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The Manager Of the B. & A.

By VAUGHAN KESTER

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(Continued from last week)

She displayed undeniable skill in those 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 pitiful talking 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 slightly dressed man of forty-five, or thereabout, who preserved an air of rustic shrewdness. He was angular faced and somewhat shrewd and wore his hair rather long in a tangled mop. He was generally considered in the party papers as "the picturesque statesman from off the coast." He had served one term in congress. Prior to that he was of an apprenticeship he had done a great deal of hard work and little work for his party. His position had been built on the fortunes of a former and a latter man, who after a hard struggle as a result of a failure in the business of the state his father had done, which was a general store, had been a success.

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had so far freed himself of his habitual indifference that he was displaying an unheard-of energy in promoting Kenyon's interest. Of course he expected to derive certain very substantial benefits from the alliance. The congressman had made him endless promises, and Ryder saw, or thought he saw, his way clear to leave Antioch in the near future. For two days he had been saying, "Mr. Brown, shake hands with Congressman Kenyon," or, "Mr. Jones, I want you to know Congressman Kenyon, the man we must keep at Washington."

He had marveled at the speed with which the statesman got down to first names. Mr. Kenyon said modestly when Griff commented on this that his methods were modern—they were certainly vulgar.

"I guess I'm going to give 'em a run for their money, Ryder. I can see I'm doing good work here. There's nothing like being on the ground yourself."

It was characteristic of him that he should ignore the work Ryder had done in his behalf.

"You are an inspiration, Sam. The people know their leader," said the editor gaily, but with a touch of sarcasm that was lost on Kenyon, who took himself quite seriously.

"Yes, sir. They'd 'a done me dirt," feelingly, "but I am on my own range now and ready to pull off my coat and fight for what's due me."

They were seated before the open door, which looked out upon the square. Kenyon was chewing nervously at the end of an unlit cigar which he held between his fingers. "When the nomination is made I guess the other fellow will discover I ain't been letting the grass grow in my path." He spat out over the door sill into the street. "What's that you were just telling me about the Huckleberry?"

"This new manager of Cornish's is going to make the road pay, and he's going to do it from the pockets of the employees," said Ryder, with a disgruntled air, for the memory of his interview with Dan still rankled.

"That ain't bad either. You know the governor's pretty close to Cornish. The general was a big contributor to his campaign fund."

Ryder hitched his chair nearer his companion's.

"If there's a cut in wages at the shops, and I suppose that will be the next move, there's bound to be a lot of bad feeling."

"Well, don't forget we are for the people," remarked the congressman and he winced slyly.

Ryder smiled cynically. "I shan't, I have it in for the manager anyhow."

"What's your opinion of him?"

"Oh, nothing but a whole lot," said Ryder, with a shrug.

"I don't know what you mean by that," said Kenyon, looking at Ryder with a questioning glance.

"Well, he looks most awfully like some one else, that's all." And he peered to those interested.

"See that old man Oakley. He works in the shops."

"Oakley?"

"Yes, that's his name. Why?" curiously.

"How long has he been here, say now?"

"A month perhaps, maybe longer. Do you know him?"

"I've seen him before. A cousin of mine, John Kenyon, is warden of a prison here in Marshfield. I'm in the habit of holding office. I visited him and while I was there a few boys came out in the hospital ward, and they said they had a look at the boys of two or three of the prisoners. The boys came within a few feet of my eyes. I saw after-ward by the papers that the governor had pardoned him."

Ryder jumped up with sudden alacrity.

"Do you remember the convict's full name?"

"Kenyon, I meditated a moment, then he said 'Brown Oakley.'"

The editor turned to the files of the Herald.

"If you just look back and see it it's the same name. The trouble gets to be here among the prisoners. If I can only find out what was his prison name he'd be added."

"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 coal."

"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 skink! 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," said McClintock, who was standing in the groups about the yards and in the shops. They talked over the cut and argued the merits of the case as men will, aside their comments on Cornish, who was generally considered to be a man in money matters as he was for a time and then went back to their work when the 10 per cent whistle blew in a state of high coal humor with themselves and their critical ability.

The next day the Herald dealt with the situation at some length. The whole tone of the editorial was rather one of pity. It spoke of the parsimony of the new management, which had been instructed by a number of recent donations among men who had served the road long and faithful, 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 carry favor with Cornish, who was notoriously hostile to the best interests of labor. It would up by regretting that the men were not organized, as proper organization would have enabled them to meet



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