

# HIS RISE TO POWER

By Henry Russell Miller,  
Author of "The Man Higher Up"

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## 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.

In New Chelsea lives Warren Blake, a model young bank cashier, connected with Hampden in "high finance." They try without success for John's aid.

The rottenness of politics in his state and party as revealed in his campaign discourse. He calls upon Katherine.

Katherine's peril in a runaway reveals to her and John their unspoken love. John publicly "turns down" the machine of his party.

John will not compromise with his conscience even for the sake of winning Katherine, and the two part.

The course of his son is disapproved by Judge Dunmeade. John is elected and puts Sheehan on trial for political corruption.

Sheehan is convicted and flees. John meets Haig, a novelist, who is introduced to him by Warren Blake.

Haig and John visit the Hampdens. Blake proposes to Katherine and is rejected. He praises John to her. Murchell has a visitor.

"The question is, am I big enough for the job?"

"No, that ain't the question," Cranshaw contradicted quickly. "Because that can't be answered till ye've tried. The question is, are ye goin' to be scared out by a job because it's big, or are ye goin' to keep up what ye've started? 'F ye don't, there ain't anybody else to do it. An' we'll soon be back where we started."

John nodded slowly. Cranshaw did not pursue the point.

"I see Steve Hampden's back," he remarked casually. "That girl of his was at the trial. Came in late an' had to stand by the door where I was standin'. She was with some young city feller. Seen her at the rally last fall too. She seems," he grinned quizzically, "to take considerable interest in ye. So long?"

Soon he was out of sight around a turn in the road.

John swung rapidly along for an hour until the sweat oozed from every pore of his body. Then he threw himself under a tree by the roadside.

He pondered his problem. Yet he knew that it was answered, not by Cranshaw's homely wisdom, but by the inscrutable purpose of the force which had impelled him into the fight. He could not withdraw from the task to which he had been set. Whether it was a question that he needed not to answer, so long as a straight piece of road lay ahead. He thought sadly of his father's displeasure. And he thought of Katherine, whom, it appeared, the winter had not taught to forget him. He had not learned to forget. Work could dull, it could not wholly stifle, the longing for her. And yet he had not been unhappy. He knew that he could not say no to that which was calling him into service.

He walked home through the calm of sundown. At the corner where stands the Farmers' bank he met Warren Blake and a companion. Warren stopped him to introduce the stranger, Haig, a lanky, cadaverous individual who was the author of a much criticized novel, "The Brethren."

"I heard you twisting Murchell's tail this afternoon," Haig drawled. "If you don't mind, I'd like to congratulate you—on your nerve. I've been wondering whether you are merely a brave man or a specimen of that splendid genus, the fool. Brother Blake inclines to the latter notion."

"Yes, Warren would," John smiled. "I do," said Warren solemnly. "I don't believe in agitation. It hurts business—and the agitator."

"In New Chelsea, Mr. Haig, we daily offer thanks for prosperity, good weather and the old party."

Haig's ready grin broadened as he placed a hand on Warren's shoulder. "Here, Mr. Dunmeade, but for the grace of God, stand I. My people wanted to make me a banker."

"A dollar, Mr. Haig," John put in, "held close enough to the eye will hide the rest of creation."

Haig chuckled. "Now, that's good. That's very good. Wish I could have thought of it."

"As we put it in New Chelsea, are you leaving soon, Mr. Haig?" asked John.

"Lord, no! I'm here for my health. Doctor told me I'd been working too hard or not hard enough, I forget which, and that I needed fresh air for my liver. So I trilled up here after the Hampdens, where, by the way, Brother Blake and I are dining this

"Yes, and we'd better start," Warren suggested patiently.

"Ah, these fiery lovers! Come around and see me, Mr. Dunmeade."

John promised, and they parted.

He reached home to be soundly scolded by Miss Roberta for his tardiness at supper. After supper he strolled into the library. The judge was reading by the desk, the light from the lamp throwing his cold, heavy features into sharp relief. He looked up inhospitably as John entered.

"Busy, judge?" John generally called him judge, feeling not without reason that his father took more pride in his office than in his paternity. Of late he had had especial reason for this belief.

"Not too busy if you have anything of importance to discuss. I suppose you expect me to pat you on the back because you've sent another man on the road to prison?"

"I have felt that you weren't in full sympathy with it."

"I am not." The judge laid his book on the desk and sat stiffly erect. John was immediately enabled to sympathize with those unfortunates who were arraigned before his father.

"Now that the case is ended, I may speak frankly. As a judge I, of course, approve of the punishment of crime. But I don't approve your going out of your way to attack your party and Senator Murchell, a fine, clean living gentleman, who has always showed the warmest friendship for your family."

Judge Dunmeade spoke with restrained emphasis.

"And has created a pernicious machine," John added incautiously.

"Which elected you to the office you now hold."

"Your memory isn't good, judge. The machine nominated me. The people of Benton county elected me, you may remember."

"You couldn't have been nominated without Murchell's indorsement."

"That, I'm sorry to say, is probably true," John said, wishing that he had not ventured into the room. "I'm sorry you feel so about it. Good night, father."

Judge Dunmeade resumed his book. Now, the judicial temperament is not given to impulse. But as John went slowly out of the room Judge Dunmeade experienced a novel sensation which in the brief moment allowed for reflection he was at loss to define. Later he decided that it was his generous nature asserting itself to give his son another chance. He may have been mistaken.

Be that as it may, before John had passed quite out of the room he was recalled by an unexpected "Wait!"

He returned. "Yes, father?"

"I suppose," said the judge gruffly, "your father's interest can have no weight with you. It ought to be clear to you without suggestion from me that if you persist in attacking Senator Murchell you make my lifelong ambition impossible."

"Are you still taking that seriously? The senator has been teasing you along with the promise of a justiceship for ten years. Don't you know by this time that he has no intention of giving it to you?"

"He gave you a nomination."

"Yes, he happened to believe he could make use of me. It seems to be solely a question of the senator's political necessities. I—I doubt that he needs you, father."

"That means, I presume," the judge said bitterly, "that I count for nothing against your notions? But I might have known it. Good night!" he repeated.

Out in the clear night John walked slowly about. More than ever he realized the price which they must pay who would be voices.

## CHAPTER X. Apples of Eden.

IF the summer before had been gay, what shall we say of that which now opened? The center of gaiety was East ridge. The Italian villa was the scene of one continuous house party.

It was inevitable that John and Katherine should meet. It happened one morning a few days after the Sheehan trial when John was leaving the postoffice with his daily mail. A trap drew up in which sat Katherine and a young man. John remembered a saying of hers concerning one whom "people were apt to sneer at as a speculator," but whom she thought "splendid" because he had had the brains and courage to make his own fight and win." He had no difficulty in identifying that man with Gregg, of whom he had heard more than once. Gregg was an attractive fellow, a few years older than John, of athletic build and pleasant manner. He joined Katherine in congratulating John on his recently acquired fame.

"We expect to see you often on the ridge. There will be tennis. He will make you play," she said to Gregg, who responded pleasantly.

"I'd like to have the chance, Mr. Dunmeade. I've been hearing about your game."

But, although Gregg spent nearly every week end on the ridge, John did not keep his promise. Indeed he had little time for recreation, and that little was put in with Haig, with whom he was rapidly cementing a friendship. The June primaries were at hand. John felt less pride than responsibility when he found that he was expected to lead the campaign to capture the county nominations from the machine and that, by tacit consent of friends and enemies alike, upon him devolved the task of choosing the reform ticket. He gave much thought to this task. It was not simple. There were many unworthy gentlemen, he discovered, willing to be swept into office by the wave of popular protest. And he could have

learned here, had he been so minded, that even a reformer must employ the wisdom of the serpent. He achieved results at which a politician might have sneered, but which were on the whole very promising in the light of his inexperience.

In Haig John found an unexpected but invaluable aid. The novelist had once been a political reporter. The reform ticket was nominated. Murchell, cynically willing to let the reform wave run its brief course, withheld his hand. Bereft of its familiar weapon, fraud, the machine was easily conquered by a people thoroughly angered. Even Phinville gave the reformers a small majority. Haig hailed John as a "little boss."

John indignantly rejected the title. "My work is done, or, at least, will be when they're elected. I can't interfere with them then."

"Say, aren't you afraid the cows will take you for a bunch of nice, green, succulent clover? Just wait," Haig grinned, "until they're in office. Make no mistake, sonny; you'll need to keep a tight rein on them. About a year from now I expect to see some pretty little, homemade illusions badly busted."

The promised journey to the ridge had not yet been made.

One afternoon Haig found him busy in his office. "How's the bosslet? Had a shave today? Feeling conversational? You and I are going out for a little drive this afternoon."

"We're not. I hope you are. I've got things to do."

"This American habit of industry is becoming a positive mania. Are you coming peacefully or will you go anyhow?"

"I'll do neither," John continued his writing.

"All right," Haig seated himself, deposited his feet on the desk beside John and commenced an apparently interminable monologue on the apocryphal cleverness of a dog he once had owned.

John threw down his pen in disgust. "I surrender," he groaned. "I'll go to get rid of you."

"Thought I could persuade you. Come right along. I've got a buggy outside."

John put his papers away and meekly followed to the waiting vehicle. Haig drove, chattering volubly of whatever came into his mind. But when Haig turned into the ridge road John stirred uneasily.

"Going anywhere in particular?"

"Anywhere you'd like to go?"

"No-o, I guess not."

"Then we'll go to the Hampdens. There's always somebody there."

"Oh, no, we won't! Let's go back the other direction. I like the south road better."

"Oh, you do! Why not Hampdens?"

"Well, you see," John began to explain lamely, "Hampden and I aren't on very good terms and—"

"Lord! Don't I know that? He spends most of his time enumerating

the different kinds of fool you are. I sometimes think his list is incomplete. But what difference does that make? We aren't going to see him. There's a fellow up there—Gregg—that I want you to play tennis with."

"I haven't had a racket in my hand all summer," John protested.

"Macht nichts aus! I've never seen you play, but you can beat him. You've got to. He's got my scalp so often I have to take revenge by proxy. Besides, you need a little frivolity. You're beginning to take yourself seriously, and that's a bad sign."

"But I'm not fixed up for it." John looked at his shoes, upon which a thin coating of dust had settled.

Haig surveyed him and then stretched out over the dashboard a lean shank, the trouser of which had not felt an iron for many a day. "You're a regular dude beside me."

"Oh, have it your own way," John agreed with as good grace as possible. He could not well explain that he and Katherine had been in love, that he was still in the same case though she had probably recovered, that he had persistently stayed away from her for the sake of his peace of mind, and—Almost any excuse for yielding will serve when one is resisting a weakness to which one both wishes and does not wish to succumb.

On the shaded eastern terrace they found a small group of young people of both sexes. Haig saluted them with

a triumphant hail. "I've brought him! Now, you broker man, I'll bet you \$10 he can beat you, best two out of three sets."

Katherine rose and came forward to meet them. Gregg accompanied her, almost with the air of a host, it seemed to John. They greeted the newcomers cordially, Katherine with such a notable absence of constraint that John, who had nerved himself for an ordeal, was rather heavily let down. He could almost have believed that she had forgotten the ride home under the October moon.

It was undeniably pleasant to loiter luxuriously in the comfortable wicker chair, watching the play of animated young faces, from whose freshness neither work nor worry had subtracted, against the background of green-sward and flowering shrubbery. Occasionally he tossed a light word on the eddy of conversation. He noticed that when he spoke all, especially the men, showed interest. That, too, was pleasant.

Later Gregg reminded him of the promised match, and when they had donned flannels it was played. John lost, although after the first set he gave his opponent a hard game. Gregg proved a generous conqueror, finding more excuses for his lucky victory than John could have devised. The latter enjoyed every point, especially when Haig, grumbling something about a "thrown match," paid his bet. Afterward, in the physical contentment consequent upon hard exercise and a good tubbing, he stayed to dinner, a very gay, informal affair served on the terrace by candlelight. John was almost regretful when the time came to leave.

Late that night, going over the day, he found that he had talked a great deal with Katherine, but never alone. He was leaving.

"I am very glad you came," she said brightly. "You will come again?"

"And I am glad. I certainly shall."

Then it was he thought he caught a question flickering momentarily in her eyes. But the question, if there at all save in his imagination, was gone before he could make sure.

He was silent during the drive homeward, and Haig, busily humming the pilgrims' chorus motif, did not try to interrupt his thoughts.

Haig's parting shot as they separated was, "Now I've shown you the way go up there often. You'll be a brighter and nobler man for it."

John went, not often and always in Haig's company, it is true, but often enough to keep burning brightly the fires within him.

If John's love affairs remained in statu quo those of another advanced at least to a climax. Amid the cares of banking and trusteeships Warren Blake found time to contribute to the gaiety of the ridge—that is to say, he was frequently to be found on the Hampden terrace, an inconspicuous, often half forgotten listener to the nimble gossip and badinage. Had he been more obtrusive it is probable that he would have been snubbed into staying away. But one does not greatly resent the attentions of a shadow, and one day he proposed to Katherine and was rejected.

"Why don't you marry John Dunmeade?" he asked abruptly.

She turned on him angrily. "Warren! That is an—"

"An impertinence," he interrupted again evenly. "You will allow me this time. I'm not likely to bother you much again. You were in love with him last summer. And you aren't the sort that forgets. Nor is he, I think. He will go further than any of us—he'll go better. He is what you need. With me—with Gregg—you would be merely a pleasant incident. You know that yourself. I think you're fighting against that knowledge. Don't do it." It was the longest speech she had ever heard from his lips.

When they were nearing home she turned to him again. "I didn't know you and he were friends."

"We are not," he replied simply. "He doesn't care for me."

"You are mistaken about him and me," she said steadily. "But that you could plead for him when you— Oh, I call that fine, Warren!" she ended impulsively.

"I'm thinking of you," he said. "Since I can't have what I want I want you to have what you need."

When he left for more than an hour she sat, chin cupped in one hand, gazing out over the green hills. Once it's just a jumble," she sighed.

"What I want. I wish I weren't so I wish he— She did not indicate what she wished, and she was not referring to Warren Blake.

Senator Murchell, after several weeks' absence, had returned to his "legal residence." On his roundabout journey homeward he had been interviewed by many reporters concerning a rumored revolt in the organization.

A few days after the senator's return New Chelsea was visited by a monarch. But he came incognito, with a notable absence of regal splendor. To Silas Hicks, at the station, appeared a short, square whiskered, alert man who asked to be taken to Senator Murchell's home.

"Senator's out to the farm," Silas responded in the omniscience of hackmen.

"Then take me to the farm."

Arrived at the farm, he received another command—to wait. A hired man was repairing a broken place in the fence. From him royalty demanded to know the whereabouts of the prime minister and was told to seek him in the potato patch.

In the middle of the potato patch the visitor beheld the figure of his minister, arrayed in a pair of the hired man's overalls and a straw hat of enormous brim, busily hoeing. Toward this truly

rural figure Sackett—tor' out' monarch is no other than the president of the great Atlantic railroad—made his way, considerably to the damage of the vines beneath his feet.

"Careful!" admonished the senator. "Walk between the hills."

Sackett became more careful. "How are you, senator?"

"How're you, Sackett?"

"Their hands met, to part instantly. "What," Sackett demanded, "is the matter with Sherrod?"

"He wants too much," Murchell answered briefly.

"I was talking to him last week." Murchell turned on him suddenly. "Told you I ought to get down from the head of the organization, didn't he? Told you that Adelphi and the Steel City are turning against me, that he wants to be governor and that the Steel people want Parrott for my job in the senate, didn't he?"

"You fellows," Sackett exploded irritably, "had better settle your squabbles or you'll give some incendiary the chance to step in and raise Cain. The trouble is Sherrod is close to the Steel City organization, and the Michigan is trying to get into the city." The secret of the royal irritation is out. A competing monarch is making ready to invade his dominion!

Murchell smiled bitterly. "So that's it? For twenty years I've been doing your dirty work. And now at the first threat of competition you're ready to throw me over without a scruple—if you think it's safe! It isn't safe, Sackett."

Sackett's eyes snapped angrily. "I've my duty to my stockholders, of whom you are one. Can you keep the Michigan out?"

"I don't know, so I won't promise. But have I ever failed you yet?"

"I don't believe you can do it. You're too unpopular with the organization. You've been too strong handed. Things are ripe for a revolt. Why, you can't even control your own county!"

"When I give up hope for this county," the senator answered sharply, "you can talk. All that's been said before. How do you expect me to keep these hungry coyotes in line—by quoting Golden Rule Scripture at 'em? Do you want to go back to the old guerilla days, Sackett?"

Sackett stared moodily at his feet. Murchell took off his old straw hat and leaned against the tree. He waited until Sackett was ready to speak.

"About Parrott," Sackett said after a long pause, "MacGregor and Fieck want him for senator."

"He's slated for governor. I like my job."

"But Sherrod wants to be governor." "He'll take what he's earned and can get," Murchell said shortly. "Parrott can have Roseben's place four years from now—maybe. We'll see."

"But they want him to have your place. They say," Sackett explained with that brutal frankness which we naturally associate with royalty, "that you're nothing but a politician and have been identified with a lot of unpopular things, while Parrott is a fine lawyer and could easily work up a reputation as a statesman. They figure he could get 'em more. And they don't care whether the Michigan gets in or not. They think they'd get better rates. And they're afraid that you and Sherrod with your squabbles will spill the milk. I'm afraid of that too. Senator, you're getting to be an old man. You've had enough. Why don't you—retire?"

"Old, am I?" exclaimed Murchell harshly. "Want me to retire, do you? Well, I won't. And I'll tell you why—because the organization, the power, is mine. Set your mind easy. I'm too old to learn new tricks. I'll not turn agitator like these dreamers and fellows with a grievance. The Michigan won't come in, if I can help it. But Sherrod won't be governor, and Parrott won't get my seat. I'm not going to give up what I've worked for all my life. You tell 'em that I like my job and that I'm not too old to run it. And, Sackett," he added, "play fair-play fair!"

Sackett left, wondering if in an enlightened, up to date monarchy a prime minister could have more power than his liege. Sackett would have been surprised had he known that the senator's mind was not on the conversation just ended. He was seeing very clearly the gray-green eyes of a young woman and measuring himself against a young man who once had been.

(Continued in Next Friday's Issue.)

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