad for us.”

“For us?”

“Well, for our mob of burglars and second story workers here—the gang we represent.” He took a cigarette from the box Kittrell was opening.

“And will he win?”

“Will he win?” said Manning, exhaling the words on the thin level stream of smoke that came from his lungs. “Will he win? In a walk, I tell you. He’s got ’em beat to a standstill right now. That’s the dope.”

“But what about this story of—”

“Aw, that’s all a pipe-dream of Burns’. I’m running it in the morning, but it’s nothing; it’s a shine. They’re big fools to print it at all. But it’s their last card; they’re desperate. They won’t stop at anything, or at any crime, except those requiring courage. Burns is in there with Benson now; so is Salton, and old man Glenn, and the rest of the bunco family. They’re framing it up. When I saw old Glenn go in, with his white side whiskers, I knew the widow and the orphan were in danger again, and that he was going bravely to the front for ’em. Say, that young Banks is comin’, isn’t he? That’s a peach, that cartoon of his to-night.”

Kittrell went on down the hall to the art-room to wait until Benson should be free. But it was not long until he was sent for, and as he entered the managing editor’s room he was instantly sensible of the somber atmosphere of a grave and solemn council of war. Benson introduced him to Glenn, the banker, to Salton, the party boss, and to Burns, the president of the street-car company; and as Kittrell sat down he looked about him, and could scarcely repress a smile as he recalled Manning’s estimate of Glenn. The old man sat there, as solemn and unctuous as ever he had in his pew at church. Benson, red of face, was more plainly perturbed, but Salton was as reserved, as immobile, as inscrutable as ever, his narrow, pointed face, with its vulpine expression, being perhaps paler than usual. Benson had on his desk before him the cartoon Kittrell had finished that day.

“Mr. Kittrell,” Benson began, “we’ve been talking over the political situation, and I was showing these gentlemen this cartoon. It isn’t, I fear, in your best style; it lacks the force, the argument, we’d like just at this time. That isn’t the *Telegraph* Clayton, Mr. Kittrell.” He pointed with the amber

stem of his pipe. “Not at all. Clayton is a strong, smart, unscrupulous, dangerous man! We’ve reached a crisis in this campaign; if we can’t turn things in the next three days, we’re lost, that’s all; we might as well face it. To-morrow we make an important revelation concerning the character of Clayton, and we want to follow it up the morning after by a cartoon that will be a stunner, a clencher. We have discussed it here among ourselves, and this is our idea.”

Benson drew a crude, bald outline, indicating the cartoon they wished Kittrell to draw. The idea was so coarse, so brutal, so revolting, that Kittrell stood aghast, and, as he stood, he was aware of Salton’s little eyes fixed on him. Benson waited; they all waited.

“Well,” said Benson, “what do you think of it?”

Kittrell paused an instant, and then said:

“I won’t draw it; that’s what I think of it.”

Benson flushed angrily and looked up at him.

“We are paying you a very large salary, Mr. Kittrell, and your work, if you will pardon me, has not been up to what we were led to expect.”

“You are quite right, Mr. Benson, but I can’t draw that cartoon.”

“Well, great God!” yelled Burns, “what have we got here—a gold brick?” He rose with a vivid sneer on his red face, plunged his hands in his pockets, and took two or three nervous strides across the room. Kittrell looked at him, and slowly his eyes blazed out of a face that had gone white on the instant.

“What did you say, sir?” he demanded.

Burns thrust his red face, with its prognathic jaw, menacingly toward Kittrell.

“I said that in you we’d got a gold brick.”

“You?” said Kittrell. “What have you to do with it? I don’t work for you.”

“You don’t? Well, I guess it’s us that puts up—”

“Gentlemen! Gentlemen!” said Glenn, waving a white, pacificatory hand.

“Yes, let me deal with this, if you please,” said Benson, looking hard at Burns. The street-car man sneered again, then, in ostentatious contempt, looked out the window. And in the stillness Benson continued:

“Mr. Kittrell, think a minute. Is your decision final?”

“It is final, Mr. Benson,” said Kittrell. “And as for you, Burns,” he glared angrily at the man, “I wouldn’t draw that cartoon for all the dirty money that all the bribing street-car companies in the world could put into Mr. Glenn’s bank here. Good evening, gentlemen.”

It was not until he stood again in his own home that Kittrell felt the physical effects which the spiritual squalor of such a scene was certain to produce in a nature like his.

“Neil! What is the matter?” Edith fluttered toward him in alarm.

He sank into a chair, and for a moment he looked as if he would faint, but he looked wanly up at her and said:

“Nothing; I’m all right; just a little weak. I’ve gone through a sickening, horrible scene—”

“Dearest!”

“And I’m off the *Telegraph*—and a man once more!”

He bent over, with his elbows on his knees, his head in his hands, and when Edith put her calm, caressing hand on his brow, she found that it was moist from nervousness. Presently he was able to tell her the whole story.

“It was, after all, Edith, a fitting conclusion to my experience on the *Telegraph*. I suppose, though, that to people who are used to ten thousand a year such scenes are nothing at all.” She saw in this trace of his old humor that he was himself again, and she hugged his head to her bosom.

“Oh, dearest,” she said, “I’m proud of you—and happy again.”

They were, indeed, both happy, happier than they had been in weeks.

The next morning after breakfast, she saw by his manner, by the humorous, almost comical expression about his eyes, that he had an idea. In this mood of satisfaction—this mood that comes too seldom in the artist’s life—she knew it was wise to let him alone. And he lighted his pipe and went to

work. She heard him now and then, singing or whistling or humming; she scented his pipe, then cigarettes; then, at last, after two hours, he called in a loud, triumphant tone:

“Oh, Edith!”

She was at the door in an instant, and, waving his hand grandly at his drawing-board, he turned to her with that expression which connotes the greatest joy gods or mortals can know—the joy of beholding one’s own work and finding it good. He had, as she saw, returned to the cartoon of Clayton he had laid aside when the tempter came; and now it was finished. Its simple lines revealed Clayton’s character, as the sufficient answer to all the charges the *Telegraph* might make against him. Edith leaned against the door and looked long and critically.

“It was fine before,” she said presently; “it’s better now. Before it was a portrait of the man; this shows his soul.”

“Well, it’s how he looks to me,” said Neil, “after a month in which to appreciate him.”

“But what,” she said, stooping and peering at the edge of the drawing, where, despite much knife-scraping, vague figures appeared, “what’s that?”

“Oh, I’m ashamed to tell you,” he said. “I’ll have to paste over that before it’s electrotyped. You see, I had a notion of putting in the gang, and I drew four little figures—Benson, Burns, Salton and Glenn; they were plotting—oh, it was foolish and unworthy. I decided I didn’t want anything of hatred in it—just as he wouldn’t want anything of hatred in it; so I rubbed them out.”

“Well, I’m glad. It is beautiful; it makes up for everything; it’s an appreciation—worthy of the man.”

When Kittrell entered the office of the *Post*, the boys greeted him with delight, and his presence made a sensation, for there had been rumors of the break which the absence of a “Kit” cartoon in the *Telegraph* that morning had confirmed. But, if Hardy was surprised, his surprise was swallowed up in his joy, and Kittrell was grateful to him for the delicacy with which he touched the subject that consumed the newspaper and political world with curiosity.

“I’m glad, Kit,” was all that he said. “You know that.”

Then he forgot everything in the cartoon, and he showed his instant recognition of its significance by snatching out his watch, pushing a button, and saying to Garland, who came to the door in his shirt-sleeves:

“Tell Nic to hold the first edition for a five-column first-page cartoon. And send this up right away.”

They had a last look at it before it went, and after gazing a moment in silence Hardy said:

“It’s the greatest thing you ever did, Kit, and it comes at the psychological moment. It’ll elect him.”

“Oh, he was elected anyhow.”

Hardy shook his head, and in the movement Kittrell saw how the strain of the campaign had told on him. “No, he wasn’t; the way they’ve been hammering him is something fierce; and the *Telegraph*—well, your cartoons and all, you know.”

“But my cartoons in the *Telegraph* were rotten. Any work that is not sincere, not intellectually honest—”

Hardy interrupted him:

“Yes; but, Kit, you’re so good that your rotten is better than ’most anybody’s best.” He smiled, and Kittrell blushed and looked away.

Hardy was right. The “Kit” cartoon, back in the *Post*, created its sensation, and after it appeared the political reporters said it had started a landslide to Clayton; that the betting was 4 to 1 and no takers, and that it was all over but the shouting.

That night, as they were at dinner, the telephone rang, and in a minute Neil knew by Edith’s excited and delighted reiteration of “yes,” “yes,” who had called up. And then he heard her say:

“Indeed I will; I’ll come every night and sit in the front seat.”

When Kittrell displaced Edith at the telephone, he heard the voice of John Clayton, lower in register and somewhat husky after four weeks’ speaking, but more musical than ever in Kittrell’s ears when it said:

“I just told the little woman, Neil, that I didn’t know how to say it, so I wanted her to thank you for me. It was beautiful in you, and I wish I were worthy of it; it was simply your own good soul expressing itself.”

And it was the last delight to Kittrell to hear that voice and to know that all was well.

But one question remained unsettled. Kittrell had been on the *Telegraph* a month, and his contract differed from that ordinarily made by the members of a newspaper staff in that he was paid by the year, though in monthly instalments. Kittrell knew that he had broken his contract on grounds which the sordid law would not see or recognize and the average court think absurd, and that the *Telegraph* might legally refuse to pay him at all. He hoped the *Telegraph* would do this! But it did not; on the contrary, he received the next day a check for his month’s work. He held it up for Edith’s inspection.

“Of course, I’ll have to send it back,” he said.

“Certainly.”

“Do you think me quixotic?”

“Well, we’re poor enough as it is—let’s have some luxuries; let’s be quixotic until after election, at least.”

“Sure,” said Neil; “just what I was thinking. I’m going to do a cartoon every day for the *Post* until election day, and I’m not going to take a cent. I don’t want to crowd Banks out, you know, and I want to do my part for Clayton and the cause, and do it, just once, for the pure love of the thing.”

Those last days of the campaign were, indeed, luxuries to Kittrell and to Edith, days of work and fun and excitement. All day Kittrell worked on his cartoons, and in the evening they went to Clayton’s meetings. The experience was a revelation to them both—the crowds, the waiting for the singing of the automobile’s siren, the wild cheers that greeted Clayton, and then his speech, his appeals to the best there was in men. He had never made such speeches, and long afterward Edith could hear those cheers and see the faces of those working-men aglow with the hope, the passion, the fervent religion of democracy. And those days came to their glad climax that night when they met at the office of the *Post* to receive the returns, in an atmosphere quivering with excitement, with messenger boys and

reporters coming and going, and in the street outside an immense crowd, swaying and rocking between the walls on either side, with screams and shouts and mad huzzas, and the wild blowing of horns—all the hideous, happy noise an American election-night crowd can make.

Late in the evening Clayton had made his way, somehow unnoticed, through the crowd, and entered the office. He was happy in the great triumph he would not accept as personal, claiming it always for the cause; but as he dropped into the chair Hardy pushed toward him, they all saw how weary he was.

Just at that moment the roar in the street below swelled to a mighty crescendo, and Hardy cried:

“Look!”

They ran to the window. The boys up-stairs who were manipulating the stereopticon, had thrown on the screen an enormous picture of Clayton, the portrait Kittrell had drawn for his cartoon.

“Will you say now there isn’t the personal note in it?” Edith asked.

Clayton glanced out the window, across the dark, surging street, at the picture.

“Oh, it’s not me they’re cheering for,” he said; “it’s for Kit, here.”

“Well, perhaps some of it’s for him,” Edith admitted loyally.

They were silent, seized irresistibly by the emotion that mastered the mighty crowd in the dark streets below. Edith was strangely moved. Presently she could speak:

“Is there anything sweeter in life than to know that you have done a good thing—and done it well?”

“Yes,” said Clayton, “just one: to have a few friends who understand.”

“You are right,” said Edith. “It is so with art, and it must be so with life; it makes an art of life.”

It was dark enough there by the window for her to slip her hand into that of Neil, who had been musing silently on the crowd.

“I can never say again,” she said softly, “that those people are not worth sacrifice. They are worth all; they are everything; they are the hope of the world; and their longings and their needs, and the possibility of bringing them to pass, are all that give significance to life.”

“That’s what America is for,” said Clayton, “and it’s worth while to be allowed to help even in a little way to make, as old Walt says, ‘a nation of friends, of equals.’”

## THE HAS-BEEN

AS HOLMAN loitered along the pavement that June morning, glad once more to be back in Springfield after so many years, he recalled with a sigh another morning, far gone, when first he had come up to the capital of his state. "A morning just like this," he was thinking, "all green and sunny and hopeful and—pure. My God!" But he put aside regret; it was enough just then to be back after so many years of absence—years of dingy poverty which had kept him down in stupid Jasper, never once able to get back during the session, if only for a day to see the boys!—even as a man of fifty, with gray hair straggling beneath his broad, slouch hat, with his long, dusty coat, and worn, old shoes, that fell softly on the hot sidewalk, far other than the young representative who had come up to the capital so long before. In Capitol Avenue he had the state house in full view, the gray, swelling dome still patiently brooding over the stupidities and trivialities which the bickering human beings, running about like insects below, were proudly and solemnly achieving. The little flags were at their staffs on either wing. Once, at the sight he might have hurried, knowing his presence to be required beneath that flag on the house wing. No need now to hasten any more; he was not needed there, nor anywhere in the world.

The sidewalk was filled with men striding like the statesmen they felt themselves to be, and none among them now to remember him; but he walked with them under the railroad's ugly trestle, past the old white house on the little hill, still with its lightning-rod to keep alive one of the best of Lincoln stories, and up the broad walk to the state house. Inside, the cool shades of the big pile were grateful as they used to be. Through the open doors of offices he could see clerks at work, or at least at desks, somehow coming off victorious, it seemed, in their desperate business of holding on to their slippery, eel-like, political jobs; then the crowded elevator—and the inevitable old soldier to operate it. All as it used to be; and he, like some risen ghost long since laid in its political grave, stalking among earthly presences that had forgotten him.

The doorkeepers at the house regarded him with the official misanthropy and distrust, but Holman quelled their glance, pronounced the word "Ex-member," and so passed in to the one barren prerogative left him out of the years of former power and prestige.

The house, on the order of senate bills on first reading, was inattentive; members lolled in their seats, read newspapers, talked, gossiped, wrote letters, now and then threw paper wads at one another—incipiencies of that horseplay which would mark the session's close. The clerk mumbled the said senate bills on first reading, the speaker turned in his chair to talk with some one on the divan behind him, swinging about now and then to say, "First reading of the bill!" and to tap the sounding-board with his gavel. And, of them all, not one he knew, not one to recognize him! But, yes, there was one, after all; just one. Down the center aisle, reclining in his chair nonchalantly, was a young fellow, almost a boy to Holman's disadvantage point of years, whose head, turned at that instant, showed a profile which, when age and authority should visit it, would cause one to remark it; a fair brow, strong nose and good-humored lips parting now in a smile at some remark a member across the aisle had made. As Holman looked at young McCray his mind went back to another morning in another June, when the air came in through the tall, open windows with the breath of young summer in Illinois, the very odor of the prairie flowers themselves, the morning that Baldwin had come to him. And now McCray sat there, representing his old district, with all the opportunities, dreams, ambitions, illusions he himself had had—and lost.

But Holman was not much given to introspection—his eye was not long turned inward; and now, turned outward, it lighted on a white head far down toward the front of the house.

"Why, if there isn't, after all, one o' the old-timers! Say, young fellow," he said, speaking to an assistant sergeant-at-arms who had been standing near and, unable to identify Holman as a representative of any railroad or other interest entitled to respect on that floor, had been eying him with some suspicion. "Say," said Holman, pointing with a long forefinger, "ain't that old Ike Bemis down there—Bemis, of Tazewell? Yes? Well, now, just call a page boy, won't you? And have him tell Bemis an old friend wants to see him."

Bemis was, in his way, a phenomenon unparalleled in politics; he had been in the house before Holman and had held on, minority member from his district, the Republican and Democratic machines working harmoniously together, for a quarter of a century. And as he came up the aisle in response to Holman's message he seemed to Holman to have changed little; only his hair from iron gray had grown white, and his face was not so clear or ruddy or healthy as he had known it. He was dressed as he used to be in the gray clothes that made him look so like a prosperous farmer, and the hand he held out to Holman was, by some mystery, rough and horny, as if it had worked indeed.

"Why, bless the Lord!" he cried, "if it ain't Jim Holman!"

He shook Holman's hand with genuine pleasure and, putting his arm across Holman's shoulders, led him away to a divan under the gallery.

They sat down there and for half an hour chatted and gossiped, recalled old friends and associates of legislatures that were gone, discussed them, accounted for them, pursued their subsequent histories in politics or out of politics, their triumphs, their failures and their fates—in short, they reconstructed their own little world and caught up with the times.

"Tain't what it used to be, Jim," said Bemis with an old man's deploration of change. "You did right to get out of it. I don't want any more of it. When this session closes I'm through; I won't run again."

Holman was not greatly impressed; politicians, he knew, were always making their last campaign, as sailors were always making their last voyage.

"*Sine die* adjournment next week, and then good-by to politics for me," Bemis went on. "I'll be glad to be shut of it all. Nothing in it, nothing in it." He wagged his sage head sadly.

"Anything—ah—doing this session?" asked Holman, glancing sidewise at his old colleague.

"No, nothing except this Chicago street-car bill. We passed it, you know, and the governor vetoed it. The reformers raised an awful howl. Comes up—let's see—to-night, I reckon. Going to try to pass it over the governor's veto."

“Will they make it?”

“Oh, I don’t know. Looks dubious. The senate’s all right, of course; it’s all fixed there, but the house ain’t certain. A two-thirds vote’s hard to get these days. Baldwin’s been working day and night—but I don’t know; you can’t tell yet.”

Then the house broke into new confusion. Holman knew the signs well; a roll-call was on. Bemis pricked his ears and hurried back to his seat.

Holman was glad just then to have him go, for almost at the mention of the name of Baldwin he had happened to glance toward the speaker’s chair; the speaker had risen, his gavel poised, and in that instant Holman saw the man on the speaker’s lounge, lolling back to await the passing of the interruption, and recognized Baldwin, George R. Baldwin, carefully dressed as of old, suave, elegant, dignified, all unchanged save that his hair had grown a bit more gray, though only, it seemed, to lend to his aspect new dignity, new authority, almost refinement. Baldwin, the same as ever! It had not changed him, evidently; he was still correct, irreproachable, respected, received everywhere—while he, Holman, had come to this. Sarah, back there at home, amid the dingy poverty and drudgery of her life; and Baldwin’s wife, doubtless, welcome in all society and reigning there! Holman, sick of the scene, got up, plunged his hands into his pockets and started out. Near the door he turned to have another glance. Baldwin had slid to the end of the lounge and was talking to some young fellow—to McCray.

Holman went to the cigar stand, lighted a cigar, sauntered out into the rotunda and leaned against the brass rail. He blew out streams of smoke and through squinting little eyes watched them float away; he smoked and squinted and thought, and what he saw was Baldwin, the lobbyist, and young McCray.

Two men passed on their way over to the senate chamber, and he heard one of them pronounce his name.

“——leaning on the rail there, smoking.

“Oh—I forgot; his face was familiar, too. The old Has-been has come back for a day!”

It was Baldwin who spoke; his companion was young McCray.

“Ah, yes! An old Has-been,” thought Holman. Baldwin said that, and McCray! They said that even down in Jasper. But Baldwin, he was no Has-been; it had not affected him at all.

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When Holman entered the house that afternoon he was sensible of a change in the atmosphere. The new element was one he recognized—skilled as of old in legislative aëroscepsy—one that strangely excited him, both by what it recalled and by what it portended; there were tension, alertness, irritability and suspense, the knowledge of an evil, sinister Presence, known, silent, unrevealed, but apprehended—a Presence expected, even desired, yet dreaded; in short, the psychic condition that exists in a legislative chamber when something is about to come off. Holman, standing well back by the cloak-room, examining the house with expert eye, knew that the thing was imminent, though not immediate. There were certain signs wanting. The speaker sat calm, but he was twirling his gavel nervously; the leaders were restless and furtive, but they had not as yet got every man in his seat. McCray, for instance, was absent.

Holman sauntered carelessly around to the side on which Bemis sat, caught the old man’s eye and beckoned.

“I thought they’d get that bill up,” said Holman, “and I’d see a little fun; but there seems to be no chance of that. Reckon I’ll go.”

“There’s been a hitch,” said Bemis in a low tone.

“Has, heh?”

“Yes,” said Bemis; “the boys thought they had it fixed, but Wimbleton switched; told O’Leary so at noon. Either the governor got around him or he got scared.”

“Need only one vote?” surmised Holman. Then Bemis, as if a thought had struck him, drew close and put his lips to Holman’s ear:

“You know that young McCray from your district?”

“Sure.”

“Well, now, Jim, if you could fix him—you might get in on this thing. He won’t do business with any of us. I don’t know exactly, but I should think there’d be for you and him at least—” He put his lips quite into Holman’s ear, and Holman bent lower; and Bemis whispered again. Holman did not move a muscle. Bemis withdrew a little and looked at him.

“I don’t know McCray very well,” said Holman presently. “He’s a youngster, and I’ve been out of politics a long time. But I might have a little talk with him. I can’t promise, though—an old Has-been like me, you know.” He laughed a small bitter laugh.

“Oh, you!” said Bemis striking him softly on the shoulder. “You a Has-been! Why, Jim, you’re the slickest man in southern Illinois—when you want to be!”

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Holman found McCray in the Leland bar-room. The young man was plainly in some mental stress, his hair matted to his brow, his face moist with perspiration, and drawn, and in his eyes an utter weariness.

“Just the man I was looking for,” said Holman. “I came to see you about a little matter down in Jasper; some interests I represent—constits of yours—and I’ve got to hurry back. So, just give me a minute; I’ll not keep you long.”

McCray looked at his watch. “I”—he hesitated—“I must get over to the house; I’m late, anyway. I was detained—”

“Yes, I know,” said Holman, “but I’ve got to see you. It’s something you’re interested in, anyway. If you’ll just walk along a little way with me.”

Once outside, Holman kept on out Sixth Street, and McCray, wondering somewhat, did not demur.

“McCray, you don’t know me well,” Holman began; “I’m an old-timer—a Has-been, as I overheard a man say this morning. You’re a young man; you come from my district—or, perhaps, I’d better say I come from yours. I came here one session, just as you have done, from old Jasper, and I served, in all, four sessions. During that time I saw a lot of life and of men; I

learned a lot, too, and then I gave it up—and quit. This morning I came back for a little holiday, and I strolled over to the house to see how the old place looked once more, just as all the Has-beens do; they always manage to get back, some way or another, every session; it's a habit, a fever, a disease—get it once, a fellow never gets over it. Well, this morning, as I stood there looking around I saw you; and that and one thing and another reminded me of something. I saw you sitting there—young, ambitious, bright, with the world before you,—and, well, my boy, I took a kind of liking for you all of a sudden; but that's neither here nor there. What I was reminded of, curiously enough, was another young fellow I used to know years ago—a fellow that didn't look so much like you, perhaps, and yet who was like you in many ways.

“It must have been, let's see, back in the—well, no matter, I don't exactly recall just now, and it isn't material. But this young fellow came up from down our way to take his seat for the first time in the legislature. He was a young lawyer, smart, good-looking, a fellow every one liked. He had the gift of the gab; he could make a rattling speech, was strong on the stump and good before a jury. Everybody wanted to see him succeed. He was ambitious—ambitious as Lincoln, ambitious as the devil. His ambitions were not selfish—that is, not so damned selfish. He was no reformer, nothing like that; but he really wanted to help his people, wanted to do something to make life a little easier, a little better for the average fellow—like those he knew back home. He didn't have, perhaps, any very clear idea how he was going to do this, but he wanted to do it somehow, and, vaguely enough, I reckon, he felt that the chance would turn up. Back home, too, there was a girl—you got a girl, McCray?”

The young man, startled by the abrupt question, turned up to Holman, who shambled along a head taller than he, a face that went red; a smile came to it, then, suddenly, it went gray and he turned away.

“Beg your pardon,” said Holman, “that's none of my business, of course. But this fellow of mine, he had a girl back there. I knew about it; we were young members, first term, and he used to tell me things. And he wanted to marry this girl and make her happy. He thought, you see, that by being something, doing something in the world, he could do *that*.”

They were by this time far out Sixth Street, at the edge of town; a little farther on lay the open country. They came to a pasture with a broken fence and a tree.

“Let’s sit down here,” Holman said, “and rest, and I’ll get on with my story.”

They sat side by side on the bank at the roots of the elm, and Holman, having finished his cigar and being a man who seemed to require tobacco in some form every moment of the day, drew out a long plug and a knife and cut a piece and put it comfortably into his mouth.

“Chew?” he said, proffering tobacco and knife. McCray shook his head, but lighted a cigarette. And the old and the new generation sat there side by side on the bank.

“Interested?” asked Holman.

“Yes; go on.”

“Well, this young fellow I’m telling you of—the legislature was just a stepping-stone to him; that’s what he thought and that’s what everybody thought; beyond that were congress, governor, senator, everything. He went right ahead, was popular and influential, got good committees, and when he got up to speak the house grew quiet—you’ve seen it that way yourself—and he worked and studied, and back home there was the girl—and they wanted to get married. But he was poor—mighty poor.”

Holman leaned over, stretched out his long, thin arm—McCray noted the frayed cuffbands—and plucked a spear of young grass, pulled the thin, transparent, whitish-green blade out of its delicate sheath and, squinting his eyes, examined it minutely, as if it were the most engrossing object of study in the world.

“A legislature, McCray,” he went on, “is the damnedest thing in the world, the rottenest, most demoralizing, hell-fire sort of institution there is. All politics is that way, no matter where you find it. Sometimes I think you can’t get within forty rows o’ apple trees of it without being polluted. A man, to go to a legislature and stay there any time and come out whole and safe and sound, has to be made of pure gold. Now, this young friend of mine, he was, as I’ve said, all right at heart, and pretty strong, too, most ways; good family, good blood and all that; and back home there, in safe

surroundings, he'd 'ave got along all right till the end. But in the legislature a fellow's away from home, away from all his customary moorings, and most of the members get it into their heads that at the capital all the rules are suspended, and I reckon they are—that's about what government, as we administer it, amounts to.

“No one from home ever shows up there. The only ones that come around come to get something for themselves, and it's always something they have no right to and oughtn't to have. They come with all kinds of plausible reasons and lies and temptations—damned sneaking, hypocritical, white-washed sepulchers! Eminent and respectable citizens, best people and all that! And unless a fellow has his eyes wide open all the time, has his principles clear and fixed and knows enough to apply 'em every minute, knows what a bunco game it all is, and is of pure gold besides—as I said—why, he gets all tangled up and lost—yes, lost. It pretty much all comes from the cities. We poor jays from the country districts don't know anything about the cities; we take what they tell us, or did in my time. We think if we just pass a few laws to make our fellow-citizens in the cities good, regulate their beer for 'em and all that, that nothing else is required of us; so these fellows come down from the city and get us to do their dirty work for them. In those days there was a fellow here, a lobbyist, a good-looking man, about the size and favor of—well, Baldwin back there—saw him talking to you this morning—same kind of a man exactly, smooth, genial, polished, well-dressed, polite, good fellow, and all that.

“Now, Baldwin—I mean the fellow—well, damn it!” Holman suddenly exploded in his exasperation, “it *was* Baldwin! He had a bill he was trying to pass, a crooked bill, of course, one of those bills like this street-car bill I heard of to-day, to take something that by rights belonged to the people of the city, a street, or the ground under a street, or the air over a street, or the room in the middle of a street, and give it to half a dozen eminently respectable and pious citizens to use for themselves and exploit and get rich on. Baldwin was trying to pass that bill, and the session was nearly done, and he needed just one vote. And he looked around and he settled on this young friend of mine; he knew his hopes, his wants, his necessities—knew all about him, for that's Baldwin's business and his way. I needn't go into the details; he worked with him a whole day and nearly a whole night; explained that it was really a good thing for the city, that this young fellow's

constits were not interested in the city, anyway, didn't know anything about it, nor care anything about it. 'It can't hurt you,' Baldwin would say. 'Your people won't know or care; of course, if it was something they were interested in it might be different'—and all that. And then, finally, 'way in the night, when the young fellow was worn down in will, and tired and weak and dazed anyway, Baldwin began to count the money down on the table, among the stinking whisky glasses and cigar butts, thousand-dollar bills, green as that grass there, one—two—three—like that." McCray, with a kind of fascination, watched Holman as with slow gesture of his long hands he turned over, as it were, and laid down one after another those thousand-dollar bills. "And the young man fell," said Holman at last. And then he was silent, his gaze fixed afar on some light across the fields.

"Well," Holman resumed, "Baldwin was right in one way, at any rate; the people, the young fellow's people down home, didn't care. They never do care; they don't take the trouble. They never knew, anyway, and they elected him again and re-elected him. And he got married and things seemed to go along all right with him; you would have said he was to be envied. But, while nothing seemed to change outside, something did change inside the young man; and the worst of it was, it was a change that he didn't know or realize. It was like some disease, working away, working away there inside of him, without any pain or any symptoms even; he had no idea of it. But there it was, working away, working away. He found, at first, that it was easy enough to get money, and he got it and he spent it and it never did him any good, never a bit, neither him nor his family. Easy money, they call it; but there's no such thing. All money, even easy money, is hard; you got to pay somehow, you got to pay!

"He changed by slow degrees; first he got careless and slovenly in his thoughts, and, after a while, didn't think much anyway, and couldn't; he just talked and talked and talked and made loud speeches—became a windbag, a blatherskite, a bore and a nuisance in the land, to himself and everybody. There's a lot of them in this land; all they need to make a speech is room enough to work their jaws in. His old wishes and longings to be of some use in the world died out of him; he had no aims, no mark to head for, no place to go. He became ineffectual; after while all there was to him was that one vote of his in the house, and by and by that wasn't worth much; it kept

declining in value, he got cheaper and cheaper, and finally—just naturally petered out.

“Then, when he was slouchy in morals and mind and character, he got slouchy in person; his habits weren’t bad, perhaps; he was no drunkard or anything like that, but just—oh, sloppy, every way. And his wife, his little wife—she was a fine, pretty girl, McCray, when he married her—she, of course, had to pay, too, along with him; he dragged her down. She was patient and kind and always hopeful, but they were poor, and under the stress of their necessities he would get peevish and cross, and sometimes when, say, a Saturday night would come and there wasn’t anything in the house to eat—well, he’d look at the children and get mad—mad at himself, primarily, though he didn’t say so or admit it even to himself—and he’d take it out in nasty, mean ways with her and the children. Finally, she gave up; she didn’t know why, she never knew what had happened, or, if she did, she never even hinted it—and the whole family was just going down to hell and the devil. There wasn’t any outward tragedy to make it striking or dramatic or even interesting.

“And then, after everybody half knew or half guessed, and had ceased to respect him, he came back here to Springfield once, as we all do, and happened to see Baldwin, and found him the same, scarcely a day older, though he himself was gray and withered. It hadn’t hurt Baldwin; he was well-dressed, respectable, popular, received everywhere—clubs, society, church and all, just as the men were whose dirty money Baldwin handled. And Baldwin’s wife, she wasn’t old and sad and hopeless; she was going out in society, president of a big woman’s club, talked about safe little reforms, charities and philanthropies. And Baldwin’s daughters were over in Europe getting the last finish on their education.”

Holman had a feeling that McCray was no longer listening and, glancing aside, saw that McCray’s face was buried in his hands. And with pity in his long, gray face he looked at him a little while, then laid a hand on McCray’s shoulder.

“Do you know,” he said, “why I told you this story? You see, I didn’t want to make you feel bad; I only wanted to show you. Because there’s a lot in you—a big, beautiful future.”

“Oh, don’t say that,” cried McCray. “All but that last—all but that last.”

“Why not that?”

“Because it’s too late. Oh, Holman, it’s too late—too late! If it were only yesterday! But now—it’s too late!”

And McCray bent forward, bowed in pain, and wept.

Holman waited until the boy’s grief subsided, and then, by degrees, he got the story. To McCray it was an irreclaimable and tragic wreck of life. But to Holman, in the broader vision his own sins had made possible, and in some of his judgments of men, perhaps too broad—if, indeed, that may be—the case was not at all hopeless. He had not, it is true, been prepared for a revelation so complete and damaging, but it presented to him no irrevocable aspect. McCray, with the proclivity of youth to fixed and fated facts, saw the thing consummated and complete, the contract wholly executed; but Holman did not regard it as even executory, and he cited for McCray the old adage about the bad bargain.

“We’ll just give the stuff back to Baldwin.”

“Before?”

“No,” said Holman stoutly, “afterward. After the vote; we’ll have that satisfaction. Keep him on the hooks.”

“Well,” said McCray. “But here, you take it. It—burns—” He gave to Holman a roll of bills, and sighed in relief. “You have saved me,” he said; “you have saved my soul.”

“Oh, to hell with your soul!” Holman said, with more orthodoxy than he was accustomed to evince. He was not sufficiently accustomed to the highly moral to relish its too bald expression; perhaps his experience had been of one other as yet unrecognized benefit—it had made him wholesomely afraid of cant, and whatever good his spiritual adventure of that day had done, or was to do him, he was in little danger of becoming a Pharisee.

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Greggerson, the clerk of the house, in shirt-sleeves, a handkerchief stuffed into his collar, had himself taken the reading-desk that night. Above him the speaker, bent forward, watched the proceedings like some bird of prey,

smiting his desk sharply with his gavel now and then, or pointing it fiercely at some one. Above the speaker, in placid folds, was the flag, and from their large canvases on either side of the house, Lincoln and Douglas surveyed the scene from the calm altitude of their secure place in American statesmanship.

When the bill had come over from the senate half an hour before, the crowd had rushed over with it, burst into the house and pushed down the aisle, choking the passage. Holman saw several senators come over to see the end; he saw the governor's private secretary, and old Benson, the governor's political manager, and—Baldwin, suave and bland as usual, yet, as Holman could see on a second closer look, intensely anxious and concerned. He was paler than Holman had ever seen him. The air of the chamber was hot and fetid; there was a low, ominous grumbling. Dalby was on his feet on the Republican side, Quinn on the Democratic—the program under Baldwin's eye and the speaker's would be hurried through. In the curious way in which secrets cease to be secrets and permeate the mind of the mass, it was generally known how every man would vote, and it was understood that the climax, somehow, would come with the calling of the name of McCray, of Jasper. The roll-call moved slowly on down the alphabet; Greggerson's voice resounded; its boom could have been heard through open windows three blocks away:

“Lyendorf!”

“Aye.”

“Lynn, of Sangamon!”

“No.”

“Lynn, of Vermilion!”

“No.”

“McBroom!”

“No.”

“McCoy!”

“Aye.”

“McCray!”

Holman strained forward with the crowd. McCray hesitated, looked up, then shouted:

“No!”

There was a sharp volley of applause, a clapping of hands which had in it perhaps, a certain too self-righteous quality; and there were human groans and hoots, and at his elbow Holman heard an oath and turned to face Baldwin. The face of the lobbyist was white with rage and moist with fine globules of perspiration, and there were revealed to Holman in the brilliant, new illuminations of that moment certain lines that once had not been there, lines not drawn by age, and Holman saw them with a fierce, vindictive joy.

But McCray was coming, battling his way down the aisle, escaping the congratulations, curses, praises, objurgations of the men who crowded about him. He got away from them and came back, and, as he took Holman’s hand, his tired, drawn face was touched with a smile. Baldwin, there beside them, saw it, stared at Holman incredulously and said:

“Well, I’ll be damned!”

But Holman had no attention for Baldwin then.

“Let’s get out of this,” he said to McCray.

And when, out of that weltering chaos, they found themselves in the rotunda, in the mysterious semi-gloom that filled its great, inverted bowl, the gloom which all the electric lights could not wholly dissipate, Holman quickly drew his hand from his pocket, pressed it into McCray’s, and said:

“Here, this belongs to—” Holman hesitated, as at a new point in ethics.

“To Baldwin,” said McCray. “Yes,” he went on wearily, “I’ll give it back to him.”

“To think of an old Has-been like me,” said Holman, “that hasn’t seen so much easy money in a coon’s age—and to go toting it around all day in his pocket! McCray, I’m afraid I’m getting too damned civic! I’ll be a reformer next, and back in politics!” He laughed again. “We’ll wait here a little. Baldwin’ll be along, and I’ll stay and see you safely through it.”

Baldwin was coming even then, and in a moment espied them there by the rail. He had recovered himself; the mask of years could not be lowered

long; he came on leisurely, even pausing to light a cigarette. Holman hailed him:

“Lost out, didn’t you, George?”

“So it seems,” Baldwin replied. “When you do business on honor you must expect to be betrayed once in a while. It’s all in the game. But where do you come in, Jim—an old back number like you?”

“Does seem funny, doesn’t it? An old Has-been like me! Well, I saw a good thing coming off and I declared myself in. But McCray has a little business with you, and when you’re through with him, maybe I can make it plain to you.”

“Oh, I have no further business with Mr. McCray. I’m quite through with *him*.” And he turned his back deliberately on the young man.

McCray bit his lip, then remembered and became humble, and, putting forth his hand, said:

“Here—here’s your—money.”

Baldwin turned, took the money, thrust it carelessly into his pocket, and said:

“I can’t count it here, of course. I *presume* it’s all there.”

“Yes,” said Holman, “it’s all there. Such work is done on honor, you know.”

“Thank you.” Baldwin delicately drew on his cigarette, blew the smoke upward. “But—that question, Jim, that one unanswered question. Where do you come in? What is there in this for you?”

Holman looked at him from top to toe with a long, cold, steady gaze.

“Well, George,” he began slowly, “for me there’s nothing in it, in the way you think—in the only terms you can think in, I mean. There is, however, in another way, a lot in it; a lot I haven’t dreamed of for years. All day, while arranging and planning this—the idea came to me suddenly this morning—I’ve been looking forward to this moment, thinking of what I’d say and what satisfaction I’d have in saying it. I thought that that satisfaction would pay me for all you’ve done—for all you’ve tried to do to this boy here—for all—no, damn it! not for all!—all hell and eternity couldn’t pay you for *all* you’ve done—to other boys like him. But now, as I look at your face and

study it, I see that you just couldn't understand, that's all; you have lost the ability to understand—and—well, George, that mere fact will pay you, so I won't try to say it. I'll say only good-by, and when you get home to that wife and those daughters of yours—just remember that Jim Holman asked you how you could look them in the eyes. Do that and maybe—you'll understand.”

Baldwin stared at him; the mask shifted an instant, then, instantly restored, he turned away.

“He looks old, after all,” said Holman. “It has changed him, too....” He drew out his watch. “I can catch that midnight train on the Alton. I'm going to get out of here now; I'm going home to old Jasper. There's a little woman there I want to see, a little woman and some children, and I'm going home—now, at last, to look them in the eyes.”

## WHAT WILL BECOME OF ANNIE?

SPRING had come back to Leadam Street. The moist cobblestones had steamed in the new sun all the afternoon; sparrows were sweeping up to the eaves, trailing strings and long straws after them; from the back porches of the flats were loud, awaking, tinny sounds, breaking the long silence. The clank of the cable-cars was borne over the roofs, clearly now in the damp, heavy atmosphere; from somewhere came the jingle of a street piano. Floating down the mild afternoon, came the deep, mellow note of some big propeller, loosing her winter moorings at last and rousing to greet the tug that would tow her out of the narrow river. Kelley, the policeman, strolled along the sidewalk, with his hands locked behind him, his nose in the air, sniffing eagerly and pleasurably. He had left off his skirted overcoat, and changed his clumsy cap for his helmet.

Annie had sat at her window all the afternoon, but, as the spring day wore toward its close, she began to realize that only the melancholy, and none of the promise of this first spring day had touched her. She had thrown open the window, to test the quality of the air. Now and then a warm breath came wandering in off the prairies, though when it met the cold, persistent wind from the lake, it hesitated, and timidly turned back. But Annie would not let herself doubt that the spring had come. She knew that in time the prairie wind would woo its way until it would be playing with the waves of the lake itself, the little waves that danced all day, blue and white, in the sunshine. And then the summer would come, and on Sunday afternoons Jimmy would take her out to Lincoln Park, and they would have their supper at Fisher's Garden.

Leadam Street was dull enough on week days; on Sundays it was wholly mournful.

Once Annie saw a woman, with a shawl over her head and a tin bucket in her hand, go into Englehardt's place, down the street. The woman went in furtively, and brushed hastily through the "Family Entrance," though why could not be told. She went there nearly every hour of every day. Then Annie was left alone. She did not turn inward to the flat; that was too still

and lonesome, and it was growing dark now, as the shadows gathered. She heard the strenuous gongs of the cable-cars over in State Street, and she could imagine the crowds, gay from their Sunday holiday, that filled them, clinging even to the running-boards. She might have gone out and been with them, as every one else in the street seemed to have done, but she would not for worlds have been away from home when Jimmy came. She heard the jingle of the street piano, too; she wished it would come down that way. She would gladly have emptied her purse for the Dago.

It was not unusual for Annie to be left alone, and she had grown used to it—almost; as used as a woman can—even the wife of a politician. Jimmy had told her that she must not worry at any of his absences; an alderman could never tell what might detain him. She had but a vague notion of the things that might detain an alderman, though she had no doubt of their importance. At times she thought she felt an intimate little charm in the importance that thus reflected itself upon her, but, nevertheless, her heart was never quite easy until she heard Jimmy's step on the stair and his key in the latch, and then—joy came to the little flat, and stayed there, trembling and fearful, until he went away again. She had grown to be so dependent on Jimmy. Ever since she had been graduated from the convent his great, strong personality had stood between her and the world, so that, as her girlhood had merged into womanhood, she had hardly recognized the change, and she remained a girl still, alone but for him; he was her whole life. She had doubted his entrance into politics at first, just as she had doubted his going into the saloon business, though she scarcely understood either in their various significances. Father Daugherty had told her she was a fortunate girl to have Jimmy for a husband, and that had been enough. Her only objection was that politics seemed to keep Jimmy away from home oftener than the old work in the packing-house used to; she had trembled at it at times, and at times had grown a little frightened. His success in politics had pleased her, of course, and made her proud, but it could not have made her prouder of him than she had been. He was all-sufficient for her; no change could make any difference.... Without Jimmy, what could she have done? He had never been gone so long before; here it was Sunday evening; he had left at eleven o'clock Saturday morning; there was to be an extra session of the council Saturday night, an unusual thing, and she had not been surprised when she awoke to find that it was Sunday morning—and that Jimmy had not come.

The morning wore away, and she had made all the arrangements for the dinner she would have awaiting him. She had gone about lightly, happily, all the day, singing to herself, the gladness of the new spring in her. But, one by one, all the tasks she could think of were performed, even to drawing the water for his bath and laying out his clean linen. And then, when there was nothing else to do but wait, and nothing with which to beguile her waiting, she had taken her post at the window to watch for his cab.

The day waned, the Sunday drew wearily toward its close, as if it sighed for Monday, and the resumption of active life. The street grew stiller and stiller. She heard the voice of a newsboy, far out of his usual haunts, crying an extra. She could not distinguish the words in which he bawled his tidings, and she thought nothing of it. One of Jimmy's few rules was that she was not to read the papers. But, when the heavy voice was gone, she found that it had had a strange, depressing effect upon her; she longed for Jimmy to come; the day had dragged itself by so slowly, and something of its somberness had stolen into her soul. She sighed, and leaned her chin on her arm; her back was growing tired, and beginning to ache. Then suddenly she heard horses' hoofs, and the roll of a carriage in the street. She rose and leaned far out of the window to welcome him. The cab drew up; it stopped; the door opened. But the man who got out was not Jimmy. It was Father Daugherty. She knew him the instant she saw the fuzzy old high hat thrust out of the cab, and caught the greenish sheen of the shabby cassock that stood away from the fringe of white hair on his neck in such an ill-fitting, ill-becoming fashion. The old man did not look up, but tottered across the sidewalk.

Annie gasped, and scarce could move. In a moment more she heard the old steps on the stairs, the steps that for forty years had gone on so many errands for others, kind and merciful errands all of them, though for the most part sad. He was soon beside her, and she looked up into the gentle face that was so full of the woes of humanity. He had driven at once from the hospital in the cab they had sent to fetch him. Jimmy's last words had been:

“What will become of Annie?”

The death of Alderman Jimmy Tiernan at any time would have been a shock. When death came to him by a pistol-ball it created what the newspapers, in the columns they were so glad to fill that Monday morning, defined as a profound sensation. This sensation was most profound in two circles in the city, outwardly unconnected, though bound by ties which it was the constant and earnest effort of both to keep secret and unknown.

The city council had had a special session on Saturday night, and had passed the new gas franchise. Alderman Tiernan had had charge of the fight. Malachi Nolan was away, and Baldwin had picked out Tiernan as the most trustworthy and able of those of the gang who were left behind. Jimmy had felt the compliment, and gloried in it. It was the biggest thing that had fallen to him in his political life, and he was determined that he would make all there was to be made out of the opportunity. Not in any base or sordid sense—that is, not wholly so; that would come, of course, but he felt beyond this a joy in his work; the satisfaction of mere success would be his chief reward, the glory and the professional pride he would feel. He relished the fight against the newspapers, against “public opinion,” whatever that was; against the element that called itself the “better” element.

He was fully determined that no step should be misplaced; he counted his men over and over again; he checked them off mentally, and it all turned out as he had said. Every one was present, every one voted, and voted “right,” when the roll was called; the new gas franchise was granted; Jimmy had delivered the goods.

It was natural that such a glorious victory should be celebrated, and the gang, when it assembled in Jimmy’s place, immediately after the session was over, could not restrain its impatience. The boys longed to have the fruits of the day’s work; with their wages they could celebrate with glad, care-free hearts. But Jimmy was of a Gaelic cunning. He would not jeopardize the victory at that stage by any indiscretion. He saw at a glance the mood the gang was in. He smiled, as he always smiled—and any one, to see his smile, must have loved him—but he shook his head.

“The drink’s in you, boys,” he said, “and you can’t trust your tongues. You’ll have to wait. Monday night you’ll be over. Then we’ll talk business.”

Subconsciously, they still were sober; in a strange dual mentality they saw the safety there was in his decision; and, in the paralysis of will his

magnetism worked in them, they loved him the more for it. They remembered that it was just what Malachi would have done. And so, noisy and excited as they were, they applauded his sagacity. Then they gave themselves over unreservedly to their appetites. It was a famous night in the annals of the gang. Jimmy himself joined in the revelry. And in the calm, silent Sunday morning, with the new sunlight of spring glaring in his swollen, aching eyes, he found himself, with a companion, in a Clark Street chop house. Just as they were going to order breakfast, a young man came in, with a black look in his eyes. No one saw it then, though they all remembered it afterward. Jimmy greeted him as gaily as he greeted everybody, but the young man did not warm to Jimmy's greeting. There were words, the quick rush of anger to Jimmy's face, a blow, and the pistol shot. At first the newspapers were glad to trace some sinister connection between the franchise fight and the tragedy. Afterward, they said it was only some private grudge. No one dreamed that Jimmy Tiernan had an enemy on earth.

At the hospital, Jimmy opened his eyes, and on his face, grown very white, there was a smile again, the last of his winning smiles. His friends were with him, and they wept, unashamed. Then he rolled his head on his pillow, and spoke of Annie. The calm Sister of Charity pressed her rosary into his hand, and stooped to listen. They had just time to send for Father Daugherty.

Down in the ward, the sadness that had come to Leadam Street spread blackly. Many a man, and many a woman, and many a child, cried. The poor had lost a friend, and they would not soon forget him. In the long days of the distant winter they would think of him over and over. Every one in that ward was poor, though the reformers, condescending that way whenever Jimmy was up for reelection, somehow never grasped the real significance of the fact. And it was a somber Monday around the city hall. Jimmy had been a man with a genius for friendship. The gang mourned him in a sadness that had added to it the remorse of a recent sobriety, but their grief, genuine as it was, had in it an evil bitterness their hearts would not have owned. They were restive and troubled. Whenever they got together in little groups, they read consternation in one another's faces, and now and then they cursed the caution they had extolled on Saturday night. Besides these varied effects, Jimmy's death, while it could not create a crisis in the

market, nevertheless gave rise to nervous feelings in certain segments of financial circles. It was inevitable that financial and political circles should overlap and intersect each other in this matter, and there were conferences which seemed to reflect a sense of personal resentment at Jimmy for having been murdered so inopportunistically. In the end, the financiers were peremptory with Baldwin. He must fix the thing some way. And he assured them that he would give the appointment of the administrator his immediate attention. Already, he said, he had a man in view who would be reasonable and practical. There were suggestions of strong-handed methods, but that was never George R. Baldwin's way. He went out with his air of affability unimpaired. Meanwhile, political and financial circles could only wait and hope.

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The excitement of the first few days following the tragedy kept Annie's mind occupied; but, when the funeral was over, and she returned to her little flat, when the neighborly women had at last gone back to their homes and their interrupted duties, and the world to its work, Annie was left to face life alone. She could not adjust herself to the change, and fear and despair added their blackness to her grief. Father Daugherty knew how great a blow Jimmy's death would be to her, and, though he gave what comfort he could, he left her grief to time. He did not belong to the preaching orders. But, as he pondered in his wise old head, he shrewdly guessed that the careless Jimmy would hardly have made provision against anything so far from his thoughts as death, and he perceived that if Annie were to be protected from a future with which she, alone and unaided, would hardly have the capacity to deal, some one must act.

Long ago might Father Daugherty have celebrated his silver jubilee as pastor of St. Patrick's, but he was not the man for celebrations. The parish was one big family to him, and he knew the joys and sorrows, the little hopes and pathetic ambitions of every one in it. The sorrows of his children he bore in his own heart; they had wrought their complex and tragic tale in his face. The joys he left them to taste alone; but he found too much sorrow to have time for joy. During all those years, he had given himself unsparingly; if it was all he had to give, it was the most precious thing he

could have given—a daily sacrifice that exhausted a temperament keenly sensitive and sympathetic. So he had grown old and white before his time. Many a man had he kept straight when times were hard and the right to work denied him; many a widow had he saved from the wiles of the claim-agent. The corporations and the lawyers hated him.

And so, on Monday morning, the clerks of the probate court had scarcely had time to yawn reluctantly before beginning a new week's work, when Father Daugherty appeared to file Annie's waiver of her own right to be appointed administratrix of the estate of James Tiernan, deceased, with an application for the appointment, instead, of Francis Daugherty as administrator.

“He must keep a set of blanks,” whispered one clerk to another.

As Father Daugherty went about his inventory, he saw that the result would be what he had expected. Jimmy had left no estate, no insurance, nothing but the saloon. And that, with Jimmy dead, was nothing, for its value lay all in Jimmy's personality and the importance of his position in politics. The fixtures would hardly pay for the burying of him. When the debts the law prefers had been paid, Annie would have scarce a penny. The world might preserve a respectful and sympathetic attitude during the few exciting days when it was paying its last conventional tributes to the dead man, but it kept itemized accounts meanwhile, and it could not long pretend to have forgotten material things. It would present its bills, and they must be paid. Annie would have hardly a cent to meet them with. And Father Daugherty knew, even if Annie did not know, what the world would do then.

Yet he smiled, though he shook his head, as he thought of the free-handed, indiscriminating generosity that had been akin to the improvidence of Jimmy's nature. And now he had but one more duty to perform; the safe in Jimmy's saloon had not been opened. No one, not even the bartender, knew the combination, and Father Daugherty had a locksmith to drill the lock. The gang had attended Jimmy's funeral in black neckties, and had mourned him sincerely, but, now that he was buried, their attitude became the common worldly attitude, with perhaps a little more than the usual aggressiveness in it. They were in a quandary as to the bundle in the new gas franchise, and many conferences with Baldwin had nerved them to desperate expedients. So it was on Baldwin's advice that they determined to

be represented at the opening of the safe. Two of the number were detailed to this duty, McQuirk of the Ninth, and Bretzenger of the Twenty-fourth. When they made their demand on Father Daugherty, explaining that they came in their capacity as Jimmy's nearest friends, he assented with a readiness that relieved them both, and delighted Bretzenger, though McQuirk, who knew Father Daugherty better than his colleague did, was fearful and suspicious. Father Daugherty said that he had thought of having witnesses, and they would serve as well as any. It was very kind of them.

The priest and the two aldermen waited in the saloon for two hours while the locksmith drilled away silently. The street door was closed; the crape still hung from the handle that had never gone unlatched so long at a time before, the curtains were drawn, and outside the crowds for ever shuffled by on the sidewalk, all oblivious to the little drama of hopes and fears that was unfolding its cross-purposes within. The saloon was dark, and an electric bulb glowed to shed light for the locksmith. The two aldermen puffed their cigars in silence, save for an occasional whisper, one with another. Father Daugherty's gaunt form leaned against the dusty bar, strangely out of keeping with such a scene, though the saloons in his parish knew him, especially on Saturday nights, when he conducted little raids of his own, and turned his prisoners over to their wives. Now his weary visage was relaxed in patient waiting. At last the locksmith dropped his tools, and said:

“There!”

The thick steel doors swung out on their noiseless hinges. The two aldermen sprang to the side of the safe. The priest drew near slowly, but his little eyes were turned on the aldermen, and they fell back a pace. Then the priest's long figure sank to a kneeling posture, and he peered into the safe. There was nothing in view. It was strangely empty, for a safe of its monstrous size and mystery, and the tenacity of its combination. He thrust in his hand and fumbled through all its hollow interior, and then he drew forth—a soiled linen collar! It was ludicrous, and for once he laughed, a little laugh. There was not a ledger, not a book.

“He kept no accounts, your riverence,” said McQuirk.

“It was just like him,” said Father Daugherty. But he kept on with his search. And, when he opened the little drawer of maplewood, he found a parcel, done snugly up in thick brown paper. He tore it open, and there

swelled into his sight packages of bank-notes almost bursting in their yellow paper straps. The bills were new, and as freshly green as the spring itself; more tempting thus, some way, to the reluctant conscience. The two aldermen bent over the black, stooping figure of the priest, their eyes fixed on the money. There it was at last, the bundle itself, the price of, or a part of the price of the new gas franchise. The priest straightened painfully, and got to his feet. He held the bundle in his thin fingers, and glanced at his witnesses, with a keen and curious eye. They met his gaze, expectant, eager, drawing dry, hot breaths. Involuntarily, they extended their hands. Father Daugherty looked at them, and a little twinkle of amusement showed in the eyes that were wontedly so mild and sad.

“Would you?” he said.

The two aldermen hastily raised their hands, and together, in strange unison, wiped their brows. The room had suddenly grown hot for them, and their brows were wet, though Father Daugherty was cool and composed, as he ever was. Yet they remembered; they could not so easily give up; it was theirs by every right. They could have cursed Jimmy just then for his excessive caution. It was McQuirk’s quick mind that thought first.

“Maybe there’s writing,” he said.

Father Daugherty looked long and thoroughly, running his thin hand deep into pigeon-holes and back into the partitions, until the sleeves of his shabby coat were pushed far up his lean wrist.

“Not a scrap,” he said.

“Then, maybe—” But McQuirk drew Bretzenger away, and they went into the darkness that lay thick as dust in the back of the long room. Meanwhile, Father Daugherty searched the safe through and through. He found nothing more. The strong-box had had but one purpose, and it had served it well. Then slowly, painfully, with the clumsy, unaccustomed fingers that had had small chance to count money, he turned the packages over, counting them carefully, wetting his trembling fingers now and then. The man who had drilled the safe stood looking on, with eyes that widened more and more.

“How much is there, Father?” he said, at length. He extended a grimy forefinger hesitatingly, as if to touch the package the priest balanced on his

palm. But he did not touch it, any more than if it had been something sacred in that clean, sacerdotal hand.

“Fifty thousand,” the priest answered. His voice was a trifle husky.

“Fifty thousand!” the man exclaimed. And then he added, in awe: “Dollars! Doesn’t look like that much, does it?”

“No,” Father Daugherty answered. He had been a little surprised himself. There was something disappointing in the size of the package. He had never seen so much money before, and its tremendous power, its tremendous power for evil, as he suddenly thought, was concentrated in a compass so small that the mind could but slowly wheel about to the new conception. The locksmith spoke.

“Might I—might I—hold it a second—in my own hand?” he said.

The priest gave the bundle into the hand hardened by so much honest toil. The man held it, heaving it up and down incredulously, testing its weight. Then he gave it back.

“Thanks,” he said, and sighed.

The two aldermen had returned from their little conference.

“Your riverence,” began McQuirk hesitatingly, “might we have a word with you—in private?” He looked suspiciously at the workman. The priest went with them a little way apart.

“We know about that,” McQuirk pointed to the bundle.

“You do, do you?” said the priest sharply.

“Yes, Father,” Bretzenger said. “It’s—it’s—well, it belongs to the company, sir.”

“What company?”

“Well, you know, the new ga—ah, that is, Mr. Baldwin, the lawyer. You know him?”

“George R.?” asked Father Daugherty.

“Yes, your riverence,” said both men hopefully. “It should go back to him.”

The priest looked at them, and they caught again that amused expression in his face. It put them ill at ease, and it roused resentment in Bretzenger, who felt that this calm priest could read him too well.

“None of it belongs to you, then, I suppose?” observed Father Daugherty.

“Ah, well—of course,” McQuirk urged, and his tone showed that he was trying, in his crude way, to impress the priest with an honest disinterestedness. “Of course, Jimmy was entitled to his piece.”

“Sure!” Bretzenger said, swelling with the little virtue he had found to help him.

“But you say it ought to go back to Baldwin, eh?”

“That’s what we think, sir,” they chimed.

“Well, he can come and identify it,” said Father Daugherty. He slowly wrapped the package up, and, unbuttoning his long, rusty coat a little way down from the throat, stuffed the money into an inner pocket. The deed seemed to madden Bretzenger, and he moved a step forward. The two others saw his motion. The priest did not move, but he turned a look on them, and raised his hand, and McQuirk quailed, a superstitious fear in his eyes. He stiffened his arm before Bretzenger, and stayed him. And then the priest stepped quietly to the safe, and pushed its door to with an arm that seemed too weak and frail to stir the heavy steel.

“It looks to me, Michael,” he was saying gently, as if addressing McQuirk alone, “like personal property, and, as I’m the administrator, I suppose I’ll have to take charge of it. If any beside our dead friend own it, let them come forward and prove their claim, and identify their property in open court.”

Father Daugherty reported the whole affair to the probate court, and the judge when the time for filing claims had elapsed, and he had waited for the particular claim he knew would not be presented, ordered a distribution of the property. Then Father Daugherty went to the flat to see Annie, bearing the bundle, the original bundle, the bundle that had bought the new gas franchise. Something of the dramatic quality in the situation had got into the old priest’s heart. He knew that Annie would appreciate it all so much better if she could see the fortune, and feel it, and he would let her do so for an

instant before he put it away in the safety deposit vaults to await opportunity for its investment.

She looked at it long and long, lying there in the lap of her black gown. She could not grasp the amount, though the old priest, leaning forward, with the enthusiasm of a boy shining once more, after so many years, in his hollow eyes, said over and over:

“Look at it, my child! Feel it! It’s fifty thousand dollars! And it’s all yours!”

She patted it, tenderly and affectionately, with a soft and reminiscent caress, so that the priest knew that it was not for anything that package of money might hold for her in a material way, then or afterward, but rather for what it gave back for a moment to her desolated heart. And the priest was glad of that, and thereafter silent. He had had doubts. He would feel better when the money had passed out of his hands, and he sometimes questioned whether it would ever do good in any one’s hands. But he had a sense of humor, too, a grim sense in this instance, when he thought of certain political and financial circles, even if he did dust his thin hands carefully with his spotless handkerchief when he laid the money down.

Annie’s eyes had filled with the ready tears that welled to their sweeping, black lashes, and trembled there as she raised her eyes to him.

“Ah, Father,” she said, “he was so, *so* good to me, always—and so kind! And see how thoughtful he was—to leave me all this! Oh, Jimmy, my poor Jimmy!”

And she rocked forward, like an old woman, and wept.

## THE VINDICATION OF HENDERSON OF GREENE

BALDWIN, the lobbyist, leaning forward with his elbows on his knees, and swaying with the train as it swung out on to the rocky ledge that paves the Valley of the Desplaines, contemplatively cut the end from a fresh cigar and said:

“But I’m not so sure, after all. My experience with the Bailey bill shook my faith in that proposition.”

The two other men in the salon looked up with startled eyes.

Baldwin had been driven over from his Michigan Avenue home and caught the Alton Limited when it made the station stop at Twenty-third Street, where he boarded the last of its curtained Pullmans. This coach was the political institution known to Illinois statesmanship as the Springfield sleeper, and Baldwin and his two companions, Jennings, the secretary of state, and Denny Healy, a canal commissioner, had the capsulated coziness of its smoking compartment all to themselves. Down by Dwight they had fallen into a desultory discussion of the old question as to whether or not every man has his price. The question could hardly interest these men long, for, after many years’ constant contemplation, under the gray dome of the state house, of the weaknesses of men, they had come to an acceptance of the doctrine now grown frank enough to have no lingering taint of cynicism. Jennings, indeed, had just dismissed the subject by declaring:

“All men aire fer sale, an’ most of ’em damn cheap.”

And so the subject might have lapsed had it not been for Baldwin’s heterodoxy. That George R. Baldwin of all men should doubt the first maxim of their profession was beyond comprehension. Though he played his part in life with a suite of law offices in a skyscraper as a background, his serious business was lobbying bills through the legislature. His friends, who were many, boasted that he always stood by them, right or wrong. Which he did, indeed, and as they were generally wrong, the value of such friendship, or his opinions on practical politics, could hardly be

overestimated. The day had been a hot one in Chicago, but now a cold draft of smoky air was sucking in through the narrow window-screen, on which the cinders hailed as the Limited plunged southward.

Smoke and dirt had long since begrimed the dark and sweaty face of Jennings, who, with waistcoat opened in the comfort dear to the Egyptian, was sprawling his shanks on the cushion opposite him, while Healy, doomed by corpulence to an attitude more erect, sitting with his chubby knees far apart, as the fat will, his paunch resting on the edge of the seat he filled, now and then brushed a fat palm over his red scalp and sighed, as he puffed his domestic cigar. But Baldwin sat and smiled, showing his excellent teeth beneath his reddish mustache, and visibly expanded. They could hear, as an undertone to their talking, the dull roll of the Pullman's paper wheels, and now and then they were interrupted by the whistle's long and lonesome note at a country road-crossing. Out through the double windows, against which Healy sometimes pressed his forehead because the glass cooled it, the dark fields wheeled past in an endless belt of blackness, save where an occasional bunch of sparks from the engine burrowed under the right-of-way fence, and then, in the momentary glow of light, they could catch sight of a tossing plume of corn, which told them they were out on the prairies of central Illinois.

When the train paused for the Big Four crossing at Gardner, they heard in the sudden flood of silence the snoring of a sensible fare-paying passenger who had gone to bed. The strident noise of the crickets and the frogs outside was noted only as an effect of the silence. The three men had no thought of retiring until they reached Pontiac at two o'clock, for the lives they led were such that they could not sleep until that hour, and then not very well.

Baldwin had lighted his imported cigar, the superior aroma of which, perceptible even in an atmosphere choked with coal gases and the fumes of the domestic cigars Jennings and Healy were smoking, indicated faintly the height of cultivation to which he had brought his appetites, when Jennings, flecking his ashes on the floor of the salon just as he would have done on his own parlor carpet, said:

“Well, go on with the story.”

Baldwin settled his chin over the blue cravat with the white polka dots that was knotted over the immaculate collar—a collar, incredulous men from

southern Illinois were sometimes told, that was actually made on the shirt—drew his creased trousers a little farther above the tops of his patent leather boots, and began:

“One session there was an old man named Henderson in the house, who had come up from Greene County; Henderson of Greene, everybody called him, to distinguish him from Tom Henderson, of Effingham. He was a queer figure, was Henderson of Greene, tall and gaunt, with a stoop in his shoulders. He always wore a hickory shirt, opened at a red and wrinkled throat, and his hair was just a stubble bleached by harvest suns. The old man was a riddle to everybody in Springfield that winter. He was always in his seat, even on Monday evenings, when no one else was there. He voted always with his party, and he voted consistently as well, like a good country member, against all the Chicago legislation. But he was a silent man, who stood apart from his fellows, looking with eyes that peered from under his shaggy, sunburned brows with an expression no one could fathom. He never made a speech, he never introduced a bill, he never offered a resolution, he never even presented a petition, and when the speaker made his committee assignments, he placed the old man on the committees on History, Geology and Science, and on Civil Service Reform, and he did not even look disappointed.”

The two politicians chuckled.

“As for me,” continued Baldwin, “I never spoke to him, and never knew any one who did. The speaker himself only addressed him—and then as the gentleman from Greene—when they were verifying roll-calls. No one ever knew where he boarded. The herd book gave him a paragraph, saying that he had been born in Indiana along in ’37, and moved to this state sometime in the fifties. Left an orphan early, with no education, he had been a day laborer all his life, working at anything he could get, mostly on farms. He never had held office before, and none knew how he broke into the legislature—the tidal wave, I suppose. Every one knew he never would come back again.

“Well, we got down to the last night of the session. The hands of the clock had been turned back in that vain old attempt to stay the remorseless hours, but its pale and impassive face was impotent as a gravestone to stay dissolution and oblivion. I know men who would have spent a fortune to

give that legislature one day more of life, but it was sweeping on to its midnight death. Somehow, whenever I think of the legislature, I think of *that* legislature, and whenever my mind conceives the state house it isn't pictured to me as standing there on the hill, stately in the sunshine, but as it appeared that night as I walked over from the Leland, with the clouds flying low over its dome. The lower floors were dark and still as sepulchres, and the messenger boys who came over from the Western Union, now and then, reminded me of ghosts as they went by, their heels dragging on the marble floors of the corridor. A light was burning in the governor's office, though the old man himself, I knew, was over at the mansion, pacing the floor of the library and cursing with classic curses. We were going to try that night to pass the Bailey bill over his veto.

“But the third floor blazed with electric lights, and the big dome was full of noisy echoes. The senate kept its coat on—you know how they mimic decorum over there—but the house was in its shirt-sleeves, huddled like a pack of wolves around the speaker's dais, with faces ripe with whisky, shaking its fists under the umbrella of cigar smoke. Every fellow was trying to get his bill passed in the last hour of the session—you know what it is, Hank?”

“Oah, yes,” replied Jennings, “but 'tain't nothin' to what 't used to be under the ol' constitution. We'd stack a pile o' them 'ere private acts up on the clerk's desk, an' pass 'em all t' oncet 'ith a whoop. Them 'as the days—but that 'as 'fore your time.”

“Those must have been good old days,” assented the lobbyist, “for the gang.”

“I reckon! A feller could 'a' done business in them days! Ol' John M.'d better left the ol' constitution alone—it 'as good enough. But there 'as a passion fer change right after the war.”

The lobbyist politely nodded concurrence in this view and continued:

“Some of the members clambered on to their desks, filling the air with oaths, ink bottles, and hurtling books with rattling leaves. Sometimes an iron weight sheathed in paper whizzed by on a vindictive mission, and one man made an Egyptian nigger-killer with rubber bands. Some even hurled their copies of the revised statutes—it was the first use they had ever found

for them. Once in a while some one would toss a batch of printed bills to the ceiling, where they set the glass prisms of the chandeliers jingling, and then fell like autumn leaves, a shower of dead pledges and withered hopes. And out of all the hubbub rose a steady roar—”

“Like at a lynchin’ bee,” assisted Jennings.

“Exactly,” assented Baldwin, who had never seen a lynching. “There were drunken howls and vacuous laughs, and yet we could hear through it all the hoarse voice of the clerk, his throat so heated that you could see the vapor of his breath, as you can an orator’s, or a wood-chopper’s in winter, rapidly intoning senate bills on third reading. The pages were growing heedless and impertinent. The newspaper correspondents, their despatches on the wires, puffed their cigarettes in professional unconcern, and awaited happenings worthy of late bulletins. The older members, who had been through the mill many times before, lounged low in their seats. One could see, above their desks, only their heads and heels. The speaker, old ’Zeke himself, was in the chair, suave as ever, but growing caustic. He had splintered his sounding-board early in the evening, and had taken to tapping perfunctorily his walnut desk with his little inadequate gavel. And yet he and the older members and the newspaper men would cast occasionally an anxious glance at the clock, and an expectant one at the big doors.

“As I sat there on the old, red lounge under the speaker’s flag-draped canopy, I noticed Henderson of Greene, standing away back under the galleries on the Democratic side, eying the proceedings with the same mysterious stare that had never left him since he had been sworn in. As I have said, I had never spoken to the fellow, but I had always felt a pity for him—he impressed me as a man who had been stunned by repeated raps of bad luck. Along toward the end of the session he had brought his wife up from Greene County to the capital. She had that tired look that country women have. Her face was seamed, her cheeks hollow; her back was bent in a bow, and she walked hurriedly, anxiously along in her flapping skirts beside her tall and somber husband. She had never been away from home before, and the boys had many a laugh over her wonder at the trolley-cars purring along under the maple trees, and her fear of the elevators in the state house—though, for my part, I could see nothing ludicrous in it all. She stayed three or four days and they went everywhere, out to Oak Ridge to see Lincoln’s tomb, over to Eighth Street to visit his old homestead, up to

the Geological Museum where the moth-eaten stuffed animals are, and out to Camp Lincoln. They took many trolley rides, and even climbed to the top of the state house dome, whence, they say, you can see Rochester and the prairies for thirty miles around. He brought her over to the house one or two mornings, but not on to the floor as other members did their over-dressed wives; he sent her up to the gallery, where she sat peering down over the railing at the gang—and her husband, who took no part in all that was going on.

“The old woman’s interest in all these new things that had come into her starved life, her ill-concealed pride in her husband’s membership in such a distinguished body of law-givers, were touching to me, and as I looked at him that last night of the session, and thought of her, the wish to do something to lighten their lives came into my heart, but just then, suddenly, old ’Zeke started from his chair, grasped his gavel firmly, and leaned expectantly over his desk. At the same instant the older members dragged their feet down from their desks and sat bolt upright. The newspaper men flung away their cigarettes and adjusted their eye-glasses. The assistant clerk, who had been reading, looked up from the bill then under what I suppose they would have called consideration, and hurriedly gave his place at the reading-desk to the clerk of the house. I knew what was coming. I knew that the Bailey bill was on its way over from the senate. And I heard Bill Hill call:

“‘Mistah Speakah.’

“At the sound of that voice the uproar in the chamber ceased. It became so still that the silence tingled like a numbness through the body; stiller than it had been any time since nine o’clock that morning, when they had paused for the chaplain to say his prayer. The gang turned around and stood motionless, panting, in its shirt-sleeves, as though a flashlight photograph were to be taken. Half-way down the aisle stood Hill. You know how he would look at such a time, in his long black coat, his wide white shirt bosom with the big diamond, his rolling collar and black string tie, and his long black hair falling to his shoulders. You know how he would love such a moment—and it was his last chance that session. He stood there quietly a whole minute, and then putting a foot forward, said in his great bass voice:

“‘Mistah Speakah.’

“Old ’Zeke rose and said:

“‘Mister Doorkeeper.’

“‘A message from the senate, by its secretary.’

“‘A message from the senate by its secretary,’ repeated ’Zeke, and then Bill had to give way to Sam Pollard, who stepped forth and said:

“‘Mr. Speaker, I am directed to inform the house that the senate has passed senate bill No. 106’—I never shall forget the number of that bill, after all the sleepless nights it caused me, and the anxious mornings scanning the calendar to see if its black figures were there—‘Senate bill No. 106. A bill for an act to amend an act entitled: An Act concerning the exercise of the right of eminent domain, notwithstanding the objections of the governor’—you know the lingo.

“Then, as the speaker said, ‘The clerk will read the message,’ Hen Harvey, who was clerk of the house, stretched his arm over the narrow desk and took the file from the page. The old man was mad when he wrote that veto message, and he gave both houses the devil. I never knew the legislature to get such an unmerciful lamming in my life; it was outrageous, for it was a good bill, and—”

“Ought ter pass,” interjected Jennings, repeating the trite phrase sentimentously.

“But nobody heard it, for when Hen began to read, the gang took a deep breath and began to howl. From both sides of the chamber broke forth a clamor of ‘Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker,’ until in the din even these words were lost, and there was just that long, heavy roar. The boys came over from the senate, for they had done their duty and had done it nobly, in the face of a great storm of criticism, combined with the abuse of the Chicago papers, and they wanted to help lift in the house. And with them came the crowd of reformers from the Municipal League, and stood about with George Herrick, the old man’s private secretary. The reformers, as George pointed out members here and there, and whispered in their ears, supposed that they were doing great things in the fight against the bill, but that was only another time when they deluded their precious selves. They did their reforming chiefly at banquets, but George and the old man knew a thing or two about politics themselves, and George, standing back by the

Democratic cloak-room, smoking his little cigarettes, was directing that fight with the party lash in his hand, and some of the best men on the floor of the house to do his bidding. He was the only private secretary I ever knew who could set an army in the field.

“But through it all old ’Zeke stood there, game as ever, with a hard, cold smile on his face, and you could hear the sharp, monotonous rap of his gavel, rap, rap, rap, neither fast nor slow. The tumult did not die during the reading of that scathing message, and when Hen’s ruined voice ceased, and he rolled the message up again and thrust it in his desk, ’Zeke smashed his gavel down and I heard him say:

“‘Will the house be in order?’

“And it was in order, for ’Zeke knew how to compel order in that bear-pit when he wanted to, and he never raised his voice to do it either, only his eye, and the gavel. And so, when they were quiet, he said: ‘The question is: Shall the house concur with the senate in the passage of senate bill No. 106, notwithstanding the objections of the governor?’

“The house tried to break away from him again, but he held it in his gavel fist, drawing the curb tight, and turned to recognize old Long John Riley, who was standing like a tall tree beside his desk, with his hand upraised.

“‘The gentleman from Cook!’

“‘Mr. Speaker,’ said Riley, ‘I move the previous question.’

“There was another roar, but ’Zeke’s gavel fell, and his eyes blazed black again, and he said:

“‘The gentleman from Cook moves the previous question, and the question is: Shall the main question be now put? Those in favor of this question will say aye’—there was a roar of ayes—‘and those opposed will say no.’ There was a heavier roar of noes, and then came the old cry: ‘Ayes and noes, ayes and noes, Mr. Speaker, ayes and noes, damn you, don’t you dare to shut off debate!’ But ’Zeke only smiled and his gavel cracked—and they were still. Then in the stillness he said:

“‘Gentlemen are as familiar with the rules as is the chair. They are well aware that the chair is powerless to order a roll-call after a *viva voce* vote, unless he is in doubt as to the result, the demand for the yeas and nays not

having been preferred before the question had been put to the house. In this instance'—and the splendid old fellow swung his gavel to his ear, and the smile flickered out of his face—'in this instance the chair is not in doubt. The ayes seem to have it, the ayes have it, and the main question is ordered.' The hammer fell like a bolt, and then calmly leaning on it, his eye traveled around over the turbulent mob, until it lit on George Herrick and his little band of dazed reformers—and I knew he was thinking of the old man over in the mansion whom he hated with an Indian's hate—and as he looked George in the eye, the cold smile came back, and he said:

“The question is: Shall the house concur with the senate in the passage of senate bill No. 106, notwithstanding the objections of the governor. Upon this question those in favor of the bill will vote aye, and those opposed will vote no, when their names are called, and the clerk will call the roll.’ The gavel fell, and the speaker, holding it where it had fallen, leaned half his length over his desk and motioned to Hen Harvey. Hen had taken off his coat and vest and collar—he would call *that* roll himself—and as he unbuttoned his cuffs, inclining his head toward the speaker, 'Zeke yelled in his ear:

“Now, Hen, damn it, call that roll to beat all hell.’

“Then we knew that the Bailey bill fight was on to a finish. We had had our first big battle with the reformers, and were down together in the last ditch. Whenever a bill with something in it is about to pass the legislature, a strange quality steals into the atmosphere, just as there does in the council chamber in Chicago when anything is to be pulled off—don't you know? There is a foreboding, an apprehensiveness, that electrifies the nerves and oppresses the lungs. I felt it there that night. We had had a heavy fight to pass the bill in the first place, and now we had to override a veto! It's hard enough to get the seventy-seven votes that constitute a majority, with the people against you—men are such cowards—but when it comes to rounding up two-thirds—a hundred and two—it's an entirely different problem. We had been working quietly at the thing for days, for we knew the veto was coming, and that the old man would wait until the last night to send it in. We had a hundred and one tried and true men who would stick to the end. The hundred and second was Jim Berry. We had his promise, and believed he would stay in line—though he was afraid of his constituents—for he was poor and in debt.

“Judge Hardin came and sat beside me that we might check them off for ourselves, and Hen began calling the roll:

“‘Allen!’

“‘Aye!’

“‘Ambaugh!’

“‘Aye!’

“‘Anderson!’

“‘Aye!’

“‘Bartly!’

“‘Aye!’

“The leaders, Jamison over on the Republican side, and Riley on the Democratic, sat at their desks, with roll-calls, at which they thoughtfully blew the smoke of their cigars as they checked off the progress of the vote. They appeared as unconcerned as the correspondents. I never can forget the drollery of the wink Jamison gave me as he voted no—it was necessary to have some one who had voted with the majority to move a reconsideration of the vote in case anything happened. ’Zeke did not resume his seat during the roll-call, as the rules permitted him to do, but stood bending over his desk with an alert eye on the cadets. The vote up to this point was propitious, but ’Zeke knew, and Jamison and Riley knew, and Judge Hardin and I knew, and we were not so sanguine as the correspondents, who had already begun to toss sheets of copy to the frowsy telegraph boys, running to and fro between the press gallery and the Western Union. We were chiefly interested just then whether Berry would vote right or not. I was keeping an eye on him and noticed that he was beginning to fidget in his seat, and chew his cigar, and tear paper into little pieces. And the roll-call went on:

“‘Beel!’

“‘Aye!’

“‘Bell!’

“‘No!’

“Bell, of course, was on the other side, and was standing back with George Herrick, keeping their fellows in line and cheering up the reformers from the Municipal League, but we knew his vote would have its effect on Berry, so I pulled the speaker’s coat-tail, and ’Zeke leaned over and whispered hoarsely to the clerk. Hen observed a lengthened pause and then began to call more slowly. Berry was the next name.

“‘Berry!’ Hen drawled.

“There was no reply.

“‘Berry!’

“There was no reply.

“Hen looked long at Berry, and the poltroon sat there with his eyes cast down, rolling his cigar around and around in his mouth, tearing up his little flakes of paper, and swinging from side to side in his chair. Then Hen called the next name:

“‘Briggs!’

“‘No!’ he voted, and Berry looked up for the first time since the bill had come over from the senate. ’Zeke rapped fiercely with his gavel, and Hen paused. Then ’Zeke said sharply:

“‘The chair is compelled again to call the attention of gentlemen to rule three, which prohibits smoking in the hall of the house. The chair dislikes to be compelled to repeat this admonition so frequently, and trusts that gentlemen will observe the injunction without additional suggestion. The clerk will proceed with the calling of the roll.’ And he smashed the broken sounding-board again with his gavel. We needed time. Some of the members laughed, but that only gave ’Zeke a chance to gain more time by rapping for order. We feared the effect, however, on discipline. Then he called Brisbane, one of our fellows, and he didn’t vote. I grew uneasy, and Judge Hardin was squirming there beside me on the lounge. When I thought of Berry I grew mad, and wondered if we could save the bill without him. At that instant my eye happened to light upon Henderson of Greene. He was standing under the gallery just as he had been standing all evening. He seemed not to have moved. He had his hands clasped awkwardly behind him, and was chewing his tobacco contemplatively. And here was my chance! I thought of the pathetic biography in the house directory. I thought

of his wife as I had seen the poor old thing going around town with him the week before. I thought of the way he had worked and toiled for her and all those children, and how little life held for him. If I could get him for the bill in Berry's place, the Chicago people, I knew, would be liberal with him, and he could go back home better off in a financial way than when he came. And so I motioned to Burke, and when he came up I told him to ask the gentleman from Greene to meet me at once in the speaker's room, and I retired to await him. Presently, in his clumsy way, he shuffled in. He came close up to me, and when I had given the poor devil a cigar he bent over to hear what I might have to say. I asked him how he was going to vote on the bill, and he said he thought he would vote against it, inasmuch as the governor had said it was a bad piece of legislation. Well, there was no time to discuss that phase of the question.

“‘Look here, comrade,’ I said, ‘this is a bill that concerns Chicago alone—it does not affect and can not affect you or your constituents one way or the other, can it?’

“‘No,’ he said; ‘reckon not.’

“‘They don't even know down in Greene County that there is such a bill, do they?’

“‘Reckon not,’ he said, ‘leastways I hain't heerd ary one say nothin' 'bout it.’

“‘Of course you haven't,’ I said, ‘and what's more, you never will. Now, see here,’ I said, ‘I'll be quite frank with you, for I like you’—he cast a strange, sidling glance at me, distrustful, like all farmers—‘for I like you,’ I said, ‘and I want to do something for you. The men who are promoting this legislation have exactly enough votes to pass it over the governor's veto, and it's going to pass. On this ballot they will have just ninety-one votes—one of their men will vote against it to move a reconsideration if necessary, and about ten will not vote. When the absentees are called, these ten will vote for the bill, and on the verification, you'll see others tumbling into the band-wagon. Now, your vote is not needed, as you see, and, cast for the bill or against it, can have no appreciable effect upon the result. The bill will pass without your vote, and you can not defeat it, for the hundred and two will stand firm in the end. One of them, however—it is Berry, I don't mind telling you—is trying, at the last minute, to force us into raising his price.

You can take his place, you can have his price of the easy money with his raise added, if you will go out there and vote for the bill.’

“He stood looking at the floor, ruminating.

“‘I know, Henderson,’ I continued, ‘that you are a poor man, that you have a large family, that you have to work hard for a living. You are going home to-morrow, maybe not to come back here any more, and you can go if you wish, with three thousand dollars clean, cold cash in your pocket. What do you say?’

“The old man turned his face away and began to fumble with his horny fingers at his chin. His hand trembled as with a palsy. We could hear the roll-call going on outside:

“‘Donavin!’

“‘Aye!’

“‘Donnelly!’

“‘Aye!’

“‘Evans!’

“‘No!’

“‘Finerty!’

“‘Aye!’

“‘Fitzmeyer!’

“‘Aye!’

“‘Flanigan!’

“‘Aye!’

“‘Hear them?’ I said. ‘It’s nearly up to you—what do you say?’

“The old man’s lips quivered, and his calloused fingers grated in his beard. He opened his lips to speak, but his jaw moved helplessly. And we heard Hen’s voice back there in the house calling—calling so that you could have heard him over in the Leland bar-room:

“‘Geisbach!’

“No!”

“He is one of those who will change,” I said.

“Giger!”

“There was no response. ‘He’ll be all right when they call the absentees,’ I said.

“Gordon!”

“No!”

“Griesheimer!”

“Aye!”

“Hear them?” I asked. The H’s came next, and the old man, still fumbling with his chin, and without turning his head began to talk:

“Baldwin,” he said, ‘you’re right. I am a poor man. I have a wife an’ eight children. To-morrow I’m goin’ back home, an’ o’ Monday I’m goin’ to hunt a job—hunt a job in the harves’ field. I’ve worked hard all my life. I ’spect to work hard all my life. I’ll keep on huntin’ jobs in the harves’ fields. I’ll probably die in the poor-house. I’ll be buried in the potter’s field. God knows what’ll become of that woman and them children.’

“He nodded his head as in assent to an indisputable proposition, and his eyes widened as if in fright. They were looking down the barren years before him, and I felt in that moment glad of my power to brighten them.

“Hallen!” we heard Hen call.

“No!”

“Henderson of Effingham.”

“Aye!”

“The old man straightened out his long, lank figure, and then suddenly he turned and looked me in the eyes.

“But, Baldwin,” he said, ‘I come here last January an honest man, and to-morrow I’m goin’ back, back to ol’ Greene, back to my people, back to that woman an’ them children, an’ Baldwin’—he gulped the word—‘Baldwin, I’m goin’ back an honest man.’

“‘Henderson of Greene!’ Hen’s voice called, and the old man stalked into the corridor and thundered ‘No!’ in a trumpet note.”

The lobbyist ceased. The train had stopped at Chenoa, and they could hear the breathing of the engine, breathing as a living thing when it rests. The noise ceased presently, and the silence of the wide country night ensued. They heard only the notes that came from the throats of frogs, and the strident drumming of the cicadæ. Baldwin looked at the two politicians, expecting some comment. The oscitant Healy looked out of the window, into the vast darkness brooding over the prairie town. Jennings sat meditatively pulling at his moist mustache, an expression of perplexity in his countenance, the wrinkles of increasing concentration of mind gathering in his brow. Presently, without a word, he rose and left the compartment. When he returned he was treading in his stockings, his coat and waistcoat and collar had been removed, his suspenders were hanging at his hips. He was evidently preparing for his berth. Baldwin meanwhile had pressed a button, and sent Gentry, the aged porter, now in white jacket, for his bag, and laid out on the seat beside him his pajamas, and a traveler’s case filled with silver toilet articles. Jennings lifted his own big valise to his knees, and from its depths drew a bottle, wrapped heavily in a newspaper. He held one of the heavy little glasses under the faucet of the water-cooler, and allowed the water to trickle into it. Then, peeling back the paper from his bottle, he took a long pull from its naked neck, and passed it to Baldwin. As he did so, his brows still knotted in perplexity, he asked:

“What’d you say that feller’s name was?”

“Henderson.”

“Henderson of Greene, eh?”

“Yes.”

Jennings threw back his head and tilted the water, deadly cold from the ice and tasting of smoke, into his throat, and when he had rinsed his mouth, he said, with the happy expression of a man who has resolved a doubt:

“Oah, yes, John Henderson, of Greene. He lived out at Rabb’s Corners. Yes, that’s him; the governor ’p’inted him public administrator of Greene County right after that session.”

The train lurched, and Jennings, bracing himself, wrapped up his bottle and stowed it carefully away in his valise. And swinging the valise in one hand and with the other hitching up his trousers, now beginning to drag at his heels, he stepped away in his stockinged feet to his berth.

Baldwin began to wind his watch, and the Limited, with its three hundred tons, and its tossing heads full of the schemes of politics, went careering away on its paper wheels toward the capital of Illinois.

## SENATE BILL 578

HE was a page in the Illinois legislature—"House Page No. 7," the bright metal badge on the lapel of his little coat said—and all day long he heard nothing but "Here, boy!" from city members, or "Hey, bub!" from country members, or "Hi, there, kid!" from the other pages, or "Get a move on you, Seven!" as the chief page snapped his fingers at him in his lordly way. His real name was James, but he never heard that, now that his father was dead. His mother called him Jamie.

Jamie was kept very busy and yet he enjoyed his legislative duties. He felt that it was a big thing to help, even in his humble little way, to make laws for all the people in the state. It was pretty important, for instance, to carry a paper from some member up to the clerk's desk, for after the clerk had read it, on three different days, and the house had voted on it and passed it, and after it had been read on three different days and passed by the senate, and after the governor had read it and thought over it as he walked back and forth between the executive mansion and the state house, and had written his name on it, it became a law, and everybody in the state had to obey it or go to jail.

The people were called constituents, they seemed to be divided up among all the members of the legislature; everybody in the state house had his constituents. Jamie felt that, as a legislator, he should have some constituents, but he couldn't decide who his constituents were, and he didn't like to ask anybody. But finally he thought of his mother, and when he told her that she was his constituent she took his little face between her two hands and kissed him and pressed her cheek to his. Her cheek was moist with tears.

If everybody in the state house had been as good to his constituents as Jamie, Illinois would have been a very happy place in which to live. When his father died, Jamie's mother had to take in sewing and to work hard to keep things going. She was sad much of the time, and always looked tired, and this made Jamie sad. He longed to help her, but he did not know what to do. Then a friend of theirs, Mr. Woodbridge, said he could get Jamie a

place in the house as a page boy—they always say “page boy” in the legislature—and one morning Jamie’s mother dressed him in his Sunday suit and sent him up to the state house with Mr. Woodbridge.

And so he became a page. He was paid a dollar and a half a day. Every twenty days the payrolls were made out, and Jamie would go down to the treasury, sign his name in a big, round hand, “James Horn,” and then proudly take home to his mother thirty dollars in fresh, crisp, green bills! His mother had wished him to stay in school, but, of course, being a page was better than going to school. There were no books to study, and then you got out so much earlier every day! And more than all, you couldn’t take home money from school!

The house met every morning at ten o’clock, and after the speaker had taken his place under the canopy where the beautiful flag was draped, and had rapped for order, and the chaplain had prayed, the clerk would call the roll for the introduction of bills. This was Jamie’s busiest time. Everybody would have bills to introduce or petitions from his constituents to present, and for an hour Jamie would be scampering up and down the aisles between the members’ desks and the clerk’s desk. But after that he had a breathing spell, and could sit on the speaker’s steps and whisper to the speaker’s page, or look about over the house and watch the members. There were grave members from the country districts with long whiskers and steel-bowed spectacles, there were city members with fancy vests and diamonds, there were Irish members and German members, there was a Polish member named Kumaszynski, and there was a negro member, who sat away back on the Republican side almost under the galleries, and was very quiet, and wore black clothes and gold eye-glasses.

But there was one whom Jamie liked above all the others. He was tall, with smiling blue eyes that saw everything, and though his black hair was patched with gray at the temples, his face was that of a young man, clean-shaven and ruddy. He was a Chicago member and the most fashionably dressed man in the house—he wore a different suit of clothes every day. He was a lawyer and his name was Bronson Meredith. Jamie loved him the first time he ever saw him, and whenever Mr. Meredith clapped his hands Jamie would spring to his side before any other page had started, and if by chance Mr. Meredith ever gave a resolution or a bill to any of the other boys Jamie felt a twinge of jealousy at his heart.

Sometimes he would loiter an instant beside Mr. Meredith's desk, and a smile from him made Jamie happy all that day. Jamie longed to touch him with his hand, but dared not. The only thing he could do was to pat Mr. Meredith's overcoat, with its soft, silken lining, as it hung on its hook in the cloak-room. At night, lying in his bed, Jamie would close his eyes and see Mr. Meredith standing beside his desk, his lips slightly parted in a smile, showing his white teeth and replying so sharply to members who interrupted him that they would shoot down into their seats with red faces and all the other members would laugh, while Mr. Meredith, raising his hand, would go on with his speech, saying:

“Now, Mr. Speaker, as I was about to remark when I yielded to the perplexing question of the distinguished gentleman from Pike—”

Mr. Meredith was not often on his feet, as they say in legislative bodies, but when he took part in a debate all the other members kept still and listened with their hands behind their ears, which they didn't do when any one else spoke. Mr. Meredith was a leader—many called him a reformer. Jamie decided that when he grew up he would be a lawyer, a leader and a reformer.

Now, when the session was about over there was a bill in the house which almost all the Chicago members hoped to see made into a law; but Mr. Meredith was against it. The country members, too, for the most part, were against the bill, and Jamie noticed that when it first came over from the senate there was a stir in the house, and that every time it came up, after that, all the members would rush in from the cloak-rooms, or the lobbies, or the supreme court library, or the rotunda of the state house, to speak about it and to vote on it.

Jamie did not understand the bill, or know what it was for; he only knew that it was something about a franchise in Chicago, and that every week a party of rich-looking gentlemen would come down to Springfield and stand about in the house, or sit on the big red lounge behind the speaker's chair, and whisper and try to get men to vote for it.

And Jamie knew, too, that it was called senate bill No. 578; he impressed that number firmly on his mind and could never forget it. He soon observed that on any day when he saw S. B. 578 on the calendar—which is a kind of program printed every morning to tell what bills are coming up—Mr.

Meredith would be on his feet and make motions and speeches, and that the gentlemen on the speaker's red lounge would scowl at him and the other city members try to answer him. And Jamie noticed that Mr. Meredith always succeeded in having the bill referred back to some committee, or did something to keep it from becoming a law.

Jamie read the newspapers now and then. He always turned first to the base-ball news—the season was just opening—and then to the legislative news, although he never read that as carefully as he did the base-ball news. Often he saw Mr. Meredith's name in the types—the papers said he was making a gallant fight against the franchise grab. Jamie hoped with all his soul that Mr. Meredith would win in that fight; not, of course, that he cared about the franchise grab—he had, like many older persons, very hazy ideas about that—but he always wished to see Mr. Meredith win.

The spring had come, and as the legislature usually ends early in June, and the work was piling up, the house was meeting at nine o'clock in the morning. The house adjourned every Friday at noon, in order that the members might go home over Sunday, and it didn't meet again until Monday afternoon at five o'clock, and then only for a few minutes. The members who had gone home did not get back until Tuesday morning, and there were never many there Monday afternoon, not even a quorum, and it was always understood that nothing was to be done at that session. The chaplain prayed, the journal of Friday's session was read and approved, and the house adjourned until Tuesday morning.

But one Monday afternoon when Jamie reached the hall of the house he was surprised to find a big body of members there—almost all the Chicago members except Mr. Meredith. Those rich gentlemen were there, too, sitting on the speaker's red lounge. Jamie looked for Mr. Meredith—he was not there. He thought instantly of senate bill 578—something was up! They were going to try to pass senate bill 578—that was why the gentlemen were there on the speaker's red lounge; that was why the Chicago members had come down to Springfield on the Monday afternoon train instead of waiting for the Monday night train. Jamie was worried.

It was a balmy spring day with a sky blue and tender, and a soft wind that wafted strange sweet country smells about, smells that filled Jamie with

dreamy longings and a kind of pleasant sadness. The speaker gently tapped with his gavel; the good old chaplain rose and spread out his white hands.

“O Lord,” he prayed, “we thank Thee that the winter is past, that the rain is over and gone, that the flowers appear upon the earth, that the time of the singing of birds is come.”

The words stole sweetly in upon Jamie’s soul. He sat on the steps, looking out of the open windows at the tender young leaves of the maple trees—it was just the way he used to look out of the open windows in school before vacation came, when he thought of the swimming-hole out at Sycamore and of going barefooted. It was all so calm and peaceful. But with the chaplain’s “Amen!” the speaker’s gavel cracked and the buzzing noise peculiar to the house began again. And Jamie awoke from his reveries with a start. He had heavier things to think of now; he was almost a man; he was in the legislature. Senate bill 578 was on its third reading, the gang was present, and Mr. Meredith had not come. Jamie was troubled, and sighed. He must attend to his duties—he must do something.

Jamie looked over all the faces before him; nowhere could he find one man he could trust as a friend of Mr. Meredith.

He glanced at the door with a lingering hope that Mr. Meredith would appear, but of course he did not come. Then Jamie slowly hitched down the speaker’s stairs, a step at a time, and, reaching the floor, slipped over by the reporters’ boxes—empty that afternoon, for the correspondents, like the legislators, never returned until Tuesday morning—and thence into the side aisle, under the gallery, and to the cloak-room. There he got his cap, looked longingly at Mr. Meredith’s hook, empty now, with no satin-lined overcoat for him to nestle lovingly against for a blissful second, and then he went out into the hall under the huge dome. No one, of course, observed a mere page boy, but Jamie felt, as he clicked his hurrying little heels across the marble floors, that something was about to poke him in his cold, unprotected back—the fear of a rear attack that boyhood inherits from its far-distant savage ancestry. Jamie didn’t take the elevator, or the grand staircase, but reached the main floor by leaping two steps at a time down a narrow side stairway, unused and dark.

Then he flew out of the east entrance, ran down the wide walk and on up Capitol Avenue for four long blocks—ran as fast as he could pump his little

short legs to the hotel where he knew Mr. Meredith lived when he was at the capital. But Jamie had no hope of finding him there that afternoon. He went to the hotel simply because he did not know where else to go—that was all. Rushing into the hotel and up to the clerk's desk, he put his chin over its edge and, as the clerk leaned down with his face almost in Jamie's face, the boy panted:

“Is—now—Honorable Bronson Meredith in?”

The clerk smiled and Jamie blushed, fearing the clerk was making fun of him. And his heart sank—he might have known Mr. Meredith was not in.

“Whom did you say?” asked the clerk.

“Honorable Bronson Meredith—the gentleman from Cook—”

The clerk was knitting his brows, though the wrinkles about his lips were twitching as if he found it hard to keep them from rippling out into smiles. Jamie thought the clerk was wonderfully stupid not to know such a great man as Mr. Meredith, and he added, in order to jog the man's memory a little:

“You know—the reformer.”

The clerk straightened up, placed his hands on his hips, threw back his head and laughed. Jamie stared at him with wide eyes—he saw nothing to laugh at, especially when senate bill 578 was coming up. Presently the clerk took one of his hands from his side and dropped it on the big bell beside the register, and as it clanged out in the empty lobby, he shouted in his laughing voice:

“Front!”

A bell-boy in buttons slid to the desk just as a page boy does in the house when a member claps his hands. The bell-boy and Jamie looked each other all over from head to toe in the instant they stood there facing each other, and the clerk began:

“Go see if Mr. Meredith—”

And just then a tall form appeared around the corner of a wall, and Jamie looked up.

It was Mr. Meredith himself, as smiling as the spring, with a bunch of violets in the lapel of his new light coat. Jamie sprang at him.

“Oh, Mr. Meredith,” he exclaimed, raising his clasped hands almost appealingly, “come—quick! Come quick!”

“Why, what’s the matter?” said Mr. Meredith, halting in surprise.

“They’ve got senate bill 578 up!”

Mr. Meredith’s eyes opened; his face lost its mild expression.

“What do you know about senate bill 578?”

Jamie took him by the coat—he dared at last to lay hands on his sacred person—and tugged as he said:

“Oh, honest—Mr. Meredith—honest—cross my heart they have—you’ll be too late!”

Mr. Meredith looked at the pleading lad closely, and then suddenly exclaimed:

“Oh, yes! You’re one of the page boys.” And then he ran as fast as he could through the lobby, down the steps and across the sidewalk, Jamie after him.

“Come on!” cried Mr. Meredith, as he stooped to plunge into a carriage at the curb, dragging Jamie in after him, and shouting to the driver:

“The state house—fast as you can drive!”

The driver whirled his carriage about in Sixth Street, and as Mr. Meredith drew in his head and slammed the heavy door he shouted:

“Faster there—I’ll double your fare!”

The carriage lurched around the corner, the lash of the driver’s whip writhed in the air, and the horses went galloping with the rattling old hack down Capitol Avenue. And as the carriage pitched and rocked Jamie was supremely happy—he had done what he could, and, better than all, he was sitting beside Mr. Meredith and actually riding in the same hack with him!

Mr. Meredith was silent until the carriage whirled into the state house grounds and the horses, breathing heavily, were plunging up the driveway toward the north portico. Then he turned and said:

“How’d they know I was in town?”

Jamie looked up in surprise.

“Who?” he said.

“Why,” replied Mr. Meredith, “whoever sent you.”

Jamie felt hurt.

“But no one sent me, Mr. Meredith,” he said; “I just came.”

“And how did you know I was here?”

“I guessed.”

Mr. Meredith was thoughtful for an instant and then said:

“But why did you come?”

Jamie blushed.

“I—I—I—now—” he stammered. “I don’t like to tell.” And he hid his face against Mr. Meredith’s sleeve.

The carriage stopped, the driver leaped from his box and flung open the door. Mr. Meredith sprang out, leaped up the stone steps, ran down the corridors, dashed into the elevator and was shot up to the third floor. Jamie had been compelled to run faster than he ever did in his life to keep up with him. He was nearly pinched by the iron door of the elevator as the man slid it shut.

But he was close at Mr. Meredith’s heels when he ran into the house. The few senators, having just concluded a perfunctory Monday afternoon session over in their more or less solemn chamber, were bustling into the hall of the house, evidently expecting something of interest to occur. They pressed by the doorkeeper, and as they entered Jamie heard the speaker cry:

“The gentleman from Cook asks unanimous consent to have senate bill 578 taken up out of the regular order, read at large a third time, and put upon its passage. Are there any objections?”

The speaker raised his gavel, waited an instant, and said:

“The chair hears—”

But suddenly a voice beside Jamie rang out like a bugle:

“Object!”

The speaker looked up in amazement. The members of the gang turned about in their seats with startled, guilty faces; the rich gentlemen on the speaker’s red lounge leaned forward with pained expressions. Mr. Meredith was striding down the center aisle, his hat in his hand, his face red, his eyes on fire.

Half-way down the aisle he halted, and once more shouted in that fearless note:

“I object! A million people in Chicago to-night are waiting to hear from this house on this franchise bill—I dare you to take it up in this star-chamber session!”

Mr. Meredith’s hand swept a wide arc that included the whole house as he flung his defiance, and then he stood glaring at them all. The eyes that met Mr. Meredith’s eyes quailed; the house was still. No one rose, no one replied to him.

Then after a long minute of this painful silence the speaker, lowering his head until Jamie could not see his face, said in a low voice:

“Objections are heard.”

And so the franchise grab bill was not taken up that day after all.

The session was very short after that, and when the house adjourned Mr. Meredith went down to the speaker’s dais. The speaker looked up as if he thought Mr. Meredith was coming to speak to him, but Mr. Meredith stopped at the steps, and taking Jamie’s little hand he pressed it in his own big palm and said:

“Come with me.”

It was the proudest moment of Jamie’s life as he walked out of the noisy chamber, through the crowd of angry, baffled members, past the staring pages, by the wondering doorkeepers, and so on out into the rotunda. They walked down the great white staircase, and as they were passing around the polished brass railing of the balcony on the second floor Mr. Meredith said, as if suddenly reminded of something:

“Beg your pardon, but what’s your name?”

“James Horn,” replied Jamie.

They kept on and Jamie wondered where they were going, until they turned into the governor’s offices. Jamie’s heart leaped suddenly. Surely this was a day of big surprises, thought he.

“Is the governor in?” Mr. Meredith asked of the governor’s private secretary.

“Yes—just go right in, Mr. Meredith,” and in another instant Jamie was standing beside Mr. Meredith in the presence of the governor.

The governor rose as they entered, and looked first at Mr. Meredith, then lowered his kind blue eyes and fixed them on Jamie.

“Governor,” said Mr. Meredith, “I wish to present my little friend, Master James Horn.”

The governor bowed, took Jamie’s hand in his own and said in his soft voice:

“I’m very glad to meet you, Master Horn, I’m sure.”

Jamie felt himself tingle all through at the governor’s words.

“Master Horn, Governor,” continued Mr. Meredith, “is a page boy in the house, and to-day, when we were all caught napping, he saved the franchise bill from becoming a law.”

The governor, looking a question at Mr. Meredith, said:

“Ah?”

“Yes,” answered Mr. Meredith, and then, when the governor had motioned them to take seats, and Jamie had worked and wiggled himself away back into a deep leather chair, with his legs and feet sticking straight out in front of him, Mr. Meredith told the governor the whole story. When he had done, the governor rose and went over to where Jamie sat in the big chair, his arms stretched along the chair’s arms.

Jamie would have wiggled out of the chair, but he had not time to do so. And then, as he looked up into the grave, kind face, His Excellency, speaking very seriously, said:

“My boy, you have done the people of Chicago and the people of Illinois a great service—a service you will understand some day—and now, on their behalf, I wish to thank you for it.”

## MACOCHEE'S FIRST CAMPAIGN FUND

SQUIRE GODDARD had been renominated as mayor of Macochee for the fifth time, and for three weeks had played his customary checker games with the firemen in the town hall, serene in the conviction that he could not fail of reëlection. Then suddenly he awakened to the fact that he had been the victim of a gum-shoe campaign. Election was but a week off, and something had to be done. So they raised a campaign fund. Now, Macochee, in that day, had never had a campaign fund. The state committee never put any money into Gordon County, even in a presidential year. The Republicans didn't have to, and the Democrats knew better. The local candidates, of course, had little expenses of their own—for cigars, for carriages when there were township meetings out in the little red school-house, for printing the tickets (in the days before we had the Australian ballot), and for Ganson's hack to use at the polls on election day, but they were stingy in these things. Macochee and Gordon County always went right, anyhow. Joe Boyle, Captain Bishop, Major Turner, old Bill Williams and John Ernest had been parceling the fat offices in the court-house among themselves ever since the war, and all a county convention ever had to do was to renominate the old ticket, and it went through in November without a scratch. Sometimes, because of curious constitutional prejudices against a county treasurer succeeding himself, they had to run Captain Bishop for county clerk, and let old Bill Williams have the treasury, but it only meant, after all, changing the combination a little, and beyond the trouble of moving some favorite old desk chairs, which had molded themselves to rheumatic backs, from one side of the court-house to the other, the ring remained undisturbed in that ancient, life-giving pile. Of course they had to find a new candidate for prosecuting attorney every six years, but, fortunately, the crop of young lawyers is one that never fails, whatever party is in power down in Washington.

And so, among a virgin electorate, the advent of a campaign fund was an impressive event. The people felt that they had entered upon a new era in their political life, just as they did when the council bought the new fire apparatus and began to agitate the question of bonding the town for water-

works—a proposition, by the way, upon which the leading citizens sat down quickly enough, because it meant taxes—while the line of loafers leaning against the court-house fence increased, waiting for the distribution. They had vague notions about a campaign fund in Macochee. The amount was reputed to be five hundred dollars, and, technically, it was in the custody of the court-house ring, but as they had never had a campaign fund to disburse before, and could not decide how to proceed, it was temporarily locked in the county treasurer's vault, where, not being interest on the public moneys, it was comparatively safe. Meanwhile they were sticking closer than brothers. They would not allow one of their number out of their sight. They went to their meals in relays, and held night sessions in the treasury, losing sleep and rest, so that all their latent diseases, rheumatics, phthisis, lumbago, gravel, and so on, were aggravated. They became cross, jealous and suspicious, full of envy, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, back-biters, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things. They swore as they had not sworn since the battle of Port Republic. They cursed each other, they cursed Horace Goddard, and when these subjects failed, they cursed young Halliday.

Young Halliday was at the bottom of all the deviltry in Macochee. He had not been out of Harvard a month before all the good people in the town were wagging their heads sadly and saying: "Tsck! Tsck! Tsck!" He parted his hair in the middle. He brought home a habit of dropping his r's, and of pronouncing his a's with a broad accent, as, for instance, when he said "rawther;" he smoked cigarettes, puffed a heavy brier pipe, wore red neckties and knickerbockers, and he drank beer. And he did something else, something that struck the moral fiber of the town on the raw. He changed his politics and became a Democrat!

Being a Democrat in Macochee is like being a Republican in Alabama. There are hardly enough Democrats in Macochee—outside of the fifth ward, which is Irish—to hold primaries, and they always have mass conventions to hide their political nakedness. Hank Defrees, the only Democratic lawyer in Macochee, insisted that conventions were necessary in order to keep up the party organization. He liked to go over to Columbus every two years as delegate to the state convention. It afforded him an outing and a chance at the whisky in the Neil House. Besides, it is something to go to the state convention with the solid vote of any county,

even Gordon, in your vest pocket. The local Democrats humored Hank. He had been their only available timber for Common Pleas judge and prosecuting attorney, and he had been sacrificed on the altar of his party times enough, surely, to entitle him to whatever there was in sight.

But George Halliday had been reared a Republican. His father had been an Abolitionist, the friend of Salmon P. Chase, and his home had been known in its time as one of the stations of the underground railway. He had voted for John C. Fremont, and he had voted a straight Republican ticket ever since. George had responded to these home influences sympathetically, and had given early promise of that vital interest in politics for which Ohio mothers ardently look in their sons. His first experience in politics was in 1876, when he took an active part in the Hayes-Tilden campaign, crying after the little Catholic boys from the parochial school, on his homeward way at evening:

“Fried rats and pickled cats,  
Are good enough for Democrats.”

And once he marched with a party of his playmates in a torchlight procession, under a transparency which announced exultantly:

“Hurrah for Hayes! He’s the man!  
If we can’t vote, our daddies can!”

That was a fine campaign, extending far beyond autumn, and during the long winter evenings he had been allowed to sit up, sometimes until after nine o’clock, to hear his father read in the Cincinnati *Gazette*, of the bloody deeds of the Ku-Klux Klan. The strange, cabalistic words froze the very blood in his veins. At night he would hear the drumming of horses’ hoofs, and see white-sheeted forms galloping by in the gloom. Sometimes they halted and looked at him through big black eyeholes.

These were the Ku-Klux, and he was afraid, until the evening his father came home radiant, sat down to the supper table with a smile that gave a fine cheer to the room and said:

“Well, we got Hayes in.”

Later, when he was in the high school, he became a member of the Blaine and Logan marching club, wore a red oilcloth cape and carried a torch. As he trudged along Macochee’s streets, strangely unfamiliar in the darkness,

breathing the smoke of the flaring torches, intoxicated by the tired throbbing of the bass drum, he would shout in unison with the hoarse voices of excited men:

“Blaine—Blaine,  
James—G.—Blaine!”

Then the procession, debouching into the Square, was swallowed up by the crowd; nothing remained of it but extinguished reeking torches scattered here and there among the thousands of restless heads. George wriggled his way up to the festooned band stand, he saw the pale speakers and the countless vice-presidents—his father was one of the vice-presidents—and he listened to the inspiring song of the Glee Club:

“Dinna ye hear the slogan,  
Jimmy Blaine and Johnny Logan?  
The plumed knight and warrior bold  
Are bound to gain the day.  
The golden gates are creaking  
While the Yankee boys are speaking,  
And the Johnnies are retreating,  
For we’re bound to gain the day.”

His eyes had been blurred by the tears, his heart had ached with the secret pain of patriotism. He had registered sweet vows; he never could forget—and yet, now, just as his education was complete and he was ready to enter upon his career, just as the new sign of the new firm of Halliday and Halliday, attorneys-at-law, was swinging at the foot of the stairs in the People’s National Bank block, he had turned Democrat. It was a sore subject at home. He and his father no longer discussed the tariff question. Mrs. Halliday said it made her nervous, as it might anybody.

That winter Halliday did nothing more serious than to attend a Catholic fair in Father Hennessey’s church, and make a speech awarding the prize some one had won in the raffle. But in the spring, Hank Defrees, loafing around among the boys, told them the thing to do was to nominate George for mayor on the Democratic ticket, and it was done. When old Horace Goddard heard of the nomination, he chuckled until his great belly shook, and actually invited Captain Bishop and the rest of the boys, who had gathered at the post-office to wait for the seven o’clock mail, around to

Cramer's drug store to have a drink. The cronies all laughed as they drank—though they said, with soberness, that they felt sorry for old Judge Halliday himself.

It was a cruel thing to do, and it was young Halliday's idea alone. He was a youth with aspirations, and he saw in the nomination something more than the mere compliment Hank Defrees had intended. Therefore Squire Goddard's checker game was interrupted by a black-coated delegation of Protestant clergymen. It was a Monday morning, and they must have come straight from preachers' meeting with their impudent questions. They wanted to know whether or not it was true that the liquor laws had not been enforced, and how he stood on the saloon question generally. The old squire puffed profusely and made promises. The next day a committee of saloon-keepers was called. The old man blew out his varicose cheeks and sputtered:

"I've ran for mayor o' this 'ere town now goin' on five times, and I'm dog *damned* if I ever heerd such a lot o' fool questions before!"

The next day it was rumored that Father Hennessey had told his parishioners that Squire Goddard could not be trusted. Then the storm broke. The W. C. T. U. held a mass meeting and issued an appeal to save the boys. That night husbands were put on the rack of domestic inquisition. They had it pointed out to them that there was a drunkard in every fifth family—statistics proved it—and parents didn't want their boys exposed any longer to such temptations. No one knew where the statistical lightning was going to strike.

"Suppose you want to intrust the regulation of the rum power to the Democrats, do you?" sneered the husbands, with ironical grunts, thereby moving the previous question and closing the debate. Nevertheless, after that the mayor was kept busy explaining, which is the direst necessity that can befall a candidate. He encountered Halliday in the Square one day, and blazed forth:

"You're gittin' too smart 'round this town all to onct, young feller. You know more'n your pap a'ready, an' if he can't l'arn ye no respec' fer yer elders, I will." He shook a palsied fist at the youth, as he added, in a tone almost pitiable: "An' I'll tell him jest what you done, too."

Defeat might have killed the old man, and the campaign was beginning to tell on him. But when they raised the fund, it was as a hot and sweetened toddy to warm the cockles of his heart. While he had no adequate concept of it, and while the manner of its working was a mystery to him, he did not doubt its efficacy. He felt safe. Also, as the subject of the only campaign fund Gordon County had ever known, he felt a supreme importance, which swelled out his chest and filled him with a ripe content. He even found himself taking the opposition with some zest, now that it was certain to be non-effective. Three days more, thought the squire, and it would be all over. He imagined some sort of civic triumph for himself. He dreamed of a serenade by the Macochee Silver Cornet Band, in the evening, under the shade of the pine trees about his home. He dramatized himself as bowing and smiling on the front porch. He would go out just as he was, in his shirt-sleeves and slippers, his silver-bowed spectacles on his nose, and the Cincinnati paper in his hand. It would be thus more spontaneous, more democratic. Mandy would stand behind him, holding the lamp high. The front picket fence would be black with people. He wondered if there would be enough of the campaign fund left to provide the cake she must offer the band boys, and whether a part of its office was to meet such contingencies. So the old squire sat in his old chair, the split bottom of which had been worn shiny years ago, and smoked his old pipe, with sharp, dry puffs of contentment.

The squire looked forward to disbursing the fund himself, but the courthouse ring still clung to it in indecision. Friday morning, when they met, election was but three days off, and the ring agreed that they must get down to business. Major Turner said, with profound wisdom, that money could be used to best advantage in the saloons. Charley Bassett—he was prosecuting attorney then—asked, with a lawyer's passion for fine distinctions, in what sense the major employed the word "used." Before the major could reply—he had knit his brows and was whittling a fresh chew from his plug, to irrigate his thought—old Bill Williams said:

"No, that won't do; we must use it to get out the vote."

"Well," said Bassett, who always annoyed the old fellows with his young haggling, "how'll you get out the vote?"

The auditor, with an effort at something definite, said:

“Why, we must have organization—that’s what wins in elections these days.” He shook his head, in a keen triumph, for the phrase pleased him, as phrases do please politicians. He began to conceive himself—gladly, as a great political leader, as an organizer of victory. “Organization, that’s the word,” he persisted, and then, growing bolder, he brought his fist down on his fat knee, and plunged on heedlessly into detail.

“You just give me that fund,” he said, “and I’ll—I’ll show you,” he brought up lamely.

“Well, tell us how you’d spend it,” insisted Bassett. “What’d you buy first? Remember, election’s only next Tuesday.”

“Why, why,” hesitated Williams, “I’d spend it gittin’ out the vote. I’d git kerriages, and have signs painted to hang on the horses, readin’,” and he lined the imaginary letters on the rough palm of his left hand with the gnarled forefinger of his right, “Republican City Committee—Vote for Goddard.”

The old squire, tickled with the sound of the last legend, broke in with:

“You’ve got the idee, Billy.”

“Course,” said Williams, expanding more and more, “I seen ’em that way when I was in Columbus onct, on ’lection day. Get about five good two-horse kerriages—”

But the captious Bassett, remembering that old Bill’s son-in-law, Hi Wellman, kept the livery stable, interrupted him by saying:

“Oh, that wouldn’t cost more’n twenty dollars, and, anyway, we can use our own buggies, same as we’ve always done.”

Captain Bishop, who had been carefully combing his whiskers with his fingers, then advanced his scheme.

“Seems to me,” he said, “that we’d ought to have a campaign committee, with a treasur’ and a finance committee, and let the treasur’ pay out only on warrants drawn by the finance committee—then there’d be no question.”

“No, there’d be no question,” said Bassett cynically, “there’d be no question. And the finance committee could draw warrants for their own arrest, while they’re about it.”

The ring gasped, and though the captain tried to say something about business methods, they were all silent for a long time, chewing their tobacco gravely and thoughtfully, until the squire nervously ventured to ask:

“But what do you think we’d best spend it fer?”

“Votes,” said Bassett laconically.

“That’s surely what we want,” said Judge Ernest, speaking for the first time. The old men in the circle wheeled toward the probate judge. They had not been surprised at what Bassett said, for he never attended service, and was reputed to be a free-thinker, but Judge Ernest was a pillar in the church.

“Why, John,” said Major Turner, “you don’t mean to say you’d buy votes?”

“Didn’t say I would, did I?” snapped the old man, wriggling uneasily in his Delaware chair. “I meant that the money ought to be used so as to produce votes.”

“Exactly,” assented Bassett.

“And if it don’t do that,” the judge went on, “why we’d ought to give it back to them as contributed.” The judge offered this solution with a new hope dawning in his heart, for he had mourned over the ten dollars he had invested in the fund. A murmur of approval ran around the ring, and the old squire, fearing the dissolution of the fund, was the only one in the room whose face did not glow.

“I’ll tell you, boys,” said Joe Bogle, “we might whack her up among the crowd and everybody do the best they can with their share.”

“That’s what I call a grand su’gestion,” said Judge Ernest, shaking his head approvingly.

But Bassett shook his head the other way. “No,” he said, “that won’t do, we want some system in this thing. It ought to be changed into dollar bills and then given to the central committeemen to use in their wards election day. Of course we won’t need so much in the strong Republican wards—we’ll put it out in Lighttown and down in Gooseville among the niggers, and some of it across the tracks among the boys in the shops—that’s where it’ll tell.”

But the ring stubbornly opposed the idea of letting that pile of money go out of its hands. They put only young men on the city committee, and the honor and importance were enough for them. They would be wanting office next.

The old squire voiced the protest.

“Pears to me,” he whined, “that as I’m runnin’, I’d ought to have a leetle of it fer my own expenses on ’lection day. I’ve been givin’ of my services to the party now fer nigh on to twenty year, not countin’ my term in the army, and it’s expensive, ’specially with that young Halliday carryin’ on the way he is—”

“No one never made up a fund for none of us, Hod Goddard,” chorused the old fellows.

“Yes, and there’s others on the ticket besides you,” interrupted Bassett. “Let each candidate spend his own money if he wants to. You hain’t paid your assessment yet, anyhow.”

“But I’m the head o’ the ticket,” stammered the squire, his red face deepening to purple.

The booming of the town clock in the court-house tower startled the ring, and the county officials glanced at their big silver watches. They were already half an hour late for their dinners.

“And my wife told me to fetch home some meat,” said Bassett, forgetting all else as he seized his hat.

And so the conference broke up. Saturday night came, they had no solution, and, like those that do business in great waters, were at their wits’ end.

Sunday morning a report spread through the town that caused the ring to take heart of grace. It was a report of serious defections in Halliday’s ranks. Jerry Sullivan, Scotty Gordon, old man Garwood, Rice Murrell and even Hank Defrees had been going about town all Saturday afternoon and evening, and everywhere they went they told people it was no use—Halliday couldn’t be elected. He might have been two weeks ago, if he had acted differently, but now—they shook their heads. They couldn’t stand for him any more—he needn’t look to them for support—he hadn’t treated them right—they had been fools to expect anything from such a dude. Five hundred dollars, they said, judiciously used, would settle his hash. They

wished they had the management of it, they would revenge themselves for his slights and insults. And these were representative men, even if their portraits had not been made in half-tone for the *History of Gordon County*.

Jerry Sullivan lived on the hill behind the priest's house, and was the "darlint" of all the old women in Lighttown. He was a lad of power in the Fifth Ward. Scotty Gordon lived across the tracks in the Second Ward and worked in the shops. Old man Garwood lived just at the edge of town, on the Blue Jacket road, in the Fourth Ward, and Rice Murrell, the Reverend Rice Murrell, the pastor of the A. M. E. church—who had turned Democrat when they took the janitorship of the court-house away from him—could do more with the colored voters down in Gooseville than any man, save Judge Halliday, and he was out of politics. Hank Defrees, of course, who still shivered under the fringe of a ragged garment of respectability by clinging to a heavily mortgaged home far out on Scioto Street, where the better element of the town began to thin out into social mediocrity, stood for the aristocratic Third Ward, with its normal Republican majority of two hundred and eleven. The Democrats had never been able to make up a ward delegation in the Third, and Defrees for years and years had sat in all city and county conventions very much at large.

Such a defection, on the eve of election, was serious, as every one recognized. Just after dinner, on Sunday, Judge Halliday, who had disclaimed all interest in the campaign, beckoned his son into the parlor, darkened for secrets, and said to him in a whisper that Mrs. Halliday plainly heard over the banister of the staircase in the hall:

"Did you know that Hank Defrees and that Sullivan boy and Gordon and old man Garwood, and even Rice Murrell, are around working against you?"

George gasped with surprise.

"And did you know," the father whispered on, "that the Republicans have raised a corruption fund—five hundred dollars, I understand?"

"Yes, I heard that," said George, "must be getting desperate, you fellows, eh?"

"Now, my son," said the judge, with brows lowered, "you know I would have absolutely nothing to do with such a business as that. You know my

opinions on such things too well.”

“Oh, of course, father,” said the boy, “that’s all right. I know you wouldn’t countenance it—”

“And I was just going to say,” the elder man continued, “that while I do not agree with you, and while I would not vote for you—at least, I do not think I would—I was just going to say that if you need any money yourself, to meet any of the—ah—legitimate expenses of your campaign, why, just call on me.”

The boy grasped his father’s hand, and when he could speak, he said:

“Thank you, father, thank you, but not now—it isn’t worth it—but I’ll see what’s the matter with these Indians, anyway.”

George went to his offices, over the People’s National Bank and waited an hour in the rear room, a dark and dingy room, with the dust of a country law office deep on everything, and one ray of sunlight scrambling in through the heavy shutters from the alley. Then one after another, up the worn and splintered stairs with tin signs of insurance agents and notaries public on every step, five men clambered. They were grinning when they entered the room, grinning and standing about awkwardly, all save Hank Defrees, who was solemn and imponderable, chewing his tobacco as gravely as if he were making an appearance in court.

“Well,” said George, standing in the middle of the floor, “anything happened?”

The men all looked at one another, hesitating to speak, but finally Scotty Gordon said:

“Happened! Well, I guess yes.”

“What?” queried George.

“Well,” he began, “now I done it, and last night old Bill Williams hunted me up in Jake Fogarty’s saloon, and, well, he offered me fifty dollars to use if I wanted it.”

“Say,” Jerry Sullivan broke in—“Captain Bishop offered me seventy-five.”

“And didn’t you take it?”

“Why, no,” said Jerry.

“What did you tell him?”

The lad’s eyes twinkled.

“I told him,” he answered slowly, “that it wouldn’t be a drop in the bucket.”

“Good for you,” said George. “And now, Mr. Garwood?”

“Well,” said the old man, “don’t know as I got much to say. Major Turner, though, ’as ’round to my house this morning, an’—Well, he offered me fifty dollars if I felt the way I had been reported, and thought I could use it.”

“Judge,” said George, turning to Defrees, “it’s up to you.”

The old lawyer took his tobacco in his fist and chucked it away. “Joe Bogle,” he said, “told me he knew where there’s a hundred for me if I could do any good with it.”

“And, doctor,” said Halliday, facing around to the Reverend Mr. Murrell, who stood solemn in his black garments and white tie, “what happened to you?”

The old negro glanced all around him cautiously and even craned his neck to peer into the room beyond.

“Well, suh,” he began, “Judge Ernest ’as out this mornin’ to hyah me preach, an’ aftah service was ovah, he drawed me to one side, and ’gin to talk politics. He ast me how I felt towa’ds you all, Mistuh Halliday, an’—Ah didn’ like to say it—but you done tol’ me, ’membah.”

“That’s right,” said George, urging the parson out of his hesitation, “you made it strong, I hope.”

“Wellum, Ah tol’ the judge that Ah wasn’ pow’ful strong on you any moah, sense, Ah said, you all hadn’t felt ’sposed to help us ’ith the subscription fo’ the new roof on ouah chu’ch.”

“That was clever,” said George, “damned clever—I beg your pardon.” The old negro’s eyes had widened till their whites showed, and he had raised his hands, holding up his yellow palms before George. “But go on.”

“Well, suh, the jedge ’as al’ays had an interest in ouah spiritual welfare, an’ so he ’lowed we’d ought to be holpen out some.” The old man paused and

swallowed ceremoniously. “An’ so, gen’lemen, he offered me a hundred an’ fifty dollahs.”

The dark eyes of the old man shone with a strange new luster.

“What did you say?”

“Well, suh,” the preacher hesitated, “Ah took it.”

George brought his hand down on the parson’s shoulder with a heavy slap and he laughed. “Good, Bishop, good.”

They counted the money out on the table—exactly four hundred and ninety dollars, the first campaign fund Macochee had ever known. Then they laughed and laughed and laughed.

When Halliday had laid his plans for the morrow’s battle before his companions, he leaned back in his chair and said, turning to the Reverend Rice Murrell:

“I don’t suppose, Bishop, that you approve of the use of money in politics, do you?”

“No, *suh*,” the old preacher replied, with a smart gravity, “an’ somepin’ done tol’ me, yist’day, when the jedge come to see me, that it ’as jus’ providential that this much o’ that filthy lucuah ’as removed from corruptin’ ouah ’lections by bein’ placed in mah han’s.” His rolling eyes bulged and he dribbled at the mouth as he fingered the pile of bills.

“Well,” said George, “don’t put too big a roof on the church, and remember—Gooseville’s going to vote to-morrow.”

“Oh, nevah you feah ’bout Gooseville, mah brothah—she’ll be votin’ early an’ of’en to-morra, an’ she’ll vote right.”

George Halliday was mayor of Macochee but one term. That is a trick that has been played once in every town in this free republic—but it can never be played twice.

## A SECRET OF STATE

OVER at the executive mansion, Governor Chatham and his private secretary were at dinner when the telegram came. The governor took the yellow envelope from the butler's tray and tore it open. When he had read the message he passed it over without a word to Gilman. The private secretary's eyes widened as he read it, and he exclaimed:

"Jim Lockhart dead!"

William, the black butler, stirred uneasily. The governor bent forward, and lifted his coffee to his lips. Gilman laid the despatch beside his plate, and, still looking at it, began to pinch the golden tip of a cigarette. William slid noiselessly to his side with a match. When Gilman had lighted his cigarette he said:

"Poor Jim!"

The governor responded:

"Yes, poor Jim."

A strange quality in the governor's tone gave expression to something more than sadness. His face was somber, immobile, inscrutable. He dropped his napkin, and, without lighting his cigar, though William stood by, shading the little flame of the ready match with his pale palm, he rose and went slowly into the library. About the walls were his beloved books. On the broad, heavy table of Flemish oak a shaded lamp rose over the magazines, the pamphlets, the scattered books and the Chicago newspapers, which reach Springfield at noon. In the wide chimney—over which is carved those words from the *Benedicte*, "Oh, ye Fire and Heat, Bless ye the Lord"—a brazier of Sangamon County coal was blazing. Outside a cold November rain was driving against the tall windows of the mansion. The governor sank into a deep leather chair. He supported his head in his hand and gazed into the fire.

Gilman followed, and seating himself, likewise fell into a melancholy reverie. The silence within, and the wind sweeping the rain back and forth

like a broom without, oppressed him. He was a young man. Once or twice he looked at the governor, and then the silence, the wind and the rain forced him to speak.

“He seemed to be in perfect health when he went away Wednesday,” he said.

The silence deepened. The wind threshed the trees and the rain drenched the windows anew. Gilman spoke again. He said:

“The party’s lost a good man.”

“And I have lost another friend,” said the governor. He was growing old.

Without moving, still gazing deeply into the coals, after a little minute, he added:

“He was the most generous man I ever knew.”

“Yes; and I believe, after all, when the time came, he would have been with you for the renomination.” The governor stretched out his hand to stay Gilman’s speech.

“I was not thinking of that, Leonard.”

The governor did this gently, as he did all things. Gilman’s face reddened—for the fire was growing hot—and silence fell again between them. Gilman felt the silence. He flung his cigarette into the fire. Then he rose.

“Guess I’ll go over to the Leland,” he said. “Some of the boys may have particulars.”

The governor nodded acquiescence, but as Gilman reached the door that leads into the northwest drawing-room, he spoke:

“Before you go hand me the statutes, if you please. I suppose I have some duty to perform in an event like this.”

Gilman who longed only for action, bore with alacrity the three big calf-skin volumes to the library table, and turned to the index.

“I’ll find the section for you.” Gilman examined the second volume for an instant, and then said: “Here it is.”

“Read it, please,” said the governor.

And Gilman read: “Section sixteen. In case of the death of the treasurer, it shall be the duty of the governor to take possession of the office of such treasurer, and cause the vaults thereof to be closed and securely locked, and so remain until a successor is appointed and qualified; and at the time such successor takes possession of the office, he, together with the auditor of public accounts and any of the bondmen of the deceased treasurer who shall be present, shall proceed to take an account of all moneys, papers, books, records and other property coming into his possession; and the auditor shall take of such succeeding treasurer his receipt therefor and keep the same on file in his office.’ There,” concluded Gilman, closing the book, and then immediately reopening it, “that’s it—it’s chapter one hundred and thirty, section sixteen of the act of eighteen seventy-three, page twenty-three twenty-seven.”

“Now turn,” said the governor, “to the chapter on elections, chapter forty-six, I think it is, and see what it says about the appointment of a successor.”

Gilman tilted up the first volume, and inspected the red and black labels on its back; then he turned to chapter forty-six, and, running his finger down the pages until he found the section, read hurriedly, mumbling his words until he came to the vital sentence:

“‘When a vacancy shall occur in the office of secretary of state, auditor of public accounts,’ yes, here it is” (he accentuated the word) “‘*treasurer*, attorney-general, superintendent of public instruction” (he was reading rapidly now and running words together) “‘or member of the state board of equalization, the governor” (and now he raised his voice and read more slowly and distinctly) “‘the governor shall fill the same by appointment, and the appointee shall hold his office during the remainder of the term, and until his successor is elected and qualified.’ That’s section hundred and twenty-eight.”

“Well,” said the governor, “I’ll name Hillman to fill the vacancy.” Hillman was the treasurer-elect, chosen by the people in November to succeed Lockhart. He was not of the party, however, to which the governor belonged. In Illinois, it will be remembered, treasurers are elected not quadrennially, as are the other state officials, but biennially, and a treasurer can not succeed himself. So that in the middle of an administration there is

always an off year, and a reaction, and as the papers say, a stinging rebuke at the polls.

“M-m-yes,” said Gilman, “the boys won’t like it—but it’s only for a couple of months.”

“And as to sealing the treasury,” continued the governor, “I presume that the morning will be time enough for that.”

“Yes, it’s a bad night outside, anyway,” responded Gilman. The governor was lost again in thought. Gilman went on and out.

The governor, alone in the library, continued to gaze into the fire. Once he took from the table at his elbow a worn book, which he handled tenderly. He read in it for a while. It was *The Thoughts of Marcus Aurelius*. But he did not read long. Presently he was sitting with the forefinger of one hand between the leaves of the book, which lay in his lap, musing on the fire again. Outside the rain drenched the tall windows of the mansion.

The clock in the hall tolled eleven. The governor rose, and went slowly up the staircase that winds gracefully from the great hall to the floor above, and thence to his chamber and his bed.

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In a room on the parlor floor of the Leland, the windows of which looked down on Sixth street, a short, fat man was pacing the floor. His unbuttoned waistcoat showed a white shirt stretched over a large paunch. His hair was greased with perspiration, big drops of which stood out on his forehead, and slid down his pendulous, dewlapt cheeks. He had a bristling mustache, at which he gnawed when he removed his cigar from his lips, and a short goatee at which he plucked incessantly with his fingers. When his cigar was in his mouth, he rolled it about and ground it between his teeth. At times he spat pieces of the tobacco leaves fiercely into the grate. The cigar was burning unevenly, and fuming so that the little man winked his little eyes. On a table in the room, littered with the inevitable Chicago papers, and strewn with poker chips, stood an empty whisky glass. The rumpled counterpane of the bed showed that the little man had been tossing upon it. As he paced up and down he talked to himself, and at times swore.

“Hell,” he would say, “why the devil doesn’t he come!”

Occasionally he would draw out his watch, and scowl at its face. Then he would look at the old-fashioned brass crank on the wall, beside the door, which sometimes pulled a call-bell in the office below, and sometimes did not, but he did not ring it. He ran his fingers through his tumbled hair, and paced up and down.

The little man was William Grigsby, and he was the attorney-general of the state of Illinois. He had come down from the Jo Daviess hills, to serve a term in the house, and been nominated for the office he now held by the governor, John Chatham. John Chatham was his political creator, and the two men had once been friends. The administration had begun harmoniously enough, but before two of the four years of its political life had expired there was a split, and factions had formed. There had been a fierce fight for the control of the state central committee that year, and the struggle had been carried into the state convention, which nominated a state treasurer, a superintendent of public instruction, and trustees of the university of Illinois. In one faction were the governor, the auditor of public accounts, and, of course, his appointees, the adjutant-general, the railroad and warehouse commissioners and the trustees of the state institutions. In the other were the attorney-general and the secretary of state, Jennings. Lockhart, the state treasurer, had been neutral. He was everybody’s friend. The lieutenant-governor did not count. The superintendent of public instruction was not a politician, save in teachers’ institutes, where he was cheered and indorsed in classic resolutions.

And now Grigsby was an avowed candidate for governor, in opposition to his old friend, John Chatham, the man who had made him. Two years bring about great changes in politics. Grigsby, in that time, had grown corpulent, had hardened his liver and his heart, and was threatened with Bright’s disease.

The attorney-general continued to smoke and pace the floor, and swear. After a while he consulted his watch again, and then gave the old-fashioned brass bell-pull a vigorous jerk. Presently a negro boy came bearing a presumptive pitcher of water, the tinkling of the ice heralding his approach. The attorney-general would have welcomed iced water in the morning, but

now he seized it from the black boy's hand, set it down with a splash on his wash-stand, and shouted:

“Go and tell Jim to mix me a commodore.”

Just as the boy reached the door, it opened, and a tall man entered. The tall man seeing the boy, looked at Grigsby.

“What'll you have, Hank?” said the attorney-general.

“A little whisky.”

“Bring Mr. Jennings some whisky,” ordered the attorney-general.

“Bourbon, boy,” added Mr. Jennings.

The boy withdrew.

The attorney-general paused before the fire, and looked up into the face of the secretary of state.

“Well, Hank,” he said, “I began to fear you hadn't got my message. Heard the news?”

The secretary of state lazily pulled off his wet overcoat and flung it across the bed, and then, shaking the water from his broad-brimmed black slouch hat in the careless way they have down in southern Illinois, he tossed it after the coat, on which it fell with a damp slap. He stood six feet in height, and would have been taller had he not stooped. His face was long, his skin dingy and sallow, and his thin nose, beginning between deep-set eyes of steely blue, stretched down the middle of his visage, and precipitated itself over the black mustache that drooped thin and moist about his mouth. His hair, glossy black, though he was fifty, was flung straight across his brow and over his left ear, giving the effect of a mane. Behind, it greased the collar of a long black frock coat that wrapped him lankly. A narrow black tie hung unknotted at his throat. When he moved it was in that loose and lazy way that told, as his hat and his habit did, that he came from the country south of the old O. and M., which divides Egypt from the corn lands of central Illinois. He drew a rocking-chair to the grate, and stretching himself comfortably in it, with his feet upon the ash-strewn fender, drew from his hip pocket a plug of tobacco and gnawed on it. Then he drawled, in a voice haunted by musical echoes of southern ancestry:

“What news?”

“Why,” replied the attorney-general, “haven’t you heard? Jim Lockhart’s dead.”

“The hell he is!” responded Jennings. “I hadn’t heerd ary word. When’d he die?”

“This afternoon.”

“Sudden?”

“Rather.”

“What was ailin’ of him?”

The attorney-general smiled, a peculiar, mirthless smile.

The secretary of state ceased to rock.

“You don’t reckon now—”

“That’s it exactly.”

“I didn’t know it’d got that bad. What’d they give out fer the cause?”

“Oh, heart failure, I suppose.”

“Beats hell, don’t it?”

The secretary of state was silent. Presently he spoke again in an abstracted way:

“Well, Jim ’as a devil of a good feller, as good as you’d meet up ’ith in a coon’s age. An’ I reckon when it come to a show-down, he ’as our friend. If the boys ’p’ints an investigatin’ committee—Jim ’as al’ays a leetle too free ’ith the stuff.”

Grigsby said “Yes,” in a detached tone. Then there was silence for a space. The bell-boy knocked, bore in his tray and departed. The men nodded over the edges of their little glasses each to the other, and drank. Then Grigsby, wiping his lips, said:

“Hank, I didn’t send for you to-night to hold memorial services over Jim Lockhart. There’s something more important than that—there’s something damned important, and it concerns me.”

“You?”

“Yes, me. I’m in this thing just twenty thousand dollars.”

“The hell you are!”

“Just—twenty—thousand—dollars.”

Grigsby sank into a chair.

“Borrowed?” asked Jennings.

“Yes.”

“Public funds?”

“Well—I don’t know. Course—”

“Jim Lockhart didn’t have no private fortune—’ithout it ’as the int’rust.”

“Well, suppose it was.”

“An’tthin’ to show fer it?”

“I gave him three notes—one for ten, two for five thousand each.”

“Well, you’re a bigger damn fool than I gave you credit fer bein’.”

The attorney-general, clutching his fingers into his hair, rested his elbows on his short knees, and bowed his head. “And with the governorship just in plain sight, too,” he groaned.

“Well, it wasn’t so damn plain,” said Jennings.

Then as his eye rested on the man bowed beside him, the sweat trickling down his tallow face, something in the droop of the figure touched a chord of pity in his heart, and the tall Egyptian laid a hand on Grigsby’s shoulder, saying in another tone:

“Don’t take on that way. Let’s see what can be done.”

“Yes, let’s,” assented Grigsby.

The Egyptian knitted the brows over his long, narrow nose.

“Hev you got any money?” he asked.

“I!” exclaimed Grigsby, with a sardonic grunt.

“Any property?”

“Only my house up home.”

“Hain’t you any friends up there, any bankers that’ll take care o’ this thing fer you?”

Grigsby laughed ironically.

“Cain’t you lay down on somebody fer it?”

Grigsby shook his head.

“How’s your quo ’arranto proceedin’s ’gainst the Chicago Consolidated?”

“It isn’t ripe yet,” said Grigsby, “and, anyhow, there isn’t time. Damn it, man,” he said, raising his voice, and striking his knee with his fist, “it’s got to be done now, to-night, or I’m lost. The governor, under the law, must seal the treasury at once, and you know just how long John Chatham’ll wait. We’ve got to take care of this thing to-night, to-night, I tell you. That’s why I sent for you.” The attorney-general spoke angrily, and with a puffed face that flushed an unhealthy red, and then added, stretching forth his hand and laying it on Jennings’ knee, “You’re my friend, ain’t you?”

“Sure,” said the secretary of state carelessly, and then knitted his brows again. After a few minutes he said:

“Say, Bill, you and the governor used to be friends, and he hain’t a bad feller, no-way. He got you your nomination, you know—why don’t you go to him—”

“Go to the governor?” cried Grigsby; “and tell him—tell *him!*”

“Bill,” said the secretary of state, “you don’t know the governor. He hain’t my kind, ner I his’n, but I’ll tell you one thing—he hain’t the man to take advantage of a feller. You’d be as safe in his hands as you would in mine—safer, maybe,” Jennings concluded, with a good-humored chuckle.

Grigsby emphatically, doggedly, shook his head.

“It never would do in this world,” he said, “never.”

“Why, you could get him to hold off till you could take care of it. You and him used to be such friends—tell him you’ll lay down fer the sake of old

times—that's the thing—tell him an'thin' to get him to hold off fer a few days. Then you'll have time to turn 'round."

"Look here, Jennings," said Grigsby, straightening up and glaring at the secretary of state, "Chatham's got all you fellows hypnotized. You think he's a little tin god, that he's incapable of doing a mean act, of throwing a friend down, or anything of that sort. I tell you I know him better than all of you do. He and I used to be close, thicker'n—"

"You wasn't borrowin' money out o' the state treasury them days, though, was you, Bill?" interrupted Jennings.

Grigsby colored.

"No, you was somethin' of a reformer yourself."

Grigsby colored more deeply.

"An' as fer the throwin' down—we know who done the heft o' that. Course I don't care—it suits me—but give a houn' his dues."

Grigsby's color had changed by swift gradations of tone to splenetic blackness. He broke in upon Jennings' indictment of him, and his defense of the governor:

"Oh, drop that—let's talk business. I tell you I know Chatham, and I ain't goin' to put myself in his hands."

He drew out his watch and opened it.

"It's half-past eight now, and he doubtless knows Lockhart's dead—probably he's got the treasury sealed."

Jennings' brow was gathered once more in wrinkles that indicated thought. His face rapidly assumed an expression of determination. Presently he rose.

"Bill," he said, "I'm goin' to do somethin' fer you I wouldn't do fer any other livin' man."

Grigsby raised an appealing, yearning face.

"Yest'day I deposited in Gregory's bank over at Decatur twenty-four thousand dollars. It's the fees received in my office durin' the last quarter. It's lucky fer you they was unusually large—"

“Yes,” said Grigsby, and his expression, expectant and hopeful a moment before, clouded, “but it’s in Decatur, and we’re in Springfield and we’ve got to have it now, to-night, if it’s goin’ to do us any good. What the devil did you want to deposit it in Gregory’s bank for?”

“Because,” replied Jennings, “Gregory’s rich, and a contributor, an’ he can deliver Macon County, and we’ll want Macon County’s ten votes, if I hain’t mistaken, one of these days. But never mind that now—it’s the on’y thing we can do.”

Jennings looked at his watch. “It’s now twenty-five till nine. A train goes out on the Wabash at nine-five. I’ll send Hennessey over on that train with a note to Gregory, an’ a check. He can get twenty thousand, an’ ketch a train back ’bout eleven-twenty, I think, anyway—that train that gets here at twelve-forty. You can take the money, put it back in the treasury, ’fore the governor seals ’er up, an’—”

Grigsby sprang toward Jennings and seized his hand.

“Hank, you’re the best friend I ever had,” he cried, and his eyes glistened.

“Aw, don’t talk like that,” said Jennings awkwardly.

“But can we trust Hennessey?” said Grigsby, the next instant, his eyes dilating, his hand suddenly dropping by his side.

“Hell, we’ve got to,” said Jennings. Then he strode across the room and turned the old-fashioned brass bell-pull.

When a black boy grinned in the doorway, Jennings sent for Hennessey, and soon, the old elevator having clambered to the parlor floor, there was a knock. Jennings yelled “Come!” and in the doorway stood a young Irishman, red-cheeked and with closely-cropped, silver-sprinkled black hair. In the cities, the hair of the Irish-American—especially in politics, and they are all in—turns gray early. Hennessey was strong in the Thirteenth Ward of Chicago, hence his job in the office of the secretary of state. Jennings had been writing while awaiting the Irishman’s coming. Turning to him the secretary of state gave his instructions, and he departed. As he closed the door Grigsby called:

“I’ll make it all right with you, Mike.”

Grigsby went to the window and pressed his face to one of the small panes, placing his hands as blinds beside his eyes as a little child does. The cold glass soothed his forehead deliciously. He saw Shorty, who has driven “statesmen” on their mysterious nightly rounds for generations, mount the box of his old hack and pull his reluctant horses into the street. Then he turned to confront the three hours’ wait. He poked the smouldering fire of soft prairie coal, gave Jennings a cigar, and was about to pull the old-fashioned brass bell crank that more cheer might be added to the factitious comfort he sought to create in the room, when Jennings, meditatively scratching his head, said:

“Bill, where’s them notes o’ yourn?”

“Why, in the treasury, I suppose.”

“Well, you’ll have to get some one who can open the vaults fer you to-night.”

Grigsby’s brow darkened, and the small cheerfulness that had begun to adumbrate itself in his face faded quite away.

“That’s so—I hadn’t thought of that.”

He pondered heavily and then said, the old note of fear in his tone:

“Has that vault a time lock?”

“I reckon.”

They were silent.

“Well,” said Grigsby presently, breaking the silence, “I’ll have to get Mendenhall.” Mendenhall was the assistant state treasurer, and was counted among the adherents of Grigsby.

“Better let me go,” said Jennings, taking up his coat and hat.

When he had gone Grigsby again paced the floor. Now he would pause at the window and look down into Sixth Street, where the rain, falling hopelessly and helplessly, was making pools in the depressions of the cedar block pavement that glistened in the white glare of the arc light spluttering before the hotel. Whenever the hoarse sounds of distant locomotive whistles came to him out of the wet night, he jerked forth his watch and sighed as he replaced it. Then he began to worry because Jennings did not reappear. He

wondered if Governor Chatham would venture out in such a night to seal the treasury. He cursed Chatham, who had made him, and finally Jennings, who had saved him. Altogether, he passed a very bad two hours. And then Jennings returned. As the tall Egyptian entered the room, Grigsby demanded:

“Where you been?”

“Over to the St. Nick—met up ’ith some o’ the boys, an’ set into a little game fer a while.”

“See Mendenhall?”

“Yep—he’ll be ’long. Gosh! it’s a regular Shawneetown flood outside!” And the man waved his big hat in a wide arc, the spray from it spitting angrily as it sprinkled the fire in the grate.

“So it’s all right, is it?”

“Ump huh.”

“How about the time lock?”

“Oh, George says they don’t never use that—haven’t sence the day the senate ’p’inted that committee to count the money in the treasury. ’Member? By gosh, didn’t pore ol’ Jim hustle to get a special train an’ haul that money down from Chicago, though?”

The secretary of state wagged his long head and chuckled.

“That thing lost him e’enamost fifty thousan’ in int’rust, he tol’ me onct,” the secretary of state went on, “an’ he hain’t never been able sinct to make ary long loan.”

Again he laughed, and, the spirit of reminiscence being upon him, he went on: “One time ’fore the war, the legislature ’p’inted a countin’ committee, an’ ol’—oh, what’s ’is name?—you know—from Gallatin County—he ’as treasur’ then, an’ the’ wasn’ more’n about fifty thousan’ in the safe, but he ’as game, an’ when the committee ’peared next mornin’, he says, ‘Cert’n’y, gentlemen,’ an’ handed ’em out about ten thousan’ in them old green dollar bills, an’ says: ‘When yo’re done countin’ o’ *them ’ere*, I’ll give you all some more.’ An’ in ’bout an hour they reckoned they’d take *his* figur’s—they’d have to do.”

Grigsby's heart lightened, and he became almost gay, ordering much drink. And for an hour the two men sat there, waiting and smoking, and drinking whisky—Jennings bourbon and Grigsby rye—and were content. Though every time the yowl of a locomotive was borne to him on the cold, wet night, Grigsby jerked out his watch. And once he started at a short knock on the door, but it was only Mendenhall.

After midnight Grigsby's anxiety deepened, and he ceased to pay attention to Jennings' stories of politics down in "southern Eellinoy," stories about Don Morrison and John A. Logan. At twelve-forty he rose and trod the floor, but Jennings' long form was stretched out before the fire, his whisky glass was at his elbow, and he said from time to time:

"Oh, fer God's sake, Bill, set down—they'll be 'long all right."

"Isn't that the Wabash?" said Grigsby, cocking his head at the night cry of a locomotive.

"I don' know," said Jennings, who was growing mellow, "on'y whistles I could ever tell was them on the ol' O. and M., 'ceptin' o' course, the toot of the *Three States*, which is now at Cairo, ef she hain't stuck on a mud bank over on the Mizzouri shore some'er's 'round Bird's Landin'."

Grigsby looked at his watch. It was ten minutes of one, and just as he dolefully announced the hour the door opened, and Hennessey entered, carrying a leather traveling-bag. Grigsby leaped toward him, his itching fingers outstretched to seize the valise.

"Is it all there?" he exclaimed.

"Take me for a thief?" replied Hennessey, swinging the bag behind him.

Hennessey proffered the bag to his master, but Jennings said:

"Wait a minute." Then he ran his hand wrist-deep into his pocket and drew out a paper, which he examined critically, squinting his eyes, partly to protect them from the smoke that curled up from a big domestic cigar, partly—as it seemed, to assist in the concentration of his thoughts.

"Gineral," he said—by some strange confusion of ideas, down in Springfield they give the attorney-general a military title, which custom that functionary fosters—"Gineral, will you give me your signature to that, 'fore you start?"

Grigsby glowered at Jennings, read the paper, said somewhat petulantly, "Oh, of course," and hesitatingly signed it.

"Now, Hennessey," said Jennings, carefully placing the paper in a long pocket-book he drew from the region of his left hip.

Hennessey held the bag out toward the secretary of state.

"No," said Jennings, who was pouring himself a drink, "give it to the general."

The attorney-general took the bag and opened it. Inside were four big bundles of bank bills. He lifted them out. Each bundle was composed of ten smaller packages, held by rubber bands, and each package was bound with a pink paper strap neatly pinned and marked "five hundred." He counted and replaced the packages in the bag. Then taking his coat and hat, he turned to Jennings and said:

"Well, let's be gone."

The secretary of state rolled his head toward the attorney-general, waved his long arm and flapped his hand fin-like at him, and said:

"We'll wait here, Mike and me. You won't need us."

The attorney-general scowled, and then went out, accompanied only by the assistant state treasurer. Hurrying down Capitol Avenue, Grigsby shivered, glancing up dark alleys.

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The clock in the hall of the executive mansion had struck the half-hour after midnight, and the governor was descending the stairs in a gray bath-robe and slippers. The old house was dark and still. Even the room occupied by Gilman, who should, at that hour, have been reading the magazines in bed, showed no light. The governor, softly treading, entered the library. The last embers of the fire were smouldering. The governor lighted the lamp, and in the circle of soft light it spread on the library table, he bent over a book, his glasses on his nose, their cord hanging down into his lap. He turned the leaves of the book. It was not *The Thoughts of Marcus Aurelius*. It was the second volume of *The Revised Statutes of Illinois*, a stupid work which

many men consult, laboriously, far into the night. He softly rustled over the leaves until he found chapter one hundred and thirty. He ran his finger down the pages till it stopped at section sixteen. And then he read very slowly: "In case of the death of the treasurer, it shall be the duty of the governor to take possession of the office of such treasurer and cause the vaults thereof to be closed and securely locked, and so remain until—" He read the words again, and again a third time, and yet again.

He closed the book, put out the lamp and slowly felt his way back up the stairs.

Ten minutes later he descended again, and groping in the hall, drew a greatcoat over his broad shoulders, covered his head with the slouch hat he wore when he went down into southern Illinois, and let himself out of the wide front door. The asphalt driveway that flings its long curve through the grounds of the gubernatorial residence from Fifth Street to Fourth, gleamed like the surface of a river at night. The rain no longer fell, but the trees dripped dismally. Across the low night sky black clouds were flying. The governor walked down the driveway to the big iron gates at Fourth Street, whose watered surface as far as he could see, wavered under the electric lights at the crossings. The governor turned at Jackson Street and walked down the sleeping little avenue toward Second Street. Before a low brown house trickling its eaves behind two sentinel cedars, he halted. He went up the moist brick walk, and pulled the white bell-knob. The bell jangled harshly upon the sleeping stillness. The jangling trembled away. He rang again. There was a reluctant stir within and a voice, a scared woman's voice, said:

"Who's there?"

"The governor," he responded. "Is Mr. Mendenhall at home?"

The woman slid back bolts and opened the door circumspectly. She thrust out a trowsled head and shoulders wrapped in a shawl. The governor heard a baby's cry. The woman's teeth chattered with nervousness and the cold.

"No, sir; he hasn't got in yet."

The governor thanked her and turned away. The woman opened the door wide and watched him as he retreated down the moist brick walk. At the

street he paused. Then he turned on toward Second Street. The woman closed the door, and her key grated in the lock.

The governor strode on into Second Street, past the residence of the Bishop of Springfield, standing behind white pillars deep in its naked grove, past St. Agatha's Seminary sleeping in its gloom, until he reached the state house. The brooding building loomed above him, dark and dour, heaving its great gray dome into the grim night. Huge granite pillars lifted themselves above him, he was lost in the shades of the lofty portico. He unlocked and pushed open the heavy door. The great marble corridors were dark and echoed to the touch of his heel upon the stones. In the wide rotunda, under the enormous dome, thick with billowing gloom, a janitor, the people's solitary night watch, slept profoundly in his chair, his mouth open, his white beard upon his breast. His gossips had departed. Their deserted chairs stood aimlessly about. He had finished the nightly recital of the strenuous part he had borne in the great rebellion, and he slumbered, his snores echoing in the monstrous inverted bowl above him. The governor ascended to the floor above, and turned down the north corridor. A golden bar of light was thrown across the marble floor. It streamed from the open door of the state treasury. The governor quickened his steps. He heard the lunge of huge bolts as they were tumbled home. He heard the dull spin of a combination lock, and as he reached the treasury two men were emerging from the dark vaults.

“Thank God, that's—”

The sentence was lost in the mouth of the attorney-general of the state of Illinois, who stood with dropping jaw staring at the governor. The attorney-general stood motionless, and then plunged a hand with three pieces of paper into an outer pocket of his overcoat. Mendenhall stood behind him, a flame flashing over his face.

The governor was the first one to speak.

“Good evening, gentlemen,” he said.

The two men did not reply, and the governor spoke again.

“Under the law, gentlemen,” he said, “the duty devolves upon me of closing and locking the treasury and temporarily assuming possession of it.”

Still the men did not reply. The tissues of Grigsby's face had become flaccid, and a greenish shade had overspread them. His eyes had contracted

to sharp points under angry brows. The governor scrutinized the two men closely, as he advanced, and said, speaking in a calm tone:

“And so, if you gentlemen have concluded your business”—he paused—“I shall proceed to the execution of that duty.”

“I am,” he added, a moment afterward, “perhaps fortunate in finding you here, Mr. Mendenhall. You may be able to assist me.”

He drew toward them, and they stood aside. He entered the vaults where a gas-jet glimmered, its light glinting on the nickel-plated knobs of the great steel doors. He tried the doors. They were locked. He remained an instant in thought, and then took from his pocket a stick of red sealing-wax. He hesitated another instant.

“No,” he said, “the great seal could not be utilized.”

The great seal of state of the state of Illinois, though it has a political history, is, nevertheless, physically, but a huge overgrown seal such as notaries public use in their little businesses. And in Illinois the governor has no privy seal as he has in some commonwealths. The governor warmed the sealing-wax in the gas-jet that blazed beside him in the vault. When it began to melt he dribbled and daubed its softened substance, drop by drop, on the combination of the huge safe, as a girl would seal a letter. When he had quite covered the lock with the molten wax, he sealed it with the seal ring he wore on his left hand, a ring which bore the coat-of-arms of a colonial governor. The midnight secret of those two men, whatever it might be, was either safe with them or more safely still, sealed with other secrets behind those massive doors. And then he turned the gas down until only a tiny star blinked in the vault, and came out, and swung together the big steel gates that clanked like prison bars, their locks snapping automatically.

He returned to the outer door of the department and placed his hand upon the knob.

“Gentlemen,” he said ceremoniously, “I await your pleasure.”

He bent his gaze full upon William Grigsby, and that little man, throwing back his head with something like defiance, strode on his short legs out of the high-ceiled room, and Mendenhall followed him, but meekly. As they filed past, Grigsby, with face upturned, a face that now in anger had taken on the blue tinge of butchered beef, drew his hands from his overcoat

pocket and clasped them behind his back. The governor bowed as the little man and Mendenhall swept out before him. And then he drew the big walnut door to.

Standing out in the corridor Grigsby waited, and as he stood and waited, he fumbled in the outer pocket of his overcoat. Suddenly he drew forth his hand. His face had turned white, the white of a fish's belly.

As the governor drew the big walnut door to, and as it swung behind him, it pushed before it, scraping with the peevish voice of a ratchet along the matted floor, a piece of crumpled paper. Grigsby, who had turned toward Mendenhall with a look of death's despair, saw it, and started, a faint ray of hope beaming in his eye. But the paper lay under the governor's feet.

The governor closed the doors.

"You may lock them, Mr. Mendenhall," he said.

The assistant state treasurer drew a jingling bunch of keys from his pocket and locked the door. Grigsby's eyes were fastened on the paper at the governor's feet. His heart was swelling in his throat. His fingers were twitching, and he was sweating like a stoker. At Mendenhall's approach the governor placed his foot upon the paper. When Mendenhall had done, the governor picked it up. He smoothed it out in his fingers, and slowly adjusted his glasses. By the dim light that always burns at night just outside the door of the state treasury he read it. Then he placed it in the pocket of his overcoat. He kept his hand upon it. The blue of Grigsby's face deepened.

The three men went down the stairs, the governor standing aside at the top to let them precede him. They crossed the rotunda, past the slumbering janitor whose snores ascended and exploded in the rounded blackness of the hollow dome, down the east corridor and so out into the darkness. They walked together down the wide stone walk, the stone walk as wide as a street, that sweeps, with a strip of sward down its middle, across the state house lawns to Capitol Avenue. The governor did not turn up Second Street by the way he had come. He kept on with his two companions, and all three were silent. Not a word had any one of them spoken. They were drowned in thought. It matters not of what the assistant state treasurer was thinking. He held only an appointive office. He was a political villain, and had a collar

on his neck. The attorney-general was thinking of days that were to come. The governor was thinking of days that were gone. Silent, thoughtful, thus they kept on up Capitol Avenue. When they approached the shades that gathered under the ugly iron bridge which spans the ragged street that leads to the capitol of Illinois, the Alton's St. Louis Limited came plunging through the town, half an hour late. The three men halted. The great mysterious, vestibuled train, with its darkly curtained Pullmans, slid across the bridge. As they stood waiting for it to pass that they might go under, the governor withdrew his hand from his pocket, the paper still folded in it. He held the paper out toward Grigsby.

“William,” he said, “I think you dropped something.”

## THE COLONEL'S LAST CAMPAIGN

ALL day long Colonel Talbott sat in his leather chair in the lobby of the Grand, twiddling his cane, smoking his cigar, and talking politics. Under the broad brim of his black slouch hat his hair fell in silver wisps almost to his shoulders, and the long mustache, drooping like a Georgian's at the corners of his mouth, was as white as his hair, save at the spot where his cigar had tinged it yellow.

There was not a politician of either party between Dunleith and Cairo who was not proud to bend over the old fellow's chair, take his thin hand and say: "Hello, Colonel, what's new in politics?" The colonel had one invariable reply: "I'm out of politics, and don't know anything. What do you hear?" Sometimes, if the passing politician happened to be of the old day, the colonel would take him by the arm, and they would saunter away to the bar. If the politician came from northern Illinois, the colonel would take rye; if from southern Illinois the colonel would take bourbon; such was his idea of etiquette. Though never would he take a drink before breakfast, for a drink before breakfast, he told Carroll, was a back log in the fire that would burn the live-long day.

Carroll was the staff of the colonel's old age. The two would sit by the hour, while the old man talked of the Nineteenth Illinois Cavalry, of Lincoln and Douglas, of David Davis and Elijah Haines, of state and national conventions, in the days when he had made and unmade congressmen, governors and senators, ruling his party in the state, Carroll shrewdly thought, with a discipline as rigid as that with which he had welded the Nineteenth Illinois into a fighting regiment.

To those who knew the veteran's history, his love for the boy was touching. The story is too long to tell now, but its essential motif must always be the ingratitude of Si Warren. The colonel had picked Warren up in the old Fifteenth District, sent him to Congress, and finally made a United States senator of him. Warren, developing quickly as a politician, had turned around, defeated the colonel for reelection as chairman of the state executive committee, a position he had held for sixteen years, had frozen

him out of the Arizona deal, and somehow caused the colonel's only son to go wrong out there in Tucson. The boy's mother had died; of a broken heart, they said. Since then a decade had passed, a decade which the colonel had spent in the grim lonesomeness of a crowded hotel. He never mentioned Warren's name. If he heard it, he clenched his bony fists so tightly that the knuckles showed white. Once a year, perhaps, in the springtime, when the state central committee met, he got out his white waistcoat and was invited up to the ordinary to make a speech on the state of the party, and once a year, in the summertime, he attended a reunion of his regiment, now decimated to a squadron of tottering old men, whom the colonel called "boys."

Spring came, rolling up from the muddy Ohio, showering its apple blossoms in the orchards of Egypt, sprinkling with purple flowers the prairies of central Illinois, and finally flooding with tardy sunshine the cold waters of Lake Michigan. It was the year the legislature that chose Warren's successor in the senate was to be elected, and when the senator came home from Washington he found his fences in sad repair. The Silas Warren of the parlor suite in a Lake Front hotel was not the Si Warren whom Colonel Talbott had rescued from the dusty little law office down in Shelbyville fifteen years before. The clothes of that time were faded by the sun in which he loafed all day on the post-office corner, whereas the clothes of this spring morning bespoke a New York tailor and a valet.

The senator was not in a pleasant mood. There was opposition to his reelection, and while his machine ignored it, and while George R. Baldwin, the lawyer who watched the interests of certain big corporations during the sessions of the legislature, said it was but a sporadic demonstration of soreheads, back-numbers and labor skates, it was spreading, as the picturesque politicians from the corn lands of central Illinois would say, like a prairie fire. Jacksonville, where the standard of revolt had first been raised, was in Morgan, the colonel's home county, and so it came to pass that the defection was laid to the machinations of the colonel himself. And yet, as the politicians who were always dropping into Chicago to correct their reckonings, paused an instant by the leather chair, the old white head would slowly wag from side to side, and the old man would say:

"No, I'm out of politics."

If Carroll had not conceived the idea of running for office, perhaps the colonel would have remained out of politics, but the boy, after a week of dreaming, dramatized himself as making a speech in the state senate chamber at Springfield. The colonel, as a man's duty is, advised him to keep out of politics, and yet within an hour after Carroll shyly confessed his ambition, the fever awoke in the old fellow's bones, his eyes flamed with the old fire, and he admitted that the experience might help a boy who was struggling in a pitiless city for a law practice.

Within a week the colonel had introduced Carroll to Superintendent of Street and Alley Cleaning Patrick F. Gibbons, who promised to be with him, and had taken him to the city hall for an audience with the mayor. After that the newspapers said that John D. Carroll had been slated for the senatorial nomination in the First District.

When Warren learned of the colonel's new interest in the campaign, he cunningly decided to utilize it by throwing his strength to Carroll in the First, provided the colonel would withdraw his opposition. He prided himself on being a man who harbored no resentments. So he sent Dan Ford, his private secretary, to open negotiations for peace.

The colonel had recognized the coming of the heat by donning his suit of linen, with a red tie at his throat to give the touch of color he always loved, and he had got out his broad-leaved Panama hat for its fifteenth season. Ford found him seated in the leather chair, swinging one thin leg over the other, his white hose wrinkling over his low shoes, telling Carroll how Grant came to Springfield from Galena seeking a commission in the army. Ford diplomatically broached the subject of a conference between the colonel and the senator. The colonel heard him to the end, but said nothing. His mustache simply lifted a little with the curl of his lip. Ford was evidently disappointed.

"Have you any reply?" he asked, "or any message?"

"Yes," said the colonel, and his gray eyes flashed under their shaggy brows. "Present my compliments to Senator Warren, and tell him that if he ever presumes to speak to me again in all his life, I'll slap his face, and if he resents it, I'll kill him."

Ford tried to bow, and the colonel, turning to Carroll, said:

“As I was saying, General Palmer happened to go into the adjutant-general’s office and saw Grant smoking a corn-cob pipe and working away on muster rolls at a broken table propped up in one corner of the room. The old forage cap he had worn in the Mexican War was lying on the table. It was the only hat he had in those days.”

The next morning an interview with Warren appeared in all the papers.

“I would prefer,” the senator was reported as saying, “to retire to private life and resume my interrupted law practice, if I were not compelled to seek vindication by the bushwhacking of this doting old ingrate, who, disappointed in his attempts to monopolize patronage that belongs to patriotic party workers, now skulks behind the sympathy his years and infirmities excite, to wage a guerrilla warfare.”

The colonel read the interview at breakfast. He sat at the table with one paper propped up before him and four others beside his plate, his eye-glasses on his nose, and ate his oatmeal and his beefsteak and his boiled eggs just as he did on every morning of the year. Then he drank the half cup of coffee that he always reserved, with its cream slowly coagulating at the surface, for the end of his meal, because it was cooler then, laid his napkin down and shuffled slowly out.

Half an hour later a man stopped by his chair in the lobby and said something to the colonel that made him drop his paper, and look up over his eye-glasses with a scowl. The man was known as Birdy Quinn, and he had lost his job in the water office the week before, because Warren wished to make room for a fellow who could deliver more votes at the coming primaries than Birdy could.

“Are you sure?” the colonel asked.

“Sure! Isn’t it all over the ward this morning?”

“You’re sure that Pat Gibbons consented to run as Warren’s candidate for state senator in the First District against Carroll—after promising me—*me*?” He bent his brows angrily and pointed with a long forefinger at his own breast.

“Well, hell’s bells!” said Quinn. “Wasn’t Baldwin working with him half the night?”

The colonel took his glasses from his nose and swinging them by their heavy cord, blinked with his old eyes at the square of sunlight blazing in the Clark Street entrance, across which, as on a vividly illuminated screen, the crowds on the sidewalk flitted like trembling figures in a kinoscope. Presently he lifted himself heavily from his chair and gathered up his newspapers and his stick.

“Well, Birdy,” he said wearily, “I guess I’ve got one more fight left in me.”

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Most men thought it was Warren’s interview that caused the colonel to consent at last to lead the opposition against him, though some said it was but the fascination of politics, which is like the fascination of the sea, so that a man who follows it once must follow it till he dies.

“I never thought I’d live to see the day when I’d be glad to find the old man’s chair empty,” said Eph Harkness, of Macoupin, that afternoon. He had come up from Carlinville in response to a telegram from the colonel, and having registered, and given his bag and linen duster to a bell-boy, was removing his big felt hat to mop his wet brow.

“I’m afraid he won’t be able to stand the strain of a campaign,” said Carroll.

“Stand the strain! Him?” exclaimed Harkness. “Why, he’ll be alive and drawing pay when they’re referring to Si Warren as ex-senator!”

“I hate to have them say such mean things about him,” Carroll persisted, thinking of the interview.

“If they think they kin say any meaner things ’bout him than he kin ’bout them, jes’ let ’em lam in,” chuckled Mosely, of Alexander.

“Yes,” mused Harkness, “it’ll be the greatest fight we’ve had in Illinois since Logan’s time. We’ve got a leader now.”

There was an echo of the old days in his voice, which, with its gentle hint of regret, was lost on Carroll, who had not known the colonel in the old days.

They found the colonel in his room, sitting by an open window, his Panama hat on his head, his cigar in his teeth, and his walking-stick twirling in his

long fingers. The room did not present that orderly and cool appearance it had on the few occasions when Carroll had been in it before. The shades were high at the window, admitting flames of heat, wads of crumpled paper bestrewed the floor, a huge table had been brought in and it was already littered with newspapers and telegraph blanks. The bureau had been moved, the tall white door it had hidden so long had been unlocked, and Carroll heard the incessant clicking of a typewriter in the adjoining room. Two or three men sat idly about, gossiping, as men will, about political battles of the past. There seemed to be none of the industry of politics apparent, though political headquarters seldom do display that, perhaps because a good part of the industry of politics consists in talking and smoking and drinking, and partly, perhaps, because of the necessity of concealment that always exists. These men were gathered to organize the defeat of a crafty and unscrupulous man who had a national, state and city machine at his command, with money to heart's desire, and yet they sat and smoked, stirring only when a telegram came from down the state, or some long-forgotten politician came in to offer himself as a recruit.

For a month the colonel did not go out of the hotel. He was up early and at work, his cigar in his mouth, dictating letters, sending telegrams, receiving callers. When he slept, no one knew. He never had his hat off. He ate his meals from a tray in his room, after the food had grown cold. His headquarters recalled pathetically the old days when his power and supremacy were unquestioned. They were crowded day and night with the back-numbers and the soreheads Baldwin had talked about, who came with their grievances, their impossible schemes, their paltry ambitions. Of such stuff the colonel had to make his machine, flattering, threatening, wheedling, soothing jealousies, reconciling discordant factions, healing old animosities, inflaming new hatreds, keeping up spirit in faint hearts, leaving not a wire unpulled. He appointed a steering committee, on which were Mosely, of Alexander; Garwood, of Kankakee; Harkness, of Macoupin, and Malachi Nolan; he wrote personal letters to old friends in every school district in the state, and thus, slowly, patiently, laboriously welded his organization together. What he most needed was funds, and a candidate to provide funds; lacking them, he insisted that this was not a movement for the profit of any one man, but for the good of the party alone, and so invested it with the enthusiasm of what passes for patriotism in a nation where party is set above country. He told the landlord of the Grand that he

would be responsible for the rent of the two rooms he had engaged next his own. He already owed the landlord.

The night before the primaries a crowd, foul with the reek of tobacco, alcohol and perspiration, was shuffling about in the hall and anterooms of the colonel's headquarters. The crowd was noisy, profane and confident. But inside, the steering committee was assembled, and it was very sober. Garwood, at the littered table, had been scratching his head over political equations.

Conventions had been held in all the thirty-six outside districts, and sixty-nine candidates had been nominated, fifty-five representatives and fourteen senators. Of these they could depend upon twenty-nine. It requires fifty-two to control a legislative caucus, when the party has a bare majority on joint ballot, so they would have to nominate at least twenty-three of their candidates in Cook County to get a caucus majority, assuming the ultimate election of them all. Fifty-seven candidates were to be selected in Cook County on the morrow. Of them, they should name at least thirty-five to be entirely safe. In other words, they must carry Cook County.

"Is that countin' hold-over senators?" asked Mosely, when Garwood was done.

"Yes, counting the hold-overs—Warren claims fourteen out of the seventeen."

"Josh Badger never'll vote for him," said Mosely.

"He gives us Josh," Garwood replied. "Bates and Halliday are uncertain."

"Not so damned uncertain," said Mosely. "They're only waitin' to be seen."

"Warren'll get them easy enough," said Harkness.

"Yes, they're cheap," Mosely assented, spitting across the room at an iron cuspidor. "'Bout eight dollars apiece, I'd guess 'em off at," he added, with a poor man's contempt for low prices.

"Well, that only makes it worse," replied Garwood. "But leave them out entirely. With sixty-two votes Warren can control the caucus—"

"Providin' al'ays, however," suggested Mosely, in statutory language.

“Oh, course,” assented Garwood, petulant from the heat and the situation, “they won’t all be elected. That’s why he’ll work like hell to carry Cook. He lies when he says he doesn’t give a damn how she goes to-morrow.”

“He always does that,” said the colonel, from his bed.

Carroll, to whom political calculations savored always of the mystery of higher mathematics, said:

“Seems to me you could figure it better than that.”

“Well, you try it,” said Garwood, dropping his pencil and tilting back in his chair.

There was not much hope, and the soberness deepened. After a while there was a knock on the door, and a shaven head was thrust in.

“Them lit’ry guys is out here,” said the shaven head. “Any figur’s to give out?”

“Figur’s?” cried Mosely. “We’ve got th’ official vote!”

And Garwood, taking his papers from the table, went out and said to the reporters:

“Conventions have been held in all the senatorial districts down the state, and sixty-nine candidates are already nominated. Of these sixty-nine, we have beyond any question”—he consulted his paper, as if to make sure of the number—“we have fifty-three, and that doesn’t include the nine hold-over senators who are with us. We can lose ten of them at the polls and still have enough to control the caucus. In Cook County, to-morrow, we’ll carry the First, Third, Fifth, Sixth, Ninth, Eleventh, Seventeenth, Nineteenth, Twenty-first, Twenty-third and the country towns—the Seventh—giving us thirty-five more candidates, or ninety-seven in all. This is a conservative estimate, and gives the doubtful districts to Warren. We can lose Cook to-morrow and still have a fighting chance to win out. I regard the battle as ours. Senator Warren is defeated.”

“Over at the Richelieu,” said Cowley, of the *News-Despatch*, “Baldwin claims they have you whipped to a standstill.”

“They’re welcome over there to any comfort they can get out of the situation,” said Garwood in a superior way.

It rained on the day of the primaries. All morning politicians, big and little, stamped into Senator Warren's hotel on Michigan Avenue, or stamped into the Grand, tracking with greasy mud the muslin that had been stretched over the carpet in Colonel Talbott's headquarters. The polls were to open at one o'clock. The colonel had risen early, after three hours' sleep, and snatched his breakfast from a tray, talking to Carroll between bites. All morning he was buttonholed by men who scuffled for a word, complaining that Warren's fellows would have money to burn, and he fought with them, bill by bill, for the few dollars he had in his pocket. He was only liberal, to the extent that his slender campaign funds permitted liberality, with those who were to work in Carroll's district. As the day wore on and he received reports and despatched orders, like a general fighting a battle, the colonel's spirits rose, and the politicians, when he ordered them sharply about, paused at the door to look back at him, pleased by the thought that this was the Colonel Talbott of the good old days.

It was a wicked battle they fought out at the polls that day. The Warren men had control of the party organization and named the judges and clerks. Inmates of lodging houses, and Lake Front hoboes, their rags steaming in the warm rain, were hauled from poll to poll in big moving vans, and voted wherever Warren needed votes and as often as he pleased. The city hall took a hand and furnished policemen in larger numbers than the primary election law intended, so that whenever an anti-Warren challenger challenged a vote he was hustled by officers, and if he resisted, bundled off to the Harrison Street police station and locked up on a charge of disturbance. Late in the afternoon reports coming from Halsted Street that the Fifth Ward was in danger, the colonel escaped from his headquarters and went into the trenches himself. Carroll never forgot the old man as he splashed from poll to poll that waning summer day, or stood in the drenching rain before a voting booth, waving back policemen, ordering men up to vote, threatening judges and clerks. He had never heard the old man swear before.

At seven o'clock the polls closed. Warren carried some of the districts, the opposition others. Both claimed the victory. It was left for the convention to decide.

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The colonel, for some reason, preferred not to get up the next morning, but opened his mail, read his papers, ate his breakfast, and finally held his morning levee, the last of the campaign, in bed. The politicians who had been waiting outside for an hour, grumbled at such indolence, and, when they were finally admitted to their leader's presence, suspected him of imitating the undemocratic luxuriousness of Senator Warren, who received his callers in bed every morning. But by nine o'clock they had received their final instructions and scattered to the conventions, and when Mosely and Garwood sauntered in from the breakfast-room, they found only a few stragglers, who lingered on in the hope of beer money, at least, for their imaginary services on this decisive day. Malachi Nolan, in black garments and white cravat, came presently, his big diamond flashing, his face shining and red from his dull razor, and then Carroll, at the sound of whose young step and fresh laugh the colonel succeeded in evoking a wan, tired smile.

"Just lazy, that's all," he declared reassuringly, seeing Carroll halt in surprise. He reared himself on his elbow, and as he raised his head, its white hair all tangled, Carroll saw how haggard he was. He never had seen him look so old, so white, so worn, before.

"I was waiting for you," said the colonel, indicating Nolan with a finger that was like a claw. "I've fixed everything but the First District." He paused for breath. "The First Ward's solid, isn't it? Well, all right. But watch Donahue. I'm sorry we ever let him get on the delegation. And then, let's see"—he pressed his brow in a troubled effort to steady his senses—"oh, yes. See McGlynn and have him lay down on Hardy, and tell Reinhold that if he wants that job from the South Park board he'd better get in line, and as to Wright—his brother's a conductor on the Cottage Grove line, and you can get at him through Harlow. Tell him I sent you. That'll give you thirty-five votes on the first ballot, and—"

Carroll, who had turned to reply to some jest of Mosely's, heard a groan. Instantly he looked back at the colonel. The old politician, his face livid, was struggling as if he wished to get out of bed. He writhed a moment, then his head nodded, his chin dropped to his breast, and he collapsed in a heap, among the tumbled bedclothes. Carroll paled with a sudden sickness.

"He's fainted," said Garwood, fumbling at the throat of the colonel's shirt. Malachi Nolan brought a cup of water, Mosely hunted impatiently for a

flask of whisky, and when they had straightened him out upon his pillows, Carroll ran for the hotel physician. The colonel recovered consciousness before the physician came and glanced around with an expression of embarrassment.

“Damn such a heart, anyway,” he said. Then young Doctor Lambert came with his new stethoscope. When the doctor had finished his auscultation, the colonel said:

“Malachi, vote your delegation solid every time—don’t give complimentary votes—it’s dangerous. And remember—I don’t care what happens so long as Carroll’s nominated, trade anything, everything for that, and send me word—”

But they hushed him.

At noon Doctor Foerder, the specialist, arrived.

“Ah, Lambert,” he said, scowling about him as he put down his tremendous leather valise, big with the mysterious contrivances of modern surgery, pulled off his gloves, and with his quick, professional tread, stepped to the bedside. He exposed the colonel’s big chest, and began a delicate percussion with his white fingers. When he had done tapping, he laid his ear over the colonel’s heart, and listened silently a long time to the cardiac murmurs, he rolled under his fingers the superficial vessels of the temples, the forearms, the wrists, the knees, he counted the pulse; and he looked long at the old man’s finger-nails. When he paused, the colonel said:

“Well?”

Doctor Foerder had retreated from the bedside and was writing his directions precisely, logically, as an official draws up a report, beginning each paragraph with a Roman numeral. He did not answer the colonel.

Foerder briefly consulted with Lambert, that is, repeated the directions he had already written out, and began to buckle his big valise.

“And as to a nurse?” asked Doctor Lambert.

“I’ll send one of my own,” said Foerder, hastily lighting a Russian cigarette. He could not remain long in one place. He had patients to see and a lecture to deliver over at Rush Medical College and his man was waiting with his high-hooded phaeton down in Jackson Boulevard.

The nurse, diffusing a faint odor of antiseptics, came from Doctor Foerder's private hospital, laid aside her bonnet and veil and pausing an instant to give a woman's touch to her hair, quietly and deftly set the room in order.

All that afternoon the colonel lay in his darkened bedroom, fighting the battle of his life. He lay so still that the nurse almost fancied him asleep, so regular was his breathing. Once he broke the silence by asking the time.

"Twenty minutes after three," the nurse responded, glancing at her little watch.

"Some of the conventions, then," the colonel said, "are over. I wonder why they don't send me word."

The nurse did not notice his speech, and he added:

"Pardon me, you doubtless are not interested in politics."

The talking brought on a spasm of dyspnoea, and the colonel struggled so painfully for his breath that the nurse had to prop him up with pillows in a sitting posture, as those who are afflicted with asthma pass their nights, finding it easier thus to breathe. The colonel begged the nurse's pardon, as if he had committed some indelicacy.

About this time news was brought from the Fifth District convention in Arlington Hall and from the Sixth in Jung's Hall, that the Warren men had carried both districts. The colonel, hearing the hoarse whispering between the messengers and Mosely in the room outside, demanded information, and Doctor Lambert had to tell him. The colonel wished to see Mosely, he had some new plan for the West Side to offset their loss; and he saw Mosely and the plan was put in execution. Then the colonel seemed once more to sleep. When he opened his eyes he asked if he could not have a cigar—"seegar," he pronounced it—assuring the nurse that he felt much better, but she said, as one might say to the whim of a child to whom explanations are not vouchsafed:

"Not just now."

And there was silence again, and the ticking of the nurse's little watch.

By four o'clock the colonel became restless once more, and asked if there were any news. When the nurse said no, he insisted that there must be some message, some letter, some telegram. He did not know that his followers,

vindicating all history, were now standing afar off. He worried and grew incoherent. He seemed to confuse Carroll with the boy who was sleeping under the stars far away in Arizona.

Doctor Foerder returned at four o'clock. He had not been expected before evening, but he was interested in the case. He had mentioned it in his lecture that day. He had commented on the wonderful display of vitality on the patient's part, and spoken of the value in such cases of moral treatment, of encouraging words and a confident manner. He read the nurse's chart, counted the colonel's pulse for fifteen seconds and calculated the rate by multiplication, drew down the old man's eyelids, noting the senile arc that was whitening the periphery of the cornea, and he examined the fingernails; then the percussion and the auscultation. When he raised his black head, the colonel said:

"Any news?"

"You're doing well."

"Aw!" said the colonel impatiently, "I don't mean that—any news from the conventions?"

Foerder hesitated, as if half reluctant to display interest in anything so human, but said:

"Yes."

"What?" said the colonel eagerly, his eyes brightening with a light that alarmed the doctor.

"They say you've carried some districts on the North Side."

"Which ones?" asked the colonel.

"Don't remember."

"Anything else?"

"Well, they say Warner has carried some North Side districts, too—and some West Side districts."

"Warner?"

"Well, whatever his name is."

Then Foerder was silent, and the colonel lay a long time thinking.

“Did you learn how it’s going in the Ninth, or the Second, or the Seventeenth?”

“They say it’s about an even break everywhere.”

“And how’s the First?” The colonel put this question in a whisper, as if he feared the answer. The doctor did not know. Then the silence again, and the colonel’s labored breathing, and the ticking of the nurse’s little gold watch.

“What district do you live in, Doctor?” the colonel asked later.

“I?” replied the medical man in some surprise.

“Yes.”

“I—why, I don’t know,” he said.

The colonel faintly smiled. “Where do you live, then?”

“In Drexel Boulevard.”

“That’s the Fifth,” the colonel said. “Warren carried that.”

“Did he?” The doctor looked as if he were ashamed. “We mustn’t talk any more just now.”

Foerder remained until evening, pacing the anteroom, his hands behind him, his lips twitching in his involuntary smile. Now and then he took a turn in the long, dark, softly carpeted hall, to smoke a cigarette. At times some politician would come with a scared face and inquire about the colonel, and the doctor always demanded news of the battle, before he answered the questions. The reports brought by the politicians were not encouraging, and they hurried outside again. Their visits, as the afternoon waned, became fewer. Even Mosely and Garwood had been glad of the exciting excuse offered by the First District convention in Italia Hall down Clark Street to escape from the shadowed headquarters. At six o’clock no one had been there for an hour, save some sympathetic bell-boys and porters from downstairs, and Carroll, of course—he came every half-hour from the convention, disheveled, bathed in perspiration, his eyes burning with excitement and suspense. Foerder would not allow him to see the colonel, who lay behind the white door, his eyes half closed, too weak any longer to whisper.

At seven o'clock the reporters came, and Doctor Foerder, as they put it, issued a bulletin.

"He's alive," the doctor said, "pulse 120 to 124, respiration 22 to 26, temperature 98. His remarkable nerve alone sustains him. He's making the most magnificent fight I ever saw in all my life—have you heard anything from the convention?"

"They're all over but the one in the First District," one of the reporters said, while they scribbled down the physician's figures. "It all depends now upon what that does. It's the worst fight ever known in Chicago. They say Warren has spent twenty-five thousand to-day."

"Does it look as if he could be elected there—in the First, you know?"

The reporters smiled and winked one at another.

The colonel lay like one asleep, until far along in the evening. Once or twice he opened his eyes and looked an inquiry into the doctor's eyes, but Foerder could only shake his head. And once or twice he muttered something about Baldwin, and was troubled that they could not understand. Then he sank into a state of coma, and the news for which all were waiting would not come.

Doctor Foerder was for ever glancing at his watch and asking Lambert how he thought the First District convention would turn out. Lambert had no idea.

"I hope we'll win," Foerder would say. Finally he sent Lambert down for news. Lambert hurried back. They had taken forty-six ballots, he said, and the vote was tied. At ten o'clock Doctor Foerder examined the colonel again, examined his eyes, his finger-nails, drummed on his chest, listened to his heart.

"You're magnificent!" he could not refrain from whispering, but his patient did not answer or look, or even smile this time. He was growing very weak. His breathing was faint, he inhaled the air through livid lips. He did not arouse from his stupor.

Doctor Foerder got very impatient. "We can't wait much longer," he said.

"It's all we can do, now," said Lambert.

Foerder went outside. The anteroom was deserted. The politicians came no more. He would sit down, then instantly get up, walk back and forth; his eyebrows knitting in his scowl, his lips twitching in that mirthless smile. And he smoked cigarette after cigarette. He did this for an hour.

Along toward midnight he heard a step. Flying to the door, he saw Carroll, dragging down the hall with the step of defeat and exhaustion. The boy's hair was matted under his hat, his eyes were dull, sunken, black as night.

"Licked," he said, waving his hands with a gesture of despair, as if the world had come to an end. Foerder went inside, leaving Carroll to sink into the first chair. But a moment later the physician opened the white door, and beckoned with his head. The motion was conclusive, final. He held the door ajar, and Carroll entered. The useless drugs had been pushed aside. The room was filled with the strange silence, the odor of death. Lambert stood at the window, looking out into the darkness. The nurse stood by the bed, waiting to perform her last office for the dying man.

Carroll timidly approached and looked down at the long form, scarcely outlined by the sheet, at the rigid head, at the great, waxen brow, at the little blue spheres formed by the closed eyelids, at the mouth slightly open beneath the white mustache with its tinge of yellow. Doctor Foerder was pressing his fingers to the colonel's wrist. The breathing had lost all human quality, it was but a series of automatic gasps, which, it seemed, would never end. Finally they grew shorter, at last they ceased, there was one faint inspiration, and Doctor Foerder, laying the thin old hand down upon the colonel's breast, said:

"It's all over."

There was silence for a whole minute. Then Doctor Lambert tossed up the window, and Carroll heard, in the street below, a crowd shuffling over the sidewalk, a crowd coming, as he knew, from the convention in Italia Hall. And suddenly from the crowd arose a raucous, drunken yell:

"Hurrah for Warren!"

## REFORM IN THE FIRST

THE senatorial convention in the First District was to convene at ten o'clock, in a dingy little hall in lower Clark Street, lighted by windows so long unwashed that they looked like ground glass. From the chandeliers, black and sticky with dead flies, shreds of tissue paper fluttered, relics of some boisterous fête an Italian society had given there long ago. The floor was damp in arabesque wrought by a sprinkling-can, for the janitor had sprayed water there to lay the dust he was too indifferent to remove. Perhaps a hundred chairs were set in amphitheatrical order, and before them stood a kitchen table, on which was a white water pitcher, flanked by a glass, thickened by various sedimentary deposits within.

In the saloon below, at nine o'clock, scores of delegates were already shuffling in the sawdust that covered the floor, holding huge schooners of beer in their hairy fists, gorging grossly at the free lunch table, with bologna, rank onions and rye bread. The foam of the beer clung to their mustaches, which, after each sip, they sucked between their lips. Most of them managed, at the same time they were eating and drinking, by a dexterous sleight-of-hand, to smoke cheap domestic cigars, and a cloud of white smoke rolled along the low ceiling. Each new arrival was greeted with some obscene but endearing epithet, and the room rang with laughter and profanity. A keg of beer had been provided by one of Conway's managers, and the bartender, wiping his hands on a dirty towel, was rid, so long as the keg lasted, of the responsibility of keeping account of drinks, and of ringing up the change on the cash register. At eleven o'clock the keg was empty, the free lunch table abandoned to the flies, and the delegates scuffled up the dingy stairs to the hall. Half an hour later the chairman of the senatorial district committee pounded the kitchen table with a leg of a broken chair, and shouted:

“The convention will be in order.”

This declaration made no impression upon the babel of voices, the laughter, the profanity, the noise of shuffling feet and scraping chairs. The delegates were scrambling to their places, seating themselves by wards. Reporters

flung themselves into seats at a second table and gazed about the room, noting who were there. The political men of the morning papers did not trouble themselves to take seats. They loafed among the politicians in a way superior to the reporters for the afternoon papers, as if they were politicians themselves, making history instead of recording it.

Meanwhile the noise did not abate, and the committeeman was growing red in the face. The morning was warm, and the room, already cloudy with tobacco smoke, was filling with a noisome human odor. The atmosphere was feculent. Delegates removed their coats, hanging them over the backs of their chairs. Finally the chairman of the committee, growing impatient, split the table with his club and yelled:

“Damn it all, boys, come to order!”

And then, eager to resign such a difficult command, he hastened to announce:

“The committee has named Honorable John P. Muldoon to act as temp’ry chairman.”

He handed the chair leg to John P. Muldoon, who, stroking back his curly hair from his brow, began to beat the table impartially.

All this while Underwood stood against the wall, looking on. The question that had been agitating him for weeks was about to be decided, but now that the ordeal was actually upon him, the consciousness beat numbly against his brain, so that the whole scene lacked reality, almost interest. He was dazed. He was about to take his baptism of political fire, and he trembled like a white novice.

Underwood belonged to one of the oldest families of Chicago—the name had been known there before the fire. His father, who had lately taken him into his law firm, continued to cling in his conservatism to an old stone house in Michigan Avenue long after his neighbors had abandoned their mansions to uncertain boarders, and either retreated farther south or advanced to the North Side. John Underwood had come out of Harvard with a young lawyer’s ambition in politics, an ambition that had the United States senate merely as a beginning of its home stretch, and when the year rolled around in which state senators were to be elected in the odd numbered districts he decided that it was time to begin.

The newspapers had scented the sensation that lurked in the candidature of a young man like Underwood in a district like the First, and because he was rich, because he wore good clothes, because he went into what is called society, promptly dubbed him a reformer, and thus weighted he had set out upon his race for the nomination. He liked to see his name in the newspapers, liked to think of himself as a reformer, though he was embarrassed in this attitude by the fascinating figure of the political boss he had hoped to become—a well-dressed, gentlemanly boss, of course, who, while at home in those saloons where he permitted the convivial familiarity of the boys, nevertheless took his luncheons at his club. He fell into a way of speaking of the First as “my district,” spoke of it, in fact, as if he, instead of Malachi Nolan and “Cinch” Conway, owned it, and when certain ward politicians in the first days of the campaign called upon him, Underwood was pleased to lend them money, just as he was pleased to comply with the requests of certain others who organized the John W. Underwood First Ward Campaign Club, and sent a committee to inform him that they were assembled in the club rooms ready to transact business, and beer only four dollars a keg. He winked confidentially at himself in the mirror that night as he gave a final touch to his white cravat and surveyed his fine young form arrayed in evening clothes for the reform banquet at the Palmer House. His speech was *The Tendencies of Modern Politics*. The newspapers said it was a very brilliant speech, breathing lofty political sentiments that were bound to make John W. Underwood votes. Also, the Reform Club indorsed his candidature.

As Underwood leaned against the greasy wall of the little hall on lower Clark Street this morning, the whole campaign flashed before him, just as the events of a lifetime are said in books to flash before the mind of a drowning man. He recalled every vivid detail of the call Baldwin had made upon him, how he entered his private office without troubling the pale, pimpled office boy to announce him, how he lifted from his carefully parted hair his straw hat with its youthful band of blue, and laughed out, “John, my boy, how are you? Hot, isn’t it?” He could see Baldwin as he sat in the solid oak chair that stood intimately beside his roll-top desk, fanning his ruddy face with the hat, which had impressed a broad red band on his forehead. Underwood had been glad enough to close *Cooley on Taxation* and revolve his chair to face Baldwin, just as if he had been a client, for Baldwin was the most important politician who had ever called upon him professionally.

Underwood remembered clearly how Baldwin's excellent teeth glistened when he smiled, how he lighted a Turkish cigarette and, tilting up his chin, blew a long, airy stream of blue smoke through the thick hairs of his mustache. He could even remember how carefully Baldwin sheltered the flame of the match for Underwood's cigarette, in that curious spirit of economy men always practice with regard to matches, much as if there were only one match left in the whole world. And then he could recall almost word for word their conversation. Baldwin had frankly told him that Conway had him handicapped, because he had the city hall with him and controlled the Fifth Ward. Simmons, Baldwin had said, didn't cut much ice; he had some labor leaders with him, and would get a bunch of delegates from his own ward, but that was about all. In fact, said Baldwin, concluding his judicial summing up, Conway could win out, hands down, if it were not for his recent quarrel with Malachi Nolan. Underwood remembered that during all this frankness he had reflectively drawn rude little geometrical figures on an envelope and had been somehow afraid to look up at Baldwin, for the noted lobbyist had sat there transfixing him with an eye that could read the mind of a man when it was impinged on politics—that is, practical politics—as easily as it could a poker hand across a table stacked with blue chips.

He knew Baldwin had come with some practical proposition, and when the lobbyist suggested that he was too respectable, and would run better in some residence district, that the boys looked upon him as a reformer, and that the silk stockings were not practical enough to help him, Underwood had felt that at last it was coming. It was simple enough. Baldwin had been talking that very morning about Underwood's candidature to Mr. Weed of the Metropolitan Motor System, and to Mr. Peabody, president of the Gas Company, and they had been very much interested. They had an anxiety to see good men nominated that year, for they had large business interests that were more or less affected by legislation, and had feared they would have to settle on Conway. Conway had experience in legislative matters, and had been friendly enough in the city council, yet they felt they could hardly trust him—he was such a grafter, and in such things, Baldwin blandly assured Underwood, they had to depend upon a man's honor alone, and so they had sent Baldwin to suggest that Underwood meet them at luncheon, and talk matters over. Baldwin, with his love of ease and luxury, had preferred a dinner over at the Cardinal's in the evening, but Mr. Peabody had

something on hand with the trustees of his church and couldn't meet them then. Baldwin had taken out his watch at this point, with the air of a man who suddenly remembers some important engagement—the details all came back with a fidelity that was painful—and stood awaiting Underwood's reply, with the open watch ticking impatiently in his palm.

Of course, Underwood had understood—and he wished ardently to be nominated and elected. He could see himself swinging idly in a big chair behind a walnut desk in the senate chamber, just as an actor sees himself, with an artist's ecstatic, half-frightened gasp, in some new part he is about to study. The position would give him much importance, he would be riding back and forth between Chicago and Springfield on a pass, it would be so pleasant to be addressed as senator, to be consulted, to head delegations in state conventions and cast the solid vote for any one he pleased; besides, it would be a good training for Washington, he could practise in oratory and parliamentary law just as he practised on friendless paupers over in the criminal court when his father influenced some judge to appoint him to defend an indigent prisoner. It meant only one little word, he could be wary of promises. His heart had expanded, he had turned half around in his chair to face Baldwin, when suddenly the reformer within him rose to object, pointed to his ideals, rehearsed the speech on *The Tendencies of Modern Politics*, recalled all the good words the independent papers had spoken of him, urged the beauty of great sacrifices for principle. At the idea of self-sacrifice, Underwood had felt a melting self-pity, he admired himself in this new rôle of a self-sacrificing reformer. And so he flung the cigarette out of the window, watched it whirl down to the melting tar of the roofs below and said firmly:

“I have an engagement this morning, Mr. Baldwin. I'm sorry, but I guess I can't come.”

Once more Underwood saw the pleasantness leave Baldwin's face, saw him fleck a flake of ash from the white waistcoat he wore with his summer suit of blue, and snapping the lid of his watch shut, he once more heard him say in a final and reproachful tone:

“Well, all right; sorry, my boy.”

Underwood wondered that morning in the noisy convention hall, whether, if he had the decision to make over again, he would decline such influence. It

had been the cause of much doubt and some regret at the time. The boss within him had protested—surely it was a political mistake—and the boss was louder than the reformer, and more plausible. He came forward with a brilliant scheme. He recalled Baldwin's reference to the rivalry between Nolan and Conway. Underwood remembered that when he suggested the possibility of Nolan's running for the nomination himself, Baldwin had shaken his head—there wasn't enough in it, he said. Nolan could do very much better in the council, where he was. Besides, Mr. Weed and Mr. Peabody disliked him.

Underwood thought out his scheme that afternoon, while hunting in the digest for cases in point to be cited in a case his father was preparing for the appellate court. The work of looking up cases in point, while its results are impressive and seem to smell of the lamp, had in reality grown quite automatic to Underwood, and as he loafed over digests and reports and jotted down his notes, he elaborated the scheme, just what he would say and do, how he would appear, and so forth. And so, when he entered Malachi Nolan's place in Dearborn Street, early that evening, he was fully prepared. The details of this incident came back just as the details of Baldwin's visit had done—the empty saloon, the alderman himself leaning over his bar, his white apron rolled into a big girth about his middle, the cigar in the round hole at the corner of his mouth gone out, denoting that it was time for him to go down the alley to Billy Boyle's and get his porterhouse and baked potato.

Underwood watched Malachi Nolan mix his Martini cocktail, splash it picturesquely into a sparkling glass and bejewel it with a Maraschino cherry, then gravely take a cigar for himself and stow it away in his ample waistcoat. Then, as Nolan mopped the bar with professional sweep of his white-sleeved, muscular arm, Underwood unfolded his brilliant scheme, skirting carefully the acute suspicions of an old politician. But Nolan mopped, blinking inscrutably, at last putting the damp cloth away in some mysterious place under the counter. The fat Maltese cat, waiting until the moisture on the bar had evaporated, stretched herself again beside the silver urn that held the crackers and the little cubes of cheese. Still Nolan blinked in silence, like a hostile jury with its mind made up, until at last, in desperation, Underwood blurted out his proposition. Nolan blinked some more, then, half opening his blue Irish eyes, grunted:

“Well, I like your gall.”

Underwood’s spirits fell, yet he was not disappointed. It was, after all, just what he had expected. It served him right for his presumption, if nothing more—though the subdued reformer within had hinted at other reasons. He hung his head, twirling his empty glass disconsolately. He did not see the light that twinkled in the blue eyes, he had not then known how very ready Nolan was to form any combination that would beat Conway and Baldwin, especially with a reformer like himself who had money to spend on his ambitions. He had not discerned how badly the man whom the newspapers always cartooned with the First Ward sticking out of his vest pocket, needed a reformer in his business, as the saying is. Hence his glad surprise when Nolan wiped his big hand on his apron like a washer-woman and held it out, saying:

“But I’m wit’ ye.”

Then the campaign, under Nolan’s management, in the most wonderful legislative district—a cosmopolitan district, bristling with sociological problems, a district that has fewer homes and more saloons, more commerce and more sloth, more millionaires and more paupers, and while it confines within its boundaries the skyscrapers, clubs, theaters and hundred churches of a metropolis, still boasts a police station with more arrests on its blotter than any other in the world. Night after night, with Nolan’s two candidates for the house, he spent in saloons where a candidate must treat and distribute his cards that the boys may size him up; lodging houses and barrel houses in lower Clark Street, where sweating negroes and frowsy whites drank five-cent whisky with him; blazing saloons along the levee, where even the poor, painted girls at the tables lifted their glasses when he ordered the drinks for the house; crap games and policy shops in lower Clark Street, the Syrian, Arabic, Chinese and Italian quarters down by the squalid Bad Lands, and at last a happier evening along the Archey Road. Underwood had three weeks of this, and as he stood in the convention hall that morning, unwashed, unshaven, his linen soiled, his shoes muddy, his own friends would not have known him, though he cared little enough for this now—they had all forgotten to go to the primaries the day before, and those for whom he had sent carriages had been too busy, or too respectable, to respond. The taste of bad beer and the scorch of cheap cigars still

smacked in his mouth—indeed, he did not get them entirely out until he came back from Mt. Clemens two weeks after the nomination.

But they were balloting for permanent chairman now. It would be a test vote; it would disclose his own strength and the strength of Conway. He looked over the red faces before him. He saw Conway himself moving among the delegates, snarling, cursing, quarreling with the friends of years; he saw Conway's candidate for the house, McGlone, over in the Second Ward delegation, his coat off, a handkerchief about his fat neck, a fuming cigar between his chubby fingers, turning on his heavy haunches to revile some man who was numbered with Nolan's crowd; he saw in the First Ward delegation, Malachi Nolan, clean-shaven, in black coat and cravat, his iron gray hair cropped short, calm alone of all the others. He would have looked the priest more than the saloon-keeper, had he smoked his cigar differently. Now and then he solemnly raised his hand, with almost the benediction of a father, to still the clamor of his delegation, which, with its twenty-one votes, was safe at all events for Underwood.

Muldoon was Conway's man—they would try to make the temporary organization permanent. D'Ormand was Underwood's candidate. And Muldoon won. Underwood had lost the first round.

The candidates for senator were to be placed in nomination first. Underwood stood in the crowded doorway and heard Conway's name presented. Then, in the cheering, with his heart in his sanded throat, he heard the chairman say:

“Are there any other nominations?”

There was a momentary stillness, and then he heard a thick, strong voice:

“Misther Chairman!”

“The gentleman from the First Ward.”

“Misther Chairman,” the thick, strong voice said, “I roise to place in nomynation the name of wan—”

It was the voice of Malachi Nolan, and Underwood suddenly remembered that Nolan was to place his name before the convention. He listened an instant, but could not endure it long. He could not endure that men should see him in the hour when his name was being thus laid naked to the world.

Reporters were writing it down, perhaps the crowd would laugh or whistle or hiss. Besides, candidates do not remain in the convention hall; they await the committee of notification in some near-by saloon. He squeezed through the mass of men who stood on tiptoes, stretching their necks to see and hear the old leader of the First Ward, and fled.

The first ballot was taken—Conway, 31; Underwood, 30; Simmons, the dark horse, 8; necessary to a choice, 35. The vote was unchanged for twenty-six ballots, till the afternoon had worn away, and the trucks had jolted off the cobblestones of Clark Street, till the lights were flaring and hot tamale men, gamblers, beggars, street walkers, all the denizens of darkness were shifting along the sidewalks, till the policemen had been changed on their beats, and Pinkerton night watchmen were trying the doors of stores, till Chinamen shuffled forth, and Jewesses and Italian women emerged for their evening breath of air, bringing swart and grimy children to play upon the heated flags. The hall was lighted, just as if some Italian festival were to be held there. The reporters' places at the table were taken by the men who did politics for the morning papers, themselves reduced at last to the necessity of taking notes. They brought reports of the results in other senatorial conventions held about town that day—it seemed to be assured that John Skelley had carried the country towns, Lemont, Riverside, Evanston, and so on. In certain west side districts this man had won, in certain north side districts that man had been successful. It looked as if the old gang was going to break back into the legislature.

And so the interest in this one remaining convention deepened, the strain tightened, the crowd thickened. The delegates, tired and sullen, shed their waistcoats, tore off their moist and dirty collars and settled down to an angry fight. The amphitheatrical arrangement of the chairs had long been broken. The ward delegations now formed circles about their leaders. The damp arabesques wrought by the janitor's superficial sprinkling-can had long since been superseded by arabesques of tobacco juice. The floor was littered with scraps of paper, the spent ballots with which the stubborn contest had been waged. The First Ward delegation was in a solid ring, and in the center of it sat Malachi Nolan, his elbows on his knees, tearing old ballots into tiny specks of paper and strewing them on the floor, but keeping all the while a surveying eye on the Fifth Ward delegation, now divided into two groups, one of which surrounded Howe, the other huddling about

Grogan, the lawyer, who, with disheveled hair, a handkerchief about his neck, stood glaring angrily at Nolan, his eyes shadowed by heavy circles telling of weariness and the strain.

Now and then the leaders made desperate attempts to trade, harrying Simmons, offering him everything for his seven votes. Simmons himself, in his turn, tried to induce each faction to swing its strength to him.

But the situation remained unchanged.

Once Nolan sent for Underwood and whispered to him. He thought he knew one or two Conway men who could be got very cheaply, but the boy shook his head—the reformer within him demurred—and yet he smiled sardonically at the reformer thinking of the primaries and the convention itself.

Then Malachi Nolan caught the chairman’s shifty eye and moved an adjournment until morning. But even as he spoke, Grogan scowled at Muldoon, shook his head at his followers, and the room rang with their hoarse shouts:

“No! no! no!”

Heartened by this confession of weakness on Nolan’s part, they kept on yelling lustily:

“No! no! no!”

They even laughed, and Muldoon smote the table, to declare the motion lost.

On the forty-seventh ballot, one of the Simmons votes went over to Conway, and there was a faint cheer. On the forty-eighth, one of the Simmons votes went to Underwood, and parity was restored. On the forty-ninth, Underwood gained another of Simmons’ votes—Nolan, it seemed, had promised to get him on the janitor’s pay-roll in the state house—and the vote was tied. This ballot stood:

	First Ward	Second Ward	Fifth Ward	Total
Conway	—	10	22	32
Underwood	21	4	7	32

The Simmons men were holding out, waiting to throw their strength to the winner. When the sixty-seventh ballot had been taken, Muldoon, squinting in the miserable light, at the secretary's figures, hit the table with the chair leg and said:

“On this ballot Conway receives 32, Underwood 32, Simmons 5. There being no choice, you will prepare your ballots for another vote.”

Just then one of the Conway men from the Second Ward left his place, and touched one of Nolan's fellows in the First Ward delegation—Donahue—on the shoulder. Donahue started. The man whispered in his ear, and returned to his delegation, keeping his eye on Donahue. Underwood looked on breathlessly. Nolan, revolving slowly, held his hat for every vote—last of all for Donahue's. The man dropped his folded ballot into the hat and hung his head. Nolan calmly picked the ballot out of the hat and gave it back to Donahue, who looked up in affected surprise.

“What's the trouble, Malachi?” he said as innocently as he could. He was not much of an actor.

“This won't do,” Nolan said, giving the ballot back to the man.

“It's all right, Malachi, honest to God it is!” protested Donahue.

“Thin I'll just put this wan in for ye, heh?” said Nolan, drawing another ballot from the pocket of his huge waistcoat and poising it above the hat.

The crowd had pressed around the First Ward delegation. The convention had risen to its feet, craning red necks, and out of the mass, Grogan cried:

“Aw, here, Malachi Nolan, none o' that now!”

Nolan turned his rugged face toward him and said simply:

“Who's runnin' this dillygation, you or me?”

“Well—none o' your bulldozing—we won't stand it!” replied Grogan angrily, his blue eyes blazing.

“You get to hell out o' this.” And so saying, Nolan dropped the ballot into the hat and turned to face the chair.

“Have you all voted?” inquired Muldoon.

“First Ward!” the secretary called.

Nolan squared his shoulders, not having looked in his hat or counted the ballots there, and said slowly and impressively:

“On behalf av the solid dillygation av the First Ward, I cast twinty-wan votes for John W. Underwood.”

“Misther Chairman! Misther Chairman!” cried Grogan, waving his hand in the air, “I challenge that vote! I challenge that vote!”

“The gentleman from the Fifth Ward challenges the vote—”

“Misther Chairman,” said Nolan, standing with one heavy foot on his chair and leveling a forefinger at Muldoon, “a point of order! The gintleman from the Fifth Ward has no right to challenge the vote av the First Ward—he’s not a mumber of the dillygation!”

“Let the First Ward be polled,” calmly ruled Muldoon. Nolan took his foot from his chair and stepped to Donahue’s side. Every man in the First Ward delegation, as his name was called from the credentials, cried “Underwood!” As the secretary neared the name of Donahue, Nolan laid his hand heavily on the fellow’s shoulder.

“Donahue!” called the secretary.

The fellow squirmed under Nolan’s hand.

“Donahue!”

“Don’t let him bluff you!” cried some one from the Fifth Ward.

“Vote as you damn please, Jimmie!”

“T’row the boots into ’im, Donnie!”

“Soak him one!”

“Take your hands off him, Bull Nolan!”

So they bawled and Donahue wriggled. But the hand of Nolan, like the hand of Douglas, was his own, and gripped fast. Grogan, his face red, his eyes on fire, leaped from his place in his delegation, and started across the chairs for Nolan. The big saloon-keeper gave him a look out of his little eye. His left shoulder dipped, his left fist tightened. Grogan halted.

“Vote, Jimmie, me lad,” said Nolan, in a soft voice.

“Underwood!” said Donahue, in a whisper. His weak, pinched, hungry face turned appealingly toward Grogan. His bleary eyes were filmy with disappointment.

“He votes for John W. Underwood, Mither Chairman,” said Nolan complacently. The vote was unchanged. The chairman ordered another ballot.

And then, all at once, as if a breath from a sanded desert had been blown into the room, Underwood was sensible of a change in the atmosphere. The air was perhaps no hotter than it had been for hours at the close of that stifling day, no bluer with tobacco smoke, no heavier with the smell borne in from Clark Street on hot night winds that had started cool and fresh from the lake four blocks away, a smell compounded of many smells, the smell ascending from foul and dark cellars beneath the sidewalk, the smell of stale beer, the ammoniac smell of filthy pavements, mingled with the feculence of unclean bodies that had sweated for hours in the vitiated air of that low-ceilinged, crowded room. It had a strange moral density that oppressed him, that oppressed all, even the politicians, for they ceased from cursing and from speech, and now sat sullen, silent, suspiciously eying their companions. It was an atmosphere charged with some ominous foreboding, some awful fear. Underwood had never felt that atmosphere before, yet, with a gasp that came not as an effect of the heat, he recognized its meaning.

A hush fell. Muldoon, his black, curly locks shining with perspiration, was leaning on his improvised gavel, his keen eye, the Irish eye that so readily seizes such situations, darting into every face before him.

And suddenly came that for which they were waiting. A man entered the hall and strode straight across the floor into the Fifth Ward delegation, into the group where the Underwood men were clustered about their leader. He wore evening clothes, his black dinner-coat and white shirt bosom striking a vivid note in the scene. He walked briskly, but his mind was so intent upon his pose that it was not until he had removed his cigarette from his lips and had observed Underwood, that his white teeth showed beneath his reddish mustache in the well-known smile of George R. Baldwin. He elbowed his way into the very midst of the Underwood men from the Fifth Ward, and

leading one of them aside, talked with him an instant, and then returned him, as it were, to his place in the delegation. Then he brought forth another, whispered to him for an earnest moment, and sent him back, with a smile and a slap on the shoulder. The third delegate detained him longer, and once, as he argued with him, the slightest shade of displeasure crossed Baldwin's face, but in an instant the smile replaced it, and he talked—convincingly, it seemed. Before Baldwin returned this man to his delegation, he shook hands with him.

The secretary was calling the wards, and Nolan had announced the result in his delegation. The Fifth Ward was a long while in preparing its ballots. There was trouble of some sort there, among the Underwood men. Nolan was urging, expostulating, cursing, commanding. The air was tense. It seemed to Underwood that it must inevitably be shattered by some moral cataclysm in the soul of man. Grogan's brow was knit, as he waited, hat in hand. The delegates voted. Feverishly, with trembling fingers, Grogan opened and counted the bits of paper. Then he sprang to his feet, with a wild, glad light in his face.

“Misther Chairman!” he cried, “the Fifth Ward casts twenty-five votes for Conway and four for Underwood!”

The three bolters in the Fifth Ward delegation sat with defiance in their faces, but they could not sustain the expression, even by huddling close together. They broke for the door, wriggling their way through masses of men, who made their passage uncertain, almost perilous. A billow of applause broke from the Conway men, and submerged the convention. Delegates all over the hall were on their feet, clamoring for recognition, but Malachi Nolan's voice boomed heavily above all other voices. His fist was in the air above all other fists.

“Misther Chairman!” he yelled, “I challenge that vote!”

“Misther Chairman!” yelled Grogan, “a point of order! The gentleman isn't a member of the Fifth Ward delegation and can not challenge its vote!”

“The point of order is well taken,” promptly ruled the chair. “The gentleman from the First Ward is out of order—he will take his seat.”

Men were screaming, brandishing fists, waving hats, coats, anything, scraping chairs, pounding the floor with them. There were heavy, brutal

oaths, and, here and there, the smack of a fist on a face. In the tumult, the five Simmons votes went to Conway. Muldoon was beating the table with his club and crying:

“Order! order! order!”

“To hell with order!” bawled some one from the First Ward delegation.

“On this ballot,” Muldoon was calling, “there were sixty-nine votes cast; necessary to a choice, thirty-five. James P. Conway has received forty votes; John W. Underwood, twenty-nine, and George W. Simmons”—he paused, as if to decipher the vote—“none. James P. Conway, having received the necessary number of votes, is therefore declared the nominee of this convention.”

Underwood was stunned. He staggered through the horrible uproar toward the door. He longed for the air outside, even the heavy air of lower Clark street, where the people surged along under the wild, dazzling lights, in two opposite, ever-passing processions. His head reeled. He lost the sense of things, the voices about him seemed far away and vague, he felt himself detached, as it were, from all that had gone before. But as he pressed his way through the crowd that blocked the entrance, and plunged toward the stairs, he saw Baldwin, mopping the red band on his white brow. Baldwin recognized him, and said, with his everlasting smile:

“Sorry, my boy—next time!”

## MALACHI NOLAN

MALACHI NOLAN sat by the roll-top desk in the front window of his saloon. The desk was unopened, for Malachi seldom had occasion to use it. The only letters he ever wrote were to whisky houses in Peoria or Louisville, and then the process was a painful one. His mighty haunches completely filled the chair, which, in turn, completely filled the space railed off in front of the partition that screened the bar. The saloon was in a basement in Dearborn Street, and, to get to it, you had to go down four stone steps, hollowed by countless feet in the long years he had kept there. Outside, over the door, a long, black sign bore his simple device—M. Nolan.

Malachi Nolan sat with his back to the window. His cropped gray hair showed his red scalp, the hard red skin on his face was closely shaven and shone on the points of his heavy jaw. In the round hole at the corner of his broad mouth was one of the long succession of cigars that had worn away the hole, sending up its perpetual incense. He never removed the cigar and seldom puffed it. It seemed to smoke of its own volition, and lasted a long time. When it consumed itself, Malachi replaced it with another. No one had ever seen him without a cigar in that hole at the side of his mouth. When he moved his thin lips to speak the cigar would stand out rigidly between his teeth. He spoke with his teeth clenched. He was in his shirt-sleeves, and his shirt was clean and fresh, for he changed his linen daily, just as he shaved himself, relentlessly, every morning with a dull razor. On his glossy shirt front a great diamond, four carats in weight, sparkled leisurely as his enormous chest slowly rose and fell with his heavy breathing. This diamond was the central jewel of his alderman's gold star, presented by constituents years before. The setting was so contrived that the stone could be unscrewed and made to serve as a stud. Malachi seldom wore the star, unless he went to a fire, or to a prize-fight across the Indiana line, or to the Olympic Theater, or got drunk.

As he sat there in his warm saloon on this raw March morning, Malachi read his paper, read it carefully and slowly, first the front page, column after

column, then the second page, and so on, methodically, through all the pages, except the editorials, which he skipped. His lips moved slightly as he read, for he had to pronounce the words to himself in order to get their full meaning. He read his paper thus every morning of his life, and his paper was all he ever did read.

Malachi sat this morning, as on every other morning of the year, heavy, imponderable and solemn. The hour was ten o'clock. It was too early for business to begin in that saloon, so that the old bartender, who had been with Malachi for fifteen years, sat with his apron in his lap, against the whisky barrels that reached in rows from the slot machine back to the wooden stalls where many a campaign in the city council had been planned and its victory celebrated. The bartender was likewise reading a paper, the sporting news chiefly claiming his attention. By noon, aldermen and city hall employees would begin to drop in, and the place would liven up, but now the monotonous ticking of the Western Union clock on the wall could be heard all over the long room, and the big Maltese cat snoozed lazily at one end of the bar.

Malachi was not feeling as well as usual this morning, though his exterior was as clean and calm as ever. A fever burned beneath his great waistcoat, and on coming down he had drunk a bottle of mineral water. The truth is, that the night before, Malachi had so far departed from the habit of his methodical life as to drink much whisky, a thing he had not done for years, ever since the occasion, in fact, when celebrating a reelection to the council, he had drunk so much that he was constrained to enter a barber shop in State Street, and terrorize the barbers by sticking all the razors in the floor, like a juggler he had seen playing with knives in a theater. The gang had been in the saloon until three o'clock that morning. They had just passed an ordinance granting a new franchise to the Metropolitan Motor Company, and in one of the walnut stalls the bundle had been cut, as the phrase is. The gang had grown so hilarious, as it always did on such occasions, that it had proposed a song by Malachi. Now, in his younger days, Malachi had been a great lad for song, and many a shindig in Bridgeport had he gladdened with his voice, but in the latter years it was seldom that he could be induced to exercise it. He would always plead his age and his flesh, and such was the solemnity of manner that had grown upon him with the years, that men in their sober hours never had the temerity to suggest anything so unbecoming

his dignity. But on this night, heated by wine, and feeling, though they did not of course analyze the feeling, that so many improprieties had been committed that one more could not noticeably swell the score, they had been emboldened to demand a song. Malachi, standing by his own bar in his long frock coat and square-crowned stiff hat, twiddling his whisky glass just as if he were a casual visitor there, had resolutely shaken his head. But at two o'clock in the morning he had suddenly ordered the drinks for the house, and then, when the gang had given over all hope of his singing, save, perhaps, one or two who, deeper in their cups than the rest, had monotonously persisted in the invitation, he had spontaneously burst forth:

“Oh, Paddy, dear, and did you hear the news that’s going round?  
The shamrock is forbid by law to grow on Irish ground.  
St. Patrick’s day no more we’ll keep, his colors can’t be seen,  
For there’s a bloody law ag’in the wearin’ of the green.  
I met with Napper Tandy, and he took me by the hand,  
And he said, ‘How’s poor old Ireland, and how does she stand?’”

And then the gang, unable to hold its enthusiasm, bellowed in chorus with the sadly cracked voice, which, nevertheless, retained the true old Irish lilt:

“She’s the most distressful country that ever yet was seen,  
They are hangin’ men and women for the wearin’ of the green.”

They had sung it over and over, prolonging to a greater extent with each repetition the high note upon which in the song the word “men” falls. Once in tune, it was not so difficult to get Malachi to sing other songs, and he gave them, with the genuine flavor of the old sod, *Garryowen*. The gang became uproarious when he reached the stanza:

“Johnny Connell’s tall and straight,  
And in his limbs he is complete,  
He’ll pitch a bar of any weight  
From Garryowen to Thomond gate.”

But the climax was reached when Malachi was at last induced to sing *The Night Before Larry Was Stretched*. This had taken time and diplomacy, for the more popular the song, the more difficult it was to prevail upon him to sing it, though at last he yielded, and the gang restrained itself as he began:

“The night before Larry was stretched,

The boys they all paid him a visit,  
A bit in their sacks too they fetched,  
They sweated their duds till they riz it:  
For Larry was always the lad,  
When a friend was condemned to the squeezer,  
But he'd fence all the togs that he had  
Just to help the poor boy to a sneezer,  
And moisten his gob 'fore he died."

The lagging last line was too much, and in their mad delight they began to pound Malachi familiarly on the back. And then he froze stiffly, drew himself up, ordered his cab and went home, and the song was never finished.

But now that morning had come and reason had returned with the light, he felt a chagrin at having suffered such a lapse in his dignity, and such a break in the resolution of years, and so was more solemn than ever.

When Malachi had read to the last line of the last column of the last page of his newspaper, he did not fold it and lay it aside as he did every other morning of the year. He turned to the first page and studied the picture there. It was the daily cartoon, and the central figure was intended for Malachi himself. That there could be no question of identity, the prudent artist had labeled it "Bull Nolan." The figure was one that Malachi had seen in the newspapers in varying situations for years, and the aldermanic paunch, with massive chain and charm, the bullet head, with its stubble of hair and bell-crowned hat, the checked and braided clothes, the broad-soled shoes and checkered spats, the briskly radiating lines to symbolize his diamond, were supposed to embody the popular conception of the alderman's personality. The inevitable cigar had fallen and lay fuming at his feet, the eyes and mouth gaped in palpable fear, and with a fat hand flashing other diamonds, this counterfeit presentment of Malachi Nolan was trying to protect the First Ward—peeping on a ballot from his waistcoat pocket—from a gentleman with high hat, side whiskers, gloves and cane, who, labeled "Citizen," obviously impersonated the better element. The point of the cartoon was that the Municipal Reform League had resolved that Malachi Nolan be retired from public life. The League had had a banquet, and the speeches had breathed a zeal of reform such as only champagne and truffles can inspire. The resolutions rang like a declaration of independence;

if the reform candidate, a gentleman of prominent probity, were beaten in regular convention, they would nominate him by petition.

Malachi studied the cartoon a long time, never changing expression, and when he finished, he folded the paper carefully and laid it on his desk, bestowed his spectacles in his waistcoat pocket, and then, placing a hand on each knee, sat and stared with widening eyes straight before him.

It was not a new experience to be thus caricatured. He had long since acquired a politician's stoicism and could affect a reassuring indifference to attacks of the press; indeed, if a newspaper happened to elude him and slip into Nora's hands, he could even pretend to like it. But this cartoon roused the fighting Irish in him.

Malachi had promised himself to retire from politics that spring, though his wary habit had kept him from taking the public into his confidence. He was rich, though not rich enough to give up saloon-keeping and become a contractor or a broker, and he had lately got the notion that he was growing old. But this successful politician, who so long before had landed in New York a homesick emigrant, had one great ambition unfulfilled. It was the common ambition of the exile—to see his home once more. When first elected to the council, after toiling years to save enough for his first small saloon, he had found, in the sentimental manner of his race, his chief joy in the fact that it was in the character of an ex-alderman he could go home to Ireland. Fate, of course, with her usual irony, had embittered his joy; Molly had died that very spring, she had not been spared even long enough to see him take his seat in the council chamber behind the one pathetic floral piece his constituents had placed upon his desk, but had left him to sit beside the candles at her wake, with lonesome little Nora crying at his knee. He felt that he had earned a rest. He had worked hard, mastered the intricate details of the water office and the special assessment bureau; he had done his part in making a town of wooden sidewalks a city of steel and stone; he had never betrayed his party or his friend. As for certain of his methods, well—if he thought of them at all—they were direct, and they won. So now that Nora was grown and had finished her education at St. Aloysius, he had decided to retire and take her with him on the long-dreamed-of trip back to Ireland—Ireland, where it was really spring that very morning.

But he wished to retire gracefully, to name his successor before he went, and how could he do this with the reformers making the fight of their lives against him? It would take Malachi Nolan some time to decide a question like that. He must think. Nora was young; after all, another term would make little difference; if he concluded to give some more lessons in practical politics to the reformers, she could take some more lessons on the piano.

Meanwhile, like a wise statesman, Malachi Nolan set about his day's work. He had enough to keep him busy, so, drawing out his gold watch he carefully compared it with the clock, grasped the hour, rose deliberately, settled his ponderous body on his thick legs, and withdrew behind the partition. When he emerged to view again he was wrapped in his frieze overcoat, with his square-crowned hat pulled down to his eyebrows, ready for his morning visit to the city hall.

His progress over the great building was constantly impeded by men who stepped out of the rushing throngs of lawyers and lawyers' clerks, city employees, court officials and politicians to shake hands with him, to whisper to him. He halted each time in a way that did not impair his Hibernian dignity, heard them with gravity, and walked on. He went to the water office to see why young Hennessey had been laid off; to the civil service commission to find out what opportunities the sixty-day list afforded; to the commissioner of public works to have some laborers put on the pay-roll; to the board of election commissioners to give in a list of certain constituents he desired to have appointed as extra clerks during the spring rush of work. He dropped in on the chief of police to get Murphy on the force; he saw the city clerk about a good fellow who had to be taken care of; he even followed the long hall to the court-house wing, where he whispered an instant to Judge Peters and had a friend excused from the jury.

And then he called on the mayor. A lieutenant of police, in gold stripes and stars, the velvet cuffs of his blue coat scrupulously brushed, was just going in. When the officer came out, the big policeman standing guard at the door raised his hand in a semi-military salute, and he kept a finger at his forehead until Malachi entered, thus declaring his abiding faith in the alderman's political star, and his concern for his own official one.

The mayor sat at his great, square desk, with that look of nervous weariness Chicago gives the faces of its successful men, though the morning was young and the day's strain scarce begun.

“Well, Alderman,” he said with a sigh, “what can I do for you?”

“Misther May’r,” said Nolan, “I come fer to ask a favor.”

The shade of weariness under the mayor’s eyes enveloped his brow, although he tried to wipe it out with his palm. Everybody came every day to ask favors.

“Now, Alderman,” he said, turning away fretfully, “I know. Please don’t ask me to interfere in your fight this spring. I’ll promise to keep hands off and leave you alone. Ain’t that enough?”

“Who said annything about my fight?” said Malachi. “It’s time enough to saay good marnin’ to th’ divil whin ye meet ’im, Jawn.”

The mayor looked a bit relieved, and turned toward Malachi with half a smile.

“Excuse me, Alderman, I supposed, of course—But what can I do for you?” He repeated his formula.

Malachi seated himself, and dangling his hat between his knees, he said:

“They’s a laad from my waard in the Bridewell, Jawn, an’ he’s a mother who’s wallop in’ a wash-board be th’ daay an’ night fer to make a livin’. His name’s James McGlone, an’ I’m afther a paardon fer ’im.”

The mayor scowled. “What’s he in for?”

“Damned if I know,” said Malachi; “he’s all the time in wan shcrape or anither with some o’ thim bla’gyaards down there.”

The mayor was turning a long blue pencil over and over, end for end, between his white fingers, making a series of monotonous tappings on his desk.

“Can’t you wait till after election?” he said at last.

“His time’ll be served out befoore that,” said Malachi, “an’ ph’at good’ll a paardon do ’im thin?”

The mayor continued the thoughtful tapping with his long blue pencil.

“Well, Alderman,” he said after a while, “I’d rather not issue any pardons before election, if I can help it. These reformers are going to raise hell this spring, sticking their noses into everybody’s business, and—”

Malachi’s little eyes contracted until their blue twinkle was almost hidden.

“But, Jawn,” he said, “so much the more r’ason why ye’ll want the Firsh in th’ convintion.”

“Oh, well,” said the mayor, “if it’s important—” And he pressed a button under his desk. Before his secretary appeared he added:

“You say you don’t know what he’s in for?”

“I dinnaw,” Malachi replied, “Mallett sint him up befoore I could git over.”

“You ought to watch those things more closely, Alderman,” chided the mayor peevishly.

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Malachi Nolan sat at twilight with a glass of hot toddy on the leaf of his desk, and he sipped it with heavy sighs, for he had taken cold out in the March weather, with pores opened by the relaxations of the night before. Through his windows he could see the lights glimmering in the rain that had followed the moist snow of the early morning, and thousands of feet trudging by under rolled-up trousers or skirts held ankle high. At intervals the feet would line up along the curb waiting for North Side cable-cars, and seeing them paddle in the dirty slush, Malachi in the selfish spirit of contrast, more than ever coddled in the warmth of the room, of the toddy over which he smacked his lips, and of the cigar he smoked so slowly and comfortably. As he sat and smoked and sipped, he thought again of Limerick—the breath of spring blows the fragrance of the hawthorne, white upon the bough; he hears the song of the mavis; he is walking homeward along the black path through the bog, and up the green boreen, and there before him is the little cottage, its thatch held down by sticks and stones, a long ash pole propping up its crumbling gable; there is the mud shed with the thills of the old cart sticking out of it; the donkey is standing by, sad as

ever; and up the muddy lane little Annie in her bare feet is driving the cows to the byre; and then he sees his mother sitting in the low doorway, all at once he catches his first whiff of the peat smoke, and with the strange spell that odors work upon the memory, it makes him a boy again; again he is sheltered on a rainy day in the mud shed, playing shoot-marbles with Andy Corrigan and Jerry O'Brien; again he is in the little chapel with the leaky roof; he sees all the boys and girls—Mary Cassidy among them—standing on the bare clay floor; he brings his bit of stone to kneel on during mass, he even runs out for a piece of slate to give to Mary, who lays it in the puddle at her feet and spreads her handkerchief over it before she kneels. And when the mass is over he will take little Nora—little Nora? He placed his hand to his forehead in confusion, and then in a gasp it all comes over him—Mary is old, Andy and Jerry are old, little Annie is old and he is old—they are all gone away. He bowed his head.

And yet Nora yearned to go. Should he turn the ward over to Brennan and take her this spring? He could run for the legislature when he came back in the fall; a senator would be elected by the next general assembly, and the graft would be very good then. The compromise attracted Malachi, for at once it acquitted him of indecision, a quality of statesmanship he hated, and kept for him the life of power that had become as the very breath of his nostrils. He would have been happy but for this stuffy cold, and even as it was he smacked his lips and fetched a long sigh, as he put down the glass.

And then the door opened, and a chill, wet wind blew in, causing him to start up out of his chair. He looked to see who it was that thus broke upon his reveries—and it was a woman! Now, a woman had never been in Malachi Nolan's place before. It was a thing he could never tolerate, if he could ever imagine it even, and he hastily glanced around to see how many men were at the bar, and who they were. His face showed positive alarm. But the woman entered. She was accompanied by a boy, who slouched in behind her, shutting the door at her solicitous command, and halted there, hanging his head. His eyes shifted suspiciously under the hat brim that shadowed his sallow, prematurely wrinkled face; his lips curled in an evil sneer that seemed habitual.

The woman fluttered her shawl about her shoulders, clutched it to her thin breast with one hand, while the other she stretched forth with a blessing, as it were, for Malachi, and as she spoke, her seamed and scarred old Irish

face, bleached in the steam of many wash-days and framed in withered black bonnet strings, glowed with the light of mother-love.

“Praise be, Mal’chi Nol’n,” she began, in a high voice that immediately stifled the clinking of glasses and the laughter behind the partition. “May God bless ye—ye’re th’ foinest man in th’ whole town! To think of yer l’avin’ th’ laad out th’ way ye did—an’ so soon afther me havin’ th’ impidence to ask ye, too—shure a mither’s blessin’ an’ th’ blessin’ of th’ Vargin’ll be on ye fer gettin’ th’ paardon fer ’im. Shtep up here, Jamesy, and t’ank Misther Nol’n yersilf—he’s th’ best man—”

“Aw, tut, tut, tut, now, Misthress McGlone,” said Malachi, his face flaming with something more than the exertion of craning his neck to peer behind the partition, “tut, tut, now, don’t be goin’ on like that.”

But the woman, brave in the one subject upon which she could dispute the alderman, persisted:

“Shure, Mal’chi Nol’n, ye know it yersilf—shtep up here, Jamesy, an’ make yer t’anks to ’im. Th’ laad’s a bit bashful, ye must excuse ’im, sor, he’s th’ best b’y ever lived, though it’s mesilf says it p’hat oughtn’t to.”

The boy still hung back, but the old woman hitching up the shawl that was shamelessly revealing the moth-eaten waist she wore, plucked him by the sleeve, and dragged him to the rail that separated them from Malachi. The boy jerked away from his mother’s grasp, yet lifted his unsteady eyes for an instant to blurt out:

“Well, I’m much obliged, see?”

And then, as if ashamed of so much politeness, he hung his head and squeezed the toe of his shoe between the spokes of the railing. The old woman folded her arms in the shawl and gazed on him with a fond smile that showed the few loose, yellow teeth that always wobbled in their gums when she spoke. Presently she turned to Malachi again:

“Ye mustn’t think haard o’ him, Misther Nol’n, he’s a bit back’ard shp’akin’ to th’ loikes o’ ye, ye moind, but he’s a good b’y, an’ he’d never got into throuble if it hadn’t been for this bad comp’ny he be’s dhragged into. Shure, he niver shtays out later’n tin o’clock o’ noights widout tellin’ me p’here he’s been. This afthernoon Oi was shcrubbin’ awaay all alone, an’ who

should come in all o' a suddint but him, bless th' b'y, an' saay, 'Ma,' he says, 'Alderman Nol'n got me a paardon an' Oi—'"

"That's all right, Misthress McGlone—"

"An' God'll bless ye, sor," the old woman broke in, unable to restrain the flood of tears that filled her filmy eyes and zigzagged down her cheeks. She cried softly a moment, then suddenly looked up in a crafty, cunning way.

"They's wan thing, Misther Nol'n," she said, "some wan was so good," she looked all about to make sure that none was within hearing, and lowered her voice to a rough whisper, "as to sind me a ton o' coal in a pushcart th' day. Oi wonder now who could that be?"

The alderman raised his heavy face with fine innocence.

"Where did it come from?" he asked.

"Misther Degan's yaards," the woman answered.

"Thin I suppose't was Degan himsilf sint it."

"Aw, there now!" the old woman cried, with the triumph of a vindicated prophet. "Oi knowed ye'd saay that, Oi knowed ye'd saay that—but, shure Oi think't was yersilf done it."

"L'ave off, l'ave off, now," said Malachi almost roughly, "'tis no place, do ye mind, fer a woman, an' no place fer th' laad." He gave the boy a penetrating glance that made the shifting eyes fall suddenly. "An' 'tis late—did ye come down on th' caar?"

The old woman's tears running down her cheeks had left stains in the wrinkles, and she began plucking at something under her shawl. Presently she drew forth a handkerchief folded in a soft little white square, fresh and clean from the iron, and shaking it out she dabbed at her weak old eyes and wiped away the tear stains. Her voice was a whisper again.

"Aw, Misther Nol'n," she began, "it's been a haard winther on the poor, an' Oi've had to save th' pinnies, shure they're scarce enough, an' th' laad with no job an' me a poor widow woman. God forgive me"—her voice sank still lower, and into the whisper came a hard, rebellious note—"but some noights Oi've gone without me supper—"

"But why didn't ye tell?" asked Malachi, looking up in concern.

“Oi’d die first!” she whispered hoarsely, while her wet eyes blazed. “It’ll niver be said Oi’m a beggar, an’ Oi wouldn’t have tould anny wan but you, sor”—she gave him a coaxing smile through her tears, and bent her head to one side in a way that seemed to recall her girlhood—“an’ maybe, sor, ye’d not saay annything ’bout it—there’s a good man, now. Oi’ve kep’ up th’ insurance an’ there’ll be enough to give me a dacent bur’al whin Oi die. Ye’ll excuse me fer”—she stretched a hand from the shawl and touched him on the shoulder—“fer runnin’ on loike this, but Oi couldn’t shlope th’ noight till Oi’d come down to thank ye—God bless ye, sor, Oi’ll pray fer ye every noight. We’ll be goin’ now.” She took a step toward the door, but turned back again, with that pleading inclination of the head, that smile, showing her long, wabbling teeth.

“Ye must excuse me, sor,” she said, “fer throublin’ ye so, but ye’re a koind, saft-hearted man—ye couldn’t git th’ laad a job now—shure Oi know ye couldn’t—he’s an hones’ b’y an’ a willin’ worker, sor, whin he can git annything to do—ye must excuse me, sor.”

Malachi was deeply chagrined. He actually got up and peeped again around the corner of the partition, and then said hastily, so as to close a painful and scandalous incident:

“Let th’ b’y come down an’ see me in th’ marnin’, ma’am, an’ here’s a bit o’ caar fare fer ye. Do ye go now an’ take th’ caar home. ’Tis a long waays fer ye to walk, ye niver ought a done it.”

The old woman objected at first, but finally consented to accept the coin on the basis of a loan, and then, blessing him again and again, courtesied herself in an old-fashioned, rheumatic way out of the door. And then Malachi tilted up his glass and drained the last drop. The toddy had grown quite cold.

The law of moral reaction sent the gang home early that evening, and by ten o’clock it was plain that the day’s work was done. Malachi had the bartender help him on with the frieze overcoat, and was adjusting his hat to a skull that still was sore, when the door opened. Malachi turned with a scowl, when the draft struck him, and saw Sullivan, the ward committeeman, and Brennan, Malachi’s political residuary legatee. Brennan’s eyes were sparkling merrily, his red face was round with laughter, and he came in with a breeze like the March day.

“Hello, Mal’chi,” he called, smiting the bar with the thick of his fist, “ain’t goin’ home, are you? It’s just the shank of the evening. What’ll you have?” Then, as one who likes to think he has special privileges, he said to the bartender aside: “Give’s a nice little drink of whisky.”

Malachi neither moved nor spoke. Brennan felt his coldness and flashed the intelligence to Sullivan.

“Just saw Jim Degnan,” he said, grasping the sweating whisky bottle.

“You did, did you?” said Malachi, in a challenging tone.

“Yes,” said Brennan, determined to be genial. “He tells me you’re goin’ back to Ireland in the spring.”

“He does, does he?” again challenged Nolan.

“Didn’t you tell ’im?”

“If I did, did I tell ’im phat spring?”

“Well, I s’posed as a matter of course he meant this spring.”

Brennan bent over to measure his drink and to hide some confusion. “And I thought—you know what you said, Mal’chi—I was goin’ to have Mike here call the convention and round up the nomination—”

“Th’ hell you was! Th’—hell—you—was!” Malachi’s growing amazement lengthened the pauses between his words.

“Why, didn’t you say you’d t’row the nomination to me when you quit?”

Brennan’s color deepened to an angry red.

“Did ye iver see such narve!” said Malachi, ignoring the question. “Mike’ll call th’ convintion fer soon enough, but whin I’m not a candydate in me own waard, I’ll tell ye mesilf, Willum Brennan.”

“Well, don’t get mad about it, Mal’chi,” said Brennan, who was getting mad himself. He shoved the bottle on to Sullivan, and blinked his small eyelids a moment. “Of course, Mal’chi, it’s just as you say.”

“Well, now, ye’re talkin’, Willum.” Malachi never could brook anything like interference in his ruling of the First Ward. “Whin I’m done, ye can have th’ nomination, same’s I told ye, but this spring I’m a candydate

mesilf, do ye mind that now?" He drew closer to the bar in his softened humor, and now that the question at last had been decided, and in the only way it could have been decided, he suddenly became himself again.

"When do you want the convention called for, Mr. Nolan?" asked Sullivan.

"Sathurday," replied Malachi promptly.

"Where?"

"Oh, same as usual—in the back ind of th' plaace here." Malachi jerked his thick thumb toward the rear end of the saloon, where the gloom was deep.

"Prim'ries fer Friday."

"All right," said Sullivan.

Then no one spoke for a while. Finally, however, Brennan said, in a hesitating way:

"If you're goin' back to the council, Mal'chi, what's the matter with me takin' the legislative nomination in the district?"

"It's time enough to saay good marnin' to th' divil whin ye meet 'im, Willum."

There was silence again, until Brennan said:

"Well, I can't help thinkin' it's a fine trip to Ireland you're losin'."

"'Tis so," assented Malachi.

"Yes," sighed Brennan. And he saw his ambition pass from him. But presently he was saying in his old, cheery tone:

"Ain't you goin' to take somethin'?"

Malachi leaned his big body against his bar, and over his shoulder, out of the corner of his mouth, he said:

"Seegaar."

The bartender slid the box along the counter and rang up another ten cents on the cash register.

"Well, here's lookin' at you," said Brennan, raising the little tumbler.

"Dhrink hearty," said Malachi Nolan.

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The long day was done, and Malachi, in shirt-sleeves and stockinged feet, sat in his big plush rocking-chair, his legs stretched out before him, taking his ease at his own hearth. When he had come home at midnight, Nora, who always sat up for him, had insisted upon brewing him a cup of tea, under the impression, common to a certain class of women, that it has great medicinal qualities. Malachi had sipped it obediently, though he had not cared for it after all the mineral waters he had drunk that day, and had enjoyed far more than the tea the freckled Irish face of his daughter, as he gravely goggled at her over the rim of the saucer into which he had poured the beverage to cool it. They were in what Malachi called the parlor of their flat, though Nora had lately taken to calling it the drawing-room. It was furnished mostly in pieces upholstered in plush. Over the mantelpiece hung a large crayon portrait of a woman whose face, despite the insipidity the canvassing artist had given it, still showed the toil she had endured, if it told little of her strong character, while that disregard for expense which was expressed in the gilt frame marked it as a memorial of the dead. It was, of course, the face of Malachi's wife, and when Nora, in her new culture, had hinted at hanging it in his bedroom, she had, for the first time in her life, quailed before that stubborn spirit with which her father ruled the First Ward. The few books on the center-table treated mostly of religious subjects, though there were queer bound volumes of Irish poetry, and on the wall there were one or two etchings in oaken frames. In a corner was a crucifix with a candle before it. But the one object in the room that dominated all the rest with its aggressive worldliness, was an upright piano, and Nora now sat swinging on the stool, her back to the instrument, her elbows behind her on the keys. She had partly prepared for bed, for she wore a flannel wrapper and her brilliant black hair hung in a braid down her back. Celtic blue eyes lighted up her face, and now they smiled under their long, black lashes upon this big saloon-keeper whom half the city feared, as if the simple sight of him were reward enough for her long hours of waiting.

Malachi finished his cup of tea and hurriedly inserted a cigar in the hole at the corner of his mouth, and thus confirmed in comfort, he said:

“Nora, child, do ye sing now—phat was that—it wint hummin’ t’rough me head th’ daay. Well, well, well, let me see now—hum-m-m-m—it goes

something like—”

And he hummed a quavering old tune:

“I saw the Shannon’s purple flood  
Flow by the Irish town.”

Then he stopped and shook his grizzled head. “Shure, now, I’m forgettin’ it intirely; ye know, though, somethin’ about:

“Whin down the glin rode Sarsfield’s min,  
And they wore the jackets green.’

“Sing it onct, fer th’ ould man.”

“But, father,” the girl laughed, though she began screwing up the piano stool, “it’s too late, the neighbors will object.”

“Niver mind th’ neighbors,” commanded the alderman in the tone he used at a primary, “sing it.”

“But it’s forbidden in the lease after ten o’clock,” the girl protested, leafing over her music. “What if the landlord—”

“It’s time to say good marnin’ to th’ divil, Nora, whin ye meet ’im.”

Nora fixed herself on the stool, fingered the keys, finding a soft minor chord. The old man closed his eyes, slid farther down in his plush chair, and just as he was prepared to listen, she suddenly stopped in the provoking way amateur musicians cultivate, to say:

“But, father, that’s such an old song, wouldn’t you rather I’d sing the Intermezzo from *Cavalerie*?”

Malachi opened his eyes with a start and sat bolt upright.

“Naw,” he said, “none o’ thim fur’n op’res—phat’s the use of yer goin’ to th’ convint all those years?” But his voice quickly softened. “Do ye go on now, Nora, darlin’, there’s a good gur-rl.”

And so she sang, and the alderman sank in his chair, with his big arms in their shirt-sleeves thrown over his head, closed his eyes again, stretched out his stockinged feet. The smoke from his cigar ascended to the chandelier, and now and then when he remembered the words of a line, he hummed them behind closed lips, in unison with his daughter. When the song was

done Nora whirled around, clasped her hands in a school-girl's ecstasy and said:

“Oh, father, that song makes me homesick—homesick for a place I never saw. You won't run again, will you, father, will you? And we'll go to Ireland in the spring, won't we? Tell me, in the spring?”

A pain struck through Malachi Nolan's heart, a pain that was made only more poignant when, with her American fear of the sentimental, Nora joked:

“I must see our ancestral cabin.”

Malachi could not open his eyes. For once he was afraid. He did not move for a long time. But at last he sighed and set his jaw, and said:

“Well, Nora—if ye saay so—in the spring.”

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Malachi Nolan sat bolt upright in his seat in the Pullman. He was clothed in his decent black suit, and he wore his black cravat tucked stiffly under the collar that so tightly bound his thick, red neck. On his glossy shirt front the great diamond, four carats in weight, rose and fell with his heavy breathing. At his feet was a new yellow valise; beside him, wedging him tightly into his seat, was Nora's luggage, her new bag, the roll of steamer rugs, her little umbrella, her plaid cape, and all the things she had got at the suggestion of friends who were interested in her journey across the sea to Ireland. Nora, in her new traveling gown, was prettier than Malachi had ever seen her. She sat in the front seat of the section, leaning against the double window, her elbow on its narrow sill, her chin meditatively in her palm. There had been some talk between them as the heavy train pulled out of the Van Buren Street station, and in the bustle of getting away, of arranging her bags and her bundles, and all that, Nora had beamed with pleasure, and a fine and happy excitement had sparkled through the long, black lashes of her blue Irish eyes. But as the train plunged recklessly out through the bewildering yards, she had noticed her father casting wistful glances at this or that familiar object sweeping so swiftly and irrevocably away. There was the Harrison Street police station which he had visited on so many mornings to

help some poor devil out of the toils; the shops shutting down for the night, their workers trooping homeward, dead tired after the long hours; the Twelfth Street viaduct, marking the limits of his ward; the slips in the south branch of the dirty Chicago River, where big schooners still lay torpid at their winter moorings, the crossings at Sixteenth Street, then the dear old Archey Road. A silence had fallen upon him that reacted upon her, and she grew still, and rode on in the swaying train, gazing soberly out upon the ragged edges of that Chicago she was leaving behind for the first time in her life.

The black porter, in spotless white jacket, was going through the car with his stool, pulling down the inverted globes of the lamps with his ventilating stick and lighting the four little gas-jets; the travelers in the car were settling themselves accustomedly for the long ride to New York, there was even a prospect of some cheer in the dinner which was soon to be served in the dining-car, but the alderman seemed not to notice any of these things.

Malachi had never traveled much. His only trips had been those biennial ones to Springfield, when he had headed the First Ward delegation to the state conventions; sometimes he had gone down there while the legislature was in session; and once he had journeyed to Washington with the Marching Club to attend the inauguration ceremonies. But that was all. On these trips he had gone with his own kind, and doubtless enjoyed them, but now, this evening, it was plain that he was not comfortable. He could not smoke, for one thing, and the round hole in the corner of his mouth looked forlorn in its present lack of a cigar. He must have thought, once or twice, of escaping to the smoking-room, but each time he had remembered Nora, and so had sat on, heavy, imponderable and solemn.

After a while the porter got the little lights to burning, and they illumed, though inadequately, the long coach, its heavy trappings, its bell cord, the suspended hats and wraps swaying from side to side, as it creaked and groaned over so many switches and curves and crossings to get out of town. They rushed by mills, with furnaces blazing like infernos in the gathering twilight, and black, stubby chimneys lighting the dull sky with flames; at last they were in the outskirts where the city helplessly degenerates into naked flat buildings, finally, into low cottages scattered here and there in little broken rows, with high board-walks in front of them.

Then Malachi, stooping painfully, unbuckled his new valise and took from it a newspaper. Before he unfolded it, he drew out his spectacles and calmly adjusted them to his nose. Then opening the paper he began to read. He read carefully and slowly, first the front page, column after column, then the second page, and so on, methodically, through all the pages. His lips moved slightly as he read, for he had to pronounce the words to himself to get their full meaning. When Malachi had read to the last line of the last column of the last page of his newspaper, he did not fold and lay it aside. He turned back to the first page and studied the picture there. It was the daily cartoon, and the central figure was intended for Malachi himself. That there could be no question of identity, the prudent artist had labeled it "Bull Nolan." The figure was one that Malachi had seen in the papers, in varying situations, for years, with the aldermanic paunch, the massive chain and charm, the bullet head, the stubble of hair, the bell-crowned hat, the braided plaid clothes, broad-soled shoes and checkered spats, the briskly radiating lines to symbolize the diamond. But at last the inevitable cigar had gone out, the First Ward no longer peeped on a ballot, secure and safe, from his waistcoat pocket. The gentleman with high hat, side whiskers, gloves and cane, who, labeled "Citizen," impersonated the better element, had it now, and while he was still self-contained, there was a look of almost holy triumph in his face.

Malachi studied the cartoon a long time, never changing expression. But even when he finished he did not fold the paper carefully and put it back in his valise, nor bestow his spectacles in his waistcoat pocket. He had suffered many lapses in his methodical habits of late, and they were growing easy now. He turned to the editorial page, where a line in big types, heading a leading editorial, had caught his little eye. It said: "The Passing of Malachi Nolan." Malachi began to read, slowly and carefully, pronouncing each word to himself:

"Citizens not only of the First Ward, but of the entire city, are to be congratulated upon the signal victory the Municipal Reform League has won in its campaign against Malachi Nolan. This man, who so long has misrepresented the ward mentioned in the city council, has at last been dislodged, and driven to the obscurity of private life, where his pernicious and dangerous

tendencies, if not altogether abated, will at least be confined to a narrower sphere of activity. In announcing his retirement from politics, he gives as a reason his desire to pay a visit to his native land, but the public, while speeding his departure, will readily penetrate the gauzy excuse he advances for it. They know that he has been forced to fly from a field rendered utterly untenable by the onslaughts of those public-spirited gentlemen who at great personal sacrifice have so freely contributed of their means, their energies and their time to the work of the Municipal Reform League, and to them and the press they will ascribe the credit and the praise. It would seem, however, that the Honorable Bull Nolan has lost none of his presumption, for he insolently declares that he leaves as his personal representative and successor in the aldermanic chair one of his henchmen, William Brennan. But the people will take care of Mr. Brennan at the proper time. They will see to it that Nolan's successor shall not be a man whose political methods are such as will enable him to take vacation trips in Europe, and with the abundant encouragement they have now received, will continue to widen this breach already made in the walls of corruption and dishonesty and carry on the splendid work for good government and honest politics—”

Malachi did not read any further. The lights in the car were poor, after all, and then, his eyes were not so good as they used to be. He folded the paper carefully, looked all about, then hid it at last behind him. Then he bestowed his spectacles in his waistcoat pocket, and, like Nora, looked out of the window. They had gone through South Chicago, they had passed One-hundredth Street. They looked out now upon the dull prairies that sprawled flat all about them, with no sign of spring as yet, but dead and desolate, broken only by a black and stunted tree here or there. At wide, wide

intervals a lonely gas lamp twinkled bravely in a legal way as if to preserve the prescription of what was only technically a street. The prairies stretched away until they faded into the gray gloom of the March evening, and they had left Chicago at last behind.

## THE PARDON OF THOMAS WHALEN

THE private secretary turned reluctantly from his open window beside which the trees bathed their young leaves in the sparkling sunshine of the June morning to confront the throng that awaited audience with the governor. The throng was larger than usual, for the state convention was to be held on the morrow. Every county in the state was represented in the crowd that trampled the red carpet, crushed the leather chairs and blew the smoke of campaign cigars into the solemn faces of former governors standing in their massive gilt frames with their hands on ponderous law books. In one corner a woman huddled, pinching a handkerchief to her eyes. Now and then she sobbed aloud. When Leonard Gilman, the private secretary, saw her he knew it at once for a pardon case, and paid no further attention to her. Big countrymen in Sunday clothes, who wore the red badges of delegates, slapped him on the back, city ward-healers of checkered lives and garments called him "Len."

There was an odor of perspiration in the room, distinguishable even in the heavy fumes of tobacco. The real leaders, of course, William Handy and the others, were over at the executive mansion, with the governor, completing the final arrangements for his renomination. The governor held the convention in the hollow of his hand.

The woman huddled in her corner until eleven o'clock, and then Gilman, happening into her quarter of the room, asked her what she wanted, listening with official respect for her reply. It was an old story to him. When she told him he smiled a strange smile and turned away. At noon the governor ran the gauntlet of the waiting crowd and gained the sanctuary of his private office. Once there, breathing a sigh of relief, he stood for a moment in one of the tall windows looking out upon the smooth lawns stretching lazily in the sun, and rolling away to the elms surrounding the state house. He was a tall man and strong. If he had a physical fault, it was that he carried his head too low, denoting him a thinker, but if his gaze was fixed upon the earth, his thoughts were in the stars. Presently he shook his

splendid head vigorously, wrapped his long coat determinedly about him, and settled himself at his desk.

Gilman entered, bearing a pile of papers demanding the governor's personal attention, but the morning conference was very brief on this day. As Gilman turned to go, the governor said:

"I desire to be alone to-day. I have that speech of acceptance to write. If Handy comes, send him in, but no one else."

Gilman laid his hand upon the door-knob and the governor asked:

"No one of importance out there, is there?"

"No," said Gilman. "There's a woman—what do you think she wants?"

"A pardon, of course."

"Yes, but for whom? You'd never guess in a thousand years." Gilman was smiling.

"Then tell me."

"Tom Whalen!" Gilman laughed at the humor of it.

The governor's features relaxed with a smile, but quickly his brow contracted again, and he said:

"Well—poor things—I pity them. I could wash my hands in women's tears every week."

"Well," said Gilman, opening the door, "I told her she could see you. I'll slide her out."

The governor bent to his desk, but just as the door was closing he called:

"Oh, Gilman!"

Gilman stopped.

"Don't do that—tell her I'll see her after a while."

Gilman, as he returned to his desk, smiled and shook his head at the governor's weakness.

Thomas Whalen was a life convict in the penitentiary. The crime was committed on the night of the election at which John Chatham had been

chosen chief executive of his state. Whalen was a boss in the nineteenth ward and a Chatham man. The campaign had developed such bitterness that Whalen found it necessary to name himself a judge of election in the fourth precinct of his ward. Many times during the day blue patrol wagons had rolled into the precinct.

The polling place of the fourth precinct was a small barber shop in Fifteenth Street. During the evening, as the ballots were being counted, it had become apparent that an altercation was in progress behind the yellow blinds. It was abruptly terminated by a shot. The lights in the shop were extinguished at the same moment. A man burst from the door and fled. When the police arrived, they found a dead election judge face downward on the table. His name had been Brokoski. The bullet had passed entirely through his body, and reddened with his blood the ballots that gushed from the overturned box. The window at his back had been completely shattered by the ball as it flew out into the alley. This was a large bullet, a thirty-eight caliber. The police found a revolver gleaming in the light of the dark lanterns they flashed down the alley. It was a thirty-eight caliber with one empty chamber. It was evident that the murderer had discarded it in his flight. A lieutenant of police at the Market Place police station easily identified the gun as one he had given to Whalen several weeks previously. The judges and clerks had rushed after Whalen. The shock, the sudden failure of light, the horror of the dead man in the dark had jangled their nerves. They were too excited to give a clear account of the affair. They knew that Whalen and Brokoski, sitting on opposite sides of the table, had been quarreling. They had heard the shot, had been blinded by the flash, and had seen Whalen bolt. Brokoski had fallen heavily upon the table, and died with an oath upon his lips.

Gilman never forgot that wild night. He had spent it with the governor at the headquarters of the state central committee. In the dawn, when the east was yellowing, and sparrows began to scuffle and splutter on the eaves of the federal building looming dour just over the way, the news of the murder and frauds had come to them. The governor's face, white with excitement and fatigue, had suddenly darkened. Had it been the shadow cast by the passing of a great ambition?

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At the close of the long day the woman, beckoned by Gilman into the governor's presence, lingered on the threshold of the chamber. The room was full of shadows. The figure of the governor, standing in the tall window, shut out the waning light, and was silhouetted, big and black, against the twilight sky. He did not hear the woman enter. She coughed to attract his attention. This did not arouse him from his reverie, and after a moment's timid hesitation, she said:

"May I come in?"

The governor turned. "Be seated, madam," he said. "I shall be quite frank with you. I am acquainted with this case, and do not believe it to be one justifying executive clemency."

When she spoke her voice was tremulous.

"Will you hear my story?"

"You may proceed," the governor replied. He had pushed the papers aside and was drumming lightly with his long, white fingers on his desk.

The woman nervously pleated her handkerchief, fearing to begin. "You must excuse me," she said presently, "I can not tell my story very well. I do not come here for mercy or anything like that. It is only a matter of justice."

Had it not been for the gloom, she might have seen a smile steal over the face of the dark figure at the desk. Once plunged into her narrative, her words flowed rapidly, until—suddenly she ceased to speak.

"That was five years ago," she said, her voice dropping to a sadly reminiscent whisper. "We were to have been married that spring, but—I would rather not tell the rest."

The woman probably felt her cheeks flush with warmth.

The governor could hear her quick breathing. In a minute he said kindly:

"Well?"

The woman hesitated an instant, and then fairly blurted out the rest of her tale. The governor, through the darkness, saw the woman lean, panting, toward him. Convulsively she pressed her hands to her face. She collapsed in tears. When her sobs became more regular, though still labored, the governor said:

“And Whalen—he knew this?”

“He must have known.”

“Then why did he not tell?”

The woman hung her head and said, in a low voice:

“I was mistaken, sir. The other woman lied.”

“Ah, I see.” The governor turned and looked out of the windows. The old-fashioned iron lamps on the broad steps that led up to the state house were blinking in the dark trees, and the arc light swinging in the street swayed the shadows of their foliage back and forth on the white walks. A flash of heat lightning quivered over the purple outlines of the elms.

The governor sat for a long time in somber silence. The woman could hear the ticking of his watch. Presently he drew it from his pocket and struck a match.

“It is growing late,” he said. “The tale you tell is a very remarkable tale. My time is so fully occupied that it will be impossible for me to devote any thought to it just now. If you will leave your address with my secretary I shall communicate with you. Meanwhile—do not talk.”

When the private secretary had conducted the woman from the room the governor went to his window. The voices of the June night floated up to him, but he no longer heard their music. For the second time, at the name of Whalen, and even in the darkness, there swept over his face the shadow of the passing of a great ambition.

The convention met. The secretary never got down to *S* in calling the roll of counties, and the governor was renominated by acclamation. But never in all the exciting scenes of those two days, in the black moment of suspense before the roll-call began, in the white instant of agony pending the poll of the Richland County delegation, in the golden hour of triumph, when he stood pale and bending before the mad applause rolling up to him in mighty billows, did he forget the name of Thomas Whalen, or did the face of that woman pass from him. They followed him persistently, they glimmered in his dreams. There was no escape from their pursuit.

After a week in which he found no ease, with the determination that characterized him when once aroused, he undertook a judicial investigation

of the case. He obtained a transcript of record, and read it as carefully as if he had been retained in the case and sought error upon which to carry it to the supreme court. In the familiar work he found for a time relief.

Gilman, meanwhile, had forgotten the incident of the woman's visit. The idea of pardoning Tom Whalen was too preposterous to merit serious consideration. But, when the governor told him to go to the penitentiary and interview Whalen, and then to the city and the locality of the crime for the purpose of learning all he could about Brokoski's death, he damned himself for having mentioned the fact of the woman's presence on that crowded, tobacco-clogged, perspiring morning. And as he left the capitol he resolved that his visit should be astonishingly barren of results.

Inside the warden's private office at the penitentiary he saw Whalen. The man had found the convict's friend, consumption, and Gilman hardly knew him. When the private secretary told him of the application for his pardon, Whalen only smiled. Gilman found him strangely reticent, and after an effort to induce him to talk, said:

“Whalen, really now, did you kill Brokoski?”

The striped convict picked at the cap he held in his lap. A bitter smile wrinkled his pale, moist face.

“Suspected again, eh?” he said, without looking up.

Finally Whalen tired of the examination. He breathed with difficulty, but that may have been due to his disease. At last he raised his shaven head.

“Mr. Gilman,” he said, “I see what you're getting at. I have told you I did not commit the crime for which I am here. For that matter, any of the three thousand other prisoners within these walls and wearing these clothes will tell you the same thing. I don't know whether you believe me or not. It doesn't make much difference. It doesn't matter what becomes of me any more. I ain't long for this world. So just let it drop—what's the use of opening it up again?”

“But you haven't answered my question,” said Gilman, interested in spite of himself, for a great fear was growing up within him; “you have not told me who did kill Brokoski.”

The convict lifted his eyelids slowly, and fastened his vision upon his interlocutor. And then he said very deliberately and distinctly:

“No, Mr. Gilman, and I never will!”

Gilman left the penitentiary with more than its gloom upon him. He declined the warden’s effusive invitation to stay to dinner. He wanted to get away. He could not forget the shine in Whalen’s eyes. And the fear within possessed him.

When he reached the city, after dining at the chop house where his old friends foregathered, he went out to Fifteenth Street. Costello had sold his barber shop, and the place had become a saloon. The saloon was quiet that night. Gilman drank with the bartender, and, of course, talked about the Brokoski killing. The bartender had made a study of that case, and discussed it with the curled lip of the specialist.

“They didn’t do a t’ing to Tom but t’row the hooks into ’im all right, all right. It was a case of him in the stripes from the start. Say, them lawyer guys and fly-cops’d frost you.”

Then carefully locating the actors in the tragedy, he reproduced it vividly before Gilman’s eyes. Brokoski had faced the wall where the hole was. Whalen’s back had been to it. Brokoski had sat with his back to the window. The barkeeper plunged his red hands into a drawer, rattled a corkscrew, a knife, a revolver and a jigger, and then drew out a small piece of lead. It was a thirty-eight caliber bullet.

“That’s the boy that done Brokoski,” he said.

“Where did you get it?” asked Gilman, with the mild awe a curio excites in men.

The bartender pointed to a ragged hole in the wainscoting.

“Dug it out o’ there with the icepick. I’m a Sherlock, see? Sure,” he sneered, “it might ’a’ bounced off the Polock’s breast.”

The man wiped his towel over the bar in disgust.

Then seriously:

“On the dead, Mr. Gilman, if Tom had his rights, he’d be sent back to the ward to die.”

Gilman was troubled. He returned in the morning and examined the premises carefully. At two-twenty that afternoon he was on the Limited, flying back to the capital.

That evening he was sitting with the governor in the library of the executive mansion. The windows were open and the odor of lilacs was borne in from the summer night. A negro who had served half a dozen governors, shuffled into the room, bearing a tray.

“That’s excellent whisky,” observed the private secretary.

“That was excellent whisky, Gilman,” said the governor, “before you were born.”

The private secretary was rolling a cigarette. He rolled it with unusual deliberation, licking the rice paper many times before trusting himself to paste it down.

The governor bit the end from a black cigar. A blazing match passed between them.

Then Gilman told of his interview with Whalen. He did not display much spirit in the telling. When he had done, he flicked the ash from his cigarette in a thoughtful way. Resting his forearms on his knees, he regarded the floor between his feet.

“Has it ever struck you as peculiar,” he said, “that the bullet was not introduced in evidence?”

“No,” said the governor, “not very.”

The private secretary paused. When he had done he laughed. The governor was seriously silent for many minutes, and then he said:

“Leonard, I want you to tell me your theory of this whole business.”

Gilman sat up. “Well,” he said, “had it never occurred to you that it would have been significant to determine where that bullet lodged as showing its direction? It bored a hole clear through Brokoski, but at which end had it entered?”

“I presume the medical testimony settled that,” replied the governor. He seemed to find a species of relief in this thought.

“Yes,” Gilman said, “but the medical testimony was bad. It consisted of the conclusions of a young doctor who examined Brokoski’s body after it had grown cold. He accepted Whalen’s guilt as an established fact. He assumed that the bullet entered at the breast. There was then nothing to do but to trace its course through the tissues of the body. If his views were correct, the ball would have lodged somewhere behind Brokoski.”

“But it flew out into the alley,” argued the governor, “and shattered the window in doing so.”

“True,” assented Gilman, “and yet you assume all the while that Whalen fired the shot. Of course the circumstances attending the tragedy, the occasion, the quarrel, Whalen’s flight, and the finding of his gun, lent strong color to that presumption.”

“But the shattered window,” the governor interpolated.

“Yes, and the shattered window. Now,” he continued, “a surgeon, experienced in gunshot wounds, might have been able to distinguish in such a wound as Brokoski’s, the point of the missile’s entrance from the point of exit. Of course it is not certain. The youth the police called did not think such an inquiry important, whereas it was vital. A pistol fired point-blank at a man would blacken his breast with powder. The velocity of the ball, fired at such range might have been sufficient to knock the man over backward, instead of allowing him to fall upon his face as he did. Then, there’s the window. It was shattered, the police said, by the ball. Even the glass in the upper sash was broken. The frame on the outside was blackened by powder, the stains even now being visible. Now, a bullet flying the distance it must have traversed between Whalen’s hand and the window, would, in all probability, simply have perforated the glass with a round, clean hole. But the weapon having been fired in close proximity, the concussion shattered the whole window.”

After a silence Gilman resumed:

“Now then, assume that the bullet entered Brokoski’s back and emerged from his breast. The conclusion deduced from the circumstances I have suggested, is impregnable when that bullet is located in a position in front of Brokoski.”

During the recital the governor lay in his deep chair, his arms across his breast, his finger-tips together. He regarded Gilman through half-closed eyes. A thoughtful observer would have said that he had heard the essential elements of the tale before. When he spoke, after a silence which had begun to annoy the private secretary, he said:

“Well, your hypothesis is tenable. In fact, it is one of the prettiest cases I ever saw put together.”

Gilman stirred uneasily.

“But did you learn anything as to the identity of the person, who, if your suppositions are correct, killed Brokoski?”

“That’s the weak point,” Gilman promptly admitted. “A sufficient motive is utterly lacking, if we eliminate partisan hatred. It was shown that Whalen killed him in an impulse of passion, and that alone saved him from the death penalty. But I feel that my reasoning is valid. The conviction was strengthened by Whalen’s manner and expression the other day. He never killed Brokoski, I tell you.” Gilman smote his thigh for emphasis. “Why he chooses to die in prison a silent martyr I don’t know—but the woman does.”

The governor assumed a sitting posture.

“Damn it!” exclaimed Gilman, after a momentary silence, “if those stupid police had examined the mud in the alley beneath the window that night, they would have found tracks that would have changed the course of this whole business.”

The governor bent farther forward, burying himself in an intense concentration of mind. For a time interminable to Gilman, he sat thus. His cigar went out. The ice in his glass melted, spun on the crystal brim, and sank with a tiny splash and tinkle. The little pile of burned cigarettes, the black ends of consumed cigars, the mass of tobacco ash deposited in a whisky glass, absorbed its tepid liquid, and stunk. The room grew chill, and the mists of the fountain which played in mournful solitude beneath the rocking elms in the grounds, permeated the atmosphere. The brooding night added her terrors and her cares.

Gilman took a sip of liquor, lighted a fresh cigarette, rose, and walked up and down the room. He thought of the election, so near at hand. He looked

at the governor bowed there before him. What was Whalen, or the woman, or anybody to him? Let the prisoner die! What was he to the governor? John Chatham's party needed him, his country needed him, his time needed him, mankind and human progress needed him. If he pardoned Whalen, what was to become of him? The conviction of Brokoski's murderer alone could save him from such apparent stultification, here on the eve of an election at which, in the foolish phrase of modern politics, he sought vindication. Was this conviction possible? The bare thought halted Gilman beside the governor. He laid a hand on his shoulder.

"These abstruse propositions wouldn't stand before a jury in a criminal court," he said. "Let Whalen stay."

The governor lifted his head.

"But you just now said that he was not Brokoski's murderer."

Gilman hesitated. When he spoke, he said:

"A jury of twelve sworn men has said that he is."

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Two days after the private secretary's return, the newspapers were full of stories concerning his movements. Whalen's picture was exploited, correspondents sought the governor for interviews, and the *Courier* charged that, in his desperation, he intended to pardon Whalen, that he might have, in his campaign, the assistance of that skilled and unscrupulous manipulator. The pack of country newspapers took up the *Courier's* cry. Whalen's illness was either ignored, or referred to as feigned, at the direction of prison authorities and the governor. And yet a certificate pigeonholed in Gilman's desk, signed by the prison physician, stated that Thomas Whalen had pulmonary tuberculosis and was in a moribund condition.

In his office in the city William Handy, the chairman of the state central committee, read these newspaper stories, and swore as he did so. That night the shrewdest and maddest politician in the state stole out of town. The next morning Gilman was surprised when the big man burst through the door marked "private," brushed by him and entered, unannounced, the

governor's chambers. Before the stately door swung to behind him, Gilman heard him demand:

“What’s all this I hear about your pardoning Tom Whalen?”

The private secretary did not hear the governor's reply, for with deliberate step he had crossed the room and closed the door. He heard nothing clearly, for Handy's voice came to him smothered, and the governor's not at all. Once he thought he heard “mawkish sentiment,” and “the action of a political imbecile,” but what he mostly distinguished was muffled profanity. The young man for the first time in his experience was delighted when his bell buzzed just then. When he entered upon the scene, the governor, rocking complacently in his high-backed chair, was saying:

“But what if it's my duty?”

“Duty be damned!” shouted Handy, rising to his feet, and smiting the desk with a heavy fist he had had folded during the conversation. The wrath which the politician had kept bottled up overnight had burst out at last.

“I am running this campaign,” he cried, “and as long as I do run it, I do not propose to tolerate such incredible folly as pardoning Tom Whalen.”

Gilman, wide-eyed, gazed in amaze at the two men. Handy stood glaring at the governor, his fist fastened where it had fallen. The governor's lips were tightly compressed. A sheet of scarlet swept over his dark face. Both men were strong-willed. The tensivity of such a moment could not long endure. Its contagion spread to Gilman's nerves. The governor's splendid frame seemed to dilate, and Gilman suddenly became conscious that the admiration he had always given the man had never before measured up to the fullness of John Chatham's deserts. It was with relief that he saw the governor's glance turn from Handy to bend on him.

“Gilman,” he said, “have a pardon made out for Thomas Whalen.”

This answer to Handy's threats was punctuated by a flash from the governor's eyes.

“And Gilman—” the governor continued.

“Yes, sir.”

“Wire that woman—what's her name?”

“Barry?”

“Yes—Barry—wire her to come. I think I shall prefer to tell her myself.”

Handy dropped, heavy with exhaustion, into his chair. He tried to speak, but had trouble with his articulation. When he mastered his tongue, he could only blurt:

“Now you have done it, haven’t you?”

“Yes,” said the governor in gentle assent, “I have done it.” The sigh that ended this remark was one in which a heart-burdening care was dissipated. It was a sigh that resolved a vast difficulty.

When the woman came the next morning, Gilman led her at once into the governor’s presence. Before him lay a large document, lettered in preposterous script, lined in red ink. The woman knew this imitation parchment to be the pardon of Thomas Whalen. The governor rose and stood until she had seated herself, and then said, drawing the pardon on the desk to him, “I have decided to grant the application for Whalen’s pardon.”

The woman’s fingers clawed the carved arms of the chair. Gilman stared with parted lips. The governor continued as he hastily scanned the pardon:

“I take this action because circumstances recently revealed lead me to believe that Whalen is innocent.”

The governor dipped his pen in the ink.

“They form a very abstruse proposition,” he said, poising his pen nicely in his fingers, “and I am not sure that every one can grasp it.”

The governor spoke meditatively. The two persons in the room silently regarded him. Something in the man, in the moment, impelled awe. He set his hand to the paper to write, but paused an instant longer. His eyes wandered from the document. As he raised them over her, the woman bowed her head. Out through the open window, out through the summer morning, over the wimpling foliage of the trees, far, far away they gazed. And then he sighed, as a woman sighs, and turning, signed the pardon of Thomas Whalen. A moment he sat still as an ancient statue, and then dropping the pen on the desk, he turned toward Gilman with a smile. The action relieved the young man from the spell which bound him.

“Are you going before the people with that story I worked up?” he cried.

Fiercely, without awaiting a reply to a question already answered, he wheeled on the woman.

“Do you see what he has done? He has given up all—he has killed himself! He says Whalen is innocent—and doesn’t even know upon whom to fasten suspicion! Don’t you—my God, woman—can’t you see?”

Slowly the situation was borne in upon her understanding. Her mouth opened with a gasp, her eyes widened.

“Why!” she said, jerking her words from a choking throat. “He knows who did it. I told him. It was—me.”

The door latch clicked behind her. She turned in the direction whence came the sound, and repeated, as if the interrupter contradicted her:

“Yes, I did it. I killed Brokoski.”

Her strength failed her. She sobbed convulsively.

“Yes—I—did—it,” she repeated. “I—did—it.”

Gilman stared in wonder. Here, then, was the person who had stood in the alley beneath the window that night, whose footprints would have led him to the solution of his mystery, to the end of his clever chain. The problem of her motive for slaying Brokoski alone remained. He longed to ask her, but she had collapsed unconscious in her chair. Turning to the governor he implored light. A word informed him of the accidental killing of Brokoski by a jealous woman who was trying to shoot his vis-à-vis. Then he demanded in tones reproachful:

“Why did you not tell me this?”

“Because,” the man quietly responded, “I do not war on women.”

The door whose latch had clicked had opened wide, and William Handy entered, smiling.

Governor Chatham was assorting papers on his desk, as a man would whose routine work had received a trifling interruption. Handy remained on his feet.

“John,” he said, “John, I take off my hat to you. I admire your nerve. I recognized it years ago, that day you presided over our convention in the old seventh district—remember?—the day you turned me down so hard. Remember?”

The governor smiled.

“This ain’t flattery,” said Handy, seating himself in a leather chair. “You’re not only all I’ve said, you’re a devil of a good fellow to boot.”

Handy spoke seldom. He never wrote letters, but sent word, according to an ancient maxim uttered by one of the political fathers. But when he did speak, he spoke bluntly, in the same tone in which he would have called a man a liar. The governor raised his hand to stay Handy’s compliments.

“Yes, John,” he persisted. “You’re a hell of a good fellow, but,” he added, “you’re a damn poor politician.”

There was the faintest shadow of a smile on the governor’s face. Handy closed his eyes until they were the merest slits. He puffed his cigar back to life.

His head was wrapped in scarfs of smoke.

“When does the grand jury sit?” he inquired, after a time.

“Not till the December term.”

“We can have a special one impaneled. I’ll have Donnelly call it.”

Donnelly was a judge of dignity and erudition, and Handy spoke of him as if he were his hired man, which he was.

“The boys’ll be glad to get Tom back in the nineteenth. O’Rourke says—”

“Look here, Handy,” said the governor, whirling about in his chair, and speaking as sharply as a precinct captain at a primary. “I want none of Tom Whalen’s work in the nineteenth—not while I’m running for governor. But then,” he added gravely, “he’s only going back to the nineteenth to die.”

Handy grunted. “Well, I’ll have Fitzgerald pinch the girl anyway, and keep her in the Division Street station till after election.”

The governor looked at Handy. “William,” he said, “you might as well understand now, that that would be wholly useless. I am convinced of

Whalen's innocence absolutely, beyond all doubt, but it will be impossible to get a jury to convict the one who did kill Brokoski on such evidence as convinced me."

"But she confesses," urged Handy.

"To whom?"

"To you."

"Exactly. But what if that confession be a privileged communication?"

Handy looked up in amazement. "You don't mean you wouldn't testify?"

The governor's countenance lost its legal expression, and became suddenly human. If Handy had been a thinner man he would have jumped when the governor said:

"Do you think I would send a woman to the penitentiary to elect myself governor?"

"Are you sure confessions to a governor are privileges?" inquired Handy, who was adhering to practical things.

The governor's face put on its legal mask again, and he replied:

"Well, the question is unsettled—"

"Who presides in the criminal court this winter?" inquired Handy, "any of our fellows?" Handy's whole philosophy of life was pulled. The governor resumed, without answering:

"The question has never been decided. Mr. Chief Justice Marshall, upon the trial of Aaron Burr, ruled, if I remember, that a *subpœna duces tecum* might be issued to the president for a letter addressed to him, leaving the question of the production of the letter—"

"Oh, say, John," broke in Handy, "Burr's dead, isn't he? And he wasn't a good fellow, anyway, or he'd never got in that far. Go on with your legalities—I myself do not propose to go to jail for contempt for refusing to testify."

"You?"

"Yes, me."

“What have you to do with it?”

“Oh, nothing much,” said Handy, “only I happened to be inside that door just now when she confessed—and there’s Gilman besides.” Handy, his cigar tilted upward, smoked on voluminously and smiled through the smoke with deep satisfaction. The governor averted his face. Lines of trouble drew themselves across his brow. Presently he turned to the chairman.

“Handy,” he said, “I may be reëlected and I may not—probably not. However that may be, I insist upon this: I want that woman, for the present, let alone. I have faith in the people. I am willing to go to them on my record. They may or may not reëlect me. I shall not, at any rate, have my motives impugned. I only want, when the turmoil has subsided, when the subject can be viewed with clear eyes and investigated by clear heads and clean hands, to see justice done.”

“Oh,” said Handy, “to hell with justice.”

“Well, then,” asked the governor, “what do you say to a little mercy now and then?”

## THAT BOY

IT must have been sometime in the winter or spring of 1891 that I first saw him. I had just been elected to the legislature. It was the famous Reform Session, you will remember, that proved to be of such benefit to stenographers and space writers. During the six months that general assembly lasted I lived at the St. James hotel. It is probable that I first saw the boy behind the counter of the cigar stand in the lobby of the hotel. It is probable that I had seen and spoken to him many times before I gave him any especial notice. What first arrested my attention was a law book. I had stopped at the cigar stand one evening after dinner to get some cigars, and as he rose to attend upon my wants, he took the book from his lap and laid it down upon the counter. While he was under the counter getting out a box of the brand I wished—for I never relish, somehow, cigars taken from a show case—I turned the book over and idly looked at its title. I remember very well that it was Reeves' *History of the English Law*. It struck me as rather odd that a boy behind a cigar stand should be reading such a book. It was not a book that law students, in my state, at any rate, generally read. I know that I never read it (through) and probably never shall read it, although it is, of course, a wise and ancient book. I asked him why he read it.

“Why,” he said, “I’m studying law!”

As I lighted a cigar, I looked at the boy. He was tall and overgrown, and thin with his overgrowth, with spare wrists that thrust themselves out of frayed cuffs. His face was sallow, and he was not good to look upon. His clothes were worn bare to the threads. He had every appearance of being poor, almost hungry. I fancy I disliked him.

“When do you expect to be admitted?” I asked casually.

“Oh,” he replied, blithely enough, “in two or three years. Then I go into politics.”

This, I have said, was in 1891. If anything impressed me, it was the hopelessness of it all.

In 1893, early in the summer, I went down to the capital to argue a case at the June term of the supreme court. In the evening, after a hard day in court, I strolled out Lafayette Street to mollify my nerves. Toward the edge of the town I saw a thin youth walking with a girl. The girl wore a white dress. The evening was balmy. The moon was shining. The lilacs were in bloom, and their odor was on the air. As we passed each other, the youth's appearance struck me as familiar. At the time I thought that he was the boy who used to tend the cigar stand in the St. James, and read Reeves' *History of the English Law*, whom I had naturally forgotten.

In the spring of 1898—I remember the time, not, of course, because it has anything to do with the boy but because we were then engaged in the track elevation cases—I went over to the Gregory Building one morning to see Judge Goodman, in order to get him to consent to the Updegraff case going over the term. That was a case which involved the doctrine of merger, and I needed some additional time for preparation.

As I entered the offices of Goodman, Peck, Gilmore and Eckhart, I turned to the office boy, who was sitting near the door at the futile little desk all office boys occupy, and on which they scribble mysterious things, to ask whether the judge was in. When I spoke to the boy he looked up and smiled and called me by name. He seemed to be, for some reason, glad to see me, as if I had been some one from home. In fact, he said:

“Have you been down lately?”

I examined him quite attentively for an instant. He had half risen from his chair, and stood, or hung, in an awkward attitude over his desk. Presently I recognized him as the boy who used to tend the cigar stand in the hotel at the state capital, and read Reeves' *History of the English Law*. I asked him what he was doing in the city.

“Why,” he said, in apparent surprise at my question, “I'm practising law!”

His eyes, in his pale face, dilated with a childish pride, until they were large and round and brilliant. He had drawn himself quite erect, and now he waved his hand toward the wall, and there I saw, in a new oak frame, the old familiar law license the supreme court issues to poor devils with illusions. There it was, bearing the seal of the court and the signatures of the seven justices. I read the boy's name, written on the imitation parchment. It

was the first time I had ever known what he called himself. I was amused by his having had his license framed.

“So you are in Judge Goodman’s office, are you?” I said, rather ineptly, to be sure, but merely to have something to say.

He made the obvious reply, and spoke of Judge Goodman’s kindness to him. I asked him how he was getting along.

“Well,” he replied, “rather slowly, of course—just at first, you know. But then I think if I can stick it out a while—say five or six years—I’ll be all right.”

I kept on looking at the old familiar law license, and thinking of my own. I have not seen it for years. I think my wife has it somewhere, in a tin tube with the diplomas and our marriage certificate and her father’s discharge from the army and other family charters, if it is not lost.

Then—for I felt that I should say something—I asked him how everybody was in the capital.

“I don’t get down any more,” he said; “it costs, you know.”

And then he was silent, and I did not care to look in his eyes. I noticed that the black cravat he had on was very old, and worn through in places. Also that he was actually out at the elbows, as to the right arm at least, for there, in the sleeve, was a ragged hole that showed the soiled lining of his coat. Presently the boy said:

“When you go down, tell them you saw me, won’t you?”

Of course it was presumptuous in him, but I thought of those five or six years. In that time he would learn—that and other things. Just then Judge Goodman stuck his head out of his private room.

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I happened to go to the capital in May of that year. We were then at war, you will remember. I told the man who kept the cigar stand in the lobby of the St. James that I had seen the boy in the city, that he was practising law there, and wished to be remembered to his friends. I think I told him, also,

that the boy was doing well, and already making a favorable impression upon many of the older and more prominent members of the bar. But the man shook his head and responded:

“Why, haven’t you heard? He’s gone to war—enlisted in the First Infantry!”

I hid my surprise from the man, and told him I had heard that, of course, but that the bar regarded his absence as merely temporary.

That summer I got into the habit of scanning the lists of sick and disabled soldiers who were at Chickamauga and the other fever camps, or in Cuba. I was especially likely to do this where the First Regiment was concerned. It was a practice foolish in a way, because it took up time in the morning, and was only a meaningless list of names, anyway. But then, we were rather proud of the First in the city that summer, for it was our crack regiment, you know, and my wife had one or two acquaintances among the young officers, who reflected a certain glory upon her, and gave a color to her conversation.

A friend of mine at the capital, a lawyer, often sent me, two or three times a week, perhaps, copies of the local papers, and these frequently published little bits of personal gossip about boys from that town who had gone to “the front,” as they put it. The country papers gave a more personal tone to their war articles than did the city papers. These latter seemed to think that a war is got up especially for the officers. Doubtless they were about right.

After a while, the First went to Cuba. The regiment got there too late for active fighting in the operations about Santiago, but not too late for duty in the trenches, with their freshly upturned earth, damp and saturated with malaria. Nor did they get there too late for the fever. Many of them contracted it, and some died of it. I used to read the lists of the sick and dead, to see if the names of any of my wife’s acquaintances in the field, line or staff, were among them.

Once in a while I would observe that some young soldier had died of something or other and homesickness. One morning I happened upon a name that impressed me as being familiar. After studying it a while, I finally recognized it as the same name that had been upon the law license that was framed in oak and hanging above the desk of the office boy. There was printed after the name:

“Pernicious malaria and nostalgia.”

In the spring of the following year (1899) the bodies of several hundred soldiers who had died in Cuba were brought home for final interment. I happened to be in the capital again and heard that there was to be a military funeral that afternoon. I had some curiosity to see a military funeral, and so, having nothing else to do, went to the church where it was to be held. You can imagine my surprise when I was told that it was the funeral of the boy who had once tended the cigar stand in the lobby of the St. James and read Reeves' *History of the English Law*, the boy who had afterward gone to the city to practise law, and, later, enlisted in the First Infantry to die in Cuba. There were not many at the funeral, for, of course, he was only a private. There was a woman there in black, probably his aunt, or mother, for she appeared to weep, and some girl. Out at the cemetery—Oak Wood, where a general is buried—there were few persons besides the clergyman, and the woman and the girl. A local militia company had sent a firing squad, and it fired the salute prescribed for a private over the grave, and a bugler stood at the head and blew taps, the soldier's good night. Happening to have a rose or two with me, I threw them into the grave. The coffin, of course, had a flag over it, but that was about all there was of the military funeral—hardly enough, indeed, to reward one's curiosity.

This, I believe, is all. The story hardly seems worth the telling, now that it is written, but I fancied that I detected one or two coincidences in my haphazard relations with the boy, like my reading of his death in the paper, and my happening to be in the capital on the day of his funeral, and so I set them down.

I forgot to say that I happened to have his law license with me that day at the funeral. After he had enlisted in the First, perhaps I should explain, I noticed it one day in the offices of Goodman, Peck, Gilmore and Eckhart, where it was evidently in the way. So I let it hang in my office all that summer and all the next winter, but in the spring we needed the wall space for some new bookcases, and I took it down. I think the girl who was at the funeral that day, whoever she is, has it now.

THE END

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Obvious typographical errors have been corrected.

Inconsistencies in hyphenation have been standardized.

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