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# The Manager Of the B. & A.

By VAUGHAN KESTER

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(Continued from last week)

She pisplayed undeniable skill in these maneuvers, and Dan was by turns savage and penitent. But she never gave him a chance to say what he wanted to say.

Ryder made his appeal to her vanity. It was a strong appeal. He was essentially presentable and companionable. She understood him, and they had much in common, but for all that her heart approved of Oakley. She felt his dominance. She realized that he was direct and simple and strong. Yet in her judgment of him she was not very generous. She could not understand, for instance, how it was that he had been willing to allow his father to go to work in the shops like one of the common hands. It seemed to her to argue such an awful poverty in the way of ideals.

She tried to stifle her growing liking for Oakley and her unwilling admira-

*"Isn't it infinitely pathetic to think of that poor little man and his work?"*

tion for his strength and honesty and a certain native refinement. Unconsciously, perhaps, she had always associated qualities of this sort with position and wealth. She divined his lack of early opportunity and was alive to his many crudities of speech and manner, and he suffered, as he knew he must suffer, by comparison with the editor, but in spite of this Constance Emory knew deep down in her heart that he possessed solid and substantial merits of his own.

## CHAPTER VIII.

KENYON came to town to remind his Antioch friends and supporters that presently he would be needing their votes. He was Ryder's guest for a week, and the Herald recorded his movements with painstaking accuracy and with what its editor secretly considered metropolitan enterprise. The great man had his official headquarters at the Herald office, a ramshackle two story building on the west side of the square. Here he was at home to the local politicians and to such of the general public as wished to meet him. The former smoked his cigars and talked incessantly of primaries, nominations and majorities—topics on which they appeared to be profoundly versed. Their distinguishing mark was their capacity for strong drink, which was far in excess of that of the ordinary citizen who took only a casual interest in politics.

Kenyon was a sloppily dressed man of forty-five or thereabout, who preserved an air of rustic shrewdness. He was angular faced and smooth shaven and wore his hair rather long in a tangled mop. He was generally described in the party papers as "the picturesque statesman from old Hickory." He had served one term in congress. Prior to that he was an apprentice-ship. He had done a great deal of hard work and fully earned the party. His partisans had been built on the foundation of a [illegible] man, who after a fight which was already famous in the history of the state for its bitterness had been elected governor and [illegible] of the women [illegible] Just [illegible] the governor [illegible] the party [illegible] the [illegible] that [illegible]

"He was serving a life sentence for murder, I think, John told me, but I won't be sure."

"The devil you say!" ejaculated Ryder. "Yes, Roger Oakley; the name's the same."

"I knew I couldn't be mistaken. I got a pretty good memory for names and faces. Curious, ain't it, that he should turn up here?"

Ryder smiled queerly as he dropped the Herald files back into the rack.

"His son is manager for Cornish here. He's the fellow I was telling you about."

Kenyon smiled too.

"I guess you won't have any more trouble with him. You've got him where you can hit him, and hit him hard, whenever you like."

## CHAPTER IX.

IT was pay day in the car shops, and Oakley posted a number of notices in conspicuous places about the works. They announced a 10 per cent reduction in the wages of the men, the cut to go into effect immediately.

By and by McClintock came in from the yards. He was hot and perspiring, and his check shirt clung moistly to his powerful shoulders.

Oakley looked up inquiringly from the letter he was writing.

"Have you seen the notices?"

"Yes," nodding.

"Heard anything from the men yet?"

"Not a word."

McClintock returned to the yards. It was the noon hour, and in the shade of one of the sheds he found a number of the hands at lunch, who lived too far from the shops to go home to dinner.

"Say, Milt," said one of these, "have you tumbled to the notices, 10 per cent all round? You'll be having to go down in your sock for coin."

"It's there, all right," cheerfully.

"I knew when Cornish came down here there would be something drop shortly. I ain't never known it to fail. The old skinflint! I'll bet he ain't losing any money."

"You bet he ain't, not he," said a second, with a short laugh.

The first man, Branyon by name, bit carefully into the wedge shaped piece of pie he was holding in his hand. "If I was as rich as Cornish I'm hanged if I'd be such an infernal stiff! What good is his money doing him, anyhow?"

"What does the boss say, Milt?"

"That wages will go back as soon as he can put them back."

"Yes, they will! Like fun!" said Branyon sarcastically.

"You're a lot of kickers, you are," commented McClintock good naturedly. "You don't believe for one minute, do you, that the Huckleberry or the shops ever earned a dollar?"

"You can gamble on it that they ain't ever cost Cornish a red cent," said Branyon as positively as a mouthful of pie would allow.

"I wouldn't be too sure about that," said the master mechanic, walking on.

"I bet he ain't out none on this," remarked Branyon cynically. "If he was he wouldn't take it so blamed easy."

The men began to straggle back from their various homes and to form in lit-

*"I came to see what you meant by this"*

tle groups about the yards and in the shops. They talked over the cut and argued the merits of the case, as men will, made their comments on Cornish, who was generally conceded to be as mean in money matters as he was fortunate, and then went back to their work when the 1 o'clock whistle blew in a state of high good humor with themselves and their evident ability.

The next day the Herald dealt with the situation at some length. The whole tone of the editorial was [illegible] and bitter. It spoke of the parsimony of the new management, which had been measured by a number of recent discharges among men who had served the road long and faithfully and who deserved other and more considerate treatment. It declared that the cut was but the beginning of the troubles in store for the hands and characterized it as an attempt on the part of the new management to curry favor with Cornish, who was notoriously hostile to the best interests of labor. It wound up by regretting that the men were not organized, as proper organization would have enabled them to meet

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