

REAPING THE WHIRLWIND

BY CHRISTINE FABER CHAPTER X.

Gerald Thurston received Miss Brown's loving effusion as he was about to go forth to Raney's Hall. The meeting was not to be held for three quarters of an hour yet; he could give ten minutes to the letter of his betrothed and have ample time to reach the place of assembly. With trembling haste he tore it open, and read with delighted surprise a letter such as Helen never before had written to him. His eyes brightened, his cheeks flushed with pleasure, and he pressed the tinted and perfumed sheets to his lips. Then, placing the packet in his breast, he hurried out. Even his gait was more elastic owing to the reception of that letter, and his voice as he saluted Grandfather Burhill, who was sitting on the little front porch, had a heartier ring in it; meeting Miss Balk on the street, he did not seem to experience quite the thrill which any unexpected sight of her always caused him. He raised his hat, and even went so far as to salute her more kindly than he had done for a fortnight past; but Barbara was as grim and obdurate as ever, and she passed him with scarcely a response to his salutation, while Gerald, caring little, now that he held in Helen's letter an assurance that, as he loved so was he loved in return, continued his way, humming to himself a gay love tune. "Raney's Hall" was a great barn-like place just within the precincts of the poorest part of Eastbury. The lower portion served as a low bar-room; the upper part was a long, low, wide apartment, hired in turn for balls occasionally given by the poor but festively inclined residents of the village, and the political meetings that aroused alternately the boisterous spirit of opposing political factions. Now as Gerald approached he could see the entrance surrounded by the factory operatives; in but a few instances had they changed their working dress, or assumed a semblance of cleanliness even in the matter of washed faces or combed hair. Dirty, gaunt, and lathered, their heavy faces and watery eyes bore evidence that another agency than a close-fisted employer had to do with their poverty. They made respectful way for Gerald, and while a few faces looked threatening, the majority brightened as he kindly greeted them. "You are to have a meeting, I understand," he said to one of the men, "and Dick Hogan is to make a speech." "We are, sir," the man answered, civilly, while at the same time a look of surprise not unmixed with fear came into his face. Gerald saw the expression and correctly interpreted it. "Do not fear, my man," he said, in a hearty tone. "I am not here acting under Mr. Robinson's orders. I am here on my own account, to help you, my poor fellows, if I can consistently with right and justice." "God bless you, sir; you were always our friend since you came to the factory." And the man lifted his ragged cap. There was a movement of the groups as if some signal to enter had been given, and they hurried up the well-worn wooden stair to the low wide room above, now dimly lighted. Gerald followed, keeping beside the man to whom he had spoken, but at the door of the room he found himself repulsed. "I am sorry," said the operative who acted as doorkeeper, "but you are not one of us, Mr. Thurston, and Dick's orders were strict to let no one in but ourselves." "Is Dick here?" asked Gerald. "He is, sir." "Tell him that I desire admission." The message brought the man termed Dick to the door. Shabbily dressed and unkempt as he was, his massive form and uncommonly handsome features would attract even a casual observer. He confronted Gerald respectfully, but with something of a haughty surprise. "Will you refuse me entrance, Dick?" "How did you know of this meeting?" was the question asked instead of the reply Gerald expected. "Never mind that," said Thurston, "but tell me at once whether you will admit me." The large and somewhat fierce-looking black eyes of the man looked sharply into Gerald's face, and the firm set mouth twitched a little. Thurston bent forward and placed his hand on his arm. "Tell me, Dick, who before this has stood between the hands and a determination to crush them by bringing in foreign labor? Who for the past two years has done all in his power to maintain the wages even at their present rate?" Hogan became humbled and abashed. You, Mr. Thurston," he said, hanging his head. Gerald continued: "I came here tonight as much in your interest as in that of my employer, to use what influence I may possess in the cause of right and justice. You are sober now, Dick, and so are enabled to take an impartial view of things. Had you been sober the day before yesterday you would not have provoked Mr. Robinson to discharge you, and had you not continued to drink after that, you would not have gone to such an extremity as this meeting proves you to have done."

Hogan still hung his head, and the other hands, who had grouped themselves near, curious and anxious to know the subject of the conference, seeing their leader apparently cowed, lost much of their own bold demeanor. Gerald still continued: "You had a purpose in stirring up the men so soon. You would have a strike go into operation to-morrow if possible." Hogan raised his head: "I will be honest with you, Mr. Thurston—that's my intention. I know that Mr. Robinson will lose a good many thousand dollars if the contract isn't finished in time, and so I'd have the hands strike while the way is clear for them. He's keeping us on starvation wages long enough; it's time we'd keep some of the dollars from his rich purse." "Ah, my man! you are only looking at one side of the case. Grant that you succeed in your effort to make Mr. Robinson so great a loser, what after that? An increase of wages for the operatives? No, but a sweeping discharge, and an immediate introduction of foreign labor. Robinson is rich enough to stand a loss of many thousand dollars, and rich enough to compass his ends, be they the punishment of his employees or the introduction of foreign workmen. No, my poor fellow, your reasoning is entirely opposed to your own interest and to that of the other factory-hands. Think! The winter is near. What will these hundred poor fellows do with their helpless families? Where will they go, or how will they procure employment? Better continue their work even at the present poor rate of pay; but I think I can guarantee, if you will abolish this meeting and try rather to prevent a strike than to organize one, that you yourself shall be reinstated in the factory, and on the completion of this contract Mr. Robinson shall be so impressed with the magnanimity of the operatives in giving up their determination to strike under circumstances were so much in their favor that he will, of his own accord, raise the wages." Hogan shook his head. "You don't know your man, Mr. Thurston, if you think he'd be touched by the like of that. We've worked for him many a day before you come here, and the way he screwed us to the last penny made it a wonder more than once that we didn't rise up and murder him where he stood. Since you came you seemed to stand between us, somehow, as if you had a secret power over him some way." Gerald knew to what he owed his secret power over Mr. Robinson, though he did not enlighten the poor fellow. He owed it to the fact that his business ability brought more money to the miserly factory-owner than the latter could gain by his own management of the work. Hogan continued, losing much of his humble air as he proceeded: "And I wouldn't put it past him to have sent you down here with a soft speech in your mouth in order to turn us against our purpose." Gerald replied, a little indignantly: "Were my soft speeches in the past in his or in your interest? You say that I seem to have stood between you and his hard course, and you acknowledge that your condition has been something better since I came to the factory; why accuse me now of contrary conduct? And this, like your other reasoning, is opposed to the judgment of your rational mind. You know that Mr. Robinson is from home; that were he in Eastbury, and knew of this meeting, he could have stopped it as a riotous and disorderly proceeding, for half of these fellows are now so full of liquor that it needs but one of your firebrand speeches to set them fighting with each other if they can find no one else to fall upon. No, Dick, I came down here, as I told you before, of my own accord, to help you if I can, consistently with right and justice. Now, what will you do? continue your preparation for a strike, and have the suffering of these poor fellows and their families upon you, for suffer they certainly will if you win them to this step?" Again the firm set mouth twitched, and the fierce-looking eyes seemed to pierce Gerald's countenance. "I must, Mr. Thurston; the boys expect me to speak, but I'll tell them all you said, and let them choose their own course." He turned away, giving, as he did so, a low order to the door keeper to admit Gerald. Hogan kept his word with Thurston. He mounted the rude platform to speak, and while the rugged bearded faces, wearing a strange aspect in the dim light of the hall, looked up to him with intense expectation, no one waited with such keener and anxious interest for the first words that should fall from his lips as Thurston. Assigned a place very near the platform, he riveted his gaze on the speaker with a magnetism that more than once compelled the latter to return the steady and searching look. Hogan—uncouth, illiterate as he was—was a natural orator; there was even a grace and dignity about his attitude, as he stood for a moment before beginning his speech, which surprised Gerald, and won from him involuntary admiration. He gave calmly, in his own way, the substance of the interview which had just occurred between Mr. Thurston and himself; but in the next breath he burst into an impassioned account of the wrongs which had brought about the present meeting. Tones and gestures were on fire from his own impassioned feelings, and while his language was the simplest

and homeliest, every word, because of the voice and manner of the speaker, struck with resistless influence the hearts of the uncouth fellows whom he addressed. Even Thurston bent a little to the sway of that powerful oratory, but he paled as he saw how Hogan's stirring words were riveting the fierce, sullen determination which had been visible from the first on the faces of many. Something must be done, and done quickly, if he would save his employer's interest, and save the unhappy men themselves from an act which must result disastrously. Waiting only to have the last word leave Hogan's lips, he sprang upon the platform and begged a hearing. Surprise kept every one silent for a second, then discordant cries broke out: "We won't hear you; you'll take the part of Mr. Robinson against us; we'll have our rights!" mingled with—"Yes, we will hear you; you were always for us! Speak on!" Hogan himself demanded order, and asked them to listen to Thurston. Gerald spoke, in his simple manner, detailing the evils their course would bring upon themselves, the little hope of redress which a strike would gain, and ended by pledging himself to obtain some increase in their wages if they would abandon their present attempt. He waited for some one to reply, but instead, a discussion ensued between the men. Many were for accepting Gerald's terms at once, and as many more refused to do so, saying that Thurston would be unable to keep his pledge, and that so good an opportunity for a strike might not occur again. In the midst of the discussion the door of the hall was forced violently open, and a number of constables entered. One produced a warrant for the arrest of Dick Hogan. "What for?" said Hogan, coming forward, and with a look in his eyes from which the man shrank. "For inciting these men to be disturbers of the peace. It's on Mr. Robinson's orders the warrant was issued." "Mr. Robinson, eh!" and for a moment Hogan's face grew white with suppressed passion. "Well, come on then, and take me if you can." He braced himself against the wall and flourished a large knife which he drew from his breast. The constable drew his pistol. "Put up your pistol," shouted Thurston, who had hung himself in front of Hogan and was struggling with the officers to keep back the angry and desperate men. But his order came too late; the officer, maddened by the fierce and unexpected resistance of Hogan, and apprehensive also of violence to himself from the other factory operatives, yielded to his first savage impulse and fired. The ball passed not to the man for whom it was intended, but to Thurston, who had interposed himself as a shield between the officer and his intended victim. Without a word or a groan he fell; and Hogan struck with awe and reverence, dropped his knife and stood like one paralyzed above the bleeding form at his feet. The confusion became consternation. Gerald was thought to be dead, he lay so white and motionless, and while a hurried order was given by one of the constables for a physician, his companions proceeded to arrest Hogan. He made no resistance, seeming like one dazed and keeping his eye on the wounded man. The officer who had fired the pistol placed himself under arrest. The messenger who had rushed hither for the nearest doctor speedily returned with one, who at once pronounced the wound fatal. Men and surgeons were dispatched for a conveyance, and Thurston, still insensible, was removed to it, and, accompanied by the doctor, was slowly driven to his boarding-house.

CHAPTER XI. The wedding of the Tillotson girls took place in the quiet, unostentatious manner in which they chose to conduct everything. The guests were few but they were well selected, and in the enjoyment of it all Helen forgot for a time her own unhappy state of mind. All her efforts—and they had been many—were vain to stifle the reproaches and the terror of her conscience for the promise she had given Mr. Phillips. Gerald's face rose before her in a way that would not be put down, and his voice rang in her ears whenever she was alone, until she was often constrained to seek some member of the family in order to dispel the delusion. Once, yielding to an impulse of her better nature, she actually began a letter to him in which she intended to make a frank confession, assure him of her deep love for him, and beg him to come immediately for her, and remove her from influences which had been so beneficial to her. But the thought of the complete catastrophe which such a proceeding would cause in the Tillotson family, the disgust which it must arouse for herself, paralyzed her hand; then she thought of flight, and was almost casting about her for some means of secretly accomplishing it, when Mr. Phillips' immense wealth and the dazzling prospects which that wealth held out to her, made her again pause and waver. At last she determined on complete forgetfulness, and for this purpose she took the locket that contained Gerald's picture from her bosom; it seemed to stick to her hand; she burst into a passion of tears, and ended by returning it to its place. On this day of the wedding, however, in the consciousness of her beauty, which was never more brilliant, and which made her as much an object of attraction as the two handsome brides, and the recipient of attentions the most delicate and flattering from Mr. Phillips, she was enabled to keep her wild thoughts completely at bay. Indeed, not a little to her own surprise, Gerald's face did not once interpose in its accustomed way, and when the reception which followed the marriage ceremony was over, and the brides had gone on their Western tour, and Helen had a moment to slip from the guests still below, she found herself so happy from the adulation that had ministered to her vanity that she determined to write an immediate account of the day's festivities to Gerald. True, he had not answered her last letter, but his reply might have miscarried, and in any event she knew that her letters could not be too frequent. So she gave him glowing details of the double wedding, appended a description of her own appearance, and ended with the warmest protestations of love for himself; but as in the case of every other letter, so was this one innocent of the name of Phillips. On the day succeeding the wedding she was in so much demand by Mr. and Mrs. Tillotson, who had become quite fondly attached to her, and by Phillips himself, who seemed restless and anxious out of her presence, that she had little time for solitude. Gerald had not replied to any of her recent letters, and while she wondered, and even somewhat worried, interior voices were saying to her that his silence might be very fortunate. In this seeming neglect of his would be found a sufficient excuse for the breaking of her engagement to him, and for her marriage to Phillips; and as every day brought acknowledgments of the latter's warm regard for her in the shape of costly presents, the voice of her conscience was further stilled, and her treachery to her lover nearer completion. Though continuing to write every fortnight to Barbara Balk, she made not a single allusion to Gerald, and that lady in her caustic replies was equally silent about him. "But a month remains," whispered Mr. Phillips to Helen, one day that he came to lunch with the Tillotsons; and as that morning she had received from him an exquisite set of jewels, she could do nothing but assent to his whisper by a smile and a blush. He pressed her hand, and they entered the dining-room together. But what a sight met them. Mrs. Tillotson in a passion of tears hung on her husband's neck, while he, holding an open telegram, looked the picture of grief and horror. "Read, Phillips," he said, extending the telegram, "and see how suddenly grief has overtaken you." Phillips read: "Accident to the train—Annette and Mary hurt, but not seriously; still it is better that you should come on." "CHARLES SCOTTFIELD." "I have given orders for my immediate departure," said Mr. Tillotson, for, though the telegram states "not seriously," I have had misgivings." At this instant a servant entered, bearing another despatch. It was torn open with feverish haste. "There is no cause for alarm. Both ladies are very slightly hurt, and both request me to state that there is no necessity to subject you to the fatigue of a journey to them." "C. SCOTTFIELD." "Thank God!" said Mr. Phillips. But Mrs. Tillotson had sustained a shock which nothing but the prospect of going immediately to her daughters seemed to lighten. She must see them, and Tillotson, both to gratify her and to satisfy his own yearning to behold or himself the condition of his children, determined to follow out his order for speedy departure. "And Helen," he said, "shall accompany us." "No," said Phillips. "I have another plan; spare me a few minutes, Tillotson, to submit it to you." They withdrew to the library, leaving Helen white and terror-stricken, but her paleness and terror were attributed to the sad news received, and not to the secret premonitions of what Phillips' plan might be. She had little time, however, to yield to her wild thoughts for Mrs. Tillotson had drawn her to her, and was weeping upon her neck tears of mingled sorrow and joy—joy that the last news had been so favorable; and in a few moments the two men returned, and immediately approached her. Phillips' plan was disclosed to her. It was that her marriage to him should take place at once, before Mr. and Mrs. Tillotson's departure. It could be a very quiet ceremony, performed in the house of the Tillotsons, which should remain the home of the newly-wedded couple for the few days prior to a journey abroad. The plan met Tillotson's warm approbation, and Mrs. Tillotson kissing and straining the pallid girl to her, whispered: "Consent, dearest; it is best for you." But Helen gasped, while Gerald's face rose up in its old persistent way. "You gave me three months; there is a month yet." Her terror was plainly visible and utterly inexplicable to the three who

saw it, even on the supposition, which was in the mind of each, that her time of mourning for her father had not expired. Phillips answered with a sternness that Helen had never heard in his tones before, and that somewhat terrified her. "If the thought of a hasty union with me than you had expected is so insupportable, Helen, it is better that you should ask to be released from your engagement; or if there be some secret reason why—she bent towards her; she was forced to look at him, and she covered before the expression of his eyes—"you should continue to crave delay; it is your duty to tell it." For one whirling moment the last impulse of her better nature rose up. "Ask the release that she suggests," whispered the still small voice; but her weak nature recoiled from the indignation and scorn with which she felt she would be visited; indeed, she was terrified now, and she had but one desire—to do anything that would regain Phillips' wanted regard. "I have no reason; I am not thinking of papers," her tears burst forth, and she threw herself sobbing on Mrs. Tillotson's breast. It was the last protest of her stifled conscience against her falsehood and her cruel wrong to Gerald. But Phillips never was so much in love with her as at that moment; his grief, deeming it as he did the outburst of a devoted filial affection, enhanced the charm of her character, and he became impatient to win at once her consent to an immediate marriage. Waiving only for the partial calm of her agitation, he pressed with delicate courtesy for her answer. Powerless now to resist the toils she had woven about herself, she assented, and he withdrew with Tillotson to make immediate preparations for a hasty ceremony, while Mrs. Tillotson accompanied Helen to her room.

TO BE CONTINUED. AN OCEAN EPISODE. The Mayurma had steamed quietly away from San Francisco and was already half way through that famous portal of Western America—the Golden Gate—when Irving Newcomb, leaning on his wife's arm, came on deck, only to find that a stranger had usurped one of the two steamer chairs he had chartered for the voyage. Having only lately passed through the hands of a surgeon, Newcomb was on a convalescing trip over the Pacific, but he looked what he was, an invalid, and more than usually irascible. He was about to apostrophize the stranger when his wife prevented him. "Wait a moment, Irving," she observed. "I believe it's a Catholic priest." "Sure enough!" remarked the husband when he observed the clerical appearance of the usurper, the Roman collar and the inevitable breviary. "But, confound it," he went on, "the chairs are ours. I'm going to inform him." "Don't, just yet! Perhaps he doesn't know they're reserved," ventured Mrs. Newcomb. "It's nearly dinner time. Let us leave him there and go to have the bags brought to the stateroom." Newcomb yielded reluctantly, bewailing the fact "those priests are ubiquitous." While the invalid and his wife descended the stairway Father Higgins, wholly unaware of the irate intention he had occasioned, finished up Matins and Laude, and rose to take a glimpse of the ocean. As the great Pacific liner pushed farther and farther away from the fading coast line, the young missionary experienced within himself a curious medley of sentiments which might be summed up under the head of loneliness. He yielded for a moment to their depressing influence, but they were partly shaken off in a brisk double circuit of the upper deck, after which he went down to the dining saloon. The mirth of the court parties gathered at different tables harmonized so little with his present state of mind that he hesitated a moment at the door of the sumptuous hall, before seeking out a place. "This way, Father!" beckoned the head-waiter, who took him to a quiet corner where happily a port-hole at his elbow would enable him during his meal to enjoy the gorgeous spectacle of a Pacific sunset. The diners began to file in until all the places on his side of the saloon were taken, save the two directly opposite him. Even then a couple were being directed thither, although they seemed rather perturbed over something or other. "At any rate, Irving," the lady remarked in an undertone as they seated themselves, "we can enjoy the sunset." "Well, that at least is something to be thankful for," concurred the other in a tone more or less sepulchral. Both exchanged a nod of recognition to the priest seated opposite, who noted its lack of friendliness and returned it as an "aboard ship" formality. "We've arranged with the steward for a special service," the woman said when the waiter appeared, while a peremptory bob of the head from her husband was the signal to the young Tap in white to dispatch himself. Father Higgins lingered over his coffee and dessert, but the "special service" arrived straightway, much to the dissatisfaction of Newcomb, who told the waiter he did not want buttered toast, but dry, nor his eggs boiled so hard, etc. The missionary rose, said his grace, and then withdrew, to their

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