# HIS RISE TO POWER

## By Henry Russell Miller,

*Author of*

"The Man Higher Up"



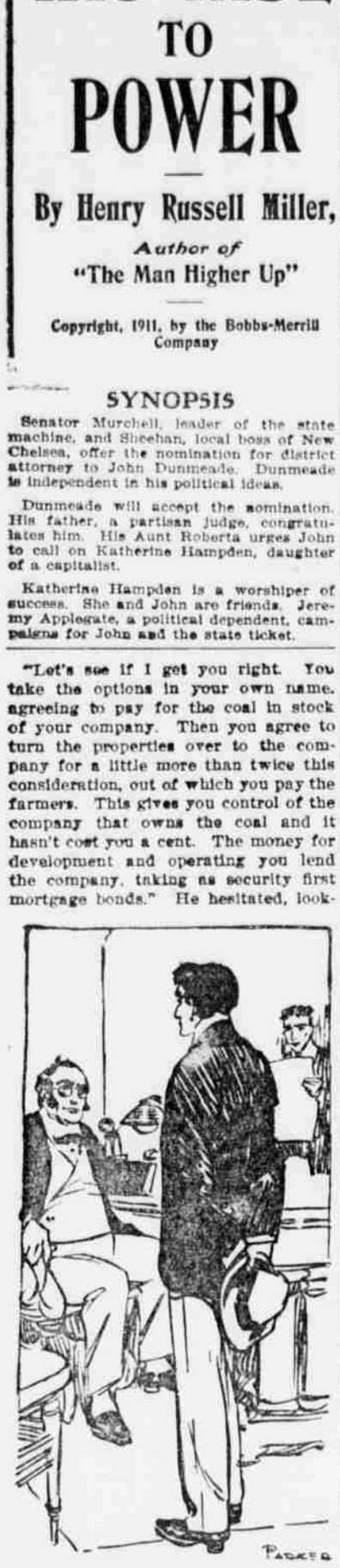
### SYNOPSIS

Senator Murchell, leader of the state machine, and Sheehan, local boss of New Chelsea, offer the nomination for district attorney to John Dunmeade. Dunmeade is independent in his political ideas.

Dunmeade will accept the nomination. His father, a partisan judge, congratulates him. His Aunt Roberta urges John to call on Katherine Hampden, daughter of a capitalist.

Katherine Hampden is a worshiper of success. She and John are friends. Jeremy Applegate, a political dependent, campaigns for John and the state ticket.

"Let's see if I get you right. You take the options in your own name, agreeing to pay for the coal in stock of your company. Then you agree to turn the properties over to the company for a little more than twice this consideration, out of which you pay the farmers. This gives you control of the company that owns the coal and it hasn't cost you a cent. The money for development and operating you lend the company, taking as security first mortgage bonds." He hesitated, look-



"I'm sorry, but I can't do it."

ing directly at Hampden. "That hardly gives the farmers a square deal, does it?"

The pupils of Hampden's eyes contracted suddenly. "Certainly it does," he answered with some emphasis, "since it converts properties that have been eating themselves up in taxes into a producing proposition. I didn't say," he added carelessly, "that your fee ought, in my opinion, to be about $10,000—in stock."

"Worth how much?"

"Worth par," Hampden answered with conviction. "Eventually."

"Phew! You haven't impressed me as a man who would pay city prices for country butter, Mr. Hampden," John replied thoughtfully. "Just why so much?"

"You will be expected to earn it," said Hampden dryly. "Are you in the habit of questioning fees because they are large?"

"I'm not in the habit of getting large fees. Only I'm not quite clear how you expect me to earn a fee of $10,000 in stock worth par—eventually."

"The usual legal matters—charter, organization, conveyances and so on. And," casually, "helping us to sign up the Deer township properties."

"They don't like the proposition?"

"They're the only ones who haven't accepted it. They seem to be holding out under the advice of this fellow—Cranshawe, is it?" Warren nodded. "We think you can swing them into line."

"I see," said John thoughtfully. His brow wrinkled in a troubled fashion as he gazed reflectively out at the clerks sweltering behind the cage. Hampden and Warren waited patiently for his answer.

At last he raised his eyes to Hampden's. "I'm sorry, but I can't do it."

"Why not?" Hampden demanded.

"This fellow Cranshawe happens to be a good deal of a man. He and his neighbors are clients of mine in a small way and friends also, I think. They do me the honor to trust me. I shouldn't care to advise them in this matter."

"Why not?" Hampden demanded again.

"Let us say," John smiled, "that I am in politics and don't want to complicate my vote getting."

"That isn't your reason."

"Well," John said regretfully, "if you will have it, it isn't a proposition that I can conscientiously recommend."

"You impeach my honesty?"

"I do not go so far, sir. Honesty is a matter of intent. I think I understand your point of view—that you will convert their idle coal, as you say, into an income property and by starting a new industry will indirectly benefit the whole valley, which is probably true. But the point is that the coal, the one indispensable element in the situation, is theirs, and in return for it they should at least have control."

"The coal has always been there. We furnish the initiative and the brains and the money to make it useful."

"I see that, too. But don't you think initiative of this sort is sometimes—er—overcapitalized?"

"Do you know of any capital that will offer better terms than I do?"

"I do not," John confessed. "And it strikes me," he added gravely, "that you are taking advantage of that fact to gouge"—the word slipped out; he corrected himself hastily—"to drive a close bargain with the farmers."

Hampden abruptly straightened up in his chair. "You may stick to 'gouge.' Do I understand that you refuse the job?"

"I have been trying to explain my reasons"—

"I'm not deeply concerned with your reasons," Hampden remarked shortly. He picked up a document and pointedly began to peruse it. Observing that John did not at once take the hint, he looked up, nodding carelessly. "Oh! Good morning!"

John rose, flushed under the curt dismissal and went out of the bank.

"I told you so," Warren said.

"Can't you say anything more original than that?" Hampden exclaimed impatiently. Warren couldn't, so he held his peace.

"What I'd like to know," Hampden added reflectively, dropping the document, "is why Murchell let him be nominated. A young lawyer who refuses a big fee for sentimental reasons has no place in Murchell's machine." He was talking to himself rather than to Warren.

But this was attacking what had almost attained the sanctity of a tradition, an institution proudly cherished by New Chelsea! "Murchell is a smart man," Warren was moved to protest, "and he likes Dunmeade. And maybe John is smart enough to guess that the stock may be worth nothing—eventually."

Hampden looked at him sharply, but Warren's face was as expressionless as that of the soldiers' monument.

"Well," the capitalist remarked philosophically, "it's Murchell's business, not mine."

That evening Katherine was to be found on the terrace. She was looking particularly well, a fact of which she was not altogether unconscious. But she was restless and wandered aimlessly into the library where she found her father busy at his desk on which lay a profusion of papers and blueprints. He nodded abstractedly.

"Still at work, dad? Don't you ever get tired of it?"

"I guess it's the only thing I know how to do. My generation was never taught to take pleasure seriously. You needn't complain, though." He leaned back in his chair and surveyed her approvingly. "Where are the swains?"

She yawned. "There seems to have been a devastating epidemic. You will kindly proceed to amuse me."

"All this gorgeousness wasted!"

She yawned again. "I was rather looking for John Dunmeade this evening."

"Hence that gown and that stunning new arrangement of the hair? You're not going to fall in love with an incompetent one horse country lawyer, are you?"

"It is not beyond the bounds of possibility," she laughed. "But is John an incompetent? I don't believe it."

"He is. He proved it today. I gave him the chance to make some money, more than he is likely to make in five years, and he turned it down—for sentimental reasons! And the worse of it is he didn't turn it down regretfully, but bluntly, quite as though it didn't matter. That sort of man won't go far."

"He told me once that he didn't care much for money. I thought then he wasn't posing."

"And," Hampden continued the indictment, "he virtually called me a crook."

"Well?"

"Well—what?"

"Are you?" And she added quickly, seeing his look of aggrieved astonishment, "But of course I know you aren't."

"I am not," he said emphatically. "I have always kept my operations strictly within the law, and that is more than a good many men who aren't called crooks can say. Of course," he went on, "I know perfectly well I'll not be consulted when you come to marry. You will choose your husband according to your own tastes"—

"I have the right," she interrupted, "since I shall have to live with him."

"Unless I have to support him!"

"You wouldn't have to," she said positively, "even if he were poor. I can do without luxury."

"You think you can," he answered. "You've never had to try. But even if you could do without it, you couldn't be content with mediocrity. You'd want to be in the thick of things, with a husband who'd wear a No. 8 hat, who'd have big wants and would put up a big fight to get what he wanted. And if you ever took the bit in your mouth. Lord pity you and your husband!"

"Do you know," she said thoughtfully, "I've been thinking just that. Still, John Dunmeade—we're still discussing him, aren't we?—isn't exactly commonplace. He really has brains and he is attractive. In politics"—

"He would be out of place. You know nothing of politics. He'd have less chance there than in business."

"We are really anticipating the event. He hasn't asked me to marry him, and he doesn't intend to, I think. He strongly disapproves of me, even while he likes me."

### CHAPTER V.

#### Explorations.

BEFORE the real leaders in the warfare against privilege, cool headed, farseeing, combining caution and courage came forward to give form and direction to the uprising certain lonely protestants had appeared—young men mostly, audacious egotists who, the people said, thought they were wiser and better than other men, dared to criticise what their neighbors accepted and presumed to instruct their elders. In the end they were broken, silenced—sadly unaware that in the subconscious memory of men the echo of their protest was still ringing. They are forgotten now.

John Dunmeade was a normally intelligent young man, healthy of mind and conscience, who had never been tempted, hence never tested. He had heard the protestants of his day, of course, but they dealt with problems so remote from his own simple existence that he had carelessly accepted his elders' appraisement of them. He had an ingenuous belief in the greatness and goodness of men who attained high position in life, such men as Senator Murchell.

Despite his charity and credulity, he was, when occasion presented itself quick to see the fundamental verities of the case—as Stephen Hampden had learned.

He was not unambitious, although the spark had smoldered until, apparently from nowhere in particular, had come the suggestion of his nomination. When he perceived the distinct approval with which his neighbors received the suggestion his heart leaped within him. They were a good, kind people. If he should prove a faithful servant in little perhaps—with unaffected modesty he contemplated the prospect—to him might be committed service of wider scope.

The conceded fact that his nomination came solely by grace of Murchell's and Sheehan's decree caused him vague misgivings. Jeremy Applegate's plaint startled him. Hampden's offer did not tempt—it revolted him. What troubled him most was that these things were done in the light of day and that no one—Jeremy did not count, the victim would naturally protest—seemed to care.

After careful consideration of his unimposing bank account John invested a part of it in a horse despite the teasing of Aunt Roberta, who accused him of "joining the cavalry"—to wit, Warren Blake and the troop of undergraduates that clattered over the roads at Crusader's heels. He was not a thoroughbred, blue ribbon winner, like Crusader, but just a plain horse that, with buggy attached, could trot a mile in something less than five minutes or if you weren't particular as to gait would bear you in the saddle all day with equal willingness. He was a big, raw boned beast with a Roman nose and eyes continually showing white, which quite belied his placid temper, and John called him Lightning. So John and Lightning, two industrious campaigners between whom a perfect understanding existed, went about their business of getting votes—and learning.

Lightning's duties generally consisted in standing under the shade of some tree, while John, a volunteer who at least earned his dinner, worked with the farmers in the fields. And over the dinner table or when the day's work was done John chatted with the farmers. The labor was good for his muscles and digestion, and the chat was good for his soul.

Often he found that Jeremy Applegate or one of Jeremy's fellow scouts had blazed the trail for him. But sometimes he found skeptics who asked pertinent questions.

"Why should I vote for ye?" asked Dan Criswell, a citizen of Baldwin township, one evening.

John began to patter the stock party arguments, which carried conviction neither to the skeptical Criswell nor—of a sudden—to himself. He broke off abruptly in the middle of a sentence.

"As you say," he laughed uncomfortably. "Why should you vote for me?"

"Does sound kind o' foolish, don't it? Reckon ye won't have nothin' to do with the tariff or the single gold standard ner prosperity neither. The hull party won't make ye git after the lawbreakers if ye're cheek by jowl with Jim Sheehan an' he don't want it. What I want to know is are ye honest—or will ye take orders?"

"That sounds logical," John assented.

"It's common sense. Only most candidates think we're too simple to think on't. An' I don't know as they're far wrong," he added thoughtfully.

When John left, however, Criswell shook hands with him cordially. "I guess I'll vote for ye—this time. I can't swaller the hull ticket, though—stomach wouldn't stand it. Ye look like ye'd be yer own man. Leastways, I'll chance it."

And John replied, troubled, "I won't regard that as a promise. I'm not sure that you ought to vote for me."

Another day he met one Sykes, a hill farmer, a little, wizened fellow who looked as though he had worn himself out in the struggle to wring a living out of the steep slopes.

"I ain't voting," he said.

"Well," John laughed cheerfully, "if I can't get a vote I'll be content with information. Will you tell me why you won't vote?"

"Well, if ye will have it, Jim Sheehan nominated ye. If ye'd been the right kind o' man he wouldn't 'a' had nothin' to do with ye. Anybody he's for, I'm against. I rec'lect when he come to Plumville, nothin' but a drinkin' bum. An' now he's got rich, buildin' bad streets an' roads an' taxin' me heavy to pay fer it while it keeps me scratchin' to get the intrust on my mortgage. How do I know he's crooked? I don't know—I feel it. An' I know that no one gets the nomination less'n he says so. Or Murchell—an' they're tarred with the same stick."

John's face was grave. "Then you ought to vote the opposition ticket. I'd rather you'd do that than not vote at all."

The momentary flicker of passion died down. "What's the use?" was the reply, dully given. "However I vote some feller like Sheehan gits on top."

John sought counsel from his father. But to the judge Caesar's wife—that is to say, his party and all things thereto appertaining—was above suspicion; not so the motives of him who raised a question. So he took his trouble to 'Ri Cranshawe, the office visitor to whom John's deference had attracted Sheehan's attention, a big man, kindly, shrewd, with wisdom in the raw. He listened sympathetically as John poured out his tale.

"It's like what Sykes says. It ain't what we know—it's what we feel. When Jim Sheehan gits a public contract, we feel there's somethin' crooked about it. When a man gits a nomination, we feel that he's made some kind o' deal with Sheehan. When we put up a man on our own hook, an' he's nominated—which ain't often—we find he's gone over to Sheehan. An' that ain't feel, it's know. Jim Sheehan's represented; we ain't. It ain't right!"

"Then why don't you get together and fight?"

"We've got to live," Cranshawe answered simply. "We don't lay by money fast enough to keep us without workin'. We ain't got the time ner the trainin' to make a good fight against him. We've got no leader." His eyes, through the bushy brows, rested with an almost wistful light on the troubled countenance before him. "An it'd take a large sized man fer the job."

John just then felt very small.

He went to Plumville, an ugly, grimy, bustling, growing hive of workers, with its drones too. He had the key to interpret what he saw. He was permitted to go through the mills and meet the men; he came out with hands blackened from much contact with their hands and in the smut he felt a sort of pride. What he had read on the farmers' brown faces he saw on their red, scorched ones—the dull eyed suspicion of those used to flattery before election and neglect afterward. Under the careful ciceronage of Sheehan's lieutenants he was led into political club and saloon, where he shook hands with many more men, who guzzled vast quantities of liquor and sneered openly at his abstinence. He was told that here he would meet "men who counted;" he did meet such men—brutish things, moral idiots, chinless creatures bound together by the cohesive force of common interest—plunder. This army never slept, could always be relied upon.

"What a self centered beast I have been!" he cried within himself. "All this rottenness under my nose, and I have never perceived it!" A great fear came upon him—fear of the responsibility of that into which he felt himself being carried.

And there was another thing that deepened those twin creases between his eyes.

One morning a very sleek, high stepping cob drawing a very elegant trap halted before his office, a circumstance of which you may be sure New Chelsea took prompt and interested notice.

"Why, hello!" he exclaimed, extending his hand to the visitor. "This is fine!"

She observed him hesitatingly. "It is Mr. Dunmeade, isn't it? Yet I think I should have recognized you anywhere. You haven't changed much, though it has been a long time since I last saw you. Aren't you ashamed of having neglected me so long?" she concluded indignantly.

"Well, you see, Katherine," he grinned, lamely explanatory, "I've been out campaigning"—

"You might at least have come to report your progress to an interested—constituent. Are you aware that you and I are going over to inspect the new house this afternoon? It's completed, and you've never seen it yet."

"But I ought to see some men"—

"Do you think," she interrupted him again, "that I've set all the tongues in New Chelsea clacking for nothing? Your campaign can wait. We shall start at 2."

He hesitated, then surrendered. "Oh, hang it all! I've earned a holiday. I'll go."

She beamed brightly on him. "That's nice of you. And we shall ride. I want to race Crusader against that new steed I've heard so much about."

"Oh, no!" he protested. "The aristocratic Crusader would probably snub him, and Lightning is very sensitive about such things."

"It is time," she insisted firmly, "that Crusader acquired a more democratic spirit. At 2, remember!"

A few minutes before the appointed hour New Chelsea saw Lightning—curried as never before in his life—amble in his own peculiar fashion up Main street to the opening in Hampden's hedge, whence he soon emerged in the company of the satiny Crusader. They came after a half hour's ride to a long, straight avenue, once the rain washed lane to a farmhouse, newly graded and graveled and flanked by precise rows of towering poplars.

"It was for the trees we took this place," she told him. "And for the view. Do you wonder?"

They stopped and looked down into the valley lying silent before them like some vast, deserted amphitheater of the gods. The town, seen through the thin, bluish haze of September, seemed sleepier than ever, half hidden by its trees; the spires of the churches and schoolhouse standing up like exaggerated exclamation points. "Which

Lightning Soon Emerged in the Company of Crusader.

is perfectly absurd," she flouted his fancy, "since New Chelsea is nothing so emphatic."

Inside, the decorators—not from New Chelsea—were putting the finishing touches on the last room, and most of the furnishings were in place. He found that the Globe had done the house grave injustice. It was not at all "palatial," but planned with an eye to comfort and harmony—"livableness," Katherine called it—and marked by extreme simplicity—of the expensive sort however.

Under Katherine's guidance John was shown the whole house from garret to cellar. At least half of his admiration he gave to his guide. He had never before known her as she was that afternoon, girlish, enthusiastic, absorbed in her woman's task of homemaking, never so alluring. Afterward they rested on the shady eastern terrace.

"Do you know," she said, "you haven't exclaimed once. Not a single 'Fine!' or even a 'Bully!' You're a very satisfactory person—in some ways. Do you like it?"

"Very much," he answered with such evident sincerity that she was content. "But why this air of permanence?"

"Because this is to be home. Of course we shall be in the Steel city during the winter, with a month in New York for the opera. But this is home. It seems lonely and out of the way now, I suppose, but that won't last long. The Sangers have bought the place next to this. The Flicks, and maybe the Hawes, are coming. We'll soon have our own little colony."

"And the siege of New York?"

"A foolish expedition from which we have discreetly retreated." Her laugh did not ring quite so free as usual. She continued: "It was humiliating, toadying to people who despise you for your presumption." The crimson rushed resentfully to her cheeks. He said nothing.

"Thank you for not asking questions. It's foolish for me to be so sensitive about it, but"—she shrugged her shoulders—"our experience wasn't pleasant. I like the new rich. I like to meet men who are doing things—who are making their own conquests, not living on the fruits of others' conquests."

He sat silent. To win, always to win, was the sum of this girl's philosophy, with no thought of its cruelty or realization that for every victor there must be many losers. And wealth, power, the things a man had, were the badge of his victory.

She was laughing at him. "What do you think when you retire into yourself so rudely? Anything profitable or interesting?"

"I'm afraid not. Do you think winning is all of life?"

"Isn't it?"

"No," he cried. "There is the use of strength, if one is strong, to support the weak"—He paused abruptly, conscious of the triteness and futility of his words, with the shyness of the man who, self conscious without conceit, fears to uncover his ideals before unsympathetic eyes.

"Oh, John Dunmeade," she replied impatiently, "you're so disappointing, with your schoolboy platitudes."

He made no answer; the quick red rushed to his face. And why should she interest herself in his ideals? A long, troubled silence fell between them.

"John," she said suddenly, "was it necessary for you to criticise and quarrel with my father?"

"I did not criticise him," he responded quickly, "and there is no quarrel that I am aware of. We merely differed in opinion on a business matter, each believing he was right."

"Will you tell me why you think him wrong?"

He found his lips sealed. "I haven't criticised him," he said gravely, "and I can't begin now, especially to his daughter."

(Continued in Next Friday's Issue.)

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