



Courtenay—most men in public life have! "As often happens the crooks fell out. Some division of the spoils, I believe, which angered young McGinnis. He put the screws on them, and it ended by their having to make a getaway. Jim was threatened with the penitentiary; Garbut had already made tracks elsewhere. I had to step in again, at Gwennyth's instance—though she did not know the real story—and managed to get Jim away. It cost money, but I won her gratitude, and got the negative and prints back from Jim. Garbut, having no further need of them, left them with him. Since then Jim has been in a job I got him at Westhill. I told him to hold it, or I'd make it hot for him! That's the whole story, Mr. Courtenay!"

"Hum!" said Daniel P. "Had you any assurance that all the prints were returned?"

"Only his word. But then, you see, I've something on him to keep him quiet, now that he's beyond the McGinnis protection, too. I've never had a line from him since, nor a word, except indirect news through Gwennyth. He seems to have settled down as a decent citizen!"

"Just the same, Mr. Price, he has tried to poison your wife's mind against you with vague references to the Garbut affair!"

"Humph! Well, the young scoundrel never liked me—I guess I told him things about himself that were nasty doses to swallow!"

"Mr. Price," said Courtenay, gravely, "I only wish you had exercised towards your wife the same frankness you have towards her lawyer!"

DARREL PRICE roamed the room uneasily, biting an unlit cigar. He swung on the lawyer then.

"A campaign like this is hard on the nerves, Mr. Courtenay. I let myself go—partly through nerves—partly because I care so much for her and am jealous of her reputation more than my own. It angered me that she should spend all night with this Mulanny woman, and then come home with this young devil, McGinnis!"

"You forget, Mr. Price, that your wife's sympathies are doubly drawn to the unfortunate woman—and that she knew Jerry McGinnis—quite well—long before you!"

"Eh?" The candidate turned sharply.

Courtenay continued, imperturbably: "And that she has a rather trusting disposition in spite of her being thrown so early on the world. Our standards of judgment, Mr. Price, are apt to be a reflection of ourselves. But to come to the point: you were hasty; you overlooked the fact that all your recent actions have led her to feel that you were regarding her as a child, given playthings and left, rather than a wife to be treated as a partner. The mistake is not all, but very much yours, sir. You have given her reason to think that you do not really care—not as she thinks of caring, with whole-souled devotion that finds all else as dross. Mr. Price, do you care enough to sacrifice your chances of election to-morrow for her?"

The cherub sat back in his chair, head tilted, finger-tips tapping, quietly awaiting his answer. The candidate chewed his cigar viciously.

He said at last: "There is my duty as a citizen, Mr. Courtenay—to those who support me; there is the programme of clean civics to which I am pledged!"

Daniel P. smiled. Then he rose.

"Mr. Price," he said, "I have spoken to you very frankly, and you to me. Life would be easier if we exercised more of this frankness. Let me go the full distance." He went over, and stared out of the window at the flapping banner, under which the traffic flowed, bidding the citizens "Vote For Price—and Reform." "Mr. Price," he went on, "to-night I understand you are to address a great west-end meeting. On it hangs much of your hope?"

The candidate nodded.

"You will pledge yourself to-night to

stand by the interests of the west-end, where your vote must largely come from. You will disabuse their minds of any so-called radical views which your reform ticket has brought into being! You will declaim the sacred rights of this and that! You will have on your platform a man who owns the rottenest tenement district in the city! He will applaud your safe and sane reform talk—your clean civics—and smile up his sleeve the while! I wonder, Mr. Price, how much of that excuse of your 'duty as a citizen' would better be put in the words 'duty as an individual to Mr. Price's interests'! I may be a little unfair, Mr. Price—I simply leave the question with you! Good-afternoon! Will you be here for a while? I may 'phone you later!"

The cherub let himself out, gave smiling response to the dark looks of the impatient secretary, disregarded the envious glances of a long waiting-list, and so reached the street. He chartered a taxi-cab that was passing, and headed towards the humble abode of Daniel Mulanny's widow. He was not surprised to learn that her health gave no more concern than usual; that she had sent no urgent call to Mrs. Price, but that the latter had been here and had a lengthy interview, conducted in low tones, with Jerry McGinnis; that she had looked distressed after he had gone, but had passed it off lightly; that she had left shortly after.

He headed, then, for his club, and spent a considerable time in a private telephone-booth. His calls included one of some length with the companion of many years of matrimonial bliss, but his half promise of phoning Price was not then redeemed. He left that for a later hour as developments might come to pass.

JERRY MCGINNIS felt that he had fallen on prosperous times. His scape-grace ways, while tolerated by his father—perhaps with some sense of justice based on a debt of inheritance—had not strengthened bonds between them in a time when the elder eschewed deeds that might bring censure upon him, preferring to pull the strings that would make his puppets do the devil's dance. Jerry was, in a way, a reproach to a public and paternal dignity! To-night he would play his game; unless he won the highest stake, to-morrow win his father's approval. If he won, it would be worth sacrificing everything to it.

Now, with the coming of evening, all was as it should be. He had driven direct to the Mulanny place, and found Canning's ruse had worked. Gwennyth had already arrived. There he had the best chance in the world for a further persuasive argument with her. And, driven to desperation, she was willing to trust him. He felt he had played his cards with finesse; covering the underlying interest that none knew better how to apply. Most potent threat of all, he had declared that any further communication with Courtenay or his office would "queer" all chance of his—Jerry's—aid. Gwennyth, frightened, had promised.

He hurried on his way now in the growing dusk. She had agreed to meet him at the side door of the Biltor hotel at seven, and he was to take her to dinner with the newspaperman—fictitious being—whose good offices must be secured, whose sympathy evoked in the matter of the return of the offensive cut.

A commissioner helped Gwennyth into the car beside him.

"Where to, sir?" "The Chateau Grasset," said Jerry, happily. "It's all right. My man knows!"

The exquisite pain of having her beside him, yet knowing her to belong to another, fed the thing within him, to which he himself could hardly give a name.

The Chateau Grasset lay in the suburbs—a well-known roadhouse. The car sped along the lighted boulevard. Once with Darrel, since their marriage, Gwennyth had motored this way; at a sudden turn, she said, quickly: (Continued on page 40)



"I will never consent to Gray Hair"



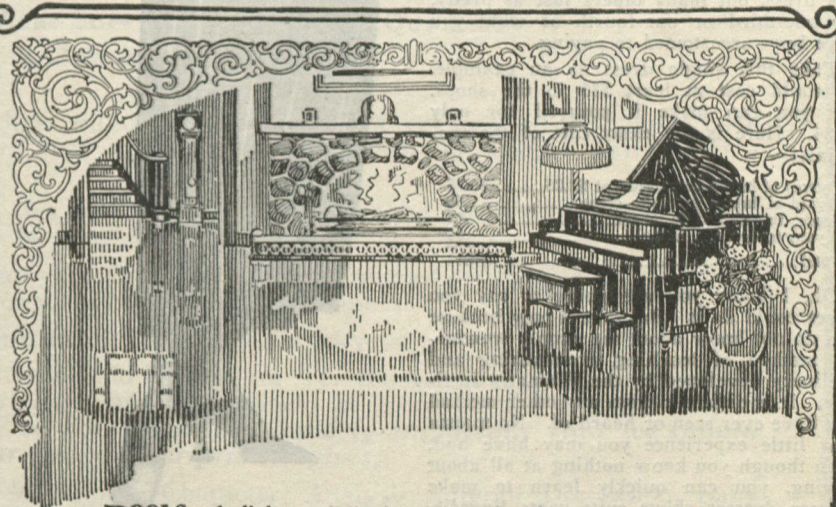
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