

The Last President

Ingersoll Lockwood



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CHAPTER I.

That was a terrible night for the great City of New York—the night of Tuesday, November 3rd, 1896. The city staggered under the blow like a huge ocean liner which plunges, full speed, with terrific crash into a mighty iceberg, and recoils shattered and trembling like an aspen. The people were gathered, light-hearted and confident, at the evening meal, when the news burst upon them. It was like a thunder bolt out of an azure sky: “Altgeld holds Illinois hard and fast in the Democratic line. This elects Bryan President of the United States!”

Strange to say, the people in the upper portion of the city made no movement to rush out of their houses and collect in the public squares, although the night was clear and beautiful. They sat as if paralyzed with a nameless dread, and when they conversed it was with bated breath and throbbing hearts.

In less than half an hour, mounted policemen dashed through the streets calling out: “Keep within your houses; close your doors and barricade them. The entire East side is in a state of uproar. Mobs of vast size are organizing under the lead of Anarchists and Socialists, and threaten to plunder and despoil the houses of the rich who have wronged and oppressed them for so many years. Keep within doors. Extinguish all lights.”

Happily, Governor Morton was in town, and although a deeper pallor overcame the ashen hue of age as he spoke, yet there was no tremor in his voice: “Let the Seventh, Twenty-second and Seventy-first regiments be ordered under arms.” In a few moments hundreds of messengers could be heard racing through the silent streets, summoning the members of these regiments to their Armories.