

The Prodigal Village

By Irving Bacheller

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CHAPTER FIVE—Continued.

"The fish are very wise," Judge Crooker used to say. "They know the truth about every one and it's well that they do. After all, they perform an important office. There's many a man and woman who think they've been fooling the fish, but they've only fooled themselves."

And within a day or two, the secrets of the Bing family were swimming up and down the stream of the under-life of Bingville.

Mr. Bing had found a situation in the plant which was new to him. The men were discontented. Their wages were "sky high," to quote a phrase of one of the foremen. Still, they were not satisfied. Reports of the fabulous earnings of the mill had spread among them. They had begun to think that they were not getting a fair division of the proceeds of their labor. At a meeting of the help a radical speaker had declared that one of the Bing women wore a noose of pearls on her neck worth half a million dollars. The men wanted more pay and less work. A committee of their leaders had called at Mr. Bing's office with a demand soon after his arrival. Mr. Bing had said "no" with a bang of his fist on the table. A workers' meeting was to be held a week later to act upon the report of the committee.

Meanwhile, another cause of worry had come or rather returned to him. Again, Phyllis had begun to show symptoms of the old trouble. Mrs. Bing, arriving at dusk from a market trip to Hazelmead with Sophronia Ames, had found Phyllis lying asleep among the cushions on the great couch in the latter's bedroom. She entered the room softly and leaned over the girl and looked into her face, now turned toward the open window and lighted by the fading glow in the western sky and relaxed by sleep. It was a sad face! There were lines and shadows in it which the anxious mother had not seen before and—had she been crying? Very softly, the woman sat down at the girl's side. Darkness fell, black, menacing shadows filled the corners of the room. The spirit of the girl betrayed its trouble in a sorrowful groan as she slept. Roger DeLune was coming next day. There was every reason why Phyllis should be happy. Silently, Mrs. Bing left the room. She met Martha in the hall.

"I shall want no dinner and Mr. Bing is dining in Hazelmead," she whispered. "Miss Phyllis is asleep. Don't disturb her."

Then she sat down in the darkness of her own bedroom alone.

CHAPTER SIX.

In Which Hiram Blenkinsop Has a Number of Adventures.

The Shepherd of the Birds had caught the plague of influenza in March and nearly lost his life with it. Judge Crooker and Mr. and Mrs. Singleton and their daughter and Father O'Neil and Mrs. Ames and Hiram Blenkinsop had taken turns in the nursing of the boy. He had come out of it with impaired vitality.

The rubber tree used to speak to him in those days of his depression and say, "It will be summer soon."

"Oh, dear! But the days pass so slowly," Bob would answer with a sigh.

Then the round nickel clock would say cheerfully, "I hurry them along as fast as ever I can."

"Seems as if old Time was losing the use of his legs," said the Shepherd. "I wouldn't wonder if some one had run over him with an automobile."

"Everybody is trying to kill Time these days," ticked the clock with a merry chuckle.

Bob looked at the clock and laughed. "You've got some sense," he declared. "Nonsense!" the clock answered.

"You can talk pretty well," said the boy.

"I can run, too. If I couldn't, nobody would look at me."

"The more I look at you the more I think of Pauline. It's a long time since she went away," said the Shepherd. "We must all pray for her."

"Not I," said the little pine bureau. "Do you see that long scratch on my side? She did it with a hatpin when I belonged to her mother, and she used to keep her dolls in my lower drawer."

Mr. Bloggs assumed a look of great alertness, as if he spied the enemy. "What's the use of worrying?" he quoted.

"You'd better lie down and cover yourself up or you'll never live to see her or the summer either," the clock warned the Shepherd.

Then Bob would lie down quickly and draw the clothes over his shoulders and sing of the Good King Wenceslas and The First Noel, which Miss Betsy Singleton had taught him at Christmas time.

All this is important as showing how a poor lad, of a lively imagination was wont to spend his lonely hours. He needed company and knew how to find it.

Christmas day, Judge Crooker had presented him with a beautiful copy of Raphael's Madonna and Child.

"It's the greatest theme and the

greatest picture this poor world of ours can boast of," said the judge. "I want you to study the look in that mother's face, not that it is unusual. I have seen the like of it a hundred times. Almost every young mother with a child in her arms has that look or ought to have it—the most beautiful and mysterious thing in the world. The light of that old star which led the wise men is in it. I sometimes think. Study it and you may hear voices in the sky as did the shepherds of old."

So the boy acquired the companionship of those divine faces that looked down at him from the wall near his bed and had something to say to him every day.

Also, another friend—a very humble one—had begun to share his confidence. He was the little yellow dog, Christmas. He had come with his master, one evening in March, to spend a night with the sick Shepherd. Christmas had lain on the foot of the bed and felt the loving caress of the boy. The heart of the world, that loves above all things the touch of a kindly hand, was in this little creature. Often, when Hiram was walking out in the bitter winds, Christmas would edge away when his master's back was turned. In a jiffy, he was out of sight and making with all haste for the door of the Widow Moran. There, he never failed to receive some token of the generous woman's understanding of the great need of dogs—a bone or a doughnut or a slice of bread soaked in meat gravy—and a warm welcome from the boy above stairs. The boy always had time to pet him and play with him. He was never fooling the days away with an ax and a saw in the cold wind. Christmas admired his master's ability to pick up logs of wood and heave them about and to make a great deal of noise with an axe but, in cold weather, all that was a bore to him. When he had been missing, Hiram Blenkinsop found him, always, on Bob Moran's bed.

May had returned with its warm sunlight. The robins had come back,



"Oh Dear! But the Days Pass So Slowly!" Bob Would Answer With a Sigh.

The blue martins had taken possession of the bird house. The grass had turned green on the garden borders and was now sprinkled with the golden glow of dandelions. The leaves were coming but Pat Crowley was no longer at work in the garden. He had fallen before the pestilence. Old Bill Rutherford was working there. The Shepherd was at the open window every day, talking with him and watching and feeding the birds.

Now, with the spring, a new feeling had come to Mr. Hiram Blenkinsop. He had been sober for months. His Old Self had come back and had imparted his youthful strength to the man Hiram. He had money in the bank. He was decently dressed. People had begun to respect him. Every day, Hiram was being nudged and worried by a new thought. It persisted in telling him that respectability was like the Fourth of July—a very dull thing unless it was celebrated. He had been greatly pleased with his own growing respectability. He felt as if he wanted to take a look at it, from a distance, as it were. That money in the bank was nudging and calling him. It seemed to be lonely and longing for companionship.

"Come, Hiram Blenkinsop," it used to say. "Let's be off together and get a silk hat and a gold-headed cane and make 'em set up and take notice. Suppose you should die sudden and leave me without an owner?"

The warmth and joy of the spring-time had turned his fancy to the old dream. So one day, he converted his bank balance into "a roll big enough

to choke a dog," and took the early morning train to Hazelmead, having left Christmas at the Widow Moran's.

In the mill city he bought a high silk hat and a gold-headed cane and a new suit of clothes and a boiled shirt and a high collar and a red necktie. It didn't matter to him that the fashion and fit of his garments were not quite in keeping with the silk hat and gold-headed cane. There were three other items in the old dream of splendor—the mother, the prancing team, and the envious remarks of the onlookers. His mother was gone. Also there were no prancing horses in Hazelmead, but he could hire an automobile.

In the course of his celebration he asked a lady whom he met in the street, if she would kindly be his mother for a day. He meant well but the lady being younger than Hiram and not accustomed to such familiarity from strangers, did not feel complimented by the question. They fled from each other. Soon, Hiram bought a big custard pie in a bake-shop and had it cut into smallish pieces and, having purchased pie and plate, went out upon the street with it. He ate what he wanted of the pie and generously offered the rest of it to sundry people who passed him. It was not impertinence in Hiram; it was pure generosity—a desire to share his riches, flavored, in some degree, by a feeling of vanity. It happened that Mr. J. Patterson Bing came along and received a tender of pie from Mr. Blenkinsop.

"No!" said Mr. Bing, with that old hammer whack in his voice which aroused bitter memories in the mind of Hiram.

That tone was a great piece of impudence. There was a menacing gesture and a rapid succession of footsteps on the pavement. Mr. Bing's retreat was not, however, quite swift enough to save him. The pie landed on his shoulder. In a moment, Hiram was arrested and marching toward the lockup while Mr. Bing went to the nearest drug store to be cleaned and scoured.

A few days later Hiram Blenkinsop arrived in Bingville. Mr. Singleton met him on the street and saw to his deep regret that Hiram had been drinking.

"I've made up my mind that religion is good for some folks, but it won't do for me," said the latter.

"Why not?" the minister asked.

"I can't afford it."

"Have you found religion a luxury?" Mr. Singleton asked.

"It's grand while it lasts, but it's like 'pison gettin' over it," said Hiram. "I feel kind o' ruined."

"You look it," said the minister, with a glance at Hiram's silk hat and soiled clothing. "A long spell of sobriety is hard on a man if he quits it sudden. You've had your day of trial, my friend. We all have to be tried soon or late. People begin to say, 'At last he's come around all right. He's a good fellow.' And the Lord says: 'Perhaps he's worthy of better things. I'll try him and see.'"

"That's His way of pushing people along, Hiram. He doesn't want them to stand still. You've had your trial and failed, but you mustn't give up. When your fun turns into sorrow, as it will, come back to me and we'll try again."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The "Pie Calendar."

Schoolboys would easily remember the months of the year if they would study them in the "pie calendar" that the Chicago Daily News has prepared and that celebrates the kind of pie most appropriate to each month.

There is no such general agreement about pies as there is about flowers or birth stones, but the following list will probably commend itself to the judgment of most inhabitants of the pie belt:

January, cranberry; February, apple; March, rhubarb; April, raisin; May, strawberry; June, peach; July, cherry; August, gooseberry; September, blueberry; October, currant; November, pumpkin; December, mince.—Youth's Companion.

He Was Superstitious.

Every one knows that a lot of people are superstitious about \$2 bills, but a new phase of it appeared on a Fourteenth street crosstown car. A \$2 bill was tendered in payment of fare. Panic! "For God's sake, ain't you got anything else," said the conductor, backing away.

"Sorry, but I haven't got any small change."

"It ain't the size of the bill, G'ime a five or a ten and I'll change it, but if I make that I'll have an accident sure before the end of the run. It never failed. We either run into somebody or somebody runs into us, or we go off the track."—New York World.

Tact.

"What do you think that pretty girl said to the officer who introduced his comrades to her at the naval ball?" She said, "You have got me in a nice mess."

The American Legion

(Copy for This Department Supplied by the American Legion News Service.)

POOR LEAD TO OBTAIN SPLIT

Attempt to Arouse Indignation Over "Horror on the Rhine" Proves Dismal Failure.

"The Germanophile attempt to arouse American indignation over 'the horror on the Rhine' and thereby to lead to a split, spiritual rather than politico-economic, between America and her recent allies has failed of its purpose in precisely the same way that German propaganda in this country failed in every one of the years between 1914 and 1918," says an editorial in the American Legion Weekly.

"The truth is merely that the Germans do not know how to go about it. 'Kultur' obviously does not include any knowledge of the fine art of getting something over, a fact amply attested by the reflex action which has accompanied the present attempt. The Von Mach style of persuasiveness is no more subtle than the efforts of a St. Bernard puppy to stand up on a hardwood floor. It is flattering the Von Mach type of 'boring from within' to call its insiduous. Insidious it is, however, in its intent if not in its application.

"Dr. Von Mach has proved himself a poor servant of his country, whether he regards his country as America or Germany. He is a poor American for having tried to win America over to the point of view of the unrepentant nation to defeat whose government 100,000 Americans gave their lives, for attempting to resurrect a hyphen that was theoretically buried just three years ago. He is a poor German because his clumsiness has served only to arouse America to the fact that she is still at war with Germany."

POST WINS ON GOLDEN CALF

Two-Headed Animal Aids in Raising Organization's Funds From \$100 to \$1,500.

The Golden Calf of the Twentieth century has been discovered by the American Legion post at Fredericksburg, Va., which owes an increase in its working capital from \$100 to \$1,500 to a two-headed juvenile cow, in full title to which the post invested its scant \$100 last fall.

Having induced a Westmoreland county farmer to part with the freak animal for this sum, a special levy of various small amounts was made upon the treasury to buy nourishment for the calf. Then came the Virginia state fair in Richmond and the calf was in full bloom, eating both his heads off and waxing fat withal.

The Fredericksburg post put him on exhibit, charging a suitable fee. When the fair was over and the dust had settled, the post treasury contained \$1,500—the accrued earnings of



Two-Headed Calf That Put Virginia Post on Road to Wealth.

the calf—and all this for doing nothing but standing still and being inspected.

It was recently that the representative of a large circus made his offer of \$150 for the animal and it was accepted. There is a rumor that the excitement of travel and late hours have affected the calf's health and that he is a poor insurance risk. However, as the old Romans had it, caveat emptor.

The post plans to reinvest the \$1,500 as soon as some other such good security as the calf is found.

Legion Men Among the Miners.

The activity of the American Legion in the mining districts of southeast Kansas is another pertinent proof that the misunderstanding between labor bodies and the ex-service men's organization has been dissipated. At Scammon, Kan., the climax of the eight-hour day celebration of the miners in District 14, was reached in a ball at the Legion hall, under the auspices of Francis Ellison Post. Another instance is the almost unprecedented growth of Clarence Smith Post No. 272 at Weir. From a membership of 21 ex-service men in 1920, a total of 112 has been enrolled in 1921 thus far.

LEGION ROLLERS UNDER THEM

Ex-Service Men Promptly Halt Exploitations of Pro-German Troublemakers.

In response to the warning issued by their national commander, F. W. Galbraith, Jr., American Legion members in many parts of the country have been active in fighting against efforts of pro-Germans and other hyphenated persons to drive a wedge between America and her allies in the World war.

Twenty-five thousand patriotic citizens of New York attended the "All American Meeting for God and Country," which was held in Madison Square Garden under the auspices of the Legion, as a protest against a previous pro-German meeting, said to be for the purpose of creating sentiment against the alleged "Horror on the Rhine."

When word was received in Philadelphia that Dr. Edmund von Mach, notorious German propagandist, was planning to hold a meeting in that city, Legion members and other patriotic citizens opposed the proposition and succeeded in blocking the scheme.

Similar action was taken by the Legion and various societies in Indianapolis. Among the organizations co-operating with the Legion was the national executive committee of the American Gymnastic union, composed of a large membership of citizens of German extraction, which insisted upon unhyphenated citizenship and scored Von Mach and George Sylvester Viereck. On the same day the Indianapolis board of public works announced it would not permit the use of its large convention hall for the proposed Von Mach meeting.

Learning that Louisville was on the proposed itinerary of Doctor Von Mach, the Kentucky department of the Legion instructed posts to use "every lawful means practicable to stop the threatened invasion of Boche propagandists." The Kentucky Legion's bulletin also warned against the activities of Viereck.

Legion posts have also opposed the hyphenates in Chicago, Cleveland, Omaha, Cincinnati and Milwaukee.

THREE VOICES AT ONE TIME

Minneapolis Legion Man Can Sing Tenor, Bass and Baritone Parts Simultaneously.

Wonder voices have been heralded the world over, at least since the inception of the press agent. But it was left for Joe Kaufman, a former army sergeant and an American Legion member in Minneapolis, Minn., to sing the first male trio simultaneously, carrying the parts along with the same harmony and control of three singers.

The secret of Kaufman's unusual accomplishment has baffled voice experts as well as himself. Several years ago he discovered his ability to produce overtones which gave the sound of more than one part. He entered the MacPhail school at Minneapolis as a government student and, as his voice strengthened and became clearer, he developed the curious trio.

The only case remotely similar to that of Kaufman, according to his instructor in the government school, is that of a woman singer in whose voice could be distinguished one separate overtone, over which she had practically no control. The former soldier in some way has separated and controlled tenor, bass and baritone parts simultaneously.

LEGION MAN BUSY WITH B'S

Buckeye Boy Bends, Bows and Bows Bad and Beautiful Bonus Boosting Babbie.

"Apt alliteration's artful aid" was not neglected when an Akron (O.) member of the American Legion spun the following bonus yarn:

"Burt began to bitterly berate the 'bull' about the bonus bill, bawling the benighted bigotry of the belligerent birds, badly blocking the bonus by bombastic blusterings and brabble, and branding the busted bucks who bore the brunt of the battle as badgers and booty-burglars of billions in bonds, believed by big, bald business brow-beaters to belong buried in banks.

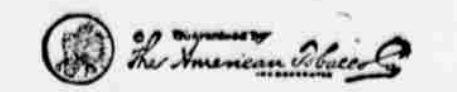
"Before our bewildered Burt boarded a boat to become a battle-scarred vet beyond the borders of our bright, beautiful, big country, he became a benedict; and, back from the battles, busted and barren of bullion, our benighted boy hero became beautifully bored because big bibulous bunco men breathlessly built a bunch of back-hand lies to bribe him by a bunk promise of a bonus.

"But Burt isn't badly brow-beaten by the bedraggled babble of a bonus. Blythe, buoyant and bubbling, biding his time, Burt, the benedict and battle buddy, and Beulah, his bride, believe the bully and bumptious idea that a beneficent bunch of birds will be brought to believe that big battles beat the Boche and busted bucks need bread; and before beaucoup belated years pass a bonus bill to bring the bacon back to our buddy, Burt.



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His Views.
"A 'zoo' is a place to reflect on the superiority of mankind," remarked the bumptious citizen.
"I don't agree with you," answered Mr. Grumpson. "I've never visited a 'zoo' but two or three times in my life, but the thoughts that struck me was that all the animals were attending strictly to their own business and if mankind had less curiosity and more consideration for dumb creatures none of them would have been there."
—Birmingham Age-Herald.

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And double your razor efficiency as well as promote skin purity, skin comfort and skin health. No mug, no stinky soap, no germs, no waste, no irritation even when shaved twice daily. One soap for all uses—shaving, bathing and shampooing.—Adv.

Owing to the shortage of small change in Paris, half the beggars have disappeared from the streets.

Just say to your grocer Red Cross Ball Blue when buying bluing. You will be more than repaid by the results. Once tried always used. 5c.

Near Bingen, in Germany, is a famous echo which will toss a sound to and fro no less than 70 times.

Why That Bad Back?

Is backache keeping you miserable? Are you "all played out," without strength or vigor for your work? Then find what is causing the trouble and correct it. Likely, it's your kidneys! You have probably been working too hard and neglecting rest and exercise. Your kidneys have slowed up and poisons have accumulated. That, then, is the cause of the backache, headaches, dizziness and bladder irregularities. Use Doan's Kidney Pills. Doan's have helped thousands and should help you. Ask your neighbor!

A Nebraska Case
Mrs. Elenora Jezewski, 2000 K. St., Auburn, Neb., says: "An attack of the grip about eight years ago weakened my kidneys. I had terrible backaches and could hardly do my housework. Dizzy spells would come over me. I also suffered from dull headaches. My kidneys acted irregularly and my rest was broken at night. A couple boxes of Doan's Kidney Pills cured me entirely."
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