



The New Mayor
Based on G.H. Broadhurst's Successful Play

THE MAN OF THE HOUR

BY
**ALBERT
PAYSON
TERHUNE**

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GEORGE H. BROADHURST

CHAPTER I CONTINUED.

A whimsical frown crossed Wainwright's face, but cleared into a rascally hospitable expression as a little gray haired man, with a solemn, weak face, trotted pompously in on the heels of the butler's announcement.

"Good morning, Judge," said the host pleasantly. "You don't know Mr. Gibbs, I think, of Gibbs, Norton & Co? Judge Newman is my next door neighbor on the left as you come from the station, Gibbs. You must have noticed the place—Queen Anne house, with—"

"Oh, he probably never gave it a glance," put in the judge. "A mere cottage, that's all. When a man with my resplendent judicial salary has a social position to keep up and four daughters that aren't married and Charles, you ain't realize what it means to have our unmarried?"

"No, I cannot," assented Wainwright quickly, "and from present signs I'm not likely to. I hope Mrs. Newman is well?"



"I thought you might say a word to Mr. Horrigan in my behalf."

The little judge's face grew doubly important.

"Extremely well, thank you," said he. "A wonderful woman! You've met her, Mr. Gibbs? So? But of course you have often heard—by the way, Charles, it was she who told me to drop in on you this morning. You see—she—Mrs. Newman's most anxious for me to come up for re-election this fall. Mr. Horrigan, to whom I broached the subject, doesn't quite seem to see it that way. He doesn't want to have me re-nominated. I thought perhaps, as a personal favor to so old a friend, you might say a word to Mr. Horrigan in my behalf."

"Of course I'll do what little I can. Horrigan will be here today. Drop in a little after noon and I'll tell you how my intervention turns out."

"Oh, thank you so much!" cried the judge, positively wriggling in his delight. "Mrs. Newman will be so pleased. And, by the way, won't you ask Perry why he never comes over to see my daughters? Please ask him if he won't. I'm sure Mrs. Newman would be glad if he did. Well, till afternoon, then. Good morning."

"Queer little rat!" observed Gibbs as the judge bowed himself out. "Mrs. Newman must be a marvel if all he says is—"

"She is a wonder as a husband trainer. She's tamed him so he doesn't know his soul's his own. A good little man because he's never had a chance to be otherwise. I'll speak to Horrigan about him, though. It's always well to have a friend on the bench. One never can tell when?"

But Gibbs was not listening. His heavy face had lighted with a sudden glow of eagerness. Turning to note the cause, Wainwright saw his niece Dallas descending the stairs. Involuntarily she halted as she reached the threshold and saw Gibbs. Then, her sense of hospitality triumphing over impulse, she came in and greeted her uncle's guest with some show of cordiality.

"Remember, Dallas," said Wainwright as he prepared to go into his office, "Gibbs is here only for the day. I count on you to make his holiday as pleasant as you can." He glanced covertly at Gibbs, who had strolled to the window. Then the financier lowered his voice and said rapidly:

"Please be nice to Gibbs for my sake, Dallas. I do a great deal for you, and I don't often ask anything in return."

He patted her on the shoulder with a gesture meant to be affectionate and hurried into the adjoining office. Scarcely had the door closed when Gibbs turned from the window, crossed the room to where Dallas stood and in his usual direct fashion said:

"You saw that?"

"The article in this morning's paper? Yes."

There was no confusion, no embarrassment, neither in the clear, girlish voice nor in the honest dark eyes that met Gibbs' so calmly. He went on

with a shade less confidence.

"It amuses you?"

"Very much indeed."

"You can't feel worse about it than I do, Miss Wainwright. I—"

"You didn't write it yourself, then?"

"? Of course not! How could you think?"

"I didn't; I just wondered. Please see that the rumor is dead."

"Why should I? You are going to marry me some day, aren't you, Dallas?"

"Have I ever given you reason to think I would?"

"You have let me keep on coming to see you. You have—"

"I have told you that I don't care for you the way you want me to. I have great admiration and respect for you, but that is all. And it is not enough to marry on."

"It is enough for me, if I have your admiration and respect to start on, I'll soon make you love me."

"You would be satisfied with so little?"

"Yes. Knowing I would in time win more. You aren't the sort of girl who could marry a man if she didn't respect him—didn't admire him. You—"

"Perhaps I couldn't marry such a man. But perhaps I couldn't help loving him."

"Your chances for happiness would be better with me. Oh, Dallas, you know I love you! You've kept me waiting so long! Is it fair to either of us?"

"I hesitate because I want to be fair to us both. For that reason I must still ask you to wait."

"But I've waited so long! Tell me one thing: Is there any one else that—"

Steps, none too light, clattered down the stairs, and into the library bounded a lad in tennis flannels. He was tall, well set up and good to look at and seemed always to have stepped directly from a handbox and to have had extremely recent acquaintance with much soap and water.

"Hello, Dallas!" he shouted, encompassing his sister in a bear hug. "How soon are—"

"Here's Mr. Gibbs, Perry," Dallas reminded him as she emerged, somewhat crumpled, from the embrace.

"Have you—"

The lad's manner underwent a lightning and frigid change.

"Oh, good morning!" he grunted, with a curt nod to the visitor, and, picking up a paper, turned to the sporting sheet and became immersed in its contents, oblivious of all else.

"Mr. Gibbs is only spending one day with us," admonished Dallas, trying to soften her young brother's rudeness.

"Hope he'll enjoy it," came in absent ones from the depths of the paper.

Gibbs rose.

"I'm going out for a cigar on the terrace," said he. "I'll join you a little later."

"Perry," scolded Dallas as soon as the broker disappeared through the open windows, "how could you treat a guest of uncle's so rudely?"

"I don't like the fellow. And I don't like what I read in the paper today about him and you. Gee, what a nasty paragraph! It's enough to make a white man want to dash out his brains with a cigarette. You're going to deny it in time for the retraction to get into tomorrow's papers, aren't you?"

"I'm not quite sure."

"Good Lord!" gasped Perry, slumping down in the nearest chair. "Are you crazy? Say, if you are looking for a real good, exciting match why don't you marry a Wall street stock report? It'd be better'n Gibbs. If you marry him you'll only be an 'also ran' with the ticker tape and the market news. Oh, keep out of it, old girl! You owe something to your intelligent and distinguished little brother. If you've got to commit matrimony, marry some one I like, can't you?"

"I haven't given him a definite answer yet," admitted the girl, a little touched by the real feeling that underlay her brother's flippant words.

"That's good medicine. Confidence restored and the run on Brother's Emotions is checked. Next time you get the marry bee I have a dandy candidate to suggest for the job."

"Who?" laughed Dallas, amused in spite of herself.

"Alwyn Bennett."

"How silly!"

"Not on your life! Words of wisdom from the young—that's what it is. Go ahead and marry Bennett. Be a sport and say 'Yes.' Why don't you want to marry him?"

"For any one of a million reasons. First of all, he never asked me to."

"Maybe he's scared to. But if he wasn't stuck on you he wouldn't be hanging around here every day and going everywhere with you the way he does. I'll bet \$3 he's—"

"Mr. Bennett!" the butler announced. Brother and sister stared guiltily at each other.

"Speaking of angels"—muttered Perry. But Dallas had already turned to welcome the visitor.

Alwyn Bennett at first glance had little to distinguish him from the average good looking young man about

town. But a closer observer would have noticed a firmness about the shapely mouth, an honesty and strength of purpose about the eyes, a general air of latent power that lay unawakened beneath the jolly, purposeless exterior. No crisis had yet called forth any special manifestation of this power, and meanwhile Bennett was content to loaf through an existence that thus far had been decidedly pleasant. The only son of a widowed mother who advised and spoiled him, more than comfortably well off from the great fortune amassed by his dead father, possessed of a social position unassailable and equally fortunate in that mysterious quality that spells popularity—all these gifts had saved Alwyn Bennett the trouble of fighting life's battle or showing who might be within his reach.

"Good old Bennett!" hailed Perry. "We were just talking about you."



Dallas Wainwright.

"Good!" answered Alwyn. "Anything is better than indifference. What were you saying about me?"

"You tell him, Dallas!" grinned the boy.

"Be quiet!" whispered his sister, flushing with vexation.

"Then I'll tell for myself," went on Perry gleefully. "I was just asking her—"

Seeing the girl's confusion, Bennett quickly changed the subject by interrupting:

"My mother will be over here in a few minutes, Dallas. She is bringing along a guest of ours, who says you and she were chums at school—Miss Garrison."

"Cynthia Garrison! Oh, I'll be ever so glad to see her again!"

"I know who she is!" cried Perry, refusing to be snubbed. "They say she's a gorgeous looker. When her kennel was under the hammer I bought her two pet Boston terriers, Betty and Prince. Maybe that won't make me sell with her, eh? Well, I guess. All I ask is a start, and you'll find a whole lot of puppies slower than I'll be. If they're walking over I might wonder out, sort of aimless-like and happen to meet 'em. Maybe that's a bum idea? Good old me!"

Full of his Machiavellian scheme, the lad baited through the long window and was gone.

"Dallas," began Bennett, without preamble, "you must surely know why I'm here today. You've seen that paragraph in the—"

"I have seen it," she answered quietly.

Taken aback by her manner, Bennett hesitated an instant; then asked nervously:

"The—the rumor isn't true, Dallas? Tell me it isn't."

"Why shouldn't it be true?" she countered perversely, as though not wholly sorry to witness the new look her words called to his face. The look deepened as Bennett continued:

"You don't love Gibbs? Surely you don't love him?"

"—"

The French windows swung wide, breaking off her reply.

CHAPTER II.

ALWYN BENNETT turned sharply toward the window, angry at the interruption, but Perry Wainwright, ushering two ladies in from the veranda, met his scowl with a wink of triumph.

"Not so bad, eh?" called the boy. "Met them as they were turning into the drive. You see?"

"Oh," observed the younger of the two women—a pretty, flower faced girl who since her entrance into the room had been engaged in exchanging delighted greetings with Dallas. "So you came to meet us? You said you just happened—"

CONTINUED NEXT WEEK

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