

Old Blazer's Hero

By DAVID CHRISTIE MURRAY.

CHAPTER XXII.

For an instant this annoying intelligence seemed to paralyze mind and body. Mary had not already had a hand upon the stair rail, she would have fallen on the shock. She turned ghostly white, and her heart began to beat furiously. She could not have told if she were glad, or sorry, or resentful.

In a little while this extreme agitation subsided, and, standing with one foot on the lowest step of the staircase, with the maid staring round-eyed and frightened at her white face, she listened and heard the deep breath of the returned prodigal rising and falling in a regular cadence. The room in which he slept was on the ground floor. The door was ajar, and a faint gleam of light came from a single gas jet, which was lowered so far that in daylight it might have been invisible. Mary moved softly to the door, trembling from head to foot. Three steps carried her across the narrow little hall, and then she paused with a hand upon the doorpost of the room. The maid, open-mouthed and open-eyed, waited for what might happen. The mistress entered the room noiselessly, and peered through the crack at the sleeping figure in the armchair. Hackett was lying broadside with his feet wide apart, and his arms hanging loosely over the arms of the chair. His head had lurched forward. Even in that poor light there was no mistaking him.

Yet when she had looked a while she was impelled to turn the gas a little higher. In the clearer light she returned the prodigal lay at a marked disadvantage. The feet seemed to be cast forward in ostentation of the gaping boots and the frayed edges of the trousers. All his raiment was wrinkled, and seedy, and disreputable. His shirt cuffs were crumpled and dirty, his cheek bore a week's black stubble, his nose had taken a tinge of red.

His wife absorbed all these details of his aspect, and stood wondering that she should care so little and feel so undisturbed. She did not know as yet that the shock of his return had dulled all power and feeling, and she stood and noted every shabby sign of social fall, and moral degradation, as if they were all pointed in a picture and had no personal interest for her.

She sat down in a chair opposite to him, regarding him fixedly, going over and over again, one by one, the signs of squalor and decay, and little by little the thought grew up in her mind that she was bound to do something for his sake. The first apprehension of this life arose clearly enough. It was not that the knowledge of it seemed incomplete; but at first she lacked the power to care about it. Then slowly it grew more and more definite, because more and more horrible, and at last it overwhelmed her, so that she rose to her feet and protested against it. She turned the gas light to the full, and went on over every sign before her. Hackett changed his posture, winking and muttering at the light, and she started behind the table instinctively to place some barrier between herself and him; but he settled back again, and in mere seconds she was breathing more serenely than before.

And now that she was awake to the terror of the position she set her wits to work to find out what she might best do for the moment. There was no creature to whom she might run for advice or assistance, and she was thrown entirely upon her own resources. But she managed in a while to rouse the position pretty thoroughly. Above all other things, it was evident that no pity, compunction or affection had brought this rascally husband home again.

He had come in search of spoil, and in that respect she was quite defenceless against him. In the light of her dread of him and her abhorrence of him, she would willingly have surrendered everything in her possession to be rid of him once and for all.

So she slipped to her bedroom and searched her desk to see what she had there. Finding some bills and gold, she packed the money in a sheet of note paper, and then wrote a hasty note.

"Take this, and make your own respectable. When you want more write to me. Do not try to see me, for I would rather die than speak to you."

She enclosed this and the money in an envelope, and, descending to the kitchen, gave it into the hands of the maid.

"You must sit up," she said, "till Mr. Hackett awakes, and give him this. If he asks for me, never mind that. Give him this when he awakes."

Then she fled to her room and locked herself in, and barricaded the door, and lay in wait for what might happen. Footsteps and voices passed, and distant unimportant sounds shook her with dread a score of times. Once a rap at her door, following on the faint sound of stealthy footsteps on the stair, so made her tremble that she could find no voice to answer. The knock was repeated timidly, and Mary whispered:

"What is it?"

"I've brought you a cup of tea, ma'am," the maid whispered back in a voice as frightened as her own.

"Take it away," said her mistress. "Don't come again until Mr. Hackett has gone away."

The maid retired, and in the solitude and silence of her kitchen found things so dismal and oppressive that she was forced at length to wrap a shawl about her head and steal into the roadway. Drawing the front door gently after her, and unslinging the shawl, she went to the gate and stood shivering behind it, finding some comfort in the sight and sound of passers by. Amongst them was Ned Blane, and it was more timely than discretion which prevented her from calling upon him and requesting his protection.

But when an hour had gone by and the maid's nose was blue with cold, and her hands so chilled that she could no longer feel her own fingers, or the note she carried, she recognized a passing figure in the dusk and hailed it.

"That you, Hepzibah?"

"What's the matter?" Hepzibah demanded, pausing and peering at her. "Who is it?"

"Will Hackett be back again?" cried Hepzibah. "It's pretty plain to see what's brought him back. He's got news somehow as his wife has got money. Has he seen her yet?"

"Her seen him?" said the maid, "but he ain't seen her. He was asleep when the missis came home."

Hepzibah opened the gate with great caution and, preceded by the maid, entered the house silently and stealthily. In the kitchen she drew forth a whispered history of the manner of Mr. Hackett's arrival. The maid, it seems, had heard a loud and bullying noise of knocking at the front door, and going in haste to answer it, had but just escaped from being staggered over by the new arrival, who, after glaring at her for a minute without apparent recognition, had felt his way into the front room.

"I'm to sit up till he wakens," she said; "and then I've got to give him this. But I'm afraid to go in him."

"I ain't," said Hepzibah. "You just run down to Mrs. Blane's and tell her I shall stop and sleep at mother's to-night, with my compliments, and then run on to mother's and tell her to sit up for me. I'll see this job through, any way."

So the small servant, happy to escape, got out by the back way and ran swiftly on her errand. She had scarcely been gone a quarter of an hour when Hepzibah, seated there in listening wrath, heard a movement and a series of mutterings, and marching bolt upright into the front room confronted Hackett. He was rubbing his eyes with both hands and yawning when she first set eyes on him.

"A second later she threw his hands aloft and stretched himself. The sudden sight of Hepzibah glaring stonily at him from the doorway froze him in that attitude for a moment, but he recovered himself almost immediately.

"Hello!" he said, "what are you doing here?"

"I'm told to give you this from Mrs. Hackett," said Hepzibah, throwing the envelope on the table. It dropped heavily there, and a muffled jingle arose from it.

"Oh!" said Hackett, staring angrily back at her as he made a step toward the table. Hepzibah folded her arms and regarded him uncompromisingly. He became a little restless under her gaze, and to escape it took the envelope and opened it. When he had read the note he opened the package within it and counted its contents from one hand into the other.

"Where is Mrs. Hackett?" he asked, transforming the money to his pocket.

"How should I know?" asked Hepzibah in turn. "Why do you want to see Mrs. Hackett? You've got what you came for."

Will, finding no immediate answer to this direct attack, tried his wrathful stare again, but finding himself looked down, swagged round on his heel and began to look for his hat. It lay beside the chair, he had lately occupied, and having found it, he stood brushing it with his arm, shivering sharply twice or thrice.

"Tell her I'll see her to-morrow," he said, fixing his hat upon his head, and avoiding Hepzibah's gaze.

"Not I," said Hepzibah. "If you've got any messages give 'em yourself."

"Of course," this was very discourteous and impudent; but Will was a little out of sorts and indisposed to combat.

"Let me get by," he said, advancing toward her.

"Glad and willin'," returned Hepzibah, making room for him; "and rare and pleased I should be to see the last of you."

Even this Mr. Hackett declined to resent, not caring to provoke just then any fuller expression of Hepzibah's sentiments concerning him. As well as his cold, cramped limbs and shuffling boots would allow him, he swaggered to the front door, and throwing it wide open and closing it with a bang, marched from the house, and for that night disappeared. He turned up again next morning in a brand new suit of clothes, with linen, boots, hat, gloves and neckcloth, all new and fine, and made a call upon the solicitor who had acted for John Howarth.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The returned wanderer was, of course, a great deal incensed by what his wife had left for him, and it began to be clear to his own intelligence that before he had read that heartless greeting he had been inspired by the tenderness and most husbandly sentiments. After that, however, he was going to stand no nonsense. She had dared to write and read to him, and he was determined to be clear to his own intelligence and open enemy. He was able to swagger in upon the solicitor and lay claim to his wife's belongings without any too pressing sentiment of self-disdain. At bottom he knew that he was acting like a blackguard, but he was not forced to admit as much himself.

He put up at the hotel, and his open arrival there excited a good deal of attention and comment. People for the most part gave him the cold shoulder, and there was not a soul who met him with that enthusiastic and friendly which he felt to be due to a popular traveler on his return to his native place. There were some who were willing to be friendly, but they were not the people he wanted, and altogether he was less happy than he had hoped to be. In respect of more money he had never been so well off in all his life. Howarth had died, and the will left him a considerable sum, and Will had before him the prospect of an undisturbed nibble at that considerable hoard while it should last. The wife was defenseless against him, and as a last protest the possibilities of consolation—what had he married her for but her money?

The averages get wonderfully good care taken of them always, and if will of balance in this instance. If Will Hackett undervalued Mary, his wife, Ned Blane overvalued her almost enough for full compensation. For by this time there had never been so patient and so angelic a sufferer since the world began. So meek, so defenceless, yet so courageous, she seemed to Ned's eyes, that he worshipped her. His own stalwart limbs and red health defied disaster and seemed somewhat to merit it, if only for the sake of a rough-and-tumble with the world and fate; but she, so delicate, tender and pallid, should surely have been sheltered from all imaginable ills, and have been

called to confront nothing that was harsh, comforting or unfriendly. And thus, as was natural for a man in love, though it could only be absurd for any but a lover, the infant school was the scene of a most valorous war tragedy, and the native instinct to hold body and soul together became an enterprise purely angelic.

The passion which defiled the girl naturally enough demonized the scoundrel who was her husband. To look at him fairly, Will was no more than despicable, but Blane was not in a position to assume a purely critical attitude. To him the selfish rascal stood mountainous, phenomenal, hideously deformed. Blane had carried a dull, slow despair so long that he had begun to think of himself as a man of a dull nature; but now that it began to be noised abroad that Hackett was back again and squandering his wife's substance he began to hate with a heat and intensity which sometimes terrified him. The fierce loathing and revolt he sometimes felt at the bare existence of this poor and commonplace personage grown phenomenal would stab at him as if with the sudden anguish of a red-hot knife, and he would sicken and whirr with the intensity of his own hatred.

Resolutely hour by hour and day by day he had to fight against himself lest he should seek the man and lay upon him hands that could be nothing less than murderous. But to do the villain a damage would be to rob himself of his own right to despise him. And beyond that, he had no right to interfere. He kept, in the very midst of his madness, self-possession enough to know that he could not quarrel with the husband without throwing an undesired stigma upon the wife. What were Mary and he to each other? What could they ever be! If the current of his love had flowed in a smooth channel it would certainly never have run dry, for there was a perennial spring of loyalty within the man, but the obstacles it encountered dammed it and held it in until it gathered strength and volume enough to go dashing and spraying in these wild canals of passion.

(To be continued.)

USE OF APPLES.

Financial and Dietetic Value of a Growing American Crop.

One medical writer says: "The more mellow apples one eats the better, provided they be taken at meal time. It is best of all to eat fruit before meals, and freely as you like."

This will prevent losing the system with a heavy weight of less digestible foods. Senator Vest says that if a man wishes to live long and be able to keep up his work he must eat not less than one apple with every noon lunch; we are not sure but he said half a dozen. The no-breakfast fad tells us that we must not only go without the morning meal, but that we must live much more largely upon fruit. Some of its disciples insist that the apple may be taken in the place of the ordinary breakfast. John Wesley once referred to apple dumplings as an illustration of the alarming advance of luxuries in England. Charles Lamb quotes a friend who says that "a man cannot have a pure mind who refuses apple dumplings," and Dr. Johnson speaks of a clergyman of his acquaintance who brought his family up almost altogether on this Anglo-Saxon combination. We have recollections of dumplings which might accord with the opinion of Lamb, and then we have recollections of other dumplings which might have been the origin of Calvinism. It must be borne in mind that the ideal apple is one that is fit to be eaten raw; yet the glorious old Spitzenburg is only fit for the cook—in whose hands it becomes the very perfection of pie apples. The nineteenth century went out with a marvelous evolution of new sorts of fruits of all kinds; but there was nothing in the list to exceed the delicious juices of the Northern Spy, the Macintosh Red, the Shannon or the Stuart's Golden.

There is nothing in the world to exceed the beauty of the apple blossom; while the air is laden with an exquisite perfume that has charmed a hundred generations—has added to the poetry, the love and the comfort of Greek, of Roman and of Briton. But if there be anything more beautiful than the apple in blossom it is the same tree loaded down with crimson and golden fruit. Then it is that the apple touches human nature and awakens in the house-keeper the highest conceptions of the science and the fine art of dietetics.—Independent.

And She Had Never Read Homer! They were a party of people from "up state," and nothing in the big city interested them so much as the great ships at the docks. They had been wandering joyfully over the deck of a four-master just about to clear with coal for an Eastern port, and after a while one of the women found an open hatch.

"Come here," she called excitedly to her nearest companion, with the air of one who had made a discovery. "Look! look! Just think! She's hollow!"

Negotiating a Loan. A story is told by Households Words of a shopkeeper who declined to be worked into the development of certain family fortunes.

He was a dry goods merchant in a small town in Buckinghamshire. As he was standing one day at the door a small girl came up and said: "Please, sir, I'm Maggie Quayle, and mother says will you give her change for half a crown? She will send the half crown on Monday."

"Can't do it," replied the shopkeeper.

What Else? "Here is an item," said the man at the copy desk, "about a young fellow that broke into a Boston man's house and eloped with his daughter. Give me a head for it."

"Head it," "Work of an iceberg!" said the night editor.—Chicago Tribune.

The Only Way Possible. Gruff—My wife insisted upon my attending her tea this afternoon and I tell you I just simply had to swear under my breath.

Huff—Why, how was that? Gruff—What else could I do? There were ladies present.—Philadelphia Press.

Genuine Article. Sinkins—And you really consider her a great realist, do you? Timkins—Sure thing. Why, she can actually sing "How Sweet Home" so that nobody can tell what it is without looking at the program.

VICE PRESIDENTS WHO HAVE BECOME PRESIDENTS



JOHN TYLER. ANDREW JOHNSON. MILLARD FILLMORE. CHESTER A. ARTHUR.

Inasmuch as the presidential campaign of 1904 is drawing near, with President Roosevelt mentioned as the probable candidate of the Republican party, it is of interest to note that his nomination would mark the exorcising of the seeming "hoodoo" that has in the past militated against those of our chief executives who became President by the death of the elected head of the nation. Prior to President Roosevelt there have been four Vice Presidents elevated to the presidential chair by the demise of its incumbents, the four being John Tyler, Millard Fillmore, Andrew Johnson and Chester A. Arthur.

Mr. Tyler was elected Vice President in 1840 on the celebrated "Tippecanoe and Tyler too" ticket and became President within little more than a month after the inauguration of General William Henry Harrison, who died in April, 1841.

The Whigs again came into power with the elections of 1848. General Zachary Taylor, of Indian and Mexican war fame, being elected Vice President. In July, 1850, President Taylor died, and Vice President Fillmore was at once sworn into office, forming a new cabinet, with Daniel Webster as Secretary of State.

The third accidental President was Andrew Johnson, who attained the presidency in 1865 when the assassin's bullet killed Abraham Lincoln. President Johnson's tenure of office was marked by a succession of disputes between the Chief Executive and Congress, the apex of dissension being reached when he was impeached for the removal from office of Secretary of War Stanton, etc. The break between the President and Congress hinged on the method to be followed in reconstructing the American Union.

Chester A. Arthur, who in 1880 was elected Vice President on the Republican ticket headed by James A. Garfield, took the oath of office as President of the United States Sept. 20, 1881, a day after Mr. Garfield died at Elberon, N. J., victim of Guita's pistol. Mr. Arthur's administration was not marked by any event of momentous importance, but was characterized by his opposition to extravagance in appropriations, his views on this matter leading him to veto the river and harbor bills of 1882.

RUSSIAN TROOPS AT MUKDEN.



One of the chief causes of the Russo-Japanese war was the refusal of the Czar's Government to withdraw the Muscovite soldiery from Manchuria and especially from Mukden, the capital of that province. Instead of taking these troops away, however, more have been constantly shipped in and added to the forces already present. At one time Russia did make a bluff at withdrawal, it is true, but eyewitnesses reported that the armies which marched out a day or two later marched in at another gate. At frequent intervals a few Slav regiments sally forth from their quarters in Mukden and parade through the streets to overawe the natives. Our illustration shows one of these processions and also gives a graphic idea of the appearance of Ivan in uniform.

A TRANSPORTATION EXPERT.

William Barclay Parsons, of the Panama Commission.

The most distinguished engineer on the Panama Commission is William Barclay Parsons. He won his spurs in railroad work in China for a syndicate of which the late Senator Calvin S. Brice was the chief engineer. His work in connection with the transportation problem in New York—to-day the most difficult and complicated transportation problem in the world—has been marked by a high order of ability and zeal. He may not have shown much originality, but it was not a field in which pioneering was desired. He is now recognized as one of the foremost transportation experts in the world, as is witnessed by the fact that he has been chosen an advisory member of the royal (English) commission which is to investigate and report upon the passenger traffic problem of London. Mr. Parsons is young and energetic, and on the Isthmus will find a field for original and constructive work of a higher and more interesting type than he has as yet had to deal with.

The Very Latest News. "Your wife," began the reporter, "and the man with whom she eloped have just been caught in New York, where they lost their money and were stranded just as they were starting for Europe. We thought you'd want to hear the news, and—"

"That isn't the news," replied the man. "The news is that I've sent them enough money to see them through."—Philadelphia Press.

By-Products of Animals. The blood of slaughtered animals is used for the production of albumen, the bones for knife handles, toothbrush handles, chessmen, etc.; the horns for combs, backs of brushes, large buttons, etc.; the hoofs for buttons, ornaments, and fertilizers. Neatsfoot oil extracted from the feet, has a high commercial value. The fat is used for glycerin and butterine.

During a Lover's Quarrel. He (wishing to make it up again after the quarrel)—Good morning. She (freezing)—You're mistaken, sir, I think.

He—Oh, I beg your pardon. I mistook you for your mother.—Alley Sloper.

THE OLD HOME.

'Twas only a humble cottage,
Not far from the village street;
But the cool green meadows included it,
And the flowers brought fragrance sweet.
The birds in the roof's old thatches,
The winds in the tall elm trees,
The pathway that led to the woodlands,
Made the happiest home for me.

Then, no word beyond the meadows,
Disturbed my beautiful dream;
My playmates were birds and flowers,
And we used to sing to the stream.
But now the green meadows have widened,
Far, far to the rolling sea,
And I sail away on its bosom
From the home of my infancy.

O lands of crimson and purple!
O white-jeweled cities afar!
Ye throbs on the restless ocean,
Ye dazzle like Orient stars;
But, oh! for the home of my childhood,
And all my world of meadow and tree;
For the quiet calm of those old, old days
Has forever gone from me.

David and Jonathan

It was remarked by their respective nurses that nothing was more touching than the devotion of the baby, David Smith, to the baby, Jonathan Brown. If David possessed a cake or a new toy, it was his great delight to lay it at Jonathan's feet. Jonathan accepted these attentions, though with some haughtiness and did not return them. He once gave David a button, but after thinking the matter over for about a week, decided to ask for it back again—and got it.

As boys at a private school, David's devotion to Jonathan continued. David was the more studious of the two and was able to assist Jonathan in his work.

At their public school David continued his friendly care for Jonathan. He would take without a murmur punishments that should have properly come to Jonathan. He lent Jonathan money. He exhorted Jonathan not to smoke cigarettes because, as he very justly observed, it was not right. I am not certain that Jonathan was any more grateful now than he had been in the days of his babyhood, but he had at any rate now learned the propriety of expressing the gratitude which he did not feel.

"You are a good chap, David," he said. "You've got me out of no end of a lot of messes."

The two young men went up to Oxford to the same college. David had a scholarship, Jonathan had none. David habitually spoke of Jonathan as a remarkably brilliant man until other people as nearly as possible believed it. David lent him a little more money. David took him back to his rooms, thereby avoiding catastrophe at a time when, owing to much wine, Jonathan's legs had refused their office and he had expressed a wish to call on the master to invite him to take part in the California game of "draw poker." There is not the least doubt that Jonathan owed much to David, and the natural result was that David was more attached to Jonathan than Jonathan was to David.

Then a tragedy happened. Jonathan Brown announced that, in the beautiful words of the Morning Post, a marriage had been arranged and would shortly take place between himself and Miss Bertha Frieze. Now, Miss Bertha Frieze was the third daughter of a local tobaccoist. She was large and plump and comely, and would have sooner flirted with an archbishop than not have flirted at all.

In rage and despair and an express train Jonathan's papa and mamma hurried off to Oxford. At any cost his terrible mesalliance must be prevented. For three days Jonathan's papa bellowed as if he had been a bull of Bashan. He bellowed at Mr. Frieze, who was sulky, and at Bertha, who was distinctly impertinent, and said that his father was doing just exactly what he had expected, and it would make no difference. His mother wept and pleaded, and it was all of no use. At the end of three days she said to her husband, "I shall go around and see that very nice young man, David—David Smith—who was always such a friend of Jonathan's."

She saw David. She reminded him of all that he had done for Jonathan in the past, and assured him that Jonathan was not ungrateful. The time had now come when David had a chance to render a service far greater. She and her husband had done what they could, but neither persuasions nor threats nor the most liberal promises to old Frieze of any effect. Could Mr. Smith help them? Could he do anything to save his friend from a lifetime of misery? "Mrs. Brown," said Smith, "you may depend upon me. I will do my best. If the thing can be done it shall be done." He then went out to buy two ounces of Latakia at Frieze's little shop.

It took a good deal of effort, and much flattery and many presents. But David was a better-looking man than Jonathan and had more money. The time arrived at last when all Oxford knew that Bertha Frieze had deliberately thrown over Jonathan Brown and engaged herself to David Smith. Jonathan's father and mother were extremely grateful to David. Jonathan went to look for David with a revolver, and luckily did not find him. After his first burst of fury he confided himself with a sarcastic letter, in which he told David that their acquaintance was at an end. Years have a wonderfully softening effect, and if Jonathan meets David in the street now he is perfectly civil. But Jonathan never goes to David's home because, as he very properly points out, David's wife is a quite impossible woman.—Barry Pain, in the Sphere.

Had Dog-and-Cat Time. A man leading a small dog by a long chain created quite a sensation on Penn square, near Broad street station, recently, says the Philadelphia Record, when there was an encounter with a strange cat. The dog barked at the cat and the cat immediately sprang at the dog's head. The dog started to run around in a circle and succeeded in dragging its chain around his master and a strange woman.

The chain caught round the woman's feet and she fell forward against the man, who swore violently. The woman screamed, the dog howled and the cat spat viciously. Several bystanders had to grasp the dog's chain and hold it firmly, while the cat was chased away by a couple of boys.

Then the woman who had been tripped told what she thought of a man who was pulled about by a dog on a chain, but all the argument was out of the man and he slunk away, after giving the dog a kick that was registered by a canine yell.

Preliminary to Matrimony. Maud—Surely you wouldn't wish all men to be bachelors?

Mame—Oh, not permanently, of course, but just long enough to get into the habit of sewing on their buttons and doing their own mending.—Philadelphia Press.

Insanity Among Animals. Darwin asserted that there is insanity among animals, just as there is among human beings.

Call It a Unicorn or Now. A wheelbarrow with ball bearings has been put on the market by an Ohio firm.

Important Part Filled by the Advertising Men and Buyers.

The man who writes the daily advertisement for a big store commands a big salary—ten or fifteen thousand dollars. He must be original, resourceful, and witty—a man of ideas, alert.