

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 Roberts 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 dependant, 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 against John. 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 visitor is Sackett, head of the Atlantic railroad, trying to keep the Michigan out of the Steel City. He wants Murchell to retire. The latter cannot induce John to stop his attacks on the machine. John and Katherine meet.

They talked for a few minutes longer on uninteresting, impersonal subjects until they saw Gregg appear at the entrance. But Mrs. Deland effusively welcomed him, and there was an awkward pause which John did not know how to bridge.

Katherine said, on an impulse, the wisdom of which may be regarded as doubtful: "About what you said of your career. I don't like to hear you speak so—so lightly of it. I think you have been very brave and splendid. Not many men would have held out as you have."

He was taken off his guard. "I did not expect you to think so."

"My—notions of values and things have changed a good deal, I find. And, I—may I go on?" She looked at Gregg. He was still in Mrs. Deland's clutches. "I was a very selfish, thoughtless girl—then, I deliberately—no, carelessly, which is worse—jeopardized your happiness in the search for my own. I have been heartily ashamed of it. I—I hope it did not mean serious unhappiness to you."

He looked at her steadily. "I have not been unhappy." Then he rose to greet Gregg, who had extricated himself.

The latter was very cordial. "Any time you're in town call me up and we'll lunch at the club. Any time, remember!"

But he did not miss Katherine's tone as she said to John, "Goodby—and I am very glad of what you have just told me."

Later, when they were at their table, Gregg said to Katherine, "I have a notion Dunmeade is the reason you have kept me waiting so long."

Under his gaze the tinge of color in her cheeks deepened. She made no reply.

"Does it ever occur to you," he asked, carefully setting down the glass, "that I might get tired of waiting?"

"Does it ever occur to you," she answered, "that I shouldn't care very much?"

But of this John could know nothing.

The ceremony of exchanging ministers was not an elaborate court function. Fifty odd gentlemen, representing each his principality, met in a hotel parlor and elected Mark Sherrod to succeed William Murchell as chairman of the state executive committee. As the latter retired from the chair which, symbol of his undisputed sway, he had occupied for twenty years and his enemy took his place there was nothing to indicate that the seals of dominion had been formally transferred.

The monarch was not present in person. Many of the committeemen were surprised at Murchell's presence. They had thought that he would stay away to escape the last humiliation of beholding the formal ratification of his accomplished defeat.

He had gone to the meeting in a carriage because the weather was rough and his physical condition was not good. But when he left he forgot the carriage and started to walk to the house that he called home. He walked aimlessly, head lowered as though he were pondering some deep problem. The defiant front that he had maintained before the committee had been

a pose. He was feeling old—old!

His course took him past a house of state, where the monarch sat enthroned amid his court, directing the affairs of his kingdom. What Murchell saw was the office building of the Atlantic railroad. He entered an elevator and was rapidly hoisted to the proper story. A page of ebony skin took his card.

Murchell did not have to wait long. Soon he was before his former liege.

The royal brow wrinkled. "Isn't this a little indiscreet—considering the present state of public sentiment?"

"What difference does it make—now? I've just come from the committee meeting."

"Yes?" Sackett understood. "Sherrod's elected, I suppose?"

"Yes. Thanks to your influence."

"I'm sorry." Sackett's regret was genuine. "But I have my duty."

"To your stockholders, of whom I am one. Yes, I know. I'm not complaining," Murchell interrupted mildly. "I came to tell you to keep an eye on the Michigan. I've kept them out of the Steel City for you so far. But they're coming in. They ought to get in, too. At any rate, they're getting ready to spend a million in the attempt. I don't believe Sherrod can keep them out. Keep an eye on him, Sackett."

"We're counting on you to help there."

Murchell shook his head. "I'm through."

"Look here! What's the use of your getting your back up over this business? You understand perfectly well that we must stand in with whoever's on top. You put Sherrod out and we'll back you as strong as ever. I wish," Sackett said persuasively, "you'd keep an oversight of the Michigan matter. I doubt myself that Sherrod can keep them out."

"Little late thinking that, aren't you? He can't. Don't trust him to do it. Sherrod won't last, Sackett. He has no self control. He's too greedy. But I'm through. I don't want to put him out."

"We'll make it worth your while, if that's the trouble."

"You can't make it worth my while," "You politicians," Sackett exclaimed angrily, "make me tired with your infernal bickering and jealousies. I'd as soon be back in the old days."

"No, you wouldn't," Murchell interrupted again dryly. "You wouldn't go back to those days for many times the millions it'll cost you to keep the Michigan out—if you keep it out. You know that—I know it. You railroaders have grown hog fat the last few years just because in every state of the Union there's been a man like me, willing to prostitute himself at your service."

Sackett looked a real astonishment—and suspicion.

"You needn't be afraid," Murchell grimly answered the suspicion. "It's too late for the leopard to change his spots. I'm not going to fight you. I'm going to quit."

He slouched back in his chair, half closing his eyes as though he were very tired. He sat for several minutes without speaking, forgetting that Sackett's time was precious. Sackett, too, seemed to have forgotten this important fact. He was wrinkling his brow over the problem, what means to devise to induce an old, pigheaded, betrayed minister to remain in the service in a minor capacity. He was too shrewd to argue. For many years he had had intimate knowledge of Murchell's inflexibility.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," he began at last. "I'll see Sherrod and—"

Senator Murchell looked up sharply, as though he had forgotten the other's presence. "I'm through. I've earned a rest, and my health's gone back on me. I'm going back to the farm to raise potatoes—the farmer vote crop has petered out. And if I ever do come back into politics I'll make my own terms."

He nodded a careless goodby and went slowly out of the office. Apparently he had forgotten to shake hands. Sackett did not remind him of the omission. He remained with the impression of having beheld a broken, senseless, old man.

CHAPTER XIV.

History.

IT was characteristic of Murchell to give the world no inkling of his illness. He was supposed to be stinking over his defeat. Not until after the fact did the surgeons, unable to refuse the opportunity for self advertisement, announce that a critical operation had been performed from which there were hopes of a partial recovery. Interest in his condition persisted—extraordinarily, considering that he was out of politics. When his convalescence permitted it he was removed to New Chelsea. That community, as you may believe, was properly excited, intrusively interested and somewhat apprehensive lest he pass unseasonably into the beyond and rob it of the distinction of being his "legal residence." John Dunmeade, as a collaborator in this disaster, was made to feel a sudden atmospheric frigidly and was led into further sorrowful reflections on the fickleness of the public. Murchell in very ungracious fashion kept himself secluded from his neighbors and the stream of pilgrims that knocked at his gates. Their plaints were divers. Sherrod was too arbitrary, he was too lax, he permitted himself and his friends to shake the plum trees of the cities so vigorously as to court failure of the crop, he greedily refused to divide the plums. From which it will appear that Sherrod, even thus early in his ministry, showed an incomplete mastery of the subtle science of suiting the word to the man. Murchell was urged to intervene, to resist, to destroy. For one and all he had only the irritable re-

iteration, "I am out of politics." But the pilgrimages continued.

In the midst of this uncertainty the Michigan railroad began secretly to undermine the Steel City, that hitherto impregnable fortress of the rival monarch. And John Dunmeade's announcement was made that, whether renominated as district attorney or not, he would be a candidate, anti-Sherrod and anti-Murchell, for the gubernatorial nomination. Jerry Brent was already well into a campaign for the opposition nomination, theretofore regarded as an empty honor.

We may not go so far as to declare that Miss Roberta turned the course of history. But it is certain that she was first to foresee, though not with her bones, the fork of the road. So touching were the pictures presented to her of Murchell's illness that at length, after a protracted struggle with herself, her heart relented. She filled a basket with homemade comestibles designed to tempt the appetite of the most jaded invalid. This basket on her arm, she set out, on a day when the March wind blustered and stung her face, toward Murchell's home.

She found Murchell reading before an open fire, his cheeks slightly pale and sunken, but his eyes clear and bright. He rose, with an ease that did not betoken approaching dissolution, to relieve her of the basket, shaking hands warmly.

"I'm very glad to see you, Roberta. Take a chair."

She seated herself primly. "You don't look as bad as they say." She observed him suspiciously.

"Roberta," he said lugubriously, "the doctors tell me that even with

the best of care I can live only a few years and that's thanks to my good constitution!" "A few years!" she sniffed. "What did you expect, at your time of life?" He thought it wise to change the subject and hurriedly leaned over, raised the napkin and peered into the basket. "Why! Did you bring all these for me, Roberta? That was very thoughtful of you."



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"The best of care I can live only a few years and that's thanks to my good constitution!"

"A few years!" she sniffed. "What did you expect, at your time of life?" He thought it wise to change the subject and hurriedly leaned over, raised the napkin and peered into the basket.

"Why! Did you bring all these for me, Roberta? That was very thoughtful of you."

"I guess you don't need them. Pretending to be sick to get people's sympathy because you've been beaten."

He smiled, not in amusement, at her asperity. "It's like you to cover up a kind act with sharp words. What an escape the men had that you wouldn't marry!"

"There weren't any to escape." "Yes, there were. I remember that. You were what they call a beauty, weren't you? Why," he asked in sudden curiosity, "didn't you marry some one of them?"

"Because," she said simply, "you were too busy being in love with Anne Dunmeade to notice me."

"Eh? I—why, Roberta?" He stared at her blankly. "Then his manner quickly softened. She perceived the change and drew herself up even more stiffly, if that were possible. Her lips straightened in a severe, thin line.

"You needn't be sorry for me. I have been glad I escaped, ever since I found out the kind of man you were. I'd have made a man out of you."

"I guess," he smiled grimly, "you'd have found it a hard job, as you seem to measure men. But I guess you could have, if any one could."

She turned on him in a little unexpected gust of fierceness. "But not the kind of man you are! Not a coward to quit fighting the very first time you are beaten. I thought you were one when you left your regiment before Gettysburg, but I excused you on the plea that we needed men at home too. But now—" Her unfinished sentence was eloquent.

His astonishment was genuine. "Eh! I believed you thought me a bad man. You ought to be glad I was beaten."

"But John says you're a better man than Sherrod."

"Only," Murchell amended, shrewdly guessing, "he put it that Sherrod is a worse man than I am, didn't he? I don't believe I'm a coward. A few months ago I did intend to quit—I was very tired and my sickness was coming on. But now—Roberta, can you keep a secret?"

"I've kept one for forty years." "So you have! Well, the other day I got my doctor to tell me the things I must eat and must not eat to keep

as long as possible and then you

him to go to the devil. Roberta, it was the first time I've sworn since I joined the church."

Miss Roberta kept her smiles for rare occasions. "I wish I could have heard you." Which concession she immediately negated by adding, "I suppose you're going to do the same kind of thing over again."

"Roberta, you're the most consistently inconsistent person in the world. You mean am I going to turn reformer? You can't teach an old dog new tricks."

"Not if he doesn't want to learn, I expect."

She rose to go. He followed her example, though urging her to remain. She went a few steps toward the door, then suddenly turned and walked back to face him.

"Why don't you help John?"

It was his turn to stiffen angrily. "You ask that after the way he attacked me and created a sentiment against me that paved the way for Sherrod to beat me? He's responsible for Sherrod's getting on top, do you know that? I gave him a chance five years ago, and he wouldn't take it. I will do nothing for him."

"And besides," he added more mildly, "he wouldn't let me help him in the only way I could."

"I wasn't thinking of him. He doesn't need you. You need him."

His astonishment was genuine as she left. He went to a window where he could watch her, still stiffly upright as a grenadier, breathing the March gale. He tried to recall how she had appeared when she was young, for she, too, all unknown to him, must have marked a phase in the life of the young man who once had been. When she had passed out of sight he returned to his chair.

His book was forgotten.

The Hon. G. Washington Jenkins had been of the faithful at a time when heresy was profitable; hence his tall, Lincoln-like figure was one of the few that were not turned inhospitably away from Murchell's door.

He was in New Chelsea a few days after Miss Roberta's neighborly errand.

"Wash," asked the senator abruptly, "how'd you like to be a candidate for governor?"

"I'd like it," said Wash honestly.

"Suppose," Murchell suggested, "you begin a campaign for delegates. We could use the delegates, even if we couldn't use you," he added thoughtfully.

The congressman smiled faintly. They discussed the matter at length.

As Jenkins was leaving, his host remarked earnestly, "Hereafter consult only with Greene. Don't come here. I'm out of politics."

Neither gentleman smiled.

When the Honorable Jenkins returned to Washington, he reluctantly admitted to an interrogative reporter: "No, I'm afraid the senator is in a bad way. I don't think he'll ever go back into politics."

Of John Heath you have never heard. Unhonored and unsung until this hour, he has remained in that shadowy obscurity for which he was designed. And no man ever saw him.

It was at a crucial time for those whom this chronicle concerns when Jerry Brent and John Dunmeade were marching from Dan to Beersheba and back and laboring, with a patience worthy of larger results, to rally the slender hosts of reform; when Stephen Hampden was risking his all in one wild throw for vast fortune and Warren Blake was following that daring example; when the Consolidated Coal company was making many happy by declaring a dividend of 7 per cent.

In the kingdom things were awry. The rival monarch was thundering at the gates. Worse still, there was disaffection in the very source of dominion, in the army. And the minister in power chose this hour—to get drunk! Anxious glances were being cast toward the deposed minister in his self exacted exile. Royal messengers were being sent galloping post-haste to him to urge him, with due, unobscured irony, for the sake of past favor, to speak the word that would restore concord among the mutinous regiments. But the ominous silence continued unbroken.

At such a juncture, we say, John Heath stepped in to deduce the course of history.

Came to the exile, not many days after Miss Roberta, a messenger not under royal seal. Secretary, we may call him, to the new minister, having carried favor by desertion of the old. He was visibly perturbed and would not desist from his importunities until admitted to the presence of the exile. Even then, such was his feverish haste, he did not notice in his host, as Miss Roberta had done, a vigor inconsistent with certain rumors rife. He plunged at once into the matter in hand.

"We've got Sherrod locked up in a room at the hotel. He's drunk as a lord and threatens to throw himself into the river!"

"Well—let him!" said Murchell, grimly heartless.

"But," cried the messenger, "it may be something to bring on a revolution that will sweep us all—Sherrod, Parrott, me—yourself—the face of the earth."

"I," responded Murchell calmly, "am out of politics and don't care. What do you want me to do?"

"Come with me to the capital, find what's wrong and straighten it out."

"Go to Parrott."

"Parrott's a fourflusher. This is critical."

"I won't do it. It's trouble of your own making. Get yourselves out of it."

The messenger sprang to his feet and began to pace the floor swiftly. He assumed to instruct a messenger.

With wild gesticulation and passionate phrase he sketched the impending calamity. The times were ripe for a revolution. These unutterable fools, Dunmeade and Brent, with their incessant clack about bosses and graft, were getting the people stirred up. There was trouble in the air—be, the speaker, could feel it. The organization was falling to pieces.

"Do you think," Murchell inquired calmly, "Sherrod's short in his accounts?"

"I don't know. There are books I can't see without exciting suspicion. And I can't get nothing out of him."

The swift pacing ceased abruptly. The messenger confronted Murchell.

"Who," he demanded, "is John Heath?"

"I don't know," answered Murchell truthfully.

"Within less than two years he has received from the state more'n nine hundred thousand dollars for special services!"

"Nine hundred thousand dollars! What is John Heath?"

"I don't know. But I think he may be—h—!"

The messenger flopped into his chair, helping himself, uninvited, to a cigar. Murchell, as though taking up a task that the other had left unfinished, rose and in his turn began to pace the floor. After a few minutes he went out of the room, still without speaking. He did not reappear for almost a quarter of an hour. But then he wore a hat and an overcoat and was carrying a light leather grip.

"Come along," he commanded. "The hack's waiting."

The guest went along with alacrity.

When they had reached the Steel City and had changed cars for the capital train Murchell went to their stateroom and was soon, to all outward appearances, sound asleep.

At that mystic hour which we are told is the darkest of all two men were sitting in a hotel room. One, Watkins, sat stretched out before the dying fire, yawning wistfully for the sleep of which twenty-four hours' guard duty had robbed him. A litter of newspapers on the floor around him showed how he had beguiled the slow vigil. The other, Sherrod, was slouched in a rocker by the table, head drooped forward on his breast and hands hanging inertly at his sides. The red rimmed eyeballs were half closed. Drunk evidently, and more than that. Occasionally his lips moved; senseless mutterings came from them.

Steps along the hall, and there was a guarded knock at the door. He opened a cautious crack, peeped out and then threw it open eagerly. Murchell and the messenger entered. Watkins seized Murchell's hand joyfully.

"Thank the Lord!" he exclaimed. "I couldn't have stood it much longer."

Sherrod seemed to hear the voice. He opened his eyes and stared at the newcomers glassily. Then a lightning flash of intelligence seemed to penetrate his stupor.

"Murchell!"

He managed to stagger to his feet. Then a last wave of drunkenness swept over him. He fell, sprawling, unconscious on the floor.

"He ought," said Murchell, "to have a Turkish bath."

(Continued in Next Friday's Issue.)

"SUCCESS FARM;" "FAILURE FARM"

DO you see the two farms? They are both good farms, or ought to be, as are most of those in this country.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEM IS NOT IN THE LAND, BUT IN THE MEN THAT OWN THEM.

One of these men is an up to date chap who READS THE PAPERS, especially the farm notes, takes agricultural journals and applies scientific methods.

The other works just as hard, but will not have a newspaper in the house and could not get a new idea if it were bored into his head with an X ray.

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