

GEORGE RANDOLPH CHESTER

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SYNOPSIS

se, a typical politician, becomes inted with Molly Marley, daughter of et car company president. He sends

Molly attends the governor's ball, and her attractiveness results in her climbing the dizzy heights of popularity. The no-table respect accorded Sledge, however,

Mariey's loans are ordered called by ledge. Feeder, who receives a salary for seping quiet about the public fund scan-al, confesses during Sledge's questioning nd is roughly handled.

Molly becomes angry at her father's obvious fear of Siedge. He tells her to marry him, but she refuses and suggests a sell ton Siedge, which encourages Marley.

Sledge visits Bozzam, and a heated argument arises. The chief finds Bozzam is working against him. The reorgalized railway company stockholders meet. Maray presides, and Sledge is present.

The two votes of Marley and Bert Glid-er are sufficient to carry the amendment to the resolution for the purchase of the franchise for \$50,000 cash.

Siedge receives an announcement of the negagement of Molly and Gilder. Bozzam sils Marley Siedge decided not to sell the ranchise at any price, and that he is nancially dead.

Sledge goes to the state capital and gets verything fixed up for the passage of a lill granting a new car company a fifty ear franchise free of charge.

Arranging a Little Protection For the People.

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THAT sterling friend of the populace, that stalwart defender of the rights and the morals and the welfare and the purses of his admiring constituents, that vociferous choice of the people, State Senator Allerton, was discovered by Sledge in the act of serving the public interests by playing poker in the rooms of Assemblyman Buckley, and with these two conscientious patriots, deep also in the exercise of their duties to the commonwealth, were the very men Sledge wanted to see—Franchise Walters, who was heavy set, but not fat, and who looked like a prosperous shoe merchant, and old Pop Gresham, the red eyed administration wheelhorse from Pickerel county, and Calvin T. Luther, the ministerial looking profanity expert, and Cap Digglesby, the avowed and professedly bitter enemy of Sledge, whose every white whisker was needed as a calendar for his many honorable scars of forensic battle.

It was Cap Digglesby who was the first to hall the visitor as he entered the door.

"Hello, malefactor of great wealth."

"Hello, malefactor of great wealth," he called. "Have you a spare queen of clubs about your person?"
"I'm shy on queens," confessed Sledge, looking down with indifference at the game he played so indifferently.

"Buckley, I'm dry."

"Beat you to it, old man," replied Buckley easily. He was a spare person, with the neatly combed appearance of a dancing master, but with intensely clear eyes and deep creases in his cheeks. "I sent word to the bar as soon as the phone announced you. Your stein will be right up."

"Thanks!" grunted Sledge, and considerately fell to estimating the jackpot. Buckley, I'm dry."

pot.

Allerton, a smooth featured man with a good forehead and a smiling eva nicked up the two cards which had been dealt him, compared them judically with the three he held, felded them together with minute care and tucked them neatly under the deck. Looking up, he caught the coldly disinterested eye of Sledge. Every man of the six at the table had tried that same thing, but Allerton was the only one who succeeded. Sledge, pausing to inspect carelessly the bountful garanged sideboard, moved into the adjoining room. Allerton arose from ing room. Allerton arose from

the table.
"Deal me out for a couple of rounds,"
he suggested. "Buckley, watch my
stack. There's twenty-three fifty in it,
and Pop Gresham's pile is mighty

Pop Gresham took ten blues from Allerton's assortment and added them

to his own. "Charge me ten from your friend's treasury, Buckley," he chuckled, with a playfulness intended to conceal his

what's new?" asked Allerton. closing the door carefully behind him and sitting on the edge of Buckley's

Street car business," returned

"I see we have two companies down home," remarked Allerton. "Which

"They're no good," insisted Sledge.
"Short terms."

That's why we have to work quick," Sledge informed him.
"What do you want?" asked Allerton.

"Fifty year franchises—free."
"Good Lord!" exclaimed Allerton.
"Why, Sledge, the man who would propose that might just as well retire from

politics forever."

"Sure!" agreed Sledge.

The senator stopped, with a shock, and reflected.

"The street car interests in the state are large, that's a fact." he acknowledged

"Great game," approved Sledge. "I want stock all over the state. You'd better invest."

"It might be attractive," considered the senator. "How much stock do you think I should secure?"

"Million."
Even the seasoned senator, used as he was to private and personal discussions involving comfortable figures, was startled at the sound of that word.
"That listens very cheerfully," he conceded. "Do you suggest that I—buy up—that amount of stock for myself in the various street car companies of the state or that myself and friends should club together for that amount?"
"Hundred thousand extra for them," responded Sledge with the promptness of a man who has done all his figuring beforehand.

beforehand.
Allerton spent some minutes in quiet

thought.

"There's the legal business, too," Sledge reminded him.

"That's so," agreed Allerton. "An attorney who is also a large steckholder could control that clientage. Suppose I see Buckley about this? Send him in, will you?"

Appreciation the

Appreciating the convenience of have Appreciating the convenience of having no witnesses to conversations
which so intimately concern the serving of the public. Sledge loafed out
and stood nonchalantly over the table.
The five men looked up at him keenly,
but Sledge was staring into Cap Digglesby's hand. Buckley finished his
deal and glanced up again. He immediately arose.

noting the was examine time Cap Die gleistly hand generally and gleistly and gleist

bead off" with keen zest.

Digglesby gave no sign or glance at Sledge, but nevertheless, after another deal, Sledge arose stolldy from the table, and, without making any bones about it, walked directly into the bedroom. Allerton was lounging in a cushloned window sill, smoking a cushloned window

"All cash," Sledge told him. "On the cigarette, and with his foot pushed the

"All cash," Sledge told him. "On the level."

"You must have a good outlook," wondered Allerton.
"Naw!" repudiated Sledge. "It's rotten! No franchises."

"I thought you held easily salable ones, from what I saw in the papers," puzzled Allerton. "If you haven't, however, you can easily get them from the city council."

"They're no good," insisted Sledge. "Short terms."

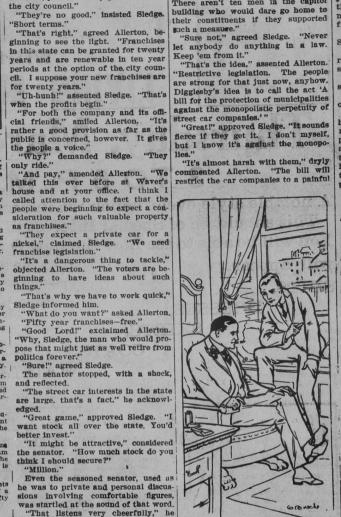
"They're no good," insisted Sledge. "Short terms."

"They're right," ggrand Allerton he."

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"They're right," ggrand Allerton he."

"They're right," ggrand Allerton he. says the measure."



"It's almost harsh with them," dryly commented Allerton.

It will make a penal offense on the part of the officers to bond a company for more than its capitaliza-Sledge chuckled.

tion."
Sledge chuckled.
"The bankers' convention will indorse that," he said.

"The bill will prevent street railway companies from running open or summer cars when the thermometer is below 40 degrees F. It will prevent the running of winter cars without double glass protection for the motormen. It will be made illegal to have more than one strap in every eighteen inches of space. It will be made illegal for a full car to run by a signaling pedestrian, and it will be made illegal, although this will be scattered in three or four places in the bill, and surrounded with a lot of ambiguous language, for any franchise to be granted for as long a period as fifty years."

"That's the talk," nodded Sledge. "Restrictive legislation."

"I thought you could get along with forty-nine years and eleven months," stated Allerton. "Moreover, I think we can frame the bill to protect the people."

"Can you slip it through?"

Bailey like a book. They know what he thinks when he locks himself in his room, and he'il tear into this bill as if he were fighting the devil himself, face to face. After he gets through the real argument will begin, and anything anybody else says against it will sound flabby. After that we'll bury the bill flabby. After that we'll bury the bill in committee until there's something exciting in the house, split in the fifty year franchise amendment and pass the thing some rainy afternoon when nobody's in the house but invited friends."

"How long will it take?" inquired Sledge.

Sledge. "About as long as it will take you to

round up and organize the best paying street car corporations in the state." Sledge looked out of the window in

silence which seemed almost moody.
"So long," he said, and left by way
of the hall. Meanwhile Sozzam and Timbers were having their troubles. Two big, husky men who looked as if they might be primary leaders jostled them one day and told them they had better leave town. When they protested mildly the huskies snarled and finally gave them twenty-four hours to pack up. They packed.

CHAPTER XII. Friendly Chat on the Peaceful Sabbath.

Sabbath.

ARLEY, as president of the Ring City Street Railway company and as chairman of the impromptu convention of street car magnates, was so full of business that he felt stuffed like a sausage. To his mind the fund they had raised to fight Allerton's iniquitous legislation was weefully inadequate, and raised to fight Allerton's iniquitous legislation was woefully inadequate, and the men who should have been most interested were strangely optimistic. He suggested to several of them that they appoint a committee to see Allerton and arrange some sort of compromise, but here again he found an unexpected lugewarmers. Nobody seemed. mise, but here again he found an unex pected lukewarmness. Nobody seemed to think that Allerton could be "reached." and as a matter of fact every time he broached that subject he found his fellow magnates evasive. The newspapers need not have blazed so much about the probable corruption fund, because there positively was none. The subscription secured was only for the conduct of a publicity camcaign and to nay for the services of a paign and to pay for the services of a perfectly legitimate lobbyist, who would explain the reasonable rights of

would explain the reasonable rights of the street car men.

On Saturday morning the visitors all went home, looking fagged about the eyes, without having done much more than pass some frothy resolutions and raise the feeble fund referred to and investigate by electric light whatever the keys of the city would unlock; and President Marley, staggering under the burden of his position, was very much worried.

He confided his fears to his future son-in-law after he had seen the last tired, hard working magnate on a train headed for home and remorse.

"I don't think these men appreciate, as I do, the need of controlling street car legislation," he complained. "Allerton's bill looks like a menace to all my interests, and I am a little bit surprised that Sledge, since his entrance into the game on a big scale, does not seem more concerned about it."

"It was Sledge who arranged to have these fellows come together." Bert reminded him.

"Yes," admitted Marley, "but he seemed to have such feeble ideas about what to do after he had them here. It wasn't like his usual vigorous methods."

"Then he has something up his

methods."

"Then he has something up his sleeve." decided Bert. "I wish that fellow would drop dead. I'm afraid of him."

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to be rather decent in the last lew days, and I am only annoyed because he does not seem to see the necessity of using his influence with Allerton to stop this street railway bill. I think I shall see Allerton myself tomorrow. He comes home every Saturday night."

Pursuant to that happy idea, the president drove out to Allerton's house the next morning and found the senator in the luxury of pajamas, easy slippers and lounging robe amid an extravagant confusion of Sunday papers. At his right hand was a taboret, on which bubbled an electric coffee percolator, and at his left hand was a feather-weight serving table, on which was a comfortable supply of cigarettes. In front of him sat Ben Siedge.

"Hello, Marley," greeted the senator.
"You're just in time for coffee."
"Had mine hours ago," returned Marley, nodding his return to Siedge's grunt.
"Then it's time again," insisted the senator pleasantly, ringing for another

grunt.

"Then it's time again," insisted the senator pleasantly, ringing for another cup. "Or would you prefer a cocktail?"

"A little of your exclusive rye, I think, if you insist on anything," accepted Marley, drawing a chair into the cozy little circle. "You're trying to save that rye or you would have offered it in the first place."

"No; only trying to promote sobriety," bantered Allerton. "I suppose, however, that a memory of that good Kentucky stock is what brought you out here on this peaceful Sabbath morning."

out here on this pencerul Sabbath morning."

"Hardly." denied Marley. "Frankly I suppose I came on the same errand as my rival and competitor here."

"What's that?" asked Allerton. with a glance at Sledge.

"To find out what the dickens you mean by that infamous street railway bill of which you are the disreputable parent."

Allerton gazed at him blankly for a moment and again glanced quizzically at Sledge. There was a low rumble down in Sledge's throat, but neither his face nor his eyes betrayed any sentiment or emotion whatsoever.

(To be continued.)

SLAYS THREE

Alexander Toth Kills Two.

WOUNDED WOMAN MAY DIE

Slayer Wanted Two-Week Bride to Desert Husband and Elope With Him. Had Been Infatuated With Woman.

Had Been Infatuated With Woman.

Because his former sweetheart, a bride of only two weeks, refused to elope with him, it is said, Alexander Toth of Sewickley, aged thirty-five, a tailor employed by a Eittsburgh firm, killed her father-in-taw and her husband, seriously wounded the young woman and committed suicide in the home of Stephen Petro, a farmer, in Connoquenessing township, two miles south of Petersville, Pa.

The dead are Stephen Petro, aged forty-six, farmer; Julius Petro, twenty-one, son of Stephen Petro, Alexander Toth, thirty-five, a tailor, Sewickley.

Wounded: Mrs. Teresa Petro, aged twenty-one, wife of Julius Petro; bullet wounds in arms and head and feet frozen.

net wounds in arms and head and feet frozen.

News of the tragedy reached actioning farms when Mrs. Petro, bleeding from wounds in the arms and head, ran two miles without shoes, through snowdrifts to the farm of Casper Fehl, where she fell unconscious, after telling Fehl that "he killed my father-in-law and husband."

Ivy Fehl, fifteen-year-old daughter of Casper Fehl, mounted a horse and rode two miles to Petersville, where she notified the state police and summoned Dr. J. L. Christy. After being revived, Mrs. Petro related a story of the circumstances which led up to the tragedy.

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