

Science Fiction Series

No. 2

**THE
THOUGHT
PROJECTOR**

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Then he connected them with an electric light socket, put in the records and turned on the current. They would keep running until he stopped them.

The Thought Projector

CHAPTER I

Five Potentates Embarrassed

“**W**HAT are you guys trying to do!”
The motor-cycle policeman had finally caught up with the speeding automobile, and forced it to come to a dead stop.

“And now you can come with me to the station and tell the Captain all about it,” he said gruffly.

The man who sat beside the liveried chauffeur laughed,

“I guess you do not know who we are!”

“No, and don’t care! You have your man drive slow and you can tell the Captain what you want to. I know the facts. I had to go over sixty an hour to stop you.”

“But my name is Hiram Smith!”

“Well, what about it? What if it is?”

“And these men are my guests. We are going to an important meeting. You are detaining us in an unnecessary manner. Take the number of my car and I will have one of my lawyers attend to it in the morning. If you want to, I will have my chauffeur appear in court.”

“Drive on slow!” commanded the policeman. “Do your talking with the Captain. We have orders to stop this speeding. You knew you were going too fast. What’s the use of talking about it. Let’s go.”

The five men who were lined up later on before the desk of the Captain in the Police Station were all of prosperous appearance, middle aged, and well dressed. Without exception, they were thoroughly angry.

“What’s your names?” demanded the Captain, as he wearily opened the blotter and prepared to write.

The owner of the car stepped forward, and leaned on the desk. He was a large man, much larger than the Captain, and there was no doubt as to his attitude of complete superiority.

“I am Hiram Smith, President of Universal Utilities. I want you to correct this mistake at once. We have a very important meeting to attend and we are late as it is. This fool in uniform would not listen to us. The quicker you let us go, the better it will be for you!”

The Captain looked at him.

Another of the men came up to the other side of the desk.

"I am Thaddeus Cooper, President of World's Motors. I suppose you read the papers and have heard of the new consolidation of aeroplane and auto companies? Well, it may interest you to know that I own fifty-one percent of the stock."

The Captain wrote in his blotter. Finally he looked up wearily as he asked, "Who are the other three?"

Hiram Smith answered the question for the remaining three,

"This gentleman is Bockerman, head of the new Oil and Electrical Consolidation. The next gentleman is Mr. Butler. You may not know him, but he nearly dominates the financial system of this nation. The last man is Mr. Smithers, the President of the new Transportation Trust which has consolidated American railways and shipping."

The Captain showed distinct signs of irritation, as he growled.

"And I suppose your chauffeur is Goda'mighty, head of the Heaven and Hell Trust? Watcher trying to do? Kid me? Get fresh? I was going to let you off light, but now you get the limit. The new ordinance makes it possible for me to fine you five hundred and I am going to soak you just that much."

Smith pulled out a check book.

"In cash," added the Captain.

A hasty consultation revealed the combined assets of the six men as fifty-three dollars. The chauffeur had more than any of them.

"I thought so," sneered the Captain, thoroughly disgusted, "Trying to kid me. A fine lot of Presidents and Captains of Industry you are. Trying to make me think you own the Universe and not worth a hundred dollars between you. Crooks and liars! That's what you are. Cool off for the night in the cells and in the morning you can get some of your friends to pay your fine for you."

"That is a fine way to treat some of the best people in the nation!" cried Bockerman, shaking his fist at the Captain.

The policeman jumped up.

"Don't you like the treatment you get in New York? Then, why don't you stay out of it? Go and make a New York that will suit you better, but just for tonight you tin horn gamblers can dry up and cool off in the cells."

"I'll break you for this!" shouted Hiram Smith, struggling with three policemen and almost purple with rage.

"On your way. ON YOUR WAY! You couldn't break a five dollar bill."

And that was the end of the discussion. But it took the entire

force to put the struggling men behind the bars.

To his surprise, when morning came, the hard-headed Police Captain found that he had attained to international notoriety. He had locked up, and treated as common felons, the five richest men in America. Anxious lawyers appeared the next morning to identify them. Even the Mayor of the city reached the Station-house before the five men could leave it and profusely apologized for the treatment that they had received during the night. He assured the men that nothing more would appear in the newspapers concerning the incident. The five men, unshaven, tired and thoroughly disgusted, heard him in silence and then entered their automobiles, leaving the puzzled Mayor standing on the sidewalk.

The Mayor tried to keep his promise in regard to the papers, but the news had leaked out during the night, and every one of the morning papers featured the incident in startling headlines.

They Plan a Revenge

IN the private office of Hiram Smith, in the Universal Utilities Building, five insulted captains of industry and finance met by appointment a week later. With them was Shamus O'Brion, President of the Amalgamated Workers of the United States. His presence at this conference was a subtle compliment to the Muscle Men of America, who, when all is said and done, control much of the industrial life of the nation.

Hiram Smith opened the discussion:

"About a week ago a very unfortunate event happened in our lives. Five of us spent a night behind the bars of a cell in a police station. We were called liars. We were also informed that if we did not like the way we were treated in New York, we could go and make a city that suited us better.

"It is a rather interesting fact that none of us were born here in New York city. We were all born in small towns, and after we had made our start in life we came to this Metropolis to rule it. I suppose that is the way with most of the big men in the city of New York. They live here because it is to their interest to do so.

"But how many really love this city, the home of their adoption? How many would fight for it, work for it, die for it? To most of the eight million who live here, it is simply a place to live in, to earn and spend in, to work and be amused in. It is a city of apartments rather than of homes. It is like a large bee hive, filled with disinterested workers, who live here, either because they have to earn money to live, or have to spend money to be socially recognized.

"It was this city, through its Police Department, that treated the five of us like common tramps. I have talked to each of you, and, one by one, all four of you have assured me that you will never be able to forget the insult you received that night. You have assured me that you would help me achieve a joint revenge for that insult, yet each of you said that you were unable to think of a suitable revenge which would appropriately wipe out the stain and disgrace of that insult. You seemed to be waiting for my leadership; you said that you wanted my ideas as to suitable action.

"I have a plan. It is for the consideration of that plan that I have called this meeting. I am going to be frank and say that it is not at all original, but was suggested to me by the Police Captain in the heat of our late argument. He said that if we did not like New York, we could go and make a city that would suit us better.

"And that, gentlemen, is what I am going to propose to you, and because it will require the co-operation of every first-class laboring man in the East, I have asked Mr. O'Brien to meet with us. I want him to understand our plans and give us his assistance. We want labor to be behind us in this stupendous undertaking."

He paused, and his audience looked at him and then at each other, in a thoroughly puzzled manner. Finally, the banker, Mr. Butler, asked:

"You want to build another New York?"

"Exactly, only better and finer and larger and richer."

"It cannot be done. There is room for only one city of that size."

"I realize that," answered Hiram Smith, "but that city will be our city, the new city that we are going to build. The old city will be dead."

"But how can you kill the old city? There may be a new one, but it cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, be New York. People will refuse to live there; they will keep on living in little old New York.

"I do not think so," said Smith, "In the first place, let us analyse the situation. What has made New York great? You can answer this question in a hundred different ways. For example, you can say that it is a great port, a center of finance, a great place for amusement, a metropolis of learning. It has become fashionable for business interests to center here. The New York Stock Exchange dominates the markets of the world. There are thousands of rich people who live here because they think that it is the proper place for rich people to live. There is employment here for thousands of working people and a large

number of the 'White Collars.' There are a lot of people in New York today because they have never been able to figure out a way to leave it. They have not enough moral courage or imagination to move to a smaller city or a rural town.

"If there were another city just like New York, only cleaner and better and finer and cheaper and happier in every way, the New Yorkers would move over there by the million and leave the city an empty shell. They would desert the old city like rats leaving a sinking ship."

CHAPTER II

Smith Explains

"I do not agree with you!" exclaimed Smithers. "After all, you have said, I believe that the real reason for their living in New York is because they want to—and they are going to keep on living here because they want to."

"Suppose something happened that would make them want to leave? Suppose they would want to live somewhere else?"

"Then they would—if they could—but nothing like that is going to happen. I read a science fiction magazine, wherein story after story New York has been destroyed by glaciers and comets and pedestrians, but these things only happen in stories. They could not happen in real life. No one can even imagine a really dead New York. What could cause it?"

"Oh! I do not think that we will kill it. Perhaps, we really do not want to kill it, just cripple it, make it a third class city, reduce its commerce, put its Stock Exchange on a par with the bucket-shop of a small city."

"We ought not to do it, Smith," interrupted Bockerman. "Certainly not for revenge."

"Suppose I show you how each of us can increase his income five hundred, even a thousand percent?" replied Hiram Smith.

"That would put a different viewpoint on the matter. But how can you do it?"

"I can easily answer your question. I asked an efficiency expert to go over some phases of the matter with me. For the time being, there is no use of giving you his name, but if you knew who he was, you would realize that he has the brains necessary for such a study. I gave him a problem, and, fortunately, it was one that had been a hobby of his for many years. He has all the preliminary plans made for a new city of ten million, not the engineering

or architecture, but the social features and the financial ones. I will give you an idea of his report. Some of the financial suggestions are my own. Briefly stated, our plan is this:

"At the present time, real estate prices are sky high in New York. The companies that we represent own about thirty percent of that real estate. Our first move will be to sell it as rapidly as we can without breaking the market. It will have to be sold for cash. No mortgages, or local papers—nothing that we cannot put in a bag and take with us and later on convert into cash. I think that the five of us should sell everything, our homes, offices, business places. Our friends will be puzzled and our enemies triumphant, because they will think that we are forced to sell by financial difficulties.

"We will also sell our controlling interests in the various businesses that are purely local and which cannot be easily transferred. All things like local transit, ferry lines, department stores should be sold.

"This movement will place in our hands a lot of cash. And for a while we are going to need a lot. I think that we should each be assessed about three billion to start with, on a thirty billion bond issue. We will at once start buying the land for the new city. That will be the cheapest part of it, because most of it will be bought as farm land, without the sellers realizing that it is going to become a part of the largest and best city in the world. We will never sell a foot of land or a single building. It will be entirely owned by us, and we will simply lease it. We will hold perpetual control.

"You may be curious to know where this city will be. It will front on the Delaware River, in the State of Delaware, at a little town, called Marcus Hook."

Cooper, President of World's Motors, voiced the amazement of the group when he exclaimed,

"Where the Devil is Marcus Hook?"

"It is a little town down in Pennsylvania. It used to have five thousand population, but at present only about two thousand people live there. In front of it is the Delaware River and in back of it lots of farm land. It has one of the finest harbors in the world. We will buy as much land as we need and then we will start building. First, we will build homes for a million mechanics. O'Brien will supply these men and build the homes. We will pay his men ten per cent more than they can get in New York and ultimately lease them modern homes at a rental that will be im-

possible to be matched in any of the large cities in the country. At the same time, we will be building stores and all necessary public utilities so we can supply these millions of mechanics and their families with the necessities of life and many of its luxuries.

"Then we will use these mechanics to build the new city. It will be a clean city, a noiseless city. It will also be a light city, made of structural steel, cement and multicolored glass that is unbreakable. The streets will be wide. Movable platforms, running at various speeds, will provide for most of the traffic. The automobile will be used mainly for interurban movements.

"Docks and warehouses will be erected to surpass anything that is owned by New York at the present time. Department stores, wholesale houses, theaters, churches, office buildings, manufacturing will all be planned for and built in the greatest abundance and with regard to efficiency."

How It Will Be Done

"RESIDENTIAL sections will be set aside for different strata of the city dwellers. There will be pleasant homes at rentals to suit every size of income, from the very wealthy to those in the most moderate circumstances, but there will be no place for the poor. We will tolerate no poor. Our leases will automatically provide for the expulsion of all mentally unable to make an adequate living. Of course, there will be an abundance of hospitals and schools and colleges, museums, libraries and art galleries. Most of the people will live in apartments, but these will be home-like, and my first order to the architects will be to arrange for one room for each person in the city. Even the lowest priced apartment will have an abundance of bedrooms.

"Now, suppose we take up this city from our individual standpoints. First, we will consider the matter of high class labor. I have sold Mr. O'Brion on that part of it. We will give his group of mechanics higher wages, less hours of work and better living conditions than they receive anywhere in the States. In return, he promises me his best men and more work for a dollar than has ever before been delivered by labor. He intends to use the labor situation in the city of Marcus Hook as an object lesson to labor all over the United States.

"You will pardon me if I put Universal Utilities next. These million mechanics will need material to build with, and it is a great thing to build a city of ten million people. My company will furnish that material. We control the market in steel,

cement, wood and glass. All we ask is to be allowed to furnish the building material of this city. My financial experts will receive instruction to furnish this at a total profit, over all cost, of eight per cent. That will satisfy me. We do not know just how much we will make, but our profits will be enormous.

“Cooper is the head of World’s Motors. That means aeroplanes, motors and all kinds of electrical apparatus. I think I can be confidential and tell you of a new principle, that we will make use of in this city. His company will have sole control of it. Sunlight will be transformed into a form of canned electricity. All during the summer, this energy will be absorbed and condensed. We will take enough sunlight out of the air in the neighborhood of Marcus Hook so it will be the coolest city in the East in the summer time. We will keep the temperature below seventy, even in the height of summer. In the winter time, this surplus will be used to heat the houses. At all times of the year it will furnish energy for all kinds of electrically-driven motors. Our rates will be more than encouraging to manufacturing interests. We will limit the use of this sunlight-electrical invention to the city of Marcus Hook for fifty years. After that, our city will be so far ahead of the world that we will not care who uses it.

“The sunlight in New York City is shadowed by the smoke-fog. A haze constantly overshadows the city. On some days 40 per cent of the sunlight is absorbed in the upper smoke strata of the atmosphere. Except on very windy days, New Yorkers live in a perpetual twilight. In our new city, there will be no fog, no smoke, no vapors from exploded gasoline. It will be a clean city, a sunlight city, and that sunlight will furnish the cheapest power ever known to mankind.

“From the time that the boats enter Delaware Bay, they will be driven by electrical power. All the railroads will be electrified before they come into Pennsylvania. And all the income from this invention, which will furnish this cheap electricity from the sunlight, and all the income from the sale of motors of all description will be the property of World’s Motors, and I believe that President Cooper will be satisfied with his returns.

“His field of labor and profits will be largely shared by our friend, Bockerman, of the new Oil and Electric Consolidated. In fact, I hear that these two companies are working in the greatest harmony and may some day unite under one management.

“Mr. Butler has always had the secret ambition to dictate the fiscal policies of this nation. At present, he has decided opposi-

tion from certain New York bankers. But we will form a Marcus Hook Bank and also a separate Stock Exchange and do all our business in the new city; and it will not be long before the business of the nation will be done in Marcus Hook.

"Finally, we have Mr. Smithers. He controls, and this time I am not using a fanciful word, the transportation to and from New York. He has not received the kindest treatment from those who own the town politically. New terminals will be built in Marcus Hook, and the commerce of the old city will be diverted to the new one. Enormous docks will care for the shipping, and where one hundred ships now enter New York harbor, in the future one ship will. New York will just be a station on a few railroads instead of an inter-oceanic terminal.

"In the course of a month, typewritten plans of this entire proposal will be in your hands. For the time being, I will ask but one thing, and that is absolute secrecy. There may be doubts in the minds of some of you as to our ability to put this plan over. To convince you that we can, I will tell you that Mr. Butler assures me that around this table is centered over sixty per cent of the wealth of the nation, not including real estate. We can do as we please. *New York is an ulcer on the face of our nation. Suppose we cauterize it?*"

Mr. Bockerman held up his hand,

"Just one question, Smith. Do you really think that they will work out and show a profit, these visionary plans of ours?"

"I know they will. I have a report here on the waste of New York City. Of course, this is estimated, but think of the totals! Five hundred million in traffic waste, ninety-six million in smoke waste, fifty million in graft, ten million in wasted water. Think of it! Two hundred and eighty million gallons of water spent uselessly every day. How about that? There will be, in a city owned and run by a private corporation, none of this waste. Thus, we will be able to save nearly a thousand million a year. Another saving will be in the efficiency of city employees.

"I might add that, while there will be state and national taxation, there will be no direct city tax. The expense of running the city will be prorated and added to the rentals. Thus, each man will be taxed according to the rent that he pays, which will certainly be fairer than the present method. We will give them a clean, contented city at a moderate cost, and, at the same time, everything that we furnish them will yield us a profit. I am confident that the stock holders will clear better than six per cent

on their investment. My answer to the question. *'Will it pay?'* is that we have five men going into this new business that, so far, have never failed in any undertaking that they have started. We have never had a failure. *'Why should we fail now?'*

No one was able to answer his question.

The Plan Carries

FINALLY, after some silence, the banker, Butler, cleared his throat, and said, almost in a whisper,

"I think we can build a city, but suppose the people of New York refuse to move? We would just have a population of low grade, average people from all over the States. Suppose the real New Yorkers the high-class, go-getter, successful business specialists decided to remain in the old city? Then we would simply have another city, and New York would still be the leading city. I do not know how you feel about it, but I am the first one in my family to spend a night in jail like a common felon. I want revenge. I am willing to make money, but I will not be real happy till I help crush New York. And we cannot do that unless the New Yorker becomes a Marcus Hooker. Will he move?"

For the first time, Hiram Smith showed indecision.

"I think so," he finally said.

"That is not enough. We must be sure!" whispered the banker.

"How can I be sure?" almost yelled the President of Universal Utilities. He was in a white rage. "We are not dealing with dollars, but with human beings, personalities, the reactions of souls. I have spent a few hours talking over this very matter with a psychologist. We think that we have the answer; we feel that we know what the people will do. It looks foolproof to me, but no one can tell. After all, we are business men and not sociologists. I believe that when the time comes we shall be able to make the people move—we can buy the press and subsidize the radio. We are bound to make it a paying proposition, and I am also confident that we will have our revenge. But I cannot positively guarantee it. All I can say is that I think we shall succeed, and I know that none of us have ever failed. I forgot to say that we are thinking of giving a special rental discount to all applicants who can show that they have lived and successfully conducted business in New York for ten years or over. We want to get the very cream of the New York intelligence and, as you know, that is the cream of the nation.

"There is a lot more that I should like to say, but it can all be

left till our next meeting, which will be a week from today. If you will sign a contract with me today, I will buy options on the land at once. I would suggest that each of you select two men from your organizations to serve on a Plans Committee. We can plan to spend twenty billion at once, but it will be money well invested and bringing in a good return. Please keep this a secret till we have the land bought and all of our interests in New York sold. Even then it will be best not to say much about it till the time comes for our propaganda to start. Be sure to remember that our reason for all this is to destroy New York. By the Seven Sacred Caterpillars, we will make a country town out of her!"

The men present signed a gentleman's agreement, and that was the beginning of the new city of Marcus Hook.

New York seemed to be doomed.

CHAPTER III

Enter S. H. Strong

IN a building just across the street from the one in which the conspirators were meeting, an old man was quietly sitting at a Daniel Webster desk. Around the room ran a long wall table covered with a number of electrical and mechanical appliances. In spite of the apparent disorder, there was an evident exquisite method in the arrangement of the apparatus and of loving care in its cleanliness. On the table, between the desk and the window, was a brass tube on a tripod of steel. It looked a little like a surveyor's transit. From it ran wires, ending in a set of ear-phones, which were clamped over the old man's head.

The transit-like instrument was pointed toward a window on the other side of the street. Fifty stories below, the traffic roared like a herd of hungry mastodons. Directly across sat the five Captains of Industry and the President of the Amalgamated Workers of the United States who were just beginning to decide the fate of the Metropolis that moved so restlessly at their feet.

S. H. Strong had been an inventor for many years. During that time he had supported himself and his wife by writing books for boys. From time to time, in the course of fifty years, he had moved his offices, but their arrangement was always the same. In the one office was a stenographer's desk, chair and machine, and two very comfortable chairs, one for himself and one for his wife when she chanced to visit the office. Around the room were sectional bookcases, filled with the five hundred and thirty-seven

books that he had written under a dozen different pen-names. There were entire series of books: "Rough and Ready Series"; "Young Patriot Series"; "Famous Warrior Series"; "Climbing the Ladder Series"; and "Young Men in New York Series." His style was simple and easy. A fixed number of hours each day were devoted to dictation, as he rested in greatest comfort in his easy chair. It was a chair large enough for two, and often did hold two when he and his wife wanted it to.

And many of these young men made their way up the ladder in the city of New York. There were a thousand ways in which a young man could win fame in New York, and S. H. Strong loved the city for it.

And he wrote the kind of books that she wanted him to write, because she loved him. He wrote to retain that love, and finally convinced himself that the New York that he described was the real New York, and he finally believed that any young man with a pure heart and boundless courage could win to fame in New York—(which belief, of course, is not true and never had been true).

Thus, in one office, he was an author, making money, which he largely spent in the other office as an inventor. So far, he had never made a cent in this second office, much to the mild disgust of his wife.

Among the most recent of Strong's inventions, and the one that he was the proudest of, was a machine which accomplished for hearing what the telescope, aided by the X-ray, did for sight. A telescope gives to the eye a tubular vision, increasing the distance at which objects may be seen. Strong's machine, which he called an Audoscope, built on somewhat the same principle, allowed distant sounds to be heard, these sounds being augmented by radio amplification. The uniqueness of the invention lay in the ability to exclude all other sounds except those desired. He accomplished this by focussing its power on the source of the sound, and this was done by pointing the instrument directly at the exact distance. This was accomplished by means of a small telescope, attached to the top of the machine. There was an additional feature, namely, that the sounds could be heard through walls of houses or other substances that usually were impervious to the passage of sound waves. On a clear day, Strong could focus the telescopic portion of the machine on a pigeon strutting on the cornice of a seventy-story building miles from his office, and through the ear phones he could hear the cooing of the pigeon;

and no other sound from all the great city came to his ears.

On this special occasion he had noticed an illuminated office window directly across the street from the window of his laboratory room. Simply from curiosity (he would have blushed if anyone had called him by the ugly name of eavesdropper) he directed his Audoscope to that window, and, making himself comfortable, adjusted his ear phones. He expected to hear, at the most, the clicking of a machine or the dictation of a letter. Instead, he heard the remarkable words.

"We were told that if we did not like New York, we could go and build a city that would suit us better."

Strong was interested.

What Strong Heard

HE at once plugged his Audoscope in on an auxiliary attachment which referred the sounds to a device which operated a noiseless typewriter. Then he shut his eyes, made himself comfortable and started in to learn what they were going to do about it—across the street. Thus, he became an unseen participant in one of the most startling conversations ever indulged in on the Western Hemisphere. Finally the talking ceased with the words,

"Please keep this a secret till we have the land bought and all our interests in New York sold. Even then it will be best not to say much about it till the time comes for our propaganda programme to start. Be sure to remember that our reason for all this is to destroy New York. By the Seven Sacred Caterpillars, we will make a country town out of her!"

Strong disconnected the electrical current and wiped his forehead in a puzzled manner.

"Susanne never will believe this!" he said to himself, as he picked up the long tape paper on which the machine had typed the conversation. "I will tell Miss Smith to work this up as a fiction story, and then I will read it to Susanne tonight. She probably will think that my brain is cracking. But what will she think when she finds out that it is all true? But is it? Perhaps they were actors, practicing a play? Well, anyway, she will know what to do!"

That evening in front of a real fireplace (the wood bill for which cost a small fortune) S. H. Strong read his new story to his dear wife, Susanne, who placidly darned her husband's socks while he entertained her. Finally, he reached the end of the manuscript and casually asked her for an opinion.

"It will never sell," she announced definitely. "It is too improbable. Even Science Wonder Stories would not buy it. Their stories at least have to sound a little real."

And then he told her the truth, which, at first, she would not believe. Then he convinced her, and she became indignant.

"But this is our home town! Besides, if there were no New York, where would your boy heroes go to seek their fortunes? For over forty years they have gone to New York, and it will be impossible to send them to a town with such a funny name as Marcus Hook. I think those were just bad men to even think of such a thing. Samson Hercules, you must do something to save our home. I just love this city!" And she started to cry.

Strong took the little old lady on his withered lap and tried to comfort her.

"Please stop crying, Susanne. Your old Hubby will do all he can."

"And you will stop them? You will let all these nice people keep on living in New York? Please do your best to foil these conspirators. I know you can. You always are able to do it in your books."

"I certainly will do my best," he said, with an air of ability, which, secretly, he felt that he did not possess. He weighed exactly one hundred and three pounds and his total wealth, counting real estate, was less than twenty thousand dollars. He wondered how he could, single-handed, combat the combined wealth and strength of these powerful multi-millionaires?

Yet, the more that he thought of it, the more certain he was that he had to save the city and in some way would succeed. He was insensible to the dust, dirt, smells and foulness of the city. All that he knew was that it was his city, where he and his wife had come so many years ago, where they had bought their little home and where their little spirit children had been born. It was the wonderful city that had given his many heroes their start in life. It was the place in which his sons would have grown to manhood in, if he had had sons. It was New York; his and Susanne's.

They loved it. And because of that love they wanted to save it!

CHAPTER IV

Eureka!

MUCH of that night he lay awake, trying to plan just how he should proceed. It was a hard problem. Should he seek for help? Would anyone who heard his story believe him? Or should he risk failure by fighting the battle, single-handed? That would be worth while. Even in failure he would become greater than he was. So, all of the night he thought as hard as he could.

And then, just as the morning came, the pet canary started to sing, and to him came the idea of sound vibration. He roused his wife.

"The geese of the Eternal City saved Rome!" he cried. "Your canary has saved our beloved New York."

For years Strong had studied sound, not as audible noise, but as vibration. He had read all that he could about the various forms of vibration, light and heat waves, violet, infra-red and radium rays, X-ray and sound. The more he read, the more convinced he was that once a vibration was started, it never ended. It might become dissipated to the point at which no human agency could catch it, but the inability to catch such vibrations was not any reason for doubting their existence. The great advance in radio but confirmed his opinion. When he read that certain scientists were receiving radio waves, which they believed had traveled to the moon, and, rebounding against the surface of that satellite had returned to the earth as echoes, he was jubilant.

He felt that sound vibrations never ceased. It was also a pet theory of his that all sounds, impinging on the auditory nerve, were recorded in the subconscious areas of the brain, even though they were never appreciated by the conscious mind. Those of a certain rate of vibration were received by the conscious and translated into sounds, but millions of vibrations were silently entering the brain every day without the person being, in any way, aware of them.

He had often explained this idea to Susanne as they sat alone before the fire at night. Had she not known him so thoroughly, she would have thought him insane. He would suddenly break the silence with:

"Thousands of years ago an Egyptian slave was carving the face of a Sphinx in the Libyan desert. Up went his mallet and

crack—down it came on the steel chisel. Crack! CRACK!! The vibrations of that stroke are still traveling through space. Were I only sensitive enough, I could hear the crack—crack—crack of that mallet as we sit here during the long winter evenings. I cannot hear these sounds, but, nevertheless, all these sounds and a billion billion more are ringing in my ears, demanding the recognition that I am unable to supply because of the lack of sufficient delicacy in my tympanums. And not only sound waves, but all vibrations constantly strike us, thousands of waves, millions of counter waves, currents and cross currents from thousands of years ago and from the last second of today. The glare of a million lights, the sounds of five million radios and phonographs, the shriek of two million loud speakers and auto horns. All these strike us and—thanks to a protective Providence—we can only hear a small fraction of these sounds. Listen! Susanne! Stop rocking. I fancy that I hear a Babylonian Princess is telling of her love.”

“Samson Hercules!” his wife would reply. “When your hearing gets so acute that you can hear the love words of one who has been dead six thousand years, it is time for us to go to bed.”

So, this special morning when he heard the canary sing, he thought of his theory of the indestructibility of sound waves. Instantly the idea came. Could he send messages to these men in such a way that they would not comprehend the source, would not understand that they were really hearing them, but instead believe that they had originated the ideas as their own?

He realized that this could be done only by producing waves that would reach the consciousness of these men and none else. He could easily send a message that would reach eight million or one hundred and twenty million; he could send such messages through the radio or the newspapers, but he did not want the world to know the secret of the danger or his plan of preventing it.

Messages to the Sub-Conscious

HE had to have a code—a cipher that was only intelligible to these six men, and with that word, “CODE,” two facts came to him. One was that each man had a name. He was aware of the fact that there were many men who shared these names with the six conspirators—but only one man of each name in the world knew the secret of the threatening danger to New York.

Six men shared the secret with him, and each man held a position of trust and greatness. If a message were addressed to them, they would recognize it. The same message would strike the eardrums of the Universe, and die unheard and unrecognized in the subconscious, but, in the minds of these six men, it would leap across the threshold to consciousness and become a living idea, which each man would think that he had originated.

During breakfast, Strong was strangely silent and absent-minded. He sugared his eggs and salted his coffee, and gazed in a peculiar manner at Susanne, who, for once in her life, realized that he was thinking, and kept quiet. It was, however, with difficulty that she refrained from her usual morning chatter.

That night she met him at the door and demanded the reason for his ordering six electrical phonographs. Was he really insane? He simply smiled and promised to tell her all about it after supper. Then he carried all of the Victrolas into the living room of the house, connected them with an electric light socket and, one after another, put in the records and turned on the current. The phonographs were of the repeating variety and the records rather small. Once started, they would keep on repeating till the electricity was discontinued. The records were all different, but there was a little sameness about their messages. Strong turned on the one in the parlor first. It called out in clear, even tones:

"Hiram Smith, President of Universal Utilities! You have planned to destroy New York City, but, instead, you should use your vast wealth and great power of your corporation in replacing the tenements of the city with modern apartments for the poorer citizens of our municipality."

Going into the library, Strong turned on another one which said, "Thaddeus Cooper, President of World's Motors: You have planned to destroy New York City, but, instead, you should perfect an electrical automobile to furnish transportation to New Yorkers without noise or deadly fumes. You should generate power from sunshine and thus make a present to New York City of a smokeless atmosphere and a cheap form of power."

And so, in each room, different messages went on the air:

"Homer Bockerman, head of the Oil and Electrical Consolidation: You have planned to destroy New York, but, instead, you should co-operate with Thaddeus Cooper to give to the Metropolis every possible good, resulting from the combined brains of your two great companies. You

should remember that you came to New York as a poor boy. There are five hundred thousand under-privileged children in the city. Make the Children's Aid Society the richest organization of its kind in the world. Endow it with a great share of your wealth."

"Mr. Robert Butler, Bank President: You have planned to destroy New York. Why not do something for the city? Bashford Dean, Curator of Arms and Armour at the Metropolitan Museum, is dead, but your many millions could engage a worthy substitute and make this department of the Museum greater than the similar departments in London, Madrid and Vienna. Spend your great wealth in making, in every way, the Metropolitan second to none in the world."

"John Newton Smithers, President of the Consolidated Shipping and Railway Trust: You have planned to destroy New York. Instead, you should lower your transportation rates, electrify your machinery, and make it possible for every New Yorker to see America first and the world later on. You could easily save the lives of thousands of mothers and sick children by furnishing free transportation to the mountains and seashore. Why not give ten million rides a year to the poor in the city?"

"Shamus O'Brion, President of the Amalgamated Workers of the United States: You have planned to destroy New York. Instead, you should use all your power to persuade your mechanics to give an honest day's work for an honest day's wage, and thus help to make New York a better city to live in."

Room by room the phonographs were grinding out their messages, all six going at the same time. Naturally, there was some confusion. Finally, Strong took his wife into a corner and almost shouted into her ear:

"What do you think of it?"

"I think that you are insane. How do you suppose I am going to live here in this bedlam?"

"I do not expect you to. We are going to take the last train to Atlantic City and we are going to stay there at least a week. I have sold another book and we can afford it. We will leave just as soon as you can pack a few things, and I will take the canary next door. I have told the private watchman so he will not worry about the noise from an empty house. I am confident that the machines will go on playing. The salesman said that there was no limit to them so long as the electricity was on. I

had these six machines specially tested while I was making the records."

Susanne Strong sighed.

"I ought to be glad to spend a week at the shore, but I wish I had a copy of Emily Post's book on Etiquette. Things are so different now than they were when I was young. But I cannot possibly see how you can expect to accomplish anything."

"Lots of things you don't understand, my dear," replied her husband in a rather glorified, grandiose manner, which always irritated Susanne. "We will let them run on for a week, and, in the meantime, we will watch the newspapers. If we do not get results, we will sell out here and buy an old farm house down in Delaware—near Marcus Hook."

A few hours later, the little husband, and his equally little wife, took the last train for Atlantic City, while the six phonographs ground out, in never ending tones, their messages to the Six Conspirators.

Auto-Suggestion Wins

EXACTLY eight days after their first meeting, the five rich men and the labor leader re-assembled in Hiram Smith's private office. At this meeting the previous air of pugnacious revenge was replaced by an atmosphere of restless uncertainty. The men looked sidewise at each other, as though doubtful of themselves and their neighbors.

Finally, Hiram Smith rose in his place. A large man, he towered above his associates, almost menacing them with his bulk. Although he spoke in low tones, there was a trace of bitter irony in his voice:

"Gentlemen," he began, "a week ago we met here and agreed to build a new city, Marcus Hook, which would become the Metropolis of the East and, through its greatness, destroy New York. That was just a week ago, yet, in those seven days some very peculiar things have happened. Let me be more specific. Cooper and Bockerman, you have set aside a hundred million to be used in the development of new power from sunlight, and you have deeded all the profits from this invention to the Corporation of New York to be spent in endowing the Children's Aid Society. Butler, you have given the Metropolitan Museum two hundred million for its greater functioning and to provide a suitable memorial for Bashford Dean. Smithers, you have voluntarily reduced the traffic rates in America, and donated ten million free rides a year to the poor of New York. You have

also thought of lowering the passenger rates. O'Brion, you have started a plan to promote greater co-operation between capital and labor in this city. Gentlemen, this knowledge has come to me through various channels, which I control, because it is necessary to my interests to know it. You have deliberately enriched, in every way possible, the very city that you promised a week ago to destroy. Universal Utilities was prepared to place its entire wealth into the building of a great city at Marcus Hook. How can I put billions into an enterprise when I cannot be sure of the probity of my associates? You promised to help me destroy this old city and now you. . . .By the Seven Sacred Caterpillars! You act as though you loved New York; as though you even loved the very police station in which you spent a night of disgrace."

Butler, the banker, stood up. There was a quiet dignity in his demeanor. In a way, he was different from the other men, because he had had a college education, while the other men were mainly self-taught and self-made. He began quietly:

"Gentlemen, I think that it will be hard, perhaps impossible, to explain what has happened in the last week to all of us, but I, at least, can tell you about myself. When I left the conference a week ago, I was impressed with the desirability of founding a new city. I held to that idea for nearly two days, and then, for some reason or other, I began to think of Bashford Dean, the dead Curator of Arms and Armour at the Metropolitan. I began to think about him, and finally I said to myself:

'Robert Butler, why not do something for the Metropolitan Museum? Bashford Dean is dead, but your many millions could engage a substitute and make this department of the Museum greater than the similar departments in London, Madrid and Vienna. Make it second to none in the world.

"I found, to my surprise, that I could not get away from the idea. It kept reverberating in my mind. I could think of nothing else, and finally it seemed so well worth while that I visited the Metropolitan. I saw what Bashford Dean had done, and before I left I made them a gift of two hundred millions to serve as a memorial to that great man. I just had to do it to free my mind from an overpowering obsession. Even now the thought keeps ringing in my ears. I feel that even though we reduce New York to a city of the fourth class, nothing should be done to dim or lessen the greatness of our famous Museum. I am willing to go on with our plans if you insist—but this gift re-

mains with the Museum. I have no excuse except that I just had to do it."

And he sat down.

But almost before he was seated, Smithers, king of American transportation, was on his feet.

"Not one of you felt more keenly the insult of that night behind the bars than I did. I hated New York that night—and I am not sure that I love her now—but something started me to think, and finally, I said to myself:

'John Newton Smithers, you could yearly save the lives of thousands of mothers and children by furnishing them free transportation to the mountains and seashores. You could make it possible for all New Yorkers to see America first and after that the rest of the world.'

"I cannot explain how such thoughts came to me, but there they were—and I acted on them. Hiram Smith was correct when he said that I was arranging to give ten million free trips a year to the poor of the city. They are not to blame for the crookedness of the police force. If you men want to, we will go on and build Marcus Hook, but, in the meantime, I want to do the square thing by the poor folks of this city."

Then, one by one, each of the men faced Hiram Smith and made a clean manly statement of the fact that, for some reason, certain ideas had come to them with such overpowering force that they had had no rest till they had changed the thought into action. No one could offer any explanation for their conduct except the one of a compulsive thought. But all, even O'Brien, were a unit in stating that sleeping and eating and working were impossible till they had stilled the idea by acting on it.

The five men looked at the colossus of American Industry, President Smith of Universal Utilities. He faced them, sullenly, a bear at bay. Suddenly, he sat down, and growled:

"We are licked, defeated before we started to fight. Stabbed in the dark by an unseen hand! If I knew who did it, if I could win him to become my partner, we could rule the world. Fools! Pawns! PLAYTHINGS!! That is what we were in the hands of a SUPERMAN. This did not just happen. Someone has been playing with us. There will be no Marcus Hook. New York will live on, the great Metropolis of America. I do not know what happened—but the same thing that hit you hit me.

"And I presume you have been noticing a most peculiar effect. I went to a lot of trouble to find out that I got these ideas only when I was in my own home. The minute I stepped out to the

street, the effect ceased and I no longer was conscious of these ideas, usually foreign to my conscience. But the moment I entered the house I became conscious immediately that I was under the influence of that superman. I tell you, gentlemen, that we are in the hands of someone who knows his business and is forcing us to do these things against our own free will and volition, and if we do not comply he will keep his power turned on us until we either do what he wants or otherwise go to the Insane Asylum. I, for one, admit that I am licked and that for my own peace of mind, I submit.

"I am supplying to an Industrial Commission all the necessary material to build modern apartments to give to the poor of the city decent homes at low rentals. That material will be furnished at less than cost till I have donated to the city five hundred million dollars. The idea came to me, and I had to act on it. I fought it without sleep for three nights and then gave in. It was too powerful for me.

"Our plan to make a second New York was just a dream. It might have worked, but someone found it out. However, let us forget it. How would you gentlemen like to join me in underwriting the war debt of France in return for certain very valuable commercial considerations?"

The tension was broken—fresh cigars were lighted, and around the table the financial destiny of France was determined. Newspapers were asked to send in their reporters and a real story was given, which shrieked the great news in enormous headlines:

MULTIMILLIONAIRES DONATE VAST
SUMS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF THEIR
BELOVED CITY OF NEW YORK

Samson Hercules Strong read the entire page to his wife over the breakfast table.

"I think, my dear," he finally said, "that it is time to go home, turn off the victrolas, and start writing a new book."

"I think that you are wonderful, Hercules!" she replied in rapturous adoration. "Do you suppose that a year before the next presidential election we could put a machine in every state and start it saying,

'THE COUNTRY IS GOING DEMOCRATIC?'

THE END.

