By George Randelph Che

CHURNING UP BUSINESS

churn business very well, Tommy," speculated Helen Rand, as a powdered-look-

cut any more econo

"How did you come to select churns?" wondered Mrs. Rushmore select replacing her subscription list in her handbag, but opening it again to see

if Tommy's name was dry.

"I didn't," confessed Tommy with a
half-vexed smile; "they selected me. The Johnson Churn company is the oldest factory of its kind in the country, and I didn't want to see a nice old business like that go under. They eeded a combination of new capital and new blood, and I had it; and so there you are,"

"Then why don't you like it?" pussled Helen, her particularly effective eyes resting on him for a moment with frank approval.

"I don't seem to have the right kind of new blood," he worried, "My money kept the concern from bankruptcy, but nobody seems to care for the suggestions I make."

"It'll be all right, Tommy; you're lucky," laughed Helen as she rose to The door opened and there came

in, from the factory yard, a tall and exceptionally fine-looking stranger who was dressed with extreme nicety. He bowed in the general direction of Tommy, but his glance, in sweeping from Mrs. Rushmore to Helen, caught, for a fleeting second, the eyes of the latter.

"We'll see you tomorrow night, Tommy," remarked Mrs. Rushmore; and Helen, as she went out at the door, waved Tommy a gay adleu.

"Mr. Spencer?" Inquired the stranger. "Correct," admitted Tommy, with a parting nod to the ladles through the crack of the closing door, and he examined the neatly engraved calling card. "What can I do for you, Mr.

"Pd like permission to inspect your factory," requested Ames, with a smile of friendliness.

"I don't see any objection to that," granted Tommy, responding to the smile. He felt an instant liking for the man. "I'm afraid you won't see much, however.

"That's what I hope," returned the

Tommy looked at him wonderingty. "That's a queer statement," he ob-

"It merely needs explanation,"

swered Ames, pleasantly. "Tm looking for a business opportunity."
"Come right in, the water's fine,"
Invited Tommy with a grin. "That's what I was looking for; but I found

"So I understand," smiled Ames. "I came into town last night, and have en making inquiries all morning about your various local enterprises." "How did you happen to pick out

the Johnson Churn company?" "Your pay roll. At one time this concern employed 500 workmen. ploys scarcely more than 200. If I can discover the reason for that, it might be of benefit to both of us,"

"I think I'll go through the shop with you," suddenly decided Tommy, and led the way into the factory.

CHAPTER IL

The shop was apparently busy. The shafting of the long, low room was turning at a good speed, and in two squat rows was heavy looking machinery, about half of which, however, was idle.

"Where's that lumber going?" asked

"To the grooving machinery in the next room," replied Tommy. "I see, what's that chap doing in this upper corner?"

"Smoothing the tubs. It's an interesting process,"

Tommy led the way over to the corner. A man surrounded by high piles of the white-oak churn bodies was clamping them, by turns, in a clumay lathe, and scraping them, both inside and out, first with steel shaving tools and then with sandpaper. Ames watched him interestedly for a few momenta, and walked away. An ele-vator came down piled with staves. A boy unloaded them and carried them back to a groover, which stood near the rip-saw. Another box came down the alsie pushing a huge box on wheels. It was filled with shavings.

"Where's that stuff going?" Ames wanted to know. He stopped the boy

and reached his hand in the box. "To the boller room," Tommy told

Ames fished around in the shavin He brought out a strip of oak two feet long, two inches thick, three mehes wide at the butt and an inch wide at the point. He found three

"You send a lot of these pieces to the fire, I suppose," he surmised.

"Harks and stacks of them," wor-ried Tommy, "It's the best oak we can buy, and it seems a criminal waste; but it's apparently unavoid-

DON'T believe you like the able. They're trimmed from the edg of the staves, and the lumber can't be

out something should be made of

"I suggested that," and Tommy wrinkled his brow. "The superintend wrinkled his brow. "The superintendent and the manager laughed at the idea. They claim we'd scatter our force in making a market for another product. They're run this plant for years and years, and they know all about it. I don't."

"They were in financial difficulties when they got you, weren't they?"

"Yes, but there was a time when they made a good profit. They've "Why?" asked Ames. don't know," mused Tommy

"The big cramp came right after they enlarged the plant. I guess they overplayed themselves; then they ran into heavy competition." "I understand it now," nodded mes. "They did all their big manu

facturing in this room. When they enlarged the plant they didn't re arrange the machinery." As they turned away, the superin-

tendent, a wrinkled-faced old man, with a white mustache, came up to them and Tommy introduced him.

"Mr. Ames is studying our methods of production," Tommy explained. "Are you familiar with the churn business?" inquired the superintendent, with ill-concealed resentment.

"I never saw a churn factory before," confessed Ames with a laugh "Oh," said the superintendent with snort of amusement,

When Tommy and Ames returned from their inspection of the plant they found the superintendent in the office with the manager, a large, red-faced man, who was addicted to shirt sleeves and who chewed cigars. The superintendent was leaning on the corner of the manager's deak and both turned with displeasure as Tommy came in. The superintendent nodded and returned to the factory. Tommy introduced his caller, and explained his present mission in life.

"Yes," acknowledged the manager, giving Ames a thorough sizing up.
"Brinky has just been telling me that you were giving Tommy some expert advice. What do you think of our plant, Mr. Ames?"

"Frankly, it's pretty bad," he began "You should shut down your shop for about a month and rearrange all your effective machinery."

The manager leaned back in his chair and looked at Ames through eavy-lidded eyes.

"Do you like the color of the new rug Tommy put down" he insolently inquired.

Ames rose.

"I came here to talk busin "Who invited you?"

"I did," unexpectedly declared Tommy. "There's something wrong with this factory, Lasset, and I'm going to find out why the Reverse Gear people can undersell us."

churn factory as you are," retorted Lasset. "You look after the finances, Tommy, and we'll tend to the fac-

Tommy studied the manager unsmilingly.

"I've made an unfortunate impression on you, Lasset," he presently observed. "You think I'm a saphead, because you got my money into this concern; but I want you to always remember that I came along with the money; and, by jinks, I'm going to see that I get my money's worth. Come on, Ames, we'll take a spin. I want you to talk to me."

CHAPTER III.

Tommy found Brinley out in the shop giving specific orders to the foreman of the stave department about the handling of his material.

"It's awkward to do it," the fore-man was protesting when Tommy came up.

"It saved two haulings," Brinley in-"You take them now from here into the other building, finish and shape the ends, bring them back to have the edges grooved, and take them over to the other building again for assembling. By grooving the edges before you take them out of here we'll save two handlings,"

"That's what I've always said," declared the foreman.

"You do as I tell you," ordered Brinley, and a very much disgruntled foreman walked away to injure the perfect workmanship in which he had

taken so much pride.
"You're putting into effect one of Ames' suggestions," charged

"It's something I've had in mind long time," denied the superintendent.
"Then why didn't you do it?"
Tommy immediately wanted to know.

"Mr. Spencer, I am supposed to snow.

"Mr. Spencer, I am supposed to answer leading questions like that to only one man in this concern," he stated. "I can't work for two bosses, and I wen't."

"Some day you'll try not working

for any," prophesied Tommy, He returned to the office full of

"Lazer, I found Brinley putting into egocution one of Mr. Amer' sugges-tions, only doing it clumsily," he obpose he is," growled Lasset.

"I think it proves Ames' point,"

"We don't need another ornamen-tal man," remarked Lasset.

considering.
"We need a new manager," he de-

clared. "You represented to me that if ,ou were unhampered by debt, you could put us on a dividend-paying

"The price of lumber's gone up since you came into the business," Lasset

not enough to make the Reverse Gear

Churn company agree with us on a price. Our methods of production are

Brinley has been a little carele

some of our machinery."

admitted Lasset. "I went after him

this morning. I think we'll rearrange

Tommy, who was a bearty young

"By jinks, that does settle it," he swore. "If you'll go that far in stealing Ames' thunder, you prove to me that he was right in everything he wanted to do; and I'm going to have him out here."

"Are you aware that you don't own

this factory?" demanded Lasset Icily.
"I hold more stock than you do, I

control the situation, and I'm going to run this plant without interfer-egce. Who is this Ames, anyway?

"Blessed if I know," replied Tommy,

"Exactly," he accused, "That shows

how thoroughly impractical you are.

Ames is probably a grafter. Has he

Tommy, "He says he fairly aches to

put this plant on its feet. It interests

him. He'll come in here, remodel our

factory and output, install our side

"He isn't hunting work," insisted

ence. Who is this Ames, Where does he come from?"

Lasset laughed.

"I never thought to ask him."

man, with no kinks on his sho slammed a capable fist on his de

Tommy kept his temper pretty well,

persisted Tommy,

nformed blm.

full of leaks."

and Tommy, with a trace of pride in the distinguished appearance of his guest, walked into the well-appointed business club which he had so recent-

He introduced Ames to three or four of the members, and they strolled through the billiard partor on their way to the dining room.

"Hello, John Ames!" greeted Dick Templeton, walking up to the visitor and shaking hands cordially.

"You've deprived me of a pleasure, both of you," complained Tommy, "I had hoped to introduce you." "Couldn't think of it, Tommy," de

clined Dick. "I w

Tales to control town tonight, Ames?" asked Templeton.

"I hope to remain some little time," replied Ames with a quiet smile at

"Fine business!" exclaimed Dick. Tommy, we must take him out to Mrs. Rushmore's little informal dance, and give the girls a treat."

OHAPTER V.

Within ten minutes after John Ames landed at Mrs. Rushmore's that night, the entire feminine contingent of the most exclusive set in town realised that this would be a lively social season. All the mammas with marriageable daughters threw out nervous tentacles in every direction frantically anxious to absorb informa-

He danced first with Helen Rand and that lively young lady sparkled and snapped and glowed under the consciousness that the eyes of every girl on the floor was unceasingly upon them. Tommy Spencer danced with that fluffy little Restand girl, and surprised Helen by filrting outra-geously. Helen flashed at him a glance of amusement as she passed him in the waltz, but Tommy seemed even more amused than she.

"You walts like a sunbeam!" served John Ames, as he guided Helen deftly out of the pocket made by



Tommy Kept Hie Temper Pretty Well, Considering. "We Need a New Manager," He Declared.

lines, and inaugurate new selling methods, and he'll take one-third of the increase of profits for his share. Of course, we'll have to advance him money enough to live on.*

"Now, we're coming at it!" tri-umphed Lasset. "How much does he want?"

Tommy colored slightly, "Five hundred dollars a month," he stated.
Lasset threw himself back in his

went out into the shop, and Tommy heard him laughing with Brinley. Tonnny telephoned Ames, "It's no use, old man," he regretted. "I can't make them see it."

"You see it, don't you?" inquired

"I see it so hard it hurts my even."

emphatically announced Tommy.
"Then sell me a share of sto suggested Ames. "As a stockholder he can't keep me out of the factory, and he can't keep me out of the stock-holders' meeting the first of the month. Find out how the stock is divided."

"I can tell you right now," returned Tommy. "I looked it up this morning. I own 40 per cent of the stock, Lasset owns 45, outside stockholders, who haven't attended a meeting for years, own 5 per cent, and the other 10 per cent is owned by the workmen."

"Then there's an easy solution." advised Ames in a relieved voice. "You'd best buy a little more stock, and win over as many of the workmen as possible to vote with you. At the next stockholders' meeting you can throw Lasset out, if need be. If you want to save a dollar of your investment, you must obtain private control."

"By jinks, I'll do it!" he decided. "Ames, suppose you come out and help me talk to the men?"

"All right," laughed Ames. way, Tommy, can you lend me \$500?" For a moment Tommy hesitated. The sheer "nerve" of the thing took his breath. Just then Lasset came into the office.

"Certainly, old man," gulped Tommy. "I'll see you this noon." He hung up and turned to Lasset.
"I'd like to draw five hundred dol-lars," he said, and grinned.

CHAPTER IV.

Towny met Ames at noon and handed him the five hundred dollars

he had promised.

"Thanks." said Ames, and stuffed the money nonchalantly in his pocket.

"Have you time for lunch?"

clumsy Al Blair. His voice was deep and musical, and full of vibration. Helen favored him with her most

bell-like laugh, and turned her won derfully effective big eyes up to his for a fleeting second.

"I have a badly arranged card," he told her. "It only carries one dance

"I'll give you the first extra," she immediately offered.

"Just one extra won't do," he urged her. "I must have more than that." He glanced down at her, his big black eyes aglow with engerness. Yes, she looked pleased.

Temmy scowled for an instant as they whirled by him, and then he turned to that fluffy little Rostand girl with determined ardor.

"You want too much," Helen chided

"I take pride in my selfishness," he assured her. Ames visited the factory as Tommy's guest. He inspected each machine, in turn, and he watched the opera-

tions of each workman with interest.

He paused at a lathe and began to take off his gloves. ."That's a bad bevel you have on your gouge," he told the workman. "It's too blunt, and to get a proper slice with it you must hold it too nearly at right angles. One of these days you'll strike a particularly tough knot, and you'll get that handle on your chin."

The workman grinned sheepishly. "Let me try it a minute," suggested

Ames, and took the tool from him, "You could work faster and with less expenditure of energy if your tools were in proper condition," he

"He knows his business," admitted the leg-turner. "He's the boy who wants to come in and remodel the factory. He wants five bundred bones a month to start with."
"Tasset had better be a sport and

spend the money. Semething ought to be done. I've got five shares of stock that hasn't paid a dividend for ten

The tool grinder gave way to Ames and Tommy with hopeful interest. "Tommy, here is one machine which

is too important to monkey with. To begin with, there should be automatic rests to produce the proper bevel in the grinding. I can tell by the sound of the planer in there that the planer knives are not cutting at the peoper

"I'm going to take it," hughed Tommy, "I'd like to have you came over to the Commercial with with "That's what you told me last week, didn't you, Billy?" asked Tommy.
"Lasset said the firm had made a guarter of a million churns with the ols ground on these wheels," re-arked Billy with contempt.

Brinley came through the shop to the grinding room, looked in at the door with a scowl at Ames and Tommy, and went away. Presently a boy came back, Ames was in the engine room listening, with a frown, to sh ying little click in the govern

"Mr. Leaset wants to see you right away," announced the boy to Tommy. "Go as far as you like, Ames," in-vited Tommy. "Til be back in a few

Tommy went into the office, and

found Lasset in a snarling frame of You have to get your friend as

re, and keep min out!" had "Mr. Ames is a stockholder,"

turned Tommy, coming around in front of Lasset's deak where he could talk directly at his face. "I gave him a share of stock."

"That's your lookout," snapped Lasset, "The fact that he's a stockholder, however, doesn't give him the right to come in here and disturb the men. Half of them have knocked off work and are standing around, with their tools in their hands, talking. How do you expect Brinley to preserve dis-

"I don't," answered Tommy. "I'm going to fire Grinley at the same time I get rid of our clumsy old ma-

"You're going to fire him!" snorted

"That's what I said," insisted Tommy, laying his fist gently but firmly on the manager's desk. "Now, look here, Lasset. I'm going to talk to you like a Dutch uncle. Will you, or will you not, employ Ames to remodel this

"Certainly not!" shouted Lasset.

"Then I will!" declared Tommy "You got me into this concern under the impression that I couldn't be any trouble, because I didn't know any-thing. In that far you were right; but you didn't take into consideration the fact that maybe I could learn. I'm coming into the next stockholders meeting prepared to fire you and Brinley, and then Pm going to run this factory myself. I've discovered that I like the churn business better than billiards."

CHAPTER VI.

The men voted solidly with Tommy at the stockholders' meeting, and Las-set, who had not believed it possible for him to lose, made them a scathing speech in which he predicted disaster of every form and dimension. He was white with rage, and it was only because he did not like the shoulders of either Tommy or Ames that the meeting did not end in a flat fight. He took Brinley with him when he went away, and left the Johnson Churn company to its fate! The next they heard of him he was with the Reverse Gear Churn company, and cutting the price against his old output.

Ames and Tommy plunged their company into debt for new machinery, and, when it came, they closed down the factory long enough to make a thorough rearrangement.

Ames put on overalls and went into the shop. He invented a line of small dairy contrivances and devised some wooden toys to use up their hardwood waste to the last scrap. These things done and put in good running order, he went into the office with Tommy, and, with the same happy energy, pu into effect a new selling system

whereby expenses were kept to a minimum and the sales increased. At this point of his activity, John Ames might be said to be one of the most contented men in existence. Day by day, he saw the fruition of his plans, and, week by week, Tommy Spencer developed from a social idler into the live, keen business man his father's blood entitled him to become. There was something rather sad in Tommy's steadiness these days. Ames tried to drag him into the social activity of which he himself was so much a part, but Tommy showed as unaccountable lack of interest.

"Sult yourself, Tommy," laughed Ames, "but you're only young once, you know. We're getting up a little series of costume dances for the first Friday in each month, and the crowd won't be happy without you."

"Td rather not, thank you, John," said Tommy hastily. "Ames, I'm trying to figure on a consolidation with the Reverse Gear. Churn company They're our only competitors in this type of churn and there's no reason we should cut each other's throats."

"You're not after Lasset's scalp again, are you?' laughed Ames.

"No," hesitated Tommy. you know, I'd like to have Lasset go through our factory now. Why, man, I'm so proud of this plant I make a bore of myself down in the Commer cial club. We take rough lumber in at one end and shoot out churns at the other, with the smoothness of a greased bullet. By the way, I think I bave a little improvement in our churn, which should make a 10 per cent saving and give us a better ar-

Ames looked down at him with a

"It seems to me that I'm becoming an ornamental man," he observed.
"You scarcely need me any more,

"I need you forever, old man!" declared Tommy heartily. "You've done wonders for me, Ames, and, within six months, your share of the inreased profits will make a fine and dent now, for all the advances you've

"Is that so?" laughed Ames. "Gil me a thousand, Tommy. Coming bac to that series of coatume dances, of man, I do wish you'd wake up join us. Helen says you must. What'
the matter that you never get aroun
to Helen's any more? She think
you're treating her shabbily; and h

"Two been so busy," iamely defend ed Tommy. He mused heavily a mo ment. "If Helen says I must, I say poss I must," he finally admitted When do you begin?"

"The first Friday in next month," suid Ames. "I am to see Helen this evening. I'll tell her, She'll be de-

Eommy winced internally, but out-wardly he smiled most pleasantly.

promise. He saw Helen and Ames flashing by in the new touring car which was a part of the extravagent Ames' advances. At first Ames had been the delight of all the girls, but, with the passing of time, he had beome more and more devoted to Helen. The two were almost insep

CHAPTER VII.

The first little costume dance was a tremendous success, for everybody but Tommy Spencer. He danced once with Helen, and he thought her tre mendously kind to him. He had rather that she had not been. It hurt, a lit-tle, to have her treat him with so much grave consideration. It seemed to him that she, too, had quieted some what in the past winter. He found her eyes fixed speculatively on him more than once, and he thought them almost wistful at times.

He slipped out for a smoke after that dance. Somehow, he wanted to be alone, and he took a seat in a dark corner of the little side porch. intermissions were rather long, for a lonely person, and in one of them he saw Ames and Helen come from the house, arm in arm.

Tommy felt a pang at his heart as he realized what an unusually perfect couple they were. 'This was a Louis XVI night, and both Ames and Helen were all in white; Helen with her powdered hair and gleaming shoulders and a wild realized the state of ders, and a wide spreading sating gown, and Ames particularly tall and graceful in his pigtall and his knee breeches. They were like a ghostly pair from an old tapestry, as they stepped into the moonlight and Ames' head was bent low over Helen. He was holding her hand in his, and he was talking to her in a very low voice, while Helen's head drooped and her eyes were averted.

Tommy jumped down from the balcony as soon as they had passed, and cony as soon as they had passed, and strode in the opposite direction. He felt the need of rapid exercise, and he walked briskly down through the grape arbor and across through the flower garden, and back up to the fountain. He had just turned the corner of the summer house when he almost ran into Ames and Helen. The tall white courtier was standing in front of Helen, holding both of her hands in his, and, just as Tommy came upon them, Ames bent forward, Helen upturned her face to his, and he kissed her on the lips.

Tommy numbled a hasty apology and started to hurry away, but they both called after bim, and guiping down the lump which had leaped in his throat, he turned and came back.

"I'm just bidding good-by to the prettiest girl in town, Tommy," said Ames, in a serious tone. "Helen and I have been tremendous pals, and I'm going to miss all the rest of you more than I can say."

Tommy, bewildered.

"Yes, I find I can't stand it any longer," laughed Ames, "The fun's all gone. I see the same old freight cars backed up on the same old siding every day, and the same old churns."

"But you can't go now," protested Tommy. "The business is just begin-ning to yield a profit."

"I can find a profit any place," smiled Ames. "You see, Tommy, the churn business never interested me, 1 only cared for the problem of straightening out its difficulties, and now the puzzle is solved. The blocks are all fitted together, and the only way to enjoy them any further is to tear them all spart again. Better still, for a rover like me, is to wander on and find a new puzzle."

"I thought you were at home here," argued Tommy, "I don't think I shall ever have a

real home," laughed Ames. "I belong to the air, and I have to be free. The only regret I shall have in leaving is for my good friends," and he reached out a hand to both Helen and Tommy Helen slipped her other hand in Femmy's arm.

"What about Helen" Tommy suddenly demanded. "Ames, when a fellow monopolises a girl's entire time-

"Why, you silly Tommy?" flared Helen, dropping her hand from his arm. "Is that why you've neglected me all winter?" "Well, you know, I thought," stam-

mered Tommy. "And you know I thought," breath-

lessly interrupted Helen. "Oh, tut, tut," laughed Ames. "The music's beginning. Helen, will you le Towny take you to the rest of this series of dances?

Helen and Tommy looked at each other, then suddenly laughed. Ames turned away and lit a cigarette.
"Helen, that's our two-step," he said. 'Th give it to you, Tommy, Bun

He laughed as he watched the run into the house, arm in arm. H