

## 'TWIXT GOLD AND SINEW. \*

BY C. J. MESSER.

BOOK TWO—PART V.

BY inquiries of the people he met, Dermot got the story. A stranger had incited the men to seize a load of liquor that was passing Red Hill on the Millbury road. The liquor was rolled to the green, and men, women and children had become crazed. While wrangling in disputes among themselves, young Brigham had driven by, his horse on the run. When opposite the Red Hillers he had fired a shot among them. In drunken rage they followed, and felled the horse to the earth with a heavy stone. They had torn the carriage in pieces, but Brigham, by keeping up a steady firing, had escaped. The furious mob had applied the torch to one of the largest store-houses. Every drinking saloon had been sacked, and the drink-crazed operatives were terrorizing the town.

A band of desperate looking fellows were coming along the street. Their hats and coats were thrown off. Some had sticks for weapons, others carried chairs, others long-handled forks, and still others burning brands, which they flourished close to the windows of the houses they passed. Hoarse laughter greeted the frightened appeals of some belated townsmen for mercy. But it was a good-natured mob, and it sang in drunken discord. One of the number, seeing Dermot standing alone, invited him to accompany them to the great "A" mill, where young Brigham was in hiding, and see them burn a mill owner's son alive.

As Dermot heard the plan his hands clenched and his eyes glowed. A half savage excitement possessed him as he considered, "What has the burning of Brigham to do with me?" His head grew dizzy as he thought of his dead sister. His feet seemed to move with the revellers. A dozen wild looking men were encouraging him. There was a fierce struggle within him, then his birth blood asserted itself and he raised his voice with theirs.

While they marched on, growing more noisy as their numbers increased, a sweet sensation of coming vengeance took entire possession of him. The hoarse yells delighted his ears, he laughed loudly, and his eyes gleamed with the wildest of them as he listened to their plans of destruction. When they came to the mill a crowd was already surging about the main entrance, against which a battering ram was being worked.

"Down with capital!" the crowd roared.

"Down with capital!" repeated Dermot, then a cold perspiration stood out from his forehead and his heart grew deathly sick. He had looked up and had seen a figure appear at the mill office window. It was the figure of an old man, with long, white hair and beard.

"Down with capital!" yelled the crowd, encouraged by the signs of life within to greater exertions, and again the heavy log crashed against the door. For a few seconds it seemed to Dermot that his head was bursting. The noise of the rioters confused him. He seemed to be battling with his own waning consciousness. With an effort he looked again on the figure in the window, then with a bound he forced his way through the throng and stood in front of the mill door.

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"Hold!" he shouted, "Hold, ye cowards! Stand back, I tell ye!" as they advanced again with the log. They paused and looked on him, half dazed, half undecided. Every man knew him, and knew him for the kindnesses and assistance he had rendered them.

"Back!" he screamed. His body was bent forward and his eyes seemed to be starting from his head. "Get yer bread, but commit no murder. May the hand rot that harrums that old head."

It was Red Hill addressing Red Hill, but it was light commanding darkness and superstition. A rumble of voices arose, then the crowd fell slowly back.

"Bread! Bread!" they cried.

"Down 'ith capital!" howled a voice in which rage and disappointment were blended, and Old Tom thrust his hideous mask of a face in advance of his comrades. "Down 'ith Dermot!" he roared. "He ain't with us. Down—" There was a precipitous backward movement in the crowd as Dermot, with a spring, fastened his fingers in a vice-like grip on the flabby throat. Tom's eyes grew large and bulging, his tongue hung out of his great mouth and his face blackened in strangulation. Choking and gasping, he struggled till he was dashed unconscious to the pavement.



"DERMOT, WITH A SPRING, FASTENED HIS FINGERS IN A VICE-LIKE GRIP ON THE FLABBY THROAT."

The crowd gazed stupidly on the horrible face of their leader, then turned and rushed away. Dermot leaned, weak and faint, against the mill door.

"Who is it?" asked Mr. Brigham from the office window.

"Dermot," was the answer.

"Dermot," in a tone of hesitancy. After a few minutes a key was thrown to the pavement, and Mr. Brigham called: "Will you come up, Dermot?"

When Dermot, after locking the mill door behind him, had ascended to the office, he found Mr. Brigham standing at the desk, his face buried in his arms. On the floor lay Arthur in a drunken sleep.

"Oh, Dermot!" murmured the unhappy manufacturer, tears of anguish coursing down his cheeks. "If you had been my son instead of him!" A flush cov-