

THEODORE DREISER

THE FINANCIER



ЭКСКЛЮЗИВНОЕ ЧТЕНИЕ
НА АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ

ТЕОДОР ДРАЙЗЕР

ФИНАНСИСТ



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Теодор Драйзер

Финансист / The Financier

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Первая книга «Трилогии желания» Теодора Драйзера, «Финансист» рассказывает историю Фрэнка Каупервуда – простого парня из провинциального города, обладающего великолепной интуицией. Фрэнк становится коммерсантом, играет на бирже и попадает в мир роскоши и больших денег, который со временем превращает его из амбициозного юноши в беспринципного, жаждущего наживы миллионера. Текст произведения снабжен грамматическим комментарием и словарем, в который вошли все слова, содержащиеся в тексте. Благодаря этому книга подойдет для любого уровня владения языком.

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Chapter I

A city of Philadelphia, where **Frank Algernon Cowperwood**¹ was born, was a city of two hundred and fifty thousand and more. It was set with handsome parks, notable buildings, but many of the things that we and he knew later were not then in existence – the telegraph, telephone, **express company**², ocean steamer mails.

Cowperwood's father was a bank clerk at the time of Frank's birth, but ten years later, Mr. **Henry Worthington Cowperwood**³ became a **promoted teller**⁴. At once he told his wife to remove his family to a much better neighborhood, where there was a nice brick house of three stories. There was the probability that some day they would come into something even better, but for the present this was sufficient.

Henry Worthington Cowperwood was a man who believed only what he saw. He was at this time a significant figure—tall, lean, inquisitorial, clerkly—with nice, smooth whiskers coming to almost the lower lobes of his ears. He had a long, straight nose and a chin that tended to be pointed. His eyebrows were bushy, and his hair was short and smooth and nicely parted. He always wore a **frock-coat and a high hat**⁵. And he kept his hands and nails immaculately clean.

Being ambitious to get ahead socially and financially, he was very careful of whom or with whom he talked. He was much afraid of expressing a rabid or unpopular political or social opinion, though he had really no opinion to express.

Mrs. Cowperwood was a small religious woman, with light-brown hair and clear, brown eyes, who had been very attractive in her day, but had become rather prim and inclined to take very seriously the maternal care of her three sons and one daughter.

Frank Cowperwood, even at ten, was a natural-born leader. He was a sturdy youth, courageous and defiant. From the very start of his life, he wanted to know about economics and politics. He cared nothing for books. He was a clean, stalky boy, with a bright, incisive face; large, clear, gray eyes; a wide forehead; short, bristly, dark-brown hair. He had an incisive, quick-motivated manner. He never had an ache or pain, and ruled his brothers with a rod of iron. “Come on, Joe!” “Hurry, Ed!” These commands were issued in no rough but always a sure way, and Joe and Ed came.

He was always pondering. How did all these people get into the world? What were they doing here? Who started things? His mother told him the story of Adam and Eve, but he didn't believe it. There was a fish-market not so very far from his home, and there he liked to look at odd specimens of sea-life. One day he saw a squid and a lobster put in the tank, and in connection with them was witness to a tragedy which stayed with him all his life. The lobster was offered no food, as the squid was considered his rightful prey. The lobster leaped and grabbed the squid. The squid was too tired. It wasn't quick enough.

“That's the way it has to be,” Frank commented to himself. “That squid wasn't quick enough.”

The incident made a great impression on him. It answered in a rough way that riddle which had been annoying him so much in the past: “How is life organized?” Things lived on each other—that was it. Lobsters lived on squids and other things. What lived on lobsters? Men, of course!

And what lived on men? he asked himself. Was it other men? Wild animals lived on men. And there were Indians and cannibals. And some men were killed by storms and accidents.

¹ **Frank Algernon Cowperwood** – Фрэнк Алджернон Каупервуд

² **express company** – служба доставки товаров

³ **Henry Worthington Cowperwood** – Генри Уортингтон Каупервуд

⁴ **promoted teller** – помощник кассира

⁵ **a frock-coat and a high hat** – сюртук и цилиндр

He wasn't so sure about men living on men; but men did kill each other. How about wars and street fights?

He went on home quite pleased.

“Mother!” he exclaimed, as he entered the house, “He finally got him!”

“Got who? What got what?” she inquired in amazement. “Go wash your hands.”

“Why, that lobster got that squid!”

“Well, that's too bad. What makes you take any interest in such things? Run, wash your hands.”

But for days and weeks Frank thought of this event and of the life, for he was already pondering on what he should be in this world, and how he should get along. From seeing his father count money, he was sure that he would like banking; and Third Street, where his father's office was, seemed to him the cleanest, most fascinating street in the world.

Chapter II

The growth of young Frank Algernon Cowperwood was comfortable and happy. Buttonwood Street, where he spent the first ten years of his life, was a lovely place for a boy. It contained mostly small two and three-story red brick houses, there were trees in the street—plenty of them. The Cowperwoods, father and mother, were happy and joyous with their children. Henry Worthington Cowperwood's connections were increased as his position grew more responsible, and gradually he was becoming **quite a personage**⁶. He knew a number of the more prosperous merchants who dealt with his bank, the brokers knew him as representing a very sound organization, and while he was not considered brilliant mentally, he was known as a most reliable and trustworthy individual.

Young Cowperwood was quite often allowed to come to the bank on Saturdays, when he would watch with great interest the deft exchange of bills. He wanted to know where all the types of money came from, why discounts were demanded and received, what the men did with all the money they received. His father, pleased at his interest, was glad to explain so that even at this early age—from ten to fifteen—the boy gained a wide knowledge of the condition of the country financially—what a State bank was and what a national one; what brokers did, and what stocks were. He began to see clearly what was meant by money as a medium of exchange. He was a financier by instinct. This medium of exchange, gold, interested him intensely. When his father explained to him how it was mined, he dreamed that he owned a gold mine. He was likewise curious about stocks and bonds.

At home he listened to considerable talk of financial investment and adventure. He heard, for one thing, of a curious character by the name of **Steemberger**⁷, a great beef speculator from Virginia, who was attracted to Philadelphia in those days by the hope of large and easy credits. Steemberger, so his father said, was close to **Nicholas Biddle**⁸, **Lardner**⁹, and others of the United States Bank, or at least friendly with them, and seemed to be able to obtain from that organization nearly all that he asked for. He was a big man, enormous, with a face, his father said, something like that of a pig; and he wore a high beaver hat and a long frock-coat which hung loosely about his big chest and stomach. He had managed to force the price of beef up to thirty cents a pound, causing all the retailers and consumers to rebel, and this was what made him so conspicuous.

There was another man his father talked about—**Francis J. Grund**¹⁰, a famous newspaper correspondent from Washington, who possessed the faculty of unearthing secrets of every kind, especially those relating to financial legislation. The secrets of the President and the Cabinet, as well as of the Senate and the House of Representatives, seemed to be open to him. Grund had been purchasing through one or two brokers large amounts of the various kinds of Texas debt certificates and bonds. The Republic of Texas, in its struggle for independence from Mexico, had issued bonds and certificates in great variety, amounting in value to ten or fifteen million dollars. Later, a bill was passed providing a contribution on the part of the United States of five million dollars, to be applied to the extinguishment of this old debt. Grund knew of this, and also of the fact that some of this debt was to be paid in full, and there was to be a false failure to pass the bill at one session in order to frighten off the outsiders who might have heard and begun to buy the old certificates for profit. He acquainted the Third National Bank with this fact, and of course the information came to Cowperwood. He told his wife about it, and so his son heard it, and his clear, big eyes glistened. He wondered why his father did not take advantage of the situation and buy some Texas certificates for

⁶ **quite a personage** – видная персона

⁷ **Steemberger** – Стимберджер

⁸ **Nicholas Biddle** – Николас Бидл

⁹ **Lardner** – Ларднер

¹⁰ **Francis J. Grund** – Фрэнсис Дж. Гранд

himself. Frank realized that his father was too honest, too cautious, but when he grew up, he told himself, he was going to be a broker, or a financier, or a banker, and do some of these things.

Just at this time there came to the Cowperwoods an uncle who had not previously appeared. He was a brother of Mrs. Cowperwood's—**Seneca Davis**¹¹ by name—solid, unctuous, five feet ten in height, with a big, round body, a round, smooth bald head, blue eyes, and sandy hair. He was well dressed according to standards prevailing in those days. Frank was fascinated by him at once. He had been a planter in Cuba and still owned a big ranch there and could tell him tales of Cuban life—rebellions, ambushes, fighting with machetes on his own plantation, and things of that sort. He brought with him a collection of Indian curios, money and several slaves: Manuel, a tall, black attendant, and a bodyguard. He shipped raw sugar from his plantation to the Southern wharves in Philadelphia. Frank liked him very much.

“Why, **Nancy Arabella**¹²,” he said to Mrs Cowperwood on arriving one Sunday afternoon, “you haven't grown an inch! I thought when you married that you were going to fatten up like your brother. But look at you! I swear to Heaven you don't weigh five pounds!”

And he jounced her up and down by the waist, much to the perturbation of the children, who had never before seen their mother so familiarly handled.

Henry Cowperwood was exceedingly interested in and pleased at the arrival of this prosperous relative; for twelve years before, when he was married, Seneca Davis had not taken much notice of him.

“I tell you, Henry,” Seneca continued, “you have a rather nice place here.”

And he looked at the main room of the three-story house with a critical eye.

Since Henry had become teller the family had acquired a piano—a luxury in those days—brought from Europe. It was summer time, the windows were open, and the trees outside, with their widely extended green branches, were pleasantly visible shading the brick sidewalk. Uncle Seneca strolled out into the back yard.

“Well, this is pleasant enough,” he observed, noting a large elm. “Where's your hammock? Don't you string a hammock here in summer? Down on my veranda at San Pedro I have six or seven.”

“We hadn't thought of the hammock because of the neighbors, but it would be nice,” agreed Mrs. Cowperwood. “Henry will have to get one.”

“I have two or three over at the hotel. My servants make them down there. I'll send Manuel over with them in the morning.”

He tweaked Edward's ear, told Joseph, the second boy, he would bring him an Indian tomahawk, and went back into the house.

“This is the lad that interests me,” he said, after a time, laying a hand on the shoulder of Frank. “What did you name him in full, Henry?”

“Frank Algernon.”

“Well, you might have named him after me. There's something to this boy. How would you like to come down to Cuba and be a planter, my boy?”

“I'm not so sure that I'd like to,” replied the eldest.

“Well, what have you against it?”

“Nothing, except that I don't know anything about it.”

“What do you know?”

The boy smiled wisely. “Not very much, I guess.”

“Well, what are you interested in?”

“Money!”

¹¹ **Seneca Davis** – Сенекa Дэвис

¹² **Nancy Arabella** – Нэнси Арабелла

“Aha! Well, that's a good trait. And you speak like a man, too! We'll talk more about that later. Nancy, you're breeding a financier here, I think. He talks like one.”

He looked at Frank carefully. There was real force in that sturdy young body—no doubt of it. Those large, clear gray eyes were full of intelligence. They indicated much and revealed nothing.

“A smart boy!” he said to Henry. “I like him. You have a bright family.”

Henry Cowperwood smiled dryly. This man, if he liked Frank, might do much for the boy. He might eventually leave him some of his fortune. He was wealthy and single.

Uncle Seneca became a frequent visitor to the house—he and his negro bodyguard, Manuel, who spoke both English and Spanish, much to the astonishment of the children; and he took an increasing interest in Frank.

“When that boy gets old enough to find out what he wants to do, I think I'll help him to do it,” he observed to his sister one day; and she told him she was very grateful. He talked to Frank about his studies, and found that he cared little for books. Grammar was an abomination. Literature was silly. Latin was of no use. History—well, it was fairly interesting.

“I like bookkeeping and arithmetic,” the boy observed. “I want get to work. That's what I want to do.”

“You're pretty young, my son,” observed his uncle. “How old are you? Fourteen?”

“Thirteen.”

“Well, you can't leave school before sixteen. You'll do better if you stay until seventeen or eighteen. It can't do you any harm. You won't be a boy again.”

“I don't want to be a boy. I want to get to work.”

“Don't go too fast, son. You'll be a man soon enough. You want to be a banker, do you?”

“Yes, sir!”

“Well, when the time comes, if everything is all right and you've behaved yourself and you still want to, I'll help you get a start in business. If I were you and were going to be a banker, I'd first spend a year or so in some good **grain and commission house**¹³. You'll learn a lot that you ought to know. And, meantime, keep your health and learn all you can.”

He gave the boy a ten-dollar gold piece with which to start a bank-account.

¹³ **grain and commission house** – хлебно-комиссионная контора

Chapter III

When young Cowperwood was thirteen, he entered into his first business venture. Walking along Front Street one day, he saw an auctioneer's flag hanging out before a **wholesale grocery**¹⁴ and from the interior came the auctioneer's voice:

“What am I bid for this exceptional lot of Java coffee, twenty-two bags all told, which is now selling in the market for seven dollars and thirty-two cents a bag wholesale? What am I bid? The whole lot must go as one. What am I bid?”

“Eighteen dollars,” suggested a trader standing near the door. Frank paused.

“Twenty-two!” called another.

“Thirty!” a third.

“Thirty-five!” a fourth, and so up to seventy-five, less than half of what it was worth.

“I'm bid seventy-five! I'm bid seventy-five!” called the auctioneer, loudly. “Any other offers? Going once at seventy-five; am I offered eighty? Going twice at seventy-five, and”—he paused, one hand raised dramatically. Then he brought it down with a slap in the palm of the other—“sold to Mr. **Silas Gregory**¹⁵ for seventy-five. Make a note of that, Jerry,” he called to his red-haired, freckle-faced clerk beside him. Then he turned to another lot of grocery staples.

Young Cowperwood was making a rapid calculation. If, as the auctioneer said, coffee was worth seven dollars and thirty-two cents a bag in the open market, and this buyer was getting this coffee for seventy-five dollars, he was making then and there eighty-six dollars and four cents. As he recalled, his mother was paying twenty-eight cents a pound.

He drew nearer, and watched these operations closely. The starch, as he soon heard, was valued at ten dollars a barrel, and it only brought six. Some kegs of vinegar were knocked down at one-third their value, and so on. He began to wish he could bid; but he had no money, just a little pocket change. The auctioneer noticed him standing almost directly under his nose, and was impressed with the stolidity—solidity—of the boy's expression.

“I am going to offer you now a fine lot of Castile soap—seven cases, no less—which, as you know, if you know anything about soap, is now selling at fourteen cents a bar. This soap is worth anywhere at this moment eleven dollars and seventy-five cents a case. What am I bid? What am I bid? What am I bid?”

He was talking fast in the usual style of auctioneers, with much unnecessary emphasis; but Cowperwood was not impressed. He was already rapidly calculating for himself. Seven cases at eleven dollars and seventy-five cents would be worth just eighty-two dollars and twenty-five cents; and if it went at half—if it went at half—

“Twelve dollars,” commented one bidder.

“Fifteen,” bid another.

“Twenty,” called a third.

“Twenty-five,” a fourth.

“Twenty-six.”

“Twenty-seven.”

“Twenty-eight.”

“Twenty-nine.”

There was a pause.

“Thirty,” observed young Cowperwood, decisively.

¹⁴ a **wholesale grocery** – оптово-бакалейный магазин

¹⁵ **Silas Gregory** – Сайлас Грегори

The auctioneer looked at him curiously and almost incredulously but without pausing. He had, somehow, in spite of himself, been impressed by the boy's peculiar eye; and now he felt, without knowing why, that the boy had the money. He might be the son of a grocer.

"I'm bid thirty! I'm bid thirty! I'm bid thirty for this fine lot of Castile soap. It's a fine lot. It's worth fourteen cents a bar. Will any one bid thirty-one? Will any one bid thirty-one? Will any one bid thirty-one?"

"Thirty-one," said a voice.

"Thirty-two," replied Cowperwood. The same process was repeated.

"I'm bid thirty-two! I'm bid thirty-two! I'm bid thirty-two! Will anybody bid thirty-three? It's fine soap. Seven cases of fine Castile soap. Will anybody bid thirty-three?"

Young Cowperwood's mind was working. He had no money with him; but his father was teller of the Third National Bank, and **he could quote him as reference**¹⁶. He could sell all of his soap to the family grocer, surely; or, if not, to other grocers. Other people were anxious to get this soap at this price. Why not he?

The auctioneer paused.

"Thirty-two once! Am I bid thirty-three? Thirty-two twice! Am I bid thirty-three? Thirty-two three times! Seven fine cases of soap. Am I bid anything more? Once, twice! Three times! Am I bid anything more?"—his hand was up again—"and sold to Mr. — ?" He leaned over and looked curiously into the face of his young bidder.

"Frank Cowperwood, son of the teller of the Third National Bank," replied the boy, decisively.

"Oh, yes," said the man, fixed by his glance.

"Will you wait while I run up to the bank and get the money?"

"Yes. Don't be gone long. If you're not here in an hour I'll sell it again."

Young Cowperwood made no reply. He hurried out and ran fast; first, to his mother's grocer, whose store was within a block of his home.

Thirty feet from the door he slowed up, put on a nonchalant air, and strolling in, looked about for Castile soap. There it was, the same kind, displayed in a box and looking just as his soap looked.

"How much is this a bar, Mr. **Dalrymple**¹⁷?" he inquired.

"Sixteen cents," replied that worthy.

"If I could sell you seven boxes for sixty-two dollars just like this, would you take them?"

"The same soap?"

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Dalrymple calculated a moment.

"Yes, I think I would," he replied, cautiously.

"Would you pay me today?"

"I'd give you my note for it. Where is the soap?"

He was perplexed and somewhat astonished by this unexpected proposition on the part of his neighbor's son. He knew Mr. Cowperwood well—and Frank also.

"Will you take it if I bring it to you today?"

"Yes, I will," he replied. "Are you going into the soap business?"

"No. But I know where I can get some of that soap cheap."

He hurried out again and ran to his father's bank. It was after banking hours; but he knew how to get in, and he knew that his father would be glad to see him make thirty dollars. He only wanted to borrow the money for a day.

"What's the trouble, Frank?" asked his father, looking up from his desk when he appeared, breathless and red faced.

¹⁶ **he could quote him as reference** – он мог на него сослаться

¹⁷ **Dalrymple** – Дэлримпл

“I want you to loan me thirty-two dollars! Will you?”

“Why, yes, I might. What do you want to do with it?”

“I want to buy some soap—seven boxes of Castile soap. I know where I can get it and sell it. Mr. Dalrymple will take it. He's already offered me sixty-two for it. I can get it for thirty-two. Will you let me have the money? I've got to run back and pay the auctioneer.”

His father smiled.

“Why, Frank,” he said, going over to a drawer where some bills were, “are you going to become a financier already? You're sure you're not going to lose on this? You know what you're doing, do you?”

“You let me have the money, father, will you?” he pleaded. “Just let me have it. You can trust me.”

He was like a young hound on the scent of game. His father could not resist.

“Why, certainly, Frank,” he replied. “I'll trust you.” And he counted out six five-dollar certificates of the Third National's own issue and two ones. “There you are.”

Frank ran out of the building and returned to the auction room as fast as his legs would carry him. When he came in, sugar was being auctioned. He made his way to the auctioneer's clerk.

“I want to pay for that soap,” he suggested.

“Now?”

“Yes. Will you give me a receipt?”

“Yes.”

“Do you deliver this?”

“No. No delivery. You have to take it away in twenty-four hours.”

That difficulty did not trouble him.

“All right,” he said, and pocketed his paper testimony of purchase.

The auctioneer watched him as he went out. In half an hour he was back with a drayman—an idler was waiting for a job.

Frank had bargained with him to deliver the soap for sixty cents. In still another half-hour he was before the door of the astonished Mr. Dalrymple. Though it was his first great venture, he was cool as glass.

“Yes,” said Mr. Dalrymple, scratching his gray head reflectively. “Yes, that's the same soap. I'll take it. Where did you get it, Frank?”

“At Bixom's auction up here,” he replied, frankly and blandly.

Mr. Dalrymple had the drayman bring in the soap; and after some formality made out his **note at thirty days**¹⁸ and gave it to him.

Frank thanked him and pocketed the note. He decided to go back to his father's bank and discount it, as he had seen others doing, thereby paying his father back and getting his own profit in ready money.

He hurried back, whistling; and his father glanced up smiling when he came in.

“Here's a note at thirty days,” he said, producing the paper Dalrymple had given him. “Do you want to discount that for me? You can take your thirty-two out of that.”

His father examined it closely. “Sixty-two dollars!” he observed. “Mr. Dalrymple! That's good paper! Yes, I can. It will cost you ten per cent,” he added, jestingly. “Why don't you just hold it, though? I'll let you have the thirty-two dollars until the end of the month.”

“Oh, no,” said his son, “you discount it and take your money. I may want mine.”

His father smiled at his business-like air. “All right,” he said. “I'll fix it tomorrow. Tell me just how you did this.” And his son told him.

At seven o'clock that evening Frank's mother heard about it, and later Uncle Seneca.

¹⁸ **note at thirty days** – вексель сроком на 30 дней

“What'd I tell you, Cowperwood?” he asked. “He has stuff in him, that youngster. Look out for him.”

Mrs. Cowperwood looked at her boy curiously at dinner. Was this the son she had nursed at her bosom not so very long before? Surely he was developing rapidly.

“Well, Frank, I hope you can do that often,” she said.

“I hope so, too, ma,” was his reply.

Auction sales were not every day, however, and his home grocer was open to the transactions not every time, but from the very first young Cowperwood knew how to make money.

He took subscriptions for a boys' paper; sold a new kind of ice-skate, and once organized a band of neighborhood youths into a union for the purpose of purchasing their summer straw hats. It was not his idea that he could get rich by saving. From the first he had the notion that spending was better.

It was in this year, or a little earlier, that he began to take an interest in girls. Being good-looking and magnetic himself, it was not difficult for him to attract the sympathetic interest of those in whom he was interested. A twelve-year old girl, **Patience Barlow**¹⁹, who lived nearby, was the first to attract his attention or be attracted by him. She was a Quakeress, the daughter of Quaker parents. However, she liked this self-reliant, self-sufficient, straight-spoken boy.

One day, after an exchange of glances from time to time, he said, with a smile and the courage that was innate in him: “You live nearby, don't you?”

“Yes,” she replied, a little flustered, “I live at number one-forty-one.”

“I know the house,” he said. “I've seen you go in there. You go to the same school my sister does, don't you? Aren't you Patience Barlow?” He had heard some of the boys speak her name.

“Yes. How do you know?”

“Oh, I've heard,” he smiled. “I've seen you. Do you like licorice?”

He fished in his coat and pulled out some fresh sticks.

“Thank you,” she said, sweetly, taking one.

“Don't you know my sister, Anna Cowperwood?” he recurred. “She's in a lower grade than you are, but I thought maybe you might have seen her.”

“I think I know who she is. I've seen her coming home from school.”

“I live right over there,” he confided, pointing to his own home, as if she didn't know.

“Do you know **Ruth Merriam**²⁰?” she asked.

“No, why?”

“She's giving a party next Tuesday.”

“Where does she live?”

“There in twenty-eight.”

“I'd like to go,” he affirmed, warmly.

“Maybe she'll invite you, I'll ask her.”

“Thanks,” he smiled.

And she began to run gayly onward.

He looked after her with a smiling face. She was very pretty. He felt a keen desire to kiss her.

This was just one of the early love affairs, or puppy loves. Patience Barlow was kissed by him many times before he found another girl—**Dora Fidler**²¹, when he was sixteen years old and she was fourteen; and **Marjorie Stafford**²², when he was seventeen and she was fifteen. Dora Fidler was a brunette, and Marjorie Stafford was fair, with bright-red cheeks, bluish-gray eyes, and flaxen hair.

¹⁹ **Patience Barlow** – Пейшенс Барлоу

²⁰ **Ruth Merriam** – Рут Мерриам

²¹ **Dora Fidler** – Дора Фитлер

²² **Marjorie Stafford** – Марджори Стэффорд

It was at seventeen that he decided to leave school. He had not graduated. He had had enough. Ever since his thirteenth year his mind had been on finance. His Uncle Seneca had allowed him to act as assistant weigher at the sugar-docks in Southwark. In certain emergencies he was called to assist his father, and was paid for it. He even made an arrangement with Mr. Dalrymple to assist him on Saturdays; but when his father became cashier of his bank, receiving an income of four thousand dollars a year, shortly after Frank had reached his fifteenth year, it was self-evident that Frank could no longer continue in such lowly employment.

Just at this time his Uncle Seneca, again back in Philadelphia and stouter and more domineering than ever, said to him one day:

“Now, Frank, if you're ready for it, I think I know where there's a good opening for you. There won't be any salary in it for the first year, but they'll probably give you something as a gift at the end. Henry Waterman & Company might make a place for you as a bookkeeper.”

Uncle Seneca was married now, having, because of his wealth, attracted the attention of a poor but ambitious matron.

This offer of Uncle Seneca to get him in with Waterman & Company seemed to Frank quite reasonable. So he came to that organization at 74 South Second Street one day in June, and was cordially received by Mr. Henry Waterman. He looked him over critically. Yes, this boy might do, he thought. He would like to try.

“I like that fellow,” Henry Waterman confided to his brother the moment Frank had gone. “He's clean, brisk, and alive.”

“Yes,” said George, a much leaner and slightly taller man. “Yes, he's a nice young man. It's a wonder his father doesn't take him in his bank.”

“Well, he may not be able to,” said his brother. “He's only the cashier there.”

“That's right.”

“Well, we'll give him a trial. I bet anything he makes good.”

Something told him the boy would do well.

Chapter IV

The appearance of Frank Cowperwood at this time was prepossessing and satisfactory. He was about five feet ten inches tall. His head was large, shapely, his eyes were inscrutable. You could tell nothing by his eyes. He walked with a light, confident, springy step. He saw people richer than himself, but he hoped to be rich. His family was respected, his father well placed. He owed no man anything.

He turned out to be the most efficient clerk that the house of Waterman & Co. had ever known. They put him on the books at first as assistant bookkeeper, and in two weeks George said: "Why don't we make Cowperwood head bookkeeper?"

"All right, make the transfer, George, but he won't be a bookkeeper long, though."

The books of Messrs. Waterman & Co were child's play to Frank. He went through them with an ease and rapidity which surprised his erstwhile superior, Mr. Sampson.

"Why, that fellow," Sampson told another clerk on the first day he had seen Cowperwood work, "he's too brisk. **He s going to make a bad break.**²³ I know that kind. Wait a little bit."

But the bad break Mr. Sampson anticipated did not materialize. In less than a week Cowperwood knew the financial condition of the Messrs. Waterman very well. He knew how their accounts were distributed; from what section they drew the most business; who sent poor produce and good. Bookkeeping did not interest him much. He knew he would not do this long.

The Watermans, Henry and George, were greatly pleased with the way he handled their accounts. There was a sense of security in his very presence. He soon began to call George's attention to the condition of certain accounts, making suggestions as to their possible liquidation or discontinuance.

One morning, when bills indicated a probable glut of flour and a shortage of grain, the elder Waterman called him into his office and said:

"Frank, I wish you would see what you can do with this condition that confronts us. By tomorrow we're going to be overcrowded with flour. We can't be paying storage charges. We're short on grain. Maybe you could trade out the flour to some of those brokers and get me enough grain to fill the orders."

"I'd like to try," said his employee.

Frank knew from his books where the various commission-houses were. He knew the local merchants and the various commission-merchants. This was the thing he liked to do. It was pleasant to be out in the air again. He objected to desk work and pen work and poring over books. As he said in later years, his brain was his office. He hurried to the principal commission-merchants, offering his surplus. Did they want to buy for immediate delivery six hundred barrels of prime flour? He would offer it at nine dollars straight, in the barrel. They did not. He offered it in fractions, and some agreed to take one portion, and some another. In about an hour he had one lot of two hundred barrels, which he decided to offer to a famous operator named **Genderman**²⁴ with whom his firm did no business. The latter, a big man with curly gray hair and little eyes looked at Cowperwood curiously when he came in.

"What's your name, young man?" he asked, leaning back in his wooden chair.

"Cowperwood."

"So you work for Waterman & Company? You want **to make a record**²⁵, no doubt. That's why you came to me?"

²³ **He's going to make a bad break.** – Он запутается.

²⁴ **Genderman** – Джендермен

²⁵ **to make a record** – отличиться

Cowperwood merely smiled.

“Well, I'll take your flour. I need it.”

Cowperwood hurried out. He went direct to a firm of brokers in Walnut Street, with whom his firm dealt. Then he returned to the office.

“Well,” said Henry Waterman, when he reported, “you did that quick. You sold old Genderman two hundred barrels direct, did you? That's doing pretty well. He isn't on our books, is he?”

“No, sir.”

“I thought not. Well, if you can do that sort of work you won't be on the books long.”

Soon Frank became a familiar figure in the commission district and on the Produce Exchange, soliciting new customers and breaking gluts. Indeed the Watermans were astonished at his facilities. He had an uncanny faculty for making friends and being introduced into new realms. New life began to flow through the old channels of the Waterman company. Their customers were satisfied. George was for sending him out into the rural districts **to drum up trade**²⁶, and this was eventually done.

Near Christmas-time Henry said to George:

“We'll have to make Cowperwood a present. He hasn't any salary. How about five hundred dollars?”

“I guess he's worth it. He's certainly done everything we've expected, and more. He's cut out for this business.”

“What does he say about it? Do you ever hear him say whether he's satisfied?”

“Oh, he likes it pretty much, I guess.”

“Well, that fellow has the real knack for this business.”

So the night before Christmas, as Cowperwood was looking over some **way-bills**²⁷ and certificates, George Waterman came to his desk.

“My brother and I have been especially pleased with the way you have handled the work here during the past six months. We wanted to make some acknowledgment, and we thought about five hundred dollars. From January we'll give you a regular salary of thirty dollars a week.”

“I'm certainly much obliged to you,” said Frank. “I didn't expect that much. I've learned much here.”

“Oh, don't mention it. We know you've earned it. You can stay with us as long as you like. We're glad to have you with us.”

Cowperwood smiled his hearty, genial smile. He was feeling very comfortable under this evidence of approval.

On the way home that evening he was thinking about that business. He knew he wasn't going to stay there long, even in spite of this gift and promise of salary. They were grateful, of course; but why shouldn't they be? He was efficient, he knew that.

After dinner that evening, Frank told his father of the gift of five hundred dollars and the promised salary.

“That's splendid,” said his father. “You're doing better than I thought. I suppose you'll stay there.”

“No, I won't. I think I'll quit sometime next year.”

“Why?”

“Well, it isn't exactly what I want to do. It's all right, but I'd rather try my hand²⁸ at brokerage, I think. That appeals to me.”

“Don't you think you are doing them an injustice not to tell them?”

“Not at all. They need me.”

²⁶ **to drum up trade** – оживить торговлю

²⁷ **way-bill** – накладная

²⁸ **to try my hand** – попробовать свои силы

He straightened his tie and adjusted his coat.

“Have you told your mother?”

“No. I'm going to do it now.”

He went out into the dining-room, where his mother was, and slipping his arms around her little body, said:

“What do you think, Mammy?”

“Well, what?” she asked, looking affectionately into his eyes.

“I got five hundred dollars tonight, and I get thirty a week next year. What do you want for Christmas?”

“**You don't say!**²⁹ Isn't that nice! Isn't that fine! They must like you.”

“What do you want for Christmas?”

“Nothing. I don't want anything. I have my children.”

He smiled.

“All right. Then nothing it is.”

But she knew he would buy her something.

He went out, pausing at the door to grab playfully at his sister's waist, and saying that he'd be back about midnight, hurried to Marjorie's house, because he had promised to take her to a show.

“Anything you want for Christmas this year, Margy?” he asked, after kissing her. “I got five hundred tonight.”

She was an innocent little thing, only fifteen, no guile, no shrewdness.

“Oh, you needn't get me anything.”

“Needn't I?” he asked, squeezing her waist and kissing her mouth again.

²⁹ **You don't say!** – Не может быть!

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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