

# A Political Vendetta

By  
WELDON J. COBB

## CHAPTER VII.—(Continued.)

He had sustained a shock, it was evident. He tried to brace his nerves, but his tones shook as he turned his colorless face to meet the wretched, cruel one of his companion.

"Speak!" he said, almost hissing—"if you know what this means!"

"What it means!" hysterically retorted Worthington—"ruin!"

"Nonsense!"

Kane hugged his shoulders. He had got the mastery over momentary weakness now.

"You see?" pursued the other—"a drop."

"Of thirty points!"

"Only means—"

"Only two millions!"

"Only two millions! yes—but if this goes on—"

"It can't," confidently insisted Kane.

"Rouse up, man—some rascally stock-jobbing jester of a company! A cardinal sin of the holders of our stock, there has been a stampede. Tomorrow our turn will come!"

"But the cause—the cause?" persisted Worthington—"for there was a cause! We are too sold to be the footfall of the market; then whence the break—and why?"

"Come in," spoke Kane gruffly, as a tap sounded on the polished mahogany door, and a messenger boy entered, handed him a telegram, departed. Kane tore it open, a sound of breath laboring in his throat. He handed the message to Worthington, the latter in turn perused it.

"Great heavens!" he gasped. "Kane! what is the meaning of this accumulating disaster?"

The message was from a trusted agent on the New York Stock Exchange and ran:

"Our stock is going to pieces. It has dropped thirty points in two days. Blonhardt of the opposition syndicate has been in despatch to list assets, and our bonds inflated and duplicated at two different local banking concerns. How did he find out?"

How—for it was true! Old, tarred swindler that he was, Percy V. Kane shuddered as he realized what such a revelation meant: First, in money loss, next, in the eyes of the law.

"Something's wrong!" reiterated Worthington, getting up and pacing the floor like a pugilist. "There has been a leak. But—how?"

"You and I only know of the bolstering necessary to tide over the last dividend," said Kane thoughtfully.

"Unless—except—"

Worthington hesitated. He directed a keen, though hesitating, glance at his companion. The latter met the look sternly.

"Well?" he demanded.

"Except your private secretary."

"She!" burst forth Kane, a rapturous, instead of an incensed man. "Yes! Worthington, you seek to learn who the one redeeming trait of gentleness in his base nature it came to the front now—she, indeed, knows with us the shiftings, the secret subterfuges requisite for the accomplishment of a gigantic coup. But," and his voice grew even more tender, "she is one of us!"

"One of us?"

"Yes! she is soon—very soon—to become my wife."

"A far gone as that!" muttered Worthington, gazing astonished.

"So," returned Kane, "and whence and how the leak, look elsewhere. And ferret it out, man! for this is a serious, a critical situation."

"You must act—"

"I shall act!"

"Listen," he said, focusing his glance upon his weak and frightened comrade, his soul upon the theme in play; "leave me to myself for a time. I will think out a way to wreck Blonhardt and his crew."

"Meanwhile, you seek to learn who is playing as fast in the office. I shall telegraph the Chemical Nation to tell all our securities on the quiet, and have the funds applied towards buying up everything offered of our stock to-morrow."

"Will it check the tide?" warily inquired the president.

"It will bluff our rivals."

"But the local banks—the gross defection in assets—"

"I leave that to me; there is work to do—important, prompt. Why, we dare not be broken now. To-morrow we election places in our next seventy-three Representatives and a Senator. Before this election day is over we have the key to the State treasury, a foothold in Congress, our hands tight-clasped on the throat of justice! It is not a State, this country, that we own, then—the world is our stamping ground!"

"You do not trust valily!" declared Kane.

Left to himself, he slowly, meditatively paced the apartment. He reflected rapidly—but deeply, and to the point.

"Something" was indeed "wrong"—a hidden hand was groping for the vitals of the great trust. "Where?"

Something was wrong! They stood to lose two millions unless public confidence could be restored, and the shadow of perfidy, dishonesty haunted their way in the manipulation of inflated and duplicated stocks could be covered up.

Kane "thought out a way"—then his lips broke to a smile, and his eyes grew tender.

He was thinking now of the lovely girl who had come into his life like a new revelation of joy and delight, and for the moment he forgot his business troubles and his political aspirations.

Again he was inured, again a rap at the door irritated him.

"Come in!" he said again.

A meekly dressed creature crossed the threshold. At a first careless glance Kane took him to be one of the workmen from the mills.

"I want to show you something—" began the visitor.

"Oh! go to the superintendent," anxiously ordered Kane, believing the visitor had come with some complaint, or, as he himself had vaguely imagined, intended to disclose some information received at work for which he hoped to receive compensation.

He waved the shadow away. "The latter sprang, strangely, quick and energetic before the open door behind him, "I want to show you this—" he said.

Out from his sleeve he snatched a short, thick bar of steel.

"Stand where you like—listen to me!" he growled. "Or with this, and here and now, I'll batter out your wicked brains! Look well at me!"

And in a tone of thunder, the dreadful weapon uplifted, his eyes two angry sparks of flame, the stranger sternly demanded:

"Percy Kane, do you know me?"

CHAPTER VIII.

A singular shadow crossed the face of the great arch-schemer, mingled dread, despair and desperation.

But Kane instantly grew calm as ice.

some into the president's ear must have been weighted with ominous import, for he drew back with a sharp shiver.

"Oh, never!" he gasped. "Kane, you can't mean it!"

"Yes, I do mean it," calmly, decisively, retorted the other.

"To apply the trust funds left in our charge sacredly—man! should they be engulfed, then for you, for myself, it is the convict garb, and prison bars!"

"It must be done—there is no other way. We must turn back the storm of distress bearing at our threshold, at all costs or risk."

He appealed upon his conference at last. They laid their plans for the morrow. They spoke of the impending election—tomorrow—the day that would see them masters of the industrial world—or paupers!

About two hours later Percy Kane entered his private office. He paused, gazing at the trim, little figure at the teeth grating, his glance murderous, "fancied you might recognize—"

"My father?"

"Of your wife?"

"The wife that was—true, my man; what of it?"

His glance unflickering, he steadily, rather smirking, regarded the intruder. Then he said coldly:

"Yes, I know you."

"I thought you would!" hissed the other, dangerous brandishing the steel bar, his teeth grating, his glance murderous.

"What it means!" hysterically retorted Worthington—"ruin!"

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# WOMEN AND FASHION

## Don't Be a Drudge.

When a woman is a household drudge, who has time neither to improve her mind nor her body, it were well for her to ask the reason of it. Often it will be found to be caused by lack of system. The necessary duties of the house are done just any time instead of on regular days. In consequence, sometimes they are crowded out entirely, at others are done under such a feeling of pressure as to become a burden. It is as important to live on schedule in one's domestic arrangements as it would be to another person's business which must be managed.

Many women feel themselves drudges because they attempt a scale of living beyond their resources. While everyone wants as dainty appointments and service as possible, when that can be had only at the expense of nerves and brain development, it is well to live more simply. If you find you cannot get through your day's work comfortably without being tied down unduly, simplify your work in every possible way. Have less elaborate meals. The change will save not your time alone, but your money and your family dinners.

She drew from a pocket a small photograph of Gladys Hope.

She tore upon her the fragments. She was buoyed up by love when he left her. The future seemed golden. He felt he could overcome all obstacles, for with the morrow his grasp on fortune and power would tighten—much tighten!

And she—her gentle life bore her down, her spirit softly to beautiful Claire Tremaine stood like one of the approaching marriage.

Alone, Claire Tremaine stood like one of the rarest, most beautiful women.

He was a Drudge.

He was a Drudge.

He was a Drudge.

He was a Drudge.