



CHAPTER XI.

**A**T sound of the breaking fan all three participants in the strange reunion turned. For a second or more they faced the crimson faced, dumfounded Perry without a word. Here was an element in the affair on which neither Phelan nor Cynthia had counted when giving Thompson their promise not to reveal his identity. They gradually realized this, and it left even the ready witted Phelan speechless.

Perry himself was first to break the spell. "Well," he observed, with an assumption of airy scorn that was meant to be annihilating, "you all seem quite happy. Don't mind me! I'm sorry to butt in on this cute little love fest, but I left a fiancée here. Perhaps one of you can explain what's happened to her since I?"

"Oh, Perry," exclaimed Cynthia, "don't be silly! I'll tell you all about it some time. It is"—

"Some time?" squealed Perry, rage battering down his attempt at sarcasm. "Some time! Maybe it might be just as well if you did condescend to explain. Here you promise to marry me, and ten minutes later I find you in a catch-as-catch-can hug with this ugly little shrimp and Phelan looking on as happy as if he'd eaten a canary! And then you've got the gall to tell me you'll explain 'some time'!"

He glared at Cynthia in all the majesty of outraged devotion, only to surprise on that young lady's face a look that indicated a violent struggle with the desire to laugh.

"This is funny all right, I guess not!" he snapped. "Cynthia, you've mauled and smashed a loving heart, and I'll make a hit with myself by forgiving you, but as for you," wheezing about and thrusting his furious face to within three inches of Thompson's immobile countenance—"as for you, I'm going to do all sorts of things to you the moment Miss Garrison will have the kindness to shoo you out of the room. Your sorrowful relatives will have all manner of fun sorting you out when I've finished with you! Steal my sweetheart, would you, not ten minutes after I'd?"

"There!" interposed Phelan, shoving his powerful bulk good naturedly between the two younger men and linking his arm in Perry's. "Now you've got quite a bunch of hot words off your chest, an' you'll be in better shape to hear sense. Ain't you just a little bit ashamed?"

"Ashamed?" sputtered Perry. "Who? I? Well, that"—

"Yes, you, youngster, and if you holler like that in company I'll sure be forced to wind up by spankin' you. Now, stand off there—no, over there where you can see Miss Garrison—an' listen to me. So! Now, first of all, did you happen to be in love with this young lady?"

"It's none of your measly business, but I did."

"Why'd you ask her to hitch up with you for keeps?"

"Because I loved her and"—

"Because you had a lot of faith in her, too, hey?" persisted the alderman.

"Yes, and a nice way she's"—

"Pretty girl, too," mused Phelan as if to himself. "In my young days if I could 'a' got a little beauty like that to sign articles with me I'd 'a' thought I was the original Lucky Jim. I'd"—

"So did I!" interrupted Perry hotly. "I"—

But Phelan was continuing in the same abstract monologue:

"An' if I could 'a' seen from her eyes (like any dough head could see from Miss Garrison's) that she had a heart as big as a watermelon an' as true as a Bible text an' as warm as a happy man's hearth fire—well, if I'd seen all that an' got wise to the gorgeous news that that same heart was just chock-a-block full of love for my own ornery, cheap skate self I'd 'a' flopped down on both knees an' sent up a bunch of prayers to be allowed to go on dreamin' an' never, never wake up."

Phelan paused. This time Perry did not break in, and the half audible monologue continued:

"I'd have had the sense to know that a girl with eyes like those couldn't be a flirt an' couldn't double cross the man she loved if her life depended on her doin' it. I'd 'a' licked any guy that said she could, an' if I'd seen her kiss another man I'd 'a' punched myself on the jaw an' called myself a liar. That's what Jimmy Phelan of the Eighth would 'a' done. An'"—

"Say," broke in Perry in a curiously subdued voice. "These eyes of mine do funny things sometimes. I'll bet \$9 they played a joke on me just now. And even if they didn't I don't believe 'em. Cynthia, I'm dead stuck on you! You're all right even if you did happen to be acting a trifle eccentric a few minutes ago. You can explain or not, as you like. If you'll just say you love me, that's all I want, yours truly."

He slipped an arm about her waist as he spoke, awkwardly seeking to atone for his recent anger. The secretary looked at them for an instant, then said briefly:

"You can tell him, Cynthia. He's a good fellow. Come on, alderman. I

think you and I still have something to say to each other."

Cynthia and Perry drifted away toward the conservatory again, quite oblivious of the others, while Phelan and the secretary made their way to a deserted alcove off the ballroom.

"I've been looking all over for you, Mr. Bennett," called Judge Newman, hurrying out through the chain of ante-rooms as Alwyn wandered out of the ballroom into the foyer a few moments later.

"Anything important?" asked Bennett, pausing in his stroll and greeting the older man cordially. He had known the judge as long as he could remember and had always had a decided liking for the pompous henpecked little dignitary. Surrounded as he was by political intrigue, heartache and association with rogues, the harassed young man rather welcomed the variety promised by a chat with his old friend of his boyhood.

"Anything important, Judge?" he repeated. "Or are you just taking pity on a lonely chap and giving him a chance to chat with you over old times?"

"Well," began the judge, his customary air of pompous nervousness tinged by an almost conciliatory manner, "I would like to have a little business talk with you if you don't mind discussing work at a ball."

"Not at all. I've had the honor of dancing with three of your daughters this evening, and the least I can do is to repay such pleasure by"—

"Did you, really?" beamed the judge, on whom the unmarried state of his four fast aging girls rested heavily. "I'm sure Mrs. Newman will be pleased. But this business matter, you—you won't misunderstand me?"

"Of course not," replied Alwyn heartily. "You and I are too old friends, Judge, to"—

"I hope so; I hope so," conceded Newman, with growing anxiety in his tone. "You see"—

"I see you have some trouble coming to the point," said Alwyn, pitying the judge's evident discomfiture, "and I'm sorry you feel so. You were my father's friend, and I like to think of you as one of my own best friends. There surely should be no hesitation in asking anything in my power to grant."

Thus emboldened Newman blurted out:

"I—we—that is, seems to me you have been a little hard upon this Borough franchise bill, if you don't mind my saying so, Bennett. Couldn't you let up on them now?"

"Why, no, Judge, I can't," replied Bennett, still failing to connect Newman with the Wainwright-Horriggan clique and attributing the judge's interest in the matter to an amateur's love of dabbling in politics. "I can't let up on that fight," he continued. "All perpetual franchises are wrong, and this particular franchise bill is rotten to the core. In sheer justice to my oath of office I must fight it."

"My boy," said the judge in a fatherly manner that he had often found successful in argument, "I was in politics long before you were born, and I'm speaking for your own good when I say I deeply regret the stand you've taken in this matter. You objected to the bill in its original form. Almost every change you demanded has been made in it. As the gentlemen who asked me to speak to you said"—

He checked himself a minute too late. The narrowing of Bennett's eyes and the vanishing of the friendly light in the young man's face warned Newman he had made a fatal error.

"So you come to me as an emissary, not as a friend," said Bennett slowly, "and the gentlemen you come from"—

"Are the men who represent all that can make or break your career—capital and political organization."

"In other words, Wainwright and Horriggan?"

"Yes. All they ask is that you remain neutral; that you"—

"That I look the other way while they rob the city?"

"I am an old man, Bennett," evaded the judge, trying another tack, "and I've seen one rash step wreck many a bright career, just as this will wreck yours. Never antagonize wealth and the organization. The public for whom you sacrifice yourself will forget you in a month. Capital and politics never forget."

"I am not catering to the public. I am acting as my own conscience"—

"But this is stubbornness, not conscience. All you have to do is to remain neutral. If you do this I am authorized to promise you—now, listen—to promise you the nomination for governor when your term is"—

"That's the bait, is it?" cried Alwyn angrily. "If I consent to betray my trust I'll get the governorship. The

bribe is golden, and I don't wonder at Horriggan for offering it. The only thing that surprises me is that he should have chosen such a man as you for his lackey and go-between."

"Lackey? Bribe? Go-between?" echoed the judge in real indignation. "How dare you, sir? This"—

"Isn't it a bribe," insisted Alwyn, "and weren't you the man chosen to offer it? It will do you no good to bluster or grow indignant. In your heart you know the words I used were deserved. The governorship offer was a bribe, pure and simple, and worthy the modern highwaymen who made it, but that you, a judge—a former friend of my own blameless father—that you should come to me on such a vile errand turns me sick. Heaven help justice and right when our judges can be controlled by a political boss and a roll of bills! That's all! I don't care to go further into the subject!"

Bennett walked away, leaving the little judge to stare after him, pink with wrath, speechless with amazement. In all his sixty years no man had thus laid bare to Newman his own heart, stripped of its garments of respectability and self-deception. And, as usual in such cases, now that the truth had been driven home to him, Newman wrathfully denounced it, even to himself, as a lie.

Still flushed and incoherent, he wheeled to face a trio who were just returning from the supper room. They were Dallas, Gibbs and Wainwright.

"Hello!" exclaimed Wainwright in surprise. "What's the matter with you, Judge? Are you ill?"

"If—Mrs. Newman should come to know of this," sputtered the judge, glaring from one to the other, "she"—

"To know of what?" queried Gibbs.

"What has happened?"

"Happened?" fumed Newman. "I have been insulted—grossly, vulgarly insulted!"

"Insulted, Judge?" repeated Dallas. "By whom?"

"By Alwyn Bennett!" snapped the judge. "Outrageously!"

"Impossible!" exclaimed Dallas. "There must be a mistake somewhere. Mr. Bennett is too well bred to insult any man, much less a man so much older than"—

"A gentleman, is he? I should not have believed it. He has insulted me most!"

"I'm not surprised," observed Wainwright. "I am," announced Dallas. "Naturally," sneered Wainwright. "If you can remain on speaking terms with him after his abominable treatment of me you can easily overlook any other brutality of his."

"Tell us about it, Judge," interposed Gibbs, seeking to avert any further clash between uncle and niece.

"I went to him," began Newman, "bearing a request from—from"—

The judge paused. It was not wholly easy to present matters to this honest eyed young girl in such a way as to bring her in his way of thinking. But Wainwright felt no difficulty. His shrewd brain caught at a means of turning the affair to account.

"You see, Dallas," the financier broke in, with a warning glance to Newman, "I begged the judge to intercede for me with Bennett, to ask him to bury the hatchet and let us be friends again for the sake of old times. I thought Judge Newman's age and his high office would compel a certain respect even with a man of Bennett's character. But I was wrong, and I am sorry, Judge, for the unjust humiliation I caused you."

"I don't understand," said Dallas, looking in bewilderment from one to the other. "Judge, my uncle sent you to make overtures of peace? And Mr. Bennett refused to?"

"He not only refused, but called Mr. Wainwright a highwayman and"—

"But why?" demanded Dallas.

"He pretended to misunderstand what I said about the conditions."

"Oh, it was a conditional offer, then? I thought"—

"Certainly there were conditions," cut in Wainwright, again coming to the emissary's rescue. "I asked that he take a position of neutrality in regard to this Borough bill. Simply neutral, mind you. Not to change his attitude in its favor, or"—

"That was a splendidly fair offer," cried Gibbs enthusiastically.

"So it seemed to me," agreed Newman, "but Bennett would not listen when I tried to point out his proper line of duty. He called me a go-between and"—

"Even after you told him we were granting practically all the concessions he had asked in the bill?" queried Gibbs.

"Yes," said Newman. "He must have some motive behind it all. I can't"—

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Dallas. "What ulterior motive could he have?"

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"That is more than I know positively," returned the judge mysteriously. "But I do," declared Wainwright, pointing at Dallas. "There are the reasons!"

"I?" exclaimed Dallas, incredulous. "Explain, please."

"Willingly," replied her uncle, "if you'll give me a fair hearing. Bennett is in love with you. He knows Gibbs also wishes to marry you. He knows, too, that Gibbs' fortune depends on the success of the Borough franchise. If the bill is beaten, Gibbs will be practically ruined and thus in no position to marry. We've known all along of this reason of Bennett's for fighting our bill, but Gibbs forbade me to tell you. He was afraid you might think he"—



"How dare you, sir?" said the judge.

"I don't believe one word of it!" cried Dallas, her big eyes ablaze. "Alwyn Bennett could not stoop to such a thing."

"No?" said Wainwright. "Then you probably will refuse to believe what I am about to tell you now. I considered Borough stock a safe investment, and I put all your money and Perry's

in it. Bennett knows this, and in spite of the knowledge he is trying to kill the franchise even on the certainty of begging you and Perry along with Gibbs. If only he can ruin Gibbs he cares nothing about making you and Perry paupers too. That is the sort of man you are defending against your own uncle. I have just learned besides that he has secretly, through his brokers, sold large blocks of Borough stock short. Thus his veto that ruins us will make him a very rich man."

"It isn't true!" affirmed Dallas in dogged certainty. "Mr. Gibbs, do you confirm this story of my uncle's?"

"Please leave me out of this, Miss Wainwright," answered Gibbs gently. "I prefer to say nothing to prejudice you. When I fight I fight fair."

"Even at the cost of all your money," amended Wainwright. "Gibbs, this is carrying your sense of honor to an absurd point. And Bennett will"—

"Pardon me," broke in Alwyn, entering the foyer and going up to Dallas. "I'm a little late for our dance. I was detained by"—

"Alwyn!" exclaimed Dallas in relief. "I'm so glad you came here just when you did. Now we can clear this up in a word."

"Clear what up?" queried Bennett, glancing about in suspicion at the three silent men.

"You know Mr. Gibbs is favored in the Borough Street railway affair," began Dallas. "He told you so at your office that day we were there. Well"—

"Yes, but don't let's discuss business tonight," replied Bennett. "This is our dance, and"

"Wait, please. You knew his fortune was largely tied up in Borough stock,

but here is something you didn't know. My uncle says my money and Perry's is all invested in that stock and that if you defeat the bill we will be dependent on Mr. Wainwright's charity. If that is true, you didn't know it, did you?"

Her voice was almost tremulous in its eager, confident appeal, but Bennett forced himself to answer:

"Yes; it is true, and I knew it."

The eager glow died from her eyes, leaving a look of dawning horror.

"And, knowing this—knowing Perry and I shall be made paupers by your action—you still insist on"—

"On opposing the bill? Yes. I am sorry, but it is my duty."

"Duty!" sneered Wainwright. "Your duty was done when you vetoed the bill. That act made your position clear and showed the public how you regarded the measure, so why go on fighting it after"—

"I won't discuss this with you, Mr. Wainwright," interrupted Bennett. "We already understand one another, you and I."

"My uncle says," pursued Dallas, "that you made your broker secretly sell Borough stock short, knowing the deal would enrich you. Won't you even deny this?"

"No."

"You realize what all this foolish stubbornness must mean to me—to all of us," continued Dallas, "and you still persist in your opposition?"

"I must," said Bennett. "I can't turn back. Oh, Dallas," he added, dropping his voice till none but she could hear, "can't you trust me—only till Friday? I'll come to you on Saturday morning and tell you the whole miserable story.

I only ask you to wait until then. Please"—

"I see no need of waiting for an explanation," retorted Dallas aloud. "I understand everything."

"But you don't understand!" insisted Alwyn. "I"—

"I understand only too well," repeated Dallas. Checking his reply and ignoring the anguished appeal in his eyes, she turned to Gibbs.

"I have kept you waiting long for your answer, Mr. Gibbs," she said, speaking in a level, firm, emotionless voice. "I am prepared to give it to you now—publicly. You have often asked me if I would be your wife. My reply is, 'Yes.'"

"Dallas!" gasped Bennett in horrified surprise.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

O. G. Richards, Pension Agent.  
It may surprise some of our readers to know that simple case of stomach trouble, if neglected, can get so bad that it will result in cancer of the stomach. For fifteen years O. G. Richards, an attorney and pension agent at Eudora, Kan., suffered from stomach trouble, indigestion, etc., until it was feared he had cancer of the stomach. Finally he took Dr. Caldwell's Syrup Pepsin and was cured. This remedy is absolutely guaranteed to do what is claimed, and if you want to try it before buying, send your address for a free sample bottle to Pepsin Syrup Co., 119 Caldwell Bldg., Monticello, Ill. It is sold by Hood Bros. at 50c. and \$1 a bottle.

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NOTICE.  
The undersigned having qualified as Executor on the estate of E. F. Pittman deceased, hereby notifies all persons having claims against said estate to present the same to me duly verified on or before the 14th day of August, 1909 or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery; and all persons indebted to said estate will make immediate payment.  
This 11th day of August, 1908  
Jonah Pittman, Ex.

NOTICE.  
North Carolina, Johnston County, Smithfield Township.  
E. L. Cole vs. Notice of Summons.  
E. P. Baker  
The defendant above named will take notice that a summons in the above entitled action was issued against said defendant on the 11th day of July 1908, by Z. L. LeMay, a justice of the peace of Johnston County, North Carolina, for the sum of \$16.82, due said plaintiff by account, which summons is returnable before said justice, at his office at the Court House, in said county, and in Smithfield Township on the 15th day of August, 1908, when and where the defendant is required to appear and answer or demur to the complaint, or the relief demanded will be granted.  
This 13th day of July, 1908.  
Z. L. LeMay, Justice Of The Peace.

EXECUTION SALE.  
NORTH CAROLINA, JOHNSTON COUNTY.  
By virtue of an execution issuing out of the Superior Court of Johnston County, directed to the undersigned Sheriff, under and by virtue of Judgment in favor of Fonyville Grocery Co., a corporation, against B. Hudson and I. B. Hudson, formerly trading as B. & I. B. Hudson, the personal property exemptions of Benjamin Hudson was laid off and set apart according to law, and no excess being found, therefore, levy was made upon the real estate of the said Benjamin Hudson, and his homestead exemptions allotted according to law, and the hereinafter described real estate was found in excess of said homestead exemptions:  
THEREFORE, the undersigned Sheriff of Johnston County, in order to satisfy the execution in the above entitled case of Fonyville Grocery Co., against B. and I. B. Hudson, together with executions in favor of Dixie Oil Works, Westover Paper Co., Red "O" Oil Co., Wilson & Thum Co. (Inc.) and Kenton Baking Powder Co., against B. and I. B. Hudson, which executions are in my hands and levy having been made under the same, I will, on Monday the 7th of September, 1908, being the first Monday in September, at 12 o'clock M. at the Court-house door in the town of Smithfield, North Carolina, sell to highest bidder for cash, all the right, title and interest which the said Benjamin Hudson, one of the defendants in the above execution, has in the following described real estate, to wit:  
TRACT No. 1. A lot near the town of Benson, fronting on road 150 feet, and running back North 37 & 150 feet, on which is situated a dwelling house in which I. B. Hudson now resides.  
TRACT No. 2. containing 36 acres, and adjoining the lands of J. W. Wood, Jr., C. A. Reeves, Julia Tart, and J. A. Hall, and lying and being in Banner township, Johnston County.  
TRACT No. 3. containing 50 acres, and being the lands bought of Henry Bryant, adjoining the lands of Pias Hudson, John L. Raynor and lying and being in Banner township, Johnston County. For a more complete description of the above property reference is hereby made to the Registry of Johnston County.  
Terms, Spot Cash on day of sale, when deed will be executed.  
This 6th day of August, A. D. 1908.  
H. M. NOWELL, Sheriff of Johnston County.

NOTICE.  
By virtue of the authority contained in a certain mortgage deed executed by Isaiah D. C. Goodson and wife, Carcellia Goodson, to H. R. Goodson, dated November 4, 1904, and recorded in the Registry of Johnston county in Book G, No. 9, page 44, the conditions in said mortgage being broken, the undersigned mortgagee will expose to sale at public auction at the Court House door, in the town of Smithfield, N. C., on Monday, September 7th, 1908, the following lands conveyed by said mortgage deed for the purpose of satisfying the bond secured by the same, to-wit:  
A certain piece or parcel of land lying and being in Johnston county, State aforesaid, in Clayton township, described as follows: Lying and being in the town of Clayton, Johnston county, and containing one eighth of an acre, and bounded on the North by lot of H. R. Goodson on the East by the lot formerly owned by Jerry Pool and now owned by the widow of Jerry Pool, on the South by the railroad street, on the West by Richard Band and Rixie Whitley, being a portion of Jerry Pool lot, it being the southern half of lot sold by William Pool, brother and heir of Jerry Pool, as appears from deed made by William Pool and wife, Rachel Pool, recorded in the Registry of Johnston county in Book No. 8, page 116. Terms of sale cash.  
This 6th day of August, 1908.  
H. R. Goodson, Mortgagee.  
Pou & Brooks, Att'ys.

NOTICE.  
The undersigned having qualified as Executrix on the estate of Mrs. Annie L. Gulley deceased, hereby notifies all persons having claims against said estate to present the same to me duly verified on or before the 14th day of August, 1909 or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery; and all persons indebted to said estate will make immediate payment.  
This 7th day of August, 1908.  
Mrs. Mary Taylor, Exrx.  
Garner, N. C., R. F. D. No. 1.

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NOTICE.  
The undersigned having qualified as Executor on the estate of John A. Creech deceased, hereby notifies all persons having claims against said estate to present the same to me duly verified on or before the 24th day of July, 1909, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery; and all persons indebted to said estate will make immediate payment.  
This 15th day of July, 1908.  
D. T. Creech, Exr.

NOTICE OF SALE.  
The undersigned, O. C. Gregory, will on Monday, the 24th day of Aug. 1908, at twelve o'clock noon, at the court house door in Smithfield, North Carolina, sell to the highest bidder for cash, thirty five (35) shares of stock in the T. S. Ragsdale Company, of the par value of fifty dollars per share, being certificate No. 25 and standing in the name of J. S. Wooten, administrator. This certificate of stock was issued in lieu of and as a substitute for certificate No. 28, for one hundred and twenty-three shares of stock in the Allen K. Smith Company upon the re-organization of the Allen K. Smith Company, and was deposited as collateral security for a note due by Allen K. Smith to the undersigned, dated June 18, 1908, and in the principal sum of one thousand dollars, in lieu of the certificate No. 28 above mentioned. The purpose of this sale is to subject the said collateral to the payment of said note.  
O. C. GREGORY, Assignee.  
F. S. SPRULL Attorneys.  
Aug. 3, 1908.