The Ambition of Mark Truitt

HENRY RUSSELL MILLER

"THE MAN HIGHER UP." "HIS RISE TO POWER," Etc.

But I'd have expected you to say that."

Her eyes fell again to the sewing.

"Kazia," he asked directly, after a

moment, "has any one ever connected

She looked up quickly again. "Why,

"A mysterious woman has been men-

tioned. I've been afraid that every

one I've had to do with might be

smirched with me. I didn't want you-

"Do you care so much about it all?"

"I wouldn't admit it to any one else.

She was silent, but the dark eyes

He leaned forward and drew her to

him. He kissed her again and again.

"That I love you? Do I need--"

"No." He kissed her again. "Only

I can't quite believe it yet. It's worth

appointments and ugliness-to have

Much later-it did not seem long-

he asked: "Kazia, when will you marry

She did not answer for a long while.

Then she gently pushed him away and

"I can not marry you."

She shook her head, mute.

"You love me, and yet-

"But why? You are free."

"I am free-under the law. But I

have some reason." Then he aroused

himself. "Though you may just as

well forget it. Do you think," he cried,

"I've found a real enduring love only

"I have a reason. I-" She broke

went out in a little appealing gesture

of all women-to be touched."

Joseph had never dreamed!

you with my scandal?"

no. How could they?"

But I do care. Kazia."

were very gentle.

this hour."

each word.

stunned.

can not."

"I can not."

to let it go?"

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SYNOPSIS.

Mark Truitt, encouraged by his sweetheart, Unity Martin, leaves Bethel, his mative town, to seek his fortune. Simon Truitt tells Mark that it long has been his dream to see a steel plant at Bethel and asks his son to return and build one if he ever gets rich. Mark applies to Thomas Henly, head of the Quinby Iron works, for a job and is sent to the construction gang. His success in that work wins him a place as helper to Roman Andzrejzski, open-hearth furnaceman. He becomes a boarder in Roman's home and assists Piotr, Roman's son, in his studies. assists Piotr, Roman's son, in his studies. Kaxia, an adopted daughter, shows her gratitude in such a manner as to arouse Mark's interest in her. Heavy work in the intense heat of the furnace causes Mark to collapse and Kazia cares for him. Later Roman also succumbs and Mark gets his job. Roman resents this and tells Mark to get another boarding place. Five years elapse during which Mark has advanced to the foremanship, while his labor-saving devices have made him invaluable to the company. In the meantime Kazia has married one Jim Whiting. Mark meets with an accident which dooms him to be a cripple for life. He returns to Bethel intending to stay there. He finds Unity about to marry another man and wins her back. Unity urges him to return to his work in the assists Piotr. Roman's son, in his studies. other man and wins her back. Unity urges him to return to his work in the city. Mark rises rapidly to wealth and power in the steel business, but the so-cial ambitions of his wife make their marcial ambitions of his wife make their married life unhappy. The big steel interests
are secretly anxious to get hold of stock
in the Iroquois Iron company, supposed
to be worthless. Timothy Woodhouse
seeks financial assistance from Mark and
the latter buys Woodhouse's Iroquois
stock at a small figure. Henly forces
Quinby to let Mark have stock in the Quinby to let Mark have stock in the Quinby company, Mark finds Plotr making a socialistic speech on the street and the boy shows that he is still bitter against Mark. Mark finds Kazia, who is divorced and is now a hospital nurse, caring for Roman who is near death. Mark is advised by his physician to stop taking drugs and take a long rest. He gets six months' leave of absence. One day he takes Kazia out driving, and they meet Mrs. Truitt. A bitter quarrel ensues and Mark demands a divorce. He absents himself from the city during the divorce proceedings and makes no answer to the sensational charges brought by Mrs. Truitt. On his return he is treated coldly by many former friends.

CHAPTER XX.

The Red Glow.

Henley did not know what an impetus he had given with his "Pick out the thing you want most and fight until you get it."

Mark had not sought out Kazia. More than he would admit to himself. he had suffered during the weeks of injustice. Suffering had for the time dulled the longing for her. And be off, looking away. Her hands clasped live there. I meant clear out beyond ant tenderness for her. They were to offer a love tainted by the tongue of scandal-mongers. But now the hun- as her eyes came back to him. "It had visited-of calm pellucid rivers ger for a great love-born on an isn't that I don't want to. I-I love autumn evening of his youth when he had come upon a frail slip of a girl How could the love endure the little chutes; of vast stretches of untouched raptly gazing into the twilight, too much a part of him to be stifled even | commonplaceness of every-day life toduring the years of fierce blind strug- gether?" gle and disappointment-made itself felt again, downing pride. . .

He called up the Todd hospital, was told that Mrs Whiting was not there. but could be reached at a certain number. He called up that number.

The response came in a low voice of its music for him. His heart leaped.

There was a pause, then the low voice came again: "Who is that?" "This is Mark Truitt."

Another wait, so long that he thought the connection had been broken. "Yes?"

"Is there any place I could meet you-by accident?" "Is there any reason for an accident?"

"If you think not, there is none. Are you still there?"

"Yes. . . . You can come here." She gave an address.

"This evening?" "If you wish. . . . Good-by." He alighted from a car that eve-

ning before a big but unpretentious apartment house in one of the city's over the starving years of separation, quieter neighborhoods. Three stories above the street he came to a door on which was her card. He knocked. She opened the door. For many

seconds they stood looking at each other, motionless, speechless. . . . He broke the silence, in a strange greeting that spoke of itself.

"How often I remember you so-on the threshold!"

"I thought it was your step." The rich color surged before the invitation, lent meaning by his greeting. shouldn't love you as I do." "Will you come in?"

The quiet little sitting room was a found, even in the wilderness, so rest-

"I suppose," he said aloud, when they were seated, "it's part of the mystery of personality."

"What is?" "This room, It's the homiest I've

ever been in." "I'm glad you like it. I've had it for years. I suppose I oughtn't to keep it, because I don't get much good of it except in vacation. But I like to by itself?" think of it as a place to come back

"You're on your vacation now?" "Yes I have a long one this year. I take only Doctor Wolf's cases now and he is abroad for the summer."

He leaned back in the chair to which her under cover of their inconsequen-

"Why did you ask me to come here?" "Because I didn't want you to think-" She paused uncertainly. "That you believe all you may have

trials and frictions, the nearness, the

"Ah! I wish you hadn't said that." He was staggered for the moment; to him her reason was not an empty one. But he went on firmly: "That wouldn't be true with us. It's never true where there is a real love to smooth the way. And you and I-we mustn't judge that even the telephone could not rob by our past, because we've never

found the real love-until now." 'Yes, it is real. I think it is real.' From her wistful voice he thought he had shaken her. He pressed her hard. "Of course, it is. Then, don't

you see-"No, if it is real, then I can't-I daren't-risk losing it. I haven't had much, ever, except this love-I mustn't lose it. And you don't know-I'm not fine and clever and cultured, like-like the women you've known. You'd see the lacks-" She was becoming incoherent. "Oh, don't try to persuade me. You only make it hard. I've been

come-so long! And I know." But he did try to persuade her. And longing lent him eloquence, as he pictured for her their love, triumphant triumphing again over the vexatious

thinking of this-and of when you'd

problem of daily intimacy. Slowly it came to him that she meant her refusal. He released her and drew back, so suddenly that she

swayed and almost fell. "Then it only means that you don't

love me. If you did, you wouldn't count the risk. "If you must believe that," she an-

swered sadly, "you must. But it isn't true. If I could forget the risk, I He laughed harshly, and reaching for his hat, turned toward the door.

caress. He thought he had never The dreamed love had gone the way of his beautiful philosophy. But at the door he looked back. She was standing as he had left her, pale,

in her eyes both fear and the glow of the flame he had lighted. The hand, held out to him in involuntary gesture was trembling visibly.

"Why-do you go?" "But you said--"

"I didn't say-I wouldn't love you." He laughed again, "What is love-

"We could," pitifully she put forth the suggestion, "we could be friends," "Friends! I'm no bloodless poet, I want a whole love."

Her hungering look was calling him. drawing him across the room to her. It bade him take her. He took her, she had assigned him and watched wonderingly, dazed by the seeming surrender. In his clasp she seemed to

find a new courage." "Then-then-I will give you a whole love-if you will take me as I

"No, no!" he muttered. "Not that, the woods was without cloud or flaw.

be a lasting love. Love can't live ex- in and out among ever wooded hills. cept in the light of day."

"Love, if it is love, is its own light." "But the risk you fear! It would be greater your way."

"This is my risk, not yours." Her arms encircled his neck, drawing his carried. hot cheek down to hers. "And there is no one else. I am alone. No one would be hurt. It wouldn't-it couldn't jutting point they found a deserted -be a bigger love if given in the little cabin, some trapper's winter world's way. And it is all I can have, abode. There the journey ended. When all I can give. Let me have it until-" She ended in a gasp that was almost

CHAPTER XXI.

Arcady.

He went to sleep that night, fearing the awakening. But as he woke to the summons of the early summer sunshine filling his hotel room, the dreaded reaction did not come. He could think only with tenderness of the woman who had yielded to him, the love that did not haggle, with a sort of awe and the query, Could he match it?

He arose, and going to the telephone, called her number. "Is it you?" He heard the eager

catch in the low voice. "Who else could it be?" He laughed. 'Kazia, if you should happen to invite me to breakfast-"

For a long minute he held her so, in "Oh, will you? Come soon. I-I silence. . . . Insidious moment, throwam always waiting for you." ing open the gate that he might peer But as he turned away from the into a golden realm such as even this telephone, something caught in his throat. "Poor Kazia!" he muttered. "You haven't said it," he broke the "We've cut out a big job for our-

selves." He did not have to knock at her door. While he was still mounting the last flight of stairs, it was thrown going through all the trials and dis open and she stood awaiting him in the little entrance hall. When he took her in his close clasp, she put her hand to his forehead and looked searchingly into his eyes. He was glad that what she saw there contented her.

"Oh, I'm glad," she murmured from spoke, slowly, as though all her his shoulder, "I'm glad you called me

strength were needed to force out up. "Of course I did. How long did you think I could wait to hear your voice "You can not-" He stared at her, again?"

> "I was afraid you wouldn't. If you hadn't-" "But I did." He kissed her. Afterward, when the table had been

cleared and the dishes washed-he helping with an awkwardness they found very comic-he broached his "But why?" he persisted. "You must | plan.

"Kazia, have you ever been in the woods?" "No. But I remember you used to

tell me of the hills you came from. I've always wanted to see them." "Oh, yes, they're beautiful. But men

So he told her of the wilderness he that became noble lakes and then you. But-oh, can't you understand? rushed madly down narrow rocky forest, pathless to all but the wild things and the lonely, hardly less wild trapper; of its silences and ragings. She listened eagerly.

"Let's go there, Kazia." The suggestion left her almost breathless for a moment, "Dare we?"

Why not?" 'Why not?" she repeated slowly. There would be nothing to fear up there, nothing to conceal. We could stay until I have to go back to work." "Longer, if you like it. You needn't

think of work." "But I must," she smiled. "I must ive and I'm not a very rich woman.

"Hush!" She laid a silencing hand over his lips. It was easily arranged. He dropped note to Henley which led the latter



On a Jutting Point They Found a Deserted Cabin.

to believe that his counsel had been taken and Mark had gone away to let gossip run its course and die. Kazia had no explanations to make.

train together. They alighted far to the north at a rude little lumber town where the smell of fresh-sawn lumber. to whose simple mind it never occurred to question the status of his ber. . . Yankee guests, they started up the lake by canoe with a guide who was to leave them when they had made a permanent camp.

From beginning to end their stay in heard of me lately. Thank you, Kazia! I've hurt you enough. And The narrow lake narrowed still further selves still safe, Mark had persuaded | -was it a party of two, Truitt?"

They passed the region where the cruel ax had swung and scarred; the trees became bigger, the forest denser. Here and there they came to a rapids where the canoes had to be lifted and

Her almost awed perception of each unfolding beauty touched him. On a the hut had been cleaned out, they dismissed the guide with orders to return every three weeks with fresh supplies. .

Mindful of his resolve, he planned their days carefully, thinking only that

they might be perfect for her. The man was swept out of himself, out of his groove of thought, as never before. His struggles and victories and disappointments receded; they seemed part of another existence. If he thought of them briefly at all, it was but as a price well paid for his freedom. He did not guess that the habit of thinking minutely for her happiness was slowly prying loose other and firmly fixed habits.

Two moons waxed and waned. The guide came with supplies, and again a second time. On his third appearance, the time set for their departure, Mark without consulting Kazia, sent him back. She did not seem to notice the change in plan.

On the day when the guide should have returned again, he did not come. That evening a storm arose, such as rarely visits even those northern woods. Mark and Kazia were out on the lake for a lazy after-supper paddle, watching the masses of black clouds gather over the hills at the head of the lake. There was a rumble of distant thunder.

Suddenly, overtaking the mountainous vapor, appeared a lower plane of clouds, flying before a wind that struck the water and sent a line of white churning down the lake. They were not far out, but though they paddled swiftly, their light craft was tossing like a cork before they reached shore. They made their landing, dragged the canoe to safety and fled to the cabin just as a wall of green and darkness swept down upon them.

The fury was soon spent. The storm passed beyond the lake. Still they watched, in one of their long silences. She sighed and stirred, looking up at him. "I wonder-" She paused.

"Yes?" "Have I hurt you?"

"Hurt me?"

"By loving you, By coming here." "No," he cried. "How could any one be harmed by a perfect love? And it has been perfect. I can never forget.'

His heart ached with a deep poign-She did not sleep. Until morning sured. she kept her vigil beside him. Sometimes she would lean over and touch his outflung hand. .

When he awoke the sun was well up over the hills. Kazia was standing in the doorway, looking down the lake. She heard him stir and turned. He saw her eyes.

"I believe you haven't slept at all!" She did not answer that, but smiled, pointing.

"The guide is coming. Let us hurry. It is time for us to go. "No!" He sprang to his feet.

"Please," she put out an appealing hand, "let us not talk of it, but hurry. We must go, I've thought it out, and it is best." They breakfasted hurriedly and be-

gan the brief preparations to leave, putting the cabin in order and stowing into the canoes the little they would need on the trip down the river. They were soon ready. They were about to embark when Kazia, without explanation, turned and

went back to the cabin. Many minutes passed and she did not reappear. Then Mark followed her. He found her lying prone on the pile of pine boughs that had been their couch, face buried in her arms. Harsh dry sobs shook her.

With a cry he dropped to his knees beside her, gently stroking her hair, trying to soothe her grief. He pleaded with her to stay.

Soon she had regained control. She sat up, facing him. "How can you think of going? Back there we won't find it as it has been

here." "We must," she answered. "And now, while it's still perfect. It has been that-not a thing to regret. I've crowded into two months happiness his hearers and their situation; he enough for a lifetime. If I must pay had not missed that first moment of for it, I am willing. . . . And you betraying confusion. Suspicion, guided have given it to me. Do you think I by instinct, settled into conviction. haven't seen how you've watched over me, thought only of me, to make it

that I may have the chance." "It is I who will have to repay you. But why leave such happiness? Let us stay here, where love is free and

clean and strong." "If we only could! But we must go. Because it wouldn't stay perfect. There time would come-you are a man-They met in Toronto and there took when love wouldn't be enough. You would begin to want other men. You would chafe against the loneliness and inaction. We would go gladly then mingled with the fragrance of balsam, and we could look back on this only swept down a long narrow lake. After as a dream that failed. But now-oh. one night in the home of a lumberiack I shall have something to remember! And you will have something to remem-. . . Come."

CHAPTER XXII.

The Cleft Stick.

it wouldn't be a whole love. It couldn't | into a smooth clear river that wound | Kazia to stay over two days, that they might have one last uninterrupted period together. It was a mistake, an anticlimax.

They were at breakfast when, glancat the doorway of the hotel dining room-a figure of courtly and noble mien: moving with slow thoughtful stride and head slightly bent, as though, even amid the commonplace functions of life, his mind never ceased to dwell on momentous philanthropic projects; and withal modestly unaware of the whisper that ran over the room or of the many necks erence." craned in his direction. An obsequious captain of waiters led him down the room, and by fateful chance, toward of the peremptory quality of royalty's. the table where sat Mark and Kazia. Mark regarded him in that fascination Pullman to my car, which has been which a dangerous object often has for its victim.

Now it may be that the philanthropist was not quite so unaware as he seemed of the interest evoked by his



"Can It Be-Of Course, Is Is Truitt."

entrance, for a pair of furtively roving eyes alighted upon Mark. He stopped. "Can it be-of course, it is Truitt. This is an unexpected pleasure." He extended a genial hand.

Mark took it mechanically. "How are you, Mr. Quinby?" he muttered out of his daze.

"I suppose I am well." Jeremiah Quinby smiled benignantly. "A busy life leaves little time to consider the state of one's health. You are looking better than I have ever seen you." "I'm better than I've ever been."

There was a pause during which Quinby glanced tentatively at Kazia. "Ah! Perhaps I am intruding?" hind that had been a proud reluctance tightly in her lap, unclasped, then the edge of things as you know them." silent again. . . But after a time Quinby smiled humorously, as one who drowsiness overcame him and he slept. knows his welcome anywhere is as-

Mark brought his whirling thoughts to a stop. "No, certainly not. Mrs. Whiting-" He performed an introduction. Quinby's bow was impres-

"I see you have just begun, Perhaps-" He paused again, suggestively.

"You will join us? Mrs. Whiting. I'm sure--Kazia nodded and smiled com-

posedly. "This is kind, indeed. Though I should not," Quinby bowed again to Kazia, "blame Truitt for being selfish." He took the chair held out for him by the waiter, glancing from Mark's sunbrowned face to Kazia's. "I see you have both been out under the sun.

Your party-" "Has just separated. Mrs. Whiting is to let me-rather informally, to be sure-convoy her home."

"And what of it, since no one is the wiser? The conventions," Quinby wittily accepted the explanation, "are only for public consumption, though I being in the public eye, so to speak -may rarely ignore them. So you, too, are from our city, Mrs. Whiting?" Kazia admitted it.

"Ah! I wish I had known last night that you were here. The governorgeneral-" The phrase rolled lingeringly on his lips. "The governor-general gave a reception. You would have been pleased, I am sure, to see how our city, in my person, was honored." "I'm very sure of it. Please tell us

about it." Quinby told them about it, with a

wealth of detail. But under cover of his monologue Quinby was shrewdly taking stock of

And the event matched Quinby's need. For in the very midday of his perfect for me? I can never forget triumph, when the brilliancy and darthat. And maybe, some day, I shall ing of his achievements promised to have the chance to repay you. I pray eclipse his better fortified but less original rival in beneficence, a cloud no bigger than a man's hand had crept above the horizon. And if that cloud grew bigger, not MacGregor but Quinby himself might be eclipsedand, alas! forever. A crisis, then, when "harmony" more than ever was are storms even in the wilderness. A needed in his forces. There are, Quinby gratefully thought, more ways than one of insuring harmony. He felt of his whip and got ready to crack it. During a temporary lull Kazia,

pleading some unfinished packing, made her escape. Quinby's eye followed her admiringly to the door, then bent upon Mark a look in which reproof and a certain ponderous wag-. See! You know I'm right. gishness struggled for the upper hand. "Ah! Truitt! A sad dog, I fear."

> "Not at all," said Mark coldly. Quinby was blandly skeptical, "I

"Mr. Quinby," said Mark not so coldly, "your tone-! My word-" "Ah!" Quinby waved a pacific hand. "If your word is passed, that is enough. I am happy to believe it. Mrs. Whiting up, Mark espied a familiar figure ing seems a charming woman. A well poised woman! An unusual woman!"

"Very."

"You leave today?"

"Yes." "Then, since I have your word in the matter, I feel safe in inviting you and Mrs. Whiting to share my car as far as Buffalo."

"Mrs. Whiting may have a pref-

Quinby received this with the surprise of one whose invitations partake "I hope she will not prefer a stuffy praised. I should be deeply hurt by a refusal. In fact," Mark looked up quickly, as though he had heard a warning crack! overhead "I should construe a refusal as evidence- But let that go. There are company matters I wish to discuss with you, and this seems an opportune occasion."

The men regarded each other steadily for a moment. "I shall present your invitation."

Mark concluded "With my compliments," Quinby amended. "Er-Truitt, who is Mrs. Whiting? The name is not familiar." "I'm sure you never heard of her.

She's a trained nurse-a very successful one, I believe. I'll let you know They rose and Mark had the enviable distinction of marching with Jeremiah Quinby through the long

dining room, where by this time the whisper of the great philanthropist's presence had been happily confirmed. "Well," said Mark grimly, when be had found Kazia in their rooms, "you played audience to good purpose.

ing woman, a well poised woman, an unusual woman." She breathed a sigh of relief. "Then

Quinby has just informed me, with ex-

clamation points, that you are a charm-

he doesn't suspect?" "He's so sure of the truth that he wouldn't believe his own testimony to the contrary."

"What can we do?" "Exactly nothing but accept his invitation to travel in his car to Buffalo and trust to luck. Flattery and submissiveness-he would call them harmony-are the way into Quinby's good graces."

But Quinby, when the journey had begun, made no reference to that party in the woods. His engaging manners never, said the envious, so pronounced as in the presence of a pretty woman-were displayed in their perfection. Even Mark's fears were

At first the philanthropist gave himself almost wholly to Kazia. He showed her the splendors of his car, from the little kitchen, where her expert admiration brought a grin even to the pudgy face of the Japanese cook, unto the plaster cast of the ichthyosaurus Quinbyi conspicuously placed at one side of the library section

"Truitt tells me, Mrs. Whiting, that you are a nurse. A beautiful calling! A fitting sphere for woman-woman. tender minister to suffering!"

"And it pays," Kazia smiled, "better

than most woman's work." "But not enough. Have you ever noticed that the most important services are always the poorest paid. I have often wished," Quinby sighed, "that it lay in my power to give every deserving man and woman the just

reward earned by their service.' "Ah!" breathed Kazia, "that would be something to do.' Quinby bent a benignant smile on

Kazia, "Mrs. Whiting, you must leave me an address. As it happens, I am a trustee, and it may be, an influence in the Todd hospital. Surely the profession of healing offers a woman a larger-and a better paid-field than there individual nursing?" "To those who are fitted."

am sure I have not judged you too generously. He led Kazia to a big cushioned chair at the observation end of the car, had the Jap bring magazines and the latest novel.

"You are modest, of course. But I

She lay back in the chair, smiling her thanks up to him, as frankly as if she had not a suspected secret to brazen out. The philanthropist smiled back-and the light in his eyes, as they swept the figure beneath them, was not philanthropy.

His smile became quizzical. He leaned over and patted her hand. "You are a plucky woman, my dear, I have a short memory-sometimes." He went back to Mark.

"Truitt," he began, "does your recovered health mean that you are going back into harness?" "I don't know," Mark answered shortly. He had witnessed the tableau

just described. "You must get back. You are needed Have you kept track of our labor situation?"

Quinby sketched that situation, with a terseness of which Mark had not believed him capable.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Pipe Worth Half Million Dollars.

Among the royal treasures of Persia is a pipe set with diamonds, rubies and emeralds, to the value, it is estimated, of no less than \$500,000. This pipe was made for the late shah. and it is said to be even more valuable than his famous sword. In the matter of swords, it is said that the gaekwar of Baroda who, on the occasion of the coronation of George V in India, added to his fame by snubbing that monarch, possesses the most prefind you, brown as an Indian, at break- clous blade in existence. Its hilt and fast alone at a hotel with a woman | belt are incrusted with diamonds, ru-In Canada's capital, thinking them- dusky se an Indian maiden. The party | bies, sapphires and emeralds, and its value has been put at \$1,000,000