

THE LION AND THE MOUSE.

By CHARLES KLEIN.

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

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"Ryder took his chair from his side and came to the door." "You? You? You?" "Yes—yes, I am the Bossmore woman! Listen, Mr. Ryder. Don't turn away from me. Go to Washington on behalf of my father, and I promise you I will never see your son again—never, never!" "Ah, Shirley!" cried Jefferson, "you don't love me!" "Yes, Jeff. I do! God knows I do! But if I must break my own heart to save my father I will do it."

"Would you sacrifice my happiness and your own?" "No happiness can be built on lies, Jeff. We must build on truth or our whole house will crumble and fall. We have deceived your father, but he will forgive that, won't you?" she said, appealing to Ryder, "and you will go to Washington, you will save my father's honor, his life, you will?"

They stood face to face—this slim, delicate girl battling for her father's life, arrayed against a cold blooded, heartless, unscrupulous man, deaf to every impulse of human sympathy or pity. Since this woman had deceived him, fooled him, he would deal with her as with every one else who crossed his will. She laid her hand on his arm, pleading with him. Brutally, savagely, he thrust her aside.

"No, no, I will not!" he thundered. "You have wormed yourself into my confidence by means of lies and deceit. You have tricked me, fooled me to the very limit! Oh, it is easy to see how you have beguiled my son into the folly of loving you! And you—you have the brazen effrontery to ask me to plead for your father? No! No! No! Let the law take its course, and now, Miss Rossmore, you will please leave my house tomorrow morning!"

Shirley stood listening to what he had to say, her face white, her mouth quivering. At last the crisis had come. It was a fight to the finish between this man, the incarnation of corporate greed, and herself, representing the fundamental principles of right and justice. She turned on him in a fury: "Yes, I will leave your house tonight! Do you think I would remain another hour beneath the roof of a man who is as blind to justice, as deaf to mercy, as incapable of human sympathy, as you are?"

She raised her voice, and as she stood there denouncing the man of money, her eyes flashing and her head thrown back, she looked like some avenging angel defying one of the powers of evil.

"Leave the room!" shouted Ryder, beside himself, and pointing to the door. "Father!" cried Jefferson, starting forward to protect the girl he loved. "You have tricked him as you have me!" thundered Ryder. "It is your own vanity that has tricked you!" cried Shirley contemptuously. "You lay traps for yourself and walk into them. You can tell every one around you to lie to you, to cajole you, to praise you, to deceive you! At least you cannot accuse me of flattering you. I have never fawned upon you as you compel your family and your friends and your dependents to do. I have always appealed to your better nature by telling you the truth, and in your heart you know that I am speaking the truth now."

"God!" he commanded. "Yes, let us go, Shirley!" said Jefferson. "No, Jeff, I came here alone, and I'm going alone!" "You are not. I shall go with you. I intend to make you my wife!" Ryder laughed scornfully. "No," cried Shirley. "Do you think I'd marry a man whose father is as deep a discreditor to the human race as your father is? No, I wouldn't marry the son of such a merciless tyrant! He refuses to lift his voice to save my father. I refuse to marry his son!"

She turned on Ryder with all the fury of a tiger: "You think if you lived in the olden days you'd be a Caesar or an Alexander. But you wouldn't! You'd be a



"Leave the room!" shouted Ryder. Nero—a Nero! Think my self respect to the extent of marrying into your family!" she exclaimed contemptuously. "Never! I am going to Washington without your aid. I am going to save my father if I have to go on my knees to every United States senator. I'll go to the White House; I'll tell the president what you are! Marry your son—no, thank you! No, thank you!"

Exhausted by the vehemence of her passionate outburst, Shirley hurried from the room, leaving Ryder speechless, staring at his son.

CHAPTER XVI.

WHEN Shirley reached her rooms she broke down completely. She threw herself upon a sofa and burst into a fit of violent sobbing. After all, she was only a woman, and the ordeal through which she had passed would have taxed the strongest powers of endurance. She had borne up courageously while there remained the faintest chance that she might succeed in moving the financier to pity, but now that all hopes in that direction were shattered and she herself had been ordered harshly from the house, like any ordinary malefactor, the reaction set in, and she gave way freely to her long pent-up anguish and distress. Nothing now could save her father, not even this journey to Washington which she determined to take nevertheless; for, according to what she had said, the senate was to take a vote that very night.

She looked at the time—11 o'clock. She had told Mr. Ryder that she would leave his house at once, but on reflection it was impossible for a girl alone to seek a room at that hour. It would be midnight before she could get her things packed. No, she would stay under this hated roof until morning and then take the first train to Washington. There was still a chance that the vote might be delayed, in which case she might yet succeed in winning over some of the senators. She began to gather her things together and was thus engaged when she heard a knock at her door.

"Who's there?" she called out. "It's I," replied a familiar voice. Shirley went to the door and opening it found Jefferson on the threshold. He made no attempt to enter, nor did she invite him in. He looked tired and careworn.

"Of course, you're not going to-night," he asked anxiously. "My father did not mean to-night." "No, Jeff," she said wearily; "not to-night. It's a little too late. I did not realize it. Tomorrow morning, early."

He seemed reassured and held out his hand. "Good night, dearest. You're a brave girl. You made a splendid fight." "It didn't do much good," she replied in a disheartened, listless way.

"But it set him thinking," rejoined Jefferson. "No one ever spoke to my father like that before. It did him good. He's still marching up and down the library, chewing the cud." Noticing Shirley's tired face and her eyes, with great black circles underneath, he stopped short.

"Now, don't do any more packing to-night," he said. "Go to bed, and in the morning I'll come up and help you. Good night!" "Good night, Jeff," she smiled.

He went downstairs, and after doing some more packing she went to bed. But it was hours before she got to sleep, and then she dreamed that she was in the senate chamber and that she saw Ryder suddenly rise and denounce himself before the astonished senators as a perjurer and traitor to his country, while she returned to Massachusetts with the glad news that her father was acquitted. Meantime a solitary figure remained in the library, pacing to and fro like a lost soul in purgatory. Mrs. Ryder had returned from the play and gone to bed, serenely oblivious of the drama in real life that had been enacted at home. The servants locked the house for the night, and still John Burkett Ryder walked the floor of his sanctum, and late into the small hours of the morning the watchman going his lonely rounds saw a light in the library and the restless figure of his employer sharply silhouetted against the white blinds.

For the first time in his life John Ryder realized that there was something in the world beyond self. He had seen with his own eyes the sacrifice a daughter will make for the father she loves, and he asked himself what manner of a man that father could be to inspire such devotion in his child. He probed into his own heart and conscience and reviewed his past career. He had been phenomenally successful, but he had not been happy. He had more money than he knew what to do with, but the pleasures of the domestic circle, which he saw other men enjoy, had been denied to him. Was he himself to blame? Had his insatiable craving for gold and power led him to neglect those other things in life which contribute more truly to man's happiness? In other words, was his life a mistake? Yes, it was true what this girl charged—he had been merciless and unscrupulous in his dealings with his fellow man. It was true that hardly a dollar of his vast fortune had been honestly earned. It was true

that it had been wrong from the people by fraud and trickery. He had craved for power, yet now he had tasted it, what a hollow joy it was, after all! The public hated and despised him. Even his so-called friends and business associates toadied to him merely because they feared him. And this judge—this father he had persecuted and ruined—what a better man and citizen he was! How much more worthy of a child's love and of the esteem of the world!

What had Judge Rossmore done, after all, to deserve the frightful punishment the amalgamated interests had caused him to suffer? If he had blocked their game he had done only what his oath, his duty, commanded him to do. Such a girl as Shirley Rossmore could not have had any other kind of a father. Ah, if he had had such a daughter he might have been a better man, if only to win his child's respect and affection. John Ryder pondered long and deeply, and the more he ruminated the stronger the conviction grew upon him that the girl was right and he was wrong. Suddenly he looked at his watch. It was 1 o'clock. Roberts had told him that it would be an all night session and that a vote would probably not be taken until very late. He unhooked the telephone and, calling "central," asked for "long distance" and connection with Washington.

It was 7 o'clock when the maid entered Shirley's room with her breakfast, and she found its occupant up and dressed.

"Why, you haven't been to bed, miss?" exclaimed the girl, looking at the bed in the inner room, which seemed scarcely disturbed.

"No, Theresa, I—I couldn't sleep." Hastily pouring out a cup of tea, she added: "I must catch that 9 o'clock train to Washington. I didn't finish packing until nearly 3."

"Can I do anything for you, miss?" inquired the maid. Shirley was as popular with the servants as with the rest of the household.

"No," answered Shirley, "there are only a few things to go in my suitcase. Will you please have a cab here in half an hour?"

The maid was about to go when she suddenly thought of something she had forgotten. She held out an envelope which she had left lying on the tray.

"Oh, miss, Mr. Jenkins said to give you this and master wanted to see you as soon as you had finished your breakfast."

Shirley tore open the envelope and took out the contents. It was a check, payable to her order for \$5,000 and signed "John Burkett Ryder."

A deep flush covered the girl's face as she saw the money—a flush of annoyance rather than of pleasure. This man who had insulted her, who had wronged her father, who had driven her from his home, thought he could throw his gold at her and insolently send her her pay as one settles laughingly with a servant discharged for impertinence. She would have none of his money—the work she had done she would make him a present of. She replaced the check in the envelope and passed it back to Theresa.

"Give this to Mr. Ryder and tell him I cannot see him."

"But Mr. Ryder said—" insisted the girl.

"Please deliver my message as I give it," commanded Shirley with authority. "I cannot see Mr. Ryder."

The maid withdrew, but she had barely closed the door when it was opened again and Mrs. Ryder rushed in without knocking. She was all fluttered with excitement and in such a hurry that she had not even stopped to arrange her toilet.

"My dear Miss Green," she gasped, "what's this I hear—going away suddenly without giving me warning?"

"I wasn't engaged by the month," replied Shirley dryly.

"I know, dear, I know. I was thinking of myself. I've grown so used to you—how shall I get on without you? No one understands me the way you do. Dear me! The whole house is upset. Mr. Ryder never went to bed at all last night. Jefferson is going away, too—forever, he threatens. If he hadn't come and woke me up to say goodby, I should never have known you intended to leave us. My boy's going—you're going—every one's deserting me!"

Mrs. Ryder was not accustomed to such prolonged flights of oratory, and she sank exhausted on a chair, her eyes blinking with tears.

"Did they tell you who I am—the daughter of Judge Rossmore?" demanded Shirley.

It had been a shock to Mrs. Ryder that morning when Jefferson burst into his mother's room before she was up and acquainted her with the events of the previous evening. The news that the Miss Green whom she had grown to love was really the Miss Rossmore of whose relations with Jefferson her husband stood in such dread was far from affecting the financier's wife as it had Ryder himself. To the mother's simple and ingenious mind, free from prejudice and ulterior motive, the girl's character was more important than her name, and certainly she could not blame her son for loving such a woman as Shirley. Of course, it was unfortunate for Jefferson that his father felt this bitterness toward Judge Rossmore, for she herself could hardly have wished for a more sympathetic daughter-in-law. She had not seen her husband since the previous evening at dinner, so was in complete ignorance as to what he thought of this new development, but the mother sighed as she thought how happy it would make her to see Jefferson happily married to the girl of his own choice, and in her heart she still entertained the hope that her husband would see it that way and thus prevent their son from leaving them as he threatened.

"That's not your fault, my dear," she replied, answering Shirley's question. "You are yourself, that's the main thing. You mustn't mind what Mr. Ryder says. Business and worry make him irritable at times. If you must go, of course you must; you are the best judge of that, but Jefferson wants to see you before you leave." She kissed Shirley in motherly fashion and added: "He has told me everything, dear. Nothing would make me happier than to see you become his wife. He's downstairs now waiting for me to tell him to come up."

"It's better that I should not see him," replied Shirley slowly and gravely. "I can only tell him what I have already told him. My father comes first. I have still a duty to perform."

"That's right, dear," answered Mrs. Ryder. "You're a good, noble girl, and I admire you all the more for it. I'll let Jefferson be his own advocate. You'll see him for my sake!"

She gave Shirley another affectionate embrace and left the room, while the girl proceeded with her final preparations for departure. Presently there was a quick, heavy step in the corridor outside and Jefferson appeared in the doorway. He stood there waiting for her to invite him in. She looked up and greeted him cordially, yet it was hardly the kind of reception he looked for or that he considered he had a right to expect. He advanced sulkily into the room.

"Mother said she had put everything right," he began. "I guess she was mistaken."

"Your mother does not understand, neither do you," she replied seriously. "Nothing can be put right until my father is restored to honor and position."

"But why should you punish me because my father falls to regard the matter as we do?" demanded Jefferson rebelliously.

"Why should I punish myself—why should we punish those nearest and dearest?" answered Shirley gently. "The victims of human injustice always suffer where their loved ones are tortured. Why are things as they are? I don't know. I know they are—that's all."

The young man strode nervously up and down the room, while she gazed listlessly out of the window, looking for the cab that was to carry her away from this house of disappointment. He pleaded with her:

[Continued next week.]

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