

' TWIXT GOLD AND SINEW. *

BY C. J. MESSER.

BOOK TWO—PART III.

EVIDENTLY Tom had no regard for the dislikes or likes of Mr. Grillis, for he went directly to Brigham & Co's, on Federal street. Noiselessly entering, he accosted a man who was standing before a high desk, with—

"Hello, Mr. Dernaot."

The person addressed looked up. A frown showing annoyance, or even trouble, wrinkled his forehead, but he did not answer the salutation. He was tall and straight and very slight, his face wore an almost unhealthy pallor, which set out the freckles more prominently. His hair was thick, coarse and very black. He leaned his elbow on the desk and his head rested on his thin hand.

"I seed yer folks to-day," said Tom, after waiting some time for the other to break the silence. Tom was shifting from one foot to the other and twirling his old hat between his dirty fingers. He was visible growing uneasy under the clerk's steady gaze. "There's somethin' the matter with 'em." He had smiled and scowled alternately, but his eyes could not stand that stare—they sought the floor as he blurted out: "The trouble's with yer sister, an' yer mither's driv 'er out."

When Tom looked up he saw with relief that the clerk's head had fallen on the desk. Cautiously he tiptoed to the door, opened it, passed noiselessly out, and closed it softly behind him.

At midnight of the same day a man trudged along Summit avenue, on St. Timothy's hill, in the city of Linn. From far away on the sea came in the warning doleful notes of a fog bell. A heavy mist was driving in, making it an uncomfortable night for any wayfarer.

The man, coming to the Goldthurst home, cautiously entered the grounds. To all appearances the late visitor came for no unlawful purpose, for a light in one of the windows on the first floor did not check his advance.

It might be considered singular that at that time of night a shade should be left up so that the light shone on the back steps of the house. The man saw nothing alarming about this, either. Instead, he went up the steps and knocked at the door. A few moments passed, then the door was opened, but no one appeared to greet a visitor. Hesitatingly the man entered. As he came into the lighted room, the face and form of Old Tom were revealed. While Tom stood, hat in hand, looking about the apartment as though undecided as to his next move, a door, opposite to that by which he entered, was opened and Mr. Goldthurst

came in. The gentleman, who appeared not to be cognizant of his visitor's presence, went about fastening the windows and drawing the shades. While in this occupation he turned and discovered Tom. An exclamation escaped the master of the house, but so low was the sound that it was impossible to say whether it were born of surprise or fear. In another instant Tom was covered by a revolver.

"Hol' on," gasped the terror-stricken visitor, "w'at are ye a-doin' of? I'm Ole Tom, I am, I ain't no burglar, I ain't."

"What do you mean by entering here?" asked the master of the house and of the situation, lowering the weapon, but keeping his magnetic eye on the cowering wretch.

"'Cause ye told me to, that's why," sulkily, "an' then when I does w'at ye tells me to ye go ter firin' pistols at me."

"You came here to steal," Mr. Goldthurst exclaimed, sneeringly, as he placed his finger on a little silver bell. "The nightwatch passes here about this time," with a significant glance toward his hand.

"No I didn't nuther," whined Tom. "Don't ye go fer to ringin' the bell; ye fergits as ye asked me. I see ye on the Millbury road two weeks ago to-morrow, an' ye told me ter come here to-night. Ye writ it down in yer book."

Mr. Goldthurst appeared to be thinking. Not once did he take his eyes off Tom, and that worthy's position had become so uncomfortable that great drops of sweat stood on his mahogany-colored face.

"Will you be so kind as to tell me why I desired your valuable presence?" Mr. Goldthurst's voice was frigid and hard in its irony.

"We was a-talkin' on the road 'bout the trouble in the mills, an' ye said if the men held out the bosses would give in."

"And I told you besides—"

"Ye told me to go ter Coldbrook an' try ter git the men ter leave work there, an' so help the strikers ter beat."

"And I further said—"

Tom was so disconcerted by the cold questioning and the contempt in the gentleman's face, that he could only swing his bulky form from side to side and mumble unintelligibly.

"Come!" said Goldthurst, sharply.

"Ye said as how we'd been cheated an' robbed. Ye said as how 'twould be right if we done anythin' ter beat, an' ye said it was a pity as there was so much goods all manufactured in the mills. Ye said if them goods was got out o' the way the bosses would have ter go ter work ter keep the trade."

Tom's speech had grown louder, he talked faster and his eyes were half closed. It appeared that even