

THE CASH INTRIGUE

By GEORGE RANDOLPH CHESTER

"In this sign I conquer," he laughingly quoted, and then he went out upon the balcony to exhibit himself as president elect of the United States.

Senator Sawyer after having awaited his turn for nearly an hour in the outer offices came red faced with anger into the presence of President Kelvin.

"By George, it's true!" he spluttered, looking about him. "At first I thought it a newspaper joke, but it's true. You are polluting the White House with all the pomp and trappings of actual royalty."

"I do not understand what you mean by it," Mr. Sawyer went on. "The entire press of the country is aflame with it. When I picked up my paper in Chicago yesterday morning and read of the alterations you had made I was astounded. I took the first train out and came straight here."

"Very prompt and decisive in you, I am sure," returned Kelvin, with open sarcasm. "Prompt and decisive action is necessary to save the party," the senator hotly retorted, "and the country."

"What did you come to see me about, senator?" demanded Kelvin coldly. "There are many other waiting."

"I came to protest against your entire administration," blazed Sawyer. "Before your nomination, to gain the assent of certain powerful corporations, you had Vice President Rollins, as manager of the United railroad system of the United States, give them valuable rebate concessions. Since your election you have, through Pellman, who succeeded Rollins as czar of the railroads, stopped every concession and forced a perfect riot of restrictive legislation. With your railroad policy, legislative meddling and artificially produced money stringency you have stopped mills and factories by the hundred and have disrupted the entire industrial system of the country."

"Precisely what was needed," was the surprising reply. "Next will come the rearguard. We shall return to the era of smaller competitive concerns and a far better distribution of wealth."

"I do not believe it," snapped the senator. "To me such conditions would look like going backward. Left to itself the trust and combine and monopoly situation would work out its own salvation, for these aggregations of units were in the line of logical commercial progress, but while we stand here arguing this purely abstract question 100,000 men are on the verge of starvation. They are desperate men and some relief must be offered them at once. What are you going to do about it?"

"Go right on with my program," announced Kelvin calmly, picking up from his desk a heavy paper knife made in the shape of a dagger and saying with it.

"You will not go right on with it," declared the senator, striking his closed fist upon a corner of Kelvin's desk. "You're going to have a revolt on your hands in both the senate and house."

"And I suppose that you will lead the revolt in the senate," suggested Kelvin quietly.

upon your house in Washington and an equally heavy one on your place out west, both of which mortgages have eventually found their way into the hands of Mr. Breed, which perhaps you did not know."

Senator Sawyer was shocked into highly unbecomable silence. "You at least are not going to revolt," went on Phillip, "and if you came here representing any clique or combination of law peddlers you may go back and tell them that I intend to have my way first, last and all the time. I shall not permit any interference. Did you come upon any other errand?"

The senator's red faced rage had given way to pale faced apprehension. "About those mortgages," he said, shifting uneasily. "I don't suppose that there will be any present trouble about them."

"I couldn't say, I'm sure," returned Kelvin. "You'll have to see the head of Mr. Breed's real estate department about that. If you should need any ready cash my private purse is open to you to the extent of, say, a thousand."

The senator wheeled instantly. "If you can accommodate me with a trifling temporary loan—of a thousand for sixty days, say—I would appreciate it very much," he said, smiling ingratiatingly.

"No trouble at all," said Phillip pleasantly and immediately began writing out a check.

The senator was followed by a procession of office seekers and favor hunters, of whom Kelvin disposed briefly, and then came Rollins. Much recent worry had left him pale.

"Kelvin, we have been wrong from the first," he confessed after brief greetings. "You are carrying out many of the alleged reforms over which we talked, but they are not reforms. The ultimate aim was right, but the means are wrong. They are too violent, too drastic, and they have succeeded only in disturbing the economic system to an appalling extent."

"Not to any greater extent than I had calculated," returned Kelvin. "This confusion must prevail in the interim between the passing away of the old order of things and the institution of the new. You will see that the period of suffering will be but a brief one and that we shall emerge from the entire revolution—for it amounts to nothing less—upon a sounder basis than any commonwealth in the history of the world, with a larger ultimate percentage of happiness than heretofore enjoyed by any state."

Rollins shook his head. "You are mistaken," said he earnestly. "No peaceable economic readjustment is possible when any large number of the members of the body politic have reached the stage of starving desperation."

"You don't see very far, Rollins," replied Kelvin patiently. "You are looking all your calculations for new error in your own old principles. Has it ever occurred to you that the solution of all our economic difficulties might be found in an entirely new system of government?"

CHAPTER XX. ROLLINS looked at him steadily, while a slow flush mounted to his forehead. "Kelvin," said he very gravely, "this is not the first time I have heard you hint at such things. One of my ancestors assisted in the drafting of the constitution of the United States and signed it. Several of them fought to uphold it. It is the most perfect in conception, the broadest in humanitarianism, the most complete in wisdom of any human document upon which a state has ever founded itself. It is tempered with in any way or if any attempt is made to supplant it I warn you that the sons of the men who framed it and who died for it will rise up to defend it in a righteous wrath second only to the rage of the Almighty, and by the eternal God I will be foremost among their number."

"You are far too logical a man, Rollins, to speak in definite judgment upon a problem until you know its full conditions," said Kelvin. "I do contemplate change and a radical one in our type of government. That change can only be made possible of success by its being fostered and upheld by men of tried and tested probity, ability and strength. Among such men I count you. I rely upon your support and I want to tell you that if this change seems feasible I have in store for you a far higher office than the one you hold now."

Rollins glanced about the room with contempt. "I do not want it," he declared. "Nor do I wish to be taken any further into your confidences. Any system of government which needs to be supported by force—else why the enormous standing army you are now accumulating—must result in oppression, tyranny and ultimate failure. I know now that any change in government which you would propose would be a retrogression, and for my part I shall resist every such change, even to the minutest degree, with every atom of my will, with every breath of my voice, with every drop of blood in my body."

by Herbert Rensselaer, on whom a fear of office as secretary of war had wrought wonderful maturity. "Hello, Phillip the First," said he, advancing to the desk and shaking hands heartily with Kelvin.

"I wish you wouldn't use that form of address," protested Phillip quietly. "You might say it in the wrong place. How goes the enrollment?"

"Splendidly," returned Rensselaer with enthusiasm. "The army of the unemployed is rapidly becoming the army of the republic. The increase of my enlistment is almost in exact proportion to the decrease in industry. Almost in exact proportion to the increase in riots and our recruiting stations are really busier places than the bread stations. Kelvin, today you are commander in chief of an army of nearly half a million men."

"And still we have not enough," declared Kelvin. "I must have the largest army in the world." He was not addressing Rensselaer now, but himself; lost in vast speculation, he fell into muttering silence.

"By the way, old chap," ventured Rensselaer presently, "I'd like to speak

with you about a rather delicate matter. It's about Miss Breed. Er—now don't take this amiss, Phillip—are you contemplating anything serious in that direction?"

Kelvin was silent for so long that Herbert began to think he had not heard, but presently he answered. "Nothing whatever."

"Surely," Herbert asked. "Absolutely," Kelvin replied. "Thank you," said Herbert slowly. "Rather a caddish question, I know, Phillip, but between us—He, too, lapsed into troubled silence.

Kelvin seemed to be about to say something more, but he did not. "Sam, do you think that in a fight I could rely on your brother Peavy as I could on you?" asked Kelvin as he was dressing for dinner that night.

"Deed, Ah don't know, sah," answered Sam, putting the studs in Phillip's shirt. "He's kin' or no' count, anyhow. Ah don't reckon Ah'll place too much 'lance on Peavy in a pinch."

"Well, well, keep him for his looks," said Kelvin, laughing. "You want to be careful, though, that he doesn't steal Lucy from you."

"Lucy? Huh!" grunted Sam, brushing the last speck of dust from Kelvin's pumps. "Ef that wuthless coon eveh tucks up the whites o' his eyes 'twald Lucy, Ah's goan 't break ev'ry bone in his body. Heh—heh! Lucy!" and Sam grinned.

"You don't want to be too sure, Sam," cautioned Kelvin. "Do you think you could whip him?"

ever, stepped roughly between them and, taking White's arm, walked away with him.

Kelvin stopped before a magnificent residence recently vacated by a notorious railroad senator who had not been "found available," and leaving his secret service men at the door, Kelvin found awaiting him in the garishly decorated library Henry Breed. The old man seemed somewhat surprised since Kelvin had last seen him, and his bald head exhibited a slight tendency to nod rhythmically.

"Well, how goes it, my boy?" he asked in his senile old voice, rubbing his withered hands together.

"Beyond our expectations, I think," replied Kelvin. "The country is coming to exactly that state of chaos where it can be handled. There is not a city nor a village but is in a state of turmoil and panic and ready for anything just so it is a change. The enrollment is proceeding even more rapidly than I expected. Within three months more I shall have the largest and most efficient army ever placed under the control of one man."

"Excellent," said Breed. "Excellent! And then, Kelvin, things must be settled very quickly, very quickly indeed. My cash supply is not increasing. It stands now but a trifle over a billion and a half. Why, even the government could, if it chose, control nearly as much cash as I can. This unsettled condition, of course, is a means to an end, but in the meantime it is very bad for business, very bad."

"I don't think we'll attempt to accumulate much more cash for a long time," announced Kelvin. "In fact, I think that after things are settled down we'll let go of some of it."

"Go it!" protested Breed, becoming instantly excited. "Impossible! Why, the very force that has made us is locked up in that impregnable vault beneath my cellar at Forest Lakes! And would you destroy this tremendous dynamo by weakening it?"

"No," said Phillip dryly. "I do not aim to destroy it. I only aim to use it. I can guarantee you that I shall propose nothing that would lessen my own grasp of public affairs."

Breed was thoughtful for a moment, and then he chuckled and nodded his head voluntarily, his parchment-like face breaking into leathery wrinkles. "I guess you are right, my boy," he admitted. "I haven't seen you do anything yet that would lessen your own power, nor mine," he added, "nor mine. You have been doing wonderfully well, Phillip—wonderfully well. But come with me; I have a surprise for you."

Up into his own suite he led Kelvin, and from the bottom of one of his trunks he took a heavy robe of carmine velvet and ermine, with childish delight drawing its luxurious folds around his tall and stooping body. From the hat box of his trunk he took a wonderful creation in gold and jewels and set it upon his head. He brought forth a rod of polished ebony tipped with gold and set with one huge, glittering diamond in its end, then stood, half smothering, before Kelvin, accoutred royally with robe and scepter and crown. These hauberk seemed to change the current of Breed's thoughts.

"The Lord's anointed," he quavered, holding forth his scepter in an unsteady hand. "Mine is the appointed hand to chastise my people for their follies and their ingratitude. Mine is the hand to humble them. Mine is the hand to set them anew in the paths of peace and plenty."

"It is a very handsome outfit and must have cost a fortune," commented Kelvin briskly. "You don't want to keep them here, however."

"No," agreed Breed. "I only wanted to show them to you. I just got them today—to have them handy when the time comes, you know." He had snatched his voice from a whisper to a shout. "I shall take them to Forest Lakes," he went on, "but—but you might want them suddenly, and I'll just put them away here."

and every penny of it be hoarded. When any of them protests he reluctantly pays it back by check."

"I did not know that he was so weak," said Kelvin, shocked. "I have been aware that the condition was growing upon him, but I had no idea that he had gone so far with his eccentricities."

"Eccentricities?" snorted the doctor. "He's crazy—crazy as a loon. You're all crazy, the whole crowd of you, victims of the American craving for money. Mrs. Rensselaer is mad for social position; her nephew is mad for military conquest; Blagg is mad for notoriety. You are the maddest of them all—mad with the thirst for power. It is going to end in a crash, with all your institutions, all your ideals, all your ends and aims and ambitions clattering down about your ears, the most thoroughly shattered and crumbled wreck and ruin of a social structure in the history of the world. As nations have risen, so have they fallen. Those that have been the most rapid in their rise to supremacy have been the most rapid in disintegration. Already your pro rata birth rate is decreasing, and a century will see America as sterile as France."

Kelvin nodded his head with an emphatic jerk. "That is precisely why there must be an utter change in our entire social system. But I did not know that you had devoted so much thought to these things."

"Bah!" exploded the doctor, snapping the fingers of both hands. "I don't talk all I think. I have talked too much now, but in my desk I have manuscripts so thick, and with my hands he indicated a pile nearly a foot high. "It is my great book on national neutrotism. I came to America to study it. Do you suppose that I would have taken the position of house physician to Mr. Breed if I had not found clustered about him exactly the material I wished for my book on alienism? No! I have spent a lifetime on neural deterioration considered from a racial standpoint. I spent a year and a half in China, one in Japan, one in Russia, three in France, two in England and five years scattered about in other parts of Europe and Asia. Now I am nearly four years in America. I shall wait till Henry Breed dies. He will die in a year or possibly two. Then I shall go back to Switzerland to publish my great work on national neutrotism. I shall die before it is published. I shall die before five years, and I cannot live beyond seven. But my book will live. That will be the valuable part of Dr. Zelpnan. Immortality of the soul? No. Immortality of the brain? Yes. Forever."

"Possibly," agreed Phillip dryly. "No doubt, doctor, your work will be accepted as a standard. Five years afterward some other avant will write another four volume work upsetting all your theories, and five years after that somebody will mention your name to a noted alienist or student of neurotics and he will say: 'Zelpnan? Dr. Zelpnan? Don't-mind—the name seems a trifle familiar. I shall die before some of those exploded serum treatments or something?'"

"Bah!" snapped the doctor, and his beard, now beginning to streak with gray, seemed to turn redder from the redness of his face behind it. "Bah!" he repeated, but this time the exclamation was weaker, and Phillip as he went downstairs felt a prick of compunction at having hit the doctor such a vital blow.

Phillip found the library deserted and sat down with his back to the door to examine a volume on numismatics that lay open upon the table. Soft hands were suddenly clasped over his eyes, and Lillian Breed pressed her lips warmly to his. At the touch he turned her in his arms and returned her kiss with something akin to fierceness. Then he thrust her away from his almost roughly.

"You are most indiscreet," he protested, looking at the wide open door. "Why not?" she demanded, laughing. "If somebody stepped in upon us we should only have to make an announcement."

He winced involuntarily at that, and she saw it. There had been that between them which makes a woman fonder and a man more careless. For a moment she laid her hands upon her breast, but she was surprised to find that there came no hot retort, usually so ready upon her lips. With an effort, without exerting himself to do so, Kelvin had for the time being tamed the wild panther within her, and her only impulse she found to be one of conciliation. She smiled up at him, her swift wit settling upon the quick change of topic that might interest him in her mental qualities, but prompt as she was there came an interruption in the person of Dr. Zelpnan, who called Phillip peremptorily.

"I want to show you something," he said to Phillip at the door. "Breed is down in his vault dressed in all the gaudy nummery of a lodge, and he is squatted flat on the floor with money scattered all about him and his old Bible before him on a chair, like a voodoo idol. And he is jabbering garbled texts that in his interpretation are worse than blasphemy."

Lillian, left to herself, stood a moment, her breast heaving, and then dropped into the chair that Kelvin had vacated and grew deeply thoughtful. She had scarcely moved when, at the end of about twenty minutes, Herbert Rensselaer was announced.

"It is a pleasure to find you alone," he observed. "You are so very popular that an edgewise word with you is a rare boon. You've made yourself the sensation of Washington."

"It is just that about which I was going to speak to you," said Herbert with awkward bluntness. "I am prepared to offer you the Rensselaer name for your own."

Lillian bounded up at him and smiled. "The dream of your respected aunt," she laughed. "Herbert, you're a nice boy, but I'm not in love with you. Are you with me?"

"Well, no," he confessed with infinite relief. "I thought not," she returned, still laughing. "It is a pity to disappoint your sunny, but let's do that very thing. You're too good a friend of mine to spoil."

"I'm beginning to like you immensely," confessed Herbert. "Let's shake hands on it," which they cordially did. At almost the same moment Sumner Rollins had made a quite different proposal, one with the whole heart and the whole love and the whole honor of a stalwart man, and Elsie White, with sorrow that it must be so, searched in her heart and found for him only friendship, and the man whose image blocked the way of Rollins was thinking of her even then, to the entire forgetfulness of Lillian Breed.

In a hundred cities there were riot and discord. In a thousand villages there was grave panic. In a million homes there was hunger. Commerce was paralyzed, and three months afterward the entire United States was in revolt the entire unemployed had been clubbed into disruption. Street corner speakers, among whom Ben White had become prominent for a certain rudely effective oratory, were suppressed. Gatherings in halls were censored by the police, the militia or the rapidly increasing army of regular soldiers, and were broken up, sometimes with bloodshed, at the least sign of inflammatory speech. The consequence was

everywhere, and the necessities of Blagg gained converts by the tens and the hundreds of thousands from coast to coast. The chaos that Kelvin had deliberately inaugurated to serve his own ends was serving the ends of Blagg equally well. The throwing of bombs, with terrific consequence to public safety, became common—so common, indeed, that the life of no public man was secure, yet Kelvin, attended by his usual guard, went everywhere. He seemed to bear a charmed life, and on the very day he declared martial law throughout the Union, when every newspaper was against him and when countless hordes were clamoring for his death, he went calmly to Forest Lakes to keep an appointment with Henry Breed. Five hundred grim, armed men, indifferent to the turmoil of the world outside, now guarded the grounds, and Kelvin spoke of them the moment he met Breed.

"I want your men," said he. "I have examined the faces of them. They are mountaineers every one and men of blind allegiance. I need them in Washington."

"No," protested Breed. "I have been years in selecting them and they must stay here to guard Forest Lakes and me, and what you know to be in the vault below."

"The vault needs no guarding," replied Kelvin. "We'll remove it's contents very shortly to the government treasury, anyhow. The time is ripe, and my plan is to be carried out at once."

"Our plan, you mean," corrected Breed, smiling, whereas Kelvin's eyes contracted for a second.

It was significant of the remarkable control that Kelvin had obtained over this man, whose once indomitable will had bent the commerce of a nation to his own ends, that he protested no further against the appropriation of his picked guards. Instead, he turned eagerly to the immense portfolio which Sam brought in. Spreading this upon the library table, Kelvin opened it, disclosing a thick stack of the large diagrams so characteristic of him.

Breed, restored at once to his shrewd old calculating self, leafed carefully over the neat cardboard diagrams which gave, in turn, comprehensive surveys of the entire extent, condition, and prospects of textile manufacturers, of the steel industry, of meat packing, of merchandising, of every branch of human industry and commerce, each with all its ramifications. From the experience of his nearly fourscore years Breed made a crisp, brief, and pregnant comment upon each industry, upon which occupation Doctor Zelpnan beamed through his thick spectacles with approval, for Breed was never so normal as at these conferences, when the habit of his business perspicacity came upon him. Far into the night they sat over this work, with Zelpnan and Rensselaer and, for a time, Lillian as interested lookers on, and when it came time for Phillip to retire he was very weary. Leaving the others still in conversation, he was about to make his way to his own apartments, but his way led him at the head of the stairs.

"They have been making some repairs up that way, Mr. Kelvin," she informed him, "and we'll have to change your rooms for this visit."

in it; but, stooping down to inspect the bolt, he could see that it was locked, and, with a nod of satisfaction, he made haste to get to rest. He had scarcely begun to undress, however, when the communicating door opened, and Lillian, clad in the same kimono in which she had before entered his private apartments at the Esplanade in New York, came in, laughing as if her act were but a childish prank.

"Have you no discretion whatever?" Kelvin demanded, with some impatience. "Not much," she answered gayly. "What is the use of it in a poky, humdrum place like this, where everybody is deaf, dumb and blind? Come, I want to show you something."

"I'll look at it in the morning," returned Kelvin. "In the morning won't do," she insisted. "It will be too late then." She insisted so strongly that Kelvin finally went with her into her own apartments. She went to her desk and brought a letter.

"See," she said. "I have found a note written by George Blagg to Ben White, the father of your precious friend Elsie while he was still gardener. Blagg has been contracting for a million rifles, for one thing." As she spoke she seemed to be listening intently. Phillip reached out his hand for the missive. She thrust it quickly behind her back and looked up at him with glaring eyes. "Is that the way you express your thanks?" she playfully protested. "You shan't have it until you show yourself more grateful than that." And she pursed up her lips.

With something of reluctance Phillip bent forward to give her the stipulated kiss, and as he did so she suddenly threw her arms about his neck. At that instant the hall door opened wide at the hand of Lucy, and Henry Breed stalked in, followed by Dr. Zelpnan and Herbert Rensselaer and his aunt. Phillip and Lillian instantly sprang apart, but it was too late. The tableau had been seen. Henry Breed was the first to find his voice.

"Lucy told us that Lillian wished to see us in her room and led the way," he observed dryly, "but Lucy seems to have been mistaken."

"She was," asserted Lillian coolly, "but since you are here I may as well tell you a bit of news, grandfather. You may announce tomorrow that the long standing secret engagement between Phillip and myself is to culminate in an immediate wedding. We were just discussing the date. I think about the first of next month will suit us best, won't it, Phillip?" and her hand sought his.

Phillip, half confused, half angry, but as good a face upon the matter as he could and agreed, with every appearance of gravity that the first was an ideal date. Having announced their intention, the surprised couple were able to look their captors in the face with more or less of cool defiance. In Herbert's eyes Kelvin saw grave remonstrance. Dr. Zelpnan was openly chuckling. Henry Breed was smiling and rubbing his withered old palms together. The shocked and horrified Mrs. Rensselaer finally found her motive power and, sitting into the room, took Lillian's arm under her own and marched away with her to her own apartments. Dr. Zelpnan was the first to congratulate Phillip, shaking hands with him heartily.

"It is a wonderful match," said he with sardonic gleam, "an ideal match." Henry Breed delightedly patted Kelvin on the shoulder and called him a son, and it never seemed to cross his mind that there had been anything in

the circumstances to incur his disapproval. If not his anger, Rensselaer lingered long enough to protest. "I say, old man," said he, "you might have been fair enough to give a fellow a correct tip when I asked you in the first place. You've let me make an ass of myself. I finally gave in to the aunt and proposed to Miss Breed not long ago. I—I wish you happiness."

Kelvin looked enigmatically into Rensselaer's eyes, abruptly laughed aloud and then, wheeling, turned into his own room.

Stalwart soldiers surrounded the White House grounds in lines two deep. From the gates to the main entrance the way was lined upon both sides with bronzed, gray bearded non-descripts, who stood slothfully in their olive green khaki and who had nothing of the bearing of soldiers in their attitude. They were a strange lot, full 500 of them, and yet any one disposed to laugh at the awkward line had only to look into the stern succession of unlit faces to know that here was dogged fighting blood. Already throughout the length and breadth of

TO BE CONTINUED



"I MUST HAVE THE LARGEST ARMY IN THE WORLD."



"THE SECRET ENGAGEMENT IS TO CELEBRATE IN AN IMMEDIATE WEDDING."

Advertisement for The Weekly Ontario, Belleville, Thursday, December 25, 1913. Includes a list of years: 1876, 1880, 1885, 1890, 1895, 1900, 1905, 1910, 1913. Also includes a small illustration of a person.