

"I'd like to have you, Rankin," he said weakly, "but, you see, I expect to locate in—er—in Japan, and I've got to have some one who understands the language."

That was a poser. He congratulated himself. That would settle Rankin and get rid of him with no hard feelings. He was really rather fond of Rankin.

But no! "I speak Japanese very well, sir," said the extraordinary butler, with a calm which vouched for his veracity. "I was in service with two Japanese for over five years, and if you think of China, sir, or Russia—"

Fortunately for his master's difficulty maintained composure, two things happened to distract attention. He got his message on the telephone, and the ringing doorbell removed Rankin.

But the young spendthrift's calm was brief. "What's that, again?" he asked the restaurant man anxiously. "Er—what? Twenty-three hundred and twenty-three dollars? . . . The what? Oh, the . . . vintage! Is that so? . . . Er . . . not at all. Twenty-three hundred is all right. It would be the same to me if you had said—er—twenty-three thousand."

Having hung up the receiver, he sagged down in his chair disconsolately.

"Twenty-three! Twenty-three!" he murmured. "And . . . the butler speaks Japanese! I can't win a bet! I'll never forget this day!"

He rose and paced the room, then paused and gazed at the wall calendar. "The thirteenth of the month! No wonder."

He threw the offending Harrison Fisher girl into the grate, as Rankin, returning, announced a persistent visitor who had declared that he would wait when he had been assured that Mr. Jones was out. Jackson examined the man's card.

"Peter Pembroke!" he mused, puzzled. "Where have I heard the name before?"

"He appears to be a man of some importance, sir."

"And he knows I'm in?"

Rankin nodded.

"Oh, well; bring him in. It can't any worse." He called to Wallace.

"Bob! Oh, Bob! when you get that total add twenty-three hundred and twenty-three dollars to it."

"What for?"

"Thuh—vin—tago," Broadway answered bitterly, as his visitor came in.

"Of course you expected me," were his first words. "My name is Pembroke."

Broadway was puzzled. "Expected you?"

"Didn't Judge Spotswood wire you that I'd call?"

"Spotswood?"

"Yes, of Jonesville."

"Oh, I know whom you mean, of course. No; he didn't wire."

"That's strange. I talked with him over the long-distance phone less than an hour ago, and he told me he had wired you early this morning."

"No," said Broadway definitely.

"I can't understand it."

"Hold on. Rankin did hand me a

wire. I didn't read it." Broadway searched the table, then his pockets and finally discovered the crumpled and unopened telegram snuggling next his watch.

"You have my deepest sympathy, Mr. Jones," said Pembroke unctuously, as he was tearing off the envelope end.

"Have I?" Jackson was surprised.

"You must certainly have, sir. I knew your uncle very well. A fine and able man."

"U-m? Er—yes. He is abroad."

Pembroke nodded with an unctious rapidly increasing. "Yes. How sad that it should happen while he was among mere strangers!"

Jackson looked at him, not comprehending in the least, and then turned his attention to the neglected telegram. It read:

"Cable from Mr. Graham, London, England, announcing your uncle's demise, received late last night. His last will and testament made prior to his sailing places you in possession of the estate. His entire fortune, his business, his every earthly possession he leaves unconditionally to you, his nephew and only heir. Shall I come to New York, or expect you here? Pembroke will call on you today. Answer at once."

Broadway scarcely had the strength with which to raise his head after he had read this mighty news. So his uncle had relented at the end!

"Great . . . heavens!"

"I'm awfully sorry for you, young man," said Pembroke sympathetically.

Jackson was surprised. Evidently the man knew nothing of the treatment which his uncle had invariably given him while he still lived. "You are?"

"Ah, yes; but it is something through which we must all go in this life."

"What? Go through all he had? Never! I'll never go through all of that if I once really get it."

"He was worth his weight in gold," said Pembroke, still sympathetically.

"How much did it total, do you know?" asked Broadway practically.

"That I can't say. We offered him twelve hundred thousand for his business and good-will less than two months ago. The proposition still holds good, Mr. Jones. We stand

ready to close the deal in forty-eight hours. I—er—realize that in your time of trouble and grief it is hardly right to discuss business, but it is vitally important that we bring the matter to a closing point by Saturday noon, as we are considering, at the same time, the purchasing of the Sprucemint company. Our preference leans toward the Jones gum, but—"

Broadway, wide-eyed and speechless for the moment, gazed at him with dropping jaw. "Wait a minute. Wait a minute. Who is 'we'? Who stands ready with this offer?"

"The company of which I have the honor to be second vice-president, Mr. Jones—the Consolidated Chewing Gum Company of America."

Jackson approached him with an air so serious that it was almost tearful. This change in the aspect of affairs had been so sudden that he was somewhat overcome.

"Hold on. Let me get this clear. Your people want to buy the Jones Gum?"

"We do."

"For twelve hundred and fifty thousand dollars?"

"The top price."

After an instant's pause in which he licked his lips with nervous tongue, and stood poised as if to spring upon his visitor: "Where's the money? Have you got it with you?"

"I can get my lawyers together within an hour, if you are ready to close the deal."

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Jackson was in a fever of excitement. "Well, come on then. Let's get them! What are you waiting for? Let's get this all over with as quickly as we can."

"Do you mean business?"

"Certainly I mean business," Jackson gazed at him with definite reproach. "Don't I look like a business man?" He displayed the sack coat Rankin had laid out for him that morning. "Look at this business suit!" He felt in his pocket, found what he sought and was extremely

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