

WON AT LAST

By Bernard Bigsby.

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(CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEK.)

CHAPTER VII.

FRANK GREY SECURES AN APPOINTMENT AND LOSES IT.

"And this is a Sabbath day in great new Babylon of Chicago," Grey mused as he wended his way one Sunday morning to the post office. He was not strait-laced in his opinions nor in any way puritanical, but the utter disregard of that Day of Rest he had from childhood been accustomed to observe jarred his feelings strangely. The city was "running full blast." Theaters, concert-halls, "dives" of every description were open to the public, who seemed bent upon taking every advantage of enjoyment they offered.

To Grey the scene was hideous. It was not the gay, outdoor festival of a Parisian Sunday; but a day on which young men shut themselves up in bil-



"BEEN IN THE WARS, SIR?"

lard-halls and gambling dens, and drank themselves into a state of lethargy. It was a vulgar, senseless, behind-the-screen kind of a Sunday.

Frank Grey had resolved upon a journalistic career. He felt that he could write, and as he was temperate, energetic and modestly willing to begin at the bottom of the profession and work his way up, he did not anticipate much trouble in securing a position, and with this end in view he had written to the managing editor of every newspaper in the city a letter of application for immediate employment, if needs be, volunteering to give his services for nothing at the start.

When he reached the post office he took his place in the long line of expectant men patiently taking their turn of inquiry at the little window. It might be ten minutes before his chance would come, so he spent the time in scanning the features of the men near him, speculating on their lots in life, for they were, of course, all like himself, strangers, and probably nine out of every ten men who had come to this Mecca of the destitute to seek employment.

His attention was especially attracted to the person immediately in front of him—a tall, broad-shouldered, handsome young man, with a face expressive of intense anxiety.

"Algernon Granville?" the stranger asked when his turn came.

The clerk hastily ran over a pile of letters and shook his head.

"Are you sure?"

"Nothing for you. Pass on," was the curt response.

Grey was sure he saw the young man's face flush and then grow deathly pale as he strode away.

For himself there were four letters, each bearing the address in large black letters of a Chicago daily paper. He chuckled to himself as he received them, his only apprehension being that he had been precipitant in offering his services in such a broadcast manner, which might lead to the embarrassment of more than one accepting his proposition. Putting the precious missives in his pocket to be enjoyed at leisure in his lodgings he strolled away with much self-satisfaction, pausing for a moment to gaze with wonder into the shop-windows of Clark street, where the second-class tradesmen were driving a roaring business notwithstanding the city ordinances which prescribe fines innumerable for all violators of the Sabbath day.

He had crossed two blocks on his way to his lodging when his attention was attracted to a second-hand basement clothes store, in which, to his surprise, his handsome neighbor at the post office was standing in the midst of some dirty Jewish salesmen, engaged in a violent altercation, everyone of the shopmen speaking at once, and the young gentleman indignantly protesting in loud and angry tones.

Without a moment's reflection Grey sprang down the steps to the young man's side.

"Can I serve you in any way?" was the impetuous offer. "What is the matter?"

"Nothing. You thought it was a row, did you? Good fellow! It's only a way these enterprising gentlemen have of doing business."

"Oh, indeed," Grey replied, blushing at his impatient interjection. "I am very sorry I intruded."

"Never mention it. And now," said the stranger, turning to the store people, "if you will not give me ten dollars for an overcoat for which I paid fifty not a month ago, give me the garment back."

A babel of polyglot depreciation followed.

"Surely," said Grey, "you are not

thinking of selling that handsome overcoat?"

"Not for four dollars, which is all the beggars offer."

"Get your coat and come along with me; I have something to propose; you must; you shall." And, notwithstanding the opposition of the Jews, who, in their agony at losing a customer, offered nine, ten, eleven—and then, with a scream like the cry of a lost spirit, twelve dollars—they escaped to the sidewalk.

"Let me be your friend," Grey said, grasping the arm of his new acquaintance. "I am sure the dilemma that compels a gentleman to sell his coat in a strange city can be easily explained, and you will confer a favor on me by—"

"Letting you act the role of a trans-Atlantic Brother Cheerful to a distressed yet deserving young man. The twin is at home, I suppose, waiting to take me to his heart and fortunes."

"Nay. I am as great a stranger in the city as yourself—I am implying that you are a stranger—and—"

"A thousand pardons," the young man interrupted, grasping Grey's hand: "You are a royal good fellow and deserve a frank explanation. I am a peripatetic Englishman out of luck. My necessities are a mere passing shadow, but it is the confounded need of ready cash that is driving me to my wits' end. There never was such a land as this for spending money and during a sojourn through the west I have got into difficulties. Leaving my baggage out in Omaha as security for a hotel bill, I started for this big, dirty, scrambling, hustling human beehive of a Chicago."

Grey laughed.

"You will like the place if you stop here long enough. They say that everyone who comes here hates it the first month of his residence, endures it the second, and adores it the third," he said.

"Well, I'm in the first stage of experience, and I candidly confess I detest it—but to return to my story: My remittance is not come, and, as I do not know anyone in the country, I am in what you would call a 'tarnation fix.'"

"I do not know that I should use such an expression," Grey smiled. "Only American gentlemen in English novels would talk in that way; but never mind that. You want some ready money. I am not a Jay Gould, but I can spare you a little, if you put your pride in your pocket and accept my offer as cordially as it is offered."

"Agreed with all my heart. By Gad, if all your countrymen were as fine, big-hearted fellows as you are, I should like to pitch my tent among you."

Thus began between two young men, who half an hour before did not know of each other's existence, a friendship that was to last a lifetime.

In the silence of his chamber that night, after a day pleasantly spent with his new acquaintance, Grey drew forth the letters that contained his fate, sure of a choice of positions and only hoping that he would have the good judgment to choose the best.

As the letters were read one after another, his cheek flushed, and when the last was perused he sat down on the bed gazing with the blankest stare of disappointment.

The fact is, they were all worded alike, as though one hand had written them, and each contained the assurance that the members of the staff of that particular journal never resigned, rarely died and that there was not even the thinnest hope of present or future literary employment. On one letter, however, some good fellow had scribbled a postscript in pencil:

"If you can get the humblest living in any honest way, young man, give up the idea of journalism in Chicago. JOHN BAILEY."

Thus one bubble burst and now another scheme for solving the great problem of existence must be devised. Why not call upon this John Bailey? He was evidently a man with sympathetic tendencies, or he would never have troubled himself to add that scribbled bit of advice.

Accordingly next morning Frank Grey tramped up the rickety staircase that led to the editorial rooms of the great daily. He had no difficulty in finding the man for whom he was searching—evidently a person in authority—and in a few minutes found himself in the presence of an oldish man, rather inclined to corpulence, whose well-to-do air and comfortable surroundings hardly served to point a moral to his wall over the blighted prospects of journalism. He received the young man, who stammered his apologies for his impertinence, with good-humored cordiality.

"So you are another moth fluttering in the candle of literary hope?" he asked, with an amused smile.

"Well, yes, if you put it so. I do most earnestly wish to join your ranks."

"What do you think you are fit for?"

"Oh, I am modest; I am willing to start with a pittance, nay, to work for a time with no remuneration, if the chance be given me."

"Exactly. But what are your qualifications?"

"I can write rapidly and with tolerable accuracy. I have already done some magazine work, and—"

"Bah!" interrupted the eccentric editor. "Can you wallow in the mire of ward politics? Are you hand-in-glove with the loafers who hang around Hans Pumpernickle's beer saloon? Can you forget that you are a man and betray private confidences; lie about people who have been gracious to you; put up with insults; write against your

most solemn convictions, and be ready to be kicked out of your berth by your employer, who has found a man with a skin a little tougher or a conscience a little denser than your own? Can you, I ask?"

"Well, if you are the result of this peculiar training, I—"

"Might venture too. Ah, young man, we are not similarly situated—I never



"CAN I SERVE YOU IN ANY WAY?"

had to begin at the bottom. In my young days things were different, and there was no mob of hungry scribblers hanging on to a newspaper. However, thank your blessed stars, there is no chance of your getting on the daily however suicidally you may be inclined."

"What chance, sir, do you think I would have with the weeklies?"

"Their name is legion, but with the exception of three or four you would be either requested to write for starvation wages or be engaged at a high salary and never paid. You might, if you were lucky, get nine dollars a week, and a bricklayer's wages are four dollars a day."

"The picture you draw is not encouraging."

"Nor do I mean it to be. Fly from this over-populated city, to which every young adventurous breadwinner from every country on the earth makes his way, till the streets are teeming with the unemployed—but, say, have you an imagination? Can you paint word-pictures? The story papers do pay well, but you must have served your apprenticeship before you will be admitted into their columns. So that chance is barred."

"And you know of nothing?"

"Why, yes," said Mr. Bailey, reflectively, "there's an old friend of mine, who used to be a colleague in this office, who told me the other day that he wanted help. He's been badly bitten by socialism, and he runs a sheet which he seriously thinks is to redeem the world, though I never saw it, nor do I know anything about his pecuniary responsibility. Men with whims rarely amount to much, and I guess he's sunk all he had accumulated in this venture."

"Would you mind giving me his address?"

"With pleasure. Here, let me write you a line of introduction. It is a pity you cannot make up your mind to follow a respectable line of occupation, but if you are determined to go wrong, you may as well meet your fate at once."

Bidding adieu to his new friend, who he afterwards learned was fastidiously touchy on anyone else presuming to slight the profession of journalism, Grey hurried to the address he had received.

The building which housed, with twenty other crafts, the Labor Times, was not prepossessing in its exterior. However, after mounting three flights of stairs—for then there was not as now an elevator in every office building in Chicago—he came to a door brilliantly illuminated with colored placards. There was a grand pictorial representation of Labor as a knight in armor, mounted on a superb charger, pinning to the earth with a huge spear the fiery dragon of Capital, and half a dozen other florid denunciations of equal significance.

Grey modestly tapped at the door, then entered.

The walls of the office were profusely adorned with flaring posters, while its furniture consisted of three common Windsor chairs and large pine table abundantly littered with papers, behind which sat a tall, gaunt old man with gray hair falling over his shoulders.

"Col. Gilchrist, I presume?" Grey inquired.

"At your service," the gentleman bowed with old-time politeness.

"I bear you this letter of introduction."

"Ah, I see, from my old friend Bailey. Well, young man, what can I do for you?" This with a new air of patronage in his tones.

"I am seeking literary work. Your journal is likely to enlist my sympathies, and I have called to see if there is, as Mr. Bailey suggested, a vacancy on your staff."

"You have means?"

"Well, yes, enough to keep me for a month or two."

"That is good—no experience, eh?"

"Exactly."

"Well, as it happens, I do need help. Of course you are aware that the privilege of working upon a journal of such influence as the Labor Times carries with it a weight in considering the amount of salary."

"Well, yes; I do not expect much to start on."

"I am offering, under such circumstances, but twenty-five dollars."

"A week, sir?"

"A week! No, a month!" roared the old man, agitated at the extravagant ideas of his visitor.

"But that will not pay my board bill. Chicago is a dear place to live in, and I am now giving eight dollars a week for the use of a room which has the only advantage that you can lie in bed and read everything in it, together with badly cooked meals and wretched service."

"So you decline?"

"No. I accept, as the experience may be valuable to me."

So Grey was installed in the other dilapidated chair as a full-blown editor, enjoying the distinguished privilege of "molding the opinions of millions of readers," as his employer graphically put it.

Now it chanced that at noon the proprietor of the Labor Times announced his intentions of strolling over to a restaurant for a lunch—a free lunch, one of the blessings to the bibulous, for which Chicago is remarkable—and Grey found himself in full charge of the establishment.

"None will call at this hour," the great man observed; "so you might be looking over our file and get on to the hang of our line of action."

But hardly was his back turned when a visitor appeared—a frank, well-dressed, good-looking young man of pleasing exterior.

"The editor of the Labor Times?" he asked.

"Well, one of them," Grey smiled.

"Then, sir, I've brought an article I've written. Of course, I've only had a common-school education, and it isn't up to much as a literary production, but I think it's got some ideas in it, and you might be inclined to publish it."

"The subject?"

"Well, it is just a workingman's notions on capital and labor—a little out of the common for a mechanic in these troublesome times, for I take it that while trades unions are fine things in their way, there's such a thing as over-doing the laboringman's protection and crippling enterprise."

"Are you a mechanic?" Grey asked, wonderingly.

"Shipwright," was the abrupt answer; "in the employ of Moore & Marston, down at the dry docks. George Harland's my name. And, oh, before I forget it, I want to put an ad. into the Times of a furnished room I've got to let to some quiet man of steady habits."

Grey started.

"A furnished room, you say? What rent do you ask for it?"

"Five dollars a month with stove and gas."

"Would it suit me?"

"Why, no, I don't think it would. You see, sir, it's not in one of the avenues, but right out in A Hundred and



"COL. GILCHRIST, I PRESUME?"

Fiftieth street—not that the neighborhood isn't respectable or the cottages kind of pretty—but I guess it's not quite up to your requirements."

Nevertheless Grey took down the address and the very next day was in possession of the vacant chamber. But meanwhile a startling event was to happen, which was to turn the current of his plans by one instant sweep of the hand of misfortune.

It was towards four o'clock in the afternoon that the two editors were conversing pleasantly, for the senior was a man of ripe experience and great natural power of observation, and was becoming more genial towards his well-mannered subordinate—or perhaps the Real Old Kentuck he had imbibed at his free lunch had warmed his heart—when, without a knock, the door opened and a squarely-built, broad-shouldered man, showily dressed, whose heavy gold watch-chain and rings were in painful contrast to his low-bred face and black finger nails, entered.

The proprietor welcomed him enthusiastically—nay, if I were not writing of so great a man, I would say, with cringing servility.

"My new associate editor, Mr. Grey," said the colonel, calling his visitor's attention to his amused assistant.

"The gentleman's name?" Grey asked, as he shook hands.

"Ah, this is Herr Schlossinger—the great Schlossinger, you know."

"But, forgive my ignorance, I—"

"What, you don't know Schlossinger! Not know Schlossinger, the socialist! Not know the leading spirit in the great labor movement of the city of Chicago! Not know the fiery orator, before whose burning denunciations tyrants tremble and kings shake in their thrones! Not know—"

But the colonel's eloquence was interrupted by the Chicago Demosthenes, who turned rudely to Grey and said, without the faintest sign of German accent, but in the strong western vernacular: "See here, young feller, I'm tickled to death that the ole cuss has had the sense ter put young blood on his one-hoss paper; for it's milder now nor of it was run by a woman's sewin'-circle; a chile might put more go into it. See?"

Grey nodded.

"Now, I shan't bother my head about Gilchrist any longer. You look as if yer could swing a pen, an' I shall give the straight tip ter you every time, an' ef you know beans when the bag's open you'll follow my orders. Jest es I give 'em ter yer."

"Does the paper belong to you?" Grey asked, agitated at the possibility.

"Not by a long shot! but for all that I guess I'm the heart an' the liver an' the lungs an' the backbone of it. See?"

"I presume," asked Grey, coolly, "you're what they call a professional agitator?"

"You've hit it, stranger."

"And," continued Grey, with aggravating nonchalance, "you belong to a class of men for whose occupation I confess I have nothing but contempt."

Schlossinger blazed forth in a torrent

of oaths, while the poor colonel rose in bewildered deprecation.

"To a class of men," Grey went on, as soon as he could get a hearing, "who have no interest in the reform of social abuses, who prey upon the workingman, and wax fat upon his hard-earned wages."

"Do you hear him?" yelled Schlossinger, advancing. "Leave this office, you hound, you dog!"

"I am not a tyrant, and I am not a king, Mr. Schlossinger," Grey said, with exasperating coolness, "except so far as every American citizen is a sovereign, and that is why I do not quake at your approach—nay, perhaps why, if you come one step nearer, I shall soil my hands by knocking you down."

Almost sniting the action to the word, he sprang upon the communist. "Down on your knees and beg my pardon, or I will thrash you within an inch of your life," he cried, like one stung to sudden frenzy.

"Gilchrist! quick! police!" gasped the fallen agitator, who, notwithstanding his muscular build, never moved a finger to defend himself.

Grey flung him scornfully aside.

"Pshaw! I have done with you; you are not worth chastisement; but never dare to set foot in this office while I am here."

By now, however, the colonel's scattered senses had recovered their equilibrium.

"I, sir, am master here," he cried. "Herr Schlossinger, I humbly apologize for this man's insolence—and I ignominiously discharge him on the spot!"

"Don't give me any o' yer taffy," the agitator growled, turning his venom on one he dared insult. "I'll pay yer back for this, yer see ef I don't—I'll ruin yer sure es my name's Hermann Schlossinger!"

"My dear, dear friend," the colonel deprecated, "how could I help it? Don't visit on me the sins of another. Don't—"

But Frank Grey stopped the old man's apologetic.

"Col. Gilchrist," he said, not without a touch of kindness in his tone, "don't degrade yourself by wasting words on such a hound. It is painful to see a man of your education and antecedents subjected to the dictates of a loutish brute like this king quaker; but if you must continue your connection with him, do let me entreat you, adopt another method in dealing with him. When he is insolent, kick him—kick him hard—it will do him good and you no harm—for though you are an old broken man, he will not dare to retaliate, and I am sure he has too sincere an antipathy to a police court to make you legally responsible for his whipping."

With this parting shot, Grey left the Labor Times to reconstruct the world without his valuable assistance. But this meant no work—and no work in Chicago means more than in any other city in the world—means that if a man falls down in the rank on the march none have time to stop in the rush and roar of that phenomenal Babylon to pick him up.

Another trouble awaited him, on reaching his boarding place: Stewart, his newly-made friend, had received his remittance, and, all elate, was only delaying his departure to wish him good-by.

"Good-by, old fellow; I shall never forget your kindness."

"Good luck go with you," was Grey's warm rejoinder.

"Remember my address in London. There's no knowing in the whirligig of time when we may meet again."

The regret Grey felt at the loss of this young man he had known so short a time puzzled him.

"Surely," he communed with himself when he was left alone, "there is some force of electro-biology which draws souls together—some subtle attraction which controls congenial spirits, which we shall all understand some day in God's good time. I feel it in my bones that Stewart and I will meet again."

Yes, they would meet again.

(To be Continued.)

Inconsistency.

The old party papers, without exception, are in a siegel of a fix. The eastern democratic and republican papers are yelling their lungs out in behalf of the gold standard, declaring this to be the true policy of the two parties, while the same press of the south and west is yelling itself into contortions for the double standard. They are simply playing on the prejudices of their respective sections, hoping in the two-faced game to be able to hold enough dampfiles in line to carry the next presidential election. Go it, you old rascalions, and have fun while you can; your time is short and sweet.—Butte (Mont.) Bystander.

No Hope There.

"As well hope for the republican party to inaugurate free trade as for the democrats to give us free silver."—People's Sentinel.

One would be as reasonable as the other. It is true that southern and western democrats in their state conventions have frequently declared in favor of free silver; but when it has come to a vote in congress democrats have voted against it by large majorities. The national democracy of today is so largely dominated by the gold standard element of the north and east that there is no reasonable hope that the party will ever give us free silver.—Weatherford (Tex.) Leader.

Be a Man.

Don't be afraid of public opinion, but help to make it. To fear public opinion is pretty fair evidence that you have no opinion of your own. It is probably easier to let politicians think for you than to think for yourself, but it don't pay in the long run. Instead of fearing public opinion, get good opinions, based on equity and justice, and make public opinion conform to them. Don't be weak-kneed; don't shrink because somebody might laugh at you; don't let public opinion make acoward of you. Do a man's part in this struggle.—Coming Nation.

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