

Joseph A. Altsheler

**The
Changing
Order**

**The Romance and Politics
of Arthur and Lucy**

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- **The Changing Order**
- **Publication History**
- **Acknowledgement**
- **Editor's Note**
- 1 A New York Blizzard**
- 2 Old and New**
- 3 Beginnings**
- 4 The Transit Bill**
- 5 The Election**
- 6 A New Policy**
- 7 The Reign of Terror**
- 8 The Triumph**
- 9 The Best of All**

The Changing Order

The romance and politics of Arthur and Lucy

by Joseph A. Altsheler



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Editor's Note

If you were a young man of wealth and leisure and wanted to learn how to play the game of politics, how would you go about it?

This is a picture, drawn true to the developments of the last two years which have shown the connection between high finance and seemingly unimportant war politics.

The hero of the the story is given a regular party nomination, and is groomed for the race by an astute ward leader. All surface indications prophesized his election. Instead, he was mysteriously defeated.

It is a very fascinating journey to follow him in his efforts to unravel the mystery, and to learn the methods he used in securing the utter rout of his enemies, his life's happiness being held in the balance all the time. Mr. Joseph A. Altsheler, who is the author of several successful novels, has never written anything more interesting.



1 A New York Blizzard

Cathcart, despite the raw chill in the air, stood on the upper deck of the boat from Staten Island, and looked over the shining reach of blue water toward his native city. The jagged line of New York rose against the sky, a massive but irregular battlement. Buildings, light in color, soared up, floor on floor, and at their feet huddled others, low and dark, like the homes of peasants at the base of a cathedral.

The afternoon was late, and the sun, unnaturally bright, swung low on the horizon, filling all the western sky with wonderful clouds of blue and yellow and red that heaped upon each other, in terrace after terrace. The softening tints hung over the city like a fine veil of gauze, and, at the distance, all things rude or ugly were hidden. The sight was full of majesty to Cathcart, nor was it without a certain weird and unreal quality, as if a phantom and giant city had risen

suddenly from the deep. He had been back but a week after a long absence, and much was still new and strange to him.

They were approaching slowly, and, as he looked, the sun, with its circling mists and vapors, dropped suddenly behind the hills. The rosy banks of light trembled for a few moments, then died, and night, thick and cold, came swiftly down over the city and the sea.

There was darkness for an instant, and then from myriad windows shot the electric lights, rising above each other, row on row, and bringing back the day that had just gone. It was like a stage scene, set for the moment, and as sudden as if some Eastern magician had rubbed his magic ring, changing the world about him. Cathcart's heart leaped, and as he looked at the vast bank of lights he was proud to day to himself that it was his city.

They were near the wharf now, but a cold wind, damp with rain, blew across the bay, and Cathcart shivered in his heavy overcoat. Someone by his side remarked that snow was coming, and as he spoke, the first flakes, large

and white, fell on the deck. The air grew damper, and then the skies seemed to open, pouring snow from clouds, huge and low.

It was but a few yards to the ferry slip, but when Cathcart passed into the street, he was caught in a vast whirlwind of white that hid the outline of the buildings, and through which the twinkling electric lights dwindled to pin points. Cathcart heard the word “blizzard,” and he knew, from his own experience of the West, that New York was in the grasp of the real Northwestern article, warranted to be genuine, and with all known variations. But he felt exhilaration. The wind and the snow whipped his blood and stimulated head and heart. Originally of a weak frame, he rejoiced in his late strength, and scorning a car, plunged boldly into the eye of the wind, fighting his way northward until he came onto Broadway.

Full of resolution, he toiled forward on foot, and he noticed that the street cars, the slots choked with snow, had refused to run. They stood, lonely and desolate, in long lines, like phantoms of the dark. Presently the “L” trains

ceased also, and now only a few carriages struggled through the drifts that steadily heaped higher and higher.

He stopped often for shelter and a little rest, and at the end of an hour he had not gone more than a mile. While yet south of Union Square, he saw a carriage moving slowly northward. It was drawn by one weary horse, and the driver crouched in his seat, was evidently approaching the last stages of despair.

Cathcart's eyes followed the carriage, and he began to wonder vaguely how much longer the horse would last. The weary animal tumbled the next moment and fell in a deep drift, making no effort to move. The driver sprang from his seat, and, with curses and blows, urged him to his feet, but the horse would not take another step.

The driver, after his vain effort, paused a few moments, as if undecided, then opened the door and spoke to someone inside. The reply evidently was not what he wished, as he spoke again and made violent gestures.

Cathcart stopped on the sidewalk, idly curious

to know what would happen. Save for the carriage and its people and himself, the street was deserted. He saw the door open and two heavily wrapped figures step out into the snow. The driver pointed to the sidewalk, and then giving them no more notice, turned his whole attention to his horse.

The two ejected passengers approached the curb, and Cathcart noticed, despite the darkness and driving snow, that one of them was a woman, though he could tell nothing of her age or features. But she appeared to be the stronger of the two, as she helped the man through the drifts. He could see them glancing up and down the street with a bewildered air, like strangers, and their situation appealed to him as most forlorn. Prompt to act, he stepped forward.

“May I help you?” he asked.

The two had just reached the edge of the sidewalk, and when the man raised his head, as if about to speak in reply, Cathcart, by the flickering electric light caught the first glimpse of his features. He saw an old face, thin, pallid, smoothly-shaven, and denoting many things,

among which was not weakness. In fact, strength was a cardinal note of that ascetic countenance showing alike in the thin, compressed lips, the sharp, pointed chin, the long nose and the cold blue eyes, vivid and intense, despite their coldness. It made Cathcart think of those great, worldly cardinals of the Middle Ages whose features Italian genius has left to us. It was his instant impression that he was in the presence of a Man. His figure within its heavy wrappings was apparently tall and thin, and though muffled and in the storm, retained its dignity.

“I thank you,” replied the old man, in reply to Cathcart’s offer, “We have been deserted by that rascally cabman, but I think we can make our way now. What a climate we fortunate Americans have.” His voice was thin and dry, but it was not devoid of a humorous, or at least ironic touch. Cathcart also thought that he detected in it a certain note of pride in the greatness of the storm, just as one has pride in the greatness of his city, and coming from an old man it found a natural response in his younger heart,

“When we have a storm here, we make it a real

one; it is not play," he said, with a smile, shivering a little as he spoke.

As if to drive home the truth of his words, the wind whistled with fresh force, and a blinding whirlwind enveloped them. Cathcart turned to the woman, who staggered before the strength of the blast, and lent her his arm until she could recover herself. Then he saw her face, and the impression, although of another kind, was not less vivid than that made by him who was with her.

The two showed the contrast of age and a certain variation of spirit or temperament, but there the difference ended and a resemblance began, so strong, as to indicate that they were father and daughter. The old man's general effect was blond, or of one who had been so, and the girl was markedly of that type. Wavy, yellow hair showed above a broad forehead, and the face below was very fair, though rosily flushed now with the wind and the cold. She, too, had a decided chin, and a way now and then of compressing her lips that was singularly like her father's, but at present she was far from austere;

just a girl of his own time, grateful for aid when it was needed.

She thanked him quite graciously for his help, and then turning, as if the incident were over, took the arm of the old man. Cathcart accepted the dismissal without a word, but remaining there, watched them as they went their uncertain way up the street. Both wind and snow were without abatement, and he was quite sure that they had no guide but blind chance. Before they were lost in the whirling snow, he saw them pause. For an old man and a girl, so wild a night, even in the heart of an immense city, could have plenty of dangers, and Cathcart felt a strong sympathy, despite their indicated desire to be let alone.

While they yet hesitated, he put down his pride and hastened after them. The girl glanced at him when his step fell beside her, and he believed that he was not unwelcome. A certain relief shone in her eyes at the second sight of him. The old man did not seem to recognize him, a pardonable fact as he was almost hidden by his heavy overcoat, and the driving snow.

“You must let me help you to your hotel.” said Cathcart, “This is an unusual night, and it can be dangerous even to those familiar with the city,”

The old man shrugged his shoulders a little and smiled faintly. Cathcart saw in the smile the touch of irony or humor that he had marked before in the voice.

“I have lived in New York forty years,” he said, “and I should be able to reach my own home unaided or at least with the help of my daughter, but it seems that I can’t. I never reckoned on such a night as this.”

The blue eyes of the girl showed merriment. It seemed that the humor of the situation appealed to her more than the danger, or, perhaps, she did not dislike the help of a handsome young man, who dropped as it were from the clouds at the opportune moment. Cathcart was good to look at, despite the whirling flakes. His eyes responded to hers with a kindred gleam.

“You see, sir, we shall have to appeal to you after all,” she said, with the slightest shade of sauciness.

Cathcart understood that she did not take it as seriously as her tone indicated, and he replied in a manner that he purposely made grave:

“The good fortune is mine.”

But the old man did not care for banter. The cold was reaching his thinner blood, and he shivered, despite his heavy overcoat. Cathcart saw the tremor of his frame and said quickly:

“If you’ll tell me which way you want to go, sir, I think the three of us can manage to get along.”

“Fifth Avenue,” replied the old man briefly, and then he added as briefly a number far up the street. Cathcart was confirmed by the location in his belief that it was a man of wealth to whom he was speaking.

Without another word they started, beating like half-sunken ships before the wind and the snow. They reached the intersection of Broadway and Fifth Avenue and turned into the avenue. The wind came down the wider sweep of the avenue with renewed force, and the thin figure of the old man wavered. Cathcart quietly lent him an arm

and it was not rejected. The girl, supple and strong, walked with steady step beside them, and thus they continued in silence for two or three squares.

“I should tell you my name,” said the old man at last. “It’s James Howe, and this is my daughter, Lucy.”

He spoke with brevity, almost with brusqueness, and Cathcart replied with equal brevity but without brusqueness.

“Mine’s Arthur Cathcart,”

“Related to Gerald Cathcart?”

“Nephew.”

Lucy Howe laughed softly. Cathcart could not hear her for the wind, but he knew by the motion of her lips and the humorous gleam in her eye that she was laughing.

“This is an original introduction,” she said, raising her voice, “and I like the way in which you two condense your statements. Can I add that I think the Cathcarts and the Howes are distantly, very distantly related.”

“It’s not so distant as you think,” said Arthur stoutly, although he was by no means sure of the kinship. But he saw that he liked Lucy Howe and he foresaw that he was going to like her more.

The thin lips of James Howe shut down tightly, and an unpleasant look passed over his lean, ascetic face.

“Gerald Cathcart and I are not particularly good friends.” he said.

“But his nephew and your daughter mean to be,” rejoined Arthur, in ingratiating fashion.

The old man smiled. He could appreciate a sprightly humor in a young man, and when he smiled his face became attractive. It was distinctly like that of a fine old clergyman.

“That is yet to be seen,” he said briefly.

Arthur did not think his manner called for a reply and silence again held the three as they struggled up the slope of Fifth Avenue. He was reflecting on the chance that had brought him into contact with Mr. Howe. He knew very well who James Howe was, or at least he thought so, and so did everybody else in New York.

James Howe was conspicuous in the business and financial world of the metropolis, a director in many enterprises, and the president of a powerful bank. Rumor did not always handle his name kindly, but Cathcart was old enough to know that rumor is a most uncertain guide. However, no one ever denied that James Howe was a man worth meeting and observing.

The wind sank somewhat presently, and understanding the man's character he took his supporting hand from his arm. James Howe, holding himself stiffly, strode on before, as if the lead was always his proper place, Arthur was not sorry, because it gave him an opportunity to walk beside the girl.

"I'm sure that we are at least second cousins," he pleaded.

The girl shook her head, now white with snow, and the blue eyes twinkled gayly at him.

"Not nearer than eighth," she replied.

"Why that's just nothing at all," said Arthur despondently.

"One can make a claim of it."

“A claim for what?”

“That depends on the claimant.”

Arthur tried to read her meaning in those eyes of hers that seemed to change to varying shades of blue as her thoughts changed, but he was met only by a provoking smile. Before he could reply in any manner, Mr. Howe exclaimed:

“If I’m able to see straight that’s my house just ahead.”

He pointed to a massive brown stone building of the older type, standing on the eastern side of Fifth Avenue and looming through the darkness and the storm like a stone fort.

“Yes, father,” said his daughter, cheerfully, “that’s our own hearth and home and we have reached it at last, thanks to our kinsman here, whom you are going to invite to spend this terrible night under our roof.”

“Was I?” asked James Howe in his dry, ironic tone, “Well, perhaps I was, but I was not going to be in such a hurry about it.”

Then he turned directly to Arthur and said warmly:

“Of course you will stay with us. We couldn’t allow you to go out again on such a night as this.”

His manner was thoroughly sincere and Lucy Howe added her request, which at another time might have been more effective, but Arthur shook his head.

“I’d like to do so,” he said earnestly, “but I’ve got to go. Uncle Gerald, knowing that I’m due at home, would be alarmed about me. Besides the storm is dying down and there is no further danger.”

They expostulated with him, and the house was certainly tempting, when the great front doors were swung open, revealing a large hall, with big gas logs glowing with heat in a wide fireplace at the end. It was truly a haven of rest, warmth, and dryness after the fierce battle with the elements outside. But Cathcart was resolute not to linger.

“Since you will not stay tonight,” Lucy Howe said, “you must come back some other time. We are really cousins, and there is no reason why friendship should not exist between us,”

“I said that Gerald Cathcart and I were not

very good friends, but I said nothing about his nephew,” interrupted James Howe, a touch of the defensive in his tone.

Arthur knew that it was a large concession from a man of his character, and he responded with emphasis that he should certainly come and come quickly. Cousinship had suddenly become a matter of great interest to him. Then he went out, and as the storm door closed rather slowly, the last that he saw within was a girlish face crowned by yellow hair, made vivid against a background of glowing firelight. Then the door was shut and he was alone in the dark street.

Very little snow was flying now and the wind had died. The clouds were gone, the moon was out, and a silver light was falling over a wonder city, a city everywhere dazzling white in its robe of snow. There was no mar, no blemish; white roofs, white walls, soaring white pinnacles, and streets white like an untouched field.

Cathcart’s home was east of Broadway, in one of those little parks, around which business life

has flowed northward in New York, like the tide around an island, leaving it all the more quiet, all the more secluded, because trade, having broken in vain against the barrier, has passed on to easier conquests.

The little park lay now under the snow, and many of the fine old houses around it were already dark. Arthur Cathcart hesitated before entering his own home, because he had been thinking of many things, and he had taken a resolution. He knew that he would find his uncle in the library, and the most important of his uncle's views were not now his. He expected a clash, and if it should occur this would be a memorable night. But, for certain reasons, he was willing that the conflict should come, and come quickly.

He paused on the door step and looked up at his house. There was no other around the park more solid or more quietly imposing. Built of dark red brick, it had none of the modern decoration or triviality, and he was conscious of much satisfaction. But he lingered there only a moment before opening the door with his pass

key.

Cathcart, entering the hall, saw a light shining from a door on the right, and when his overcoat was put aside he entered. It was the library, and, as he had expected to find his uncle there, the light told him that he would not be disappointed. The room was almost square, heavy dark rugs on the floor, and oil paintings, chiefly of Old World scenes or incidents, covering the spaces on the walls that were not occupied by book cases or shelves. The books were in rich bindings, morocco or half calf, and the flames from the coal fire in the grate glowed ruddily across them.

The room was a perfect shelter from the storm, a temple of luxury and ease, but the most comfortable object in it was Mr. Gerald Cathcart, Arthur's uncle.

Mr. Cathcart sat before the fire reclining lazily in an easy chair, a book and a glass of wine on a small table at his elbow. He fitted well in his setting. A man of fifty he was obviously the product of more than one generation of culture and good form. His gray hair lay thickly upon a smooth white forehead, his unwrinkled face

showed that life had dealt kindly with him, and his peaceful eye indicated content with himself. The hand that rested upon the open page of the book was white, slender, and without rings. The physical resemblance of Mr. Cathcart and his nephew was marked, yet the keen observer would have said that there were other and greater respects in which they differed.

Mr. Cathcart turned his head slowly when he heard Arthur's step.

"I hope you were not caught in the storm, Arthur," he said. "What a terrible climate! I shall not pass another winter in New York."

Arthur sat down on the other side of the fire and looked into the coals, where the red glowed deepest.

"As a matter of fact," he replied, "I was caught in the storm; I think I was in the very worst of it, but to tell you the truth I have enjoyed it."

Mr. Cathcart glanced again at his nephew, then laughed lightly and with irony.

"*'De gustibus,'* you know the rest," he said; "it seems to me that the age grows rude, Bye and

bye we shall have roughness valued above fineness.”

“If by roughness, you mean strength, and endurance, I think that in certain cases it should be so.”

“You have brought back too much of the west with you,” said Mr. Cathcart, “or it may be a touch of heredity.”

“You mean my mother?”

Arthur’s voice was not raised but it bore a distinct note of challenge.

“Your mother was a beautiful and good woman,” said Mr. Cathcart, “but perhaps the marriage of her and your father was somewhat unusual. She was a Kentuckian visiting here, he fell in love with her and it was a quick courtship—they were not—ah—exactly the same type.”

Arthur smiled. He did not remember his mother, but the great portrait of her showed a face young, gentle, and, he thought, wonderfully winning.

“I have never been to see my mother’s relatives in Kentucky,” he said, and now there

was sly malice toward his uncle in his mind, “but I intend to go soon. I am informed that she belonged to a big family which has branches in the mountains. I read a dispatch today about a feud there, between the Harrisons and the Culvers. I think the Harrison who is leading his side is a cousin of mine. I want to know that man, who must be a primitive leader; I think he and I could become good friends. And it may be that he needs my help in the feud. I am a Harrison too, you know, through my mother. Duty can call.”

Mr. Cathcart, scorning to reply to what he considered persiflage, sipped his wine.

“My Kentucky blood will speak now and then,” continued Arthur. “That story of the feud had appealed to me in a way. As I read it, the Harrisons are in the right; that is, more nearly in the right than the other side, and their leader—Big Tom Harrison, they call him—is a man. He’s my cousin; I’m sure of it! At least, I hope he is! Do you know, Uncle Gerald, I’ve been picturing myself with him out there in the mountains, rifles on our shoulders, slipping through the dark, hunting men and hunted by them. It gives me a

thrill.”

It seemed to Mr. Cathcart that there was a certain significance in his nephew’s tone and he looked more keenly. Arthur’s face was certainly grave, no trace of a jest was in his eyes.

“Then I take it that all this talk leads up to something,” said his uncle.

“It does,” replied Arthur, in the same serious tone. “I’ve been thinking over a lot of things and I’ve come to some conclusions. First, I am not going to England with you in the spring. I like England and the English well enough, but for several reasons I have decided not to go.”

He spoke without any increased emphasis, but when he teased, his lips shut down tightly.

Mr. Cathcart felt deep disappointment, but he did not intend to show it. For thirty years he had spent most of his summers in England; he was widely acquainted there among the best people; and he had planned a campaign for his nephew and himself which should lead to definite and great triumphs.

“Are you willing to give any one of these

several reasons?" he asked.

"Certainly," replied Arthur, in an unchanged tone. "In the spring I intend to be a candidate for the Lower House of the General Assembly; there is to be a special election in this district to fill a vacancy caused by death."

Mr. Cathcart, scarcely believing, gazed in amazement and dismay at his nephew. No Cathcart had ever gone into politics; none had ever had even a remote connection with such a plebeian world.

"Are you in earnest?" he asked.

"Certainly," replied Arthur, and he rose to his feet in some emotion. "This is the thing that I've been thinking about most. All the Cathcarts have been considered ladies and gentlemen, but is that all? Does one's duty end there? You know that we never earned our money. The first Cathcart happened to own land here—it was a piece of luck—and the immense growth of the city has done the rest; our fortune grows with it; now I have no quixotic idea of giving my money to the public, but don't we owe something to that

public, which, even involuntarily, makes our wealth possible?”

A look of distaste came into the eyes of Mr. Cathcart. He had a vision of an unclean and noisy multitude.

“No,” he said, with unusual emphasis.

Arthur smiled.

“I have been looking up our family history,” he said, “and I find in it a strange fact. While we’ve been prosperous here for two centuries and a half I discover that no Cathcart has ever held office, no one of them has ever served his city, his country, his state, or province, or his nation in a public capacity. We have had many wars, colonial or those of the republic, but they were all fought without the help of any Cathcart. We have merely sat still and taken the good things as they came. No Cathcart has ever spent his mind or money or blood for the State.

“Now I think it’s time to break away. That slang term just fits the case. I feel that we Cathcarts have never done anything except for ourselves, and for that reason, I am going to be a

candidate for the General Assembly.”

“And be beautifully beaten and disgraced.”

“Neither will happen. The district is overwhelming Democratic, and the Democratic nomination has already been offered to me. I have said that I would accept it.”

Mr. Cathcart turned a chilling gaze upon his nephew, foreseeing a statement that a short time ago would have appeared incredible.

“Do you mean to say,” he asked, “that—”

“Yes, I have taken a nomination from Tammany Hall. I know that you have a great horror of that organization, and I do not approve of it, either, but it seems to offer the only path now to what I want to do. I give myself the benefit of the doubt. I cannot say that all the tales told of Tammany Hall are true, or even the tenth part of them, but it is right for me to inform you that I have paid in a considerable contribution, which, so far as I know, is to meet the legitimate expenses of the campaign.”

Arthur had much of the Cathcart calm, but his voice rose a little toward the close of his words.

He felt that he was on the defensive.

“I shall go to England,” said Mr. Cathcart, with thankful emphasis, “and I shall miss this wonderful campaign of yours. The English newspapers will not publish anything about it.”

“No, they won’t,” said Arthur, laughing, “but I can mail you clippings from the local press.”

“Nothing will change this resolve of yours?” said Mr. Cathcart.

“Nothing,” replied Arthur, decisively.

Mr. Cathcart’s eyes shifted to his book, and presently Arthur went to his room.

But Mr. Cathcart remained for a long time before the fire and his heart was full of bitterness. He had been proud of Arthur, of his good looks, and manly bearing, and lately he had been dreaming a fine dream. Now his nephew seemed to him to have taken the road to the depths.

His nephew, Arthur, also sat up late, but in his own room, his blood still pulsing with a new excitement. The announcement that he had made was now clearly in defiance of all the Cathcart traditions, and he was not yet sure that good

would come of it. But this impulse, however, was fortified by a period of western training, He had been a delicate little boy, slender and thin, and wanting in color. Experts had predicted that he would die in childhood, and were disappointed when he failed to fulfill their predictions. One doctor, who had no great reputation, said that it was not any organic trouble with the boy, but an inability to assimilate food. He recommended that he be sent to the western plains for a period of wild life, and Arthur's uncle, whose pride was hurt by the idea that any Cathcart should die for lack of proper nourishment, sent him. Arthur was then a tall, lanky boy of sixteen, stooping a little, and made chiefly of knots and joints.

He went to a ranch of New Mexico; many thousand acres of sand, sunshine, thin grass, and a few water holes, with clumps of trees about each hole. The ranch was his own, which made the beginnings of his life there the harder, as the cowboys unconsciously resented the proprietorship of a sickly eastern stripling who had done nothing to deserve it. But he entered upon his New Mexico career with courage and

enthusiasm and rode the range bravely with the men.

Arthur felt at first an intolerable loneliness; the barrenness of the land, the heat, the deadly monotony filled his soul with weariness, but in time the desert flung over him the mysterious, uncanny spell that is so hard to break. The thin, dry air filled him with new life, and the tender lungs grew strong and enduring. The slim frame filled out, the knots and joints sank into their proper places; his face burned to a coppery brown, he could sit in the saddle twenty-four hours, he could sleep anywhere, and he could eat anything that any other man could eat.

His time in New Mexico stretched to four years, and then he came back to the East that he might take a belated course at Harvard, where all the Cathcarts went, if not educated abroad. His uncle, who received him in New York, felt some tugs at his heart-strings, when the lad appeared, but Gerald Cathcart was compelled to hide a shudder at his nephew's appearance, which savored too strongly of a west that must be very wild.

The least observant—and Mr. Cathcart was not one of them—could not doubt Arthur's great physical improvement, as far as rude health and strength were concerned. The frame was strong; he was many pounds heavier, although the increase was muscle and sinew, not fat. His face had a rich, reddish brown tint, somewhat like that of well-tanned leather, and he spoke invariably in a loud, direct tone that was wholly unlike the usual soft, modulated Cathcart voice. Arthur's entire effect jarred heavily upon his uncle. It seemed to Mr. Cathcart that the cure had been of the most fatal character, and he hurried Arthur off to Harvard, which he thought would prove an antidote.

Mr. Cathcart's hopes were justified, externally, at least. Under the nullifying influence of Cambridge, his western clothes disappeared, and after a decent interval of time, his western manners followed, although his new health and strength fortunately remained. He became a Cathcart once more, irreproachable in appearance, correct in accent, and, so far as the world could see, justifying his uncle's hopes. He

passed through the university with credit, excelling in history and literature, and playing a capital third base on the baseball team. Then, after a short trip abroad, he returned to New York in time to encounter the storm and to have the significant talk with his uncle.

Now, his mind relieved and the way plain before him, he began to feel a certain peace. Then he went to bed, and at least one in the house slept well.



2 Old and New

Arthur and his uncle were rather quiet at breakfast, both suffering from slight constraint, although perfect courtesy prevailed between them; no Cathcart would ever stoop to a rude manner. The sunshine from a glorious winter day fell through the long windows and lay across the floor of the dining room. The world outside was all white below and all blue and gold above. Arthur felt a great surge of the spirits, but having in mind his uncle's obvious disappointment, he did not show it.

“I should tell you. Uncle Gerald,” he remarked presently, “that while out in the storm last night I was happy enough to assist at a rescue.”

“A bootblack or a newsboy?” sourly asked Mr. Cathcart over his newspaper.

“You've guessed almost the exact opposite to the truth,” replied Arthur, a humorous gleam showing in his eye. “James Howe is very far from

being either a bootblack or a newsboy. His daughter, too, was with him. I thought her extremely good looking.”

“James Howe!” said his uncle in surprise.

“Yes, I found them in the snow deserted by their cabman, and helped them to their homes. Miss Howe and I have claimed kinship. Now, uncle, will you tell me why you and Mr. Howe do not like each other?”

Mr. Cathcart frowned and his lip curled a little, as if he remembered something unpleasant.

“The cause was not at all complex,” he replied; “it was a divergence of taste, or perhaps, of judgment. James Howe has been all his life for business, the accumulation of money, financial power, while I have preferred to live what is considered abroad the life of a gentleman, to achieve culture, repose, dignity. He thinks me idle and effeminate, while I know that he is unscrupulous and grasping.”

Mr. Cathcart, after this explanation, turned to his toast, as if the subject were dismissed forever, and Arthur remained silent. He was thinking that

each of the elder men might be nearly half right in his opinion of the other.

After breakfast Arthur went for a walk. He did not go far—only a half a mile or so, and his journey ended at a large restaurant, which seemed to be built chiefly of glass, and which at night glittered both inside and out with electric lights. It was a showy place of cheap prices and had a great patronage. Over the main entrance shone the sign, “The Palace Restaurant,” with the name, “James Radigan, Proprietor,” in smaller letters just under.

Cathcart entered and walked to the bar in the rear.

“Is Mr. Radigan in?” he asked of one of the white-aproned waiters.

“Yes, Mr. Cathcart,” replied the man, a certain respect showing in his tone, and coming from behind the bar, he opened the door of a small inner room.

Cathcart entered the sanctuary and found himself in the presence of Mr. James Radigan, the prosperous proprietor of the Palace Restaurant,

and the Democratic leader of the district.

Mr. Radigan was a man of middle height and middle years, and, if the use of such an expression can be justified, of middle appearance—that is, neither noticeably bad nor noticeably good. Distinctly Irish in countenance—he was born on the East Side of Irish parentage—yet he spoke without an Irish accent. The only conspicuous thing he wore was a large diamond shirt stud, an article of adornment for which the ward politician in America had a decided liking.

“You haven’t come to tell me that you’re going to back out, have you, Mr. Cathcart?” said Radigan as he held out his hand.

“What have I done to make you think I was a quitter?” asked Cathcart, as he shook the offered hand. The very fact that he used the word “quitter” showed how much he had departed from the original Cathcart standard.

“It was just a feeler that I was throwing out,” returned Radigan with entire good nature.

Cathcart sat down. He seemed to have come, in the half mile from his own home, into another

world. Here everything was large, coarse, obvious and—where possible—glittering.

“I’ve come to ask you,” he said, “when you think we should begin the campaign!”

Radigan puckered up his lips thoughtfully.

“Not for a month,” he replied. “It’s getting to be the habit here to put the real work into the last week or two, an’ it’s a good thing. Now, there’s one question that I’ve been intending to ask you, Mr. Cathcart. Of course your name helps us—that’s why we have asked you to run, but can you talk?”

“I don’t know, but I’m willing to try,” replied Cathcart, with apparent bravery, though he felt a certain sinking of the heart.

“Then we’ll put you on the platform. It’ll do if you can make any kind of a speech, but it’ll be all the better if you can make a good one. A dude or two here and there ain’t bad for any organization.”

“But I’m no dude,” laughed Cathcart.

Radigan now began to talk more definitely of the plans for the campaign. Other men, nearly all

of whom were party workers, came in, and Cathcart was introduced to them one by one. They were of an assortment possible only in New York. The Irishman, the Canadian, the Pole, the Hebrew, the Italian, the Swede, and a half dozen others passed through Radigan's little office that morning and Cathcart met and shook hands with them all. The ordeal lasted a long time—or, at least it seemed so to Arthur, and he found it difficult now and then to repress the feeling of hostility bred in him by the suspicious or belligerent attitude shown by some of the men whom he met.

“You see what you've got to buck up against,” said Radigan, when the last of the men had gone. “But the boys are not such a bad lot. They ain't up to Newport, an', then, maybe they ain't down to it, either.”

When Arthur left the office he was conscious that Radigan's manner was approving, and the embryonic politician felt more satisfaction than he would have been willing to own.

But his mind turned quickly now from his political venture to James Howe and his daughter, and in the afternoon he went to the Twentieth National Bank, on Nassau Street, where a discreet messenger took his card to the inmost of the inner offices.

The messenger returned and escorted Cathcart discreetly to the innermost interior of the bank. Mr. Howe, who was sitting by a very long rolltop desk rose when Cathcart entered and a younger man, who had been sitting by him, in earnest talk, rose also. Without his muffling overcoat Mr. Howe looked more than ever like a minister, with his long, thin, smoothly-shaven face, and his beautiful, silvery hair brushed carefully back from his temples. But a closer look would have shown nothing ministerial in the steely glance of the cool, blue eyes. He was clad wholly in black and his close fitting frock coat was very long. The man who had risen with him was dressed in like fashion; he, too, was smoothly-shaven, ascetic of face and strong of feature, but he was darker than Mr. Howe, and not more than thirty-five.

A faint ray of geniality passed over Mr. Howe's face at sight of Cathcart and he advanced, holding out his hand.

"You probably saved my life last night, Mr. Cathcart," he said with some warmth, though not without loss of dignity, "and you are welcome here on that account and for your own sake also."

The impression that he made upon Arthur was distinctly pleasing. It was the manner of a man, kind of heart, and disposed to be at peace with his fellow men. They shook hands like two who are about to begin a genuine friendship and Mr. Howe nodded toward the third of the party.

"Mr. Hargrove, Mr. Cathcart," he said. "Mr. Hargrove is our first vice-president. I'm sure you've heard of him. Mr. Cathcart is the gentleman of whom I was speaking to you this morning.

He passed these bits of information back and forth between the two, a kindly smile in his blue eyes. But Arthur knew Mr. Hargrove very well by reputation. While Mr. Howe was one of the old giants of finance, Mr. Hargrove was one of the

young Titans in the same world, who have been springing up so frequently in New York of late years. He was of humble origin, and he had first come into public notice by his operations with a number of trolley roads on the Jersey shore. He had succeeded in combining several ill-managed, non-paying concerns, and then issuing new stock, which he sold at a great advance, ultimately harvesting a million. It was then but a few steps to the first vice-presidency of the powerful Twentieth National Bank and a high place in the esteem of the great Mr. Howe.

Mr. Hargrove also shook hands with Arthur, but his manner was reserved and unsmiling as became a young Titan of finance. Arthur thought him less attractive than his chief, not so much endowed with the milk of human kindness, but he had small chance for examination as Mr. Hargrove excused himself at once and left the room.

“Sit down, Mr. Cathcart,” said Mr. Howe in a hospitable tone, “and tell me what I can do for you. I am sure that you, at least, are not seeking a loan.”

Arthur smiled as he took the proffered chair.

“No, I do not want a loan,” he replied, “and I’m afraid I’m intruding upon a busy man. I merely wished to know that you had not suffered from last night’s exposure.”

“I’m as well as I ever was, thanks to you,” replied the banker, a kindly gleam in his blue eyes, “and you are not intruding at all.”

“And Miss Howe?”

“I think she enjoyed the experience. It was a tonic to her.”

Mr. Howe shot from beneath lowered lids one of those keen, incisive looks that pierce to the hearts and minds of men. He was far more than a mere money-lender; he was an almost infallible judge of human character and temper.

“You might inquire of Lucy herself to what extent she survived the storm,” he said.

“I certainly shall do so,” replied Arthur.

Then he paused and a little silence which was awkward to him followed. Mr. Howe suddenly became very grave and turning a direct look upon

the young man said:

“I notice by the newspaper today that you are a candidate for the General Assembly and that you have the Tammany nomination.”

Arthur bowed in affirmation.

“That doesn’t please your Uncle Gerald,” said Mr. Howe, his smile returning, “but it’s not a bad thing. More of our young men should go into politics. We are leaving public life too much to the harum-scarum and irresponsible.”

Then he began a discourse that interested, absorbed, and at last fascinated Arthur. It was a panegyric of the great commercial and financial men who in Mr. Howe’s opinion were the builders and pillars of every nation.

But he broke off suddenly, and said, smiling his kindly smile:

“Why should I afflict you so? You know your own duty far better than I can tell it to you.”

When Arthur was in the street again with the cold nipping air stimulating his lungs and mind he felt that he had been overpowered by a presence and he had regrets; regrets that he had

not told Mr. Howe of his purpose not to be identified with a class; he intended, if he should be sent to Albany, to judge all things for himself.

Arthur Cathcart was not a man who took trouble. Nor did not need the hint of James Howe to spur his inclination. He had already intended to return to the Howe home, and in doing so he found the vague claim of kinship very useful.

When he reached the banker's house he paused a moment on the stone steps and looked up at the house, a great, solid mass of dark stone. James Howe lived on doubtful ground. Though of a good family in the city he had never belonged to the inner circle of New York society, chiefly because he did not care, whatever his daughters may have felt or wished. Now, all his daughters except the youngest, Lucy, were married to men of wealth and position, though not of fashion, and his widowed sister, Mrs. Thornton, was the head of his household.

Arthur rang the bell, was shown by a severe footman into the parlor, and presently Miss Howe came, still making the claim of kinship and speaking half in jest, half seriously of his timely

help in the storm. They were young, they had met auspiciously, and they found a keen pleasure in the company of each other. Although hers was a young girl's face, all softness, roundness, and delicate tints, it bore a marked resemblance to her father's, and Cathcart surmised that on occasion it might grow decisive and stern. He was sure, too, that the blue eyes could become steady and unflinching. Firmness seemed to him to be a characteristic of hers and it attracted him.

He told her of his life in the west, of long days under a scorching sun or in a biting blizzard, of the endless brown plains and the scant water-holes, of the stampeded herds, the round-ups and country sports.

"I should like to see all that," she said, with a little wistful sigh. "It may seem strange to you, but I have traveled scarcely at all. I have been on two or three formal trips to Europe, but I have never really explored, and I know nothing about my own country. Father is always immersed in business, and my sisters are married and have families of their own. I'm just an idler."

"I've been one, too," said Arthur, "and it's not

excusable in a man. But I don't mean to be one any more if I can help it."

Then he was drawn to tell her of his political ambitions, of his desire to serve his city and state, a thing that he had no thought of doing when he entered the house, but to which he was encouraged by her sympathy and congenial spirit. But he found himself speaking fully and freely to her as he had never done to anybody else, telling his plans in detail, what he hoped to achieve, and the position that he wished to make for himself, not through any selfish aim but in the hope that he might repay the city, at least to a small extent, for the great debt that the Cathcart family owed to it.

He was rewarded by seeing a glow on her face and a sparkle in her eyes. Carried away by his own imagination and eloquence he had taken her fancy captive too, and he knew it.

Before he left, her aunt, Mrs. Thornton, came into the room and he was introduced. She was a woman of sixty, tall, thin, severe, and given to curt speech. She did not warm toward Cathcart, remaining strictly formal, but he judged that it

was her habitual manner and he took no offense.

It was night when he entered the street, but the electric lights gleamed in long parallel rows down the avenue, and the city looked more brilliant and gay to him than ever.

After dinner he visited James Radigan again in his office behind the glittering rooms of the Palace Restaurant. Mr. Radigan was in a good humor and was slightly patronizing, as became one of his superior experience, and in a way, his superior knowledge. "You are takin'," he said, in satisfaction to Cathcart. And when Arthur looked puzzled, he added, "The district is tickled with the idea of havin' you. It was a good thing for the organization to put you up."

The district was of a mixed character. In two or three sheltered corners, like the part in which Arthur lived, it included some of the old aristocratic New York families, all household names; but further east it dropped off abruptly into a region of tenements, swarming with people of foreign birth, particularly Italians and Slavs. Cathcart made a short visit there a day or two later with Radigan, and the result was not

flattering to his pride, of which he had plenty. He was nothing; Radigan was everything. The aliens there belonged body and soul to Tammany Hall, which looked after them, got them places, and often fed them when they were hungry.

Radigan, with his quick Celtic intellect or instinct, had picked up more or less of the foreign tongues, and he was able to talk to all of his constituents in their own native languages, while Cathcart was forced to wait for the leader's interpretation, in which he did not put full trust.

Cathcart, as he left Radigan at the restaurant and walked home alone, felt that he was making progress, but he doubted whether he could ever get into real touch with these alien people of the tenements in his district; he and they did not seem to meet anywhere on common ground, but he had no notion of quitting.

He saw numerous announcements of his candidacy in the newspapers, and he was not surprised at the space devoted to it, as he was well aware of the general opinion hitherto, that the Cathcart family was completely divorced from politics and public life. Many of the

comments made him blush. He was described frequently as a young millionaire of the oldest family who was going down among the people, when he had never felt that he was, in any sense going down, and he found himself invariably treated as either a sensation or a joke. He was interviewed frequently, and the first reporter who came for his views was young Collins, with whom he soon formed a strong and endearing friendship. Collins was frivolous in manner, and, at intervals, irregular of habits, but he had a vast, though perhaps ill-digested knowledge of the varied life of New York, far greater than any that Arthur Cathcart could claim. When the last note of the interview was taken and Collins stood with his hat in his hand preparatory to going he said seriously:

“Mr. Cathcart, may I tell you something, if I speak wholly as a friend?”

“Why, certainly,” replied Arthur in some surprise.

“As you are just starting in public life be good to reporters. It’s the reporters, not the editors, who make and unmake public men.”

“I’ll take your advice,” said Arthur warmly.

The interview the next morning was all that he could wish, written with remarkably good taste, and presenting a picture of himself with which he could not fail to be pleased.

Arthur now plunged more vigorously than ever into his canvass, and betweenwhiles appeared at the house of James Howe, who gave him a fatherly patronage that he scarcely knew whether to like or dislike. He dined there a week after his first meeting, and beside himself Mr. William Hargrove, first vice-president of the Twentieth National Bank, was a guest. Arthur saw, too, with some dismay, that the young Titan of Finance was not only a guest but a favored one as well. Mr. Howe treated him almost as a son.

The talk that evening at the dinner table ran on financial and political life, and it was conducted chiefly by Mr. Howe and Mr. Hargrove, Arthur taking little part in it, although he did not fail to notice what was said. He observed that the two men looked upon business and finance as first,

public life was second, subordinate to the former, and if regulated properly, under their control.

After dinner he was able, by long waiting, to snatch a moment or two alone with Lucy Howe. They were standing within the curve of the great bay window looking out at the white gleam of the asphalt on the avenue and the whiter gleam of the snow on the park beyond.

You are annoyed," she said, looking up at him and drawing his gaze with her own.

"Annoyed! I couldn't be annoyed when I'm with you, Miss Howe."

"That's perfunctory. It hasn't the slightest ring of the spontaneous about it. I repeat that you are annoyed, and it was because of the way my father and Mr. Hargrove talked at the dinner table."

The words were plain, but the tone was whimsical. She folded her hands behind her, put her head a little on one side, and smiled at him as if to say:

"You can't deny what I have said."

Nor could he. He merely replied:

“You are observant and keen, Miss Howe.”

“You did not like the way they disposed of you politically. But perhaps they were right. Does not one have to take sides? Will you not have to be either against them or for them?”

He did not know whether she was in earnest or whether she was merely seeking to draw him out, but he was saved the hazard of a reply by the advent of Mr. Hargrove, who would not suffer the two to be alone long.

The banker, his sister, and other guests joined them presently, and Mr. Howe dominated them all. Arthur began to see other phases of his character than the ability to make money, a quality which might be first with him but which did not monopolize. Financiers of the first rank must have the gift of imagination, which usually carries with it the ability to appreciate the activities included in the finer worlds of literature and art.

Mr. Howe had a magnificent library, rich in first editions, rare old bindings, illuminated manuscripts, and other treasures of the book

world which many men and few women love, collected at the cost of infinite patience and much money, but an object of delight when it is gathered under one roof. As he showed it to his guests he talked freely and eloquently of his volumes, explaining their history and value, and the blue eyes, usually so cold, lighted up with a warmth as simple and innocent as that of a child.

They passed on to the picture gallery, a long room well lighted, and filled with examples of both the old and the modern masters. An art critic himself, the great banker also commanded the aid and advice of experts, and he was known in every art capital of Europe, where he was a frequent and liberal purchaser. The exhibition was really wonderful, including a marvelous collection of landscapes of the Barbizon school over which Arthur lingered long, soothing and delighting his eye with restful woodland scenes. Mr. Howe was obviously gratified at the tribute of his guests. The steel-blue eyes again shone with warmth.

As they left the gallery Lucy stopped a moment beside Cathcart and nodding toward her father said:

He loves such beautiful things as these and I love him because he loves them.”

Arthur went to see Radigan again the next day. The leader was in a delightful humor, showing his very best side, telling anecdotes of the polyglot population in the district, all of whose idiosyncrasies he seemed to know, and showing a most cheerful and optimistic view of life and his contemporaries.

“Bye the bye,” he said to Arthur, after a while, “there’s some legislation coming up at Albany next term that will affect us here. I recall several bills, the new bridge bill and that one of the East Side Rapid Transit Company. I think its main scheme is to have a new subway on the East Side. Subways are provin’ a success here, owin’ to the long, narrow shape of the island, and the lack of room above ground. But I don’t know, I don’t know.”

“It seems to me,” said Arthur, “that a new subway would be a good thing. The more rapid transit we have and the more rapid it is the

better.”

Radigan laughed in his easy, good-natured way.

“It does sound good,” he said, reflectively, “and our people would be sure to like it. I was merely telling you, so far as I knew of the things that you’d have to handle, when you went up to Albany, and this is one of them. It might be a good thing, you rather make me take that view of it.”

Arthur was by nature opposed to corporate monopoly, and he was glad that he had converted Radigan so quickly. He felt a little glow of triumph, and already he was inclined to look upon the bill in the most friendly manner. He left shortly, and his opinion of Radigan was better than ever.

Arthur, that afternoon, also called on Mrs. Throckmorton, a particular friend of his uncle, a woman of fifty, portly, rich, and capable of finding much enjoyment in life, to which task she devoted her whole energy. She and Mr. Cathcart

had been friends since childhood, and a mild affection, which could lead to nothing and which neither wished to lead to anything, existed between the two. She was powerful in the social world, and that was why Arthur, whom she regarded almost as a son, went to her. At his request, and smiling quietly at his eagerness, she found an excuse for meeting Lucy Howe and for cultivating her, and thus behind her protecting shield Arthur more than once met the girl who, whether consciously or unconsciously, began to dominate his mind.



3 Beginnings

Arthur now began to prepare for the speech making which he must do, writing diligently and praying for native wit. He was devoutly thankful for those four years spent in the west among rough men who had treated him, first, as the owner who needed discipline, and then as one of themselves.

Now that the time was near he felt an exhilaration, and when the evening for his first great test came he was fully prepared to meet it. His tremor disappeared and he believed he was going to meet his public, like a man unafraid.

It was a fine, crisp evening, with cold air that filled the lungs like a tonic, and that made chest and heart alike expand. Cathcart breathed deep draughts of it and threw back his head in the manner of a conqueror. He had decided to make a modest entry at Liberty Hall, where the speech was to be made, and Radigan agreed with him.

“A little style don’t hurt,” the leader had said. “It’s a mistake to think the people are down on a man because he wears good clothes or even rides in a carriage. If he’s got style, they think they have a share of it, but I guess it’s best to begin in a small way.”

Hence he was to meet Radigan at the Palace Restaurant, and they were to walk over to the hall. He knew now a quiet side entrance, and he slipped through it into the little office where Radigan, resplendent with red tie and silk hat was awaiting him.

“On time, Mr. Cathcart,” he exclaimed. “It’s a good sign. Your courage is right up to the mark. It’s goin’ to be a big meetin’, the biggest ever held in this district. The boys are whoopin’ her up. We’ll just go out an’ see how things are movin’.”

The two passed unobserved into the street, and the sound of boisterous music came to Cathcart’s ears.

“That’s our marching club,” said Radigan, with satisfaction. “We’ve brought ’em all out and they

have just got to march hard an' shout hard on a cold winter night like this to keep warm. It ain't often that we have a torchlight procession in winter. Come down a little farther, an' we can see 'em goin' by."

Despite the cold, which after all was invigorating, there were many people in the streets, drawn by the bands, the shouts, and flaring of the torchlights, and the enthusiasm, though worked up in the beginning, seemed to Arthur to have become spontaneous now. Despite himself, the music, crude though it might be, got into his blood, and a certain thrill of pride came because he was the center of things tonight, and it was for him that all this was being done. It was a feeling altogether different from that brought by books or pictures or travel. It was the sense of action, and in this hour, at least, he found it a strong wine.

"We'll just drift along," said Radigan. "There's a reception committee down there at the hall, but it won't hurt you to make 'em wait a little."

Liberty Hall, which was used at times for entertainments of a semi-theatrical nature, had a

small side door, and, after a deliberate walk through the streets, Cathcart and Radigan entered there. The policeman on guard saluted them respectfully, evidently well acquainted with Radigan, and knowing who Cathcart was, because he was with Radigan.

They passed into a small room and met the reception committee, seven gentlemen clad in black, with roses in their button holes, rubicund faces, and hair, in most cases, plastered down on their foreheads.

The room was close, and, as all the members of the reception committee had been smoking big cigars cocked up at an angle, it was hot and exceedingly stuffy. Cathcart and the committeemen talked at intervals, but Radigan breathed the smoke and the dust, as if it were a compound that his lungs loved, and talked incessantly, smoothly, and with unction.

“That’s the Marching Club,” said Radigan. “They’re comin’ in now, one band in the lead, an’ one at the wind-up of the procession. Just hear ’em cheer, will you?”

Radigan had warrant for his enthusiasm, as the cheering became so loud that it drowned the strongest efforts of the two bands. The leader was in his element now and was thoroughly happy.

“I’ll have to call the meetin’ to order,” he said, “but I’ll ask you. Mr. Cathcart, an’ the committee to stay here for the present, I’ll send for you an’ bring you on the stage just when the crowd is worked up for the sight of you.”

Radigan possessed a marked aptitude and efficiency within his own sphere, however narrow the diameter of the latter might be, and when he appeared on the stage at the theatrical moment, the crowded hall gave back thunderous cheers. The air here, also, was close and heavy, and the smoke from hundreds of cigars gathered into a cloud that extended from floor to roof. Through the film shone faces of all the white races, and it was the truthful boast of Radigan that he could speak to every one of them in his native tongue, and, moreover, that he knew for what each heart throbbed most.

The leader made a little speech after he called the meeting to order, a speech not devoid of hard

common sense and adorned with familiar sayings and slang of the East Side. Then a lieutenant, at his signal, brought Cathcart and the committee upon the stage. Radigan briefly introduced him as the nominee of the Democratic party in the district. "Mr. Cathcart, all wool, an' a yard wide," was his expression.

Arthur was received with a hearty cheer, one due rather to the championship of Radigan than to his own personality, and, for a moment, he stood in silence before his audience. His first feeling was of repulsion. He was by nature fastidious, and he had been reared in a manner to make him more so. He was now face to face with "the people" and they were in very truth and reality "the people," in the most extreme sense. It would be a difficult thing to reach all these alien hearts and minds.

The tremors which he had dreaded came, but he quickly stilled them and plunged into his speech. He did not strive for oratory, adopting the conversational tone, but he spoke distinctly enough to be heard by all in the house. He had made his speech as simple as possible, and he

talked of the needs of the district—he was aware that anything higher would pass over their heads—and he promised that if he were sent to Albany, he would do his best, his very best to secure for them everything to which they were entitled. He did not flatter them; he did not call them the best people in the world. Nor did he say that it would be the proudest moment of his life, if he were chosen to represent them in the General Assembly, wherein he, perhaps, was wise, as he did not arouse an undue pride in his audience.

He had been speaking about a half hour when he happened to glance at one of the boxes on his right. The curtains of the box were partly down, but Cathcart's gray eyes met the gaze of a pair of blue ones and he saw the face of Miss Howe, flushed slightly, but attentive, and, he proudly believed, approving. Beside her was Mrs. Throckmorton, large, expansive, radiant, and, as usual, dressed just a little too brightly for her age. Behind them were Hargrove and Tommy Reed, a rich young man who imagined himself to be a writer. The banker seemed to be sneering, or at least Cathcart's fancy painted him so, and his

heart swelled with a great anger. After the anger came defiance, and he resolved to do better than ever.

He did not look at the box again for a long time, but his anger passed wholly. He was glad that they had come. He would show them what he could do, and his will to go on in the course that he had chosen became unalterable. When, at last, he looked again, the face of Lucy still expressed approval and there came to him the comforting thought that she, at least, might understand his desire to return to the state at least a little of the great amount that he had received from it.

Cathcart finished his speech, feeling that he had done well within the limits needed for his district, and he was sure of it when Radigan patted him on the shoulder and repeated the words of the reporter, "You'll do, Mr. Cathcart, you'll do!" Nor was Arthur as much offended by the patronage as he would have been a month or two before.

Now he wished to go to the box and greet Miss Howe and incidentally the others, but his constituents were crowding upon the stage,

demanding to be shaken by the hand. It was a necessity that could not be ignored and he exchanged familiar words with them as the process went on. His Western training was again invaluable, enabling him to meet them on their own ground and to share their democratic feeling.

A man tapped him on the arm, and he turned to see the young reporter, Collins, who was putting his notes in his pocket.

“I just wanted to tell you, Mr. Cathcart.” said Collins, “that you’ve struck twelve. I’ve listened to a thousand speeches and I can judge. I couldn’t do it myself, but I know when it is done.”

“Thank you. Mr. Collins,” said Arthur gratefully.

The crowd thinned at last, and he turned to the side entrance. Those for whom he was waiting were standing there, Hargrove in front. Nor did Arthur like the face of the young Titan of Finance. It seemed to him, again, that he saw a distinct sneer upon it.

“We’ve come to see how you do this sort of thing, Mr. Cathcart,” said Hargrove, “and you’ve

really surprised us. I shouldn't want to do it myself, and I suppose I couldn't, if I would, but that I imagine doesn't concern you."

"Tastes differ, of course," said Arthur coolly.

"And mine agrees with yours in this instance," exclaimed Lucy Howe, her face eager and flushed. "I think our prominent people don't take enough part in public life, and you deserve all the credit that should belong to a pioneer, Mr. Cathcart."

Mr. Hargrove frowned as if he had made a mistake.

"You really did quite well," said Mrs. Throckmorton. "It's the first political speech I ever heard in my life, and perhaps I am not a judge, but it seems to me that you got along smoothly. I did not think that it was in any Cathcart. I suppose I should feel proud of you."

"What a wonderful collection of types," broke in Tommy Reed, "Really, Cathcart, I intend to accompany you on some of your electioneering tours. One can make the most interesting studies."

“You will not make use of any of my constituents for literary purposes, at least not through me,” laughed Cathcart. Although he was wholly in earnest when he spoke, he did not intend that any such dilettante as Tommy Reed should imagine that he could go slumming with him in his district.

Lucy again spoke quietly and earnestly. She said that she had listened to him with interest, she liked the way that he had talked, and she liked the way in which the mixed crowd received him. It was a new phase of life to her, but she knew that it was worth learning.

Arthur was gratified for her words and manner and he told her so. He felt that Hargrove’s attempt to lower him in her esteem had failed. His impression that Hargrove had arranged the visit for the purpose of seeing his feebleness exposed was deepened.

They were standing at the corner of the stage, behind one of the scenes used on the semi-theatrical occasions to which Liberty Hall was often devoted, and Radigan, who felt that he had a certain proprietary interest in the central figure

of the group, approached them. He was still in extreme good humor, rubicund, smiling broadly, and swaggering just a little as he walked. Cathcart introduced him with quiet dignity, not apologizing by any suggestion of manner for anything about the leader. But Tommy Reed and Hargrove spoke to him as if they regarded him as a specimen, a type, to be studied, and also to be patronized, wherein they made a mistake, for Radigan was shrewder and quicker of perception, in some ways, than either of them. He spoke indirectly of the difficulty of getting men of education and large interests to be candidates for public office, and presently it was the visitors who in a measure, were being lectured and patronized, and not Radigan, a fact that pleased Cathcart, who was bound now to look upon the leader as a partner.

“I think you will get a good sendoff in the papers, in the morning,” said Radigan, as they left, “and it will do you an’ me and the district good.”

Miss Howe, under the chaperonage of Mrs. Throckmorton, was to return to her father’s

house, and Arthur accompanied the little party. Mr. Howe had not yet gone to bed and met them at the door, his cool blue eyes surveying, in turn, each member of the group.

“It’s safe to say that you made a success, Mr. Cathcart,” he said to Arthur. “Your face shows it, and I imagine, too, that you had good help from that man Radigan. I’ve been reading about him in the papers. He must be a shrewd fellow.”

Hargrove left them here for his own house and Tommy Reed and Cathcart drove back in the carriage with Mrs. Throckmorton. As they passed up Fifth Avenue, they dropped Tommy in the Thirties, but when he helped Mrs. Throckmorton out of the carriage at her home on Madison Avenue, she lingered a moment at the door.

“Arthur,” she said, “I was not particularly anxious to go to that hall tonight. I was afraid that you might not come out right, but now I am glad that I went. It may be just as well that the last Cathcart should try to have some part in the affairs of his own country.”

“It does me good to hear you say so,” replied

Arthur gratefully.

It was late, but when he turned up Fifth Avenue again the street was so bright, so gay with lights and people, that his own spirits, already vigorous, rose in the general animation. He walked all the way home, enjoying the tingling cold, and taking deep breaths of the crisp air. He thought that his uncle might yet be awake and that he might ask him some questions about the evening, but his rooms were dark and Arthur went to bed, falling asleep at once.



4 The Transit Bill

Arthur began to consider his election a foregone conclusion, and it seemed to him that Radigan and the principal ward workers shared his opinion as they always spoke in the most hopeful manner. He and the leader fell into the habit of discussing Arthur's plans when he should go to Albany, and often Radigan, in a way almost fatherly, would volunteer advice. He was never obtrusive about it, merely suggesting it, and leaving the inference that Cathcart was welcome to leave it alone or adopt it, as he thought fit. One day he mentioned again, quite casually, the matter of the East Side Rapid Transit Bill, and said that he had looked farther into it.

“It seems to me that it’s a mighty good thing,” he said. “It would be a big help to us, here on the East Side, where transportation lines are so crowded.”

“Of course,” said Arthur, speaking in a general

way.

Later in the day, when he was alone, Radigan's suggestion returned to him and he began to think more directly about the bill. If it were of such importance to his district he ought to examine its details and he began to make inquiries. He learned that the measure had been introduced at the last regular session, but too late for action, and would come up at a special session called by the governor on account of several important questions. He obtained a copy of the bill from Albany, and when it arrived he went up to his own room to study it.

Arthur Cathcart was not a lawyer, but he had a clear and direct mind which, backed by application, can often supply the place of legal learning. He read the bill the first time with interest, the second time with keen attention, the third time with suspicion, a fourth time with indignation, and a fifth time with conviction. Then he put it upon a table and thought a long time, trying to see clearly through cloudy regions.

The bill was worded in the most skillful and artful manner. Here and there were vague little

sentences which seemed to be in the nature of a “whereas” or a “resolved”, a sort of legal mortising, but in which Cathcart’s clear, intent mind saw a meaning that would be overlooked by the casual reader. The strength of the bill lay in these modest little clauses, and it gave to its incorporators, all of whose names were obscure, enormous powers. They would have the right to condemn property at very low rates for their right of way, they were enabled to parallel existing lines, and the company would make no financial return to the city for any of its immensely valuable privileges.

Arthur’s indignation gave way for a moment to a feeling of relief. He had intended to refer to this bill in his speeches and to speak of the great good that it would do for the East Side, and now he had been saved from compromising himself and his honor so horribly. Surely Radigan could not know, he could not dream that this bill was a huge gouge, and he made up his mind to enlighten the leader as soon as possible. He would also declare himself at once upon such an important measure and denounce it in his

speeches, knowing that if he could arouse public indignation it would help to kill the bill.

In the morning he went early to Radigan's office, and found the leader just dismissing a crippled workman to whom he was giving help for himself and his family, Radigan seemed to be embarrassed when he was caught thus in the act, but he waved it aside as a trifle, and benevolent, smiling, turned his attention to Cathcart.

"Sit down, won't you, Mr. Radigan," said Cathcart. "I want to speak to you on a matter of some importance."

"I've always time for you, Mr. Cathcart," said the leader.

Arthur drew from a pocket his copy of the East Side Rapid Transit Bill and laid it on the table between them.

"I had that from Albany yesterday," he said.

"What is it?" asked the leader.

"You remember speaking to me of the East Side Rapid Transit Bill that was introduced at Albany last session and which will come up again at the special term, and how we agreed that it

would be a good thing. Well, we were both fooled. It looks all right on the surface, but it's full of little 'jokers.' Why that thing will rip up the whole East Side in favor of its incorporators and the charter alone will be worth millions to them."

"You don't say so, Mr. Cathcart?" said Radigan, opening wide his eyes. "Let me read it"

Arthur handed him the bill and Radigan read it slowly, clause by clause. Arthur studied his face closely as he read and he was surprised to see neither indignation nor astonishment depicted there. Instead Radigan's expression was rather puzzled.

When the leader finished he folded the bill carefully, and handed it back to Cathcart.

"It's queer how opinions differ," he said in a tone of slow, good humor. "I don't see anythin' wrong with the bill. The powers that you think it gives to the incorporators couldn't be exercised because the courts would step in first. You're such an honest man yourself, Mr. Cathcart, that you get suspicious."

Arthur's surprise continued, but after all, as the whole world knows, every man has a right to his own opinion, and different men see in different ways.

"I'm quite convinced that I have ground for my suspicions in this case," he said firmly.

"You're over-anxious," said the leader, compassionately. "Anyway, I wouldn't commit myself. I think the East Side needs this bill, an' it might hurt you if you were to come out against it."

Arthur was annoyed. He had expected Radigan to rise up and share his indignation, but the leader steadfastly refused to be disturbed. Moreover, he clung to his own opinion, and the more Arthur argued with him and tried to show him where he was wrong the more tenacious he was about it, though always mild in speech and friendly in manner. Arthur finally gave up the attempt, and while much disappointed at his own failure, he had a lower opinion of Radigan's acuteness. The man's lack of education must be against him.

"Well," he said at last, "I'm sorry we can't

agree, but I'm going to come back at you about this. I'm bound to make you see the light,"

Radigan smiled, showing the narrow line of a fine set of teeth, and just as another man had done, patted Arthur on the shoulder in a fatherly way.

"Don't you be in any hurry," he said. "Don't you tangle yourself up on this bill when you'don't have any need to do it. The East Side wants it, and wants it bad."

Arthur made no promise and Radigan followed him to the door, repeating his advice to be cautious.

"We want to elect you," he said, "an' the road's all smooth now unless you're bent on trippin' yourself up with your own feet."

Arthur left much disturbed, and while usually a man who was quite able to make up his own mind he would have liked, in this case, to ask the advice of his uncle, his nearest blood relative, the very man who ought to give him advice. But he could not do it. Mr. Cathcart would merely sneer

and repeat his old assertion that he had washed his hands of the whole affair. It was, therefore, an impulse that caused him to go with his question, not to any man, but to a woman. The woman was Lucy Howe.

He had advanced far enough now with the Howe family to take Lucy in the park without a chaperone. He had bought an automobile of his own, despite his uncle's sneer that it would probably cost him many votes among his constituents, "the people," and he could take her down the more secluded roads of Central Park, over which the bare, wintry branches hung. It was on such an occasion as this that he told her about the bill, and his fears.

"Are you sure that you are right in your reading of it?" she asked.

"Absolutely!" he replied. "It's a grab; it can't be anything else. Radigan thinks to the contrary, but he's not a lawyer, and I don't think he understands technical language. He's an exceedingly bright man, but his early education was neglected."

He did not say anything, and he looked covertly at her to see if he could read her opinion in her face, most of which was hidden, however, by furs. But her lips were curved thoughtfully, and the blue eyes so wonderfully like her father's, though softer, were very grave. He suddenly forgot all about the question and thought how beautiful and tempting she was, with the glow of the winter's cold on her face, and the rays of the winter's sun turning her yellow hair to flaming gold.

“Political usage does not require you to declare yourself on any bill before you are even elected, does it?” she asked.

“Not exactly,” he replied doubtfully. “No, not unless the question is actively before the public, and this certainly is not at the present time. I have not heard a soul mention it except myself and those to whom I have spoken about it.”

“But it's a bad bill anyhow and you believe that the sooner a fight upon it is begun the more chance you have to beat it?”

“Undoubtedly. Public opinion should be

aroused.”

“Then I think you ought to speak of it, at once,” she said, her eyes sparkling with honest fire. “If it’s wicked and you feel sure that it is wicked I should come out and say so.”

“I thank you,” he said very gravely. “Your opinion is mine, and I’ve made up my mind to act.”

They said little more until they were on the way home and then she asked, as if it were an afterthought:

“Will your declaration now against this bill imperil your election?”

“I don’t know, but I’ve got to take the risk.”

She looked at him out of the corner of her eye, and her lip trembled a little. Was she inciting him to a resolution that would injure him or ruin his career? But she gave no utterance to her fears, and presently the lip grew firm again. But Arthur felt that he was approved, and he seemed to feel a certain respect in her manner when he left her at her father’s house. He needed nothing more to strengthen him in his resolution.

He was to speak that evening and again Liberty Hall was to be the scene of his effort. He had in the beginning a certain facility of speech, perhaps a gift from his ancestors on the Kentucky side, and with practice he was fast acquiring an oratorical power that added to the interest of his campaign. His speeches, or the attendant circumstances, were reported more freely than usual in the press, and tonight, when he arrived, he found a little group of reporters at a table on the stand, among whom was his friend Collins, who greeted him cheerfully, But they were all his friends; he had adopted Collins' advice of unflinching politeness, with the reserve of his own judgment as to what to say or whether to say anything at all.

“What’s the program tonight, Mr. Cathcart,” asked Collins, “going to stir ’em up?”

Cathcart smiled. Now that he had taken his resolution he was satisfied with himself and had no further fears.

“I don’t know,” he replied, “but I’m going to say something new. There’s a measure particularly affecting the East Side that I’m going

to discuss.”

Collins and his brethren sat up and their eyes brightened. An attack is always more interesting than defense, and here was the possibility of a good story. What was the measure to which he referred? They had not heard of it before.

The hall was well filled. Cathcart was now always an attraction, and in the absence of other political races attention was concentrated upon him. Radigan came upon the stage by the side entrance and sat down in a corner, quietly enough, it is true, and in a place obscure enough, but with the air of leadership and direction that in the last few days had grated with increasing harshness upon Cathcart. Arthur looked from the crowd to Radigan and the leader smiled as their glances met. But Cathcart did not smile back, his mind was full of his purpose, and he imagined that it would be a disagreeable surprise to Radigan. Then he turned his gaze, rose, and faced his audience.

He spoke for a little while on those general principles with which nearly all politicians begin their addresses, and then he turned to the

immediate needs of the district.

“Now there is one thing of which I wish particularly to speak to you tonight,” he said, “and it is a bill introduced at the last session of the General Assembly too late for action, but which will come up promptly at the special term. It is the East Side Rapid Transit Bill, ostensibly to build a new subway, but including with it almost unlimited powers, worth millions to its incorporators.”

He proceeded to attack the bill in a speech of impassioned eloquence and remarkable clearness. He had taken it previously to an expert franchise lawyer, who confirmed him in his opinion of its fraudulent nature, and he was armed with abundant proof. He told, moreover, how the public was often imposed upon by measures which pretended to be in the general interest, and which had a good look, but which in reality were gigantic grabs, and this was a most flagrant instance of the kind.

As he spoke he saw a look of amazement spread over the face of Italian and Slav, Hebrew and Russian, Irishman and American. They could

scarcely believe him. It seemed incredible to them that a measure which promised so well, which apparently was all for the public interest, was bad; but as he went on he saw that in many cases the look of amazement changed to a look of conviction, His own indignation at the measure swelled as it found vent in speech. His words came in a hot torrent. He was surprised at his own power of invective, and he riddled the bill, clause by clause.

Arthur never once turned to see the face of Radigan, but when he finished and sat down the leader came directly within his range of vision. Radigan's eyes expressed no burning indignation, their look was merely surprised, grieved, and troubled, and the grief and trouble seemed to be more for Cathcart than for anybody or anything else. He rose from his chair, and shook his head slightly.

"I'm sorry, awful sorry, Mr. Cathcart," he said in a grieved tone. "I wish you'd talked to me about this beforehand. I'm afraid you've made a big break. You're all wrong about that bill, You've jumped too soon an' you've jumped the

wrong way.”

Cathcart’s lip stiffened. He did not like Radigan’s manner. He would have preferred more heat rather than this air of grief and solicitude.

“I knew your opinion, already,” he replied, “and I haven’t been able to change it, so there was nothing to do but to declare mine.”

Radigan gave him a pitying look which said clearly: “Here is a foolish and obstinate young man who must have his head.” But he merely spoke the terse words:

“It’s my business to win.”

Cathcart made no rejoinder. He was sorry that Radigan took an opposing view, but he had no regrets. Instead, he felt a great relief that he had spoken. He walked slowly out of the hall with Radigan, both in silence, and as they reached the door the janitor turned out the last light, leaving the place a cave of darkness behind them,

“Good night,” said Radigan, when they stood in the street.

“Good night,” said Cathcart with equal brevity and then the unlike pair separated, each going his

own way.

When Cathcart awoke the next morning he found that he had indeed stirred up a local sensation. All the newspapers contained full accounts of his attack upon the East Side Rapid Transit Bill, and several of them went further, giving information that was news to Cathcart himself. They saw that the bill was backed by powerful financial interests, and they volunteered the statement that young Cathcart was in for a fight.

“I guess they are right,” said Cathcart to himself. He did not say, even to himself, that he intended to be in the fight, but he was full of resolution.

Not hearing from Radigan the next day he chose the direct way and went to see him, finding the leader yet in the grieved and troubled state that had marked his reception of the speech.

“I’ve been doin’ my best for you, Mr. Cathcart,” said Radigan in a pained voice, “but when you kicked over the traces in that speech of yours you planted a hoof right in my face. An’ I’ll

stand by you yet, but you're wrong about the bill, dead wrong, an' the East Side wants it."

Cathcart went three or four days later to the Twentieth National Bank, where he kept a deposit, in order to secure some funds. He had no occasion to see Mr. Howe, but as he waited in the line at the paying teller's window he saw someone come from the inner offices and go quickly out at the front door. He caught only a glimpse of the man's back and it was a chance look at that, but the thick, square shoulders and the swing of the body reminded him of Radigan. The incident aroused no interest in his mind, but he thought of it after he left the bank. Just then his attention was drawn by Mr. Hargrove, who had come outside the steel railing, and who, noticing Cathcart, spoke to him with a satisfied air of patronage that could not fail to be repellent. But Cathcart pretended not to notice it.

"We haven't seen much of you lately," said Mr. Hargrove.

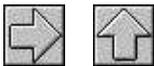
"No," replied Arthur, "but it's been the lack of opportunity not of will. How is Mr. Howe?"

“Never stronger or better,” replied Mr. Hargrove, maliciously, “but you won’t mind it, will you, when I tell you he thinks that you’ve made a mess of it about that bill. He lays it to your youth and inexperience.”

Cathcart was offended. He thought that Mr. Hargrove showed lack of taste, and he also detected a note of exultation in both his tone and his manner. It seemed to him that Mr. Hargrove rejoiced in the difficulties accumulating in his path.

“Mr. Howe may be right,” he replied coldly, “but again he may be wrong. However, he is entitled to his opinion.”

He turned away with a curt nod, and Mr. Hargrove went behind the steel railing to his office.



5 The Election

Bearing in mind Mr. Hargrove's statement that the great banker did not approve of his course, Cathcart concluded the best thing to do was to go and see for himself, gratifying at the same time another and stronger motive that led him to the Howe house. The exigencies of the campaign had kept him away for some time now, and he reflected that it was more than a week since he had seen Lucy Howe. Why not go up in his automobile and take her in the park again? There was, at least, a chance that he might find her, and a chance, if he found her, that she would go. The day, with its clear cold, and sky of blue velvet certainly invited. He did not hesitate, but acted at once.

As he passed up the avenue in his machine Arthur felt a thrill. The new opposition in his district had aroused all his tenacious fighting spirit. He felt that he was confronted both by seen

and unseen forces, but it was never in his mind to yield. Like other strong men he found in fierce conflict a certain acute pleasure that nothing else can give.

It was then about the middle of the afternoon, and in a few minutes he was before the heavy, brownstone house of James Howe. The stolid English butler received him with impassive face.

“Is Miss Howe in?” asked Arthur as he gave him his card.

“I don’t know, sir,” replied the butler as he showed Cathcart to the small reception room, “but I can inform you in a few moments.”

He turned away, and was going down the hall on his errand, but just at this moment Mr. Howe, himself, came toward the reception room and saw Arthur. Arthur saw him at the same time and smiled. Mr. Howe smiled back and nodded a welcome, but Arthur was conscious of a change, subtle, perhaps indefinable, but marked in its effect. The smile was chilly, the blue eyes were chilly, and the tall, slender, clerical figure had the effect of rigidity.

Cathcart rose and, as the younger man, went forward and offered his hand. Mr. Howe accepted it and gave it a pressure, but his fingers felt cold, like metal, to Cathcart's touch.

"We've missed you, Mr. Cathcart," said the great banker. "You've been neglecting us."

Arthur pleaded the pressure of politics.

"I've come today," he said, "to see if Miss Howe won't take a ride with me in the machine. It's a pity that any one should be indoors on a day like this."

Mr. Howe's thin lips were compressed, and a doubtful look came into his eyes. The thin figure seemed to stiffen more. Arthur felt, with all the sureness of instinct, that Mr. Hargrove was right; in some manner he had incurred the disapproval of the great banker, and Mr. Howe was not a man who condemned or praised lightly. It is not too much to say that Arthur had a slight sensation of fear, fear in the presence of a vague but formidable danger, but it was only for a moment, and then he resolutely pushed it aside.

"I think that Lucy and her aunt have gone out,"

said Mr. Howe; “in fact, I’m quite sure of it. Mrs. Thornton, like so many women of her age, makes a fad of charities, and she has dragged Lucy into them, too. That and her social duties keep Lucy so busy that I myself am never sure of her.”

Arthur understood him. He was not such a welcome guest in that house as he had been, and he was embarrassed. He was not one to thrust himself anywhere, nor was he one to be turned aside by obstacles. But chance brought a solution of the moment’s puzzle. He heard a soft rustle of a skirt in the hall, a light footstep that he had already learned infallibly to know among a thousand others, and Lucy Howe came into the room. Perhaps she had expected to find only her father there, or no one at all, as she uttered a little cry of surprise when she saw Cathcart.

Arthur was keenly attentive, observant of her face and her manner. He had learned much about human nature in the last month, and he wished to draw his own inferences. He saw the blue eyes of Mr. Howe cloud slightly with displeasure at his daughter’s sudden entrance and he knew that the great banker had not been above telling a lie,

white lie though it was. In Lucy's face he thought he read a welcome, a pleased surprise at seeing him there. Mistaken, he knew he might be, but he resolved to cherish the optimistic belief.

"I thought that you and your aunt had gone out to a meeting of one of your charity societies, and I just told Mr. Cathcart so," said the great banker composedly: nothing but the sudden little flash in his eye had shown his disappointment.

"And as charity is not calling, I want to know if Miss Howe will not go out with me for a little dash in the machine," said Arthur quietly—but with defiance to Mr. Howe. "It's such a beautiful afternoon that I don't see how one can stay indoors."

"Why, of course," she said, not looking at all at her father, but evidently taking his consent for granted.

James Howe's manner changed again. Arthur did not see it, but he felt it, the chilliness was gone, and a certain faint shade of warmth seemed to appear on the banker's face.

"I know that you will have a pleasant hour," he

said benevolently.

But Cathcart was not deceived by the change, and he was still thinking of it when he took his seat in the automobile by the side of Lucy Howe. He would not, though all unconsciously, let the thought continue in his mind. She was in a gay mood that day, and she laughed and chattered in a manner that almost took his breath away. It seemed to him that all this lightness was a rebound, a reaction, after a strain, the unstringing of the bow after being bent too tightly, and presently he learned the reason.

They went through the park, down the loneliest roads, and then over to Riverside Drive, and Cathcart's spirits rose so rapidly with hers that he tuned his machine to his own elation and he was twice warned for speeding.

The Hudson was all a vast blue sheet, dotted with shipping like a flock of fowl, and hemmed on the farther shore by the brown steep of the Palisades. Arthur turned northward, and then, though never intending, she told by degrees what

was in her mind, or gave enough hint of it for him to guess the rest. He, Arthur Cathcart, had been spoken of with disfavor recently in the Howe family circle, not once but continually, and his intelligence and honesty were both discredited. Mr. Hargrove had been coming oftener and oftener, and Mr. Howe regarded him as one of the household, as a son almost, and the acrid aunt also gave him her approval. She could not escape the accounts of Mr. Hargrove's wonderful progress in the world, his great and assured future and his supreme desirability.

She did not say the hundredth part of what has been written here. It was only by a word now and a word then—not intended by her as information but a mere unconscious escape for her feelings—that Cathcart gathered it all and he realized now how he stood in the Howe home. James Howe had even gone to the point of lying to keep him away from his daughter. William Hargrove was the chosen man, and he was being pushed forward by every influence that a father and aunt could command, influences that were always on the spot and that were exerted continually.

Cathcart felt again the thrill of battle. Here was a second and greater conflict, and he would be not less resolute in it than in the other.

They went far up the river with the blue of its waters nearly always in view. There was yet no sign of spring; the land was brown, brown everywhere, but the sky above was all blue velvet and shining gold and Arthur's heart was full of courage and hope. Bye and bye he turned back reluctantly, and at the coming of the twilight reached the Howe door, resolved that he would leave neither aunt nor father any excuse for rebuking her.

"I shall come again soon if you say that I may," he said at the door.

"Once, at least," she replied flashing back a smile.

Then he went home, well pleased with the afternoon.

He returned the next day to his campaign and Radigan accompanied him on a tour of the district, but the leader was not cheerful. The

grieved and pained mood characteristic of him at the time of the denunciation continued unbroken. He would do his best for Mr. Cathcart; he was fully aware of his duties as the Democratic leader in the district and he had never before worked so hard for a candidate, his personal as well as political sympathies being enlisted, but it was an uphill thing; if he had only let the East Side Rapid Transit Bill alone there would have been no trouble. But the people wanted that measure, they were convinced that it was all right, and so was he, he did not doubt Mr. Cathcart's honesty, but the best of men are mistaken sometimes, and it was mighty hard to overcome such an obstacle. Arthur's patience gave way at last.

“Mr. Radigan,” he exclaimed, “if you feel that you can't endorse me don't work for me. I'd rather go alone than have you fight against your convictions.”

The look of pain on Radigan's face deepened. How could Mr. Cathcart, for whom he had formed so strong a personal friendship, misjudge him so? He was there to stand by him, and stand by him he would until a region that is warmer

than this froze over. In this case inclination and duty went together, and it was not worthwhile to say anything more about it. Arthur took him at his word.

The day of the election came and the district was in a turmoil. Cathcart remained with Radigan through the evening at the office in the Palace Restaurant and the returns were sent in to them. Every figure he received with intense anxiety, though making little comment. Radigan was placid, but Arthur found the little office very hot, close, and stuffy. Every article in it was photographed on his mind and he always remembered the minutest incident of that evening.

The last return came in, and he was beaten by two hundred votes in a district always safely Democratic hitherto. He could scarcely believe it; despite all his depressions he had never really thought, until the fatal figures told it, that he could be beaten. Now, he was not only beaten, but disgraced. How it happened he could not understand, but that it had happened he knew.

“Never mind, Mr. Cathcart,” said Radigan in the fatherly manner that was now intensely disagreeable to him, “you’ve made a good race, all things considered. There was that mistake about the transit bill, but you fought a plucky fight.”

He ended his little speech by putting his hand on Cathcart’s shoulder which was the last straw. There was something in the touch that Arthur did not like. It gave him a creepy feeling of revulsion and he shook it off.

“I did not make a good race,” he exclaimed angrily. “I made a very bad one. A poorer was never made in this city, and I intend to find out the reason why. I’ve felt all along that I was fought by forces that I could not see or define, but I intend to hunt them down.”

“What do you mean?” asked Radigan.

“No more than I have said,” replied Arthur, resting his glance squarely upon him. The leader sustained it for a half minute, and then looked carelessly at the table of ballots.

“I want to thank you though, Mr. Radigan, for

all that you've done for me," said Arthur quietly.

"Oh that's all right," said Radigan in his old fashion, repeating his old saying: "That's what I'm here for an' I've done my best. You see, I suffer along with you."

When Arthur went into the street he was met by the reporter, Collins, and he promptly answered all the questions that he asked. When the interview was over they walked on together, both silent and thoughtful, for a while. It was then past 11 o'clock. The snow was all gone. A faint breath of spring, the forerunner, was in the air. The tall buildings loomed mistily through a slight, bluish haze, a compound of the moonlight, the electric lights, and the dusk. Cathcart had a feeling of unreality, as if this beating, this terrible blow had not happened to him, but to someone else whom he knew, but it was not on that account less bitter. He brought himself back to his world with an effort of the will and saw Collins regarding him attentively. They had become good friends in the course of the canvass and Arthur turned upon him with the abrupt question.

“Mr. Collins, you’ve been about in the district a great deal, and I’ve no doubt you’ve seen a lot of things that I’ve missed. Tell me! Why have I been beaten so badly?”

Collins hesitated a moment or two and then met Cathcart’s look squarely.

“I’m a bit in the dark, too,” he said, “but I believe a few things. I think, Mr. Cathcart, that you were caught between the upper and the nether millstone, and this is almost literal. A powerful machine has been fighting you with every resource it has, and its power hasn’t been any less because it has worked wholly in the dark.”

“I think so, too,” said Cathcart.

The two men continued together for a little while, talking earnestly. Then Collins hastily exclaimed “I’ve got to reach the office P.D.Q., in time to get my story into the first edition.” He boarded a car and left him.

Arthur went slowly home. He had told the servants not to wait for him, and he unlocked the

door and let himself in just as he had done on the night of the storm when he took his great resolution. Now, he thought savagely, that great resolution had ended in nothing.

Late as it was a light was burning in the library, and Arthur knew instinctively that his uncle was there waiting. This was the bitterest part of it all: the first meeting with Mr. Cathcart and the necessity to tell him of his failure in an enterprise that Mr. Cathcart had never considered worth winning. He decided to get it over at once; in his new life he was fast acquiring the habit of decision and rapid action.

He walked quickly into the library. Mr. Cathcart was sitting before the open fire, neither reading nor smoking, his hands lying listlessly on his lap. He looked up when he heard his nephew's firm, quick step and his eyes were inquiring and eager. Arthur realized, with a sudden sinking of the heart, that perhaps Mr. Cathcart cared more than he pretended. He drew up a chair deliberately for himself and sat down. Then he turned his face toward Mr. Cathcart and said:

“I am beaten, uncle. Harker goes in by a fair majority.”

Mr. Cathcart showed keen disappointment, despite his previous sneers at his nephew’s campaign, and begged Arthur to quit it all and go to Europe with him. But Arthur refused firmly.

After that they sat for perhaps half an hour longer, and not a dozen words more were spoken. Then with a quiet “Good night,” Arthur went to his own room, and with his first great defeat fresh upon him he slept an untroubled sleep.

Arthur was not wrong in his belief that he would be treated largely as a joke by press, public, and his friends. While there might have been doubt during the campaign whether he was a joke the result left none at all. Clearly he was out of place, mistaken about his vocation, and not shrewd enough or strong enough to deal with the skilled and unscrupulous men who make politics the study and business of their lives. He was but a babe after all, and “It’s Cathcart to the woods now,” ran the headline in one slangy yellow journal.

Collins' newspaper alone struck a somewhat different note. It contained a lucid account of Cathcart's defeat, an intimation that he was opposed by forces that the paper was not yet in a position to name, a complimentary description of the manner in which Arthur received the bad news, an interview with him, and closed with a hint that Mr. Cathcart was not dead; it was altogether possible that he might be heard from again.

It was a long story and it gave Cathcart pleasure.

Later in the day, while he was at a club, Mr. Hargrove came in, easy, smiling, wonderfully pleased with himself, and Arthur did not go far to guess why. He had noticed in one of the papers that day an announcement that Mr. Hargrove had been placed on the directorate of three more powerful corporations, another bank, a trust company, and a world-famous insurance company. The announcement carried with it the flattering statement that Mr. Hargrove, despite his comparative youth, had achieved a place in the small group of able financial minds that so wisely

controlled the business destiny of the United States.

“Sorry to hear of your bad luck, Cathcart, sorry indeed,” he said to Arthur in a tone that grew more patronizing as Arthur marched to failure and he marched to success.

“Thanks, Mr. Hargrove,” replied Arthur, “Yes, I’m beaten.”

Mr. Hargrove shook his head wisely.

“You were wrong about that East Side Rapid Transit Bill,” he said. “You should not have denounced it. The people of your district wanted it, and they wanted it badly,”

“Indeed! I did not know that you ever came into the district, Mr. Hargrove. I thought that you always kept out of such localities.”

Arthur looked at the banker with a sudden keen attention, and despite himself, despite their tint a flush crept into the swarthy cheeks of Mr. Hargrove. As he spoke and as he saw, a new thought came into Arthur’s mind.

“I do not go there,” replied the banker, “but I have heard; there is all the gossip, the newspaper

reports, one must believe.”

“So I see,” said Cathcart, and he did not pursue the subject, but he watched Mr. Hargrove and saw that he was restless and uneasy. Presently the banker left the club and Arthur himself stayed only a few minutes longer.

Cathcart’s first resolution was to go straight to Mrs. Throckmorton’s, where he had been asked to a tea and where he expected and hoped to find Lucy Howe. One of his reasons for wishing to see her now was part of his policy of facing all comment at once. But it was a fact, which he did not attempt to explain to himself, that he dreaded her verdict less than that of any of the others. He felt, throughout the campaign, whenever he saw her that, in some way, he had her sympathy. Whether it was for his personal self, for his course as distinguished from that of others, or was given on the general principle that he was the underdog in the fight he could not say, but it was none the less welcome. It seemed to him on occasion that she, like himself, wished to turn back to the soil and deal with actualities.

Mrs. Throckmorton, in the dim light of shaded

lamps received him. She was all curves and smoothness, youthful in the softened glow, and she spoke the pleasing language of pleasant comment and flattery. She was sorry, so sorry that Arthur was beaten, on his account merely, because he was too good for the little place out of which she was sure they had cheated him. But she was glad to see him present so brave a face to show that he did not care for the loss of that which was not worth having. She said all these things rapidly in low, soothing tones, and although Arthur knew that it was only partly real and partly pretense it was grateful to him. She was a good woman within her limited range; she wished him well, and she would give herself a certain amount of trouble to help him, if she could; of that he never felt a doubt.

Lucy Howe was there, as he had hoped, and she gave him the sympathy that he wished; the real deep sympathy that he had received from none other. She said nothing as long as others were with them, but when they were left alone for a few minutes in a little cove formed by the angle of a window and a sofa, she came directly to the

heart of the matter.

“I don’t know anything about the Rapid Transit Bill, Mr. Cathcart,” she said, “but it is better to be beaten on that issue than to win by omitting it.”

His face flushed with pleasure.

“I need not deny that the loss of the election is a bitter thing to me,” he said, “I am not philosopher enough to find as much reward in failure as in success, and I hope never to be.”

“No,” she said thoughtfully, “I do not think you ever will. It does not seem to be your temperament.”

Again Cathcart was gratified. Within the last year such a horror of weakness and diletantism had grown up within him that resignation, which perhaps implied loss of courage, did not seem to him to be much of a virtue. He was encouraged, too, by her manner, and it brought him to the verge of confidence, although he yet could not tell whether or not it was merely the fellow feeling, the companionable feeling that the young have for the young. But her manner was confidential and it lured him to speech.

“You’ll pardon me, I know, for talking a little of myself,” he said earnestly, “but I’m not going to stop with this present defeat. I’ve made up my mind to represent that district in the General Assembly, no matter how long it takes me to get there, and I shall be a candidate again at the general election in the autumn.”

Her look was grave and sweet.

“You do not tell me anything that surprises me,” she said. “I had guessed it already, and I like to see a man fight his battle to the end. If I were a man I should want to do it myself.”

For the third time in that brief talk Arthur felt the glow of pleasure, but he only said briefly, “I thank you.”

“I imagine also that you do not want me to speak of this until you give me leave to do so.”

“Keep it a secret, won’t you,” he said, “if so little a thing is worth keeping. I have told nobody else except my uncle.”

She promised readily, and he knew that it was a promise which would not be broken. Then Mr. Hargrove drifted up, and the talk went into other

channels. The banker's patronizing manner toward Cathcart was now accentuated somewhat, and Arthur knew in his heart that Mr. Hargrove no longer regarded him as formidable. It was a bitter thing to take, but Arthur ignored it, and gave no indication that he considered himself smaller than he had been the day before.

He was one of the first of the guests to leave, making good excuses, and Lucy Howe, who had become thoughtful, followed him with her eyes until he was gone from the room. Mr. Hargrove was beside her then, and his glance noticed the direction of hers. He was about to say something of Cathcart, something that would depreciate, but he remembered himself in time. His walks were not usually in fields where delicacy of speech is highly regarded, but instinct warned him not to attack Cathcart before Lucy Howe, if he did not wish to create sympathy for him. But she asked him a sudden question that embarrassed him.

“Will you tell me why Mr. Cathcart was beaten in this election?” she asked. “How was it that a heavy Democratic majority was suddenly lost?”

“Why how should I know?” he replied in a

startled tone.

“But tell me.” she persisted, “was it really that East Side Rapid Transit Bill?”

“I hear so. I suppose it was. Cathcart, it seems, went directly against the advice of the district leader, who knows about these things, and he has had to pay the price. But I shouldn’t bother about such matters, if I were you.”

There was a note of impatience in Mr. Hargrove’s voice that she might have resented, but her mind traveled elsewhere after he spoke, and she scarcely noticed him. Her preoccupation continued and she, too, left early, driving directly home.

Lucy Howe had a keen and unusual mind, and it generated that day a thought that she strove to repress, but which she could not, strive as she might, and she strove hard, because it was a most unpleasant thought. Mr. Hargrove had been coming much to her father’s house in the last few weeks, presumably on business, and he and Mr. Howe now and then had dropped little scraps of

talk before her, which then had no meaning for her, but which now suddenly appeared to her as a connected whole with a meaning direct and painful.

The days were growing longer, and the twilight had not yet come when she reached her own home. She looked up at the massive building, looming like a great stone fortress, and she sighed because she could not get rid of this new and persistent thought. When she entered and passed up the great staircase on the way to her own room she met her father in the hall. He came forward affectionately to meet her.

James Howe loved his young daughter with a pure and unselfish love. He loved his other children, but they had married and gone away from his household, and she alone was left: the youngest, the fairest, and the brightest. His face and manner then expressed only benevolence and tender feeling. The blue eyes were warm, and the thin ascetic face was illuminated with a smile. Fatherly he looked and fatherly he felt. He kissed her and asked her if her time had passed pleasantly at Mrs. Throckmorton's and after her

affirmative he asked her who was there. She ran rapidly over a number of names, including Cathcart's.

"I suppose that Mr. Cathcart is crushed," said Mr. Howe, smiling lightly.

"I do not think so," she replied. "I have got an impression somehow, father, that he is not a man who is easily put down. I'm sure that the East Side Rapid Transit Bill will yet have him to fight."

She was watching her father's face closely as she spoke, and a little shiver passed over her when she saw the smile in his eyes suddenly replaced by a look of chill resolution, so ruthless that she was terrified. But the change lasted only a moment.

"Mr. Cathcart is very young," said Mr. Howe mildly, "and it is a saying, as old as the world, that the young always have much to learn. It's a true one, too."

She went to her room, where she remained a while, thoughtful and unhappy, and she was late and silent at dinner. On the excuse of a headache

she went back to her room, where she said that she intended to read herself to sleep with a new novel, and the announcement seemed to suit Mr. Howe very well,

“Mr. Hargrove will be here in a half hour,” he said genially, “but you need not think, daughter, that he is coming to see you this time. He and I have some very important business that we cannot transact at the bank, and we’ll look after it here. He’s coming at once to my room.”

Mr. Howe had a small office in his residence which he usually called his “room,” and Lucy was quite content that Mr. Hargrove should go there “at once.”

But she was restless in her own room, and came down the hall to a small parlor overlooking the avenue. There she sat without light, save that which came from the lamps in the street, looking without seeing, at the stream of carriages and people as they passed. It was so still and dark there that no one disturbed her or noticed her, but she heard by and by a footfall in the hall, and

through the open door she saw Mr. Hargrove on his way to Mr. Howe's office. The light did not arouse any great interest in her, but she followed vaguely the line of his figure until he disappeared. It was merely the lack of any desire to move that kept her now with her face turned in the same direction, and presently she saw another come down the hall and disappear in the path of Mr. Hargrove.

The figure at first seemed strange, but then she noticed something familiar about it, and, although it was only a view of back and shoulders she was sure that she could not be mistaken. She had seen that man before, and she knew him. She sat up stiffly, and in the dark a flush of pain came to her brow. The thought that had assailed her in the day became more acute and painful, and in her mind now it was an assured truth.

She rose, and went down the hall toward her father's office. The door was closed, but she did not knock. Instead she went back to her own room, where she waited with the door open, and sitting so that she might see any one who passed in the hall.

It was a long time before any one passed. Nine o'clock came, then ten, then eleven, but the three men were still talking earnestly in the little office. Lucy, however, had many of her father's qualities. and among them were courage and endurance. She still waited. Midnight struck, and then the man who had come last passed out of the office. She watched him, and she saw that he left the house, not by the front door, but obscurely in the rear, like a thief in the night, like one who would hide his face, and her own face burned red again. She surmised, with the certainty of truth, that he had entered in the same way.

Then Mr. Hargrove departed, but his departure was according to the custom prevalent in polite society, that is by the front door. Then Lucy Howe, with a heart full of courage and high resolution, went straight to her father's office and opened the door.

Mr. Howe was sitting at his flat-topped desk, intently studying a paper which was one of a small bundle that lay before him. He looked up in surprise at the sound of his daughter's footsteps.

"Why, Lucy!" he exclaimed. "You are up too

late, and you did not knock.”

His tone was mildly reproachful.

“No,” she said, “I did not knock, and I am up very late as you say, but I want a talk with you, father.”

She sat down opposite him and her color was high. Perhaps, if she had been five years older she would not have done what she was going to do. Mr. Howe noticed that his daughter’s appearance and manner were unusual, and his brows contracted suddenly. The chill blue eyes looked straight at her with the gaze that few could endure, but she was of his own blood and she met it without wavering.

“Well,” he said shortly.

“I saw Mr. Radigan, after being here with you and Mr. Hargrove all the evening, leave the house.”

“Well and what of that?”

The sharp voice grew sharper, and his gaze was colder than he had ever before given to his daughter. But she did not flinch.

“He went out by the back way,” she said, “like one whose presence here had been dishonest.”

A livid flush passed over the thin cheeks of James Howe, and passing left them a dead white.

“Go to your room at once,” he said, “you are an impertinent child.”

She did not stir.

“Father,” she said in a tone full of reproach, “I saw Mr. Radigan come here and I saw him go. I am not a spy. It was only by chance that I saw him come, but I know why he came. It was he who defeated Mr. Cathcart, and you and Mr. Hargrove paid him to do it. You are the East Side Rapid Transit Company.”

She spoke with the absolute certainty of conviction, and James Howe, taken off his guard by her spontaneous emphasis, did not think to deny what she said. He stirred uneasily in his chair, frowned once or twice, and then became quite calm.

“Don’t you think you are outside your sphere?” he asked with chilling irony. “What is this Cathcart to you?”

“Nothing,” she replied firmly, “but you are very much.”

She spoke impulsively, with much emotion, but James Howe’s thin face was now impassive.

“Oh, don’t you see, father,” she continued, “that Mr. Cathcart’s success or defeat is a small thing, but it is you, ourselves, of whom I am thinking? You bought the election of his opponent in order that he might not defeat a measure of yours intended to make money! A week ago, a day ago, I could not have believed it!”

Here the impulse, the courage that had carried her on failed, and putting her face in her hands she cried. She was only a young girl. A thin, bitter smile twisted the lips of James Howe. She had spoken hard things to him, her father, but he loved her. Despite his present anger toward her, she had never seemed dearer to him than now, when he looked down upon her yellow head in her hands and heard her crying softly. Even at that moment he thought, with a kind of pride, that she had shown more knowledge and perception than he had put to her credit and he credited her

with much.

“Lucy,” he said dryly, “listen to me, and remember at the same time, that I am showing you more consideration than most fathers would show to their daughters in such a case. Suppose, for the sake of argument, I should grant what you say to be true. You do not know the world. You do not know how a man must fight for his own. And when he fights he is compelled to use whatever tools best fit his hands. The bill that Mr. Cathcart meant to defeat is a good one. It is in the interest of the people. He put himself in the way and he was run down. Perhaps his opponents would rather have defeated him by other methods, had it been possible, but the situation being what it was they had to do what they did.”

She raised her head and flashed at him a look wonderfully like his own when he awed men with whom he dealt in the street.

“But it is not a good bill!” she exclaimed. “It is a very bad one!”

The great banker’s smile became pitying and kind.

“I see that you have been listening to Mr. Cathcart,” he said, “and you prefer his judgment to mine. This is indeed a perplexing situation.”

She flushed. She felt herself caught in the mazes of sophistry and satire, but the Howe spirit was strong within her, and she did not mean to withdraw from the attack.

“Father,” she said, “I still think it is wrong—you must pardon me for saying so. I should still think it was wrong, even if the bill were a good one, and I am confident that it is not. You will let it go, you will not have anything more to do with this man Radigan, who is a traitor, who has betrayed his chief? If he betrayed Mr. Cathcart he will not hesitate, when it pays him to betray you.”

She spoke with energy and passion, and Mr. Howe’s smile remained pitying and kind. She seemed to appeal and he to consider whether he should grant, yet he felt to the very core of his strong heart the desire to justify himself to his daughter. It may be, too, that James Howe, in the course of a life of strenuous action had come to believe, or nearly to believe—which is perhaps as serviceable—in all that he said.

“Lucy,” he said, “you are a child and you speak as a child. I have told you that life is a great battle and you are, so far, only a spectator in the seats. It is easy enough for the one who is not in action to philosophize and have theories, but the man who is on the field must fight, and fight all the time with the best weapons that he can get.”

He continued to defend himself and justify himself to her. He told her that a great and necessary measure had to be put through, and those in charge of it were compelled to crush opposition for the sake of the public good. He was sorry for Cathcart, who seemed to be likable, but he had invited his own fate, where a wiser man would not have put himself in the way.

Mr. Howe often spoke at banquets and before restricted societies, and he had an eloquence of his own of the dry, incisive, unadorned kind. But he never talked better than on this evening with his own daughter, nearly fifty years younger than himself, as sole audience. He had such a keen and cunning mind—trained so long to go in a certain way; he was master of so many unconscious

sophistries, and he was so desperately bent upon justifying himself to Lucy that his eloquence acquired warmth and passion, an unusual thing in James Howe. Lucy felt herself unable to answer, doubting, but not convinced, and when her father kissed her good night she went to her own room, feeling that she had failed.

The day brought to Mr. Howe his usual cold resolution, and when he arrived at the bank at the usual hour his eye was as keen and critical as ever. Every man at his desk felt that both blue eyes were bent straight upon himself, and he plunged into his work with renewed vigor. Mr. Howe went quietly to his inner office—he was always a man who walked lightly and who never wasted words—and remained there alone for almost an hour. Then he sent for his vice-president, the brilliant banker, Mr. Hargrove.

The two were a long time in deep and earnest converse, and it was not about money. That mighty subject was left behind, and these two great men talked more than two hours about so trivial and unimportant a thing as the fate of a

young girl. Mr. Howe had taken alarm. It had been his wish, formed at least a year since, that Mr. Hargrove should be his son-in-law. It would be a marriage that seemed fitting in every respect

Mr. Howe, however wary he might be with Lucy, felt no scruples about talking directly to Mr. Hargrove, and they arranged that Mr. Howe and Miss Howe should go abroad suddenly in May—Mr. Howe had long felt the need of rest—and Mr. Hargrove should be called to London in June in the matter of the new Russian loan. Mr. Corey, the second vice-president, was quite able to manage the bank, with the assistance of the cable, during the dull summer months. When this matter was decided and put aside, they made arrangements also to push the East Side Rapid Transit Bill with every resource at their command, and those were many and powerful.



6 A New Policy

Arthur, not deficient at all in keenness, only looking hitherto in suspicion, was seeing a light of his own. While Mr. Howe and Mr. Hargrove were in caucus to decide the fate of someone for whom he cared, and incidentally his own, he communed with himself, and sought what would come of it.

It was singularly vivid to him now, and, in the light of the look backward, events appeared in their proper proportion. His opinion of the transit bill was not shaken in the least; he saw again the early enthusiasm of Radigan and then his later indifference and hesitation—he frowned at the memory—and he passed on to the emphatic way in which Mr. Howe and Mr. Hargrove had commended the bill. Then, like a flash of lightning through the clouds came that glimpse of a broad back and sturdy shoulders departing from the presence of the great banker. Now he could

account for the unseen and mysterious force that was always fighting him, and that had fought him so effectively. He had been bought and sold, sold by a traitor, and bought by a banker because he opposed the East Side Rapid Transit Bill. His mental operations were almost the same as Lucy Howe's had been and they led to the same result. He did not feel any doubt about his conclusion.

His rage at first was against Radigan, the man who had been put there to manage his campaign, and then turned from Radigan to Howe. Radigan might have some excuse, but James Howe had none—there he stopped and remembered that James Howe was Lucy's father. How could he denounce him while he remembered her? He had another bitter mental struggle now. He knew that he loved Lucy Howe, that there was no other woman in the world for him, but he knew, also, that he and James Howe were going to meet in conflict. No other honest road led out of it for him, and he was no coward; nor would she have him to be one, if she could care for him at all.

It was late afternoon when he returned to the city, and in order to be sure, in order that no last

lurking doubt might remain to trouble his mind he telephoned to Collins asking if he would meet him. Back came the answer from Collins that he would come at once to Mr. Cathcart's house, if Mr. Cathcart would wait for him there.

The reporter was shown to Cathcart's room and the two shook hands with warmth.

"I've taken a certain liberty with you, Mr. Collins," said Arthur. "I've no news for you, but I want to consult you about something that is very personal to me."

Collins sat down before the open grate.

"I can guess what it is Mr. Cathcart," he said. "The Rapid Transit Bill?"

"Yes, the Rapid Transit Bill."

Cathcart drew up a chair, and also sat down, but at the other angle of the fire. The reporter was expectant, intense interest showing in his face.

"I am asking you for information, Mr. Collins," said Cathcart, "all that you feel you can give. The night after the election we walked through the street together, and you told me that you were going to make some researches about the bill.

You probably have sources of information that would be closed to me. Will you tell me what you have learned?"

Collins spread out his hands towards the fire, not because they were cold, but as a gesture.

"Will you tell me first what you suspect or rather what you believe?" he asked.

"Certainly. I believe that James Howe, William Hargrove, and the Twentieth National Bank are the backers and expect to be the beneficiaries of the bill, and that they paid Radigan to have me beaten."

"You are right, Mr. Cathcart," said Collins. "I've been at work on that matter every minute, barring meat and sleep, since the election, and I've trailed it down. The incorporators of the bill are mere dummies, tools of Mr. Howe, financed by him and used by him whenever it suits his purposes. I got enough facts straight from one of those men himself to work out the rest. How much he paid Radigan we don't know, and, in fact, we cannot prove that he paid him at all, but we have enough to leave the obvious inference in

the minds of every sane, clear-thinking man. We shall publish the whole story tomorrow.”

“I knew it,” said Arthur.

He rested his head on his hand and gazed thoughtfully into the fire. Collins did not speak for some time, but his words then were to the point, although brief.

“I guess it’s going to be a fight to the death between you and Mr. Howe,” he said.

“I mean to do my best. I want to thank you, Mr. Collins, for the help you’ve given me.”

“I’m not wholly unselfish,” he said. “I like you, Mr. Cathcart, but you are a source of news in yourself and a source of news in others. I want to keep next to such a fountain head.”

Arthur smiled.

“I promise you,” he said, “that if I have any news that should go to the press you shall not be neglected.”

“It’s a bargain,” said Collins, “and I think that you can rely upon the support of my paper. Of course, you know that I am only a reporter, not

the editor—nor even an editor cannot make any promise—but I know, from what I heard at the office, that our sheet is interested in you and means to back you, and you can always rely upon Yours Truly, Robert Collins, to boom you, because I think you ought to be boomed,”

Arthur rose early the next morning and ate breakfast a full hour before his uncle's usual time, doing so on purpose, because he wished to read Collins' newspaper and take it away before Mr. Cathcart could see it. The exposure was there, occupying three columns of the first page, and the news article advanced no opinion, merely relating the facts. It stated that James Howe, William Hargrove, and their associates in the Twentieth National Bank were really the East Side Rapid Transit Company. It stated that these gentlemen, in the early days of Mr. Cathcart's campaign, had expected him to be a friend of theirs. They knew that his upright life, his attractive young personality, and the fame of his family name would make him a conspicuous figure at Albany, worth to them any half dozen in

the legislature.

These gentlemen were bitterly disappointed when Mr. Cathcart suddenly turned against their bill, convinced that it was bad. Before that time his election was assured, but then the feeling in the district began to turn against him. Radigan, the district leader, became lukewarm, and a district, always Democratic hitherto, gave a Republican majority. Only a powerful agency could have achieved such a result. These facts were placed in such relation to each other that the dullest could draw only one inference, and the newspaper stated that it had not been able, until the last day or two, to discover who were the real backers of the bill. The article closed with the statement that Mr. Cathcart would be an Independent candidate for the General Assembly from the same district at the general election in the autumn, on the platform of opposition to the corrupt alliance of boss and great corporation, and closed with the prediction that New York would see a beautiful fight in one small area at least. A short editorial endorsed the news article, and said that the public might expect much from

Mr. Cathcart.

Arthur smiled as he read: smiled with pleasure at Collins' enthusiasm, and with pleasure at the good light in which he himself was put. Then putting the sheet in his pocket he went straight to the Palace Restaurant.

Radigan was in his little office reading a newspaper and his brow was clouded. Arthur could not keep from seeing that it was the *Standard*, Collins' journal, and the leader's eyes were on the exposure on the first page. He rose quickly as Cathcart entered, drove the frown away from his brow, and held out his hand with every appearance of geniality.

"I'm glad you've come so soon, Mr. Cathcart," he said, "I've just been reading this lying stuff in the *Standard*, and I knew that you would pay no attention to it"

"No, Mr. Radigan," said Cathcart quickly, "it is not lying stuff. It is true, every word of it, and you know that it is true, I guessed the story, even before it was printed there, and on that account I do not take your hand, because, after you hear

what I have to say, I do not think you will want me to take it.”

Radigan had not dealt with men all his life for nothing. He did not burst into any explosion, he did not call names, he merely looked sorrowful, exceedingly sorrowful and sat down again, turning his pitying eyes upon Cathcart, while he rubbed his chin thoughtfully with the rejected hand.

“You don’t mean to say that you are a pin-headed reformer, all sorts of a fool.” he said.

“I am a reformer, or at least I hope to be one,” replied Cathcart sitting down, “and I have come here, Mr. Radigan, to tell you two or three things: First, that I knew you sold me out to the Rapid Transit Bill; second, that I intend, as you have probably read in the *Standard*, to be a candidate again in this district; third, that my platform will be anti-graft and down with the corrupt alliance of Radigan and the Twentieth National Bank. What do you think of that?”

A slow flush came into Radigan’s face, despite all his smoothness and self command, and his

fingers moved uneasily, an infallible sign of nervousness. But he was sufficiently master of himself to keep his voice calm.

“I’ve known worse platforms,” he replied judicially, “still I did not think, Mr. Cathcart, that you were a demagogue and a sore-head.”

“I am neither.”

“I let it go as you say. But you say that I sold you out to the Transit Company. What proof have you got?”

“I shall make the charge.”

“It’s a risky thing to do. I am not speaking of myself only, but James Howe is a powerful man.”

“So I have already learned.”

Radigan’s face fell a little at the quick thrust inside his guard, but he had learned long ago never to give away to temper and he forced a smile.

“Do you mean to say that you expect to smash up the party organization in this district?” he asked.

“I intend to be elected, if I can, and if that

means smashing the party organization in the district, let it go smash. I only wish that I were big enough to smash both party organizations in the whole city, as they are now constituted.”

Radigan was reassured by the very scope of Cathcart’s vision.

“I never dreamed that your head was full of wheels, Mr. Cathcart,” he said, “I don’t think we have any need to be scared of you.”

“Perhaps not,” said Cathcart, “but I thought we should understand each other. Good morning.”

“Good morning,” said Radigan, turning indifferently to his newspaper. But the boss was not so composed as he seemed to be. Despite himself, he feared a man who was so open and direct, who departed so far from his own devious methods. He had seen enough of Arthur to know that he was not in any sense a coward, either physical, mental, or moral.

The interview had been without any of the features of a scene. Voices had never been raised, and tempers were not lost. Arthur was glad that it was so. Despite Radigan’s base treachery, he had

a lingering liking for him. He found himself trying to make excuses for him; he thought of his birth, his environment, and the pernicious school in which he had been educated, and he regretted that he should have to attack him.

Winter fled, and spring came in its place. Spring is usually deceitful in our country, making many promises and keeping few of them, but this year it was no coy maid, coming early and staying. The grass was fresh and abundant, and the trees were all abloom when the Cathcarts went to the country, and Arthur found fresh buoyancy there. He would have been happy, if it had not been for Lucy Howe. He sought opportunities to see her, but none came in his way, and he felt that he could not go to her father's house now.

The "exposure" had not hurt James Howe in his world, rather it had helped him. Other great financiers and the swarm of little fellows who follow in their wake trying to imitate them had acclaimed it as a wonderfully clever stroke.

Arthur knew of all that was passing, but he said nothing, and bided his time. One of the things that he did now was to study the general principles of law privately. He foresaw that he would need it in his career, and with the concentration that he had acquired bent every faculty to the task. A lawyer he never expected or wished to be, but he wished to know enough to be one had he chosen.

Cathcart was no prig, and he liked moreover the society of men of his own age and position. He took his almost daily exercise on the golf links, or in his automobile, but he never indulged in excess in either respect; master of himself, he was also the master of his sports; they were never the master of him. Thus he was thoroughly normal and healthy, only he had a purpose, wherein he differed from nearly all of those who were or had been his comrades. Hence, he began to be regarded by his relatives and associates as a little different from themselves, eccentric to say the least of it, in fact almost a freak. Some of the newspapers which still kept him in view and which opposed him, invariably alluded to him in

terms of ridicule as “Little Artie,” though he was neither little nor an “Artie.”

It would be quite too much to say that Cathcart was able to ignore all these things or to view them calmly. On the contrary, they hurt him very much, but he was able to hide it. On the best day that had come so far he strolled down the road through a high and hilly country, now a sea of deep green. A fine wind blew from the sea and touched his cheeks with the pleasant salt moisture that is like the breath of life. There was no dust and the hills and the forest allowed only glimpses of the houses. Cathcart had now grown somewhat absent-minded, the invariable characteristic of all men who both work hard and think hard, and sunk in his thoughts he walked on for miles, merely feeling the physical elation, unconscious of its origin, and not noticing the country about him.

He followed the road, as it dipped from a steep hill, into a narrow little valley, down which a silver streak was cut by a brook, and there he stopped to look at the water and sniff the aromatic forest odors. Then he followed the tiny

stream into a grove, and sat down on a big stone at the foot of a tree, leaning his back against a trunk. He pulled his hat down over his eyes, and quite forgot his surroundings as he studied the moves in the long political campaign that he had planned. To any one passing he would have borne the aspect of a student, because he was quite young, but his youthful face was very serious.

But the student was not proof against the powers of a summer day that had come in spring. Everything conspired against him. A wind, very warm and very soft, sprang up, and the half formed leaves kept up a most soothing little whisper; the water had a wonderfully soft, trickling sound and Cathcart fell into a doze. When he was partly awake from it he became conscious of a presence, a beautiful presence which he did not see, but which in some impalpable manner he felt through the air and at a little distance.

“Awake! dreamer, awake!” said a voice that had laughing tones in it and he awoke. Then he sprang to his feet in mingled pleasure and embarrassment. Lucy Howe was standing before

him, in summer white, a white parasol tilted over her head, and the faintest flush in her cheeks. She was a vision to Cathcart, not merely for her physical beauty, but because of a new dignity, a new seriousness in her manner that come only to the women who have thought and who have suffered, and which puts the soul into the beauty that is otherwise only for the senses.

Cathcart was confused, not alone by her sudden presence there and his sudden awakening but by his equally sudden recollection of the different things for which they stood; his challenge to her father, his practical charge that James Howe was dishonest and a corrupter of the electorate, and hence the words that he intended to be an apology were stammered and disconnected. But she was apparently calm, whatever she may have felt, and she sat down on a fallen log near him.

“Won’t you occupy the stone again?” she asked, smiling a little, and Cathcart obeyed. He felt that, for the present, she was master, and he did not object.

“I want explanations,” she said with a pretense

of sternness. “Why have you not been to see us. It has been months since you were at our house,”

Arthur grew red and felt about for an answer. Then he quickly decided that the true answer would be the best to make.

“I have stayed away.” he replied, “not because I wanted to do so. but because—politics, you know—I appear as one making bad charges against your father—Well, wouldn’t he show me to the door, if I ever got past it?”

She laughed in a way that made him think of the trickle of the brook. But had he been less blinded he would have noticed a note of uneasiness in the laughter, a strain telling that the laugh was forced.

“My father is one of the politest of men,” she said. “An attack is nothing new to him. He has been accustomed to them all his business life, nearly half a century, and he never gets angry. It is not his way. He bears you no animosity.”

“I’m glad to know it,” said Cathcart, and he added lamely, “I thought you had gone to Europe. Didn’t I see it in the newspapers?”

“I’m going in two weeks,” she said, “and, meanwhile, we are on Long Island. Father has a place here, and I ought to tell you that while you have not cared to meet him you have not hesitated to trespass upon his land and even to sleep upon it; in his eyes you could not commit a graver sin. Father has a great horror of tramps.”

Cathcart sprang up and, for the moment, he was seriously disturbed.

“I didn’t know it,” he said, and he added half in laughter, “I’ll get off it at once.”

But she looked so cool, so much at ease, and she charmed his eyes and mind so much that he did not move a step.

“He won’t have you arrested,” she said, “because it’s only a first offense, and I would intercede for you, knowing that you would apologize most humbly.”

Arthur sat down again, and they began to talk lightly and aimlessly, caring little what they said, but satisfied with the presence of each other. She pointed to a slender segment of roof just showing over the crest of a hill and said that it was one of

their country homes. Mr. Howe was there and so was Mr. Hargrove. Arthur's face darkened at the mention of Mr. Hargrove's name. It may be that she saw it, and it may be that she also uttered the name to see his frown.

She did most of the talking now, and Arthur was content to watch her. He did not realize, until this moment, to what a pitch his mind had been keyed by hopes, ambitions, and calculations. It was a luxury to lean back against the tree and watch her, with the sun shining on her hair, turning its gold to deeper gold, and the play of color in her checks. He realized that, despite her grave womanliness, she was very young, and suddenly he felt sorrier for her than for himself. What might not be done with her youth and inexperience when two such strong men as James Howe and William Hargrove were forcing her? They would have the advantage, too, of absence in an alien land, where strangeness would compel her to turn to them.

“When do you come back from England?” he asked at last.

“Early in the autumn.” she replied. “I do not

care to stay any longer than the summer.”

He noticed that she said “I” not “we,” and also that when she said it her chin seemed to stiffen and the curve of her lip to grow firmer. He wondered if he had not underrated her power of resistance, that is, if she cared to resist.

“I want to see how your campaign ends,” she said, bending upon him a smile that puzzled him—he did not know whether it expressed interest or irony. “You realize, of course, that as an Independent you have great obstacles—you have ‘a very hard row to hoe’ is the expression, is it not?”

“Yes, that’s it.”

“You have the party organizations to fight and my father, too. And my father is an extremely formidable and dangerous man; you realize that, too, do you not?”

“I certainly do,” replied Cathcart with the utmost sincerity. “I’d rather have any other man against me.”

“I wanted to warn you,” she said with a continuation of the manner that puzzled him,

“and now I think I shall go.”

“Let you, at least, see me safely off your father’s property,” he said, and walked beside her to the road. There he thought he might continue, and she, not saying him nay, they strolled on together in the shade of the over-arching trees. In the midst of their aimless but none the less pleasant talk he made up his mind to one thing: He had been a fool to stay away from the Howes, he had carried the point too far; he should have known what James Howe was, a man who indulged in no heroics, who wore no coat of mail, who made suavity of manner a part of his gospel of life. He had deliberately played into the hands of Mr. Hargrove.

They heard a rumble behind them, the grind of an automobile, approaching slowly, and when Arthur looked back he saw a big, dark olive green machine appear on the crest of a hill.

“It is father’s,” said Lucy. “I knew it was he, even before he came in sight. I know that slow rumble. His machine can make eighty miles an hour, but he never allows it to go more than ten, and his chauffeur is dying of chagrin.”

Despite his previous resolution Arthur began to feel a certain anxiety. He might have been mistaken about Mr. Howe. The great banker might think him impertinent to be caught walking with his daughter, and might say things which, at the least, would be unpleasant. But not for worlds would he have made any excuse for leaving her at that time, and after a single backward look he took no further notice. He walked calmly on by her side, his figure firmly erect. Presently the machine overtook them and stopped, the well known voice of James Howe calling to his daughter.

Then Cathcart turned and saw that Mr. Hargrove, too, was in the machine, and the expression in the eyes of Mr. Hargrove was not pleasant. But Mr. Howe showed only geniality; he would not carry any business or political quarrel of his into private life. He held out his hand to Arthur and Arthur took it, although he felt that the stain of corrupt money was upon it. But this man was Lucy Howe's father.

You have quite neglected us, Mr. Cathcart," said Mr. Howe, in his suavest tone, "or you have

completely forgotten us, which is worse. I have heard of you on the island, and for the last two or three weeks you have been only a few miles from us. Still we have not seen you.”

Arthur murmured apologies and also shook hands with Mr. Hargrove, who was not quite so warm in his greeting.

“You are going to my house now,” said Mr. Howe. “I want you to know what I can do with a country place, and to understand that I am not all business.”

Arthur accepted the invitation, and the banker even went so far as to put Cathcart and his daughter on the same seat while he and Mr. Hargrove sat in front. But Mr. Howe did nearly all the talking, talking of the farm as he called it—in reality a thousand acres on which very little farming was done—and his plans to beautify it.

“The cottage” lay in a warm nook among the hills, a long brick house of soft red tints, rambling but everywhere pleasing to the eye and restful. Arthur went in with them and saw an interior apparently of the utmost simplicity, but

he knew that this very simplicity was the result of careful planning and great expenditure. The cottage carried with it the cost of a castle, and while he had long realized to the full the power of James Howe, he now understood also the many-sidedness of the man.

He stayed an hour, going through the house, into the conservatories, and on the lawns. But James Howe now deftly kept him by his side as a guide holds to a visitor, while Mr. Hargrove and Lucy came on behind, and Arthur saw that he would have no further opportunity to be alone with her.

No allusion whatever was made to finance or politics; it was all idyllic, rural, and Arthur understood that Mr. Howe would be the last man to make an open quarrel with him. He accepted the basis, and when he was ready to go and Mr. Howe offered to send him home in his machine he accepted the offer.

“We expect to see you here often.” said Mr. Howe genially.

“I shall certainly come,” said Arthur—but he

knew that Mr. Howe and Miss Howe were to sail for Europe within a week.

“I may trespass again,” he said to Miss Howe.

“If you are not afraid,” she replied with her puzzling smile.

Mr. Howe and Mr. Hargrove were alert, but they did not understand, and the next moment Cathcart was bowing good bye to them.



7 The Reign of Terror

Before the Howes sailed for Europe Cathcart called once at their house, and he met Lucy Howe once elsewhere. He was treated with uniform courtesy, even with a friendly familiarity by Mr. Howe, and a rumor crept into the press that the two might heal their feud with the result that Cathcart would yet appear as the champion of the Rapid Transit Bill and an organization candidate. It annoyed Arthur at first, but he understood why the report had started, and he said nothing in reply.

Lucy Howe was unchanged; her bearing toward him did not differ from her manner toward other attractive young men, and Cathcart assumed nothing. Mr. Cathcart kept sedulously to himself, and there was no attempt to bring the heads of the two families together, not even by Mrs. Throckmorton, who appeared for a day or two.

When the Howes departed, Arthur went back to his studies with increased diligence. Mr. Cathcart talked of going to England, and announced frequently that he was about to chose his berth on the steamer, but for the first summer in thirty years failed to do so. Arthur knew that it was a great thing for his uncle to do, a great proof of his affection for his nephew, but Mr. Cathcart himself would have been the last man to admit it, and Arthur, understanding, made no allusion. Yet his heart warmed toward his crusty uncle.

The summer passed, autumn came and advanced, and elections for the General Assembly were to be held throughout the state. In all the districts the rival machine organizations put forth candidates Republican and Democratic, and on his own Arthur promptly announced himself as an Independent. Old party leaders trained to run with the machines and having no thought of anything else laughed at his temerity.

But Arthur was in no wise daunted. He had been over the field before and he had all the advantage of experience, knowledge, and self-possession. He did not begin his campaign until

the other candidates were a week in the field, but when he started he had an immense store of powerful ammunition and the skill and courage with which to use it. He boldly attacked both parties in his district, saying that each was the creature of a machine, and that they were equally corrupt, the incorporators of the East Side Rapid Transit Bill not being particular whether the Republican or the Democrat was elected; in either case they expected his support.

His long rest, hours of silent thought and preparation, and the intense concentration of his mind upon one thing brought him to this subject full of fire, life, and penetration. Facts that had been obscure to him before became clear now, his power of oratory grew wonderfully, and above all he showed himself a master of attack, the very thing he needed most in the career that he had chosen for himself. In three days the delusion that he was a joke was dispelled from the district forever, and the term "Little Artie" was heard no more. The Democratic and Republican candidates ceased to laugh.

Collins, with the powerful help of the

Standard, was always at his elbow, and other newspapers, seeing that he was a figure, also came to his aid. It was in many ways a crucial moment. People everywhere were getting tired of the old political machines, and the bosses. These easy-going people, disturbed by revelations of corruption, were getting the singular idea into their heads that they ought to regulate their own public affairs, and, what was far more singular, the idea stuck. They had talked of reform many times before, and they had tried it, but only for brief spells; then they would grow tired or forget all about it. Now it showed signs of lasting life and the man and the opportunity were meeting, although the same opportunity had been there for thousands of other young men.

Cathcart opened fire with all his vigor upon the East Side Rapid Transit Bill. James Howe, and the Twentieth National Bank. He had made further investigations during the summer, and he had new facts, showing not only the corrupt alliance, but how the incorporators of the company would make unearned millions out of the city. He traced the growth of the measure step

by step, the vast though secret lobby that was pushing it forward and proclaiming its merits. He showed how an allusion had been produced in the public mind by these invisible agencies, how black had been made to appear white, and he demanded punishment. He did not hesitate to name men, powerful in politics and finance, and he showed no respect for their professions of probity and piety. All political machines were the same to him, and he attacked all with a fierce joy.

The Cathcart campaign developed extraordinary life. People left the meetings of the Republican and Democratic candidates to attend those of the Independent. The contest was pungent and spicy, like no other that the city remembered, and there were many personalities which are always far more interesting than principles. Radigan, who had laughed and pitied, began to feel alarm. He did not show it in public, but he did to his henchmen who met in his little office.

“The trouble with this Cathcart,” he said pathetically, “is that he ain’t a Reformer and a blamed fool at the same time; that’s the only kind

of reformer that I've ever knowed before.”

In the dark back alleys and among the mixed populations there were mutterings against Cathcart, and his friends took cognizance of them. About this time was formed what came to be known as The Praetorian Guard. It was a band of stalwart young men of clean life who were fascinated by Cathcart's personality and who hoped some day to imitate him. Meantime, they looked upon him as their leader, and resolved to protect him while they learned from him. They were gathered quietly at every meeting around the speakers' stand, and whenever he left the hall or the cart-tail they marched around him with equal quietness and lack of ostentation.

He heard, in the course of the campaign, that Lucy Howe and her father had arrived from Europe, but no direct message came to him. It was Mrs. Throckmorton who brought the news, and the lady was gossipy.

“Lucy is as beautiful and attractive as ever,” said she, “and I think that what was planned for her has come to naught. The European trip was a failure. Mr. Hargrove will have to try again and

press his luck on his own soil.”

Here, at least, was encouragement, and Arthur continued the campaign with renewed zest and vigor. He felt that he was making progress, not only in popular applause, but in votes. He knew that his antagonists were frightened—he knew that Radigan was puzzled and did not understand how to meet his attack. Before this, the leader had dealt only with weaklings, not with men of intellect and courage. Now he was faced by a Reformer who was also sane, a man who sought out every weak point in his defense, who knew where to find them, and who never ceased to hit them hard.

He did not wholly abandon society, and once again he met Lucy Howe at Mrs. Throckmorton's. It seemed to him that her manner toward him was lacking alike in warmth and coldness, just neutral, and that she was a little paler than usual, but he pretended indifference, and they did not speak of his campaign. He asked her the perfunctory questions about her European trip and the health of her father, and she answered in the usual conversational tone.

“I hear that your attack is beginning to wear upon the great Mr. Howe,” said Mrs. Throckmorton to him afterward, and three days later he had proof of it.

Arthur, by virtue of the Cathcart fortune, had been for two or three years a director in an important trust company. Until recently he had regarded the place as merely nominal and paid no attention to its duties; now he began to look at it from another point of view and attended every meeting, taking an active share in the business before the board.

A meeting had just been called and Arthur was among the first to arrive. Mr. Howe, who was also a director, came in soon afterward, and when he saw Arthur frowned slightly. He tried to drive away the frown and assume his old air of geniality. But to Arthur there was something stiff and strained about his manner as he held out his hand, telling of effort, and the clasp of the fingers was far from warm.

“How do you do, Mr. Cathcart?” said Mr. Howe. “You’re making a lively campaign and aiming some pretty blows at Wall Street. Well,

well, Wall Street's old and tough, and if we can help a young man along by turning ourselves into a target so much the better."

"That is, it amuses me and doesn't hurt Wall Street?" added Arthur, a twinkle in his eye.

"Just so."

Mr. Howe spoke in a careless manner, but Arthur saw that he was worried. Some of the old calm was lacking, and he was darker than usual under the eyes. In the course of the meeting he also gave a little vent to his feelings. Important investments were in question, and Mr. Howe made a speech, counseling the greatest conservatism and caution. He said that agitation had arisen, that men plausible of speech were attacking great financial institutions, and were undermining the general credit. All the directors looked at Arthur, but he seemed unconscious and made no reply, either directly or indirectly.

When they left the office of the trust company Mr. Howe paused a moment beside Arthur and said:

"I would not go too far, Mr. Cathcart. We

understand that there is a certain liberty in politics, but there is also a limit.”

“The limit of truth and right,” replied Arthur.

“Who is to be the judge of that?” said Mr. Howe somberly, as he walked away.

Despite all this concentration of forces against him, there was a strong undercurrent in the district, making toward Cathcart. The very fact that he was opposed in such a manner created sympathy for him in the minds of many, and his merciless speeches carried conviction to the minds of others that here was a man who was badly needed in the Albany Legislature.

It was one of the most turbulent elections held in New York since the old days of Tweed. In the words of Collins, rough house was attempted everywhere. Cathcart had hired headquarters right in the heart of the Italian, Jewish, and Polish section, and there he awaited the result without apprehension. It was true that he had been equally confident in his first campaign, but it was a different sort of confidence now, the certainty

born of experience and knowledge.

The reporters, a half dozen men from the Praetorian Guard, and some personal friends were present with him. Among the latter was Tommy Reed, who had gone once or twice through the district with Cathcart, and who had shown an extraordinary discretion by keeping his mouth tightly shut. Mr. Cathcart, after saying with great emphasis that he would flee again to the club to escape such a disgusting tumult, came into the room, "Just to look once at the animals," he said and stayed. After he grew used to the others and fell into the swing he sought no longer to conceal his anxiety.

Arthur was not deceived. From the first the returns were favorable, far better than either he or his friends had hoped, and their tenor never changed. He was not only elected but he was chosen by an overwhelming majority. His vote exceeded the vote given his opponents combined. The *Standard* said editorially the next morning that a new force had appeared in the politics of the State. Arthur's feeling of pleasure remained but he was grave and rather silent, weighed

somewhat with a sense of responsibility. On the second day he received a brief note from Lucy Howe, not more than five or six lines. She sent no congratulations, but she said she thought he would make a good member, useful to the State. Under the circumstances it was as much as she could do, and it aroused in him feelings of mingled elation and sadness.

One of the newspapers, on the same day, contained an interview with Mr. Howe, in which he said that the election of Mr. Cathcart was of no importance, so far as it concerned the East Side Rapid Transit Bill. It was a good measure, and it was sure to pass the legislature at the coming session.

The new General Assembly convened in due time at Albany, and Arthur was a marked man from the first. The story of himself and his campaign was known throughout the state and he was regarded with general interest and much aversion. All the partisans were in a great majority against him, because an Independent was in their eyes something heinous and

treasonable, but Cathcart soon disarmed most of the criticism. A legislature is a body of men thrown together for a long period. It always has in itself some of the aspects of a club, and animosities based merely on a difference in political belief cannot thrive; quarrels, if quarrels there are, must be personal.

Cathcart's pleasant manners and the reputation won in his campaign quickly gave him a significant victory. The legislature was Republican, and when the Republican Speaker of the House came to make up the very important committee on Ways and Means, he made Cathcart one of the minority members, an unusual compliment for a new man. Mr. Herford, the Speaker, was actuated in this matter by two motives. He was a strong man himself, and he saw that Cathcart was going to be a figure during the session. Moreover, he chose to class Cathcart as a Democrat, and by appointing him in that capacity he put a thorn in the side of the Democratic opposition. The second reason was feminine influence. Mr. Herford had a young and beautiful wife with whom he was very much in

love. Cathcart was polite to her, and by a judicious word now and then in the Speaker's ear, she induced him to go in the way in which he already wished to go.

The Democratic machine leaders protested against such an appointment, claiming that Cathcart was in no sense a Democrat, but Mr. Herford was unshakable and they had to submit. Arthur's appointment was made and his position was assured at once.

The winter was unusually cold, presenting unbroken months of ice and snow, but it will be remembered long at Albany as the year of the lively legislature, the legislature in which there were few dull moments, and which worked the beginning of a political revolution in the state. The feeling of independence, of revolt against the old order, of desire for a purer and better political life, so marked a feature of our time, was spreading, and Cathcart found himself at the head of a band, not large in members, but possessed of great fighting power.

Arthur became the leader by natural selection; that is, he glided into the place because he was

the most fit for it and because the others saw and recognized his fitness. He never led any but willing followers: if any man could not agree he dropped out of the ranks for the time being but promptly resumed his place for the next fight. Worthington, a capable young lawyer from Rochester, was the lieutenant and ably he seconded his chief. A bushy-whiskered old farmer named Kirkman, from the western part of the state, heavy of manner and slow of speech but full of native wit and keenness formed an able rear guard.

Thus the Reign of Terror began. Collins had come up for the *Standard* as its legislative correspondent, and it was he who gave to this epoch such a significant name, a name that stuck. As Collins himself said: "There was always something doing," and the machine leaders were in constant fear. Cathcart's oratory was direct and powerful, though often conversational in tone. He always cut straight to the heart of the matter. Worthington was witty and sarcastic, and thus the two formed foils to each other. Sometimes, when they failed to kill a bad bill between them, old

Farmer Kirkman joked it to death, and then buried it with a homely illustration or two.

The East Side Rapid Transit Bill lay in hiding for a long time. Arthur discovered that it was the original plan to have it introduced by one of the New York City members, but this intention was changed, and a rather simple-minded rural member was induced to undertake the task of presenting it when the right moment came. Thus it would appear under innocent auspices, and its supporters could claim that even the rural regions, which were not affected at all, saw the great benefits it would confer upon the metropolis.

The winter was far advanced when the bill was finally presented, and never before had a measure come to Albany backed by such powerful support and such an influential lobby. Money would be poured out in its defense, and there were intrigues and cabals without number. But Cathcart did not despair; the fight over it was yet to be waged on the floor, and he and his allies had sharp weapons.

Two days before the measure was to be introduced, Mr. Hargrove himself appeared in Albany, accompanied by Radigan, and Arthur, accompanied by Worthington, had an interview with the two arranged by respective friends. Mr. Hargrove had acquired self command and no longer lost his temper.

“Mr. Howe’s pride is involved in this bill,” he said. “Such a fight has been made upon it and he has been aspersed so much that all his fighting spirit—and that is great—has been aroused. He is invincible, and this bill will pass. As you are staking everything upon this contest, Mr. Cathcart, we ask you to withdraw before it breaks you.”

“If it is to make me or break me, I’ll stand by the issue,” said Arthur.

Mr. Hargrove pressed him no further. In his secret soul the banker was glad that Arthur abided by his decision: the more he fought the bill, the more he fought James Howe; and the more he fought James Howe, the further he was from his daughter. When Arthur went out Radigan followed him into the street.

“Mr. Cathcart,” said the leader, “we ain’t enemies except in politics are we?”

“No,” replied Cathcart. “You betrayed me once, Mr. Radigan, but I suppose you couldn’t rise above your education and surroundings. I’m sure I don’t want any quarrel.”

“I’m glad to hear you say so. Mr. Cathcart,” said Radigan, passing over the sarcastic part of the reply, “and I want to tell you that I haven’t been thirty years in politics for nothing. I ain’t so sure about that bill as Mr. Hargrove and his friends are. From the very first, before anybody else, I saw the stuff that was in you, Mr. Cathcart, and I wanted you to be one of us.”

He stopped and rubbed his chin reflectively. Despite all that had passed Arthur was secretly pleased at the leader’s compliment.

“I’m much obliged to you for your good opinion, Mr. Radigan,” he said.

“I mean it, I mean every word of it,” said Radigan briskly. “I know a man when I see him. Besides, I’ve been studyin’ up on that bill, studyin’ hard, an’ I’m gettin’ to be a little shaky

on my first opinion of it.”

He stopped and again rubbed his chin reflectively. Arthur stared at him but in a moment the light came: Radigan believed Arthur’s to be the winning side, and would be a traitor again, but this time to his employers; in order to save himself from the flood, he would stir up his followers in the district against the bill, if Cathcart would take him as a political friend once more.

Arthur saw the value of the alliance, and he knew that the political school was not a Sunday School, but his conscience would not allow him to go to such lengths with Radigan.

“I’m sorry, Mr. Radigan,” he said politely, “but your opinion is changing a little too late; you are committed now, you know.”

“I didn’t say that I had changed entirely, said Radigan, recognizing the rebuff. ”I just meant I’d seem some things to be said on the other side, but I guess I’ll stand by the bill all right, all right.”

The famous battle opened ten days later, and it

was fought on the floor of the House and in the committee room for weeks. The legislature was of more than average ability and every parliamentary device was used by either side. The speeches of Cathcart, Worthington, and Kirkman were magnificent, each after its own model, and the lobbies were packed with intent throngs. They brought doubtful members to their side, and while they were bringing them they skillfully fought off a vote which at that time would have passed the bill. This was the first crucial test, and all the resources of the most daring lobby that had ever gathered at Albany were exerted to break down the barrier. Mr. Hargrove handled the money bags, and their contents were poured out with a reckless hand.

Cathcart also labored hard to create a public opinion which should be a countervailing influence to that formed by the Howe lobby. In a Republican and Democratic country such a course is necessary, because few men are strong enough, even when they think they are right, to resist massed public opinion. Nor was he without supporters in the press. The *Standard*, formerly a

leading Democratic organ had become an independent journal, and it stood by him unflinchingly in its news and editorial columns. Another newspaper in Buffalo and a third in Rochester did as well.

Arthur kept up his habit of silent and lonely walks whenever he could find an opportunity, and in the bitterest weather he often trudged over the hills about Albany. Although a fierce winter, it was to him a beautiful one, white with snow and glittering with ice, and the skies blue and gold in their clearness. He had just returned from such a walk late one afternoon when Worthington came into his room with news.

“We must be making progress,” the Rochester man said as he smiled in a gratified way, “because the enemy is now bringing up his last and heaviest battery.”

“What do you mean?” asked Arthur.

“James Howe himself has come to Albany to beat us, and I hear also that he has brought with him a handsome young daughter. They are at the *Ten Eyck*.”

“It does look as if they were now making their supreme effort to beat us,” said Cathcart quietly.

Yet his heart was beating much more rapidly than usual. He had tried to keep Lucy Howe out of his mind, but he could not, and now her father, coming to win the bill, had brought her with him. His heart throbbed to see her, and yet he felt that it would be better for him not to see her at such a time. He kept to his room that evening and was alone.

But he saw her the next morning. He had just made an impassioned speech on the floor of the House, and all the time he was on his feet he kept his eyes on the Speaker. When he sat down he glanced toward the lobby and there he saw a face, the sight of which made his heart leap. She was in a group of ladies, and she was dressed in dark material, but a rose on her breast and another in her hair touched her with vivid and delicate color. Her face still wore the look of grave sweetness that he had last seen there, and there were new depths of womanliness in the dark blue eyes.

He was embarrassed when his eyes met hers, but if she was she did not show it. She smiled and

bowed, and both bow and smile were gravely sweet. His blood thrilled and the color rushed to his face, but he took a bold resolution and acted upon it at once. He left his seat and went to her in the lobby, although conscious of the gossip that it would create. Everybody would know who Lucy Howe was, because of her beauty and distinction and because she was James Howe's daughter.

Nor was Arthur mistaken. A murmur of surprise and interest ran through House and lobby when James Howe's famous opponent left his seat to join James Howe's daughter. But both Arthur and Lucy ignored it, and she gave him a friendly hand. He sat down beside her and for half an hour they talked, while the House watched and took notes. She asked him to call upon them at the hotel, and he did so the evening of the same day. James Howe was stiffly courteous, and Arthur saw that he had grown much older during the winter. He affected to jest about the great contest and pitied Arthur for his coming defeat, but Cathcart saw that it was forced. James Howe had lost some of the confidence, given by a half century of almost

unbroken success, and himself feared defeat.

The call was purely formal. The vinegary aunt, Mrs. Thornton, was present, and imparted an acrid tone to the conversation. Mr. Hargrove came in after a while and was supercilious toward Cathcart and proprietary in manner toward Lucy. Arthur cared nothing about the first but the last always annoyed and angered him, although he did not permit it to interfere with the courtesy of voice and speech. Lucy herself was quiet and rather pale, and Arthur did not feel that the call was wholly a success.

But its results exceeded anything that he expected, and clever constructors built a great fabric of it. In two or three days it was said all over Albany that Arthur Cathcart, the tribune of the people, the incorruptible, was going to sell out to the East Side Rapid Transit Bill and his price was James Howe's daughter; he could not be bought with money, but an uncommonly beautiful girl would fetch him.

“Ridiculous!” said Worthington angrily in the

lobby of the hotel, "Cathcart's as true as steel!"

"But he was with the Howes evening before last for a long time," they said, "and everybody saw how his eyes glowed and his face flushed when she appeared in the lobby. Anybody could tell at a glance that he is dead in love with her."

Worthington could not deny these facts and he grew angrier than ever. He knew that Arthur would be the last to hear of the tale told through the town, and after long hesitation he decided to speak to him about it himself. He found Arthur in his room somber and silent, and whipped himself up to his task.

"Do you know what they are saying about you now?" he asked. "Do you know the latest scandal they are spreading?"

Arthur smiled and regarded Worthington with good-humored affection.

"I don't know," he replied, "but whatever it is it will refute itself just like the others."

"No it won't," said Worthington gravely. "It's of a different kind. It touches you in an undefended spot."

“What can it be?” asked Cathcart quickly.

Then Worthington blurted it out.

“Why they’re telling that you’re in love with James Howe’s daughter, which I think is likely to be true and no harm in itself, but they’re saying, also, that you’re going to drop your opposition to the Transit Bill and to both machines, if James Howe will let you marry his daughter.”

Worthington told long afterward of the splendid rage into which his chief burst. He did not know that Cathcart, usually so calm and so self contained, could be so violent. He would tell how sparks leaped from his chief’s eyes, how his cheeks reddened and how he shot out the words, “The foul liars!”

Arthur was in truth fiercely angry at such a story, more on Lucy’s account and less on his own. He could reply to it in an indirect but effective way, but what could she say?

He made the next day another fierce attack upon the bill and called for a vote. The tactics of delay were no longer his now, but were adopted by the other. He felt that he had the majority and

he intended to push the fight to an issue. Never was he bitterer or more powerful in attack, and when he finished men said: "If Cathcart has sold out to the Howe crowd for a woman he has a curious way of clinching the bargain."

Lucy was in the lobby when the speech was made and Cathcart did not know it until the end of his argument, when he saw her hurrying out, pale-faced. He was sorry, sorry for her, and sorry for himself, but he felt that he was bound to do what he had done. It was the only way.



8 The Triumph

The fight now approached its last phase and both Arthur and his opponents knew that a vote was not far off. Meanwhile, a new form of attack was made upon him with great violence. He was an enemy of both machines, Democratic and Republican alike, and as in his campaign in the city they united to crush him. The report was spread all over the state by word of mouth and by print that he was a demagogue, rejected by both parties, who was now seeking to win a place for himself by methods of notoriety and attack. The name, "The Tribune," which someone had applied to him, was now used in derision.

The day of the vote was now almost at hand. If the measure passed the House it might yet be defeated in the Senate, but Cathcart resolved to crush it in the House, in the place of its origin. Two days were devoted to the speeches on the bill, the time fairly divided between its supporters

and its opponents. The Republican Speaker held the scales with justice. He had lately fallen into bad odor with his own machine, having shown signs of independence both in thought and action, and he felt that if Cathcart should triumph the leaders, fearing another successful revolt, might not hesitate to dethrone him. Cathcart knew how the wind blew with the Speaker and he trimmed his sails to the fair breeze.

Cathcart, in opposition to the bill, made one of the most brilliant speeches ever heard on the floor of the House, and a packed audience was present when he spoke. He was so full of his subject, he knew it so thoroughly, and he felt it so deeply that his speech was spontaneous. The words crowded for utterance but came forth, logical, coherent, and tipped with fire. The audience gave intense and rapt attention throughout the speech.

Only a minute or two before he began the Howe party entered the lobby, and sat where they could have a good view of the floor. It was the first time that James Howe had come into the House, and Arthur's single rapid but penetrating glance told him that the old banker was now

aging fast. The gray hair had turned white and the wrinkled cheeks hung in thin folds. Lucy was pale, but in her paleness he saw a pathos that made her more appealing to him than ever. Mr. Hargrove was now the master spirit, swaggering, dominant, the sole proprietor, who was soon to become in every sense the head of this great banking family. Evidently Mr. Hargrove had persuaded himself that victory was near, as he radiated triumph. Cathcart did not look at the three again, but the impression that remained with him was of Lucy's pale face.

It was pointed out afterward that, terrible though Cathcart's indictment was, he never once called the name of James Howe, and James Howe would be the chief beneficiary under the bill. He mercilessly dissected the measure clause by clause, but he let its chief promoter alone. Those were not wanting who recalled the story that he would sell out for a price, that price to be a girl, but it was applied now in a gentler and kindlier way, and the halo around the speaker received a fresher and deeper tinge.

Worthington followed Cathcart for the

opposition, and he too was in splendid form, light, witty, sarcastic, the rapier after the saber. Farmer Kirkman gave the third turn to the debate and he scored the bill with homely simile.

Then the time for the vote came and again the lobbies were packed, the party there as before. Cathcart sat at his desk, apparently calm but beneath his work he had a great nervousness. He knew that it was a crucial moment in his career.

The clerk began to call the roll, and he was deliberate in pronouncing the names. He understood the dramatic nature of the vote and he added to it with his manner, pronouncing the syllables in long-drawn, sonorous tones. It was a singular characteristic of this test that the yeas and nays ran almost even until they were down to the P's when the yeas ran ahead ten votes. Then a long drawn breath of triumph from the friends of the bill ran through the House and a cheer began, but it quickly died under the rappings of the Speaker. They would have died without the help of the Speaker's gavel, because a lot of nays came together and the yeas were in a minority. It was still anybody's fight.

The nays kept the lead and as the names moved on toward Z without any closing up of the gap Worthington could not keep a glow of triumph from his face. He moved in his seat and looked joyfully at his leader. Cathcart smiled back at him, and though his heart was beating proudly he would not yet show elation.

The clerk continued to call the names and he came to Worthington almost the last. Worthington, in a loud emphatic voice, swelled with the note of triumph voted "No!" and there were but two votes after him. The bill was beaten by a majority of seven, and a new member, a young man, had won the greatest personal triumph that the Legislature could recall!

As soon as the Clerk announced the result of the vote the Legislature and the lobbies burst into a tumult that the Speaker could not repress. The members with instinctive motion thronged about Cathcart. Worthington and Kirkham wrung a hand apiece. Congratulations poured upon him and many came from men who had voted against him. The lobbies were standing up and cheering, but three people were leaving as quietly as they

could, and one of them was an old, old man, with white hair, and thin cheeks on which the wrinkled flesh hung in folds.

While the tumult was in progress three persons were sitting in the largest room in the best suite at their hotel. James Howe, his partner, and daughter had slipped out of the Capitol almost unnoticed in the crowd. When people inquired for them to see how they took it they were gone.

Mr. Howe received the blow at its full weight. It was personal as well as financial. Hidden in the carriage they had not spoken a word on their way to the hotel. Mr. Howe's hands trembled. Mr. Hargrove was dumb with surprise and disappointment. He had persuaded himself that success was sure. Lucy looked at her father and she had a tenderer feeling for him now in defeat than in victory.

Her father crouched in a great, curtained chair in his sitting room, and the stoop in his shoulders showed more perceptibly, Lucy's eyes became wet as she looked at him. It was no day of triumph for her, nor yet wholly of defeat. She walked to the window and looked out at the street

and the people passing in the bright wintry sunshine. It was Mr. Hargrove who spoke first and he addressed himself to Mr. Howe.

“It’s only a temporary defeat,” he said. “The fellow took us by surprise. We can bring the bill up again in another form, and then we’ll win.”

Lucy turned and looked at him with bright eyes. She saw clearly that Mr. Hargrove looked only at the tangible result of the defeat, the loss of millions. Of the position in which he and Mr. Howe were placed before the public he thought nothing, or at least little.

“I wouldn’t mind it, Mr. Howe,” he said. “We can down him sure. We’ll get to work on a new bill at once.”

Then a strange thing happened, and Mr. Hargrove was almost petrified with surprise, Lucy Howe suddenly walked forward and put her hand on her father’s shoulder. The gesture was at once rebuking and protecting, but as she faced Mr. Hargrove her face expressed only defiance.

“There will be no new bill,” she said, “or if there is one my father will have nothing to do

with it. That bill was wrong and both of you know it. You cannot fight Mr. Cathcart. He would beat you again. Before this you have had to deal with only cowards and trimmers. It is the first time that you have had to fight a man who has both courage and knowledge, and who is on the side of right. There is a change, too, in the public. I am a woman, but I can feel it better perhaps than you.”

Mr. Hargrove stared, open-mouthed, but he did not speak. Mr. Howe flared up.

“Leave us at once, Lucy!” he said. “How dare you speak in such a manner!”

The old man rose to his feet. The stoop was gone from his shoulders, and his cheeks were livid. But Lucy was not afraid. She was conscious alike of her own strength, and of the sudden new note of weakness in her father.

“She loves Cathcart,” said Mr. Hargrove sullenly.

She flashed him one look, which was enough to tell him that he had made a great mistake, but she did not notice him otherwise. With a

protecting gesture of tenderness she put her arm around her father's neck.

“Father,” she said, “you are wrong and Mr. Cathcart is right. He has won because he is right. You must see it now. I ask you to let this measure go. We don't need any more money. Come, let's go away. It's time for you to rest. You've worked hard for fifty years, can't you play a little now?”

She pressed her smooth young cheek against his old and wrinkled one. Despite his faults and his sins, which were those of the world, she loved him and he knew it. The defeat, too, had been more crushing than he would admit, and for the first time in half a century he felt tired—tired in body, mind, and soul. He did not realize until today that he was old, and what the girl said was true—a half century of work and no play.

“You will quit, won't you father?” she entreated. “You have been deceived. With an equal chance you could defeat anybody, but you were on the wrong side, and you did not know it.”

She appealed at once to his love and to his

pride. His other children, so much older, married, and gone from home, had also passed partly from his heart, and his full love was centered upon his youngest child.

“If for no other reason, drop the bill to oblige me,” she entreated.

Mr. Hargrove had been standing by the window, silent but full of wrath. Mr. Hargrove, with all his rise in the world, was still wanting in finesse, and now he came over to Mr. Howe and said:

“Mr. Howe, you won’t abandon this bill! You can’t! We can’t! Do you know what has been the talk of this town? They said at first that Cathcart would drop the fight because he loved your daughter! Now are we to drop it because your daughter loves—”

He got no further. Lucy turned upon him with flaming face and angry eyes that transfixed him, although she said not a word, and Mr. Hargrove stopped abruptly. He realized that again he had let his passion get the better of him.

“Father,” said Lucy gently, “don’t you see, that

if there is such talk, it is better for us to stop it by going away. Why can't we go to Europe again or to California? They are all attacking you now, but they will forget it, if you are out of sight."

Mr. Hargrove made a gesture of scorn as if he could not believe that his partner, could be so weak, and once more he was guilty of a mistake. Mr. Hargrove, with all his worldly experience, persisted in measuring people by himself, and the measure often failed. It was the greatest fault in his mental composition. Mr. Howe took fire at the sign of insubordination from his junior and the old decision returned.

"We will abandon the bill," he said. "The Twentieth National Bank will have nothing further to do with it, and you and I, Lucy, will go to Southern California in two weeks. You are right, I need rest, and a warmer climate than this is good in the winter for an old man."

She was wise enough not to be effusive, not to make any fuss over him and his decision, but merely kissed him on the forehead and said, "I'm sure, father, you'll never be sorry."

Mr. Hargrove, knowing himself defeated, left the room, none too politely.

Arthur and Lucy met but once during the session, and it was the next day after Lucy influenced Mr. Howe's decision. He had gone to their hotel to see a fellow committee-man, and, not finding the man in his room, was wandering about the building in search of him. He went into one of the small parlors which was dusky with half lights and saw a dim figure by the deeply curtained window. Here he thought might be his man, but a woman's voice spoke to him gravely and called him by name.

Cathcart flushed when he saw that it was Lucy, and mingled emotions caused the flush, but he sat down beside her.

"I did not know that you would speak to me now." he blundered out.

"Why not?" she asked gravely sweet.

"Oh, that bill! in the public eye it has put your father and myself in direct opposition, and as we may have to go over it all again we shall be in the same position."

She glanced at him, and if the light had not been so dim he might have seen a little smile in the blue eyes.

“You are not complimentary,” she said. “You make me a poor politician. Do you think that a woman must always turn a political fight into a personal one, too?”

“I suppose not.” he said. “At any rate I’m glad to hear you say ‘No.’”

“Whether you believe me or not,” she said, “I will tell you a piece of news that you must believe. You will not have it all to do over again. The Twentieth National Bank is done with the Rapid Transit Bill forever. It will not be presented a second time.”

“You know this?” he asked incredulously.

“I know it to be a fact. My father has given his promise.”

He divined at once that she had been the cause of the final retreat.

“It was you who did it.” he said.

She was silent. Her hand lying upon the arm of

the chair trembled a little. Cathcart was a bold man, but he was also a modest one. Had he been a bold man without self depreciation he might have spoken then. He would have jumped at once to the conclusion that she had done this for his sake, but being what he was, he concluded that it was wholly on her father's account

“I am glad,” he said, simply and earnestly. “You do not think that it has ever been any pleasure to me to be in direct opposition to Mr. Howe?”

“No, I do not. I have been able to credit you with different motives.”

“And you do not believe that I have been merely a seeker after notoriety?”

“Nor that either. I attribute to you higher aims.”

He paused, embarrassed, but she added quietly:

“We return to New York this afternoon and my father and I start for Los Angeles next week. We are likely to remain in Southern California all the winter.”

“Then we part as friends, I hope?” he said.

“Oh, yes she replied. ”Haven’t I just told you that I do not turn political quarrels into personal ones. You will come to see us in New York, when we return.”

“If I may?”

She left Albany with her father that afternoon, and the newspapers announced definitely the next morning that no attempt would be made to revive the Rapid Transit Bill. But they did not state that it had received its death blow from the hands of a girl.

Cathcart returned to New York as a hero and there followed banquets and receptions. But Arthur did not intend to be idle.

His Albany fight was really a New York fight waged in Albany, and now he meant to go deeper into metropolitan affairs. While his friends and enemies thought he was resting, bathed in adulation, he was on his way back to Albany with a plan that he intended to put through while his reputation was fresh.

There had been much talk recently about great

financial institutions in New York holding funds that were in the nature of trust funds, intended chiefly as a reserve for widows and orphans. It had been said that they had long influenced legislation by methods that were corrupt, and were growing insolent in their power. Their officers paid to themselves enormous salaries out of the trust funds while the dividends of the widows and orphans steadily dwindled. These officers were financial autocrats in collusion with the great bankers, who, as directors, supported them, while they sold to them securities at excessive prices, all paid for out of the funds of the widow and orphan. They had been so long in the habit of taking other people's money and they had done it with such impunity that they considered other people's money their own.

It was now Cathcart's purpose to attack this colossal moneyed ring, which deemed itself invincible, and again he found a friend in the Speaker, who was in bad odor with the Republican machine, because the leaders did not consider him faithful enough. He was, as the politicians say, to be thrown down hard when his

term was over, but the Independents were rallying to him, and encouraged by Cathcart's example he was making a fight for political life on the basis of his own worth and honor and with every prospect of success.

Cathcart on the floor of the house demanded an investigation of the suspected corporations, and he brought the facts to support his demand. He repeated the demand and he kept it up day after day, seconded again by Worthington. He also secured an ally in the Senate who pushed it there, and despite all the efforts of a powerful lobby the result was a joint committee of investigation, of which he was the leading member.

The committee went down to New York amid some public ridicule. The people had forgotten Cathcart and were running after a new hero, and the old cry of "demagogue," "notoriety-seeker," was raised. Mr. Hargrove was active in it, but Mr. Howe and Lucy were still in Southern California and Arthur had not heard a word from them.

Arthur found that he had embarked upon a most difficult task. The insolent officials of the great corporations sneered at the committee; they

talked about a few cheap legislators trying to upset the huge financial fabric of the country. They frequently disobeyed the summonses of the committee, and at other times they lounged languidly and late in the sessions where they affected indifference at the questions asked them. They answered vaguely or were afflicted with sudden great lapses of memory. They stared through gold-rimmed glasses at the members of the committee, as if they were specimens of strange animals just come to town.

There was a week of baffling work, without result; the probe would not go in. But Arthur persevered, and above all he worked. He sought evidence everywhere, and he brought back presidents and vice-presidents again and again, until the committee began to get a hold. He made these men disclose the extent of their gigantic salaries, although official after official had sworn that he did not know the salary of anybody else in his institution. He uncovered the purchases of securities, he showed how the directors who were also bankers and brokers elsewhere, would buy, for the corporations securities from themselves at

more than the market price, and sell back to themselves at less than the market price.

The two great political machines exerted themselves to protect the magnates. The leaders of both had received substantial favors from them, and they did not want such kind gentlemen to be crushed. But they could do little; the public was aroused, and the terrible Cathcart was always on guard. Not only were they powerless to help, but they, too, were soon involved in the exposures. The steady probing reached more than one sore spot. It was shown that the machine leader on each side had received money from the guilty corporations to affect legislation, and a dozen great reputations, financial, or political, were shattered. Cathcart often recalled words once spoken to him by Radigan. "I'm better than a lot of those who are bigger than me," and now, when he considered their respective opportunities, he concluded that Radigan had told the truth.

The investigation went far into the autumn, through hot weather and into the cold. The strain upon Cathcart, the days of acute cross-

questioning and the nights of assiduous preparation would have been great beyond endurance had he not been possessed of a constitution strengthened by an open life in the west, and a spirit that would not yield.

Cathcart, as usual, was looking far ahead. He intended to shatter, once for all, the nefarious alliance between low politics and high finance in the city of New York, and he planned an increase of his political power. Worthington, at his instance, came from Rochester to New York to live, and Arthur resolved to make him district attorney of the Borough of Manhattan when the term of the incumbent expired in the following year. This important office should be filled by an able, fearless, and independent man, and there was none better than Worthington.

In one of the intervals of the long examination Radigan came to see him at his house, and revived the proposition he had made at Albany. Radigan, as usual, was frank and was not burdened with a sense of shame.

“I’ve kept quiet about this matter until the present, Mr. Cathcart,” he said, “but, I’ve got to

look out for the future. It's the business of a district leader like me to know when he's licked, an' I've been licked good an' hard by you. You've thrown down the old bosses and you're to be the new boss. I want to fight under you and for you."

"Why, I'm no boss, Mr. Radigan!" exclaimed Cathcart, "and I don't want to be one."

Radigan looked incredulous. It did not enter into his scheme of things that a man should unseat another for any purpose except to get his place.

"Then what's your game?" he asked in surprise.

"To make our government as clean and effective as possible."

"And nothing on the side for a friend?"

"I haven't anything to give, but I hope that all my friends will get from the public everything they deserve."

It was a diplomatic and vague answer that did not convince Radigan. He merely concluded that Cathcart was an unusually deep one who would

not talk at all. He went out saying that he was a Cathcart man and expected to see Cathcart a bigger and more powerful figure than any Tammany Chieftain who had gone before.

Nevertheless the interview turned Arthur's mind toward a new thought. Was he displacing the old; was he smashing a machine merely to set up a new machine of his own? The sense of great power is the deepest and most thrilling feeling that a man can have, but he had not embarked upon a career of real reform merely to secure in the end a crown for himself; and although he was human from head to foot, which was why people liked him, he resolutely put from himself any plan that might make him a mere successor of those whom he was deposing.

Winter came and Arthur did not yet hear from the Howes except in an indirect way, and his chief informant was Mrs. Throckmorton, who always took a motherly, or rather an elder-sisterly, interest in him.

“They are still in California, Arthur,” she said.

“Mr. Howe’s health has not been good, although the soft air there has been very beneficial to him. They expected to return in the summer, but they stayed on, nevertheless, and now that winter is here I think they are sure to remain until next spring, at least. I hear that Mr. Howe has mellowed and in an unobtrusive way is giving much to charity.”

Arthur made inquiry, and he found that Mrs. Throckmorton’s information in regard to Mr. Howe was correct. He was giving great sums in many places, and doing it all so quietly that his right hand and his left hand were in proper ignorance of each other. His heart throbbed. He knew the quiet agent who was responsible for this change, and the wish to see her was hard to resist putting into action. Only his intense and concentrated work kept him in New York, and measurably peaceful.

The investigation ended in a complete triumph for the committee and the prosecution. Every charge and move was proved to be true, and all the guilty or derelict officials were deposed. The financial world began a vigorous course of

house-cleaning, and then Arthur undertook to play a hand in the Mayoralty election which was coming the next autumn. It was a long look ahead, but he saw that public opinion could not be molded too early, and that he could afford to make the mistake of underestimating the strength of the opposition to him.

He began to organize clubs of Independents and to preach the doctrine of putting all city governments on a strictly non-partisan basis; merit, in his opinion, should be the only test, and municipal affairs should be administered with all the thoroughness and rigid honesty of a private business. He plunged into this, heart and soul, just as he had gone into all his other campaigns, and his work was unceasing throughout the winter.

Along toward the latter part of the cold weather his friends began to advise rest for him. He was growing thin and pale, and in February was seized with a sudden attack of dizziness. But he recovered quickly and continued burning the candle at both ends, working night and day,

attending to a multitude of affairs, allowing himself no relaxation. A second attack of dizziness, worse than the first came, and, although it passed soon, he now heeded the warning.

“Hide yourself,” said the doctor, “go clear away from New York and politics and finance. A rest is worthless unless it’s complete.”

Arthur took him at his word and his heart turned longingly toward the great southwest that had made him physically. He wanted to see the clean deserts again, to feel the unresting winds on his face, and to ride the range with the wild cowboys of his memory. Time and distance gave glowing colors to it all, deeper and more vivid than the real, and he thirsted for it like a man who has long gone dry.

He was ready in a day, and three days later he was on his ranch in New Mexico, in the great silence, alone on the deserts and the range, save for the rough friends of his youth, and they and he were mere dots in space.



9 The Best of All

Arthur reverted at once to a primitive cowboy condition. He had acquired the habit of doing whatever he undertook to do with intense vigor and concentration. Now there was no cowboy among those who were always cowboys who could ride longer or faster than he or undertake more daring deeds, and he was the master spirit here just as he had been the master spirit on a far greater stage. Life on the vast ranch rose out of its monotonous groove.

Arthur enjoyed every day of it with the intensity that he put in all things. The color came back to his cheeks although it was a brown now, made by the sun and wind of the desert, the soft muscles hardened again, New York and its fever floated far away. He was in the saddle all day and at night he slept a dreamless sleep, often on the plain with the same saddle for a pillow. Two or three times he went up into the mountains to hunt

bear and deer, and on his return from the last trip of this kind he and his three comrades rode into a tiny village in the foothills just coming into fame because of a new and wonderful mineral spring. The place looked so attractive in its fresh, green valley, watered by a mountain stream that later on lost itself in the desert that Cathcart decided to stay there for the day. He went to the little hotel where he enjoyed the luxury of a bath and shave, but when he strolled out in the sunshine he was still in his cowboy costume with the usual finishing touches of sombrero and leggings.

He wandered up the valley toward the gorge, from which the stream shot in a torrent, silver on the pebbles and foam on the rocks. A little turning shut the town from view and before him was all the sublimity of the mountains and the wilderness. The narrow but rich valley had a carpet of green, the foothills beyond were shaggy with dark pine, and beyond these rose the peaks, forever white and silent.

Cathcart lay down on the grass and gazed up at the massive barrier that would always defend the wilderness, and in the silence and loneliness he

felt a great peace. His mind traveled back over the last two or three years, and when he reflected on the great change made in himself he felt that he had cause to give thanks.

He looked about idly, not seeking anything with his eyes, but he did not wish any other living being to come into his Eden. It was one of those periods when he wished to be alone, and when he saw a flutter of white through the trees, he rose displeased. It was a woman's skirt, lifted a little by a wanton wind, and presently he saw the figure of the woman as she walked slowly on. Her face was hidden from him by a great parasol that she carried, white like her dress, and as she was not moving toward him he reflected that she would probably be out of sight in another minute or two. Then he could return to his silence and his peace.

The Tribune, as he had been often called, sat down on the grass again, but in another moment he raised his head with sudden motion. Then he sprang to his feet and gazed eagerly, while the color rushed into his face. He had seen something familiar in the white and distant figure, and the

blood was pounding in his ears.

Cathcart knew from the first that he was not mistaken. It was she! Lucy! there in the mountains close to him, and the habit of decision that he had learned served him well now. It came over him in a rush, all that she was to him, his long repression, and the intensity with which his heart longed for her. There are many men who never love any woman save one. Their hearts tell them it is she, the first time she comes, and their love never varies. Cathcart was of this kind. He had loved Lucy Howe when he met her in the snow and he would love her always.

He walked rapidly after her and she heard his approaching footsteps on the soft turf. Something warned her, too, and she knew it was he. She walked more slowly, and the white parasol no longer hid her face.

Cathcart, after his bold approach, hesitated when a little distance from her, and was seized with fear. She looked so calm, so white, so virginal, that she was a check to his abrupt courage. It did not occur to him then to wonder why she was there in that little rock at the base of

the mountains. There was nothing primitive about her; the white dress that looked so simple he knew had been made in New York; the broad white hat and the white parasol came from the same place; all was a perfect harmony of fit and color—she was educated and civilized to the last degree, and she was, therefore, all the more attractive and lovely. Yet she seemed to form a part of this scheme of mountain and wilderness, its chief decoration.

Cathcart, for the first time in his life was afraid, really afraid. He, the bold Tribune, who had so often faced hostile audiences, trembled. She looked so white, so unapproachable, so surpassingly fair, and he remembered that he had been her father's enemy. He became, for the moment, just an ordinary timid young man who wishes to but does not.

After a minute or so of very slow walking the white parasol was lifted again with rather a haughty jerk, and she went on toward the gorge at an increased pace. Arthur's courage came back at the prospect of losing sight of her, and he ceased to tremble. He, too, walked swiftly now, and she

heard his foot falls on the soft turf almost beside her, but she did not turn.

“Miss Howe.” said Cathcart desperately and pleadingly, “wait a moment please, won’t you? Don’t run away.”

She stopped at the sound of his voice, turned, and her face expressed the greatest surprise.

“Why, Mr. Cathcart?” she said. “You!”

“Yes,” he exclaimed. “It is I! And I did not dream that you were here!”

“Nor I you,” she said. She was the calmer one of the two.

He seized her free hand—the other held the parasol—in both of his, and he did not let it go. Slowly the color deepened in her face, and she uttered an embarrassed little laugh.

“Why,” she said irrelevantly, “you are a cowboy, a regular cowboy, sombrero, spurs, leggings, and all.”

He blushed and dropped her hand. He thought she was making fun of him.

“I forgot,” he said, looking down at himself

ruefully. “I’ve been out hunting and I’ve not had a chance to put on city clothes.”

She smiled. She was quite calm again.

“I’m glad you haven’t,” she said. “Your garb becomes you. Tell me about yourself. When did you come here?”

“I had a partial collapse,” he said, “and the doctor sent me back to this fountain of health and strength. Lucky collapse! Blessed doctor! If it hadn’t been for them I shouldn’t have found you.”

Red came back into her cheeks and again she became irrelevant.

“You are a great man now,” she said. “I’ve followed your career.”

“I’m not a great man,” he replied. “I’ve been lucky enough to have some success and God has given me many friends.”

Then he was silent, and she, too, was without words as they walked on together. He was content that it should be so, because they were alone in their world, and there was none other to claim her. It seemed to him that the old sweet

gravity had deepened and she was strong and self-reliant without having lost any of her girlish freshness and youth. He caught these impressions with stolen glances, while the great solemn mountains looked down upon the two and did not shake their white heads in denial.

“I was going to my favorite place under the big tree up there,” she said.

“We’ll go together.”

It was a huge tree with spreading roots, almost at the edge of the little river, just where it shot from the gorge with a roar and a flash of silver water, creamed now and then into foam at the edges. They sat down on a turfy seat between the roots and both looked down at the water and then up at the mountains.

“What a beautiful world!” said Cathcart.

“You like the wilderness?”

“Particularly with you in it.”

She was silent and looked intently at the rushing water. A glorious sunlight just then was gilding it with wonderful colors. Silver and gold and blue and then white flashed up from its

mirrored depths. She looked up at the mountains. The peaks shone white against the golden glow of the sky. Arthur looked only at the water and he grew brave, as his purpose grew.

“I think a fate, a kindly fate has had charge of us,” he said. “Don’t you see any significance in it?”

She did not answer; he had not expected it, and he went on in the same slow, grave tone.

“Our meetings: the chance that continually brings us together. First in the snow and the storm in New York; I might have met any other of four million people, but it was you; then in the grove on Long Island, it was you who came; and here in the great wilderness of space, the same chance or kind fortune brings us together again.”

He paused and she was still silent. Now she gazed only at the water, never looking up at the mountains.

“I think, Lucy,” he said, at length, “that all this has a meaning. It means that we are to be together always. I love you. Won’t you marry me and prove to me that I am right?”

“Not to prove that you are right, but because I love you.”

“I think I loved you when I first saw you back there in the snow.”

She raised a rosy face and replied:

“I knew I loved you then.”

It was a long time before he remembered that she was the daughter of his enemy. He did not hate James Howe, but James Howe must hate him.

“Your father?” he said anxiously.

“He is here,” she replied gravely and without apprehension. “We came for the water. He will never be a great financier again, but he is a happier man, and he has made me a happier woman. It was a collapse, but the doctors say he will live for years, longer, perhaps, than he would have done had he been able to continue at work in the old way. You will find him greatly changed.”

When they walked back slowly through the

green valley toward the little town he found how true were her words. James Howe was sitting placidly in an arm chair at the base of a tree that put thick boughs between him and the sun. His hair was white as snow, and it looked like the crown of a patriarch. The calm, benevolent face beneath continued the likeness. All the light of the blue eyes was kindly and the white hands lay peacefully across his knees.

The contrast between the quiet old man sitting quietly in the shade and the great financier in the heart of the great city's fevered money market made a deep and lasting impression upon Arthur's mind.

He rose when he saw Cathcart coming with his daughter.

"You are welcome here. Mr. Cathcart," he said, "we are friends now, if you choose."

"I choose it above all—now," replied Arthur, and his voice trembled, "when I am about to take your daughter from you."

The old man looked at Arthur and then at Lucy. His eyes grew troubled but in a moment

became quiet and peaceful again.

“Not so,” he replied, “because if you take her I go with her.”

“And we three are to live together always.” said Lucy, as she put her arms about her father’s neck and wept happy tears.

Then occurred a strange episode in the life of Arthur Cathcart, one for which only a few of his most intimate friends can account; it is only they who know the strength of his love for a woman. He dropped suddenly from the world and was not heard of again in a long time.

But it is the whole truth of the matter that Arthur was married and went on his honeymoon. He went to the ranch for his clothes, and he was so ardent, so devoted that Lucy consented, and they were married a week later in the little church in the little town. Then, leaving Mr. Howe there, they went up into the deeper mountains for a wonderful honeymoon.

Before going, Arthur, by telegraph, had obtained his uncle’s consent and blessing from New York. He also learned that the campaign in

the city was making splendid progress. The Independents, with a mighty public opinion behind them, believed they were sure of victory. Worthington had been nominated without opposition for district attorney, and now they were looking around for a mayoralty candidate with the liberty of choice among a dozen good men.

“They won’t need me again this year,” said Arthur joyfully to himself, “and I’ll show the public also that I have no desire to dictate, even if I could do so.”

Then New York disappeared for a while from his scheme of life, and he and his bride dwelt in happiness among the great and solemn, the beautiful and kindly mountains. They saw the lights and shadows come and go in the dark pine forest, they saw the flash of silver and gold on the surface of the leaping water, and they saw a wonderful sun, all yellow and red fire, rise and set over the gleaming banks of snow far above. At night they would often sit close to each other by the crackling camp-fire and the two guides would lie down in silence before the coals.

Nobody would speak, but all the while millions of stars twinkled kindly down at them from a sky of dusky blue.

The days passed, they grew to weeks, autumn deepened and touched the air with chill, but Arthur still had no desire to return to the world, and the mountains still held him and Lucy.

It was the middle of November and a worn man on a tired horse was riding slowly up a mountain path. The horse's head drooped and the man was battered and stained by sun, wind and rain, but his eyes were keen and his face was alight with the zeal of the chase.

It was Collins, staff correspondent of the *New York Standard* and he had been riding through the mountains more than a week. The little town in the gorge below had been suddenly cut off from civilization by a great flood. A bridge had been washed out and the telegraph line broken. Collins reached the town, only after ten days' waiting and hard riding across the desert, and then he found that the object of his chase was

somewhere in the high mountains, nobody knew exactly where.

Collins stopped when he reached the crest of a ridge and uttered a joyful little cry. A thin blue column of smoke was rising above the dark green wall of the distant pine forest. "It must be the place," he said.

The horse seemed to share his hope and went forward at a better pace. The path broadened and led into a valley wonderful in its beauty. It was like a bowl rimmed in by the pine forests on the slopes, and then the white peaks and ridges above. In the center shone among the trees silver glimpses of a little lake.

The spiral of smoke enlarged as Collins advanced, and he saw a white tent in the warmest little cove of the valley. Two people hearing the sound of the horse's hoofs came forward, and Collins uttered a shout of joy when he saw them. He galloped to them and sprang from his horse to the ground.

"Mr. Cathcart," he cried, "I've come all the way from New York to find you, and I've been

hunting you a long time.”

“Why” he asked.

“Because you were unanimously nominated for mayor by the Independents more than three weeks ago, and last Tuesday you were elected by a majority of two hundred thousand. Mr. Cathcart, your greatest work is before you.”

“That is true,” said Cathcart with all the solemnity that he felt.

Then he took Lucy’s hand in his and added:

“With God’s help I’ll do the best I can.”

