

# THE LION AND THE MOUSE.

By CHARLES KIEIN.

A Story of American Life Novelized From the Play by ARTHUR HORNBLLOW.

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ing that your friends are interested in having this man put off the bench? She stopped and burst into hysterical laughter. "Oh, I think you're having a joke at my expense," she went on. "Just to see how far you can lead me. I daresay Judge Rossmore deserves all he gets. Oh, yes, I'm sure he deserves it." She rose and walked to the other side of the room to conceal her emotion.

Ryder watched her curiously. "My dear young lady, how you take this matter to heart!"

"Please forgive me," laughed Shirley and averting her face to conceal the fact that her eyes were filled with tears. "It's my artistic temperament, I suppose. It's always getting me into trouble. It appealed so strongly to my sympathies, this story of hopeless love between two young people, with the father of the girl hounded by corrupt politicians and unscrupulous financiers. It was too much for me. Ah! ah, I forgot where I was!"

She leaned against a chair, sick and faint from nervousness, her whole body trembling. At that moment there was a knock at the library door, and Jefferson Ryder appeared. Not seeing Shirley, whose back was toward him, he advanced to greet his father.

"You told me to come up in five minutes," he said. "I just wanted to say—"

"Miss Green," said Ryder senior, addressing Shirley and ignoring whatever it was that the young man wanted to say, "this is my son Jefferson. Jeff, this is Miss Green."

Jefferson looked in the direction indicated and stood as if rooted to the floor. He was so surprised that he was struck dumb. Finally, recovering himself, he exclaimed:

"Shirley!"

"Yes, Shirley Green, the author," explained Ryder senior, not noticing the note of familiar recognition in his exclamation.

Shirley advanced and, holding out her hand to Jefferson, said demurely:

"I am very pleased to meet you, Mr. Ryder." Then quickly in an undertone she added: "Be careful. Don't betray me."

Jefferson was so astounded that he did not see the outstretched hand. All he could do was to stand and stare first at her and then at his father.

"Why don't you shake hands with her?" said Ryder senior. "She won't bite you." Then he added: "Miss Green is going to do some literary work for me, so we shall see a great deal of her. It's too bad you're going away." He chuckled at his own pleasantry.

"Father," blurted out Jefferson, "I came to say that I've changed my mind. You did not want me to go, and I feel I ought to do something to please you."

"Good boy," said Ryder, pleased. "Now you're talking common sense." He turned to Shirley, who was getting ready to make her departure: "Well, Miss Green, we may consider the matter settled. You undertake the work at the price I named and finish it as soon as you can. Of course you will have to consult me a good deal as you go along, so I think it would be better for you to come and stay here while the work is progressing. Mrs. Ryder can give you a suit of rooms to yourself, where you will be undisturbed, and you will have all your material close at hand. What do you say?"

Shirley was silent for a moment. She looked first at Ryder and then at his son, and from them her glance went to the little drawer on the left hand side of the desk. Then she said quietly:

"As you think best, Mr. Ryder. I am quite willing to do the work here."

Ryder senior escorted her to the top of the landing and watched her as she passed down the grand staircase, ushered by the gorgeously uniformed flunkies, to the front door and the street.

## CHAPTER XIII.

SHIRLEY entered upon her new duties in the Ryder household two days later. She had returned to her rooms the evening of her meeting with the financier in a state bordering upon hysteria. The day's events had been so extraordinary that it seemed to her they could not be real and that she must be in a dream. The car ride to Seventy-fourth street, the interview in the library, the discovery of her father's letters, the offer to write the biography and, what to her was still more important, the invitation to go and live in the Ryder home—all these incidents were so remarkable and unusual that it was only with difficulty that they were not figments of a disordered brain.

But it was all true enough. The next morning's mail brought a letter from Mrs. Ryder, who wrote to the effect that Mr. Ryder would like the work to begin at once and adding that a suit of rooms would be ready for her the following afternoon. Shirley did not hesitate. Everything was to be gained by making the Ryder residence her headquarters, her father's very life depending upon the successful outcome of her present mission, and this unhelped for

opportunity practically insured success. She immediately wrote to Massapequa. One letter was to her mother, saying that she was extending her visit beyond the time originally planned. The other letter was to Stott. She told him all about the interview with Ryder, informed him of the discovery of the letters and after explaining the nature of the work offered to her said that her address for the next few weeks would be in care of John Burdett Ryder. All was going better than she had dared to hope. Everything seemed to favor their plan. Her first step, of course, while in the Ryder home would be to secure possession of her father's letters, and these she would dispatch at once to Massapequa, so they could be laid before the senate without delay.

So, after settling accounts with her landlady and packing up her few belongings, Shirley lost no time in transferring herself to the more luxurious quarters provided for her in the \$10,000,000 mansion uptown.

At the Ryder house she was received cordially and with every mark of consideration. The housekeeper came down to the main hall to greet her when she arrived and escorted her to the suit of rooms, comprising a small working library, a bedroom simply but daintily furnished in pink and white and a private bathroom which had been specially prepared for her convenience and comfort, and here presently she was joined by Mrs. Ryder.

"Dear me," exclaimed the financier's wife, staring curiously at Shirley, "what a young girl you are to have made such a stir with a book! How did you do it? I'm sure I couldn't. It's as much as I can do to write a letter, and half the time that's not legible."

"Oh, it wasn't so hard!" laughed Shirley. "It was the subject that appealed rather than any special skill of mine. The trusts and their misdeeds are the favorite topics of the hour. The whole country is talking about nothing else. My book came at the right time, that's all."

Although "The American Octopus" was a direct attack on her own husband, Mrs. Ryder secretly admired this young woman who had dared to speak a few blunt truths. It was a courage which, alas, she had always lacked herself, but there was a certain satisfaction in knowing there were women in the world not entirely cowed by the tyrant man.

"I have always wanted a daughter," went on Mrs. Ryder, becoming confidential, while Shirley removed her things and made herself at home. "Girls of your age are so companionable." Then abruptly she asked, "Do your parents live in New York?"

Shirley's face flushed, and she stooped over her trunk to hide her embarrassment.

"No—not at present," she answered evasively. "My mother and father are in the country."

She was afraid that more questions of a personal nature would follow, but



"What a young girl you are to have made such a stir!"

apparently Mrs. Ryder was not in an inquisitive mood, for she asked nothing further. She only said:

"I have a son, but I don't see much of him. You must meet my Jefferson. He is such a nice boy."

Shirley tried to look unconcerned as she replied:

"I met him yesterday. Mr. Ryder introduced him to me."

"Poor lad! He has his troubles, too," went on Mrs. Ryder. "He's in love with a girl, but his father wants him to marry some one else. They're quarreling over it all the time."

"Parents shouldn't interfere in matters of the heart," said Shirley decisively. "What is more serious than the choosing of a life companion, and who are better entitled to make a free selection than they who are going to spend the rest of their days together? Of course it is a father's duty to give his son the benefit of his riper experience, but to insist on a marriage based only on business interests is little less than a crime. There are considera-

tions more important if the union is to be a happy or a lasting one. The chief thing is that the man should feel real attachment for the woman he marries. Two people who are to live together as man and wife must be compatible in tastes and temper. You cannot mix oil and water. It is these selfish marriages which keep our divorce courts busy. Money alone won't buy happiness in marriage."

"No," sighed Mrs. Ryder. "No one knows that better than I."

The financier's wife was already most favorably impressed with her guest, and she chatted on as if she had known Shirley for years. It was rarely that she had heard so young a woman express such common sense views, and the more she talked with her the less surprised she was that she was the author of a much discussed book. Finally, thinking that Shirley might prefer to be alone, she rose to go, bidding her make herself thoroughly at home and to ring for anything she might wish. A maid had been assigned to look exclusively after her wants, and she could have her meals served in her room or else have them with the family, as she liked. But Shirley, not caring to encounter Mr. Ryder's cold, searching stare more often than necessary, said she would prefer to take her meals alone.

Left to herself, Shirley settled down to work in earnest. Mr. Ryder had sent to her room all the material for the biography, and soon she was completely absorbed in the task of sorting and arranging letters, making extracts from records, compiling data, etc., laying the foundations for the important book she was to write. She wondered what they would call it, and she smiled as a peculiarly appropriate title flashed through her mind—"The History of a Crime." Yet she thought they could hardly infringe on Victor Hugo. Perhaps the best title was the simplest—"The History of the Empire Trading Company." Every one would understand that it told the story of John Burdett Ryder's remarkable career from his earliest beginnings to the present time. She worked feverishly all that evening getting the material into shape, and the following day found her early at her desk. No one disturbed her, and she wrote steadily until noon. Mrs. Ryder only once put her head in the door to wish her good morning.

After luncheon Shirley decided that the weather was too glorious to remain indoors. Her health must not be jeopardized even to advance the interests of the Colossus, so she put on her hat and left the house to go for a walk. The air smelled sweet to her after being confined so long indoors, and she walked with a more elastic and buoyant step than she had since her return home. Turning down Fifth avenue, she entered the park at Seventy-second street, following the pathway until she came to the bend in the driveway opposite the Casino. The park was almost deserted at that hour, and there was a delightful sense of solitude and a sweet scent of new mown hay from the freshly cut lawns. She found an empty bench, well shaded by an over-spreading tree, and sat down, grateful for the rest and quiet.

She wondered what Jefferson thought of her action in coming to his father's house practically in disguise and under an assumed name? She must see him at once, for in him lay her hope of obtaining possession of the letters. Certainly she felt no delicacy or compunction in asking Jefferson to do her this service. The letters belonged to her father, and they were being wrongfully withheld with the deliberate purpose of doing him an injury. She had a moral if not a legal right to recover the letters in any way that she could.

She was so deeply engrossed in her thoughts that she had not noticed a hansom cab which suddenly drew up with a jerk at the curb opposite her bench. A man jumped out. It was Jefferson.

"Hello, Shirley," he cried gayly. "Who would have expected to find you rusticated on a bench here? I pictured

[Continued next week.]

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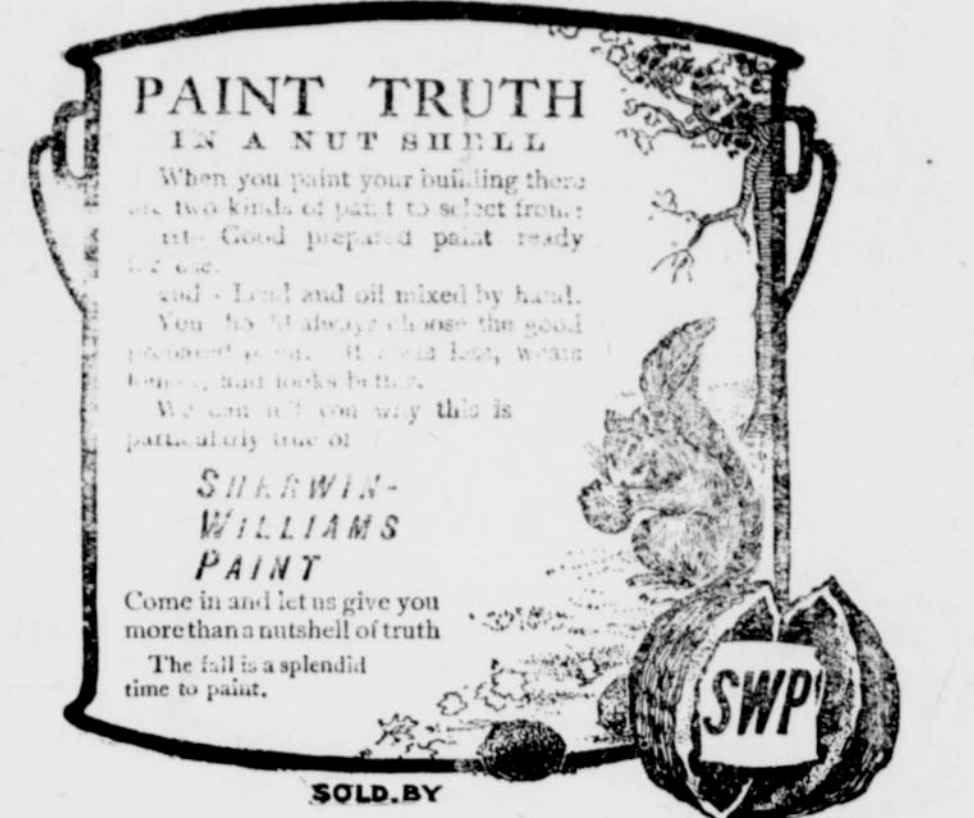
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