"THE FOOL"

BY CHANNING POLLOCK

ILLUSTRATED BY R. W. SATTERFIELD

BEGIN HERE TODAY

Clare Jewett, in love with the Rev. Daniel Gilchrist, marries Jerry Goodkind for his money. Daniel is dismissed from the fashionable Church of the Nativity in New York because of his radical sermons. Gilchrist is sent to the coal mines by Goodkind senior and wires that a bi strike is settled.

A delegation of strikers comes north to interview the president and directors. They are received in Jerry's home, first Stedtman, then Hennig and Umanski. They do not meet with success. Daniel calls at Jerry's home to see Jerry's father. Jerry meets Daniel and forbids him to speak to Clare.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

CHAPTER XIV.

GILCHRIST'S AGREEMENT.

Goodkind scanned the page before him, hastily, excitedly.

Benfield, sensing his perturbation, came alongside him and peered over his shoulder. Gilchrist stood patiently, but a look of hardness was coming into his eyes that usually were all gentleness.

"What's what?" demanded Benfield.

Goodkind read from the sheet.

"'Hereby agreed—the men are to be represented on the board of directors—'"

"No!" came from the none-too-surprised Benfield.

"Yes—and look here." Goodkind read aloud again. "'All disputes—referred—to a committee of arbitration—'"

"The man's gone crazy," stormed Benfield.

Gilchrist took a step toward them and lifted a hand.

"When you're through I—" he started.

Goodkind was reading again.

"'One-half of all profits, over and above a fair dividend to be divided pro rata, according to wage and length of service.'" He looked up. "Why—" he started, then seemed to choke. "What is this?" he demanded.

"Jerry told you what it is," stormed Benfield. "It's surrender."

Daniel cut in now, in voice as loud as theirs.

"No! NO!" he protested. "It's justice."

"It's nothing," returned Goodkind angrily. "It's a scrap of paper until I sign it, and I wouldn't sign it if I had to shut up every mine in West Virginia. Why should I? We've got 'em licked."

"If you'll only let me explain," said Daniel, softening.

"Explain what?" roared Goodkind. "They're licked. They sent a delegation up here, and we've won over the delegation."

Gilchrist's abundance of patience was ebbing. The hardness that had come to his thin, earnest face was not the hardness of wrath or malice. Rather it was the uncompromising flame of conviction.

"You mean you've bought the delegation," he said hotly.

"Who said so?" asked Goodkind, with a curious inflection.

"Jerry—not ten minutes ago," answered Daniel. "Stedtman's a company man. Hennig's for sale. Buy him," he stormed, "and I'll go back and tell them he's bought—and prove it."

"You're working for us," put in Benfield.

"I'm working for—" Daniel's voice softened.

Goodkind's shrewdness transcended his anger for a moment. He saw danger in Gilchrist's firmness and earnestness.

"Wait a minute, Benfield," he said, waving a hand at his associate. "We've all lost our heads." His tone was calmer. "Daniel and I have just been over all this and he has admitted I was right."

Daniel looked at him amusedly.

"Right as far as you went," he said forcefully, "but you only went part way. You have a right to a profit on your ideas, and your investment and the labor you put back of it. The public has a right to coal and transportation, and all it needs and pays for."

He paused a moment and lifted a finger toward the two.

"But, above everything else," he went on, "the workman who works honestly has a right to something more than the barest kind of a bare living, and it can all be done if you don't sink everybody's rights to accumulate a fortune you don't need and can't see. All the argument on earth can't make you all right so long as there's a Umanski in the world."

"If these people succeed there's no limit to what they'll do," argued Goodkind.

"If they fail, there's no limit to what they'll do," returned Gilchrist.

"There's no good transferring control from the intelligent few to the ignorant mob," Goodkind had lost his tone of ire. He was talking to convince talking in that suave, cool manner he had used on innumerable occasions in swinging a board of directors to his support. It was not so successful with Gilchrist.

"There's no good in anything so long as we fight each other like beasts instead of helping each other like brothers," he answered. He was calm, too, and cool, but glowingly earnest. "There's no hope anywhere except in the great teacher, and in the understanding that what He taught was not only good morals, but good sense and good business."

Goodkind was a good listener. He was trying to win Daniel by apparent sincere consideration of his scheme of things—a consideration that would make more convincing his ultimate rejection. He saw that stirring this man would serve no purpose. The great barrier he had to overcome was his indomitable honesty and sincerity. It was no time to goad these qualities. Hot talk would not rout them. Fast talk might.

"I'm keeping my soul!"

But Charlie Benfield was neither a diplomat nor a tactician.

"Highfalutin' nonsense!" he flung at Daniel's philosophy.

The remark swept away the careful approach Goodkind had sought to build. He scowled at his colleague, then, seeing there was to be no cooperation from this quarter in a program of clear-headed appeal, he abandoned his tack and aligned himself with the intolerant, restive Benfield.

"What?" asked Daniel, in all innocence.

"Millions!" exploded Goodkind, with a gesture that took in all the world and indicated that the fate of civilization was at stake, as well.

"Oh, is that all?" There wasn't the trace of a smile on Gilchrist's thin, drawn, white face.

"All?" stormed Benfield. Somehow he felt this "upstart" was trying to make fun of him. With the sensitiveness of the inferior he was more infuriated at this than he would have been had Gilchrist struck him. Again, too, Daniel's tranquility roused in him an anger that he could not explain.

Daniel took the cigar from his mouth, flung it aloft, then cast it aside.

"Am I costing you one cigar?" he asked quietly. "Am I costing you one blanket from your warm beds, or one stick of furniture from your comfortable homes?" He looked about the room, with its priceless tapestries and rare furnishings. "Am I costing you anything else you'll ever miss? I'm taking nothing from you and I'm giving thousands of men like you a chance to live."

"You're costing yourself your last chance of success!"

There was a tone of threat in Goodkind's remark.

Daniel looked at him with eyes that held both pity and scorn.

"I don't want your kind of success," he shouted. "I'm through." He swung his arms in a gesture of resignation. I give you back your job as I gave you back your church and—" This time it was he who threatened, but in a different tone. "I give you twenty-four hours to sign that agreement."

Goodkind narrowed his eyes and glared at him.

"If I do, you're finished," he shot.

Daniel was calm again now. There was a trace of a smile about his eyes.

"I am when you've signed," he said quietly. He had picked up his hat and was moving toward the door.

Goodkind took a step forward.

"If you walk out that door, you're throwing away the chance of your life!"

"I'm keeping my soul!" Gilchrist threw open the door and stood there, his figure framed by the arch against the black background of the dark hallway.

"You Judas!" snorted Benfield.

"You damned fool!" muttered Goodkind.

"Good night," said Gilchrist.

CHAPTER XV.

OVERCOAT HALL.

There was an air of patriarchal dignity about "Overcoat Hall." It looked one of New York's old downtown streets in the face with something akin to pride, despite the fact that its red-brick front was dulled by refacing dust and its low stoop shambled a bit under the burden of age.

Years ago it had been a "mansion," prided, almost petted. But when New York crept uptown it had been too cumbersome to carry along. And now it was "Overcoat Hall," surrounded by new and noisy human neighbors with new nothing of its tradition.

There was something of the same mien in the man who stood before it this Christmas Eve, looking at its lighted windows rather doubtfully. His indecision vanished as a cold wind caught him and set him quivering unpleasantly. With a careless gesture of resolve he strode in.

The room he found was warm. It seemed comfortable enough, too. He surveyed it skeptically. At one end was a platform, with a chair and a table. At one side was a blackboard. He read the inscription: "And so, to the end of history, hate shall breed hate, murder shall breed murder, until the gods create a race that can understand." He looked puzzled, then turned to another inscription. "Luck is work," he read and waved it away with a dirty hand.

In the centre at a table he at last discerned a man, almost hidden by a large magazine, opened before him.

"Hello, you," the newcomer beamed. "Is this Overcoat Hall?"

"Grubby" Milton, red of face, scraggly of beard, hardly looked up as he replied in the affirmative.

"I'm looking for Mr. Gilchrist," said the man.

"He ain't in, but he will be. Have a seat."

Mack sat down at the table and reached for a magazine. He rejected several, then turned to Grubby.

(To be continued.)

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Annually in India 3,000 people are killed by wild animals, and from 20,000 to 25,000 by snake-bite.

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Who wanted her tea extra good,
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Said the venerable Dame Madam Hood.

MRS. H. FOWLER,
Clinton, Ont.

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