

THEODOR DREISER

THE TITAN



Classical literature (Капо)

Теодор Драйзер

**Titan / Титан. Книга для
чтения на английском языке**

«КАРО»

1814

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Драйзер Т.

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«Титан» – вторая книга «Трилогии желания» известного американского писателя Теодора Драйзера (1871–1945). Взлеты и падения в деловой сфере преследуют главного героя романа Фрэнка Каупервуда, а пренебрежение нормами поведения общества становится еще более ярко выраженной чертой его характера. В книге представлен неадаптированный текст на языке оригинала с сокращениями, снабженный комментариями и словарем.

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Подготовка текста, комментарии, словарь К. Ю. Михно

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Chapter I

The New City

When Frank Algernon Cowperwood emerged from the Eastern District Penitentiary in Philadelphia he realized that the old life he had lived in that city since boyhood was ended. His youth was gone, and with it had been lost the great business prospects of his earlier manhood. He must begin again.

It would be useless to repeat how a second panic following upon a tremendous failure – that of Jay Cooke & Co. – had placed a second fortune in his hands. This restored wealth softened him in some degree. Fate seemed to have his personal welfare in charge. He was sick of the stock exchange, anyhow, as a means of livelihood, and now decided that he would leave it once and for all. He would get in something else – street-railways, land deals, some of the boundless opportunities of the far West. Philadelphia was no longer pleasing to him. Though now free and rich, he was still a scandal to the pretenders, and the financial and social world was not prepared to accept him. He must go his way alone, unaided, or only secretly so, while his quondam friends watched his career from afar. So, thinking of this, he took the train one day, his charming mistress, now only twenty-six, coming to the station to see him off. He looked at her quite tenderly, for she was the quintessence of a certain type of feminine beauty.

“By-by, dearie,” he smiled, as the train-bell signaled the approaching departure. “You and I will get out of this shortly. Don’t grieve. I’ll be back in two or three weeks, or I’ll send for you. I’d take you now, only I don’t know how that country is out there. We’ll fix on some place, and then you watch me settle this fortune question. We’ll not live under a cloud always. I’ll get a divorce, and we’ll marry, and things will come right with a bang¹. Money will do that.”

He looked at her with his large, cool, penetrating eyes, and she clasped his cheeks between her hands.

“Oh, Frank,” she exclaimed, “I’ll miss you so! You’re all I have.”

“In two weeks,” he smiled, as the train began to move, “I’ll wire or be back. Be good, sweet.”

She followed him with adoring eyes – a fool of love, a spoiled child, a family pet, amorous, eager, affectionate, the type so strong a man would naturally like – she tossed her pretty red gold head and waved him a kiss. Then she walked away with rich, sinuous, healthy strides – the type that men turn to look after.²

“That’s her – that’s that Butler girl,” observed one railroad clerk to another. “Gee!³ a man wouldn’t want anything better than that, would he?”

It was the spontaneous tribute that passion and envy invariably pay to health and beauty. On that pivot swings the world.

Never in all his life until this trip had Cowperwood been farther west than Pittsburg. His amazing commercial adventures, brilliant as they were, had been almost exclusively confined to the dull, staid world of Philadelphia, with its sweet refinement in sections, its pretensions to American social supremacy, its cool arrogation of traditional leadership in commercial life, its history, conservative wealth, unctuous respectability, and all the tastes and avocations which these imply. He had, as he recalled, almost mastered that pretty world and made its sacred precincts his own when the crash came. Practically he had been admitted. Now he was an Ishmael⁴, an ex-convict, albeit a

¹ **things will come right with a bang** – (разг.) все наладится, все будет хорошо

² **Then she walked away with rich, sinuous, healthy strides** – the type that men turn to look after. – Она шла широким, уверенным шагом, слегка покачивая бедрами, – походкой, на которую заглядываются мужчины.

³ **Gee!** – (разг.) Вот это да! (возглас, выражающий удивление или восхищение)

⁴ **Ishmael** – (библ.) сын Авраама и его египетской любовницы Агари, она вместе с сыном была изгнана в пустыню, (зд.,

millionaire. But wait! The race is to the swift, he said to himself over and over. Yes, and the battle is to the strong. He would test whether the world would trample him under foot or no.

Chicago, when it finally dawned on him, came with a rush on the second morning. He had spent two nights in the gaudy Pullman⁵ then provided – a car intended to make up for some of the inconveniences of its arrangements by an over-elaboration of plush and tortured glass – when the first lone outposts of the prairie metropolis began to appear. The side-tracks along the road-bed over which he was speeding became more and more numerous, the telegraph-poles more and more hung with arms and strung smoky-thick with wires. In the far distance, cityward, was, here and there, a lone working-man's cottage, the home of some adventurous soul who had planted his bare hut thus far out in order to reap the small but certain advantage which the growth of the city would bring.

The land was flat – as flat as a table – with a waning growth of brown grass left over from the previous year, and stirring faintly in the morning breeze. Underneath were signs of the new green – the New Year's flag of its disposition. For some reason a crystalline atmosphere enfolded the distant hazy outlines of the city, holding the latter like a fly in amber and giving it an artistic subtlety which touched him. Already a *d, evot, ee* of art, ambitious for connoisseurship, who had had his joy, training, and sorrow out of the collection he had made and lost in Philadelphia, he appreciated almost every suggestion of a delightful picture in nature.

The tracks, side by side, were becoming more and more numerous. Freight-cars were assembled here by thousands from all parts of the country – yellow, red, blue, green, white. (Chicago, he recalled, already had thirty railroads terminating here, as though it were the end of the world.) The little low one and two story houses, quite new as to wood, were frequently unpainted and already smoky – in places grimy. At grade-crossings, where ambling street-cars and wagons and muddy-wheeled buggies waited, he noted how flat the streets were, how unpaved, how sidewalks went up and down rhythmically – here a flight of steps, a veritable platform before a house, there a long stretch of boards laid flat on the mud of the prairie itself. What a city! Presently a branch of the filthy, arrogant, self-sufficient little Chicago River came into view, with its mass of sputtering tugs, its black, oily water, its tall, red, brown, and green grain-elevators, its immense black coal-pockets and yellowish-brown lumber-yards.

Here was life; he saw it at a flash. Here was a seething city in the making.⁶ There was something dynamic in the very air which appealed to his fancy. How different, for some reason, from Philadelphia! That was a stirring city, too. He had thought it wonderful at one time, quite a world; but this thing, while obviously infinitely worse, was better. It was more youthful, more hopeful. In a flare of morning sunlight pouring between two coal-pockets, and because the train had stopped to let a bridge swing and half a dozen great grain and lumber boats go by – a half-dozen in either direction – he saw a group of Irish stevedores idling on the bank of a lumber-yard whose wall skirted the water. Healthy men they were, in blue or red shirt-sleeves, stout straps about their waists, short pipes in their mouths, fine, hardy, nutty-brown specimens of humanity. Why were they so appealing, he asked himself. This raw, dirty town seemed naturally to compose itself into stirring artistic pictures. Why, it fairly sang! The world was young here. Life was doing something new. Perhaps he had better not go on to the Northwest at all; he would decide that question later.

In the mean time he had letters of introduction to distinguished Chicagoans, and these he would present. He wanted to talk to some bankers and grain and commission men. The stock exchange of Chicago interested him, for the intricacies of that business he knew backward and forward, and some great grain transactions had been made here.

перен.) отверженный, изгнанник

⁵ Pullman – (пульмановский) спальный вагон

⁶ Here was a seething city in the making. – Строящийся город бурлил и кипел.

The train finally rolled past the shabby backs of houses into a long, shabbily covered series of platforms – sheds having only roofs – and amidst a clatter of trucks hauling trunks, and engines belching steam, and passengers hurrying to and fro he made his way out into Canal Street and hailed a waiting cab – one of a long line of vehicles that bespoke a metropolitan spirit. He had fixed on the Grand Pacific as the most important hotel – the one with the most social significance – and thither he asked to be driven. On the way he studied these streets as in the matter of art he would have studied a picture. The little yellow, blue, green, white, and brown street-cars which he saw trundling here and there, the tired, bony horses, jingling bells at their throats, touched him. They were flimsy affairs, these cars, merely highly varnished kindling-wood with bits of polished brass and glass stuck about them, but he realized what fortunes they portended if the city grew. Street-cars, he knew, were his natural vocation. Even more than stock-brokerage, even more than banking, even more than stock-organization he loved the thought of streetcars and the vast manipulative life it suggested.

Chapter II

A Reconnoiter

The city of Chicago, with whose development the personality of Frank Algernon Cowperwood was soon to be definitely linked! To whom may the laurels as laureate of this Florence of the West yet fall? This singing flame of a city, this all America, this poet in chaps and buckskin, this rude, raw Titan, this Burns of a city! By its shimmering lake it lay, a king of shreds and patches, a maundering yokel with an epic in its mouth, a tramp, a hobo among cities, with the grip of Caesar in its mind, the dramatic force of Euripides in its soul. A very bard of a city this, singing of high deeds and high hopes, its heavy brogans buried deep in the mire of circumstance. Take Athens, oh, Greece! Italy, do you keep Rome! This was the Babylon, the Troy, the Nineveh of a younger day. Here came the gaping West and the hopeful East to see. Here hungry men, raw from the shops and fields, idyls and romances in their minds, builded them an empire crying glory in the mud.

From New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine had come a strange company, earnest, patient, determined, unschooled in even the primer of refinement, hungry for something the significance of which, when they had it, they could not even guess, anxious to be called great, determined so to be without ever knowing how. Here came the dreamy gentleman of the South, robbed of his patrimony; the hopeful student of Yale and Harvard and Princeton; the enfranchised miner of California and the Rockies⁷, his bags of gold and silver in his hands. Here was already the bewildered foreigner, an alien speech confounding him – the Hun⁸, the Pole, the Swede, the German, the Russian – seeking his homely colonies, fearing his neighbor of another race.

Here was the negro, the prostitute, the blackleg, the gambler, the romantic adventurer *par excellence*⁹. A city with but a handful of the native-born; a city packed to the doors with all the riffraff of a thousand towns. Flaring were the lights of the bagnio; tinkling the banjos, zithers, mandolins of the so-called gin-mill; all the dreams and the brutality of the day seemed gathered to rejoice (and rejoice they did) in this new-found wonder of a metropolitan life in the West.

The first prominent Chicagoan whom Cowperwood sought out was the president of the Lake City National Bank, the largest financial organization in the city, with deposits of over fourteen million dollars. It was located in Dearborn Street, at Munroe, but a block or two from his hotel.

"Find out who that man is," ordered Mr. Judah Addison, the president of the bank, on seeing him enter the president's private waiting-room.

Mr. Addison's office was so arranged with glass windows that he could, by craning his neck, see all who entered his reception-room before they saw him, and he had been struck by Cowperwood's face and force. Long familiarity with the banking world and with great affairs generally had given a rich finish to the ease and force which the latter naturally possessed. He looked strangely replete for a man of thirty-six – suave, steady, incisive, with eyes as fine as those of a Newfoundland or a Collie and as innocent and winsome. They were wonderful eyes, soft and spring-like at times, glowing with a rich, human understanding which on the instant could harden and flash lightning. Deceptive eyes, unreadable, but alluring alike to men and to women in all walks and conditions of life.

The secretary addressed came back with Cowperwood's letter of introduction, and immediately Cowperwood followed.

Mr. Addison instinctively arose – a thing he did not always do. "I'm pleased to meet you, Mr. Cowperwood," he said, politely. "I saw you come in just now. You see how I keep my windows here,

⁷ the Rockies – the Rocky Mountains – Скалистые горы

⁸ Hun – Hungarian – венгр

⁹ *par excellence* – (фр.) в высшей степени

so as to spy out the country. Sit down. You wouldn't like an apple, would you?" He opened a left-hand drawer, producing several polished red wine-saps, one of which he held out. "I always eat one about this time in the morning."

"Thank you, no," replied Cowperwood, pleasantly, estimating as he did so his host's temperament and mental caliber. "I never eat between meals, but I appreciate your kindness. I am just passing through Chicago, and I thought I would present this letter now rather than later. I thought you might tell me a little about the city from an investment point of view."

As Cowperwood talked, Addison, a short, heavy, rubicund man with grayish-brown sideburns extending to his ear-lobes and hard, bright, twinkling gray eyes – a proud, happy, self-sufficient man – munched his apple and contemplated Cowperwood. As is so often the case in life, he frequently liked or disliked people on sight, and he prided himself on his judgment of men. Almost foolishly, for one so conservative, he was taken with Cowperwood¹⁰ – a man immensely his superior – not because of the Drexel letter, which spoke of the latter's "undoubted financial genius" and the advantage it would be to Chicago to have him settle there, but because of the swimming wonder of his eyes. Cowperwood's personality, while maintaining an unbroken outward reserve, breathed a tremendous humanness which touched his fellow-banker. Both men were in their way walking enigmas, the Philadelphian far the subtler of the two. Addison was ostensibly a church-member, a model citizen; he represented a point of view to which Cowperwood would never have stooped. Both men were ruthless after their fashion, avid of a physical life; but Addison was the weaker in that he was still afraid – very much afraid – of what life might do to him. The man before him had no sense of fear. Addison contributed judiciously to charity, subscribed outwardly to a dull social routine, pretended to love his wife, of whom he was weary, and took his human pleasure secretly. The man before him subscribed to nothing, refused to talk save to intimates, whom he controlled spiritually, and did as he pleased.

"Why, I'll tell you, Mr. Cowperwood," Addison replied. "We people out here in Chicago think so well of ourselves that sometimes we're afraid to say all we think for fear of appearing a little extravagant. We're like the youngest son in the family that knows he can lick all the others, but doesn't want to do it – not just yet. We're not as handsome as we might be – did you ever see a growing boy that was? – but we're absolutely sure that we're going to be. Our pants and shoes and coat and hat get too small for us every six months, and so we don't look very fashionable, but there are big, strong, hard muscles and bones underneath, Mr. Cowperwood, as you'll discover when you get to looking around. Then you won't mind the clothes so much."

Mr. Addison's round, frank eyes narrowed and hardened for a moment. A kind of metallic hardness came into his voice. Cowperwood could see that he was honestly enamoured of his adopted city. Chicago was his most beloved mistress. A moment later the flesh about his eyes crinkled, his mouth softened, and he smiled. "I'll be glad to tell you anything I can," he went on. "There are a lot of interesting things to tell."

Cowperwood beamed back on him encouragingly. He inquired after the condition of one industry and another, one trade or profession and another. This was somewhat different from the atmosphere which prevailed in Philadelphia – more breezy and generous. The tendency to expatiate and make much of local advantages was Western. He liked it, however, as one aspect of life, whether he chose to share in it or not. It was favorable to his own future. He had a prison record to live down; a wife and two children to get rid of – in the legal sense, at least (he had no desire to rid himself of financial obligation toward them). It would take some such loose, enthusiastic Western attitude to forgive in him the strength and freedom with which he ignored and refused to accept for himself current convention. "I satisfy myself" was his private law, but so to do he must assuage and control the prejudices of other men. He felt that this banker, while not putty in his hands, was inclined to a strong and useful friendship.

¹⁰ he was taken with Cowperwood – (разг.) он был очарован Каупервудом

"My impressions of the city are entirely favorable, Mr. Addison," he said, after a time, though he inwardly admitted to himself that this was not entirely true; he was not sure whether he could bring himself ultimately to live in so excavated and scaffolded a world as this or not. "I only saw a portion of it coming in on the train. I like the snap of things. I believe Chicago has a future."

"You came over the Fort Wayne, I presume," replied Addison, loftily. "You saw the worst section. You must let me show you some of the best parts. By the way, where are you staying?"

"At the Grand Pacific."

"How long will you be here?"

"Not more than a day or two."

"Let me see," and Mr. Addison drew out his watch. "I suppose you wouldn't mind meeting a few of our leading men – and we have a little luncheon-room over at the Union League Club where we drop in now and then. If you'd care to do so, I'd like to have you come along with me at one. We're sure to find a few of them – some of our lawyers, business men, and judges."

"That will be fine," said the Philadelphian, simply. "You're more than generous. There are one or two other people I want to meet in between, and" – he arose and looked at his own watch – "I'll find the Union Club. Where is the office of Arneel & Co.?"

At the mention of the great beef-packer, who was one of the bank's heaviest depositors, Addison stirred slightly with approval. This young man, at least eight years his junior, looked to him like a future grand seigneur of finance.

At the Union Club, at this noontime luncheon, after talking with the portly, conservative, aggressive Arneel and the shrewd director of the stock exchange, Cowperwood met a varied company of men ranging in age from thirty-five to sixty-five gathered about the board in a private dining-room of heavily carved black walnut, with pictures of elder citizens of Chicago on the walls and an attempt at artistry in stained glass in the windows. There were short and long men, lean and stout, dark and blond men, with eyes and jaws which varied from those of the tiger, lynx, and bear to those of the fox, the tolerant mastiff, and the surly bulldog. There were no weaklings in this selected company.

Mr. Arneel and Mr. Addison Cowperwood approved of highly as shrewd, concentrated men. Another who interested him was Anson Merrill, a small, polite, *recherch*,¹¹ soul, suggesting mansions and footmen and remote luxury generally, who was pointed out by Addison as the famous dry-goods prince of that name, quite the leading merchant, in the retail and wholesale sense, in Chicago.

Still another was a Mr. Rambaud, pioneer railroad man, to whom Addison, smiling jocosely, observed: "Mr. Cowperwood is on from Philadelphia, Mr. Rambaud, trying to find out whether he wants to lose any money out here. Can't you sell him some of that bad land you have up in the Northwest?"

Rambaud – a spare, pale, black-bearded man of much force and exactness, dressed, as Cowperwood observed, in much better taste than some of the others – looked at Cowperwood shrewdly but in a gentlemanly, retiring way, with a gracious, enigmatic smile. He caught a glance in return which he could not possibly forget. The eyes of Cowperwood said more than any words ever could. Instead of jesting faintly Mr. Rambaud decided to explain some things about the Northwest. Perhaps this Philadelphian might be interested.

To a man who has gone through a great life struggle in one metropolis and tested all the phases of human duplicity, decency, sympathy, and chicanery in the controlling group of men that one invariably finds in every American city at least, the temperament and significance of another group in another city is not so much, and yet it is. Long since Cowperwood had parted company with the idea that humanity at any angle or under any circumstances, climatic or otherwise, is in any way different. To him the most noteworthy characteristic of the human race was that it was strangely chemic, being anything or nothing, as the hour and the condition afforded. In his leisure moments – those free from

¹¹ *recherch#e* – (фр.) изысканный, тонкий

practical calculation, which were not many – he often speculated as to what life really was. If he had not been a great financier and, above all, a marvelous organizer he might have become a highly individualistic philosopher – a calling which, if he had thought anything about it at all at this time, would have seemed rather trivial. His business as he saw it was with the material facts of life, or, rather, with those third and fourth degree theorems and syllogisms which control material things and so represent wealth. He was here to deal with the great general needs of the Middle West – to seize upon, if he might, certain well-springs of wealth and power and rise to recognized authority. In his morning talks he had learned of the extent and character of the stockyards' enterprises, of the great railroad and ship interests, of the tremendous rising importance of real estate, grain speculation, the hotel business, the hardware business. He had learned of universal manufacturing companies – one that made cars, another elevators, another binders, another windmills, another engines. Apparently, any new industry seemed to do well in Chicago. In his talk with the one director of the Board of Trade to whom he had a letter he had learned that few, if any, local stocks were dealt in on 'change¹². Wheat, corn, and grains of all kinds were principally speculated in. The big stocks of the East were gambled in by way of leased wires on the New York Stock Exchange – not otherwise.

As he looked at these men, all pleasantly civil, all general in their remarks, each safely keeping his vast plans under his vest, Cowperwood wondered how he would fare in this community. There were such difficult things ahead of him to do. No one of these men, all of whom were in their commercial-social way agreeable, knew that he had only recently been in the penitentiary. How much difference would that make in their attitude? No one of them knew that, although he was married and had two children, he was planning to divorce his wife and marry the girl who had appropriated to herself the role which his wife had once played.

“Are you seriously contemplating looking into the Northwest?” asked Mr. Rambaud, interestedly, toward the close of the luncheon.

“That is my present plan after I finish here. I thought I'd take a short run up there.”

“Let me put you in touch with an interesting party that is going as far as Fargo and Duluth. There is a private car leaving Thursday, most of them citizens of Chicago, but some Easterners. I would be glad to have you join us. I am going as far as Minneapolis.”

Cowperwood thanked him and accepted. A long conversation followed about the Northwest, its timber, wheat, land sales, cattle, and possible manufacturing plants.

What Fargo, Minneapolis, and Duluth were to be civically and financially were the chief topics of conversation. Naturally, Mr. Rambaud, having under his direction vast railroad lines which penetrated this region, was confident of the future of it. Cowperwood gathered it all, almost by instinct. Gas, street-railways, land speculations, banks, wherever located, were his chief thoughts.

Finally he left the club to keep his other appointments, but something of his personality remained behind him. Mr. Addison and Mr. Rambaud, among others, were sincerely convinced that he was one of the most interesting men they had met in years. And he scarcely had said anything at all – just listened.

¹² 'change = Exchange – биржа

Chapter III

A Chicago Evening

After his first visit to the bank over which Addison presided, and an informal dinner at the latter's home, Cowperwood had decided that he did not care to sail under any false colors so far as Addison was concerned.¹³ He was too influential and well connected. Besides, Cowperwood liked him too much. Seeing that the man's leaning toward him was strong, in reality a fascination, he made an early morning call a day or two after he had returned from Fargo, whither he had gone at Mr. Rambaud's suggestion, on his way back to Philadelphia, determined to volunteer a smooth presentation of his earlier misfortunes, and trust to Addison's interest to make him view the matter in a kindly light. He told him the whole story of how he had been convicted of technical embezzlement in Philadelphia and had served out his term in the Eastern Penitentiary. He also mentioned his divorce and his intention of marrying again.

Addison, who was the weaker man of the two and yet forceful in his own way, admired this courageous stand on Cowperwood's part. It was a braver thing than he himself could or would have achieved. It appealed to his sense of the dramatic. Here was a man who apparently had been dragged down to the very bottom of things, his face forced in the mire, and now he was coming up again strong, hopeful, urgent. The banker knew many highly respected men in Chicago whose early careers, as he was well aware, would not bear too close an inspection, but nothing was thought of that. Some of them were in society, some not, but all of them were powerful. Why should not Cowperwood be allowed to begin all over? He looked at him steadily, at his eyes, at his stocky body, at his smooth, handsome, mustached face. Then he held out his hand.

"Mr. Cowperwood," he said, finally, trying to shape his words appropriately, "I needn't say that I am pleased with this interesting confession. It appeals to me. I'm glad you have made it to me. You needn't say any more at any time. I decided the day I saw you walking into that vestibule that you were an exceptional man; now I know it. You needn't apologize to me. I haven't lived in this world fifty years and more without having my eye-teeth cut.¹⁴ You're welcome to the courtesies of this bank and of my house as long as you care to avail yourself of them. We'll cut our cloth as circumstances dictate in the future.¹⁵ I'd like to see you come to Chicago, solely because I like you personally. If you decide to settle here I'm sure I can be of service to you and you to me. Don't think anything more about it; I shan't ever say anything one way or another. You have your own battle to fight, and I wish you luck. You'll get all the aid from me I can honestly give you. Just forget that you told me, and when you get your matrimonial affairs straightened out bring your wife out to see us."

With these things completed Cowperwood took the train back to Philadelphia. <...>

After commenting on the character of Chicago he decided with her (Aileen) that so soon as conditions permitted they would remove themselves to the Western city.

It would be pointless to do more than roughly sketch the period of three years during which the various changes which saw the complete elimination of Cowperwood from Philadelphia and his introduction into Chicago took place. For a time there were merely journeys to and fro, at first more especially to Chicago, then to Fargo, where his transported secretary, Walter Whelpley, was managing

¹³ **Cowperwood had decided that he did not care to sail under any false colors so far as Addison was concerned.** – (разг.) Каупервуд решил, что не стоит ничего скрывать от Эддисона.

¹⁴ **I haven't lived in this world fifty years and more without having my eye-teeth cut.** – (разг.) Я не даром живу на свете уже пять десятков лет – жизнь меня кое-чему научила. (to have one's eye-teeth cut – приобрести жизненный опыт, мудрость)

¹⁵ **We'll cut our cloth as circumstances dictate in the future.** – (разг.) Мы будем действовать в соответствии с тем, как сложатся обстоятельства в будущем. (Перефразированная поговорка cut the coat according to the cloth – по одежке протягивай ножки)

under his direction the construction of Fargo business blocks, a short street-car line, and a fair-ground. This interesting venture bore the title of the Fargo Construction and Transportation Company, of which Frank A. Cowperwood was president. His Philadelphia lawyer, Mr. Harper Steger, was for the time being general master of contracts.

For another short period he might have been found living at the Tremont in Chicago, avoiding for the time being, because of Aileen's company, anything more than a nodding contact with the important men he had first met, while he looked quietly into the matter of a Chicago brokerage arrangement – a partnership with some established broker who, without too much personal ambition, would bring him a knowledge of Chicago Stock Exchange affairs, personages, and Chicago ventures. On one occasion he took Aileen with him to Fargo, where with a haughty, bored insouciance she surveyed the state of the growing city.

"Oh, Frank!" she exclaimed, when she saw the plain, wooden, four-story hotel, the long, unpleasing business street, with its motley collection of frame and brick stores, the gaping stretches of houses, facing in most directions unpaved streets. Aileen in her tailored spick-and-spanness¹⁶, her self-conscious vigor, vanity, and tendency to over-ornament, was a strange contrast to the rugged self-effacement and indifference to personal charm which characterized most of the men and women of this new metropolis. "You didn't seriously think of coming out here to live, did you?"

She was wondering where her chance for social exchange would come in – her opportunity to shine. Suppose her Frank were to be very rich; suppose he did make very much money – much more than he had ever had even in the past – what good would it do her here? In Philadelphia, before his failure, before she had been suspected of the secret *liaison* with him, he had been beginning (at least) to entertain in a very pretentious way. If she had been his wife then she might have stepped smartly into Philadelphia society. Out here, good gracious! She turned up her pretty nose in disgust. "What an awful place!" was her one comment at this most stirring of Western boom towns.

When it came to Chicago, however, and its swirling, increasing life, Aileen was much interested. Between attending to many financial matters Cowperwood saw to it that she was not left alone. He asked her to shop in the local stores and tell him about them; and this she did, driving around in an open carriage, attractively arrayed, a great brown hat emphasizing her pink-and-white complexion and red-gold hair. On different afternoons of their stay he took her to drive over the principal streets. When Aileen was permitted for the first time to see the spacious beauty and richness of Prairie Avenue, the North Shore Drive, Michigan Avenue, and the new mansions on Ashland Boulevard, set in their grassy spaces, the spirit, aspirations, hope, tang of the future Chicago began to work in her blood as it had in Cowperwood's. <...>

"Do you suppose we will ever have a house as fine as one of these, Frank?" she asked him, longingly.

"I'll tell you what my plan is," he said. "If you like this Michigan Avenue section we'll buy a piece of property out here now and hold it. Just as soon as I make the right connections here and see what I am going to do we'll build a house – something really nice – don't worry. I want to get this divorce matter settled, and then we'll begin. Meanwhile, if we have to come here, we'd better live rather quietly." <...>

¹⁶ **spick-and-spanness** – *суц.* от spick-and-span – очень аккуратный, опрятный; чистый, без единого пятнышка

Chapter IV

Peter Laughlin & Co

The partnership which Cowperwood eventually made with an old-time Board of Trade operator, Peter Laughlin, was eminently to his satisfaction. Laughlin was a tall, gaunt speculator who had spent most of his living days in Chicago, having come there as a boy from western Missouri. He was a typical Chicago Board of Trade¹⁷ operator of the old school, having an Andrew Jacksonish countenance, and a Henry Clay – Davy Crockett – “Long John” Wentworth build of body.¹⁸

Cowperwood from his youth up had had a curious interest in quaint characters, and he was interesting to them; they “took” to him. He could, if he chose to take the trouble, fit himself in with the odd psychology of almost any individual. In his early peregrinations in La Salle Street he inquired after clever traders on ‘change, and then gave them one small commission after another in order to get acquainted. Thus he stumbled one morning on old Peter Laughlin, wheat and corn trader, who had an office in La Salle Street near Madison, and who did a modest business gambling for himself and others in grain and Eastern railway shares. Laughlin was a shrewd, canny American, originally, perhaps, of Scotch extraction, who had all the traditional American blemishes of uncouthness, tobacco-chewing, profanity, and other small vices. Cowperwood could tell from looking at him that he must have a fund of information concerning every current Chicagoan of importance, and this fact alone was certain to be of value. Then the old man was direct, plain-spoken, simple-appearing, and wholly unpretentious – qualities which Cowperwood deemed invaluable.

Once or twice in the last three years Laughlin had lost heavily on private “corners”¹⁹ that he had attempted to engineer, and the general feeling was that he was now becoming cautious, or, in other words, afraid. “Just the man,” Cowperwood thought. So one morning he called upon Laughlin, intending to open a small account with him.

“Henry,” he heard the old man say, as he entered Laughlin’s fair-sized but rather dusty office, to a young, preternaturally solemn-looking clerk, a fit assistant for Peter Laughlin, “git me them there Pittsburg and Lake Erie sheers, will you?” Seeing Cowperwood waiting, he added, “What kin I do for ye?”²⁰

Cowperwood smiled. “So he calls them ‘sheers,’ does he?” he thought. “Good! I think I’ll like him.”

He introduced himself as coming from Philadelphia, and went on to say that he was interested in various Chicago ventures, inclined to invest in any good stock which would rise, and particularly desirous to buy into some corporation – public utility preferred – which would be certain to grow with the expansion of the city.

Old Laughlin, who was now all of sixty years of age, owned a seat on the Board, and was worth in the neighborhood of two hundred thousand dollars, looked at Cowperwood quizzically.

“Well, now, if you’d ‘a’ come along here ten or fifteen years ago you might ‘a’ got in on the ground floor of a lot of things,” he observed. “There was these here gas companies, now, that them Otway and Apperson boys got in on, and then all these here street-railways. Why, I’m the feller that

¹⁷ **Board of Trade** – Торговая палата

¹⁸ **having an Andrew Jacksonish countenance and a Henry Clay – Davy Crockett – “Long John” Wentworth build of body.** – лицом похожий на Эндрю Джексона, а телосложением – на Генри Клея, Дэвида Крокетта или «Длинного Джона» Вентворта (Эндрю Джексон, 7-й президент США (1829–1837); Генри Клей (1777–1852), американский государственный деятель; Дэвид Крокет (1786–1836), американский политик; «Длинный Джон» Вентворт (1815–1888), журналист, конгрессмен, мэр Чикаго – все они были высокими людьми крепкого телосложения)

¹⁹ **“corners”** – (здесь, *сленг*) скупка всех имеющихся на рынке акций определенного вида одним лицом (группой лиц) для последующей продажи по завышенной цене

²⁰ **git = get, sheers = share, kin = can; ye = you** (здесь и далее – написание, передающее искаженное произношение слов)

told Eddie Parkinson what a fine thing he could make out of it if he would go and organize that North State Street line. He promised me a bunch of sheers if he ever worked it out, but he never give 'em to me. I didn't expect him to, though," he added, wisely, and with a glint. "I'm too old a trader for that. He's out of it now, anyway. That Michaels-Kennelly crowd skinned him. Yep, if you'd 'a' been here ten or fifteen years ago you might 'a' got in on that. 'Tain't no use a-thinkin' about that, though, any more. Them sheers is sellin' fer clost onto a hundred and sixty."²¹

Cowperwood smiled. "Well, Mr. Laughlin," he observed, "you must have been on 'change a long time here. You seem to know a good deal of what has gone on in the past."

"Yep, ever since 1852," replied the old man. He had a thick growth of upstanding hair looking not unlike a rooster's comb, a long and what threatened eventually to become a Punch-and-Judy chin²², a slightly aquiline nose, high cheek-bones, and hollow, brown-skinned cheeks. His eyes were as clear and sharp as those of a lynx.

"To tell you the truth, Mr. Laughlin," went on Cowperwood, "what I'm really out here in Chicago for is to find a man with whom I can go into partnership in the brokerage business. Now I'm in the banking and brokerage business myself in the East. I have a firm in Philadelphia and a seat on both the New York and Philadelphia exchanges. I have some affairs in Fargo also. Any trade agency can tell you about me. You have a Board of Trade seat here, and no doubt you do some New York and Philadelphia exchange business. The new firm, if you would go in with me, could handle it all direct. I'm a rather strong outside man myself. I'm thinking of locating permanently in Chicago. What would you say now to going into business with me? Do you think we could get along in the same office space?"

Cowperwood had a way, when he wanted to be pleasant, of beating the fingers of his two hands together, finger for finger, tip for tip. He also smiled at the same time – or, rather, beamed – his eyes glowing with a warm, magnetic, seemingly affectionate light.

As it happened, old Peter Laughlin had arrived at that psychological moment when he was wishing that some such opportunity as this might appear and be available. He was a lonely man, never having been able to bring himself to trust his peculiar temperament in the hands of any woman. As a matter of fact, he had never understood women at all, his relations being confined to those sad immoralities of the cheapest character which only money – grudgingly given, at that – could buy. He lived in three small rooms in West Harrison Street, near Throup, where he cooked his own meals at times. His one companion was a small spaniel, simple and affectionate, a she dog, Jennie by name, with whom he slept. Jennie was a docile, loving companion, waiting for him patiently by day in his office until he was ready to go home at night. <...>

As Cowperwood suspected, what old Laughlin did not know about Chicago financial conditions, deals, opportunities, and individuals was scarcely worth knowing. Being only a trader by instinct, neither an organizer nor an executive, he had never been able to make any great constructive use of his knowledge. <...>

The matter of this partnership was not arranged at once, although it did not take long. Old Peter Laughlin wanted to think it over, although he had immediately developed a personal fancy for Cowperwood. In a way he was the latter's victim and servant from the start. They met day after day to discuss various details and terms. <...>

In a week the details were completed, and two weeks later the sign of Peter Laughlin & Co., grain and commission merchants, appeared over the door of a handsome suite of rooms on the ground floor of a corner at La Salle and Madison, in the heart of the Chicago financial district. <...>

²¹ 'a' = have; 'em = them; Tain't = It ain't = It is not; fer = for

²² a **Punch-and-Judy chin** – острый подбородок (как у героев английского народного кукольного театра Панча и Джуди)

Chapter V

Concerning a Wife and Family

If anyone fancies for a moment that this commercial move on the part of Cowperwood was either hasty or ill-considered they but little appreciate the incisive, apprehensive psychology of the man. His thoughts as to life and control (tempered and hardened by thirteen months of reflection in the Eastern District Penitentiary) had given him a fixed policy. He could, should, and would rule alone. No man must ever again have the least claim on him save that of a suppliant. He wanted no more dangerous combinations such as he had had with Stener, the man through whom he had lost so much in Philadelphia, and others. By right of financial intellect and courage he was first, and would so prove it. Men must swing around him as planets around the sun.

Moreover, since his fall from grace in Philadelphia he had come to think that never again, perhaps, could he hope to become socially acceptable in the sense in which the so-called best society of a city interprets the phrase; and pondering over this at odd moments, he realized that his future allies in all probability would not be among the rich and socially important – the clannish, snobbish elements of society – but among the beginners and financially strong men who had come or were coming up from the bottom, and who had no social hopes whatsoever. There were many such. If through luck and effort he became sufficiently powerful financially he might then hope to dictate to society. <...>

As the most essential preliminary to the social as well as the financial establishment of himself and Aileen in Chicago, Harper Steger, Cowperwood's lawyer, was doing his best all this while to ingratiate himself in the confidence of Mrs. Cowperwood, who had no faith in lawyers any more than she had in her recalcitrant husband. <...>

The merest item in three of the Philadelphia papers some six weeks later reported that a divorce had been granted. <...>

Chapter VI

The New Queen of the Home

The day Cowperwood and Aileen were married – it was in an obscure village called Dalston, near Pittsburg, in western Pennsylvania, where they had stopped off to manage this matter – he had said to her: “I want to tell you, dear, that you and I are really beginning life all over. Now it depends on how well we play this game as to how well we succeed. If you will listen to me we won’t try to do anything much socially in Chicago for the present. Of course we’ll have to meet a few people. That can’t be avoided. Mr. and Mrs. Addison are anxious to meet you, and I’ve delayed too long in that matter as it is. But what I mean is that I don’t believe it’s advisable to push this social exchange too far. People are sure to begin to make inquiries if we do. My plan is to wait a little while and then build a really fine house so that we won’t need to rebuild. We’re going to go to Europe next spring, if things go right, and we may get some ideas over there. I’m going to put in a good big gallery,” he concluded. “While we’re traveling we might as well see what we can find in the way of pictures and so on.” <...>

Immediately after their marriage Cowperwood and Aileen journeyed to Chicago direct, and took the best rooms that the Tremont provided, for the time being. A little later they heard of a comparatively small furnished house at Twenty-third and Michigan Avenue, which, with horses and carriages thrown in, was to be had for a season or two on lease. They contracted for it at once, installing a butler, servants, and the general service of a well-appointed home. Here, because he thought it was only courteous, and not because he thought it was essential or wise at this time to attempt a social onslaught, he invited the Addisons and one or two others whom he felt sure would come – Alexander Rambaud, president of the Chicago & Northwestern, and his wife, and Taylor Lord, an architect whom he had recently called into consultation and whom he found socially acceptable. Lord, like the Addisons, was in society, but only as a minor figure.

Trust Cowperwood to do the thing as it should be done.²³ The place they had leased was a charming little gray-stone house, with a neat flight of granite, balustraded steps leading up to its wide-arched door, and a judicious use of stained glass to give its interior an artistically subdued atmosphere. Fortunately, it was furnished in good taste. Cowperwood turned over the matter of the dinner to a caterer and decorator. Aileen had nothing to do but dress, and wait, and look her best.

“I needn’t tell you,” he said, in the morning, on leaving, “that I want you to look nice to-night, pet. I want the Addisons and Mr. Rambaud to like you.”

A hint was more than sufficient for Aileen, though really it was not needed. On arriving at Chicago she had sought and discovered a French maid. Although she had brought plenty of dresses from Philadelphia, she had been having additional winter costumes prepared by the best and most expensive mistress of the art in Chicago – Theresa Donovan. Only the day before she had welcomed home a golden-yellow silk under heavy green lace, which, with her reddish-gold hair and her white arms and neck, seemed to constitute an unusual harmony. <...>

When she finally went down-stairs to see how the dining and reception rooms looked, and Fadette began putting away the welter of discarded garments²⁴ – she was a radiant vision – a splendid greenish-gold figure, with gorgeous hair, smooth, soft, shapely ivory arms, a splendid neck and bust, and a swelling form. She felt beautiful, and yet she was a little nervous – truly. <...>

The dinner, as such simple things go, was a success from what might be called a managerial and pictorial point of view. <...>

²³ Trust Cowperwood to do the thing as it should be done. – Разумеется, Каупервуд сделал все как нужно.

²⁴ the welter of discarded garments – беспорядочно разбросанные детали туалета

All the men outside of Cowperwood were thinking how splendid Aileen was physically, how white were her arms, how rounded her neck and shoulders, how rich her hair.

Chapter VII

Chicago Gas

Old Peter Laughlin, rejuvenated by Cowperwood's electric ideas, was making money for the house. He brought many bits of interesting gossip from the floor²⁵, and such shrewd guesses as to what certain groups and individuals were up to, that Cowperwood was able to make some very brilliant deductions. <...>

But this grain and commission business, while it was yielding a profit which would average about twenty thousand a year to each partner, was nothing more to Cowperwood than a source of information.

He wanted to "get in" on something that was sure to bring very great returns within a reasonable time and that would not leave him in any such desperate situation as he was at the time of the Chicago fire – spread out very thin, as he put it. He had interested in his ventures a small group of Chicago men who were watching him – Judah Addison, Alexander Rambaud, Millard Bailey, Anton Videra – men who, although not supreme figures by any means, had free capital. He knew that he could go to them with any truly sound proposition. The one thing that most attracted his attention was the Chicago gas situation, because there was a chance to step in almost unheralded in an as yet unoccupied territory; with franchises once secured – the reader can quite imagine how – he could present himself, like a Hamilcar Barca in the heart of Spain or a Hannibal at the gates of Rome²⁶, with a demand for surrender and a division of spoils.

There were at this time three gas companies operating in the three different divisions of the city – the three sections, or "sides," as they were called – South, West, and North, and of these the Chicago Gas, Light, and Coke Company, organized in 1848 to do business on the South Side, was the most flourishing and important. The People's Gas, Light, and Coke Company, doing business on the West Side, was a few years younger than the South Chicago company, and had been allowed to spring into existence through the foolish self-confidence of the organizer and directors of the South Side company, who had fancied that neither the West Side nor the North Side was going to develop very rapidly for a number of years to come, and had counted on the city council's allowing them to extend their mains at any time to these other portions of the city. A third company, the North Chicago Gas Illuminating Company, had been organized almost simultaneously with the West Side company by the same process through which the other companies had been brought into life – their avowed intention, like that of the West Side company, being to confine their activities to the sections from which the organizers presumably came.

Cowperwood's first project was to buy out and combine the three old city companies. With this in view he looked up the holders in all three corporations – their financial and social status. It was his idea that by offering them three for one, or even four for one, for every dollar represented by the market value of their stock he might buy in and capitalize the three companies as one. Then, by issuing sufficient stock to cover all his obligations, he would reap a rich harvest and at the same time leave himself in charge. He approached Judah Addison first as the most available man to help float a scheme of this kind. He did not want him as a partner so much as he wanted him as an investor.

"Well, I'll tell you how I feel about this," said Addison, finally. "You've hit on a great idea here. It's a wonder it hasn't occurred to someone else before. And you'll want to keep rather quiet about it,

²⁵ **the floor** – (зд.) операционный зал фондовой биржи

²⁶ **Hamilcar Barca in the heart of Spain or a Hannibal at the gates of Rome** – Гамилькар Барка (около 279—229 гг. до н. э.), карфагенский генерал и государственный деятель, отец Ганнибала, после окончания Первой Пунической войны инициировал начало завоевания Карфагеном Испании; Ганнибал (247—183 до н. э.), один из величайших полководцев и государственных мужей древности, участник Второй Пунической войны, в ходе которой его армия дошла практически до самого Рима

or someone else will rush in and do it. We have a lot of venturesome men out here. But I like you, and I'm with you. Now it wouldn't be advisable for me to go in on this personally – not openly, anyhow – but I'll promise to see that you get some of the money you want. I like your idea of a central holding company, or pool, with you in charge as trustee, and I'm perfectly willing that you should manage it, for I think you can do it. Anyhow, that leaves me out, apparently, except as an Investor. But you will have to get two or three others to help carry this guarantee with me. Have you anyone in mind?"

"Oh yes," replied Cowperwood. "Certainly. I merely came to you first." He mentioned Rambaud, Videra, Bailey, and others.

"They're all right," said Addison, "if you can get them. But I'm not sure, even then, that you can induce these other fellows to sell out. They're not investors in the ordinary sense. They're people who look on this gas business as their private business. They started it. They like it. They built the gas-tanks and laid the mains. It won't be easy."

Cowperwood found, as Addison predicted, that it was not such an easy matter to induce the various stockholders and directors in the old companies to come in on any such scheme of reorganization. A closer, more unresponsive set of men he was satisfied he had never met. His offer to buy outright at three or four for one they refused absolutely. The stock in each case was selling from one hundred and seventy to two hundred and ten, and intrinsically was worth more every year, as the city was growing larger and its need of gas greater. At the same time they were suspicious – one and all – of any combination scheme by an outsider. Who was he? Whom did he represent? He could make it clear that he had ample capital, but not who his backers were. The old officers and directors fancied that it was a scheme on the part of some of the officers and directors of one of the other companies to get control and oust them. Why should they sell? Why be tempted by greater profits from their stock when they were doing very well as it was? Because of his newness to Chicago and his lack of connection as yet with large affairs Cowperwood was eventually compelled to turn to another scheme – that of organizing new companies in the suburbs as an entering-wedge of attack upon the city proper. Suburbs such as Lake View and Hyde Park, having town or village councils of their own, were permitted to grant franchises to water, gas, and street-railway companies duly incorporated under the laws of the state. Cowperwood calculated that if he could form separate and seemingly distinct companies for each of the villages and towns, and one general company for the city later, he would be in a position to dictate terms to the older organizations. It was simply a question of obtaining his charters and franchises before his rivals had awakened to the situation.

The one difficulty was that he knew absolutely nothing of the business of gas – its practical manufacture and distribution – and had never been particularly interested in it. Street-railroading, his favorite form of municipal profit-seeking, and one upon which he had acquired an almost endless fund of specialized information, offered no present practical opportunity for him here in Chicago. He meditated on the situation, did some reading on the manufacture of gas, and then suddenly, as was his luck, found an implement ready to his hand.

It appeared that in the course of the life and growth of the South Side company there had once been a smaller organization founded by a man by the name of Sippens – Henry De Soto Sippens – who had entered and actually secured, by some hocus-pocus²⁷, a franchise to manufacture and sell gas in the down-town districts, but who had been annoyed by all sorts of legal processes until he had finally been driven out or persuaded to get out. He was now in the real-estate business in Lake View. Old Peter Laughlin knew him.

"He's a smart little cuss," Laughlin told Cowperwood. "I thought once he'd make a go of it, but they ketched him where his hair was short, and he had to let go."²⁸ There was an explosion in his

²⁷ **by some hocus-pocus** – (разг.) в результате каких-то махинаций

²⁸ **I thought once he'd make a go of it, but they ketched him where his hair was short, and he had to let go.** – Было время, я думал, что он добьется успеха, но они прижали его (нашли его слабое место), и ему пришлось выпустить лакомый кусочек.

tank over here near the river onct, an I think he thort them fellers blew him up. Anyhow, he got out. I ain't seen ner heard sight of him fer years."

Cowperwood sent old Peter to look up Mr. Sippens and find out what he was really doing, and whether he would be interested to get back in the gas business. Enter, then, a few days later into the office of Peter Laughlin & Co. Henry De Soto Sippens. He was a very little man, about fifty years of age; he wore a high, four-cornered, stiff felt hat, with a short brown business coat (which in summer became seersucker) and square-toed shoes; he looked for all the world like a country drug or book store owner, with perhaps the air of a country doctor or lawyer superadded. His cuffs protruded too far from his coat-sleeves, his necktie bulged too far out of his vest, and his high hat was set a little too far back on his forehead; otherwise he was acceptable, pleasant, and interesting. He had short sideburns – reddish brown – which stuck out quite defiantly, and his eyebrows were heavy.

"Mr. Sippens," said Cowperwood, blandly, "you were once in the gas manufacturing and distributing business here in Chicago, weren't you?"

"I think I know as much about the manufacture of gas as anyone," replied Sippens, almost contentiously. "I worked at it for a number of years."

"Well, now, Mr. Sippens, I was thinking that it might be interesting to start a little gas company in one of these outlying villages that are growing so fast and see if we couldn't make some money out of it. I'm not a practical gas man myself, but I thought I might interest someone who was." He looked at Sippens in a friendly, estimating way. "I have heard of you as someone who has had considerable experience in this field here in Chicago. If I should get up a company of this kind, with considerable backing, do you think you might be willing to take the management of it?"

"Oh, I know all about this gas field," Mr. Sippens was about to say. "It can't be done." But he changed his mind before opening his lips. "If I were paid enough," he said, cautiously. "I suppose you know what you have to contend with?"

"Oh yes," Cowperwood replied, smiling. "What would you consider 'paid enough' to mean?"

"Oh, if I were given six thousand a year and a sufficient interest in the company – say, a half, or something like that – I might consider it," replied Sippens, determined, as he thought, to frighten Cowperwood off by his exorbitant demands. He was making almost six thousand dollars a year out of his present business.

"You wouldn't think that four thousand in several companies – say up to fifteen thousand dollars – and an interest of about a tenth in each would be better?"

Mr. Sippens meditated carefully on this. Plainly, the man before him was no trifling beginner. He looked at Cowperwood shrewdly and saw at once, without any additional explanation of any kind, that the latter was preparing a big fight of some sort. Ten years before Sippens had sensed the immense possibilities of the gas business. He had tried to "get in on it,"²⁹ but had been sued, waylaid, enjoined, financially blockaded, and finally blown up. He had always resented the treatment he had received, and he had bitterly regretted his inability to retaliate. He had thought his days of financial effort were over, but here was a man who was subtly suggesting a stirring fight, and who was calling him, like a hunter with horn, to the chase.

"Well, Mr. Cowperwood," he replied, with less defiance and more camaraderie, "if you could show me that you have a legitimate proposition in hand I am a practical gas man. I know all about mains, franchise contracts, and gas-machinery. I organized and installed the plant at Dayton, Ohio, and Rochester, New York. I would have been rich if I had got here a little earlier." The echo of regret was in his voice.

"Well, now, here's your chance, Mr. Sippens," urged Cowperwood, subtly. "Between you and me there's going to be a big new gas company in the field. We'll make these old fellows step up and see us quickly. Doesn't that interest you? There'll be plenty of money. It isn't that that's wanting – it's

²⁹ to get in on it – (сленг) поучаствовать в этом, поработать в этой сфере

an organizer, a fighter, a practical gas man to build the plant, lay the mains, and so on.” Cowperwood rose suddenly, straight and determined – a trick with him when he wanted to really impress anyone. He seemed to radiate force, conquest, victory. “Do you want to come in?”

“Yes, I do, Mr. Cowperwood!” exclaimed Sippens, jumping to his feet, putting on his hat and shoving it far back on his head. He looked like a chest-swollen bantam rooster.

Cowperwood took his extended hand.

“Get your real-estate affairs in order. I’ll want you to get me a franchise in Lake View shortly and build me a plant. I’ll give you all the help you need. I’ll arrange everything to your satisfaction within a week or so. We will want a good lawyer or two.”

Sippens smiled ecstatically as he left the office. Oh, the wonder of this, and after ten years! Now he would show those crooks. Now he had a real fighter behind him – a man like himself. Now, by George,³⁰ the fur would begin to fly! Who was this man, anyhow? What a wonder! He would look him up. He knew that from now on he would do almost anything Cowperwood wanted him to do.

³⁰ **by George!** – (разг.) ей-богу!, честное слово!

Chapter VIII

Now This Is Fighting

When Cowperwood, after failing in his overtures to the three city gas companies, confided to Addison his plan of organizing rival companies in the suburbs, the banker glared at him appreciatively. "You're a smart one!" he finally exclaimed. "You'll do! I back you to win!" He went on to advise Cowperwood that he would need the assistance of some of the strong men on the various village councils. "They're all as crooked as eels' teeth," he went on. "But there are one or two that are more crooked than others and safer – bell-wethers³¹. Have you got your lawyer?"

"I haven't picked one yet, but I will. I'm looking around for the right man now."

"Well, of course, I needn't tell you how important that is. There is one man, old General Van Sickle, who has had considerable training in these matters. He's fairly reliable."

The entrance of Gen. Judson P. Van Sickle threw at the very outset a suggestive light on the whole situation. The old soldier, over fifty, had been a general of division during the Civil War, and had got his real start in life by filing false titles to property in southern Illinois, and then bringing suits to substantiate his fraudulent claims before friendly associates³². He was now a prosperous go-between, requiring heavy retainers³³, and yet not over-prosperous. There was only one kind of business that came to the General – this kind; and one instinctively compared him to that decoy sheep at the stock-yards that had been trained to go forth into nervous, frightened flocks of its fellow-sheep, balking at being driven into the slaughtering-pens, and lead them peacefully into the shambles, knowing enough always to make his own way quietly to the rear during the onward progress and thus escape. A dusty old lawyer, this, with Heaven knows what welter of altered wills, broken promises, suborned juries, influenced judges, bribed councilmen and legislators, double-intentioned agreements and contracts, and a whole world of shifty legal calculations and false pretenses floating around in his brain. Among the politicians, judges, and lawyers generally, by reason of past useful services, he was supposed to have some powerful connections. He liked to be called into any case largely because it meant something to do and kept him from being bored. When compelled to keep an appointment in winter, he would slip on an old greatcoat of gray twill that he had worn until it was shabby, then, taking down a soft felt hat, twisted and pulled out of shape by use, he would pull it low over his dull gray eyes and amble forth. In summer his clothes looked as crinkled as though he had slept in them for weeks. He smoked. In cast of countenance he was not wholly unlike General Grant³⁴, with a short gray beard and mustache which always seemed more or less unkempt and hair that hung down over his forehead in a gray mass. The poor General! He was neither very happy nor very unhappy – a doubting Thomas³⁵ without faith or hope in humanity and without any particular affection for anybody. <...>

The energetic Sippens came after a few moments, and he and Van Sickle, after being instructed to be mutually helpful and to keep Cowperwood's name out of all matters relating to this work, departed together. They were an odd pair – the dusty old General phlegmatic, disillusioned, useful,

³¹ **bell-wether** – (перен.) вожак, лидер (прямое значение баран-вожак, на которого вешают бубенчик, чтобы он вел стадо)

³² **had got his real start in life by filing false titles to property in southern Illinois, and then bringing suits to substantiate his fraudulent claims before friendly associates** – он приобрел славу тем, что составлял фиктивные документы на право владения земель в южном Иллинойсе, а затем, чтобы узаконить мошенничество, подавал в суд, в котором заседали его приятели и сообщники, и выигрывал дело

³³ **requiring heavy retainers** – требующий солидный гонорар

³⁴ **In cast of countenance he was not wholly unlike General Grant** – Лицом он даже немного напоминал генерала Гранта (Улисс Симпсон Грант (1822—1885), американский политический и военный деятель, полководец северян в годы Гражданской войны в США, генерал армии. С 1869 по 1877 – 18-й президент США)

³⁵ **a doubting Thomas** – (библ.) Фома неверующий

but not inclined to feel so; and the smart, chipper Sippens, determined to wreak a kind of poetic vengeance on his old-time enemy, the South Side Gas Company, via this seemingly remote Northside conspiracy. In ten minutes they were hand in glove³⁶, the General describing to Sippens the penurious and unscrupulous brand of Councilman Duniway's politics and the friendly but expensive character of Jacob Gerecht. Such is life.

In the organization of the Hyde Park company Cowperwood, because he never cared to put all his eggs in one basket, decided to secure a second lawyer and a second dummy president, although he proposed to keep De Soto Sippens as general practical adviser for all three or four companies. He was thinking this matter over when there appeared on the scene a very much younger man than the old General, one Kent Barrows McKibben, the only son of ex-Judge Marshall Scammon McKibben, of the State Supreme Court. Kent McKibben was thirty-three years old, tall, athletic, and, after a fashion, handsome. He was not at all vague intellectually – that is, in the matter of the conduct of his business – but dandified and at times remote. He had an office in one of the best blocks in Dearborn Street, which he reached in a reserved, speculative mood every morning at nine, unless something important called him down-town earlier. It so happened that he had drawn up the deeds and agreements for the real-estate company that sold Cowperwood his lots at Thirty-seventh Street and Michigan Avenue, and when they were ready he journeyed to the latter's office to ask if there were any additional details which Cowperwood might want to have taken into consideration. When he was ushered in, Cowperwood turned to him his keen, analytical eyes and saw at once a personality he liked. McKibben was just remote and artistic enough to suit him. He liked his clothes, his agnostic unreadableness, his social air. McKibben, on his part, caught the significance of the superior financial atmosphere at once. He noted Cowperwood's light-brown suit picked out with strands of red, his maroon tie, and small cameo cuff-links. His desk, glass-covered, looked clean and official. The woodwork of the rooms was all cherry, hand-rubbed and oiled, the pictures interesting steel-engravings of American life, appropriately framed. The typewriter – at that time just introduced – was in evidence, and the stock-ticker – also new – was ticking volubly the prices current. The secretary who waited on Cowperwood was a young Polish girl named Antoinette Nowak, reserved, seemingly astute, dark, and very attractive.

“What sort of business is it you handle, Mr. McKibben?” asked Cowperwood, quite casually, in the course of the conversation. And after listening to McKibben's explanation he added, idly: “You might come and see me some time next week. It is just possible that I may have something in your line.”

In another man McKibben would have resented this remote suggestion of future aid. Now, instead, he was intensely pleased. The man before him gripped his imagination. His remote intellectuality relaxed. When he came again and Cowperwood indicated the nature of the work he might wish to have done McKibben rose to the bait like a fish to a fly.

“I wish you would let me undertake that, Mr. Cowperwood,” he said, quite eagerly. “It's something I've never done, but I'm satisfied I can do it. I live out in Hyde Park and know most of the councilmen. I can bring considerable influence to bear for you.”

Cowperwood smiled pleasantly.

So a second company, officered by dummies of McKibben's selection, was organized. De Soto Sippens, without old General Van Sickle's knowledge, was taken in as practical adviser. An application for a franchise was drawn up, and Kent Barrows McKibben began silent, polite work on the South Side, coming into the confidence, by degrees, of the various councilmen.

There was still a third lawyer, Burton Stimson, the youngest but assuredly not the least able of the three, a pale, dark-haired Romeoish youth with burning eyes, whom Cowperwood had encountered doing some little work for Laughlin, and who was engaged to work on the West Side with

³⁶ were hand in glove – (разг.) нашли общий язык, спелись

old Laughlin as ostensible organizer and the sprightly De Soto Sippens as practical adviser. Stimson was no mooning Romeo, however, but an eager, incisive soul, born very poor, eager to advance himself. Cowperwood detected that pliability of intellect which, while it might spell disaster to some, spelled success for him. He wanted the intellectual servants. He was willing to pay them handsomely, to keep them busy, to treat them with almost princely courtesy, but he must have the utmost loyalty. Stimson, while maintaining his calm and reserve, could have kissed the archepiscopal hand. Such is the subtlety of contact.

Behold then at once on the North Side, the South Side, the West Side – dark goings to and fro and walk-ings up and down in the earth. In Lake View old General Van Sickle and De Soto Sippens, conferring with shrewd Councilman Duniway, druggist, and with Jacob Gerecht, ward boss and wholesale butcher, both of whom were agreeable but exacting, holding pleasant back-room and drug-store confabs with almost tabulated details of rewards and benefits. In Hyde Park, Mr. Kent Barrows McKibben, smug and well dressed, a Chesterfield³⁷ among lawyers, and with him one J. J. Bergdoll, a noble hireling, long-haired and dusty, ostensibly president of the Hyde Park Gas and Fuel Company, conferring with Councilman Alfred B. Davis, manufacturer of willow and rattan ware, and Mr. Patrick Gilgan, saloon-keeper, arranging a prospective distribution of shares, offering certain cash consideration, lots, favors, and the like. Observe also in the village of Douglas and West Park on the West Side, just over the city line, the angular, humorous Peter Laughlin and Burton Stimson arranging a similar deal or deals.

The enemy, the city gas companies, being divided into three factions, were in no way prepared for what was now coming. When the news finally leaked out that applications for franchises had been made to the several corporate village bodies each old company suspected the other of invasion, treachery, robbery. Pettifogging lawyers were sent, one by each company, to the village council in each particular territory involved, but no one of the companies had as yet the slightest idea who was back of it all or of the general plan of operations. Before anyone of them could reasonably protest, before it could decide that it was willing to pay a very great deal to have the suburb adjacent to its particular territory left free, before it could organize a legal fight, councilmanic ordinances were introduced giving the applying company what it sought; and after a single reading in each case and one open hearing, as the law compelled, they were almost unanimously passed. There were loud cries of dismay from minor suburban papers which had almost been forgotten in the arrangement of rewards. The large city newspapers cared little at first, seeing these were outlying districts; they merely made the comment that the villages were beginning well, following in the steps of the city council in its distinguished career of crime. <...>

He worked on plans with Sippens looking to the actual introduction of gas-plants. <...>

³⁷ **a Chesterfield** – (зд,) аристократ (Филип Дормер Стенхоп, 4-й граф Честерфилд (1694—1773), английский государственный деятель, дипломат и писатель)

Chapter IX

In Search of Victory

In the meantime the social affairs of Aileen had been prospering in a small way, for while it was plain that they were not to be taken up at once – that was not to be expected – it was also plain that they were not to be ignored entirely. One thing that helped in providing a nice harmonious working atmosphere was the obvious warm affection of Cowperwood for his wife. <...>

By now also, Cowperwood had invested about one hundred thousand dollars in his gas-company speculations, and he was jubilant over his prospects; the franchises were good for twenty years. By that time he would be nearly sixty, and he would probably have bought, combined with, or sold out to the older companies at a great profit. The future of Chicago was all in his favor. He decided to invest as much as thirty thousand dollars in pictures, if he could find the right ones, and to have Aileen's portrait painted while she was still so beautiful. This matter of art was again beginning to interest him immensely. Addison had four or five good pictures – a Rousseau, a Greuze, a Wouverman, and one Lawrence³⁸ – picked up Heaven knows where. A hotel-man by the name of Collard, a dry-goods and real-estate merchant, was said to have a very striking collection. Addison had told him of one Davis Trask, a hardware prince, who was now collecting. There were many homes, he knew where art was beginning to be assembled. He must begin, too.

Cowperwood, once the franchises had been secured, had installed Sippens in his own office, giving him charge for the time being. Small rented offices and clerks were maintained in the region where practical plant-building was going on. All sorts of suits to enjoin, annul, and restrain had been begun by the various old companies, but McKibben, Stimson, and old General Van Sickle were fighting these with Trojan vigor and complacency. It was a pleasant scene. Still no one knew very much of Cowperwood's entrance into Chicago as yet. He was a very minor figure. His name had not even appeared in connection with this work. Other men were being celebrated daily, a little to his envy. When would he begin to shine? Soon, now, surely. So off they went in June, comfortable, rich, gay, in the best of health and spirits, intent upon enjoying to the full their first holiday abroad.

It was a wonderful trip. Addison was good enough to telegraph flowers to New York for Mrs. Cowperwood to be delivered on shipboard. McKibben sent books of travel. Cowperwood, uncertain whether anybody would send flowers, ordered them himself – two amazing baskets, which with Addison's made three – and these, with attached cards, awaited them in the lobby of the main deck. Several at the captain's table took pains to seek out the Cowperwoods. They were invited to join several card-parties and to attend informal concerts. It was a rough passage, however, and Aileen was sick. It was hard to make herself look just nice enough, and so she kept to her room. She was very haughty, distant to all but a few, and to these careful of her conversation. She felt herself coming to be a very important person.

Before leaving she had almost exhausted the resources of the Donovan establishment in Chicago. Lingerie, boudoir costumes, walking-costumes, riding-costumes, evening-costumes she possessed in plenty. She had a jewel-bag hidden away about her person containing all of thirty thousand dollars' worth of jewels. Her shoes, stockings, hats, and accessories in general were innumerable. Because of all this Cowperwood was rather proud of her. She had such a capacity for life. <...>

³⁸ **Rousseau, Greuze, Wouverman, Lawrence** – Руссо, Теодор (1812—1867), французский художник-пейзажист; Грёз, Жан-Батист (1725—1805), французский художник; Воуверман, Филипп (1619—1668), датский художник; Лоуренс, Томас (1769—1830), английский художник-портретист

In London letters given them by Addison brought several invitations to the opera, to dinner, to Goodwood³⁹ for a weekend, and so on. Carriages, tallyhoes, cabs for riding were invoked. A weekend invitation to a houseboat on the Thames was secured. Their English hosts, looking on all this as a financial adventure, good financial wisdom, were courteous and civil, nothing more. Aileen was intensely curious. She noted servants, manners, forms. Immediately she began to think that America was not good enough, perhaps; it wanted so many things.

“Now, Aileen, you and I have to live in Chicago for years and years,” commented Cowperwood. “Don’t get wild. These people don’t care for Americans, can’t you see that? They wouldn’t accept us if we were over here – not yet, anyhow. We’re merely passing strangers, being courteously entertained.” Cowperwood saw it all.

Aileen was being spoiled in a way, but there was no help. She dressed and dressed. The Englishmen used to look at her in Hyde Park, where she rode and drove; at Claridges’ where they stayed; in Bond Street, where she shopped. The Englishwomen, the majority of them remote, ultra-conservative, simple in their tastes, lifted their eyes. Cowperwood sensed the situation, but said nothing. He loved Aileen, and she was satisfactory to him, at least for the present, anyhow, beautiful. If he could adjust her station in Chicago, that would be sufficient for a beginning. After three weeks of very active life, during which Aileen patronized the ancient and honorable glories of England, they went on to Paris. <...>

It was on this trip that Cowperwood’s taste for art and life and his determination to possess them revived to the fullest. He made the acquaintance in London, Paris, and Brussels of the important art dealers. <...>

In London he bought a portrait by Raeburn; in Paris a plowing scene by Millet, a small Jan Steen, a battle piece by Meissonier, and a romantic courtyard scene by Isabey.⁴⁰ Thus began the revival of his former interest in art; the nucleus of that future collection which was to mean so much to him in later years.

On their return, the building of the new Chicago mansion created the next interesting diversion in the lives of Aileen and Cowperwood. Because of some chateaux they saw in France that form, or rather a modification of it as suggested by Taylor Lord, was adopted. Mr. Lord figured that it would take all of a year, perhaps a year and a half, to deliver it in perfect order, but time was of no great importance in this connection. In the meanwhile they could strengthen their social connections and prepare for that interesting day when they should be of the Chicago elite.

There were, at this time, several elements in Chicago – those who, having grown suddenly rich from dull poverty, could not so easily forget the village church and the village social standards; those who, having inherited wealth, or migrated from the East where wealth was old, understood more of the *savoir faire* of the game; and those who, being newly born into wealth and seeing the drift toward a smarter American life, were beginning to wish they might shine in it – these last the very young people. The latter were just beginning to dream of dances at Kinsley’s, a stated Kirmess, and summer diversions of the European kind, but they had not arrived as yet. The first class, although by far the dullest and most bovine, was still the most powerful because they were the richest, money as yet providing the highest standard. The functions which these people provided were stupid to the verge of distraction; really they were only the week-day receptions and Sunday-afternoon calls of Squeedunk and Hohokus raised to the Nth power. The purpose of the whole matter was to see and be seen. Novelty in either thought or action was decidedly eschewed. It was, as a matter of fact, customariness of thought and action and the quintessence of convention that was desired. The idea of introducing a

³⁹ **Goodwood** – Гудвуд, местечко в Сассексе, место проведения ежегодных скачек

⁴⁰ **Raeburn** – Ребурн, Генри (1756—1823), шотландский портретист; **Millet** – Милле, Жан-Фрасуа (1814—1875) французский художник, автор жанровых картин и пейзажей; **Jan Steen** – Ян Стен (1626—1679) датский художник, автор жанровых картин; **Meissonier** – Мейссонье, Жан-Луис-Эрнест (1815—1891), французский художник-баталист; **Isabey** – Изабэ, Луи-Габриель-Эжен (1804—1886), французский художник, автор жанровых картин и маринист

“play actress,” for instance, as was done occasionally in the East or in London – never; even a singer or an artist was eyed askance. One could easily go too far! But if a European prince should have strayed to Chicago (which he never did) or if an Eastern social magnate chanced to stay over a train or two, then the topmost circle of local wealth was prepared to strain itself to the breaking-point.

Cowperwood had sensed all this on his arrival, but he fancied that if he became rich and powerful enough he and Aileen, with their fine house to help them, might well be the leaven which would lighten the whole lump. Unfortunately, Aileen was too obviously on the *qui vive*⁴¹ for those opportunities which might lead to social recognition and equality, if not supremacy. Like the savage, unorganized for protection and at the mercy of the horrific caprice of nature, she was almost tremulous at times with thoughts of possible failure. Almost at once she had recognized herself as unsuited temperamentally for association with certain types of society women. The wife of Anson Merrill, the great dry-goods prince, whom she saw in one of the down-town stores one day, impressed her as much too cold and remote. Mrs. Merrill was a woman of superior mood and education who found herself, in her own estimation, hard put to it for suitable companionship in Chicago. She was Eastern-bred-Boston – and familiar in an offhand way with the superior world of London, which she had visited several times. Chicago at its best was to her a sordid commercial mess. She preferred New York or Washington, but she had to live here. Thus she patronized nearly all of those with whom she condescended to associate, using an upward tilt of the head, a tired droop of the eyelids, and a fine upward arching of the brows to indicate how trite it all was.

It was a Mrs. Henry Huddlestone who had pointed out Mrs. Merrill to Aileen. Mrs. Huddlestone was the wife of a soap manufacturer living very close to the Cowperwoods' temporary home, and she and her husband were on the outer fringe of society. She had heard that the Cowperwoods were people of wealth, that they were friendly with the Addisons, and that they were going to build a two-hundred-thousand-dollar mansion. (The value of houses always grows in the telling.) That was enough. She had called, being three doors away, to leave her card; and Aileen, willing to curry favor here and there, had responded. <...>

Thereafter it was Aileen's ambition to associate with Mrs. Anson Merrill, to be fully and freely accepted by her. She did not know, although she might have feared, that that ambition was never to be realized.

But there were others who had called at the first Cowperwood home, or with whom the Cowperwoods managed to form an acquaintance. There were the Sunderland Sledds, Mr. Sledd being general traffic manager of one of the southwestern railways entering the city, and a gentleman of taste and culture and some wealth; his wife an ambitious nobody. There were the Walter Rysam Cottons, Cotton being a wholesale coffee-broker, but more especially a local social litterateur; his wife a graduate of Vassar⁴². There were the Norrie Simmses, Simms being secretary and treasurer of the Douglas Trust and Savings Company, and a power in another group of financial people, a group entirely distinct from that represented by Addison and Rambaud.

Others included the Stanislau Hoecksemas, wealthy furriers; the Duane Kingslands, wholesale flour; the Webster Israelses, packers; the Bradford Candas, jewelers. All these people amounted to something socially. They all had substantial homes and substantial incomes, so that they were worthy of consideration. The difference between Aileen and most of the women involved a difference between naturalism and illusion. But this calls for some explanation.

To really know the state of the feminine mind at this time, one would have to go back to that period in the Middle Ages when the Church flourished and the industrious poet, half schooled in the facts of life, surrounded women with a mystical halo. Since that day the maiden and the matron as well has been schooled to believe that she is of a finer clay than man, that she was born to uplift

⁴¹ on the *qui vive* – (фр.) настороже, наготове

⁴² Vassar – Вассар, женский колледж в Пукипси, штат Нью-Йорк, основан в 1861 г.

him, and that her favors are priceless. This rose-tinted mist of romance, having nothing to do with personal morality, has brought about, nevertheless, a holier-than-thou attitude of women toward men, and even of women toward women. Now the Chicago atmosphere in which Aileen found herself was composed in part of this very illusion. The ladies to whom she had been introduced were of this high world of fancy. They conceived themselves to be perfect, even as they were represented in religious art and in fiction. Their husbands must be models, worthy of their high ideals, and other women must have no blemish of any kind. Aileen, urgent, elemental, would have laughed at all this if she could have understood. Not understanding, she felt diffident and uncertain of herself in certain presences.

Instance in this connection Mrs. Norrie Simms, who was a satellite of Mrs. Anson Merrill. To be invited to the Anson Merrills' for tea, dinner, luncheon, or to be driven down-town by Mrs. Merrill, was paradise to Mrs. Simms. She loved to recite the *bon mots*⁴³ of her idol, to discourse upon her astonishing degree of culture, to narrate how people refused on occasion to believe that she was the wife of Anson Merrill, even though she herself declared it – those old chestnuts of the social world which must have had their origin in Egypt and Chaldea⁴⁴. Mrs. Simms herself was of a nondescript type, not a real personage, clever, good-looking, tasteful, a social climber. The two Simms children (little girls) had been taught all the social graces of the day – to pose, smirk, genuflect, and the like, to the immense delight of their elders. The nurse in charge was in uniform, the governess was a much put-upon person. Mrs. Simms had a high manner, eyes for those above her only, a serene contempt for the commonplace world in which she had to dwell.

During the first dinner at which she entertained the Cowperwoods Mrs. Simms attempted to dig into Aileen's Philadelphia history, asking if she knew the Arthur Leighs, the Trevor Drakes, Roberta Willing, or the Martyn Walkers. Mrs. Simms did not know them herself, but she had heard Mrs. Merrill speak of them, and that was enough of a handle whereby to swing them⁴⁵. Aileen, quick on the defense, ready to lie manfully on her own behalf, assured her that she had known them, as indeed she had – very casually – and before the rumor which connected her with Cowperwood had been voiced abroad. This pleased Mrs. Simms.

"I must tell Nellie," she said, referring thus familiarly to Mrs. Merrill.

Aileen feared that if this sort of thing continued it would soon be all over town that she had been a mistress before she had been a wife, that she had been the unmentioned correspondent in the divorce suit, and that Cowperwood had been in prison. Only his wealth and her beauty could save her; and would they?

One night they had been to dinner at the Duane Kingslands', and Mrs. Bradford Canda had asked her, in what seemed a very significant way, whether she had ever met her friend Mrs. Schuyler Evans, of Philadelphia. This frightened Aileen.

"Don't you suppose they must know, some of them, about us?" she asked Cowperwood, on the way home.

"I suppose so," he replied, thoughtfully. "I'm sure I don't know. I wouldn't worry about that if I were you. If you worry about it you'll suggest it to them. I haven't made any secret of my term in prison in Philadelphia, and I don't intend to. It wasn't a square deal⁴⁶, and they had no right to put me there."

"I know, dear," replied Aileen, "it might not make so much difference if they did know. I don't see why it should. We are not the only ones that have had marriage troubles, I'm sure."

"There's just one thing about this; either they accept us or they don't. If they don't, well and good; we can't help it. We'll go on and finish the house, and give them a chance to be decent. If they won't be, there are other cities. Money will arrange matters in New York – that I know. We can

⁴³ *bon mot* – (фр.) остроумное выражение, острота

⁴⁴ *those old chestnuts ... which must have had their origin in Egypt and Chaldea* – избитые истории, которые рассказывали, наверное, еще в Древнем Египте и Халдее

⁴⁵ *and that was enough of a handle whereby to swing them* – (разг.) вполне подходящий повод упомянуть эти имена

⁴⁶ *It wasn't a square deal* – (разг.) Со мной поступили нечестно, меня подставили

build a real place there, and go in on equal terms if we have money enough – and I will have money enough,” he added, after a moment’s pondering. “Never fear. I’ll make millions here, whether they want me to or not, and after that – well, after that, we’ll see what we’ll see. Don’t worry. I haven’t seen many troubles in this world that money wouldn’t cure.”

His teeth had that even set that they always assumed when he was dangerously in earnest. He took Aileen’s hand, however, and pressed it gently.

“Don’t worry,” he repeated. “Chicago isn’t the only city, and we won’t be the poorest people in America, either, in ten years. Just keep up your courage. It will all come out right. It’s certain to.”

Aileen looked out on the lamp-lit length of Michigan Avenue, down which they were rolling past many silent mansions. The tops of all the lamps were white, and gleamed through the shadows, receding to a thin point. It was dark, but fresh and pleasant. Oh, if only Frank’s money could buy them position and friendship in this interesting world; if it only would! She did not quite realize how much on her own personality, or the lack of it, this struggle depended.

Chapter X

A Test

The opening of the house in Michigan Avenue occurred late in November in the fall of eighteen seventy-eight. When Aileen and Cowperwood had been in Chicago about two years. Altogether, between people whom they had met at the races, at various dinners and teas, and at receptions of the Union and Calumet Clubs (to which Cowperwood, through Addison's backing, had been admitted) and those whom McKibben and Lord influenced, they were able to send invitations to about three hundred, of whom some two hundred and fifty responded. Up to this time, owing to Cowperwood's quiet manipulation of his affairs, there had been no comment on his past – no particular interest in it. He had money, affable ways, a magnetic personality. The business men of the city – those whom he met socially – were inclined to consider him fascinating and very clever. Aileen being beautiful and graceful for attention, was accepted at more or less her own value, though the kingly high world knew them not.

It is amazing what a showing the socially unplaced can make on occasion where tact and discrimination are used. There was a weekly social paper published in Chicago at this time, a rather able publication as such things go, which Cowperwood, with McKibben's assistance, had pressed into service. Not much can be done under any circumstances where the cause is not essentially strong; but where, as in this case, there is a semblance of respectability, considerable wealth, and great force and magnetism, all things are possible. Kent McKibben knew Horton Biggers, the editor, who was a rather desolate and disillusioned person of forty-five, gray, and depressed-looking – a sort of human sponge or barnacle who was only galvanized into seeming interest and cheerfulness by sheer necessity. Those were the days when the society editor was accepted as a member of society – *de facto* – and treated more as a guest than a reporter, though even then the tendency was toward elimination. Working for Cowperwood, and liking him, McKibben said to Biggers one evening:

“You know the Cowperwoods, don't you, Biggers?”

“No,” replied the latter, who devoted himself barnacle-wise to the more exclusive circles. “Who are they?”

“Why, he's a banker over here in La Salle Street. They're from Philadelphia. Mrs. Cowperwood's a beautiful woman – young and all that. They're building a house out here on Michigan Avenue. You ought to know them. They're going to get in, I think. The Addisons like them. If you were to be nice to them now I think they'd appreciate it later. He's rather liberal, and a good fellow.”

Biggers pricked up his ears⁴⁷. This social journalism was thin picking at best, and he had very few ways of turning an honest penny. The would-be's and half-in's who expected nice things said of them had to subscribe, and rather liberally, to his paper. Not long after this brief talk Cowperwood received a subscription blank from the business office of the Saturday Review, and immediately sent a check for one hundred dollars to Mr. Horton Biggers direct. Subsequently certain not very significant personages noticed that when the Cowperwoods dined at their boards the function received comment by the Saturday Review, not otherwise. It looked as though the Cowperwoods must be favored; but who were they, anyhow?

The danger of publicity, and even moderate social success, is that scandal loves a shining mark. When you begin to stand out the least way in life, as separate from the mass, the *cognoscenti* wish to know who, what, and why. The enthusiasm of Aileen, combined with the genius of Cowperwood, was for making their opening entertainment a very exceptional affair, which, under the circumstances, and all things considered, was a dangerous thing to do. As yet Chicago was exceedingly slow socially.

⁴⁷ **pricked up his ears** – (разг.) наострил уши

Its movements were, as has been said, more or less bovine and phlegmatic. To rush in with something utterly brilliant and pyrotechnic was to take notable chances. The more cautious members of Chicago society, even if they did not attend, would hear, and then would come ultimate comment and decision.

The function began with a reception at four, which lasted until six-thirty, and this was followed by a dance at nine, with music by a famous stringed orchestra of Chicago, a musical programme by artists of considerable importance, and a gorgeous supper from eleven until one in a Chinese fairyland of lights⁴⁸, at small tables filling three of the ground-floor rooms. As an added fillip to the occasion Cowperwood had hung, not only the important pictures which he had purchased abroad, but a new one – a particularly brilliant *Gérôme*⁴⁹, then in the heyday of his exotic popularity⁵⁰ – a picture of nude odalisques of the harem, idling beside the highly colored stone marquetry of an oriental bath. It was more or less “loose” art for Chicago, shocking to the uninitiated, though harmless enough to the *illuminati*; but it gave a touch of color to the art-gallery which the latter needed. There was also, newly arrived and newly hung, a portrait of Aileen by a Dutch artist, Jan van Beers, whom they had encountered the previous summer at Brussels. He had painted Aileen in nine sittings, a rather brilliant canvas, high in key⁵¹, with a summery, out-of-door world behind her – a low stone-curbed pool, the red corner of a Dutch brick palace, a tulip-bed, and a blue sky with fleecy clouds. Aileen was seated on the curved arm of a stone bench, green grass at her feet, a pink-and-white parasol with a lacy edge held idly to one side; her rounded, vigorous figure clad in the latest mode of Paris, a white and blue striped-silk walking-suit, with a blue-and-white-banded straw hat, wide-brimmed, airy, shading her lusty, animal eyes. The artist had caught her spirit quite accurately, the dash, the assumption, the *bravado* based on the courage of inexperience, or lack of true subtlety. A refreshing thing in its way, a little showy, as everything that related to her was, and inclined to arouse jealousy in those not so liberally endowed by life, but fine as a character piece. In the warm glow of the guttered gas-jets she looked particularly brilliant here, pampered, idle, jaunty – the well-kept, stall-fed pet of the world. Many stopped to see, and many were the comments, private and otherwise.

This day began with a flurry of uncertainty and worried anticipation on the part of Aileen. At Cowperwood's suggestion she had employed a social secretary, a poor hack of a girl, who had sent out all the letters, tabulated the replies, run errands,⁵² and advised on one detail and another. Fadette, her French maid, was in the throes of preparing for two toilets which would have to be made this day, one by two o'clock at least, another between six and eight. Her “*mon dieu*” and “*parbleu*”⁵³ could be heard continuously as she hunted for some article of dress or polished an ornament, buckle, or pin. The struggle of Aileen to be perfect was, as usual, severe. Her meditations, as to the most becoming gown to wear were trying. Her portrait was on the east wall in the art-gallery, a spur to emulation; she felt as though all society were about to judge her. Theresa Donovan, the local dressmaker, had given some advice; but Aileen decided on a heavy brown velvet constructed by Worth, of Paris – a thing of varying aspects, showing her neck and arms to perfection, and composing charmingly with her flesh and hair. She tried amethyst ear-rings and changed to topaz; she stockinged her legs in brown silk, and her feet were shod in brown slippers with red enamel buttons.

The trouble with Aileen was that she never did these things with that ease which is a sure sign of the socially efficient. She never quite so much dominated a situation as she permitted it to dominate her. Only the superior ease and graciousness of Cowperwood carried her through at times; but that always did. When he was near she felt quite the great lady, suited to any realm. When she was alone

⁴⁸ in a Chinese fairyland of lights – освещенный гирляндами китайских фонариков

⁴⁹ *Gérôme* – Жером, Жан-Леон (1824–1904), французский художник и скульптор

⁵⁰ then in the heyday of his exotic popularity – тогда были в моде его экзотические картины

⁵¹ high in key – (зд.) яркий

⁵² run errands – (разг.) выполняла различные поручения

⁵³ “*mon dieu*” and “*parbleu*” – (фр.) восклицания, употребленные как существительные во множественном числе; *mon dieu* – Боже мой!, *parbleu* – проклятье! черт возьми!

her courage, great as it was, often trembled in the balance. Her dangerous past was never quite out of her mind.

At four Kent McKibben, smug in his afternoon frock, his quick, receptive eyes approving only partially of all this show and effort, took his place in the general reception-room, talking to Taylor Lord, who had completed his last observation and was leaving to return later in the evening. If these two had been closer friends, quite intimate, they would have discussed the Cowperwoods' social prospects; but as it was, they confined themselves to dull conventionalities. At this moment Aileen came down-stairs for a moment, radiant. Kent McKibben thought he had never seen her look more beautiful. After all, contrasted with some of the stuffy creatures who moved about in society, shrewd, hard, bony, calculating, trading on their assured position, she was admirable. It was a pity she did not have more poise; she ought to be a little harder – not quite so genial. Still, with Cowperwood at her side, she might go far.

“Really, Mrs. Cowperwood,” he said, “it is all most charming. I was just telling Mr. Lord here that I consider the house a triumph.”

From McKibben, who was in society, and with Lord, another “in” standing by, this was like wine to Aileen. She beamed joyously.

Among the first arrivals were Mrs. Webster Israels, Mrs. Bradford Canda, and Mrs. Walter Rysam Cotton, who were to assist in receiving. These ladies did not know that they were taking their future reputations for sagacity and discrimination in their hands; they had been carried away by the show of luxury of Aileen, the growing financial repute of Cowperwood, and the artistic qualities of the new house. Mrs. Webster Israels's mouth was of such a peculiar shape that Aileen was always reminded of a fish; but she was not utterly homely, and to-day she looked brisk and attractive. Mrs. Bradford Canda, whose old rose and silver-gray dress made up in part for an amazing angularity, but who was charming withal, was the soul of interest, for she believed this to be a very significant affair. Mrs. Walter Rysam Cotton, a younger woman than either of the others, had the polish of Vassar life about her, and was “above” many things. Somehow she half suspected the Cowperwoods might not do, but they were making strides, and might possibly surpass all other aspirants. It behooved her to be pleasant.

Life passes from individuality and separateness at times to a sort of Monticelliesque-mood of color⁵⁴, where individuality is nothing, the glittering totality all. The new house, with its charming French windows on the ground floor, its heavy bands of stone flowers and deep-sunk florated door, was soon crowded with a moving, colorful flow of people.

Many whom Aileen and Cowperwood did not know at all had been invited by McKibben and Lord; they came, and were now introduced. The adjacent side streets and the open space in front of the house were crowded with champing horses and smartly veneered carriages. All with whom the Cowperwoods had been the least intimate came early, and, finding the scene colorful and interesting, they remained for some time. The caterer, Kinsley, had supplied a small army of trained servants who were posted like soldiers, and carefully supervised by the Cowperwood butler. The new dining-room, rich with a Pompeian scheme of color⁵⁵, was aglow with a wealth of glass and an artistic arrangement of delicacies. The afternoon costumes of the women, ranging through autumnal grays, purples, browns, and greens, blended effectively with the brown-tinted walls of the entry-hall, the deep gray and gold of the general living-room, the old-Roman red of the dining-room, the white-and-gold of the music-room, and the neutral sepia of the art-gallery.

Aileen, backed by the courageous presence of Cowperwood, who, in the dining-room, the library, and the art-gallery, was holding a private levee of men, stood up in her vain beauty, a thing

⁵⁴ **Monticelliesque-mood of color** – напоминающий картины Монтичелли (Монтичелли, Адольф Жозеф Томас (1824—1886), французский художник)

⁵⁵ **The new dining-room, rich with a Pompeian scheme of color** – Столовая, выдержанная в красновато-коричневых тонах, излюбленных в древней Помпее

to see – almost to weep over, embodying the vanity of all seeming things, the mockery of having and yet not having. This parading throng that was more curious than interested, more jealous than sympathetic, more critical than kind, was coming almost solely to observe.

“Do you know, Mrs. Cowperwood,” Mrs. Simms remarked, lightly, “your house reminds me of an art exhibit to-day. I hardly know why.”

Aileen, who caught the implied slur, had no clever words wherewith to reply. She was not gifted in that way, but she flared with resentment.

“Do you think so?” she replied, caustically.

Mrs. Simms, not all dissatisfied with the effect she had produced, passed on with a gay air, attended by a young artist who followed amorously in her train.

Aileen saw from this and other things like it how little she was really “in.” The exclusive set did not take either her or Cowperwood seriously as yet. She almost hated the comparatively dull Mrs. Israels, who had been standing beside her at the time, and who had heard the remark; and yet Mrs. Israels was much better than nothing. Mrs. Simms had condescended a mild “how’d do” to the latter.

It was in vain that the Addisons, Sledds, Kingslands, Hoecksemas, and others made their appearance; Aileen was not reassured. However, after dinner the younger set, influenced by McKibben, came to dance, and Aileen was at her best in spite of her doubts. She was gay, bold, attractive. Kent McKibben, a past master in the mazes and mysteries of the grand march, had the pleasure of leading her in that airy, fairy procession, followed by Cowperwood, who gave his arm to Mrs. Simms. Aileen, in white satin with a touch of silver here and there and necklet, bracelet, earrings, and hair-ornament of diamonds, glittered in almost an exotic way. She was positively radiant. McKibben, almost smitten, was most attentive.

“This is such a pleasure,” he whispered, intimately. “You are very beautiful – a dream!”

“You would find me a very substantial one,” returned Aileen. “Would that I might find,” he laughed, gaily; and Aileen, gathering the hidden significance, showed her teeth teasingly. Mrs. Simms, engrossed by Cowperwood, could not hear as she would have liked.

After the march Aileen, surrounded by a half-dozen of gay, rudely thoughtless young bloods, escorted them all to see her portrait. The conservative commented on the flow of wine, the intensely nude Gerome at one end of the gallery, and the sparkling portrait of Aileen at the other, the enthusiasm of some of the young men for her company. Mrs. Rambaud, pleasant and kindly, remarked to her husband that Aileen was “very eager for life,” she thought. Mrs. Addison, astonished at the material flare of the Cowperwoods, quite transcending in glitter if not in size and solidity anything she and Addison had ever achieved, remarked to her husband that “he must be making money very fast.”

“The man’s a born financier, Ella,” Addison explained, sententiously. “He’s a manipulator, and he’s sure to make money. Whether they can get into society I don’t know. He could if he were alone, that’s sure. She’s beautiful, but he needs another kind of woman, I’m afraid. She’s almost too good-looking.”

“That’s what I think, too. I like her, but I’m afraid she’s not going to play her cards right. It’s too bad, too.”

Just then Aileen came by, a smiling youth on either side, her own face glowing with a warmth of joy engendered by much flattery. The ball-room, which was composed of the music and drawing rooms thrown into one, was now the objective. It glittered before her with a moving throng; the air was full of the odor of flowers, and the sound of music and voices.

“Mrs. Cowperwood,” observed Bradford Canda to Horton Biggers, the society editor, “is one of the prettiest women I have seen in a long time. She’s almost too pretty.”

“How do you think she’s taking?”⁵⁶ queried the cautious Biggers.

⁵⁶ **How do you think she’s taking?** – (разг.) Как вы думаете, она произвела впечатление?

“Charming, but she’s hardly cold enough, I’m afraid; hardly clever enough. It takes a more serious type. She’s a little too high-spirited. These old women would never want to get near her; she makes them look too old. She’d do better if she were not so young and so pretty.”

“That’s what I think exactly,” said Biggers. As a matter of fact, he did not think so at all; he had no power of drawing any such accurate conclusions. But he believed it now, because Bradford Canda had said it.

Chapter XI

The Fruits of Daring

Next morning, over the breakfast cups at the Norrie Simmses' and elsewhere, the import of the Cowperwoods' social efforts was discussed and the problem of their eventual acceptance or non-acceptance carefully weighed. <...>

Before this social situation had time to adjust itself one way or the other, however, a matter arose which in its way was far more vital, though Aileen might not have thought so. The feeling between the new and old gas companies was becoming strained; the stockholders of the older organization were getting uneasy. They were eager to find out who was back of these new gas companies which were threatening to poach on their exclusive preserves⁵⁷. Finally one of the lawyers who had been employed by the North Chicago Gas Illuminating Company to fight the machinations of De Soto Sippens and old General Van Sickle, finding that the Lake View Council had finally granted the franchise to the new company and that the Appellate Court was about to sustain it, hit upon the idea of charging conspiracy and wholesale bribery of councilmen. Considerable evidence had accumulated that Duniway, Jacob Gerecht, and others on the North Side had been influenced by cash, and to bring legal action would delay final approval of the franchises and give the old company time to think what else to do. This North Side company lawyer, a man by the name of Parsons, had been following up the movements of Sippens and old General Van Sickle, and had finally concluded that they were mere dummies and pawns, and that the real instigator in all this excitement was Cowperwood, or, if not he, then men whom he represented. Parsons visited Cowperwood's office one day in order to see him; getting no satisfaction, he proceeded to look up his record and connections. These various investigations and counter-schemings came to a head in a court proceeding filed in the United States Circuit Court late in November, charging Frank Algernon Cowperwood, Henry De Soto Sippens, Judson P. Van Sickle, and others with conspiracy; this again was followed almost immediately by suits begun by the West and South Side companies charging the same thing. In each case Cowperwood's name was mentioned as the secret power behind the new companies, conspiring to force the old companies to buy him out. His Philadelphia history was published, but only in part – a highly modified account he had furnished the newspapers some time before. Though conspiracy and bribery are ugly words, still lawyers' charges prove nothing. But a penitentiary record, for whatever reason served, coupled with previous failure, divorce, and scandal (though the newspapers made only the most guarded reference to all this), served to whet public interest and to fix Cowperwood and his wife in the public eye.

Cowperwood himself was solicited for an interview, but his answer was that he was merely a financial agent for the three new companies, not an investor; and that the charges, in so far as he was concerned, were untrue, mere legal *folde-rol* trumped up to make the situation as annoying as possible. He threatened to sue for libel. Nevertheless, although these suits eventually did come to nothing (for he had fixed it so that he could not be traced save as a financial agent in each case), yet the charges had been made, and he was now revealed as a shrewd, manipulative factor, with a record that was certainly spectacular. <...>

Similarly Mr. Norman Schryhart, a man who up to this time had taken no thought of Cowperwood, although he had noted his appearance about the halls of the Calumet and Union League Clubs, began to ask seriously who he was. <...>

He was wondering why men like himself, Merrill, Arneel, and others had not worked into this field long ago or bought out the old companies. He went away interested, and a day or two later –

⁵⁷ to poach on their exclusive preserves – (разг.) покушаться на их права и привилегии (букв. охотиться на их территории)

even the next morning – had formulated a scheme. Not unlike Cowperwood, he was a shrewd, hard, cold man. He believed in Chicago implicitly and in all that related to its future. This gas situation, now that Cowperwood had seen the point, was very clear to him. Even yet it might not be impossible for a third party to step in and by intricate manipulation secure the much coveted rewards. Perhaps Cowperwood himself could be taken over – who could tell?

Mr. Schryhart, being a very dominating type of person, did not believe in minor partnerships or investments. If he went into a thing of this kind it was his preference to rule. He decided to invite Cowperwood to visit the Schryhart office and talk matters over. Accordingly, he had his secretary pen a note, which in rather lofty phrases invited Cowperwood to call “on a matter of importance.”

Now just at this time, it so chanced, Cowperwood was feeling rather secure as to his place in the Chicago financial world, although he was still smarting from the bitterness of the aspersions recently cast upon him from various quarters. Under such circumstances it was his temperament to evince a rugged contempt for humanity, rich and poor alike. He was well aware that Schryhart, although introduced, had never previously troubled to notice him.

“Mr. Cowperwood begs me to say,” wrote Miss Antoinette Nowak, at his dictation, “that he finds himself very much pressed for time at present, but he would be glad to see Mr. Schryhart at his office at any time.”

This irritated the dominating, self-sufficient Schryhart a little, but nevertheless he was satisfied that a conference could do no harm in this instance – was advisable, in fact. So one Wednesday afternoon he journeyed to the office of Cowperwood, and was most hospitably received. <...>

“Well, to tell the truth,” replied Schryhart, staring at the financier, “I am interested in this local gas situation myself. It offers a rather profitable field for investment, and several members of the old companies have come to me recently to ask me to help them combine.” (This was not true at all.) “I have been wondering what chance you thought you had of winning along the lines you are now taking.”

Cowperwood smiled. “I hardly care to discuss that,” he said, “unless I know much more of your motives and connections than I do at present. Do I understand that you have really been appealed to by stockholders of the old companies to come in and help adjust this matter?”

“Exactly,” said Schryhart.

“And you think you can get them to combine? On what basis?”

“Oh, I should say it would be a simple matter to give each of them two or three shares of a new company for one in each of the old. We could then elect one set of officers. have one set of offices, stop all these suits, and leave everybody happy.”

He said this in an easy, patronizing way, as though Cowperwood had not really thought it all out years before. It amazed the latter no little to see his own scheme patronizingly brought back to him, and that, too, by a very powerful man locally – one who thus far had chosen to overlook him utterly.

“On what basis,” asked Cowperwood, cautiously, “would you expect these new companies to come in?”

“On the same basis as the others, if they are not too heavily capitalized. I haven’t thought out all the details. Two or three for one, according to investment. Of course, the prejudices of these old companies have to be considered.”

Cowperwood meditated. Should or should he not entertain this offer? Here was a chance to realize quickly by selling out to the old companies. Only Schryhart, not himself, would be taking the big end in this manipulative deal. Whereas if he waited – even if Schryhart managed to combine the three old companies into one – he might be able to force better terms. He was not sure. Finally he asked, “How much stock of the new company would be left in your hands – or in the hands of the organizing group – after each of the old and new companies had been provided for on this basis?”

“Oh, possibly thirty-five or forty per cent. of the whole,” replied Schryhart, ingratiatingly. “The laborer is worthy of his hire.”

“Quite so,” replied Cowperwood, smiling, “but, seeing that I am the man who has been cutting the pole to knock this persimmon it seems to me that a pretty good share of that should come to me; don’t you think so?”

“Just what do you mean?”

“Just what I have said. I personally have organized the new companies which have made this proposed combination possible. The plan you propose is nothing more than what I have been proposing for some time. The officers and directors of the old companies are angry at me merely because I am supposed to have invaded the fields that belong to them. Now, if on account of that they are willing to operate through you rather than through me, it seems to me that I should have a much larger share in the surplus. My personal interest in these new companies is not very large. I am really more of a fiscal agent than anything else.” (This was not true, but Cowperwood preferred to have his guest think so.)

Schryhart smiled. “But, my dear sir,” he explained, “you forget that I will be supplying nearly all the capital to do this.”

“You forget,” retorted Cowperwood, “that I am not a novice. I will guarantee to supply all the capital myself, and give you a good bonus for your services, if you want that. The plants and franchises of the old and new companies are worth something. You must remember that Chicago is growing.”

“I know that,” replied Schryhart, evasively, “but I also know that you have a long, expensive fight ahead of you. As things are now you cannot, of yourself, expect to bring these old companies to terms. They won’t work with you, as I understand it. It will require an outsider like myself – someone of influence, or perhaps, I had better say, of old standing in Chicago, someone who knows these people – to bring about this combination. Have you anyone, do you think, who can do it better than I?”

“It is not at all impossible that I will find someone,” replied Cowperwood, quite easily.

“I hardly think so; certainly not as things are now. The old companies are not disposed to work through you, and they are through me. Don’t you think you had better accept my terms and allow me to go ahead and close this matter up?”

“Not at all on that basis,” replied Cowperwood, quite simply. “We have invaded the enemies’ country too far and done too much. Three for one or four for one – whatever terms are given the stockholders of the old companies – is the best I will do about the new shares, and I must have one-half of whatever is left for myself. At that I will have to divide with others.” (This was not true either.)

“No,” replied Schryhart, evasively and opposingly, shaking his square head. “It can’t be done. The risks are too great. I might allow you one-fourth, possibly – I can’t tell yet.”

“One-half or nothing,” said Cowperwood, definitely.

Schryhart got up. “That’s the best you will do, is it?” he inquired.

“The very best.”

“I’m afraid then,” he said, “we can’t come to terms. I’m sorry. You may find this a rather long and expensive fight.”

“I have fully anticipated that,” replied the financier.

Chapter XII

A New Retainer

Cowperwood, who had rebuffed Schryhart so courteously but firmly, was to learn that he who takes the sword may well perish by the sword⁵⁸. His own watchful attorney, on guard at the state capitol, where certificates of incorporation were issued in the city and village councils, in the courts and so forth, was not long in learning that a counter-movement of significance was under way. Old General Van Sickle was the first to report that something was in the wind in connection with the North Side company. <...>

"Someone – I don't know who – is getting these three old companies together in one. There's a certificate of incorporation been applied for at Springfield for the United Gas and Fuel Company of Chicago, and there are some directors' meetings now going on at the Douglas Trust Company. I got this from Duniway, who seems to have friends somewhere that know."

Cowperwood put the ends of his fingers together in his customary way and began to tap them lightly and rhythmically.

"Let me see – the Douglas Trust Company. Mr. Simms is president of that. He isn't shrewd enough to organize a thing of that kind. Who are the incorporators?"

The General produced a list of four names, none of them officers or directors of the old companies.

"Dummies, every one," said Cowperwood, succinctly. "I think I know," he said, after a few moments' reflection, "who is behind it, General; but don't let that worry you. They can't harm us if they do unite. They're bound to sell out to us or buy us out eventually."

Still it irritated him to think that Schryhart had succeeded in persuading the old companies to combine on any basis; he had meant to have Addison go shortly, posing as an outside party, and propose this very thing. Schryhart, he was sure, had acted swiftly following their interview. He hurried to Addison's office in the Lake National.

"Have you heard the news?" exclaimed that individual, the moment Cowperwood appeared. "They're planning to combine. It's Schryhart. I was afraid of that. Simms of the Douglas Trust is going to act as the fiscal agent. I had the information not ten minutes ago."

"So did I," replied Cowperwood, calmly. "We should have acted a little sooner. Still, it isn't our fault exactly. Do you know the terms of agreement?"

"They're going to pool their stock on a basis of three to one, with about thirty per cent. of the holding company left for Schryhart to sell or keep, as he wants to. He guarantees the interest. We did that for him – drove the game right into his bag."

"Nevertheless," replied Cowperwood, "he still has us to deal with. I propose now that we go into the city council and ask for a blanket franchise⁵⁹. It can be had. If we should get it, it will bring them to their knees. We will really be in a better position than they are with these smaller companies as feeders. We can unite with ourselves."

"That will take considerable money, won't it?"

"Not so much. We may never need to lay a pipe or build a plant. They will offer to sell out, buy, or combine before that. We can fix the terms. Leave it to me. You don't happen to know by any chance this Mr. McKenty, who has so much say in local affairs here – John J. McKenty?"

Cowperwood was referring to a man who was at once gambler, rumored owner or controller of a series of houses of prostitution, rumored maker of mayors and aldermen, rumored financial backer

⁵⁸ he who takes the sword may well perish by the sword – (библ.) взявший меч от меча и погибнет

⁵⁹ a blanket franchise – (фил.) концессия на весь город, действующая во всех районах

of many saloons and contracting companies – in short, the patron saint of the political and social underworld of Chicago, and who was naturally to be reckoned with in matters which related to the city and state legislative programme.

“I don’t,” said Addison; “but I can get you a letter. Why?”

“Don’t trouble to ask me that now. Get me as strong an introduction as you can.”

“I’ll have one for you to-day some time,” replied Addison, efficiently. “I’ll send it over to you.”

Cowperwood went out while Addison speculated as to this newest move. Trust Cowperwood to dig a pit into which the enemy might fall. He marveled sometimes at the man’s resourcefulness. He never quarreled with the directness and incisiveness of Cowperwood’s action.

The man, McKenty, whom Cowperwood had in mind in this rather disturbing hour, was as interesting and forceful an individual as one would care to meet anywhere, a typical figure of Chicago and the West at the time. He was a pleasant, smiling, bland, affable person, not unlike Cowperwood in magnetism and subtlety, but different by a degree of animal coarseness (not visible on the surface) which Cowperwood would scarcely have understood, and in a kind of temperamental pull drawing to him that vast pathetic life of the underworld in which his soul found its solution. There is a kind of nature, not artistic, not spiritual, in no way emotional, nor yet unduly philosophical, that is nevertheless a sphered content of life; not crystalline, perhaps, and yet not utterly dark – an agate temperament, cloudy and strange. As a three-year-old child McKenty had been brought from Ireland by his emigrant parents during a period of famine. He had been raised on the far South Side in a shanty which stood near a maze of railroad-tracks, and as a naked baby he had crawled on its earthen floor. His father had been promoted to a section boss after working for years as a day-laborer on the adjoining railroad, and John, junior, one of eight other children, had been sent out early to do many things – to be an errand-boy in a store, a messenger-boy for a telegraph company, an emergency sweep about a saloon, and finally a bartender. This last was his true beginning, for he was discovered by a keen-minded politician and encouraged to run for the state legislature and to study law. Even as a stripling what things had he not learned – robbery, ballot-box stuffing, the sale of votes, the appointive power of leaders, graft, nepotism, vice exploitation⁶⁰ – all the things that go to make up (or did) the American world of politics and financial and social strife. There is a strong assumption in the upper walks of life that there is nothing to be learned at the bottom. If you could have looked into the capacious but balanced temperament of John J. McKenty you would have seen a strange wisdom there and stranger memories – whole worlds of brutalities, tendernesses, errors, immoralities suffered, endured, even rejoiced in – the hardy, eager life of the animal that has nothing but its perceptions, instincts, appetites to guide it. Yet the man had the air and the poise of a gentleman.

To-day, at forty-eight, McKenty was an exceedingly important personage. His roomy house on the West Side, at Harrison Street and Ashland Avenue, was visited at sundry times by financiers, business men, office-holders, priests, saloon-keepers – in short, the whole range and gamut of active, subtle, political life. From McKenty they could obtain that counsel, wisdom, surety, solution which all of them on occasion were anxious to have, and which in one deft way and another – often by no more than gratitude and an acknowledgment of his leadership – they were willing to pay for. To police captains and officers whose places he occasionally saved, when they should justly have been discharged; to mothers whose erring boys or girls he took out of prison and sent home again; to keepers of bawdy-houses whom he protected from a too harsh invasion of the grafting propensities of the local police; to politicians and saloon-keepers who were in danger of being destroyed by public upheavals of one kind and another, he seemed, in hours of stress, when his smooth, genial, almost artistic face beamed on them, like a heaven-sent son of light, a kind of Western god, all-powerful, all-

⁶⁰ robbery, ballot-box stuffing, the sale of votes, the appointive power of leaders, graft, nepotism, vice exploitation – грабеж, подтасовка избирательных бюллетеней, продажа голосов, власть политических лидеров, назначающих своих людей на различные должности, взяточничество, семейственность, использование человеческих слабостей

merciful, perfect. On the other hand, there were ingrates, uncompromising or pharasaical religionists and reformers, plotting, scheming rivals, who found him deadly to contend with. There were many henchmen – runners from an almost imperial throne – to do his bidding. He was simple in dress and taste, married and (apparently) very happy, a professing though virtually non-practising Catholic, a suave, genial Buddha-like man, powerful and enigmatic.

When Cowperwood and McKenty first met, it was on a spring evening at the latter's home. The windows of the large house were pleasantly open, though screened, and the curtains were blowing faintly in a light air. Along with a sense of the new green life everywhere came a breath of stock-yards.

On the presentation of Addison's letter and of another, secured through Van Sickle from a well-known political judge, Cowperwood had been invited to call. On his arrival he was offered a drink, a cigar, introduced to Mrs. McKenty – who, lacking an organized social life of any kind, was always pleased to meet these celebrities of the upper world, if only for a moment – and shown eventually into the library. Mrs. McKenty, as he might have observed if he had had the eye for it, was plump and fifty, a sort of superannuated Aileen, but still showing traces of a former hardy beauty, and concealing pretty well the evidences that she had once been a prostitute. It so happened that on this particular evening McKenty was in a most genial frame of mind. There were no immediate political troubles bothering him just now. <...>

"Well, Mr. McKenty," said Cowperwood, choosing his words and bringing the finest resources of his temperament into play, "it isn't so much, and yet it is. I want a franchise from the Chicago city council, and I want you to help me get it if you will. I know you may say to me why not go to the councilmen direct. I would do that, except that there are certain other elements – individuals – who might come to you. It won't offend you, I know, when I say that I have always understood that you are a sort of clearing-house for political troubles in Chicago. <...> It was not very long after I started out to get franchises to do business in Lake View and Hyde Park before I found myself confronted by the interests which control the three old city gas companies. They were very much opposed to our entering the field in Cook County anywhere, as you may imagine, although we were not really crowding in on their field. Since then they have fought me with lawsuits, injunctions, and charges of bribery and conspiracy."

"I know," put in Mr. McKenty. "I have heard something of it."

"Quite so," replied Cowperwood. "Because of their opposition I made them an offer to combine these three companies and the three new ones into one, take out a new charter, and give the city a uniform gas service. They would not do that – largely because I was an outsider, I think. Since then another person, Mr. Schryhart" – McKenty nodded – "who has never had anything to do with the gas business here, has stepped in and offered to combine them. His plan is to do exactly what I wanted to do; only his further proposition is, once he has the three old companies united, to invade this new gas field of ours and hold us up, or force us to sell by obtaining rival franchises in these outlying places. <...> Now, Mr. McKenty, I know that you are a practical man. <...> I am not coming to you with any vague story concerning my troubles and expecting you to be interested as a matter of sympathy. <...> I need advice and assistance, and I am not begging it. <...> Briefly, I want to know if you won't give me your political support in this matter and join in with me on the basis that I propose? I will make it perfectly clear to you beforehand who my associates are. I will put all the data and details on the table before you so that you can see for yourself how things are. <...> I want you to give me your aid on such terms as you think are fair and equitable." <...>

As he talked his eye fixed McKenty steadily, almost innocently; and the latter, following him clearly, felt all the while that he was listening to a strange, able, dark, and very forceful man. There was no beating about the bush here⁶¹, no squeamishness of spirit, and yet there was subtlety – the kind McKenty liked. While he was amused by Cowperwood's casual reference to the silk stockings

⁶¹ There was no beating around the bush here – (разг.) Он не ходил вокруг да около

who were keeping him out, it appealed to him. <...> McKenty, as Cowperwood was well aware, had personally no interest in the old companies and also – though this he did not say – no particular sympathy with them. <...> He had a subordinate in council, a very powerful henchman by the name of Patrick Dowling, a meaty, vigorous Irishman and a true watch-dog of graft for the machine, who worked with the mayor, the city treasurer, the city tax receiver – in fact, all the officers of the current administration – and saw that such minor matters were properly equalized. <...>

Mr. McKenty looked at Mr. Cowperwood very solemnly. There was a kind of mutual sympathy, understanding, and admiration between the two men, but it was still heavily veiled by self-interest. To Mr. McKenty Cowperwood was interesting because he was one of the few business men he had met who were not ponderous, pharasaical, even hypocritical when they were dealing with him.

“Well, I’ll tell you what I’ll do, Mr. Cowperwood,” he said, finally. “I’ll take it all under consideration. Let me think it over until Monday, anyhow. There is more of an excuse now for the introduction of a general gas ordinance than there would be a little later – I can see that. Why don’t you draw up your proposed franchise and let me see it? Then we might find out what some of the other gentlemen of the city council think.”

Cowperwood almost smiled at the word “gentlemen.”

“I have already done that,” he said. “Here it is.”

McKenty took it, surprised and yet pleased at this evidence of business proficiency. He liked a strong manipulator of this kind – the more since he was not one himself, and most of those that he did know were thin-blooded and squeamish.

“Let me take this,” he said. “I’ll see you next Monday again if you wish. Come Monday.”

Chapter XIII

The Die Is Cast⁶²

The significance of this visit was not long in manifesting itself. At the top, in large affairs, life goes off into almost inexplicable tangles of personalities. Mr. McKenty, now that the matter had been called to his attention, was interested to learn about this gas situation from all sides – whether it might not be more profitable to deal with the Schryhart end of the argument, and so on. But his eventual conclusion was that Cowperwood's plan, as he had outlined it, was the most feasible for political purposes, largely because the Schryhart faction, not being in a position where they needed to ask the city council for anything at present, were so obtuse as to forget to make overtures of any kind to the buccaneering forces at the City Hall⁶³.

When Cowperwood next came to McKenty's house the latter was in a receptive frame of mind. "Well," he said, after a few genial preliminary remarks, "I've been learning what's going on. Your proposition is fair enough. Organize your company, and arrange your plan conditionally. Then introduce your ordinance, and we'll see what can be done." They went into a long, intimate discussion as to how the forthcoming stock should be divided, how it was to be held in escrow by a favorite bank of Mr. McKenty's until the terms of the agreement under the eventual affiliation with the old companies or the new union company should be fulfilled, and details of that sort. It was rather a complicated arrangement, not as satisfactory to Cowperwood as it might have been, but satisfactory in that it permitted him to win. It required the undivided services of General Van Sickle, Henry De Soto Sippens, Kent Barrows McKibben, and Alderman Dowling for some little time. But finally all was in readiness for the *coup*.

On a certain Monday night, therefore, following the Thursday on which, according to the rules of the city council, an ordinance of this character would have to be introduced, the plan, after being publicly broached but this very little while, was quickly considered by the city council and passed. There had been really no time for public discussion. This was just the thing, of course, that Cowperwood and McKenty were trying to avoid. On the day following the particular Thursday on which the ordinance had been broached in council as certain to be brought up for passage, Schryhart, through his lawyers and the officers of the old individual gas companies, had run to the newspapers and denounced the whole thing as plain robbery; but what were they to do? There was so little time for agitation. True the newspapers, obedient to this larger financial influence, began to talk of "fair play to the old companies," and the uselessness of two large rival companies in the field when one would serve as well. Still the public, instructed or urged by the McKenty agents to the contrary, were not prepared to believe it. They had not been so well treated by the old companies as to make any outcry on their behalf.

Standing outside the city council door, on the Monday evening when the bill was finally passed, Mr. Samuel Blackman, president of the South Side Gas Company, a little, wispy man with shoe-brush whiskers, declared emphatically:

"This is a scoundrelly piece of business. If the mayor signs that he should be impeached. There is not a vote in there to-night that has not been purchased – not one. This is a fine element of brigandage to introduce into Chicago; why, people who have worked years and years to build up a business are not safe!"

⁶² The Die Is Cast – Жребий брошен

⁶³ largely because the Schryhart faction, not being in a position where they needed to ask the city council for anything at present, were so obtuse as to forget to make overtures of any kind to the buccaneering forces at the City Hall – в основном потому что группа Шрайхарта, не нуждаясь пока что в услугах городского совета, проявила недалёковидность и не сообразила подмазать на всякий случай шайку бандитов, заседающую в ратуше

“It’s true, every word of it,” complained Mr. Jordan Jules, president of the North Side company, a short, stout man with a head like an egg lying lengthwise, a mere fringe of hair, and hard, blue eyes. He was with Mr. Hudson Baker, tall and ambling, who was president of the West Chicago company. All of these had come to protest.

“It’s that scoundrel from Philadelphia. He’s the cause of all our troubles. It’s high time the respectable business element of Chicago realized just what sort of a man they have to deal with in him. He ought to be driven out of here. Look at his Philadelphia record. They sent him to the penitentiary down there, and they ought to do it here.”

Mr. Baker, very recently the guest of Schryhart, and his henchman, too, was also properly chagrined. “The man is a charlatan,” he protested to Blackman. “He doesn’t play fair. It is plain that he doesn’t belong in respectable society.”

Nevertheless, and in spite of this, the ordinance was passed. It was a bitter lesson for Mr. Norman Schryhart, Mr. Norrie Simms, and all those who had unfortunately become involved. A committee composed of all three of the old companies visited the mayor; but the latter, a tool of McKenty, giving his future into the hands of the enemy, signed it just the same. Cowperwood had his franchise, and, groan as they might, it was now necessary, in the language of a later day, “to step up and see the captain.” Only Schryhart felt personally that his score with Cowperwood was not settled. He would meet him on some other ground later. The next time he would try to fight fire with fire. But for the present, shrewd man that he was, he was prepared to compromise.

Thereafter, dissembling his chagrin as best he could, he kept on the lookout for Cowperwood at both of the clubs of which he was a member; but Cowperwood had avoided them during this period of excitement, and Mahomet would have to go to the mountain. So one drowsy June afternoon Mr. Schryhart called at Cowperwood’s office. He had on a bright, new, steel-gray suit and a straw hat. From his pocket, according to the fashion of the time, protruded a neat, blue-bordered silk handkerchief, and his feet were immaculate in new, shining Oxford ties⁶⁴.

“I’m sailing for Europe in a few days, Mr. Cowperwood,” he remarked, genially, “and I thought I’d drop round to see if you and I could reach some agreement in regard to this gas situation. The officers of the old companies naturally feel that they do not care to have a rival in the field, and I’m sure that you are not interested in carrying on a useless rate war⁶⁵ that won’t leave anybody any profit. I recall that you were willing to compromise on a half-and-half basis with me before, and I was wondering whether you were still of that mind.”

“Sit down, sit down, Mr. Schryhart,” remarked Cowperwood, cheerfully, waving the new-comer to a chair. “I’m pleased to see you again. No, I’m no more anxious for a rate war than you are. As a matter of fact, I hope to avoid it; but, as you see, things have changed somewhat since I saw you. The gentlemen who have organized and invested their money in this new city gas company are perfectly willing – rather anxious, in fact – to go on and establish a legitimate business. They feel all the confidence in the world that they can do this, and I agree with them. A compromise might be effected between the old and the new companies, but not on the basis on which I was willing to settle some time ago. A new company has been organized since then, stock issued, and a great deal of money expended.” (This was not true.) “That stock will have to figure in any new agreement. I think a general union of all the companies is desirable, but it will have to be on a basis of one, two, three, or four shares – whatever is decided – at par for all stock involved.”

Mr. Schryhart pulled a long face. “Don’t you think that’s rather steep?” he said, solemnly.

“Not at all, not at all!” replied Cowperwood. “You know these new expenditures were not undertaken voluntarily.” (The irony of this did not escape Mr. Schryhart, but he said nothing.)

⁶⁴ **Oxford ties** – ботинки с шнурками или пуговицами

⁶⁵ **rate war** – тарифная война (снижение тарифов как средство в конкурентной борьбе)

"I admit all that, but don't you think, since your shares are worth practically nothing at present, that you ought to be satisfied if they were accepted at par?"

"I can't see why," replied Cowperwood. "Our future prospects are splendid. There must be an even adjustment here or nothing. What I want to know is how much treasury stock you would expect to have in the safe for the promotion of this new organization after all the old stockholders have been satisfied?"

"Well, as I thought before, from thirty to forty per cent. of the total issue," replied Schryhart, still hopeful of a profitable adjustment. "I should think it could be worked on that basis."

"And who gets that?"

"Why, the organizer," said Schryhart, evasively.

"Yourself, perhaps, and myself."

"And how would you divide it? Half and half, as before?"

"I should think that would be fair."

"It isn't enough," returned Cowperwood, incisively. "Since I talked to you last I have been compelled to shoulder obligations and make agreements which I did not anticipate then. The best I can do now is to accept three-fourths."

Schryhart straightened up determinedly and offensively. This was outrageous, he thought, impossible! The effrontery of it!

"It can never be done, Mr. Cowperwood," he replied, forcefully. "You are trying to unload too much worthless stock on the company as it is. The old companies' stock is selling right now, as you know, for from one-fifty to two-ten. Your stock is worth nothing. If you are to be given two or three for one for that, and three-fourths of the remainder in the treasury, I for one⁶⁶ want nothing to do with the deal. You would be in control of the company, and it will be water-logged, at that. Talk about getting something for nothing! The best I would suggest to the stockholders of the old companies would be half and half. And I may say to you frankly, although you may not believe it, that the old companies will not join in with you in any scheme that gives you control. They are too much incensed. Feeling is running too high. It will mean a long, expensive fight, and they will never compromise. Now, if you have anything really reasonable to offer I would be glad to hear it. Otherwise I am afraid these negotiations are not going to come to anything."

"Share and share alike, and three-fourths of the remainder," repeated Cowperwood, grimly. "I do not want to control. If they want to raise the money and buy me out on that basis I am willing to sell. I want a decent return for investments I have made, and I am going to have it. I cannot speak for the others behind me, but as long as they deal through me that is what they will expect."

Mr. Schryhart went angrily away. He was exceedingly wroth. This proposition as Cowperwood now outlined it was buccaneering at its best. He proposed for himself to withdraw from the old companies if necessary, to close out his holdings and let the old companies deal with Cowperwood as best they could. So long as he had anything to do with it, Cowperwood should never gain control of the gas situation. Better to take him at his suggestion, raise the money and buy him out, even at an exorbitant figure. Then the old gas companies could go along and do business in their old-fashioned way without being disturbed. This buccaneer! This upstart! What a shrewd, quick, forceful move he had made! It irritated Mr. Schryhart greatly.

The end of all this was a compromise in which Cowperwood accepted one-half of the surplus stock of the new general issue, and two for one of every share of stock for which his new companies had been organized, at the same time selling out to the old companies – clearing out completely. It was a most profitable deal, and he was enabled to provide handsomely not only for Mr. McKenty and Addison, but for all the others connected with him. It was a splendid *coup*, as McKenty and

⁶⁶ **for one** – (эмоц.-усилит.) например

Addison assured him. Having now done so much, he began to turn his eyes elsewhere for other fields to conquer.

But this victory in one direction brought with it corresponding reverses in another: the social future of Cowperwood and Aileen was now in great jeopardy. Schryhart, who was a force socially, having met with defeat at the hands of Cowperwood, was now bitterly opposed to him. Norrie Simms naturally sided with his old associates. But the worst blow came through Mrs. Anson Merrill. Shortly after the housewarming, and when the gas argument and the conspiracy charges were rising to their heights, she had been to New York and had there chanced to encounter an old acquaintance of hers, Mrs. Martyn Walker, of Philadelphia, one of the circle which Cowperwood once upon a time had been vainly ambitious to enter. Mrs. Merrill, aware of the interest the Cowperwoods had aroused in Mrs. Simms and others, welcomed the opportunity to find out something definite.

"By the way, did you ever chance to hear of a Frank Algernon Cowperwood or his wife in Philadelphia?" she inquired of Mrs. Walker.

"Why, my dear Nellie," replied her friend, nonplussed that a woman so smart as Mrs. Merrill should even refer to them, "have those people established themselves in Chicago? His career in Philadelphia was, to say the least, spectacular. He was connected with a city treasurer there who stole five hundred thousand dollars, and they both went to the penitentiary. That wasn't the worst of it! He became intimate with some young girl – a Miss Butler, the sister of Owen Butler, by the way, who is now such a power down there, and – "She merely lifted her eyes. "While he was in the penitentiary her father died and the family broke up. I even heard it rumored that the old gentleman killed himself." (She was referring to Aileen's father, Edward Malia Butler.) "When he came out of the penitentiary Cowperwood disappeared, and I did hear someone say that he had gone West, and divorced his wife and married again. His first wife is still living in Philadelphia somewhere with his two children."

Mrs. Merrill was properly astonished, but she did not show it. "Quite an interesting story, isn't it?" she commented, distantly, thinking how easy it would be to adjust the Cowperwood situation, and how pleased she was that she had never shown any interest in them. "Did you ever see her – his new wife?"

"I think so, but I forget where. I believe she used to ride and drive a great deal in Philadelphia."

"Did she have red hair?"

"Oh yes. She was a very striking blonde."

"I fancy it must be the same person. They have been in the papers recently in Chicago. I wanted to be sure."

Mrs. Merrill was meditating some fine comments to be made in the future.

"I suppose now they're trying to get into Chicago society?" Mrs. Walker smiled condescendingly and contemptuously – as much at Chicago society as at the Cowperwoods.

"It's possible that they might attempt something like that in the East and succeed – I'm sure I don't know," replied Mrs. Merrill, caustically, resenting the slur, "but attempting and achieving are quite different things in Chicago."

The answer was sufficient. It ended the discussion. When next Mrs. Simms was rash enough to mention the Cowperwoods, or, rather, the peculiar publicity in connection with him, her future viewpoint was definitely fixed for her.

"If you take my advice," commented Mrs. Merrill, finally, "the less you have to do with these friends of yours the better. I know all about them. You might have seen that from the first. They can never be accepted."

Mrs. Merrill did not trouble to explain why, but Mrs. Simms through her husband soon learned the whole truth, and she was righteously indignant and even terrified. Who was to blame for this sort of thing, anyhow? she thought. Who had introduced them? The Addisons, of course. But the Addisons were socially unassailable, if not all-powerful, and so the best had to be made of that. But

the Cowperwoods could be dropped from the lists of herself and her friends instantly, and that was now done. A sudden slump in their social significance began to manifest itself, though not so swiftly but what for the time being it was slightly deceptive.

The first evidence of change which Aileen observed was when the customary cards and invitations for receptions and the like, which had come to them quite freely of late, began to decline sharply in number, and when the guests to her own Wednesday afternoons, which rather prematurely she had ventured to establish, became a mere negligible handful. <...> Aileen was beside herself with disappointment, opposition, chagrin, shame.

At the same time Cowperwood was not to be spared his share in the distrust and social opposition which was now rampant. <...>

If it had not been for Cowperwood's eventual financial triumph over all opposition – the complete routing of the enemy – in the struggle for control in the gas situation – the situation would have been hard, indeed. As it was, Aileen suffered bitterly; she felt that the slight was principally directed at her, and would remain in force. In the privacy of their own home they were compelled eventually to admit, the one to the other, that their house of cards, resplendent and forceful looking as it was, had fallen to the ground. Personal confidences between people so closely united are really the most trying of all. Human souls are constantly trying to find each other, and rarely succeeding.

“You know,” he finally said to her once, when he came in rather unexpectedly and found her sick in bed, her eyes wet, and her maid dismissed for the day, “I understand what this is all about. To tell you the truth, Aileen, I rather expected it. We have been going too fast, you and I. We have been pushing this matter too hard. Now, I don't like to see you taking it this way, dear. This battle isn't lost. Why, I thought you had more courage than this. Let me tell you something which you don't seem to remember. Money will solve all this sometime. I'm winning in this fight right now, and I'll win in others.” <...>

Chapter XIV

Undercurrents

It was during the year that followed their social repudiation, and the next and the next, that Cowperwood achieved a keen realization of what it would mean to spend the rest of his days in social isolation, or at least confined in his sources of entertainment to a circle or element which constantly reminded him of the fact that he was not identified with the best, or, at least, not the most significant, however dull that might be. When he had first attempted to introduce Aileen into society it was his idea that, however tame they might chance to find it to begin with, they themselves, once admitted, could make it into something very interesting and even brilliant. Since the time the Cowperwoods had been repudiated, however, they had found it necessary, if they wished any social diversion at all, to fall back upon such various minor elements as they could scrape an acquaintance with – passing actors and actresses, to whom occasionally they could give a dinner; artists and singers whom they could invite to the house upon gaining an introduction; and, of course, a number of the socially unimportant, such as the Haatstaedts, Hoecksemas, Videras, Baileys, and others still friendly and willing to come in a casual way. Cowperwood found it interesting from time to time to invite a business friend, a lover of pictures, or some young artist to the house to dinner or for the evening, and on these occasions Aileen was always present. The Addisons called or invited them occasionally. But it was a dull game, the more so since their complete defeat was thus all the more plainly indicated.

This defeat, as Cowperwood kept reflecting, was really not his fault at all. He had been getting along well enough personally. If Aileen had only been a somewhat different type of woman! Nevertheless, he was in no way prepared to desert or reproach her. She had clung to him through his stormy prison days. She had encouraged him when he needed encouragement. He would stand by her and see what could be done a little later; but this ostracism was a rather dreary thing to endure. Besides, personally, he appeared to be becoming more and more interesting to men and to women. The men friends he had made he retained – Addison, Bailey, Videra, McKibben, Rambaud, and others. There were women in society, a number of them, who regretted his disappearance if not that of Aileen. Occasionally the experiment would be tried of inviting him without his wife. At first he refused invariably; later he went alone occasionally to a dinner-party without her knowledge.

It was during this interregnum that Cowperwood for the first time clearly began to get the idea that there was a marked difference between him and Aileen intellectually and spiritually; and that while he might be in accord with her in many ways – emotionally, physically, idyllically – there were, nevertheless, many things which he could do alone which she could not do – heights to which he could rise where she could not possibly follow. Chicago society might be a negligible quantity, but he was now to contrast her sharply with the best of what the Old World had to offer in the matter of femininity, for following their social expulsion in Chicago and his financial victory, he once more decided to go abroad. In Rome, at the Japanese and Brazilian embassies (where, because of his wealth, he gained introduction), and at the newly established Italian Court, he encountered at a distance charming social figures of considerable significance – Italian countesses, English ladies of high degree, talented American women of strong artistic and social proclivities. As a rule they were quick to recognize the charm of his manner, the incisiveness and grip of his mind, and to estimate at all its worth the high individuality of his soul; but he could also always see that Aileen was not so acceptable. She was too rich in her entourage, too showy. Her glowing health and beauty was a species of affront to the paler, more sublimated souls of many who were not in themselves unattractive.

“Isn’t that the typical American for you,” he heard a woman remark, at one of those large, very general court receptions to which so many are freely admitted, and to which Aileen had been determined to go. He was standing aside talking to an acquaintance he had made – an English-

speaking Greek banker stopping at the Grand Hotel – while Aileen promenaded with the banker's wife. The speaker was an Englishwoman. "So gaudy, so self-conscious, and so naïve!"

Cowperwood turned to look. It was Aileen, and the lady speaking was undoubtedly well bred, thoughtful, good-looking. He had to admit that much that she said was true, but how were you to gage a woman like Aileen, anyhow? She was not reprehensible in any way – just a full-blooded animal glowing with a love of life. She was attractive to him. It was too bad that people of obviously more conservative tendencies were so opposed to her. Why could they not see what he saw – a kind of childish enthusiasm for luxury and show which sprang, perhaps, from the fact that in her youth she had not enjoyed the social opportunities which she needed and longed for. He felt sorry for her. At the same time he was inclined to feel that perhaps now another type of woman would be better for him socially. If he had a harder type, one with keener artistic perceptions and a penchant for just the right social touch or note, how much better he would do! He came home bringing a Perugino, brilliant examples of Luini, Previtali, and Pinturricchio (this last a portrait of Cesare Borgia)⁶⁷, which he picked up in Italy, to say nothing of two red African vases of great size that he found in Cairo, a tall gilt Louis Fifteenth standard of carved wood that he discovered in Rome, two ornate candelabra from Venice for his walls, and a pair of Italian torchères from Naples to decorate the corners of his library. It was thus by degrees that his art collection was growing.

At the same time it should be said, in the matter of women and the sex question, his judgment and views had begun to change tremendously. When he had first met Aileen he had many keen intuitions regarding life and sex, and above all clear faith that he had a right to do as he pleased. Since he had been out of prison and once more on his upward way there had been many a stray glance cast in his direction; he had so often had it clearly forced upon him that he was fascinating to women. Although he had only so recently acquired Aileen legally, yet she was years old to him as a mistress, and the first engrossing – it had been almost all-engrossing – enthusiasm was over. He loved her not only for her beauty, but for her faithful enthusiasm; but the power of others to provoke in him a momentary interest, and passion even, was something which he did not pretend to understand, explain, or moralize about. So it was and so he was. He did not want to hurt Aileen's feelings by letting her know that his impulses thus wantonly strayed to others, but so it was. <...>

It was during this period of social dullness, however, which somewhat resembled, though it did not exactly parallel his first years with his first wife, that Cowperwood finally met a woman who was destined to leave a marked impression on his life. He could not soon forget her. Her name was Rita Sohlberg. She was the wife of Harold Sohlberg, a Danish violinist who was then living in Chicago, a very young man; but she was not a Dane, and he was by no means a remarkable violinist, though he had unquestionably the musical temperament. <...>

Rita Sohlberg was of the semi-phlegmatic type, soft, full-blooded, with a body that was going to be fat at forty, but which at present was deliciously alluring. Having soft, silky, light-brown hair, the color of light dust, and moist gray-blue eyes, with a fair skin and even, white teeth, she was flatteringly self-conscious of her charms. She pretended in a gay, childlike way to be unconscious of the thrill she sent through many susceptible males, and yet she knew well enough all the while what she was doing and how she was doing it; it pleased her so to do. She was conscious of the wonder of her smooth, soft arms and neck, the fullness and seductiveness of her body, the grace and perfection of her clothing, or, at least, the individuality and taste which she made them indicate. <...>

A part of the peculiarity of her state was that Sohlberg had begun to disappoint Rita – sorely. <...>

⁶⁷ **Perugino** – Перуджино (1446—1524, настоящее имя Пьетро ди Кристофоро Ваннуччи), итальянский художник, представитель умбрийской школы; **Luini** – Луини, Бернардино (1480/90—1532), итальянский художник; **Previtali** – Превитали, Андреа (около 1480—1528), итальянский художник; **Pinturricchio** – Пинтуриккьо (1454—1513, настоящее имя Бернардино ди Бетти), итальянский художник, представитель умбрийской школы

Life and character must really get somewhere to be admirable, and Harold, really and truly, did not seem to be getting anywhere. He taught, stormed, dreamed, wept; but he ate his three meals a day, Rita noticed, and he took an excited interest at times in other women. <...>

Rita was not jealous of Harold any more; she had lost faith in his ability as a musician. But she was disappointed that her charms were not sufficient to blind him to all others. That was the fly in the ointment⁶⁸. It was an affront to her beauty, and she was still beautiful. She was unctuously full-bodied, not quite so tall as Aileen, not really as large, but rounder and plumper, softer and more seductive. Physically she was not well set up, so vigorous; but her eyes and mouth and the roving character of her mind held a strange lure. Mentally she was much more aware than Aileen, much more precise in her knowledge of art, music, literature, and current events; and in the field of romance she was much more vague and alluring. She knew many things about flowers, precious stones, insects, birds, characters in fiction, and poetic prose and verse generally.

At the time the Cowperwoods first met the Sohlbergs the latter still had their studio in the New Arts Building, and all was seemingly as serene as a May morning, only Harold was not getting along very well. He was drifting. The meeting was at a tea given by the Haatstaedts, with whom the Cowperwoods were still friendly, and Harold played. Aileen, who was there alone, seeing a chance to brighten her own life a little, invited the Sohlbergs, who seemed rather above the average, to her house to a musical evening. They came. <...>

Mrs. Sohlberg, he reflected shrewdly, had a kind of fool for a husband. Would she take an interest in him, Frank Cowperwood? Would a woman like this surrender on any basis outside of divorce and marriage? He wondered. On her part, Mrs. Sohlberg was thinking what a forceful man Cowperwood was, and how close he had stayed by her. She felt his interest, for she had often seen these symptoms in other men and knew what they meant. She knew the pull of her own beauty, and, while she heightened it as artfully as she dared, yet she kept aloof, too, feeling that she had never met anyone as yet for whom it was worth while to be different. But Cowperwood – he needed someone more soulful than Aileen, she thought.

⁶⁸ the fly in the ointment – (разг.) ложка дегтя в бочке меда 4

Chapter XV

A New Affection

The growth of a relationship between Cowperwood and Rita Sohlberg was fostered quite accidentally by Aileen, who took a foolishly sentimental interest in Harold which yet was not based on anything of real meaning. She liked him because he was a superlatively gracious, flattering, emotional man where women – pretty women – were concerned. She had some idea she could send him pupils, and, anyhow, it was nice to call at the Sohlberg studio. Her social life was dull enough as it was. So she went, and Cowperwood, mindful of Mrs. Sohlberg, came also. Shrewd to the point of destruction, he encouraged Aileen in her interest in them. He suggested that she invite them to dinner, that they give a musical at which Sohlberg could play and be paid. There were boxes at the theaters, tickets for concerts sent, invitations to drive Sundays or other days.

The very chemistry of life seems to play into the hands of a situation of this kind. Once Cowperwood was thinking vividly, forcefully, of her, Rita began to think in like manner of him. Hourly he grew more attractive, a strange, gripping man. Beset by his mood, she was having the devil's own time with her conscience. Not that anything had been said as yet, but he was investing her, gradually beleaguering her, sealing up, apparently, one avenue after another of escape. One Thursday afternoon, when neither Aileen nor he could attend the Sohlberg tea, Mrs. Sohlberg received a magnificent bunch of Jacqueminot roses⁶⁹. "For your nooks and corners," said a card. She knew well enough from whom it came and what it was worth. There were all of fifty dollars worth of roses. It gave her breath of a world of money that she had never known. Daily she saw the name of his banking and brokerage firm advertised in the papers. Once she met him in Merrill's store at noon, and he invited her to lunch; but she felt obliged to decline. Always he looked at her with such straight, vigorous eyes. To think that her beauty had done or was doing this! Her mind, quite beyond herself, ran forward to an hour when perhaps this eager, magnetic man would take charge of her in a way never dreamed of by Harold. But she went on practising, shopping, calling, reading, brooding over Harold's inefficiency, and stopping oddly sometimes to think – the etherealized grip of Cowperwood upon her. Those strong hands of his – how fine they were – and those large, soft-hard, incisive eyes. The puritanism of Wichita (modified sometime since by the art life of Chicago, such as it was) was having a severe struggle with the manipulative subtlety of the ages – represented in this man.

"You know you are very elusive," he said to her one evening at the theater when he sat behind her during the entr'acte, and Harold and Aileen had gone to walk in the foyer. The hubbub of conversation drowned the sound of anything that might be said. Mrs. Sohlberg was particularly pleasing in a lacy evening gown.

"No," she replied, amusedly, flattered by his attention and acutely conscious of his physical nearness. By degrees she had been yielding herself to his mood, thrilling at his every word. "It seems to me I am very stable," she went on. "I'm certainly substantial enough."

She looked at her full, smooth arm lying on her lap.

Cowperwood, who was feeling all the drag of her substantiality, but in addition the wonder of her temperament, which was so much richer than Aileen's, was deeply moved. Those little blood moods that no words ever (or rarely) indicate were coming to him from her – faint zephyr-like emanations of emotions, moods, and fancies in her mind which allured him. She was like Aileen in animality, but better, still sweeter, more delicate, much richer spiritually. Or was he just tired of Aileen for the present, he asked himself at times. No, no, he told himself that could not be. Rita Sohlberg was by far the most pleasing woman he had ever known.

⁶⁹ Jacqueminot roses – сорт роз темно-красного цвета

“Yes, but elusive, just the same,” he went on, leaning toward her. “You remind me of something that I can find no word for – a bit of color or a perfume or tone – a flash of something. I follow you in my thoughts all the time now. Your knowledge of art interests me. I like your playing – it is like you. You make me think of delightful things that have nothing to do with the ordinary run of my life. Do you understand?”

“It is very nice,” she said, “if I do.” She took a breath, softly, dramatically. “You make me think vain things, you know.” (Her mouth was a delicious O.) “You paint a pretty picture.” She was warm, flushed, suffused with a burst of her own temperament.

“You are like that,” he went on, insistently. “You make me feel like that all the time. You know,” he added, leaning over her chair, “I sometimes think you have never lived. There is so much that would complete your perfectness. I should like to send you abroad or take you – anyhow, you should go. You are very wonderful to me. Do you find me at all interesting to you?”

“Yes, but” – she paused – “you know I am afraid of all this and of you.” Her mouth had that same delicious formation which had first attracted him. “I don’t think we had better talk like this, do you? Harold is very jealous, or would be. What do you suppose Mrs. Cowperwood would think?”

“I know very well, but we needn’t stop to consider that now, need we? It will do her no harm to let me talk to you. Life is between individuals, Rita. You and I have very much in common. Don’t you see that? You are infinitely the most interesting woman I have ever known. You are bringing me something I have never known. Don’t you see that? I want you to tell me something truly. Look at me. You are not happy as you are, are you? Not perfectly happy?”

“No.” She smoothed her fan with her fingers.

“Are you happy at all?”

“I thought I was once. I’m not any more, I think.”

“It is so plain why,” he commented. “You are so much more wonderful than your place gives you scope for. You are an individual, not an acolyte to swing a censer for another. Mr. Sohlberg is very interesting, but you can’t be happy that way. It surprises me you haven’t seen it.”

“Oh,” she exclaimed, with a touch of weariness, “but perhaps I have.”

He looked at her keenly, and she thrilled. “I don’t think we’d better talk so here,” she replied. “You’d better be –”

He laid his hand on the back of her chair, almost touching her shoulder.

“Rita,” he said, using her given name again, “you wonderful woman!”

“Oh!” she breathed.

Cowperwood did not see Mrs. Sohlberg again for over a week – ten days exactly – when one afternoon Aileen came for him in a new kind of trap, having stopped first to pick up the Sohlbergs. Harold was up in front with her and she had left a place behind for Cowperwood with Rita. She did not in the vaguest way suspect how interested he was – his manner was so deceptive. Aileen imagined that she was the superior woman of the two, the better-looking, the better-dressed, hence the more ensnaring. She could not guess what a lure this woman’s temperament had for Cowperwood, who was so brisk, dynamic, seemingly unromantic, but who, just the same, in his nature concealed (under a very forceful exterior) a deep underlying element of romance and fire.

“This is charming,” he said, sinking down beside Rita. “What a fine evening! And the nice straw hat with the roses, and the nice linen dress. My, my!”⁷⁰ The roses were red; the dress white, with thin, green ribbon run through it here and there. She was keenly aware of the reason for his enthusiasm. He was so different from Harold, so healthy and out-of-doorish, so able. To-day Harold had been in tantrums over fate, life, his lack of success.

“Oh, I shouldn’t complain so much if I were you,” she had said to him, bitterly. “You might work harder and storm less.”

⁷⁰ **My, my!** – восклицание, выражающее удивление или восхищение

This had produced a scene which she had escaped by going for a walk. Almost at the very moment when she had returned Aileen had appeared. It was a way out.

She had cheered up, and accepted, dressed. So had Sohlberg. Apparently smiling and happy, they had set out on the drive. Now, as Cowperwood spoke, she glanced about her contentedly. "I'm lovely," she thought, "and he loves me. How wonderful it would be if we dared." But she said aloud: "I'm not so very nice. It's just the day – don't you think so? It's a simple dress. I'm not very happy, though, to-night, either."

"What's the matter?" he asked, cheerfully, the rumble of the traffic destroying the carrying-power of their voices. He leaned toward her, very anxious to solve any difficulty which might confront her, perfectly willing to ensnare her by kindness. "Isn't there something I can do? We're going now for a long ride to the pavilion in Jackson Park, and then, after dinner, we'll come back by moonlight. Won't that be nice? You must be smiling now and like yourself – happy. You have no reason to be otherwise that I know of. I will do anything for you that you want done – that can be done. You can have anything you want that I can give you. What is it? You know how much I think of you. If you leave your affairs to me you would never have any troubles of any kind."

"Oh, it isn't anything you can do – not now, anyhow. My affairs! Oh yes. What are they? Very simple, all."

She had that delicious atmosphere of remoteness even from herself. He was enchanted.

"But you are not simple to me, Rita," he said, softly, "nor are your affairs. They concern me very much. You are so important to me. I have told you that. Don't you see how true it is? You are a strange complexity to me – wonderful. I'm mad over you. Ever since I saw you last I have been thinking, thinking. If you have troubles let me share them. You are so much to me – my only trouble. I can fix your life. Join it with mine. I need you, and you need me."

"Yes," she said, "I know." Then she paused. "It's nothing much," she went on – "just a quarrel."

"What over?"

"Over me, really." The mouth was delicious. "I can't swing the censer⁷¹ always, as you say." That thought of his had stuck. "It's all right now, though. Isn't the day lovely, be-yoot-i-ful!"

Cowperwood looked at her and shook his head. She was such a treasure – so inconsequential. Aileen, busy driving and talking, could not see or hear. She was interested in Sohlberg, and the southward crush of vehicles on Michigan Avenue was distracting her attention. As they drove swiftly past budding trees, kempt lawns, fresh-made flower-beds, open windows – the whole seductive world of spring – Cowperwood felt as though life had once more taken a fresh start. His magnetism, if it had been visible, would have enveloped him like a glittering aura. Mrs. Sohlberg felt that this was going to be a wonderful evening.

The dinner was at the Park – an open-air chicken à la Maryland affair, with waffles and champagne to help out. Aileen, flattered by Sohlberg's gaiety under her spell, was having a delightful time, jesting, toasting, laughing, walking on the grass. Sohlberg was making love to her in a foolish, inconsequential way, as many men were inclined to do; but she was putting him off gaily with "silly boy" and "hush." She was so sure of herself that she was free to tell Cowperwood afterward how emotional he was and how she had to laugh at him. Cowperwood, quite certain that she was faithful, took it all in good part. Sohlberg was such a dunce and such a happy convenience ready to his hand. "He's not a bad sort," he commented. "I rather like him, though I don't think he's so much of a violinist."

After dinner they drove along the lake-shore and out through an open bit of tree-blocked prairie land, the moon shining in a clear sky, filling the fields and topping the lake with a silvery effulgence. Mrs. Sohlberg was being inoculated with the virus Cowperwood, and it was taking deadly effect. The tendency of her own disposition, however lethargic it might seem, once it was stirred emotionally,

⁷¹ swing the censer – (разг.) курить фимиам

was to act. She was essentially dynamic and passionate. Cowperwood was beginning to stand out in her mind as the force that he was. It would be wonderful to be loved by such a man. There would be an eager, vivid life between them. It frightened and drew her like a blazing lamp in the dark. To get control of herself she talked of art, people, of Paris, Italy, and he responded in like strain, but all the while he smoothed her hand, and once, under the shadow of some trees, he put his hand to her hair, turned her face, and put his mouth softly to her cheek. She flushed, trembled, turned pale, in the grip of this strange storm, but drew herself together. It was wonderful – heaven. Her old life was obviously going to pieces.

“Listen,” he said, guardedly. “Will you meet me tomorrow at three just beyond the Rush Street bridge? I will pick you up promptly. You won’t have to wait a moment.”

She paused, meditating, dreaming, almost hypnotized by his strange world of fancy.

“Will you?” he asked, eagerly.

“Wait,” she said, softly. “Let me think. Can I?”

She paused.

“Yes,” she said, after a time, drawing in a deep breath. “Yes” – as if she had arranged something in her mind.

“My sweet,” he whispered, pressing her arm, while he looked at her profile in the moonlight.

“But I’m doing a great deal,” she replied, softly, a little breathless and a little pale.

Chapter XVI

A Fateful Interlude

Cowperwood was enchanted. He kept the proposed tryst with eagerness and found her all that he had hoped. She was sweeter, more colorful, more elusive than anybody he had ever known. In their charming apartment on the North Side which he at once engaged, and where he sometimes spent mornings, evenings, afternoons, as opportunity afforded, he studied her with the most critical eye and found her almost flawless. She had that boundless value which youth and a certain *insouciance* of manner contribute. There was, delicious to relate, no melancholy in her nature, but a kind of innate sufficiency which neither looked forward to nor back upon troublesome ills. She loved beautiful things, but was not extravagant; and what interested him and commanded his respect was that no urgings of his toward prodigality, however subtly advanced, could affect her. She knew what she wanted, spent carefully, bought tastefully, arrayed herself in ways which appealed to him as the flowers did. His feeling for her became at times so great that he wished, one might almost have said, to destroy it – to appease the urge and allay the pull in himself, but it was useless. The charm of her endured. His transports would leave her refreshed apparently, prettier, more graceful than ever, it seemed to him, putting back her ruffled hair with her hand, mouthing at herself prettily in the glass, thinking of many remote delicious things at once. <...>

For something over a year neither Sohlberg nor Aileen was aware of the intimacy which had sprung up. Sohlberg, easily bamboozled, went back to Denmark for a visit, then to study in Germany. Mrs. Sohlberg followed Cowperwood to Europe the following year. At Aix-les-Bains, Biarritz, Paris, even London, Aileen never knew that there was an additional figure in the background. Cowperwood was trained by Rita into a really finer point of view. He came to know better music, books, even the facts. She encouraged him in his idea of a representative collection of the old masters, and begged him to be cautious in his selection of moderns. He felt himself to be delightfully situated indeed.

The difficulty with this situation, as with all such where an individual ventures thus buccaneeringly on the sea of sex, is the possibility of those storms which result from misplaced confidence, and from our built-up system of ethics relating to property in women. To Cowperwood, however, who was a law unto himself, who knew no law except such as might be imposed upon him by his lack of ability to think, this possibility of entanglement, wrath, rage, pain, offered no particular obstacle. It was not at all certain that any such thing would follow. Where the average man might have found one such liaison difficult to manage, Cowperwood, as we have seen, had previously entered on several such affairs almost simultaneously; and now he had ventured on yet another; in the last instance with much greater feeling and enthusiasm. The previous affairs had been emotional makeshifts at best – more or less idle philanderings in which his deeper moods and feelings were not concerned. In the case of Mrs. Sohlberg all this was changed. For the present at least she was really all in all to him. But this temperamental characteristic of his relating to his love of women, his artistic if not emotional subjection to their beauty, and the mystery of their personalities led him into still a further affair, and this last was not so fortunate in its outcome.

Antoinette Nowak had come to him fresh from a West Side high school and a Chicago business college, and had been engaged as his private stenographer and secretary. This girl had blossomed forth into something exceptional, as American children of foreign parents are wont to do. You would have scarcely believed that she, with her fine, lithe body, her good taste in dress, her skill in stenography, bookkeeping, and business details, could be the daughter of a struggling Pole, who had first worked in the Southwest Chicago Steel Mills, and who had later kept a fifth-rate cigar, news, and stationery store in the Polish district, the merchandise of playing-cards and a back room for idling and casual gaming being the principal reasons for its existence. Antoinette, whose first name had not been Antoinette

at all, but Minka (the Antoinette having been borrowed by her from an article in one of the Chicago Sunday papers), was a fine dark, brooding girl, ambitious and hopeful, who ten days after she had accepted her new place was admiring Cowperwood and following his every daring movement with almost excited interest. To be the wife of such a man, she thought – to even command his interest, let alone his affection – must be wonderful. After the dull world she had known – it seemed dull compared to the upper, rarefied realms which she was beginning to glimpse through him – and after the average men in the real-estate office over the way where she had first worked, Cowperwood, in his good clothes, his remote mood, his easy, commanding manner, touched the most ambitious chords of her being. One day she saw Aileen sweep in from her carriage, wearing warm brown furs, smart polished boots, a street-suit of corded brown wool, and a fur *toque* sharpened and emphasized by a long dark-red feather which shot upward like a dagger or a quill pen. Antoinette hated her. She conceived herself to be better, or as good at least. Why was life divided so unfairly? What sort of a man was Cowperwood, anyhow? <...>

Cowperwood, engrossed in his own plans, was not thinking of her at present. He was thinking of the next moves in his interesting gas war. And Aileen, seeing her one day, merely considered her an underling. The woman in business was such a novelty that as yet she was *d,eclass,e*. Aileen really thought nothing of Antoinette at all.

Somewhat over a year after Cowperwood had become intimate with Mrs. Sohlberg his rather practical business relations with Antoinette Nowak took on a more intimate color. What shall we say of this – that he had already wearied of Mrs. Sohlberg? Not in the least. He was desperately fond of her. Or that he despised Aileen, whom he was thus grossly deceiving? Not at all. She was to him at times as attractive as ever – perhaps more so for the reason that her self-imagined rights were being thus roughly infringed upon. He was sorry for her, but inclined to justify himself on the ground that these other relations – with possibly the exception of Mrs. Sohlberg – were not enduring. If it had been possible to marry Mrs. Sohlberg he might have done so, and he did speculate at times as to whether anything would ever induce Aileen to leave him; but this was more or less idle speculation. He rather fancied they would live out their days together, seeing that he was able thus easily to deceive her. But as for a girl like Antoinette Nowak, she figured in that braided symphony of mere sex attraction which somehow makes up that geometric formula of beauty which rules the world. She was charming in a dark way, beautiful, with eyes that burned with an unsatisfied fire; and Cowperwood, although at first only in the least moved by her, became by degrees interested in her, wondering at the amazing, transforming power of the American atmosphere.

“Are your parents English, Antoinette?” he asked her, one morning, with that easy familiarity which he assumed to all underlings and minor intellects – an air that could not be resented in him, and which was usually accepted as a compliment.

Antoinette, clean and fresh in a white shirtwaist, a black walking-skirt, a ribbon of black velvet about her neck, and her long, black hair laid in a heavy braid low over her forehead and held close by a white celluloid comb, looked at him with pleased and grateful eyes. She had been used to such different types of men – the earnest, fiery, excitable, sometimes drunken and swearing men of her childhood, always striking, marching, praying in the Catholic churches; and then the men of the business world, crazy over money, and with no understanding of anything save some few facts about Chicago and its momentary possibilities. In Cowperwood’s office, taking his letters and hearing him talk in his quick, genial way with old Laughlin, Sippens, and others, she had learned more of life than she had ever dreamed existed. He was like a vast open window out of which she was looking upon an almost illimitable landscape.

“No, sir,” she replied, dropping her slim, firm, white hand, holding a black lead-pencil restfully on her notebook. She smiled quite innocently because she was pleased.

“I thought not,” he said, “and yet you’re American enough.”

"I don't know how it is," she said, quite solemnly. "I have a brother who is quite as American as I am. We don't either of us look like our father or mother."

"What does your brother do?" he asked, indifferently.

"He's one of the weighers at Arneel & Co. He expects to be a manager sometime." She smiled.

Cowperwood looked at her speculatively, and after a momentary return glance she dropped her eyes. Slowly, in spite of herself, a telltale flush rose and mantled her brown cheeks. It always did when he looked at her.

"Take this letter to General Van Sickle," he began, on this occasion quite helpfully, and in a few minutes she had recovered. She could not be near Cowperwood for long at a time, however, without being stirred by a feeling which was not of her own willing. He fascinated and suffused her with a dull fire. She sometimes wondered whether a man so remarkable would ever be interested in a girl like her.

The end of this essential interest, of course, was the eventual assumption of Antoinette. One might go through all the dissolving details of days in which she sat taking dictation, receiving instructions, going about her office duties in a state of apparently chill, practical, commercial single-mindedness; but it would be to no purpose. As a matter of fact, without in any way affecting the preciseness and accuracy of her labor, her thoughts were always upon the man in the inner office – the strange master who was then seeing his men, and in between, so it seemed, a whole world of individuals, solemn and commercial, who came, presented their cards, talked at times almost interminably, and went away. It was the rare individual, however, she observed, who had the long conversation with Cowperwood, and that interested her the more. His instructions to her were always of the briefest, and he depended on her native intelligence to supply much that he scarcely more than suggested.

"You understand, do you?" was his customary phrase.

"Yes," she would reply.

She felt as though she were fifty times as significant here as she had ever been in her life before.

The office was clean, hard, bright, like Cowperwood himself. The morning sun, streaming in through an almost solid glass east front shaded by pale-green roller curtains, came to have an almost romantic atmosphere for her. Cowperwood's private office, as in Philadelphia, was a solid cherry-wood box in which he could shut himself completely – sight-proof, sound-proof. When the door was closed it was sacrosanct. He made it a rule, sensibly, to keep his door open as much as possible, even when he was dictating, sometimes not. It was in these half-hours of dictation – the door open, as a rule, for he did not care for too much privacy – that he and Miss Nowak came closest. After months and months, and because he had been busy with the other woman mentioned, of whom she knew nothing, she came to enter sometimes with a sense of suffocation, sometimes of maidenly shame. It would never have occurred to her to admit frankly that she wanted Cowperwood to make love to her. It would have frightened her to have thought of herself as yielding easily, and yet there was not a detail of his personality that was not now burned in her brain. His light, thick, always smoothly parted hair, his wide, clear, inscrutable eyes, his carefully manicured hands, so full and firm, his fresh clothing of delicate, intricate patterns – how these fascinated her! He seemed always remote except just at the moment of doing something, when, curiously enough, he seemed intensely intimate and near.

One day, after many exchanges of glances in which her own always fell sharply – in the midst of a letter – he arose and closed the half-open door. She did not think so much of that, as a rule – it had happened before – but now, to-day, because of a studied glance he had given her, neither tender nor smiling, she felt as though something unusual were about to happen. Her own body was going hot and cold by turns – her neck and hands. She had a fine figure, finer than she realized, with shapely limbs and torso. Her head had some of the sharpness of the old Greek coinage, and her hair was plaited as in ancient cut stone. Cowperwood noted it. He came back and, without taking his seat, bent over her and intimately took her hand.

"Antoinette," he said, lifting her gently.

She looked up, then arose – for he slowly drew her – breathless, the color gone, much of the capable practicality that was hers completely eliminated. She felt limp, inert. She pulled at her hand faintly, and then, lifting her eyes, was fixed by that hard, insatiable gaze of his. Her head swam – her eyes were filled with a telltale confusion.

“Antoinette!”

“Yes,” she murmured.

“You love me, don’t you?”

She tried to pull herself together, to inject some of her native rigidity of soul into her air – that rigidity which she always imagined would never desert her – but it was gone. There came instead to her a picture of the far Blue Island Avenue neighborhood from which she emanated – its low brown cottages, and then this smart, hard office and this strong man. He came out of such a marvelous world, apparently. A strange foaming seemed to be in her blood. She was deliriously, deliciously numb and happy.

“Antoinette!”

“Oh, I don’t know what I think,” she gasped. “I – Oh yes, I do, I do.”

“I like your name,” he said, simply. “Antoinette.” And then, pulling her to him, he slipped his arm about her waist.

She was frightened, numb, and then suddenly, not so much from shame as shock, tears rushed to her eyes. She turned and put her hand on the desk and hung her head and sobbed.

“Why, Antoinette,” he asked, gently, bending over her, “are you so much unused to the world? I thought you said you loved me. Do you want me to forget all this and go on as before? I can, of course, if you can, you know.”

He knew that she loved him, wanted him.

She heard him plainly enough, shaking.

“Do you?” he said, after a time, giving her moments in which to recover.

“Oh, let me cry!” she recovered herself sufficiently to say, quite wildly. “I don’t know why I’m crying. It’s just because I’m nervous, I suppose. Please don’t mind me now.”

“Antoinette,” he repeated, “look at me! Will you stop?”

“Oh no, not now. My eyes are so bad.”

“Antoinette! Come, look!” He put his hand under her chin. “See, I’m not so terrible.”

“Oh,” she said, when her eyes met his again, “I – ”

And then she folded her arms against his breast while he petted her hand and held her close.

“I’m not so bad, Antoinette. It’s you as much as it is me. You do love me, then?”

“Yes, yes – oh yes!”

“And you don’t mind?”

“No. It’s all so strange.” Her face was hidden.

“Kiss me, then.”

She put up her lips and slipped her arms about him. He held her close.

He tried teasingly to make her say why she cried, thinking the while of what Aileen or Rita would think if they knew, but she would not at first – admitting later that it was a sense of evil. Curiously she also thought of Aileen, and how, on occasion, she had seen her sweep in and out. Now she was sharing with her (the dashing Mrs. Cowperwood, so vain and superior) the wonder of his affection. Strange as it may seem, she looked on it now as rather an honor. She had risen in her own estimation – her sense of life and power. Now, more than ever before, she knew something of life because she knew something of love and passion. The future seemed tremulous with promise. She went back to her machine after a while, thinking of this. What would it all come to? she wondered, wildly. You could not have told by her eyes that she had been crying. Instead, a rich glow in her brown

cheeks heightened her beauty⁷². No disturbing sense of Aileen was involved with all this. Antoinette was of the newer order that was beginning to privately question ethics and morals. She had a right to her life, lead where it would. And to what it would bring her. The feel of Cowperwood's lips was still fresh on hers. What would the future reveal to her now? What?

⁷² **heightened her beauty** – (разг.) подчеркнул ее красоту

Chapter XVII

An Overture to Conflict

The result of this understanding was not so important to Cowperwood as it was to Antoinette. In a vagrant mood he had unlocked a spirit here which was fiery, passionate, but in his case hopelessly worshipful. However much she might be grieved by him, Antoinette, as he subsequently learned, would never sin against his personal welfare. Yet she was unwittingly the means of first opening the flood-gates of suspicion on Aileen, thereby establishing in the latter's mind the fact of Cowperwood's persistent unfaithfulness.

The incidents which led up to this were comparatively trivial – nothing more, indeed, at first than the sight of Miss Nowak and Cowperwood talking intimately in his office one afternoon when the others had gone and the fact that she appeared to be a little bit disturbed by Aileen's arrival. Later came the discovery – though of this Aileen could not be absolutely sure – of Cowperwood and Antoinette in a closed carriage one stormy November afternoon in State Street when he was supposed to be out of the city. She was coming out of Merrill's store at the time, and just happened to glance at the passing vehicle, which was running near the curb. Aileen, although uncertain, was greatly shocked. Could it be possible that he had not left town? She journeyed to his office on the pretext of taking old Laughlin's dog, Jennie, a pretty collar she had found; actually to find if Antoinette were away at the same time. Could it be possible, she kept asking herself, that Cowperwood had become interested in his own stenographer? The fact that the office assumed that he was out of town and that Antoinette was not there gave her pause. Laughlin quite innocently informed her that he thought Miss Nowak had gone to one of the libraries to make up certain reports. It left her in doubt.

What was Aileen to think? Her moods and aspirations were linked so closely with the love and success of Cowperwood that she could not, in spite of herself, but take fire at the least thought of losing him. He himself wondered sometimes, as he threaded the mesh-like paths of sex, what she would do once she discovered his variant conduct. Indeed, there had been little occasional squabbles, not sharp, but suggestive, when he was trifling about with Mrs. Kittridge, Mrs. Ledwell, and others. There were, as may be imagined, from time to time absences, brief and unimportant, which he explained easily, passional indifferences which were not explained so easily, and the like; but since his affections were not really involved in any of those instances, he had managed to smooth the matter over quite nicely.

"Why do you say that?" he would demand, when she suggested, *à propos* of a trip or a day when she had not been with him, that there might have been another. "You know there hasn't. If I am going in for that sort of thing you'll learn it fast enough. Even if I did, it wouldn't mean that I was unfaithful to you spiritually."

"Oh, wouldn't it?" exclaimed Aileen, resentfully, and with some disturbance of spirit. "Well, you can keep your spiritual faithfulness. I'm not going to be content with any sweet thoughts."

Cowperwood laughed even as she laughed, for he knew she was right and he felt sorry for her. At the same time her biting humor pleased him. He knew that she did not really suspect him of actual infidelity; he was obviously so fond of her. But she also knew that he was innately attractive to women, and that there were enough of the philandering type to want to lead him astray⁷³ and make her life a burden. Also that he might prove a very willing victim.

Sex desire and its fruition being such an integral factor in the marriage and every other sex relation, the average woman is prone to study the periodic manifestations that go with it quite as one dependent on the weather – a sailor, or example – might study the barometer. In this Aileen was no

⁷³ to lead him astray – (разг.) сбить его с пути, зд. увлечь его 8

exception. She was so beautiful herself, and had been so much to Cowperwood physically, that she had followed the corresponding evidences of feeling in him with the utmost interest, accepting the recurring ebullitions of his physical emotions as an evidence of her own enduring charm. As time went on, however – and that was long before Mrs. Sohlberg or anyone else had appeared – the original flare of passion had undergone a form of subsidence, though not noticeable enough to be disturbing. Aileen thought and thought, but she did not investigate. Indeed, because of the precariousness of her own situation as a social failure she was afraid to do so.

With the arrival of Mrs. Sohlberg and then of Antoinette Nowak as factors in the *pot-pourri*, the situation became more difficult. Humanly fond of Aileen as Cowperwood was, and because of his lapses and her affection, desirous of being kind, yet for the time being he was alienated almost completely from her. He grew remote according as his clandestine affairs were drifting or blazing, without, however, losing his firm grip on his financial affairs, and Aileen noticed it. It worried her. She was so vain that she could scarcely believe that Cowperwood could long be indifferent, and for a while her sentimental interest in Sohlberg's future and unhappiness of soul beclouded her judgment; but she finally began to feel the drift of affairs. The pathos of all this is that it so quickly descends into the realm of the unsatisfactory, the banal, the pseudo intimate. Aileen noticed it at once. She tried protestations. "You don't kiss me the way you did once," and then a little later, "You haven't noticed me hardly for four whole days. What's the matter?"

"Oh, I don't know," replied Cowperwood, easily; "I guess I want you as much as ever. I don't see that I am any different." He took her in his arms and petted and caressed her; but Aileen was suspicious, nervous.

The psychology of the human animal, when confronted by these tangles, these ripping tides of the heart, has little to do with so-called reason or logic. It is amazing how in the face of passion and the affections and the changing face of life all plans and theories by which we guide ourselves fall to the ground. Here was Aileen talking bravely at the time she invaded Mrs. Lillian Cowperwood's domain of the necessity of "her Frank" finding a woman suitable to his needs, tastes, abilities, but now that the possibility of another woman equally or possibly better suited to him was looming in the offing⁷⁴ – although she had no idea who it might be – she could not reason in the same way. Her ox, God wot, was the one that was being gored.⁷⁵ What if he should find someone whom he could want more than he did her? Dear heaven, how terrible that would be! What would she do? she asked herself, thoughtfully. She lapsed into the blues⁷⁶ one afternoon – almost cried – she could scarcely say why. Another time she thought of all the terrible things she would do, how difficult she would make it for any other woman who invaded her preserves. However, she was not sure. Would she declare war if she discovered another? She knew she would eventually; and yet she knew, too, that if she did, and Cowperwood were set in his passion, thoroughly alienated, it would do no good. It would be terrible, but what could she do to win him back? That was the issue. Once warned, however, by her suspicious questioning, Cowperwood was more mechanically attentive than ever. He did his best to conceal his altered mood – his enthusiasms for Mrs. Sohlberg, his interest in Antoinette Nowak – and this helped somewhat.

But finally there was a detectable change. Aileen noticed it first after they had been back from Europe nearly a year. At this time she was still interested in Sohlberg, but in a harmlessly flirtatious way. She thought he might be interesting physically, but would he be as delightful as Cowperwood? Never! When she felt that Cowperwood himself might be changing she pulled herself up at once, and when Antoinette appeared – the carriage incident – Sohlberg lost his, at best, unstable charm. She

⁷⁴ was looming in the offing – (разг.) маячила на горизонте

⁷⁵ Her ox, God wot, was the one that was being gored. – Бог знает, может, это она проиграет в этой битве. (досл. ее бык будет пронзен)

⁷⁶ lapsed into the blues – (разг.) загрустила, пала духом

began to meditate on what a terrible thing it would be to lose Cowperwood, seeing that she had failed to establish herself socially. Perhaps that had something to do with his defection. No doubt it had. Yet she could not believe, after all his protestations of affection in Philadelphia, after all her devotion to him in those dark days of his degradation and punishment, that he would really turn on her. No, he might stray momentarily, but if she protested enough, made a scene, perhaps, he would not feel so free to injure her – he would remember and be loving and devoted again. After seeing him, or imagining she had seen him, in the carriage, she thought at first that she would question him, but later decided that she would wait and watch more closely. Perhaps he was beginning to run around with other women. There was safety in numbers⁷⁷ – that she knew. Her heart, her pride, was hurt, but not broken.

⁷⁷ **There was safety in numbers** – (зд.) Как-то спокойнее, если у него не одна подружка, а несколько

Chapter XVIII

The Clash

The peculiar personality of Rita Sohlberg was such that by her very action she ordinarily allayed suspicion, or rather distracted it. Although a novice, she had a strange ease, courage, or balance of soul which kept her whole and self-possessed under the most trying of circumstances. She might have been overtaken in the most compromising of positions, but her manner would always have indicated ease, a sense of innocence, nothing unusual, for she had no sense of moral degradation in this matter – no troublesome emotion as to what was to flow from a relationship of this kind, no worry as to her own soul, sin, social opinion, or the like. She was really interested in art and life – a pagan, in fact. Some people are thus hardily equipped. It is the most notable attribute of the hardier type of personalities – not necessarily the most brilliant or successful. You might have said that her soul was naïvely unconscious of the agony of others in loss. She would have taken any loss to herself with an amazing equableness – some qualms, of course, but not many – because her vanity and sense of charm would have made her look forward to something better or as good.

She had called on Aileen quite regularly in the past, with or without Harold, and had frequently driven with the Cowperwoods or joined them at the theater or elsewhere. She had decided, after becoming intimate with Cowperwood, to study art again, which was a charming blind, for it called for attendance at afternoon or evening classes which she frequently skipped. Besides, since Harold had more money he was becoming gayer, more reckless and enthusiastic over women, and Cowperwood deliberately advised her to encourage him in some *liaison* which, in case exposure should subsequently come to them, would effectually tie his hands. <...>

Under the circumstances he would almost have been willing – not quite – for Aileen to succumb to Sohlberg in order to entrap her and make his situation secure. Yet he really did not wish it in the last analysis – would have been grieved temporarily if she had deserted him. However, in the case of Sohlberg, detectives were employed, the new affair with the flighty pupil was unearthed and sworn to by witnesses, and this, combined with the “lettahs”⁷⁸ held by Rita, constituted ample material wherewith to “hush up” the musician if ever he became unduly obstreperous.

So Cowperwood and Rita’s state was quite comfortable.

But Aileen, meditating over Antoinette Nowak, was beside herself with curiosity, doubt, worry. She did not want to injure Cowperwood in any way after his bitter Philadelphia experience, and yet when she thought of his deserting her in this way she fell into a great rage. Her vanity, as much as her love, was hurt. What could she do to justify or set at rest her suspicions? Watch him personally? She was too dignified and vain to lurk about street-corners or offices or hotels. Never! Start a quarrel without additional evidence – that would be silly. He was too shrewd to give her further evidence once she spoke. He would merely deny it. She brooded irritably, recalling after a time, and with an aching heart, that her father had put detectives on her track once ten years before, and had actually discovered her relations with Cowperwood and their *rendezvous*. Bitter as that memory was – torturing – yet now the same means seemed not too abhorrent to employ under the circumstances. No harm had come to Cowperwood in the former instance, she reasoned to herself – no especial harm – from that discovery (this was not true), and none would come to him now. (This also was not true.) But one must forgive a fiery, passionate soul, wounded to the quick, some errors of judgment. Her thought was that she would first be sure just what it was her beloved was doing, and then decide what course to take. But she knew that she was treading on dangerous ground, and mentally she recoiled from the

⁷⁸ “lettahs” = letters (передается произношение Риты)

consequences which might follow. He might leave her if she fought him too bitterly. He might treat her as he had treated his first wife, Lillian.

She studied her liege lord curiously these days, wondering if it were true that he had deserted her already, as he had deserted his first wife thirteen years before, wondering if he could really take up with a girl as common as Antoinette Nowak – wondering, wondering, wondering – half afraid and yet courageous. What could be done with him? If only he still loved her all would be well yet – but oh!

The detective agency to which she finally applied, after weeks of soul-racking suspense, was one of those disturbingly human implements which many are not opposed to using on occasion, when it is the only means of solving a troublous problem of wounded feelings or jeopardized interests. Aileen, being obviously rich, was forthwith shamefully overcharged; but the services agreed upon were well performed. To her amazement, chagrin, and distress, after a few weeks of observation Cowperwood was reported to have affairs not only with Antoinette Nowak, whom she did suspect, but also with Mrs. Sohlberg. And these two affairs at one and the same time. For the moment it left Aileen actually stunned and breathless.

The significance of Rita Sohlberg to her in this hour was greater than that of any woman before or after. Of all living things, women dread women most of all, and of all women the clever and beautiful. Rita Sohlberg had been growing on Aileen as a personage, for she had obviously been prospering during this past year, and her beauty had been amazingly enhanced thereby. <...>

Now, however, when it appeared that the same charm that had appealed to her had appealed to Cowperwood, she conceived an angry, animal opposition to it all. Rita Sohlberg! Ha! A lot of satisfaction she'd get knowing as she would soon, that Cowperwood was sharing his affection for her with Antoinette Nowak – a mere stenographer. And a lot of satisfaction Antoinette would get – the cheap upstart – when she learned, as she would, that Cowperwood loved her so lightly that he would take an apartment for Rita Sohlberg and let a cheap hotel or an assignation-house do for her.

But in spite of this savage exultation her thoughts kept coming back to herself, to her own predicament, to torture and destroy her. Cowperwood, the liar! Cowperwood, the pretender! Cowperwood, the sneak! At one moment she conceived a kind of horror of the man because of all his protestations to her; at the next a rage – bitter, swelling; at the next a pathetic realization of her own altered position. Say what one will, to take the love of a man like Cowperwood away from a woman like Aileen was to leave her high and dry on land⁷⁹, as a fish out of its native element, to take all the wind out of her sails – almost to kill her. Whatever position she had once thought to hold through him, was now jeopardized. Whatever joy or glory she had had in being Mrs. Frank Algernon Cowperwood, it was now tarnished. She sat in her room, this same day after the detectives had given their report, a tired look in her eyes, the first set lines her pretty mouth had ever known showing about it, her past and her future whirling painfully and nebulously in her brain. Suddenly she got up, and, seeing Cowperwood's picture on her dresser, his still impressive eyes contemplating her, she seized it and threw it on the floor, stamping on his handsome face with her pretty foot, and raging at him in her heart. The dog! The brute! Her brain was full of the thought of Rita's white arms about him, of his lips to hers. The spectacle of Rita's fluffy gowns, her enticing costumes, was in her eyes. Rita should not have him; she should not have anything connected with him, nor, for that matter, Antoinette Nowak, either – the wretched upstart, the hireling. To think he should stoop to an office stenographer! Once on that thought, she decided that he should not be allowed to have a woman as an assistant any more. He owed it to her to love her after all she had done for him, the coward, and to let other women alone. Her brain whirled with strange thoughts. She was really not sane in her present state. She was so wrought up by her prospective loss that she could only think of rash, impossible, destructive things to do. She dressed swiftly, feverishly, and, calling a closed carriage from the coach-house, ordered herself to be driven to the New Arts Building. She would

⁷⁹ **high and dry on land** – выброшенный на берег, (перен.) покинутый в беде

show this rosy cat of a woman, this smiling piece of impertinence, this she-devil, whether she would lure Cowperwood away. She meditated as she rode. She would not sit back and be robbed as Mrs. Cowperwood had been by her. Never! He could not treat her that way. She would die first! She would kill Rita Sohlberg and Antoinette Nowak and Cowperwood and herself first. She would prefer to die that way rather than lose his love. Oh yes, a thousand times! Fortunately, Rita Sohlberg was not at the New Arts Building, or Sohlberg, either. They had gone to a reception. Nor was she at the apartment on the North Side, where, under the name of Jacobs, as Aileen had been informed by the detectives, she and Cowperwood kept occasional tryst. Aileen hesitated for a moment, feeling it useless to wait, then she ordered the coachman to drive to her husband's office. It was now nearly five o'clock. Antoinette and Cowperwood had both gone, but she did not know it. She changed her mind, however, before she reached the office – for it was Rita Sohlberg she wished to reach first – and ordered her coachman to drive back to the Sohlberg studio. But still they had not returned. In a kind of aimless rage she went home, wondering how she should reach Rita Sohlberg first and alone. Then, to her savage delight, the game walked into her bag. The Sohlbergs, returning home at six o'clock from some reception farther out Michigan Avenue, had stopped, at the wish of Harold, merely to pass the time of day with Mrs. Cowperwood. Rita was exquisite in a pale-blue and lavender concoction, with silver braid worked in here and there. Her gloves and shoes were pungent bits of romance, her hat a dream of graceful lines. At the sight of her, Aileen, who was still in the hall and had opened the door herself, fairly burned to seize her by the throat and strike her; but she restrained herself sufficiently to say, "Come in." She still had sense enough and self-possession enough to conceal her wrath and to close the door. Beside his wife Harold was standing, offensively smug and inefficient in the fashionable frock-coat and silk hat of the time, a restraining influence as yet. He was bowing and smiling:

"Oh." This sound was neither an "oh" nor an "ah," but a kind of Danish inflected "awe," which was usually not displeasing to hear. "How are you, once more, Meeses Cowperwood? It eez sudge a pleasure to see you again – awe."

"Won't you two just go in the reception-room a moment," said Aileen, almost hoarsely. "I'll be right in. I want to get something." Then, as an afterthought, she called very sweetly: "Oh, Mrs. Sohlberg, won't you come up to my room for a moment? I have something I want to show you."

Rita responded promptly. She always felt it incumbent upon her to be very nice to Aileen.

"We have only a moment to stay," she replied, archly and sweetly, and coming out in the hall, "but I'll come up."

Aileen stayed to see her go first, then followed upstairs swiftly, surely, entered after Rita, and closed the door. With a courage and rage born of a purely animal despair, she turned and locked it; then she wheeled swiftly, her eyes lit with a savage fire, her cheeks pale, but later aflame, her hands, her fingers working in a strange, unconscious way.

"So," she said, looking at Rita, and coming toward her quickly and angrily, "you'll steal my husband, will you? You'll live in a secret apartment, will you? You'll come here smiling and lying to me, will you? You beast! You cat! You prostitute! I'll show you now! You tow-headed beast! I know you now for what you are! I'll teach you once for all! Take that, and that, and that!"

Suiting action to word, Aileen had descended upon her whirlwind, animal fashion, striking, scratching, choking, tearing her visitor's hat from her head, ripping the laces from her neck, beating her in the face, and clutching violently at her hair and throat to choke and mar her beauty if she could. For the moment she was really crazy with rage.

By the suddenness of this onslaught Rita Sohlberg was taken back completely. It all came so swiftly, so terribly, she scarcely realized what was happening before the storm was upon her. There was no time for arguments, pleas, anything. Terrified, shamed, nonplussed, she went down quite limply under this almost lightning attack. When Aileen began to strike her she attempted in vain to defend herself, uttering at the same time piercing screams which could be heard throughout the house. She screamed shrilly, strangely, like a wild dying animal. On the instant all her fine, civilized

poise had deserted her. From the sweetness and delicacy of the reception atmosphere – the polite cooings, posturings, and mouthings so charming to contemplate, so alluring in her – she had dropped on the instant to that native animal condition that shows itself in fear. Her eyes had a look of hunted horror, her lips and cheeks were pale and drawn. She retreated in a staggering, ungraceful way; she writhed and squirmed, screaming in the strong clutch of the irate and vigorous Aileen.

Cowperwood entered the hall below just before the screams began. He had followed the Sohlbergs almost immediately from his office, and, chancing to glance in the reception-room, he had observed Sohlberg smiling, radiant, an intangible air of self-ingratiating, social, and artistic sycophancy about him, his long black frock-coat buttoned smoothly around his body, his silk hat still in his hands.

“Awe, how do you do, Meezter Cowperwood,” he was beginning to say, his curly head shaking in a friendly manner, “I’m so glad to see you again” when – but who can imitate a scream of terror? We have no words, no symbols even, for those essential sounds of fright and agony. They filled the hall, the library, the reception-room, the distant kitchen even, and basement with a kind of vibrant terror.

Cowperwood, always the man of action as opposed to nervous cogitation, braced up on the instant like taut wire. What, for heaven’s sake, could that be? What a terrible cry! Sohlberg the artist, responding like a chameleon to the various emotional complexions of life, began to breathe stertorously, to blanch, to lose control of himself.

“My God!” he exclaimed, throwing up his hands, “that’s Rita! She’s up-stairs in your wife’s room! Something must have happened. Oh – ” On the instant he was quite beside himself, terrified, shaking, almost useless. Cowperwood, on the contrary, without a moment’s hesitation had thrown his coat to the floor, dashed up the stairs, followed by Sohlberg. What could it be? Where was Aileen? As he bounded upward a clear sense of something untoward came over him; it was sickening, terrifying. Scream! Scream! Scream! came the sounds. “Oh, my God! don’t kill me! Help! Help!” SCREAM – this last a long, terrified, ear-piercing wail.

Sohlberg was about to drop from heart failure, he was so frightened. His face was an ashen gray. Cowperwood seized the door-knob vigorously and, finding the door locked, shook, rattled, and banged at it.

“Aileen!” he called, sharply. “Aileen! What’s the matter in there? Open this door, Aileen!”

“Oh, my God! Oh, help! help! Oh, mercy – o-o-o-o-oh!” It was the moaning voice of Rita.

“I’ll show you, you she-devil!” he heard Aileen calling. “I’ll teach you, you beast! You cat, you prostitute! There! there! there!”

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