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THE MAN HIGHER UP
The Story of a True American
BY HENRY RUSSELL MILLER
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Book Two.
IN THE MOULD.
CHAPTER XII.—(Continued.)
Sanger's Offer.

...another minute. I suppose," he added complacently, "most people would call this damn foolishness."
He rose and passed into his bedroom, where he carefully changed his attire. His toilet completed, he stepped back and surveyed, with a nod of frank satisfaction, the well-groomed figure in the mirror. As he looked, something in the reflection caused him to frown. He passed into the other room, took from the mantel and old miniature and returned to the mirror. Critically he compared the face in the miniature with that reflected in the mirror.
"I had forgotten," he muttered, "how strong the resemblance is. O, why should I, with my heritage, be placed where control of passion and steadfast loyalty are necessary? Your face—this resemblance—are a continual prophecy of my utter and ultimate failure. But I'll end that right here. Roughly he tore the frame open and removed the painted ivory. Then he strode into the other room again and cast the portrait on the hot coals in the grate.
"There, you detestable renegade, you and your bequest go out of my life forever. To win her without hurting Bob—to become worthy of her love and his friendship—if I'm to do that, I can't have you to remind me of my temperamental defects. Confidence is half the battle, as Bob says."
For a minute or so the heat made no impression on the miniature. Then the paint began to swell and crack. To Paul's fancy it seemed that the somber face on the coals changed its expression, that over it spread a mocking, malicious leer.
"Ah! I know what you mean by that. That I can throw you into the flames, but that here in my face is a likeness I can't destroy—and here in my heart, too, well, well, well."
He snatched up the poker and savagely jabbed the miniature until his fragments were buried in the coals. But when this was done, he continued to stare into the fire, as though fascinated. His grasp relaxed and the poker fell to the hearth with a sharp clank. His bent attitude straightened.
"It's true," he groaned, "it's true! This isn't cowardice, but knowledge. I'm a traitor at heart already. If it came to a final choice between him and her, he might burn in hell before I would leave her."
A half-hour later Paul was ushered into the Sanger drawing-room. Eleanor not appearing at once, he wandered through an open door into the music room, at one end of which had been installed a small pipe-organ. Now modern science has perfected the organ that the souls of men might find expression.
And Paul, of the many talents, without being a great musician, knew how to make the organ respond to his soul's mood. He seated himself and began to play. His idle fingering gradually took form in a passionate, florid gust of melody that filled the big house. Then the stormy mood died away and the organ sang a weird, minor refrain. Eleanor, entering unobserved by the player, stood leaning against a chair near him, regarding him with an odd look, in which admiration and pity—perhaps a shade of contempt—mingled. For several minutes he played on, apparently not noticing her presence.
At last, without turning or ceasing his playing, he spoke. "I can't see you, but I know you are there."
"Lawyer, politician, orator, muck-raker! The gods have been good to you," she murmured quizzically.
"Yes," he answered, with a trace of bitterness. "Jack of all trades and master of none. But first and above all, Mrs. Gilbert's most sincere devotee."
"Is being Mrs. Gilbert's devotee a trade, then?" she queried idly.
"At least, it's more than a profession."
"Come, that is beneath you. A pun, you know."
"Yes, and my spirits are as low as my wit today." He ceased to play and began to examine a pile of music lying beside him.
She struck the back of the chair, in vexation half pretended, half real. "Are you ever in the same mood for two consecutive days? Your moods are as various as mine."
"I'm constant in at least one thing—but you won't let me speak of that," he responded gloomily. "Today I'm possessed of a thousand devils. Sing!" He opened a sheet of music before

him and struck into the accompaniment. And Eleanor, standing where she was, sang.
Eleanor Gilbert could sing. And that afternoon she sang as she had never sung before. For in her singing that day she found expression for what she had never quite dared to put into words, the longing for something higher and better than had yet come into her life, to fulfill the ultimate woman's mission—a longing which of late had been growing more and more poignant within her. As she sang, her heart flooded with kindness toward the handsome, romantic young man before her.
"I wish," she thought once, when at the end of a verse the organ took up the refrain, "I wish I were your mother. I wonder, can this be the beginning of love—and for you?"
Song followed song, until at length Paul turned from the organ and faced her.
"Thank you," he said simply.
She rested her elbows on the back of the chair, folding her hands and dropping her chin on them.
"How are those devils now?"
"Gone, every one of them. You're the most eminently satisfactory person I know. I came when I was restless, morbid, filled with dismal forebodings. You sing—the devils flee."
"O, no. It wasn't I who worked the magic, but your imagination. The devils existed only in your imagination, and when you imagine they are gone, they are gone."
"He waved his arm, imperiously. "Cease, woman, cease!" he cried in burlesque tones. "I refuse to allow you to speak so lightly of yourself. I insist, you're the most satisfactory person person this side of immortality. Haven't you any faults at all?"
"I told you it was your imagination. Of course, I have lots of them. Otherwise couldn't be even a little satisfactory."
"No," he replied, shaking his head obstinately. "I have made a careful search, thinking to overcome this feeling of standing on holy ground when with you; but I haven't discovered the slightest possible trace of the smallest possible fault in you."
"You're in his form today, aren't you? That ponderous compliment proves its own insincerity."
He folded his arms contentedly. "By the way, when are you going to let me propose?"
"Must I ever let you?"
"It is inevitable that I shall propose sooner or later, whether you consent or not. But I prefer to do it under the most propitious circumstances."
"Why propose at all?" she argued smiling. "I like you. We are good friends. Why risk our friendship by introducing uncertainties into it?"
"There is no uncertainty in my love for you."
"How do you know? How can you be sure that you love me and will love me a year hence?"
"How can I be sure? When every atom of my being thrills—"
"Please leave out the rhetoric," she interrupted. "They say you can judge of love by the sacrifice it is willing to make. What would you give up for me?"
"What would I give up? Everything."
"Everything is a big word, my friend," she answered skeptically. "Let's come down to facts, as Henry would say. Friends?"
The descendant of the renegade Jewess covered his face with his hands.
She pressed him almost fiercely. "Friends? Even your friend McAdoo?"
"For God's sake, don't!"
"What?" she said mockingly. "Then everything doesn't mean everything?"
Slowly his hands fell to his side. His face was very white, his eyes unutterably weary. His head went up as he answered her steadily, though with visible effort.
"No, 'everything' doesn't mean everything. When he asked me to give you up, I refused. I should demand that I give him up, I must make the same answer. Otherwise I must be utterly contemptible. I forced my friendship on him against his will. If it means anything to him now, I can't take it away from him."
He closed his eyes for a moment, and so did not see the kindness that flashed momentarily into her face.
"Ah! you are worth while now!" she cried inwardly. "If only you could be so always! I almost—almost—be my dear friend!" she said aloud gently. "I'm not tempting you, because I have nothing to care for. I'm only changing your what it means to care for an intensely selfish woman. And I— I should like to care for you. But I dare not. I'm too much like Mr. McAdoo. I can never let myself love any man with whom I am not first. And he hates me. It dates from a day long ago when he saved my life." Paul looked up, astonished. He has hated the memory of me ever since, I think. If I married you, sooner or later we should come to the place where you must hurt him or me. That would mean misery for us both. I can never think seriously of caring for us both. I can never think seriously of caring for you until he withdraws his objections to me up for me."
He made no answer. She went close to him and laid a hand gently on his arm.
"Don't you see?"
He caught her hand closely in both of his. "Do you think," he demanded fiercely, "do you think you could ever come to care for me?"
"I wish you could make me," impulsively.
"Then," he said with sudden determination, "when you do, we will teach him what a wonderful woman you are, and he will approve."
"And that would be the only way it could be, I think. For you could never ask him aside—and I could never ask you to—never let you."
She withdrew her hand gently from his ardent clasp.
"And now," she said brightly, with an air of dismissing the topic, "did you know that you are to dine with Henry and me tonight? And after that you are to take me to church. The preacher is very dull, but at least listening to him will serve as a sort of penance for our sins."
The dinner passed off very pleasantly for Paul. The chef, as Sanger boasted, was "really the one exponent of the fine art in the Steel City." And Sanger himself proved to be an adroit host, bearing himself toward Paul with a frank cordiality that made Eleanor secretly wonder, and quite disarmed Paul. By the time the dinner was reached, the talk had turned to politics, Sanger wittily chaffing Paul over the latter's reputation as a "friend of the peep-pul," Paul retorting in kind. When coffee was served, the two men were deep in a political argu-

ment, in which Sanger proved a worthy antagonist, drawing on his wide knowledge of industrial and commercial conditions to weave sophistries that more than once discomfited the forensic Paul. Eleanor, taking no part other than to ask an occasional question, listened with the deepest interest.
As the men lighted their cigars, she rose respectfully.
"If we must do penance by listening to Doctor Matland, I must get ready. I give you men just fifteen minutes in which to save the nation."
"If I can convert this defendant of the vested interest, I shall believe the nation's ultimate salvation possible," Paul laughed.
"An if I can convert this socialist friend of the people," Sanger retorted. "I'll have hopes, at least, that the threatened political chaos may be averted for a time."
"I leave Thomas to keep the peace," she smiled, and withdrew.
"Thomas," Sanger suggested. "Mr. Remington's name needs attention." The needed attention was given. "And now you may leave us, Thomas."
"Quite seriously, Remington," he began. And then adroitly, for the second time he took Paul up into a high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the earth. These he indicated might become Paul's, if only the latter would help him, Sanger, to drive the mullah, hot-headed foe of industrial progress into utter and ending oblivion. Paul laughingly declined the honor. In the exalted mood following his conversation with Eleanor, to resist temptations was easy.
"It comes too high," he laughed. "I've got to stick to McAdoo."
"Bring him along by all means. He would be a welcome addition to our goodly company. I've mentioned the matter to him myself, but he refused owing to an unfortunate misapprehension of my motives. Perhaps he might be persuaded to reconsider his refusal."
Paul shook his head. "You don't know McAdoo. He's under pledges in this campaign."
"O, but platforms, my dear Remington, you know—!" Sanger protested humorously.
"He has made personal promises this time, though. One of them is to show no quarter to your people. I never heard that he made a promise to break it."
Sanger frowned. "What's his game? You and I know that he, at least, is no friend to the people."
Paul smiled. "To be a friend of the people is good capital sometimes, you know," he answered, remembering Bob's predictions of a popular uprising.
"Your friend may find that he has overcapitalized it," Sanger said sententiously. With a wave of his hand he dismissed the subject in its personal bearing and began an eloquent disquisition on the abstract rights of property owners, which lasted until—
"Henry," came an admonishing voice from the doorway, where Eleanor stood smiling. "If you're not careful, you'll spill that wine down your sleeve. I shouldn't care to hear your comments on that catastrophe. Mr. Remington, what is it in politics that makes men so interested? Here is Henry, the sedate, waving a wineglass frantically in the air and waxing positively eloquent over our industrial prosperity!"
"What I'd like to know," said Paul, rising from the table, "is whether Mr. Sanger believes what he says."
"Of course not," she laughed. "That's merely Henry's method of justifying an intended course of action."
Sanger's eyes narrowed a trifle, but he laughed and answered in the heartiest manner.
"At least, Mr. Remington may be sure that I'm sincere in my good wishes for him personally. If ever I can do anything for you in a private way, don't fail to let me know, Remington."
"I shall remember your promise," Paul said politely, inwardly resolving that, to be on the safe side, he would never allow himself to incur obligations to Sanger.
The preacher proved to be as dull as Eleanor predicted. For a few minutes Paul dutifully tried to fix his attention on the discourse, but he soon gave over the effort and fell to watching her. He noticed her looking queerly toward a retired corner in one of the galleries. He followed the line of her gaze, and gasped in astonishment.
"Ye gods! Kathleen has brought Bob to church!"
"Is Miss Finn with him?" she whispered. "What one?"
"To his right, I'll let you into a secret. Kathleen is in love with Bob."
"Indeed!" she said indifferently. But several times during the service she caught her gaze straying from the pulpit to the man in the gallery and the sweet-faced woman beside him.
As he was leaving her, Eleanor said: "Will you take me to call on Miss Finn?"
"Gladly. I'm sure you and she will become good friends."
For the next few days Paul saw Eleanor daily. She was very kind to him and he was therefore lifted into the clouds of heaven. The generosity of the hopeful lover led him to throw himself more enthusiastically into Bob's campaign. But Bob was very busy and there was little opportunity for anything but business conversation; Eleanor Gilbert's name was never mentioned between them. Nevertheless, Bob was not so busy but that she was often in his thoughts. It was at this time that he finally decided on a plan which had been suggested to him by Sanger's visit. This decision led to several long-distance telephone calls between him and Dunmeade and Murchell.
Paul took Eleanor to call on Kathleen early in the week. His prophecy that they would become good friends was not fulfilled, at least immediately. Kathleen, with a self-consciousness foreign to her, saw in Eleanor's honest efforts to please her only patronage. And Eleanor, chilled, was convinced that the older woman disliked her. Kathleen returned the call a few days later, but at that time Eleanor had left the city to spend the week-end with her cousin, Mrs. Dunmeade. (CONTINUED TOMORROW.)

Paul Remington impatiently flung aside the book he had been trying to read. It was Sunday, and to Paul the first day of the week was always distinctly oppressive. For the Sabbath in the Steel City is like unto the Lord's day in no other city. The mills cease, the street-cars rattle irrespectably, a few godless, reckless souls risk damnation in the hereafter and loss of caste in the present by taking the air and bodily recreation. But for the most part the city, as becomes a sober Scotch Presbyterian community, remembers its Fourth Commandment and remains conscientiously and painfully indoors; a vague but perceptible atmosphere of melancholy piety broods over the city.
Paul proceeded to lose himself in a profound reverie. An hour later he was still lost in his dreaming. He came to himself with a start. He shuddered.
"It's no use. This day has got on my nerves. The time when myself and my dreams were all the company I needed is gone. Dreams are mighty poor heart food. And I'm starving. I haven't seen her for two days and I can't wait another day—another hour

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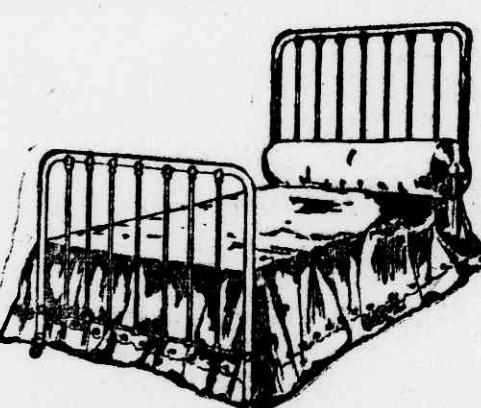
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