

Choice Literature.

THE HISTORY OF A CERTAIN "STRIKE."

AS TOLD BY "MARY DENSEL."

Raymond Knight was walking rapidly down Main Street. The public library closed at eight o'clock, and Raymond was anxious to find a certain book to read at home that evening. Perhaps you will smile when I tell you it was a book on "Political Economy," by John Stuart Mill.

Mrs. Knight had smiled, almost aloud, when she began to find similar books in her boy's hands.

"Co-operation as a Business," by Barnard; "Socialism," by Crook; "Common Sense in Business," by Freedley.

She was immensely amused, but never a word said she. "Ray has evidently a talent for business;" that is what this wise mother thought, "and my work is to help my son become what he was meant to be."

There had been a time when another sort of book had threatened to steal into Mrs. Knight's house; a certain yellow-covered novel, with wild and worse than wild plot. Upon that she had pounced, as a lioness might spring on some loathsome reptile which attacked her young.

There had been a bonfire in the parlour grate. There had been a blaze in the mother's eyes. The latter had been quenched by two large, mournful tears. Raymond never forgot either the blaze or the tears. There was no more yellow-covered literature in his house.

As for "Political Economy," he delighted in it, strange as it may seem.

He hastened into the library to find his book on its shelf. Near by, he caught sight of a familiar face, and started. At a table, bent almost at right angles over a big volume, his grimy hands propping up his red head, sat Billy O'Shane. Now Billy and Raymond had not been on the best of terms since last winter, when the former had shovelled snow under Master Knight for "20 cents a storm," and had not felt that his wages were paid with proper promptness.

Billy had a sick sister; and, as the 20 cents often went for oranges and pickled cabbage (of which the invalid was especially fond), he had been annoyed at having to wait for his dues.

Raymond eyed him as he sat wrapped in Stanley's "Across the Dark Continent." He had often seen Billy devouring tales of travel and adventure. More than once Raymond had heard a long-drawn sigh when the bell rang for closing the library. To-night it seemed exceedingly hard for O'Shane to tear himself from enchanting Africa. The librarian was forced, at length, to lay a kind but firm hand on Billy's shoulder, and gently mention: "There's the door."

"Why don't you carry the book home?" asked Raymond, laughing; and then he was ashamed of his lack of tact, as the crimson of Billy's face made a distressing combination with the carrot hue of his hair. Then, quick as a flash, seizing his advantage: "By the way," Raymond went on, "don't you want another job? I mean if you're paid on another basis. Cash down every Saturday night, and no failure. If you had money you could have as many library books as you wanted," he ended, enticingly.

The bait was eagerly snapped at.

"As many books as you want?" What would not Billy do for that?

"Tell us the job," said he.

"Well, you see, it's in the newspaper line. My uncle Raymond has given me \$20, and I've bought out Sydney Thayer's Press route. I own a place on the *Advertiser* myself, and I'm ne-go-ci-a-ting for a chance to carry the *Argus*. You're a Democrat, aren't you? Then maybe the *Argus* will be your affair. I'll give you \$1 a week if you'll deliver the *Argus* every morning for a year."

"How much does the editor pay you a week?" asked Billy.

"That's my look out," said Raymond, shortly.

Billy looked hard at his neighbour. One pair of eyes matched the other for keenness. At last said O'Shane:

"Hand over the first two weeks' pay in advance, and I'm your man."

"Very well. Give me your receipt for it," answered Raymond, loftily. "Will you have silver? A bill might be more appropriate," he added, relaxing into a mild joke.

"And the Bland dollar's short weight too," remarked Billy, accepting both pun and money.

"Mind you're at the *Argus* office at five o'clock next Monday morning," said Raymond.

Billy sped home to tell Norah about his new business. "It's a shawl ye shall have and some peppermints, and a ride on Murphy's donkey," he told her lovingly.

Raymond himself was up betimes on Monday. And at the *Argus* office even before his menial. When he had started Billy on his route, he hurried to the Press headquarters, to give a send-off to two smaller boys, who having shorter legs, took shorter routes, also shorter pay.

"Up Main to Park, down Park to Lyman Street, and so on," said Raymond to one. "And you, man," to the other, "begin at Brackett, and 'go West, young man.'"

He spoke quickly, having no time to loiter.

The distribution of newspapers in the town was but one string to Raymond's bow. Truly our friend had a business head on his shoulders.

The week before he had "interviewed" the President of the Ogdensburg Railroad. Although this special branch did not come under General Anderson's personal care, yet Raymond enjoyed his call, talking over affairs of the city, state and country, and was told to whom he should apply for permission to sell the daily journals on the train.

Not that he would retail his wares in his own person. Perish the thought! But a certain Tom Bailey had leisure, also desire, to go each morning as far as the junction, for the trifling sum of 37½ cents a week.

"And your salary shall be raised," Raymond answered him, "when I complete my arrangements for peddling candy and pop-corn also."

Tom Bailey had inherited skill in such traffic, being the

son of a professional peanut vendor. He made no objection to candy and corn, as a pleasant scheme for his own benefit came into his head. But this he did not divulge.

The summer vacation was not yet at an end. Those in authority had not hired persons to sweep and dust two of the public school rooms.

"And I'm pretty sure to get the charge of them, mother," said Raymond, gleefully. "You see I agree to take certain work at a certain price. Nobody asks or cares if I do or don't do it myself. So I get all these chaps to work under me, while I superintend. Of course I do the brain work, and I pay only for 'manual labour,' which, by all laws of trade, is cheap. So I hope to come out in the end with a very pretty sum in my pocket. Now those newspapers: the editors pay me \$1.50 each for distributing the journals. I pay two boys \$1, and two more 50 cents apiece. I clear 50 cents on each paper. But, mind you, I've had to pay out large sums to get my routes, so I sha'n't do extra well on the papers."

"The Grand Army people are to let me attend to the programmes at their entertainment at \$1 an evening. I'll hire two small boys to hand 'em round, pay them 40 cents apiece, and keep 20 cents myself clear! The little shavers aren't worth high wages, you see, for they can't shoulder responsibility. Besides, there's a crowd of them ready to jump at the chance. I declare I won't give them but 30 cents apiece," meditated Raymond, slowly, nibbling his muffin. "The 'supply' is so much greater than the 'demand.' Lucky I thought of that point. I wonder what Betsey Goggin would charge if I bought my molasses wholesale?"

Raymond knit his brows and pondered in silence.

Betsey Goggin was what she called "a sweet lady"—which is perhaps different from a sweet lady. She kept a small store, where less taffy, chocolate-creams and soda-water were sold than Mistress Goggin could have wished. She had readily agreed to supply Raymond with fresh molasses candy at 8 cents the pound.

Now, could Raymond buy his "raw material," i.e., the molasses, at wholesale, and so save a few pennies in his bargain with Betsey?

"Take care of the cents and the dollars will take care of themselves," quoted Raymond, shrewdly. "Be just before you are generous," he also repeated to himself, but with a faint twinge of conscience when Mrs. Goggin looked downcast on being requested to make her candy out of "this jug" and not her own. "And I shall only pay 5 cents a pound since I supply the molasses," said Raymond.

He also suffered a brief pang when he proposed to raise Tom Bailey's wages only 10 cents a day in consideration of the candy he should sell.

"A large profit will accrue to me," thought Raymond, tightening his purse-strings; "and if Tom demands more, why—why?"

But Tom accepted the pittance. He was a simple soul. Besides, as I said, he had a plan of his own.

Billy O'Shane was more worldly-wise. Raymond had had the good luck to add three or four new names to the list of his subscribers to the *Argus*, and had thereby gained a percentage on the sale of that journal. Billy refused, point blank, to "just drop these few extra copies on the way" unless he were paid for his pains. Billy could drive a close bargain as well as "the boss."

"For oh!" thought Irish Billy, longingly, "if I could just git two extry dollars and pay to take home thim library books to read evenin's."

Billy's very soul hankered after the books. But there were many luxuries, besides pickled cabbage, that puny Norah needed.

Of course Billy never breathed a word of this to his employer. Raymond did not, of himself, think anything about it. To be sure, he knew that O'Shane liked books, for he often met him at the library; he also knew that, for some reason, Billy never carried the volumes home. He had heard that Billy had a sick sister. But Raymond did not put two and two together in this case. Such mathematics do not come wholly under the head of "Brain Work."

When Billy refused his request, the young master, much vexed, said merely,

"Very well. I'll carry the extra papers myself." Which he did.

But, unfortunately, about this time, O'Shane found out that there had been an unusually brisk sale of journals and cardy on the Ogdensburg Railroad. Raymond had chuckled over it; it never entering his head that Tom Bailey would confide in O'Shane.

But, such being the case, Billy saw fit to descend suddenly upon his employer, and demand an increase in his own wages.

"You're makin' money hand over fist; and I can tell you it's no fun ploddin' round these dark mornin's leavin' papers to folks' doors what can lie in bed, and chicken every day to dinner, when their books is all on hand an' you gittin' the extry," declared Billy, adding grievance to grievance, with small regard to grammar or justice. "I wisht I'd taken the route on my own hook, and then I'd have piled up money, the way you're a-doin' of," he ended bitterly.

"Where would you have found the money to buy the route? And how do you know how much money I'm making? It's none of your business, anyway," answered Raymond, coldly.

Billy scowled and rumbled his hair. A dogged look came into his eyes.

"Ye can grind down Tommy Bailey and babies like him, but ye'll find I'm another sort of customer," he growled.

Raymond caught Tom Bailey's name, and it took him but very few minutes to reach the Ogdensburg station. There stood the youthful Thomas, waiting for the train to start. His newspapers were in proper order; his candy tray looked tempting; but—

"What are you doing with those peanuts?" cried Raymond Knight, angrily.

Tom, being small and of a gentle disposition, quaked in his shoes.

"Father gave 'em to me to—to—to sell along with the candy," he stammered.

"How long have you been having a side-show in my business," demanded Raymond.

"About three days," confessed the culprit.

"That's the reason my gains have fallen short, is it?" said Raymond, growing more and more fierce, as his victim waxed more and more frightened. "Next time I catch you poaching on my grounds I'll dismiss you on the spot. Do you hear? Take this 25 cents; that's every copper you'll get this week. You've lost me a good round sum. If I did the square thing by you, you'd not get a cent of your wages. There's the bell. Leave the peanuts behind, and jump on the train. Don't let me catch you at this trick again!" he shouted, after the retreating salesman. "And what's more, don't you discuss me or my affairs with O'Shane, or it will be the worse for you both."

(To be concluded.)

A REMARKABLE DISCOVERY.

Mr. Naville and his co-workers on the staff of the Egyptian Exploration Fund have succeeded in unearthing some stupendous relics of the ancient city of Bubastis, the Pi-Beseth of Scripture, and its temple dedicated to the cat-headed goddess Bast, which has been described in such glowing terms by Herodotus. After the unsuccessful searches of Mariette Pasha among the mounds of Tell Basta, near the Zagazig station of the railway which connects Cairo with Ismailia, archæologists despairingly accepted the conclusion that nothing beyond a few blocks of red granite remained as memorials of a structure which, thousands of years ago, drew together immense crowds in annual pilgrimages. Superb monolithic columns, massive architraves, building blocks sculptured with bas-relief groups, and portrait statues of colossal proportions, have already rewarded the labours expended in clearing one-third of the site of the temple—which, it is estimated, must have been 900 feet in length, with an average width of 150 feet. Among the statues are several representing Rameses II.; of two of these in black granite the size will be understood when we mention that the eyes are seven inches in length. A statue in black granite of very much earlier workmanship—in accordance with a common practice among Oriental potentates—has been utilized as a memorial of the son of Rameses, who is described in an inscription as "General of Cavalry of his Father." The bas-reliefs, which are at present in Cyclopean heaps, are believed to have formed two large tableaux, one of which represented a great festival given by King Osorkon II. It is not a little curious that the fragment of an inscription which refers to the festival as one "which takes place every fifty years," after being hidden from the eye of man for uncounted centuries, should have been brought to light in this Jubilee year. Among other groups figured are processions of priests carrying shrines and sacred boats, and others engaged in religious dances. The first temple upon the site thus laid bare is believed to date from about 3,300 years before the Christian era. Usersten III., a thousand years later, erected a new building which, after another interval of a thousand years, was enlarged and enriched by Rameses II., Osorkon II., some 500 years later, adding a festive hall. It will be gratifying to many of our readers to know that several of the remarkable monuments thus discovered are now on their road to this country, and will be shortly open to public view.

"FINIS POLONIE" NEVER WAS SAID.

In a long letter communicated to me by M. C. E. Chocleki from the archives of the Ségur family in France, Kosciuszko wrote to Count Segur, the author of "The Decade Historique": "Ignorance or malignity, with fierce persistence, has put the expression 'Finis Polonia!' into my mouth—an expression I am stated to have made use of on a fatal day. Now, first of all, I had been almost mortally wounded before the battle was decided, and only recovered my consciousness two days afterward when I found myself in the hands of my enemies. In the second instance if an expression like the one alluded to is inconsistent and criminal in the mouth of any Pole, it would have been far more so in mine. . . . It is, therefore, not allowable for anybody either to utter or to repeat that insulting expression which is contained in the words, 'Finis Polonia.' What would the French say if, after the battle of Rossbach, in 1757, Marshal Charles de Rohan, Prince de Soubise, had exclaimed: 'Finis Gallie'? Or what would they say if such cruel words were attributed to him in his biographies? I shall therefore be obliged to you if, in the new edition of your work, you will not speak any more of the 'Finis Polonia'; and I hope that the authority of your name will have its due effect with all those who in future may be induced to repeat those words, and thus attribute to me a blasphemy against which I protest with all my soul."—*Karl Blind, in the Fortnightly Review.*

AFTER THE BATTLE.

Hundreds of bodies freshly smeared with blood of men who, two hours previous, had been filled with divers lofty or petty hopes and desires, now lay with stiffened limbs in the dewy, flowery valley which separated the bastion from the trench and on the level floor of the chapel for the dead in Sevastopol; hundreds of men crawled, twisted and groaned with curses and prayers on their parched lips, some amidst the corpses in the flower-strewn vale, others on stretchers, on cots and on the blood-stained floor of the hospital; and still, as on the days preceding, the red dawn burned over Mount Sapun, the twinkling stars paled, the white mist spread abroad from the dark sounding sea, the red glow illuminated the east; long, crimson cloudlets darted across the bright blue horizon; and, still, as on days preceding, the powerful, all-beautiful sun rose up, giving promise of joy, love and happiness to all who dwell in the world.—*Count Tolstoi, in New Princeton Review for July.*