

WHALEN'S.*

BY C. J. MESSER

EVERYBODY in the county knew Timothy Whalen, and, knowing him, it was only natural that everybody should associate the man with the huge factory which covered acres of ground and reached half a dozen stories toward the sky. All day long smoke belched from Whalen's towering chimneys, and at night the machinery still grumbled, the smoke still belched and the thousands of tiny, dingy window-panes glared as though in savage watchfulness, while the monster of which they were a part panted and groaned in its frantic efforts to absorb all the wealth of the world.

"A hard-fisted money grabber," was the sobriquet Timothy Whalen received, not only from his hundreds of employees, but also from the banker and the merchant with whom business brought him in contact. There were no servants at Timothy Whalen's beck and call. His legs were the only means of transportation he owned, and a grim smile often moved his tightly closed lips when the fine equipages of his brother manufacturers whizzed past him, for, in his factory fire-proof vault, Whalen held acknowledgments of money lent to these self-same brother manufacturers.

It was early evening in January, 188—, when Timothy Whalen was leaving his club up town. Although a man of simple habits, Whalen had his club. It was policy, and everything Whalen did was from policy. In fact, at the very time we become acquainted with him, he was arranging in his busy brain the details of a dinner he was to give some visiting foreigners who were in the market for an enormous quantity of the wares he manufactured. So engrossed was he as he hurried down the steps that he did not hear the salutation, nor did he see the mite of a figure which came out from the shadow of the great stone lion crouching on the stone baluster.

He was an aggrieved, disappointed mite who appeared under the street light. He had a round, chubby face—or it might have looked so because of the strings of his cloth ear-warmers being tied so tightly under his chin—great, round eyes and a little snub nose. A bulky, home-made jacket gave to the small body a keg-like contour. For a minute he lingered, gazing after Whalen, then started on a run in the opposite direction.

At the distance of a block he stopped, peered about and shouted: "Marme! Marme!"

A lady walked rapidly toward the child and took his outstretched hands in hers. "Well, Dicky, what did he say?" she asked.

"Didn't say nothin'! He jes' kep' right a-goin'." The child's voice bore evidence of repressed sobs.

"There, there, Dicky; perhaps he didn't hear you," the mother said, cheerily. "Run down to the office now, and come home with Bobby. Don't lisp to papa about the birthday, and we'll manage to surprise him, even if Mr. Whalen doesn't lend us his assistance;" and, kissing the child, she sent him running down town.

Half an hour later Timothy Whalen, his portly figure erect and his hands clasped behind him, was pacing up and down his factory office. In one side of the office was a small window, through which he could see his employees grubbing away for their scanty weekly earnings. Whalen's large mouth was tightly closed, his heavy cheeks were very red, and his small, restless eyes had a flinty look. Altogether, it was a face and figure not calculated to invite confidence.

At the desk sat, or rather perched, Dan Carr, Whalen's clerk. Dan was a slim fellow, with a brown beard. He had a large nose and honest brown eyes. An odd figure he cut, astride the high chair; his coat too small for him and well worn, his pantaloons so short that there was quite a display of homespun stockings above the patched shoes. Dan was just then busily engaged in a two-fold duty. His right hand figured and figured; his left dipped and dipped into a tin pail, from which he was eating his supper.

All of Whalen's men liked Dan. He had a cheering word for every one as he went the rounds of the factory. Once Dan was absent a whole day, and when he returned he looked sad and thoughtful. After it became known that his little baby had died, there wasn't much noisy sympathy expressed, but a quiet canvass found every man a contributor to a neat little sum, which was offered to the clerk.

"I can't take it, boys," Dan had said, his voice husky. "You work too hard for it."

Lord knows how much Dan needed it, and they made him accept it.

Beside Dan, as he worked and ate, stood a boy whose chin came just to the level of the desk top. This boy's eyes were following Timothy Whalen. Great eyes they were, and there was an expression of lively wonder in them. Whenever Whalen looked in his direction, however, the boy crept nearer to Dan, and clung to that worthy's leg. At last Whalen spoke, in a quick, jerky way, still continuing his walk—

"Invoices all made out?"

"Yes," Dan answered, his mouth full.

"Finished the pay roll?"

"Workin' on it."

"Rents figured?"

"Partly."