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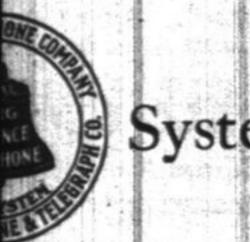
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CHAPTER VI.

The last stubborn holdout surrendering to Hampden's skillfut ne gotiations, to necessity and pressure of public opinion, had been ted tri omphantly into camp and on Hami den's terms. Among the tills of town things began to Imppen under his forceful direction. A spur from the. railroad was being constructed. A vil thrown together to house the colony of miners that was to be brought

Cranshawe one day explained

John why he and his ther fowmship

neighbors had capitulated. "We got to take what we can git. takes a lot o' money to develop coa lands. Hampden has it-no' we hain't We found he'd got all the right o ways. If we could find any one to buy our coal, he couldn't 'a' shipped 'ceptin' over Hampden's right o' way. I don't like to be held up, but it's my only chance to leave anything fer my

"I hope it will all turn out for the best," said John, fearing-he hardly knew why-that it might not so turn

"Seems like." said Cranshawe, "the over the feller with something to sell or develop. Trouble is, even when we know it's wrong, we don't want to change it, hopin' that some day it'll give us a chanct to make money the same way."

"Oh, no!" John protested. "I'd hate to believe that I can't believe it people. The power of it the power Men aren't all of the dog-eat-dog spe-

"Well," said 'Ri, a little ashamed, "I don't know as I believe it myself, trol, seem far away, nareal, impressible Guess I'm a little peevish over bein' us what's goin' on."

capitalist's favor.

The net result of his quixotism, be | The speaking begins. After a short his farmer friends.

ty's rally. Benton county had marched a young man who, in a single opposition speech. takingly reared by Jeremy Applegate and his fellow soldiers. None other than Jerry Breut. A big, rawboned, homely fellow, uncouth in manner and sometimes in grammar, but with a crude, passionate eloquence that always carried his audience with him. He had been a coal miner, a labor organizer, and had, after a struggle so common that description stales, been admitted to the practice of law. never been raised against him; he was spite of his time worn arguments. in an honest and unmanageable young wered. he among labor men-refuse him ope

portunity to speak during the cam-John, an inconspicuous listener, beard Brent's Benton county speech It troubled him. It seemed to him onanswerable. Brent, It was true, dealt in terms of suspicion, not of facts, but it was a suspicion that found a swift echo in the hearts of his audience. He frankly said as much. "We don't govern this state," said Brent. "One man, Murchell, picks out our officers and tells em what to do for it. You haven't the right to shove skin cour responsibility on other men's

to take the power."

Jerry Brent was right. he held in the square. Sheehan in-ticket. Play it up hard!"

John, letting the rally and the prob-structed John as to the part which the

He stood silent before them. The

lem it presented drift into the backlatter was to play.

Tell 'em all about us bein' the friend of which his clear, flexible voice lent itthe farmer. It's your chance. Parrott self so beautifully, refused to be utand Sherrod'll be there. Parrott's no tered. He could not speak the lieslouch of a speaker, but you can best had prepared; a "reason" he had not. him. Farmers like a good speech." "I don't know that I care to make pressed voice. He did not mean to be

the speech." "Don't you want to be elected?"

not understand of do"

pendence. Tell 'em there's no strings "I can tell them that with mith. Sheehan looked long and hard

him Then he chuckled "Of cour And don't forget the state ticket when When he was alone John fairly

He prepared a fine speech, and then came the night of the rally-the pomp

We stand with John under the big elm at the northwest corner of the haste pervaded New Chelsen The price square, where Main and North streets of real estate promptly advanced. Vi | meet | Before us is the rough board sions of expansion, of prosperity, filled speakers' stand, hastily knowled to gether and liberally bedecked

> flags and lithographs of Lincoln and Beck, the candidate for treasurer. front are many rows of pine benche Over all falls the white splender of full October moon, to be dimmed whe the four kerosene torches guarding th speakers' stand are set flaring an smoking, and by many other lights,

Debouching into Main street from draw, shying awkwardly at the light chievous boys. The steeds are safel hitched in various churchyards. the drivers gather in the square shifting, serious groups. Gradually the square fills. A hourse hum if voices rises. The air becomes charged with an ununtural excitement-the sense of an occasion-bred of the strange lights and bustle and the presence of many men. John between handshirkes loss

time to feel it. His lagging soul, jaded by much questioning, leaps forth suddealy responsive. These men are the and the glory! He thrills inder a sense of openess with them. and his machine, Sheehan and his con The candidates, properly nichtined.

outbargained by Steve Hampden. I and their party of ilistinguished citiwish," he added thoughtfully, "you | zens are on the platform. The benches could be lawyer fer the company. It are filled. Around them stands fringe looks like us farmers won't have much of men, mostly farmers, whe in the say in the business. I'd like to have rush for seats have been too slow. some one on the inside who could tell John, sandwiched in between Sheehan and Congressman Jenkins, books out "No chance of that, 'Ri. Hampden over the audience, a strange question doesn't think much of me." He did not in his eyes. He is seeking a freason, tell Cranshawe why be had lost the as though it were to be found written

thought with some bitterness, was to preliminary speech the chairman introwin Hampden's hostility and to put duces Beck, candidate for treasurer, as himself out of the way of protecting | inconsiderable now as he will be when in office. Then comes Parrelt, a fa-And late in October occurred his par- mous corporation lawyer, whose features somehow suggest that be It was necessary to marshal the named. He is adept in the use of those badly shaken party hosts. For into phrases which elicit enthusiasm, but do not convince. After him Mark Sherro state senator, a tall, suave man with a magnetic something about h of his eyes has a slight cast and gives his face a sinister expression which not all his undoubted attraction can remove. He is a coming man. Alrendy a power in the big eastern city, it whispered that he is planning to succeed Beck in the treasurership. And after him the Hon, G. Washington Jenkins, congressman from the district. Lincolnian in figure, shrill and nasal voice, but with the old campaigne In all the thirty-five years of his life | fund of stories and a rough and ready the charge of material dishonesty had eloquence that catches the growd in

still poor. And be was counted a ris- The front seats roar their approval. ing man in the opposition party, not From the fringe of farmers, Im Sheewith the connivance of his party han observes, comes only grim silence. bosses, however. They considered him There is an uneasy seuse that Jerry a radical, unsafe and cardinal crime Brent's suspicions have not been au-

man-ambitious. .. Respectable people Through it all John sat, harfily movspeered at his "antics." It was said ing. But within him was turbult. He that his eyes were fixed on the next was contrasting the grandlloggent, virnomination for governor. Even with tuous phrases with the machine as he this suspicion rankling in their minds | had seen it. And he knew that in the the bosses dared not so popular was devices of which he could not help hearing hints in his campaigning he had caught but a glimpie of the thing—the machine. He did not believe that good employs evil to its ends; by its agencies a cause was to be judged. of course. I wanted dad to come along He sighted along the line of those who but he said no, his interest in political profited by it-Sheehan, Beck, Parrott. was practical, not sentimental, and he Sherrod, Murchell. The line was lost preferred to take his vandeville in the mist of his incomplete knowl- straight. He was in quite a bad edge. This knowledge, his rankling humor because I wanted to come. But suspicions. Brent's questionings, rose —I am here.";
up to confront him, demanding a "reason." He could not find it. And the people—the sturdy, patient, hard headed "That's kind. I'm sure." She tossed men out there-were they such dolts as her head in burlesque hautenr. "Inwhile in office. You people don't gov- to be fooled by the hollow morkery be- stend, you might offer to drive hom ern Benton county. One man, Jim ing enacted before them? He could with me. Williams can stuy here and Sheehan, Murchell's tool, chooses your not believe it. And yet he he who drive back when you return." commissioners, your treasurers, your doubted-was expected to play a part He shook his head. "I'd better not sheriffs, your district attorneys." John in the mockery, to give the lie to his he muttered. He still wanted to ge winced. "And it's wrong, my God! It's, inner consciousness, to befor the issue away by himself to think. wrong!" the orator cried passionately. in the minds of the listeners to take "Please." She leaned forward and It would be wrong, even if these his place in the ranks of the machine. urged him softly, "It's our last chance men were honest. And I blame you The speech in his pocket burned to the for a good chat. We go away tomor

The tumult was still raging when the shoulders, and they haven't, the right Hon, Wash Jenkins concluded his florid peroration and the applause ded down. The man's hot, rough eloquence Vaguely, as from a distance, John found a lodgment where least expected heard the chairman introduce "New in John's heart, already sensitized by Chelsea's candidate" and the sudden his own discoveries and questionings | cheers that rose. He did not realize, although l'arrott and Sherroddid, that The oldest lubabitant could not re in the cheers was a quality not felt in member when the old party had been the other greetings that night. He rose so vigorously attacked. To stem the mechanically. He hardly knew when tide of revolt-John felt it strongly in Sheehan, grasping his arm; shouted his canvass-an old time rally was to into his ear; "Don't forget the state

well coaned speech, with its smooth "You're to speak. Hit 'er up hard. periods, the dramatic climaxes, At last words came, in a dry, sup-

grave, protesting trony

I need hardly speak for the gentlemen who have so eloquently spoken for themselves. I presume they do not I do? I suppose most people wish to be saddled with responsibility call me unwomanly. Do you think me for any of my shortcomings, nor do I that?" wish to be judged by theirs it am a candidate for office. If you think me "You can't expect the beneficiary to be fice honestly and well, without fear or happy. If you don't think that, you down easily? But I am not conferring can't believe that any party's history I am seeking. A-a friendshipwill make me an honest official, And- as ours-means a great deal to

that's all I can say." He turned and walked toward the tinned. Slack jaws fell slacker, The

fringe of farmers stood motioniess, be wildered, slow to grasp the significance of the short speech. Throug first to recover presence of mind, ried over the crowd to Main street. "For God's sake start a tune

something!" This to the band. Some one laughed. The band began to play "When Johnny Comes March ing Home," of all tunes! People began to rise from their sents, It was not

On the stage John faced a wrathfu tableau-Parrott, Sherrod and Shee



han. "What the h-l"-began Sheehan, but the suave Sherrod, minus his suavity, interrupted. "What do you mean? If you can't support the ticket abuse courtesy, young man."

"Not yours, at any rate." John answered, and walked from the stage. and out around the crowd. He was "that would elect your opponent dazed at his own act. A heavy sense wouldn't it? Senator Murchell won't of treachery was upon him, yet be allow it, surely." could not have done otherwise. He "Senator Murchell will be the first to had not eyes for the curious glances, recommend the kuiting." he laughed could then have believed, cast toward senator is a faise god." him. Walking swiftly with eyes cast down, he would have passed without noticing the fashionable trap in front of his home had not a voice frem

#### CHAPTER VII.

The Wilderness Road. What are you doing here?"

"I wish you hadn't come," he said,

He tried honestly to resist, feell, instinctively she spelled danger and that every hour with her added to th looking at her, Always she was him a sort of recklessness. He railed himself a weakling, a fool that played assented. Soon they had left the town behind them and were bowling along the moonlit road.

ground, gave himself up to a reckless enjoyment of the hour. The for of the moon, undimmed smoky torches, the silent majesty the hills with their shadows and slivery sheen, alone were real. The crowd of faces peering intently at him through the balf gloom, the struggle within facetious, and no one laughed at his

rejection of the part assigned him. | Pool and Billiards

always take the aggressive. But the

"Do you mean that, I wonder! Or Her voice dwindled away into slience grip on himself, to fight down the long tried to think of her as she will, an

ess, of generous caprices. He had no he felt blindly that it was leading his into paths whither she would not fol longing, would not-could not-g alone. He had sometimes thought be to great heights; yet he knew she was now of the earth, earthy. She was a creature of luxury. He thought of his last year's income and laughed un

"Why this sudden hilarity?" she de-"It's a joke I've just thought of you

about your speech tonight?"

"Indirectly, I suppose," he replied. "Will you tell me about that? If was the reason-one reason-why I wanted fwo minds about it. Of course. I didn't cept that you were expected to say far one could see that the men lon feeling that somehow you were finding and asserting yourself-doing thing rather splendid. I know it ma Aunt Roberta begin to snuffle-ste said man near ps-a big, hulking farmer say, By Joshua! I always though that white skin of Johnny Dun mende's. He didn't mean to be funn think. Another, a different port man, laughed and said, 'Now that's the eleverest move yet. It's a grand stand play, but it'll make him if he's

"It was neither splendid nor erafty." say it. That's all. Sheehan and the you had no right to speak at all. You under cover and beat me if only as a man who happens along with a work-

He made his way quickly behind it "Why," she exclaimed increditionally

"What have you against the candi-"It's rather against the forces behind

Bad methods and general suspicion. I guess. I probably couldn't make it clear."

slowly, "that I like it, after all. I'm

way to put it. I'm so ambilious for you! That's unwomanly, to 1 suppose, but I don't care. I am ambitious Murchell's friendship. You don't know your have brains and popularity. Do you like you? I would go into politics seriously. I would master methods and conditions and adapt them to my purpose. I would keep on until the organpower was secure I would remove, little by little, the evils I saw, and when I had finished and measured my compromises against the good I had done I know the bulance would be in my fa-

But he merely smiled bitterly. "And I suspect that by the time I'd got the power in the fashion you des ribe, I'd. have become the sort of conn that doesn't use his power for good." "What are you going to do about it?

"About the election?" He shrugged his shoulders in indifference. "Let 'em beat me, I suppose, I haven't thought "Now that it's all over I can admire

your refusing to make that speech. It was splendld in a way. You see, can appreciate unselfishness in the abstruct or when it can't be reme "I told you that wasn't unselfish. It I can acd to the evidence - rour kindly, even M mistaken, interest in me an my future. And you mustn't sneer at

yourself," he added gravely She turned to look fairly "Do you still think it necessary me down easily?" she aske

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