

THE GOLDEN FLOOD

By EDWIN LEFEVRE



Resume: Mr. Richard Dawson, president of the Metropolitan Bank, New York, is visited on a Thursday, by Mr. George Kitchell Grinnell, who wishes to deposit \$100,000, and presents an Assay Office check on the Sub-Treasury. One week from then he deposits \$151,000, a fortnight later \$250,000, and three weeks later \$500,000. He makes no revelation of his business, and on his desiring to make a deposit of \$1,000,000, the pompous president becomes excited. A deposit of \$2,500,000 follows, then \$5,000,000, and the following Thursday, \$10,000,000. Mr. Dawson employs Costello, a detective, who reports that Mr. Grinnell lives quietly, but has a load of bullion bars taken to the Assay Office every Monday. The flood continues until Mr. Grinnell has nearly thirty millions in the bank. The president in desperation seeks again to discover the source of the fortune. He is baffled once more, and Mr. Grinnell increases his deposits to \$35,000,000, and informs Mr. Dawson that Miss Grinnell, his sister, shares the secret of his wealth. The president then warns the plutocrat, Mellen, of the gold calamity. They tell Grinnell of the harm of too rapid increase in gold supply. The latter refuses to become either alarmed or confidential. Mr. Mellen and Mr. Dawson resolve to sell bonds and buy stocks. Mr. George Mellen, the brother of the richest man in the world, is warned of the situation. Mr. Grinnell then announces his desire for drafts on foreign banks. He takes a sight draft on London for two million pounds sterling. Mr. Grinnell then requests the financier, Mr. Herzog, to buy for him a hundred millions of bonds on margin. Mr. Dawson and Mr. Mellen become anxious when they find that bonds are being heavily bought and in consequence are going up.

"D ID you see Mr. Grinnell's marriage announcement in the Herald, sir?" He looked first at Mellen, then at his chief. "It's among the ads. in the front page."

"No," answered Mellen, turning toward the table, but Dawson had already picked up the Herald. He read aloud, Mellen looking over his shoulder:

"GRINNELL-ROBINSON.—On Tuesday, September 12, by the Rev. DeLancy Williamson, at his residence, Margaret, daughter of Thomas M. Robinson, to George Kitchell Grinnell. Middletown, N.Y., and Youngstown, O., papers please copy."

"Robinson?" said Mellen quickly. He answered an unspoken question of his own: "But he hasn't so much."

Dawson knew what he meant. He shook his head and said with a slight frown: "I doubt if he has even ten millions. I know he sold out all his Consolidated Steel during the boom but that couldn't have been more than five millions. I don't think so." He looked ill at ease.

"We must see Grinnell at once," said the richest man in the world, speaking quickly. "If Robinson knows what Grinnell is doing—" He checked himself with a frown. A great anger filled his very soul to overflowing: Always Grinnell came before him—an obstacle to plans, enveloped by doubt-breeding mystery, surrounded by an uncertainty which, by not openly revealing dangers, made the young man a ceaseless menace.

"Mr. Grinnell is now at Wolff, Herzog's office," said Costello. "He's been going there every day for a week."

"I knew it!" said the richest man in the world explosively. He sat down in an armchair and leaned back, breathing quickly.

"We must make sure," said Dawson. He sat down at his desk and took up the telephone. Then he said to Costello: "Anything else?"

"No, sir. He went into Mr. Herzog's private office. The door-keeper told me he was a very rich man and that he came there every day."

"Very well," said Dawson, dismissively. The detective left the room. Mellen stretched his right hand toward Dawson and opened his mouth. But he said nothing. His hand dropped and he stared intently at a paper weight on the president's desk.

Dawson took up the telephone.

"Let me have Mr. Herzog, at once," he said sharply.

A minute later he said: "Herzog?—This is Dawson—Is Mr. Grinnell in your office?" Mellen drew near and stood beside his friend.

"Hello?" went on Dawson, with a tinge of impatience. "Is Grinnell—" He turned to Mellen and explained, spitefully: "He says to wait a moment—Hello? Yes. I'd like to see him—"

"Tell him to wait for you there," said Mellen, in a tone of command. Dawson spoke into the telephone:

"Well, if he'll wait for me at your office I'll run over at once. Very well. Good-bye." Dawson rose and, putting on his hat, followed the richest man in the world who had already started out of the office briskly.

In Herzog's office the old banker, at Dawson's first question, carefully placed his hand over the transmitter and said to Grinnell:

"Dawson wants to know if you are here."

"I cannot tell a lie," laughed Grinnell; "I am."

A moment later Mr. Herzog said: "He says he will come over if you will wait here for him."

"Very well," replied Grinnell. He added: "I think this will close the incident." But Herzog shook his head—he was listening to Dawson and couldn't hear the young man's words.

The bank president and the richest man in the world walked more quickly than was their wont, each busy with his own thoughts. The myopic door-keeper at Wolff, Herzog & Co.'s knew Mr. Dawson. He opened the gate obsequiously and then hastened ahead and held open the door to Mr. Herzog's private office. They entered abreast.

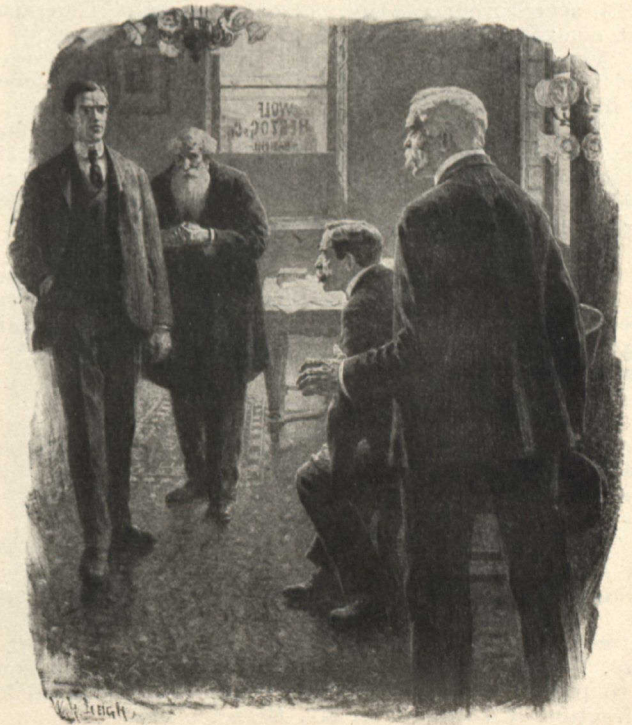
Mr. Herzog rose quickly and, walking toward them, extended his hand to Dawson. Then he shook Mellen's. Grinnell arose from his chair near Herzog's desk and merely said, "Good-morning, gentlemen."

Dawson bowed to him, and with his diplomat-at-a-reception smile, replied:

"Good-morning, Mr. Grinnell."

Mellen used the same words, and no smile.

"Be seated, gentlemen," said Mr. Herzog with a polite wave of his hand.



"I don't wish you to ask me any more questions—not one."