

THE MAN HIGHER UP
The Story of a True American
BY HENRY RUSSELL MILLER

Book Two.

IN THE MOULD.

CHAPTER III—(Continued.)

Christmas Scenes.

Kathleen leaned forward with a quick, impulsive movement. "Don't want me to like you, to believe in you, to be sure?" She laughed out at his evident hesitation. "But you are an exception. Long ago I determined to make my struggle alone. My own weight was quite enough, without adding that of others, as, believe me, I am. I inevitably must if I accepted the responsibilities of friendship. In other and uglier words— I was placed here in the eternal struggle, by a power over which I had no control, I proposed to get on top, and I didn't propose to put any one on my back. I should have hesitated to trust any one, but I never hesitated more frankly to myself. Very well, so I don't, according to one's usual strength in another is but a selfishness in another. It consists of thwarting one's own selfishness." "And does the theory satisfy?" she asked. "You put it in the past tense, I thought. I should like to know the results, but it doesn't satisfy me. I wish you were here to understand me. Because the struggle is so ridiculously easy. Really, it is a very feeble opponent to a man who sets about its conquest deliberately and systematically. It is not about able to make it interesting to an ordinary man. It's child's play for me. Sometimes I long for a real struggle, one that would test my muscles to the limit. That's one reason why I'm so public opinion so often— because the difficulties and give me the chance to fight. Being so brutal, I naturally like fighting." "The same time Kathleen stared thoughtfully into the fire. "I don't see that the only force that will give me the supreme test you desire is myself," she said at length, and then demanded abruptly, "Why don't you abandon your theory? You admit it doesn't satisfy?" "It doesn't satisfy me. I'm as contented as a sentimental girl, to do what I may as well go the whole hog. Because I'm afraid." "Bob McAdoo afraid?" Kathleen's eyes never carried a sting. "Yes," said Bob McAdoo. "She arose and looked down on him, and said: "You make me understand, as I could never understand before, the meaning in the meaning of a certain word." "Don't mind me. I'm in a humor for truth-telling just now." "Loneliness!" "Without waiting for his reply, she left the room. Bob stood gazing at the door through which she had disappeared. "Loneliness! I didn't expect that. But it hits close. God! I am lonely. Loneliness! That woman is a living embodiment of my theory. Here is the exact opposite—service, always service. And she gets far more out of life than I will with all my brutality, or a thousand Remingtons with his love of sensation. Nevertheless, I am far—humpf! How the phrases will slip into a man's thoughts! I was about to say, 'far from the kingdom of God!'"

harsh, white glare, freed from its prison, flung the face of the defiant man across the table into sharp relief. Bob continued to gaze sharply into Remington's eyes, the peculiar, wrinkle smile persisting. Without dropping his eyes, Remington took from his pocket a silver case, selected a cigarette and lighted it. There was no perceptible tremor in his hand during this theatrical performance. For a few long-drawn-out moments they stood thus, locked in a battle of the eyes. Then Remington laughed aloud, insolently. "Put the motion," Bob commanded quietly, maintaining his steady gaze. "It has been moved and seconded that this committee endorse Stoughton for the legislative nomination," the chairman repeated mechanically. "All in favor—" "Aye," said all but Remington and Bob. The chairman paused. "All opposed." The suggestion came from Bob. "No!" Remington's voice rang out. "I guess that settles it, Remington?" "It settles the immediate question," was the defiant answer. "Meeting adjourned." Bob motioned the committee out of the room. There was a general relighting of cigars, the strength and rapidity of the puffed clouds indicating a relief that the little scene was over. "Nothin' but a drink as high as the ceiling will do after that," whispered one. "Reminds me of the night the old man licked Haggin." "Me, too, only there wasn't no scrap, and there was a shade of regret in the low-voiced reply. "I thought for a while, though, to buy flowers for the kid's coffin. Five years ago, I'd had to do that." "O Remington," Bob said casually, "just wait a minute, will you?" "Well?" he turned toward Bob with a certain graceful recklessness. "Here, smoke this," Bob said gruffly, as he handed over a cigar. "I don't like to see a man smoking cigarettes." Remington hesitated, then accepted it. "And I wouldn't take this business to heart, if I were you. We have to preserve discipline in the organization, you know. There's nothing personal in it." The handsome face flushed eagerly. "Do you mean that? Then call in the boys." "I want to apologize for calling you a bully." "No! Come now, no theatricals. You're too good a man to be wasted in such childishness." So the descendant of the renegade Jewess won his fight. Bob, returning home, found Kathleen alone in the library. He entered and began without preliminary: "Kathleen, this afternoon I told you that I didn't want any friends. You remember?" "I lied to you, Kathleen, when I said that." "No, Bob, you lied to yourself." "That's true, too. At that very moment I was fighting a longing for a certain friendship." "I wouldn't fight too hard if I were you, Bob." "The other day a young chap—a fool, an ass, judged by my standards—met me on the street and, without introduction or by-on-leave, demanded my friendship. He was most theatrical and asinine—and I liked him for it." He had been fighting me politically, though he's a greenhorn. I told him I would crush him, kill him politically. Tonight he continued his opposition. He took the opportunity to tell me a few things about myself which he seemed to think I had overlooked—I have not crushed him. I shall not. He—he has much that I lack. And you hit it exactly—I have been very lenient. I'm going to test your theory, Kathleen. Good night!"

CHAPTER IV. Growth in Grace.

So, after thirty years' walking among his fellows, Robert McAdoo succumbed to that force which we call personal attraction. You are not to suppose that he experienced immediately a complete change in his habit of thought and course of feeling. It was months before Remington dared to address Bob by his first name. The friendship, if such it could be called at the beginning, took its tone from Bob, rather than from the young lawyer—quiet and undemonstrative; with a wisdom born of instinct rather than of deliberation, the latter consistently subordinated himself to the older man, never seeking to oppose his will. And though the intimacy became closer, always Bob must listen to habit's vigorous protest against the change. It was not until Remington won his way to the legislature that the protest ceased to make itself heard. The friendship, as those who could observe closely, at last came to recognize to their utter mystification, was now for McAdoo. Under its influence he warmed gradually, there was perceptibly less harshness in his demeanor. He never repeated his outburst of confidence to Kathleen, but he became generally less taciturn. He laughed more. The Flinn home had for some years been in a fine old house standing in a quarter whence the tide of fashion had recently ebbed. Bob had bought it as a speculation, but finding no immediate purchaser, had moved himself and his children into it; much to the outward pride and inward perturbation of Patrick and Nora. One evening Paul Remington entered the house and was shown into the library, where Kathleen sat alone, sewing. "Well, my Lady Charity! Working as usual—and for what? Imprecious kid this time? Here's my excuse for coming." He tossed an armful of roses into her lap. "O, you extravagant boy!" she cried, burying her face in the velvet petals. "You have more of the little graces than any one I know. But you should know that you can't afford it, you silly boy." She selected one of the roses and drew it gently over her cheek. "Which is the rose?" he asked with a gaily elaborate bow. "But you don't answer my question. For whom is the sewing?" "For the forlornest little waif you

ever saw. She—" "Spare me the details!" he groaned. "It's enough to know I guessed right. You and I are alive, with a profound difference. Every one likes us. But there's a reason in your case, while I am a mystery." "Wish! You'll inoculate me with your own vanity! But," she added gravely, "mystery or no mystery, you have succeeded in one instance where I and every one else have failed." "I'm not so sure you have failed. You can't tell about him. There are times when I doubt myself. Though I really have succeeded—you are sure of that, aren't you? And I've been good for him, haven't I?" "Yes, you have succeeded. I pray that you may always be good for him," she said gravely. "With her permission he lighted his pipe and they sat silent before the fire for some time. He broke the silence abruptly. "I saw her today." "Not the lady of your dreams? And in the flesh?" "The same! Listen—and I'll unfold to you a tale that will rack the very soul of you." He paused long enough to throw a fresh stick on the fire and then resumed: "I was standing in the depot, waiting for a fellow who didn't come—can you imagine a more disgusting place for romance? A lady dropped her kerchief. With the prompt gallantry that is one of my charming traits, I picked it up and returned it to her. 'Ah! thank you.' And she deigned to give me the hundredth part of a fraction of a coldly indifferent glance, as though I were the cement beneath her feet. Then—then I turned cold and stiff with fright and wonderment. It was she—as I had dreamed while she passed through the gate to her train. I made a dash to follow her. To be met by a blue arm with brass buttons and the prosaic demand, 'Show your ticket, please!' 'Ticket!' I said. 'I've no ticket.' 'Can't pass through then!' I asked. 'I must. I'm the president of this railroad. I'm the governor of the state. I'm the president of these glorious United States. It's a matter of life and death. I must!' 'Can't pass without a ticket,' was all the concession I received. I rushed to the ticket agent's window. 'Ticket!' I demanded. 'Where to?' he said leisurely, as though the solar system hadn't suddenly stood still. 'Where to? I don't know,' I confided to him. 'First stop on New York Limited, I suppose.' He handed me a few inches of paper. I threw down a bill and, without waiting for change, rushed out to the gate-man, waving my ticket frantically. 'Now will you let me pass?' I cried. 'None,' he answered tranquilly. 'Train just pulling out.' It was true! I sat down on a truck and spent five minutes inventing new ways of expressing profound, black despair. And such, he cried striking a tragic attitude, 'is the baleful effect of modern invention upon romance. Weep with me!' Kathleen laughed merrily. "And what would you have done, if you had made the train?" "What would I have done, you ask? What could I have done? I would have thrown myself prostrate at his feet. 'My dear, I would have said, 'you are overlong in coming. I have waited for you, for these twenty-seven years. Accept a lifetime's devotion, heart of my heart.' " "Yes! And what excuse would you have made to the police magistrate next morning?" "Bah! You would make an efficient railroad official, Kathleen. But strong!" His voice sank to a serious whisper. "She was just as I had dreamed her." "You've seen her picture somewhere and adopted it in your dreams," Kathleen suggested, eminently practical. "Perhaps," he assented, and went on in the same unwonted grave tone. "But I prefer to believe in my dreams. She was wonderful. If only you could have seen her, Kathleen! Her hair—that glorious brown with the red-gold lights in it. An angel's eyes! They are so beautifully gray, so cold and yet so sad, with that something that makes you know she seeks to hide a great sorrow. The eyes of a woman who will not weep. Her mouth is like her eyes. It is perfect and yet hard, with a trace of bitterness. Ah! he cried passionately, "it wrung my heart. She has seen great trouble, she has sounded the very depths of life. I know. I tell you I longed, I ached, to take her in my arms and say, 'My poor dear, come with me and I shall take you to the sunny heights. You need me.' Kathleen she needs me!" He turned to face her. "Paul!" Kathleen exclaimed, startled. "You let your imagination carry you away. Come back to earth. She may be the very opposite of all you imagine her." "No, no, Kathleen! She's not imagination. She's the real thing in my life. I'm a horrible shaw beside you real, i'g people, but there are no genuine things in my life! She, my friendship for you and my honest liking for Bob." Kathleen made as if to speak, but said nothing. "Yes?" he urged her gently. "Say it." "Paul," she said impulsively, "forgive me. I have not always had perfect confidence in you, in your depth I mean—except when I am with you—then you make me believe, in spite of my ungenerous feeling at it, that you have a good, true side to you. I hate to think anything of those I like. Your liking for Bob is honest, isn't it? Because you're the only person he has ever given his friendship to, and I think it's a deeper friendship than either of you realize. If you were to prove false to him, he would be hopelessly embittered. Think of the evil he might do if he were to run amuck. You and I are men of different tastes and temperaments. The day may come when you may be tempted to turn away from him. You will be a true friend to him always, won't you?" "Of course, I will," he said, smiling at her earnestness. "Ah! no, and I think it's a deeper friendship than either of you realize. If you were to prove false to him, he would be hopelessly embittered. Think of the evil he might do if he were to run amuck. 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You will be a true friend to him always, won't you?" "Of course, I will," he said, smiling at her earnestness.

"I pray it may never mean sacrifice." But she sighed. "From the outside came the sound of some one walking swiftly up the pavement to the house. "There he comes now," Paul said. "I should know that step in a thousand. How like him it is! He is as inexorable as fate, that man. Let us keep him right!" When Bob entered the library Kathleen ad Remington were chatting brightly of her latest charity. He listened a while before interrupting. "I just came from Stoughton. He wants to go back to the legislature." "Yes?" Remington queried eagerly. "I told him I had no objections." Remington's face fell. "Ah! I had rather hoped to go myself." "Well, why don't you try for it?" "But you told Stoughton—" "That I had no objection to his trying. I say the same to you." "But if you were to come out for me, it would be dead sure." "No," Bob said firmly. "If it's worth having, it's worth fighting for. I'll be out and keep Haggin out. Then you and Stoughton can fight it out between you." Remington reflected a moment. "All right," he said finally. "I'll try it." "But remember," Bob added, "you spend no money for booze or buying votes. Nothing but legitimate expenses." Remington looked furtively at Kathleen, who was diligently sewing, to all appearances oblivious to the conversation. "Stoughton will, though." "He hasn't enough to do much harm. How much have you?" "About a thousand." "Well," Bob said thoughtfully, "I'll pay your entrance fee to the primaries. Your thousand will cover legitimate expenses. And I'll see you get a square count." "Isn't he the generous soul!" Remington laughed to Kathleen, who only smiled back. "It's a tough proposition you put me up against. Stoughton has been over the field already, I suppose. But I'll try it. And I'll win. In the bright lexicon of my youth there's no such word as fail." "Don't underestimate your opponent. It's bad strategy," Bob advised dryly. Remington went into the fight and won, to the delight of Haggin and his henchmen, who fairly loved the "silk-stocking kid." It is significant that when the returns were in, primary day, Stoughton was the first to congratulate the winner, and with downright sincerity, too. Bob proceeded to reward the generous loser by giving him the chief clerkship in his department at the city hall, a plum worth twice as much pecuniarily as the legislatorship. The night of the primaries, Bob received the count over the telephone, Kathleen eagerly adding up the returns. "He wins," she said when the last precinct had reported. "Now tell me why you wouldn't help him." On Bob's face was the inscrutable, wry smile the commitment had remarked the night of Remington's defiance. "It was a test—for him and for me," he said quietly. "If he had lost, I would have cut losses from him. But now I'm pledged to carry the experiment through to the end. So come on, Paul! You see," he added grimly, "I'm falling into his theatrical ways already." "Will you shake hands with me?" "Why?" "You win." He shook his head. "I'm not sure. I once told you that I was afraid of Bob McAdoo. Despite your philosophy, I am—still afraid, a Kathleen." When Remington went to the capital for the first session, he met Mrs. Dunmeade, the governor's wife, and they became friends at once. She already knew much of Robert McAdoo, it developed; Remington told her more. As a result, the boss of the tough Sixth Legislative District received an invitation to the governor's reception, an early event in each session of the legislature. He carried it to the capital with him, when he went thither, and showed it to Remington. "Yes, I know," said the latter. "What are you going to do about it?" "Go," Bob answered laconically. "Whurro!" Remington shouted. "I thought this was out of your line." And he threw himself on the bed of the hotel apartment where they were, and gave vent to a paroxysm of laughter. "Funny, isn't it?" Bob growled, a faint twinkle, nevertheless, in his eyes. "Say, Paul, where's the best place to get clothes? New York?" "Yes," Paul gasped, and went into another game of laughter. "Well, pack up. You and I are going to New York for the night. I'll guess this state can get along without your highly valuable services for a few days." Remington laughed harder still. "Don't mind me," Bob said dryly. "Laugh away. I begin to see that humor is a good thing in this world. We need all we can get of it—as a sugar-coating for our eternal folly."

CHAPTER V. An Alliance Rejected.

Behold then the "tough" boss clad cap-a-pie as fashion decrees for evening affairs. The tailor who had filled the "rush" order was an artist in his way, and must have taken an artist's delight in fitting the splendid physique, grown less burly and more supple as the days of the mill-hand's heavy labor receded. Bob's new attire displayed to the best advantage his tall figure, carried with the unconscious grace that only perfect muscular control gives; the broad shoulders and the lines of the back converging symmetrically to the narrow waist. It may have been the effect of the wide expanse of shirt and waistcoat; whatever the reason, he seemed at once younger and more impressive. More than one that night, seeing him for the first time in this garb, revised their preconceived opinion of the man. When he appeared at Remington's apartment, the sight of the governor's reception, the young man surveyed him with critical approval. "You'll do," he nodded. "Who tied that necktie?" "That was beyond me." Bob confessed, "but a little of Uncle Sam's currency secured the expert services of the head waiter." "How do you feel? A little uneasy? Rather as though you missed something and didn't know quite what to do with yourself?" "No. Why should I?" "O, if that's the way you feel about it, there's no reason," Remington laughed, as he turned to complete his own toilet.

McAdoo and Remington crossed the governor's drawing-room together. Bob, at least, coolly unconscious of the flutter of whispering and nodding nodding that followed their entrance. The governor greeted them with the fine cordiality which was one of the reasons for his wide personal popularity. He and McAdoo were old acquaintances; old enemies, too, having fought in opposing camps during several of their party's state conventions. "I'm glad to meet you under the white flag, McAdoo," the governor said heartily. "I want you to meet my wife. Katherine, this is Mr. McAdoo." Bob did not miss the quick glance of approval she cast over his correctly attired figure; nor did he, after that glance, repress the pains he had taken in the matter of his clothes. "Surely not 'Knockout Bob?'" she queried smilingly. "Guilty!" "We must change the sobriquet," she said brightly. "We shall leave that to Mr. Langton here." She introduced Bob to a short, stout young man who looked out on the world through thick-lensed eye-glasses. Langton was a famous cartoonist from the governor's home city. "Mr. Langton, you must take Mr. McAdoo in charge for a while. Then I think we ought to get acquainted, Mr. McAdoo." Bob turned away with the cartoonist. "Well, what do you think of it?" Langton inquired, with a wave of his hand indicating the motley assemblage of verdant senators and promoted ward-healers, who stood about in awkward groups, vainly trying to adjust themselves to the propriety of the occasion. "Sort of funny, isn't it?" "I can't say, though. I never miss it. I come for new material, and never fail to find it. I enjoy it, too, better than anything I've had since I sat in the gallery and saw the melodrama. What kind of show did you prefer when you were a kid?" "Never saw a play in my life." "You don't mean it? Come now, that's to bad!" Langton readjusted his glasses and surveyed Bob quizzically; although he did not explain the reason for his regret. He went on: "Do you see that hewhiskered old hayseed over there? The one with the patently rented dress suit, raddymade tie, no cuffs in sight. A hundred to one, he thinks he's penetrated the inmost fastnesses of sweldon and is frightened out of what little wit the good God gave him, for fear his fier in society come to the ears of his reuben constituents. The old man of the mountains, the boys have dubbed him already. He's Jones, of Clarion. They must have been hitting the pipe pretty freely up there to send an old fossil like that. He'll be a mark for every one that comes along. Won't even have to buy him." "And look at that big ruffian, with the diamond studs and Bowersy walk. He's so rattled, trying to prove he isn't rattled, that he only exaggerates his natural manners—of the speakeasy variety at best. It's a crime, I say, to bring his sort into the presence of Mrs. Dunmeade. He's Blunker, of Wilksburg." "Yes, I know him. He counts." "Sure. That's the stuff we make our American statesmen out of. He'll go home with his pockets filled with a lot of fresh booty. Soon he'll be boss of his city, then of his county, then of his corner of the state. He'll make a million or two. By that time his manners will be toned down somewhat and he'll go to congress to make laws for the noble republic. He'll die of delirium tremens and the political orators will eulogize the deceased statesman. That is, if he doesn't land in the penitentiary first. The main difference between him and a lot of our big men is that he appears to be what he actually is." So Langton rattled on in caustic phrase, with the cartoonist's eye picking out the eccentricity in the personality of every Solon present and commenting mercilessly upon it. Bob was highly amused. He shared Langton's viewpoint; he knew the stuff the average state legislator is made of; he had made a few legislators himself. "All told," Langton concluded, "about as warm a combination of rottenness and incompetency as we have ever had. I wonder that Dunmeade consented to it. I can account for it only on the theory that Murchell is trying to disgust the people, to pave the way for some of the governor's pet reforms, unless that is too Machiavellian even for Murchell?" "You know Murchell as well as I do," Bob answered non-committally. "They say there is one promising member, though, young Remington. He's your man, I believe. They say he has caught Mrs. Dunmeade's eye. That augurs well for his success—unless you interfere. They say he's a coming man. What do you think?" Bob calmly ignored the question. "I don't envy the reporter sent to interview this chap," Langton said to himself; and aloud, "What do you think of Mrs. Dunmeade?" "They say," Bob quoted dryly, "that next to Murchell, she is the cleverest politician in the state." "Next to Murchell! Man, she wraps Murchell around her little finger, just as she does the governor. She has made Dunmeade. That is, she has toned down his impracticable ideals with hard common sense. There's quite a romance in their lives. I have always suspected, if one could only unearth it." "Why should one wish to unearth it?" Bob demanded sharply. "As a newspaper man, I assert it would make great copy. As a gentleman," he added with a laugh, "I agree with you that it isn't a thing for the public to paw over. They're too fine people to have their private lives trespassed upon by the foot public. She is coming in my way now." "Speaking of angels," he addressed her with a low bow. "I was just saying, Mrs. Dunmeade, that you are the most charming woman in the state." "Come now," she chided him laughingly, "that is too gross to be effective. Go over to that corner and break up Mr. Remington's monopoly of our few pretty girls. I want to talk to Mr. McAdoo alone." "Look out, McAdoo," Langton laughed. "For if Mrs. Dunmeade wants anything from you, you might as well imitate Davy Crockett's coon." With another bow he left them and made his way across the room. "Suppose," suggested Mrs. Dunmeade, "we run away from this to the library. Unless," she added with a smile, "you would rather join the monopolists?" (CONTINUED TOMORROW.)

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