

## Choice Literature.

### THE HISTORY OF A CERTAIN "STRIKE."

#### CHAPTER II.

"What does Billy O'Shane know about my gains or losses, anyway?" thought Raymond Knight.

And, indeed, Billy had heard only one side of the story. He was not aware that Raymond had been obliged to spend much of his extra money in hiring another lad to help sweep his schoolrooms. He had expected two boys to do the work, but had found a third necessary, not only here, but in distributing the Grand Army programmes.

So, if money had flowed in from one quarter, it had leaked out in another.

Raymond would be glad if the snow fell early this year, for he had agreed to take charge of four sidewalks, at \$6 apiece (to be paid in advance), and had engaged four boys to do the shovelling at \$5 each (to be paid at the end of the season).

Now Raymond had not at all liked the look on Billy O'Shane's face, and he told himself it would be wise to keep a sharp eye on that worthy.

Tom Bailey had summoned up pluck to whine a bit at not being allowed to combine his own interests with those of his employer. It was but a mild grumble and had been easily quenched; but Raymond strongly suspected O'Shane's influence in this matter. In other quarters also, when one morning the three programme boys appeared on his doorsteps.

"Say I we'd like to have thirty-five cents, instead of thirty, if you please."

"But I don't please!" said Raymond. "And, as for you Johnny Kane, you're not half spry enough. I—discharge you. There are twenty fellows ready to skip into your place. Into all your places for that matter. So no haggling over wages. If you don't get enough, you're welcome to leave any minute."

The three retired crestfallen. As for John he was disconsolate; he had counted on his winter earnings to buy marbles next spring.

Raymond, however, did not intend the words, "you're welcome to leave any moment," to be taken in the very letter; and he was more than astonished when, the next evening, not a single boy was to be found, in or near the Grand Army Hall. He distributed programmes himself, but it required quick work for one pair of hands.

The following day he met all three rogues jollily feasting on corn balls.

"Other chaps besides you have got money—mister," sang Johnny Kane, insultingly.

"Who gives you money?" demanded Raymond, laying a heavy hand on Master John's shoulder. "Who gives you money?" he repeated, emphasizing the words by a vigorous shake.

The other two boys danced out of reach. "Don't you tell, Johnny!" they shouted. "Don't you tell, and we'll stand by you."

But Raymond suddenly let the prisoner free, as a certain recollection flashed across him.

It was only the evening before that he had heard the same tale. He had come to the library to pay his yearly subscription. Billy had been there, and Raymond had caught his eye and heard him mutter: "You'll find that other chaps besides you has got money."

There was evidently a plot on foot, and O'Shane was at its core. Raymond grew more and more sure of that, and there was no welcome for Billy when, on New Year's Eve, that person called to him as he was walking home.

"See here!" said Billy.

"Well?" said Raymond.

"Who's to get the benefit of 'The Carrier's New Year's Address' to-morrow, I'd like to know?"

The two boys, employer and employee, stood looking one another squarely in the face, as they had done months ago.

"Who's to get the benefit of 'The Carrier's Address'?" repeated O'Shane.

"I am," said Raymond. "I've had it written, and every cent that it brings belongs to me."

He did not feel called upon to add that his mother had written the pretty verses, that he had printed them on his own hand press, and that, excepting a trifling sum spent for blank paper, the "Address" had cost not a penny.

Billy broke into a howl of rage.

"Your uncle gives you money, and then you grind more out of me, what slaves and does your work!"

"I pay you for your work exactly what you agreed was a fair price. As for my uncle and what he gives me, that's none of your concern."

Raymond spoke quietly, holding a tight rein over himself.

"You have everything in the world you want," raved Billy. "All your folks are healthy!"

"That's not your concern either."

"Ain't it my concern?" cried Billy hotly. "We'll see about that. You'll give me a chance at that 'Carrier's Address,' and fifty cents a week extra, or I'll never ing another cent for you as long as I live."

"Very well," said Raymond coldly; "your services are no longer required. You've broken your word of honour; but you've hardly enough of that material to make it worth your while to keep it. I release you from your bargain. You may go."

Billy faltered. He thought of Norah, but it was only for a moment.

"All right," said he, as loftily as Raymond's self. But there was a threat in his whole bearing as he turned away.

The mischief soon came to light. The other carriers came that very evening to demand their "Addresses" and the profits thereon.

"You can't have them," said Raymond with decision. "But I'll raise your wages twenty cents a week," he added hastily.

The boys wavered. Evidently they were under instructions. The *Advertiser* carrier was the spokesman.

"We're thinking of forming a club to protect our rights," said he confidentially.

"Knights of Labour," eh? I've heard of them," said Raymond scornfully. "Just let me advise you to keep out of it, for you'll find both money and law against you, if it comes to a rub."

The boy retired, probably to seek further counsel.

"Bill O'Shane!" thought Raymond to himself. "I wonder what will come next."

The snow shovellers came next.

"We made a bargain and we'll hold by it, if you please," said Raymond to them. "If you don't choose to please, remember it was for the season I hired you. I can get others in your places. But every cent of the pay goes, at the end of the winter, to the 'parties' who are at work at that date, whether they have been at it three months or three weeks, or three days, or three hours."

With much head-shaking the snow-shovellers withdrew. Raymond, the next day, went over to one of his school-houses. It being a holiday he was almost surprised to find his "hands" sweeping cheerfully and well.

"The strike hasn't reached here," thought he; and never in his life had he been so agreeable as he was this day to the faithful three.

The pleasant, friendly gleam had not left his face as he entered his own door; but it vanished as he caught sight of a familiar face. There stood Tom Bailey.

"I've come to say—" began Thomas.

"No, you haven't!" interrupted Raymond. "You'll do your job, young man, and you'll do it well, or you'll suffer for it."

"He won't let me," whimpered Tom.

"Who won't let you?"

"Bill O'Shane. He says if I go on the road for you, he won't let a single fellow buy peanuts of my father; and father makes half his money out of the school-boys."

"I declare upon my soul, it's a boycott!" exclaimed Raymond.

"A boycott!" it certainly was. Not only did Tom Bailey fear for his father's peanuts, but he feared for his own tender skin if he disobeyed Billy O'Shane. Nor was Billy the only tyrant, and Tom the only victim. The other carriers became leaders among the strikers, and not a small boy could Raymond find who dared to enter his service, or who was not frightened out of it, if by chance he did enter, giving his forcible, if not elegant excuse:

"They'll lick me if I stay."

Matters were very serious. Early, morning after morning, Raymond carried the *Press*, and one of the sweepers, standing staunch, took Billy's place on the *Arms*. As the enemy were not apt to gather at so early an hour, he was unmolested. A second sweeper filled Tom Bailey's place, dodging into the station at the very last moment, and more than once spilling half his wares as he jumped frantically upon the moving train.

Before long, down came the snow. Raymond shouldered his shovel and sallied forth. For a short time he worked in peace, then, with a hoot, the foe bore down upon him. At first they tried taunts and jeers.

"How do you like it yourself, sonny?"

"Don't work too hard, Boss! Don't now!"

"Why don't you wear a veil to protect your pretty complexion?"

"Say, what wages do you get? Do you work by the day or the job?"

"What's your idea of stealing, eh? Get fellows to work for nothing? B—ah!"

But the taunters soon used something, besides words. Snow balls began to fly. More than one struck with force. All at once, a sharp bit of ice came clanging against Raymond's cheek. He gave one bound, and grappled with the leader of the gang. The rest drew off and formed a ring.

The two plunged heavily to and fro. They were like two enraged young bulls. Sharper and sharper, fiercer and fiercer grew the fight. Wild beasts could not have tussled more madly. They used fists. They used nails. They bit with their teeth. I do not know how it would have ended, for, in point of physical strength, Raymond and Bill were fairly matched. But a good angel, in the shape of a burly policeman, appeared at the corner. O'Shane promptly withdrew his forces for rest and refreshment.

But Raymond had hard work before him. Four sidewalks must be cleared of snow, and then there was a concert at Grand Army Hall. He must be there to distribute programmes.

Late that evening Raymond crawled home, wet, exhausted, sick at heart, and sick in body too was he. No wonder that fever set in. No wonder that, for weeks, Mrs. Knight held her breath in an agony of fear.

Raymond was too worn with care and overwork to hold his own against disease. He lay at death's door, and it was only a question of at what moment it would open. It was only his mother's unceasing prayer and watching, her courage, which even terror could not conquer, which kept the flicker of life in him.

Then, just as even she was brought to the verge of despair, a gleam of something, which was not death, came into her boy's face. Slowly, slowly, he began to creep upward. The days, the weeks, the months went by, and Raymond was saved. Weak as a baby he lay on his pillows.

The sunshine poured in; the sweet May breezes blew into the chamber; Raymond felt no pain: only a great desire to sleep held him.

"And there's no medicine equal to that," said the doctor.

It was an afternoon near the end of May. Raymond was in the midst of a delicious nap, when suddenly he sprang up on his elbow. The front doorbell had rung so sharply that the sound had pierced into dreamland and awakened the sleeper.

"Please, Mrs. Knight," said the maid, coming to the chamber, "it's a red-headed boy, and see Mr. Ray lie will, and prevent it I can't."

"Mother," gasped Raymond, "it's Billy O'Shane. Let him come in."

And, sure enough, waiting for no invitation. Billy had followed Jane up the stairs.

He came into the chamber, stopped, gazed at the wan face on the pillow, gave a sort of stifled snort.

"Oh, my jingo! said Billy O'Shane.

There was silence after that. No one seemed to be able to speak. An occasional sniff from Billy's uncultured nose told of deep feeling, but no words came. Billy stared at Raymond. Raymond gazed back at Billy.

At last the latter opened his mouth.

"It was a mean trick on my part," said he, huskily. "If I chose to quit work myself, I'd no call to head off others from doin' theirs. It wasn't my concern neither how you got your money, seen' you kep' up to the bargain you made with me."

"I ought to have explained more to you," said the faint voice from the bed.

"I hadn't a-oughter to have been so fierce!"

There was a pause, Raymond was turning matters over in his mind.

"You wanted those library books dreadfully," said he.

"You didn't know that."

"I ought to have known it. I should have known it if I had cared. Some one said you had a sick sister," Raymond went on, still working the problem out. "Maybe she's expensive. It costs lots to be ill."

"I never told you that."

"No; but I should know it without your telling."

He held out a white, thin hand. With something very like a sob, Billy thrust forth his black, stubby fingers.

Employer and employee. Capital and labour. Brothers, the two, since they had one Father.

"I hadn't a-oughter to have been so fierce!"

"I ought to have known. I should have known, if I had cared!"

Several puzzling questions were answered by the clasp of those two hands.

THE END.

### ADVENTURES WITH THE GRIZZLY BEAR.

Few persons believe that a grizzly will attack a man before he is himself attacked. I was one of these doubting Thomases until two years ago, when I was thoroughly convinced by ocular demonstration that some grizzlies, at least, will attempt to make a meal off a man even though he may not have harmed them previously. We were hunting in the Shoshone Mountains in Northern Wyoming. I had killed a large elk in the morning, and on going back to the carcass in the afternoon to skin it we saw that bruin had been there ahead of us, but had fled on our approach. Without the least apprehension of his return, we leaned our rifles against a tree about fifty feet away, and commenced work. There were three of us, but only two rifles, Mr. Huffman, the photographer, having left his in camp. He had finished taking views of the carcass, and we were all busily engaged skinning, when, hearing a crashing in the brush, and a series of savage roars and growls, we looked up the hill, and were horrified to see three grizzly bears, an old female and two cubs about two-thirds grown, charging upon us with all the savage fury of a pack of starving wolves upon a sheep-fold.

They were between us and our rifles when we first saw them, and we sprang to our horses, which were picketed a few yards below, supposing, of course, that when the bears reached the elk carcass they would proceed to eat it, and pay no further attention to us. Strange to say, it was the carcass to which they paid no attention. They still came after us; we had no time for flight, and could not even release and mount our terror-stricken horses. Our only chance was to fight for our lives, and with one accord we all three grasped our hunting knives and dashed at them. We threw our hats and yelled like *Cumanches*, and the savage brutes, seeing themselves thus boldly confronted by equal numbers, stopped, raised on their haunches, growled, snapped their jaws for a few moments, and then walked sullenly back up the hill into the bush. This gave us an opportunity to get hold of our rifles, and then it was our turn to charge. To make a long story short, we killed the old female and one cub, the other escaped into the jungle before we could get a shot at him. The resolute front we put on alone saved our lives.

The grizzly is partially nocturnal in his habits, and apparently divides his labour of obtaining food and his travelling about equally between day and night. It is not definitely known to what age he lives in his wild state, but he is supposed to attain some twenty-five or thirty years.

Notwithstanding the great courage and ferocity of this formidable beast, he will utter the most pitiable groans and howls when seriously or mortally wounded.

Another instance of a grizzly making an unprovoked attack upon a man was vouched for by a man whom I know to be strictly truthful. Two brothers were prospecting in a range of mountains near the head waters of the Stinking Water River. The younger of the two, though an able-bodied man, and capable of doing a good day's work with a pick or shovel, was weak-minded, and the elder brother never allowed him to go any distance away from camp or their work alone. He, however, sent him one evening in the spring, a few rods off, to bring a kettleful of water. The spring was in a deep gorge, and the trail to it led through some fissures in the rock. As the young man passed under a shelving rock, an immense old female grizzly, that had taken up temporary quarters there, reached out and struck a powerful blow at his head, but fortunately could not reach far enough to do him any serious harm. The blow knocked his hat off, and her claws caught his scalp, and laid it open clear across the top of his head in several ugly gashes. The force of the blow sent him spinning around, and not knowing enough to be frightened, he attacked her savagely with the only weapon he had at hand—the camp kettle. The elder brother heard the racket, and hastily catching up his rifle, found his brother vigorously belabouring the bear over the head with the camp kettle, and the bear striking at him savage blows, any of which, if she could have reached him, would have torn his head from his shoulders. Three bullets from the rifle, fired in rapid succession, loosened her hold upon the rocks, and she fell life