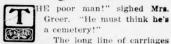
TORY OF LOVE, POLITICS, INTRIGUE, OF A RICH & POWERFUL BOSS AND AN INTREPID YOUNG REFORMER. Payson Terhune by Albert

FOREWORD.

The action of this lively, entertaining and accurately drawn story, turns around the character of Caleb Conover, a self-made railroad magnate and contractor who has used his riches and power to make himself the political boss of his party and state. he is the boss. No doubt of this. He bosses about every person and every-thing he has to do with except Clive Standish, a young lawyer who is an idealist in politics, and who, like idealists everywhere, is unbossable. men are perfect antitheses in all their aims and methods, but strikingly similar in strength of character. They become opposing candidates for governor, and the episodes of the campaign are full of spice and variety. Which wins? Read the story. The element of romance is introduced through the mutual love of Standish and Anice Lanier, private secretary of Caleb Conover. A murder in New York city which resulted in a criminal trial that obtained world-wide notoriety is used to advantage. The anxiety of the Conover family to get into fashionable society, and their accompanying troubles and humiliations, constitute one of the delightful features of the story. But best of all is the tremendous personality of Caleb Conover himself. He may be all that is despicable in his railroad, his contracting and his political interests, and not admirable in his indifferent treatment of his weak little wife, but he has a dominating mind, spends money with prodigal recklessnes, is audacious, far-seeing, and while responsive always to the in tolerance that often comes with hardwon success, he is quick to recognize character and ability and reward them especially in his own service It is captivating tale, of whose creation Mr. Terhune, the author, has every to be proud.—THE EDI-

CHAPTER I.

Caleb Conover Receives.



was passing solemnly through a mighty marble arch, aglare with electric light, leading into the "show place" of Pompton Avenue. Athwart the arch's pallid face, in

raised letters a full foot in length were the words:

"CALEB CONOVER. R.R., 1893." In the ghastly, garish illumination, above the slow-moving procession of

sombre vehicles, the arch and its inscription gave gruesome excuse for She herself Mrs. Greer's comment. thought the phrase rather apt, and

stored it away for repetition. Her husband, a downy little man, curled up miserably in the other corthe brougham, read her thought, from long experience, and twisted forward into what he liked

to think was a commanding attitude.
"Look here!" he protested. "You've got to stop that. It's bad enough to have to come here at all, without your spoiling everything with one of Bernard Shawisms of yours. Why, if it ever got back to Conover's

"He'd withdraw his support? And then good-by to Congress for the unfortunate Talbot Firth Greer?'

"Just that. He'll stand all sorts of criticism about his start in life. In fact, he revels in talking of his rise comes to guying anything in his present exalted-

What does the 'R. R.' at the end of his name over the gate stand for? I've seen the inscription often enough

"'Railroader.' He uses it as a sort of title. Life for him is one long railroad, and—"

"And now we're to do him honor at the terminus?"

"If you like to put it that way. Perhaps 'junction' would hit it closer. It was awfully good of you, Grace, to

"Of course it was. If I didn't want a try at Washington I'd never have dared it. It will be in all the papers to-morrow. He'll see to that. And then-I hate to think what everyone will say. I suppose we're the first civilized people who ever passed under that atrocious hanging mortuary chapel, aren't we?"

"Hardly as bad as that. If it's any comfort to you, there are plenty more in the same box as ourselves, to-night."

can't want to run for Congress?'

"No. But enough people have axes of their own to grind to make it worth their while to visit the Conover whet-When a man who can float companies at a word, boom or smash a dozen different stocks, swing the Legislature, make himself heard from here to Washington, and carries practically every newspaper in the Mountain State in his vest pocket; when—"

"When such a man whistles, there are some people who find it wise not to be deaf. But what on earth does he want us for?"

"The world-old ambition that had its rise when Cain and Abel began moving in separate sets. The long-ing to 'butt in,' as Caleb himself would probably call it. He has everything money and political power can give. And now he wants the only thing left-what he terms 'social rec-



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"And we are to help-

"No. We're to let him think we dp. All the king's horses and all the king's men, assisted by a score of Conover's own freight derricks. Conover's own freight derricks, couldn't hoist that cad into a decent crowd. He's been at it ever since he got his first million and married poor little Letty Standish. She was the fool of her family, and a broken family at that. But still it was a family. Yet it didn't land Caleb anywhere. Then, when that unlicked cub of a son of his grew up, he made another But you know how that turned out. Now that his daughter's cap-tured a more or less authentic prince,

I suppose he thinks the time has come. Hence to-night's—"
"What a blow to his hopes it must have been to have the girl marry in I suppose the honeymoon in America and this evening's reception are the next best thing. Are we never to get

"Soon enough, I'm afraid. Conover boasts that he's laid out his grounds so that the driveway is a measured half-mile. We'll be there in another minute or so.

Mrs. Greer laughed a little nerv-

"It'll be something to remember anyway," said she. "I suppose all sorts of horrible people will be there. I read a half-page account of it this morning in the Star, and it said that while the proudest families of Granite would delight to do Mr. Conover honor, the humbler associates of political and business life would also be present.' Did you hear anything more delicious? And in the Star, too!"

"His own paper. Why not? I supwe're the 'proudest families'; and the 'humbler associates' are some of the choice retinue of heelers who do his dirty work. Lord! what a notice of it there'll be in to-morrow's Washington will have to be papers! for this. If only I—"
"Hush!" warned Mrs. Greer, as the

ransing warned Mrs. Greer, as the carriage lurched to a halt, in the pack before a great porte-cochere. "We're actually here at last. See! There goes Clive Standish up the steps with the Polissen girls and old Mr. Polissen. There are a few real human beings here, after all. Why do you suppose-?'

"H'm!" commented Greer, "Polissen's 'long' on Interstate Canal, the route Conover's C. G. & X. Road is threatening to put out of business. But why young Standish—" But why young

Letty Conover's own nephew. Though I did hear he and the Conovers were scarcely on speaking terms. He-

"I fancy that's because Standish's 'Mayflower' back is too stiff to bend at the crack of Caleb's whip. He could have made a mighty good thing of his law business if Conover had backed him. But I understand he refuses to ally himself with his great relative-in-law, and prefers a good social position and a small law prac-

"Rather than go to Congress?" fincence that Greer could only glare at her with flabby helplessness. Before he could think of any apt retort, the brougham was at the foot of the endless marble steps, and its late occupants were passing up a wide strip of velvet between rows of vividly liv-



Caleb Conover, Railroader, was standing just within the wide doorway.

Caleb Conover, Railroader, was standing just within the wide door-way of a drawing-room that seemed to stretch away into infinity. Behind rose an equally infinite vista of heads and shoulders. But the loudly blended murmur of many voices that is the first thing to strike the ear of arriving guests at such functions was conspicuously absent. The scarce-broken hush that spread through the chain of

Mrs. Greer's mortuary simile.

But the constraint in no way extended to the host himself. The strong, alert face, with its shrewd light eyes and humorous mouth, was wreathed in welcoming smiles that seemed to ripple in a series of waves from the close-cut reddish hair to the ponderous iron jaw. The thickset form of the Railroader, massive of shoulder and sturdily full of limb. was ever plunging forward some favored newcomer by the hand, or darting to one side or the other as he whispered instructions to servant or relative.

"I congratulate you on your friend's repose of manner!" whispered Mrs. Greer, as she and her husband awaited their turn. "He has all the calm selfassurance of a jumping jack."

"But there are springs of chilled steel in the jumping jack," whispered Greer. "He's out of his element, and he knows it. But he isn't so badly confused for all that. If you saw him at a convention or a board meeting, you wouldn't know him for the

"And there's his poor little wife, looking as much like a rabbit as ever! She's a cipher here; and even her husband's figure in front of her doesn't raise the cipher to the tenth power. I suppose that is the daughter, to Mrs. Conover's left? The slender girl with the rust-colored hair and the brown She's prettier and more of a thoroughbred in looks than I should

"That's not his daughter. That's Miss Lanier, Conover's secretary. His daughter is the

"His secretary? Why, is she receiv-

"She is his secretary and everything else. She came here three years ago as Blanche's governess. To give the poor girl a sort of winding-up polish before Caleb sent her to Europe. She made all sorts of a hit with Conover. Principally because she's the person on earth who isn't afraid of person on earth who isn't afraid of him, so I hear. And now she is sected retary, and major domo, and 'right-hand man,' and I don't know what not else. Mrs. Conover's only a 'cipher,' as you say, and Miss Alice Lanier—not Caleb—is the 'figure' in front of her. That's the new-made princes to the right. The tall one princess, to the right. The tall one with the no-colored hair. I suppose that's the Prince d'Antri beside her."

"He's too handsome to be a very real prince. What a face for a sculp-

"Or a barber. A beard like that-A gorgeously apparelled couple just in front of the Greers, in the line, moved forward within the zone of Conover's greeting. Caleb nodded patronizingly to the man, and more civ-

illy to the woman.
"Mr. Conover," the latter was murmuring in an angulsh of respectful embarrassment, "'tis a great honor you do me and the man, askin' us here to-night with all your stylish friends,

"Oh there's more than your husband and me, here, who'd get hungry by habit if they heard a noon whistle blow," laughed Conover, as with a jerk of his red head and a word of pleasant welcome, he passed them on down the reception line. Then the Railroader's light, deep-set eyes fell on Greer, and he stepped forward, "Good evening, Greer!" he cried,

both hands outstretched. and there was a subcurrent of latent power in his hearty voice. "Good evening! Pleased to see you in my house. Mrs. Greer, I presume? Most kind of you to come, ma'am. Proud to make your acquaintance. Letty!"
—summoning with a jerk of the head an overdressed, frightened-looking litwoman from the line behind him "Letty, this is my very good friend, Mr. Talbot Firth Greer—Mrs. Conover—Mr. and Mrs. Greer. Mr. Greer is the next Congressman from the Eleventh District. (That's a little prophecy, Mr. Greer. You can gamble on its coming true.) My daughter, Princess d'Antri—Mr. and Mrs. Greer. Prince Amadeo d'Antri. My secretary, Miss Alice Lanier-Mr. and

down the hall toward the host, and the ordeal was over. The Greers, swept on in the rush, did not hear Conover's next greeting. This was rather a pity, since it differed mater-ially from that lavished upon them-

A new batch of guests swarmed

Its recipient was a big young man, with a shock of light hair and quiet, dark eyes. He wore his clothes well, and looked out of place in his vulgar, garish surroundings. Caleb Conover, Railroader, eyed the newcomer all over with a cold, expressionless glance. A glance that no seer on earth could have read; the glance that had gained him more than one victory when wits and concealment of purpose were rife. Then he held of purpose were rife. Then he held out a grudging hand.
"Well, Mr. Clive Standish," he ob-

served, "it seems the lion and the lamb lie down together, after all—a considerable distance this side of the millennium. And the lamb inside, at that. To think of a clubman and a citillar beader and considerable conductivities." cotillon leader, and a first-families scion and a Civic Leaguer and all that rooms seemed to bear out still further | sort of thing condescending to honor

poor shanty "My aunt, Mrs. Conover, wrote, ask-ing me especially to come, as a favor to her," replied the younger man stiff-

ly. I thought—"
"And you were O. K. in thinking it I know Letty wrote, because I dictated the letter. I wanted to count you in with the rest to-night, and I had kind of a bashful fear that your love for me, personally, might not be strong enough to fetch you. got too much sense to think the invite will score either way in our feelings to each other, or that I'm going back on what I said to you four years ago Now that you're here, chase in and enjoy yourself. This place is like heaven, to-night in one way. You'll see a whole lot of people here you never expected to, and you'll miss more'n a few you thought would sure belong. Goodby. Don't let me block

your job of heavenly recognition."

The wilful coarseness and brutality of the man carre as no surprise to Standish. He had expected something of the sort, and had braced himself for it. To please his aunt, whom he sincerely pitied, he had entered the Con-over house to-night for the first time since the Homeric quarrel, incident on his refusal to avail himself of Caleb's prestige in his law work, and, incidentally to enroll himself as one of the Railroader's numberless political vassals. That the roughness to which Conover had subjected him was no more a part of the Railroader's real nature than had been the nervous effusiveness of his greeting to the Greers, Clive well knew. It had been intended to cover any embarrassing memories of a former and somewhat less strained acquaintanceship; and as such it-like most of Conover's

So, resisting his first impulse to depart as he had come, Standish moved on. The formal receiving phalanx was crumpling up. He paused for a moment's talk with little Mrs. Conover, exchanged a civil word or two with his cousin Blanche and her prince, and then came to where Anice Lanier was trying to make conversation for sevawed-looking, bediamonded per sons who were evidently horribly ill at ease in their surroundings.

about Clive's mouth were broken by a smile of very genuine pleasure. smile that gave a younger aspect to his grave face, and found ready answer in the brown eyes that met his.

"Haven't you toiled at a forlorn hope long enough?" he asked, as the awed beings drifted away into the uncomfortable crowd, carrying their

burden of jewels with them.
"A forlorn hope?" she queried, puzzled.

to galvanize at least a segment of this portentous gathering into a semblance of life. Don't do it. place you can't. Saloonkeepers and Pompton Avenue people won't blend.
In the second place, it isn't expected

of you. The papers to-morrow wind record the right names just as jealously as if everyone had had a good time. Suppose you concentrate all your efforts on me. Come! It will be a real work of charity. For Mr. Con-over has just shown me how thoroughly I'm the prodigal. And he didn't even hint at the whereabouts of a fatted calf. Please be merciful and make me have a good time. It's months since I've seen you to talk

"Then why don't you come here oftener?" she asked as they made their way through the press, and found an unoccupied alcove between Mrs. Conover-

"My poor aunt? She'd be fright-ened to death that Conover and I would quarrel. No, no! To-night is an exception. The first and the last. I persuaded myself I came because of Aunt Letty's note. But I really came for a chat with you." She looked at him, doubting how to

accept this bald compliment. But his face was boyish in its sincerity.

"You and I used to be such good friends," he went on, "and now we never see any more of each other. Why don't we?'

"I think you know as well as I You no longer come here—you have not come. I think, since a year before arrived. And I go almost nowhere since-

world and the people who cared for you and became a drudge in the Con-over household? If you were to be found anywhere else you would see so much of me that I'd bore you to extinction. But it would be even unpleasanter for you than for me if I were to call on you here. old-time talks more than I can say.

"I miss them too. Do you remember how we used to argue over politics, and how you always ended by telling me that there were two things no woman could understand, and that politics was one and finance the other?"

"And you would always make the same retort: That woman's combined ignorance of politics and finance were pure knowledge as compared with the men's ignorance of women. It wasn't especially logical repartee, but it al-ways served to shut me up.'

"I wish we had time for another political spat. Some day we must. You see, I've learned such a lot about poli-

see, I've learned such a lot about politics—and finance—since I came here."
"Decidedly 'practical,' I fancy, if
Mr. Conover was your teacher. He
doesn't go in much for idealism."
(To Be Continued.)

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