A Man for the Ages

A Story of the Builders of Democracy

By IRVING BACHELLER

BIGGS AND BIM.

Synopsis.—Samson and Sarah Traylor, with their two children, Josiah and Betsey, travel by wagon from their home in Vergennes, Vt., to the West, the land of plenty. Their destination is the Country of the Sangamon, in Illinois. At Niagara Falls they meet John McNeil, who also decides to go to the Sangamon country. Sarah's ministrations save the life of Harry Needles, and he accompanies the Traylors. They reach New Salem, Illinois, and are welcomed by young Abe Lincoln, Jack Kelso and his pretty daughter Bim and others. Samson raises his cabin. Lincoln thrashes Armstrong. Harry strikes Bap McNeil. Harry is attacked by McNoll and his gang, and Bim drives off his assailants with a shotgun. McNeil is markedly attentive to Ann Rutledge. Lincoln is in love with Ann, but has never had enough courage to tell her so. Harry loves Bim. Traylor helps two slaves, who had run away from St. Louis. Eliphalet Biggs, owner of the slaves, has his arm broken by Traylor.

CHAPTER VI—Continued.

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"The minister got off his hoss and hitched him and took off his coat and put it on the ground.

"'What you goin' to do?' I says.

"'Me?' says the minister. 'I be goin' to rassle with Satan for the soul o' that 'ar man, an' if you keep watch I reckon you'll see 'at the ground'll be scratched up some 'fore I git through.'

"He loosened his collar an' knelt on his coat and began to pray that the man's soul would see its wickedness and repent. You could have heard him half a mile away.

"Mr. Traylor drove off with the damaged slaver settin' beside him and the saddle hoss hitched to the rear axle. I see my chance an' before that prayer ended I had got the fugitives under some hay in my wagon and started off with them on my way to Livingston county. I could hear the prayin' until I got over the hill into Canaan barrens. At sundown I left them in good hands thirty miles up the road."

In a frontier newspaper of that time it is recorded that the minister and his dog kept the slaver on the roof all day, vainly trying with prayer and exhortation to convert his soul. The man stopped swearing before dinner and on his promise not again to violate the commandment a good meal was handed up to him. He was liberated at sundown and spent the night with Brimstead.

"Who is that big sucker who grabbed my friend?" the stranger asked Brimstead.

"His name is Samson Traylor. Comes from Vermont," was the answer.

"If he don't look out 'Liph Biggs'll kill him—certain."

Samson spoke not more than a dozen words on his way back to New Salem. Amazed and a little shocked by his own conduct, he sat thinking. After all he had heard and seen, the threat of the young upstart had provoked him beyond his power of endurance. The sensitive mind of the New Englander had been hurt by the story of the fugitives. Upon this hurt the young man had poured the turpentine of haughty, imperial manners. The more he thought of it the less inclined he was to reproach himself for his violence. Slavery was a relic of ancient imperialism. It had no right in free America. There could be no peace with it save for a little time. The Missourians would tell their friends of the lawless and violent men of the North, who cared not a fig for the property rights of a Southerner. The stories would travel like fire in dry grass.

So, swiftly, the thoughts of men were being prepared for the great battle lines of the future. Samson saw the peril of it.

As they rode along young Mr. Biggs complained of pain and Samson made a sling of his muffler and put it over the neck and arm of the injured Biggs and drove with care to avoid jolting. For the first time Samson took a careful and sympathetic look at him. He was a handsome youth, about six feet tall, with dark eyes and hair and a small black mustache and teeth very white and even.

In New Salem Samson took him to Doctor Allen's office and helped the doctor in setting the broken bone. Then he went to Offut's store and found Abe reading his law book and gave him an account of his adventure.

"I'm both glad and sorry," said Abe. "I'm glad that you licked the slaver and got the negroes out of his reach. I reckon I'd have done the same if I could. I'm sorry because it looks to me like the beginning of many troubles. The whole subject of slavery is full of danger. Naturally Southern men will fight for their property, and there is a growing number in the North who will fight for their principles. If we all get to fighting, I wonder what will become of the country. It reminds me of the man who found a skunk in his house. His boy was going after the critter with a club.

"'Look here, boy,' he said, 'when you've got a skunk in the house, it's a good time to be careful. You might spyle the skunk with that club, but the skunk would be right certain to spyle the house. While he's our guest, I reckon we'll have to be polite, whether we want to or not.'"

That evening Samson set down the events of the day in his book and quoted the dialogue in Offut's store in which he had had a part. On the first of February, 1840, he put these words under the entry:

"I wouldn't wonder if this was the first trip on the Underground railroad."

CHAPTER VII.

In Which Mr. Eliphalet Biggs Gets Acquainted With Bim Kelso and Her Father.

In a musty old ledger kept by James Rutledge, the owner of Rutledge's tavern, in the year 1832, is an entry under the date of January 31st which reads as follows:

"Arrived this day Eliphalet Biggs of 26 Olive street, St. Louis, with one horse."

Young Mr. Biggs remained at Rutledge's tavern for three weeks with his arm in a sling under the eye of the good doctor. The Rutledges were Kentucky folk and there the young man had found a sympathetic hearing and tender care.

It had done him good to be hurled against a barn door and to fall trembling and confused at the feet of his master. He had never met his master until he had reached Hopedale that morning. The event had been too long delayed. Encouraged by idleness and conceit and alcohol, evil passions had grown rank in the soil of his spirit. Restraint had been a thing unknown to him. He had ruled the little world in which he had lived by a sense of divine right. He was a prince of Egoland—that province of America which had only half yielded itself to the principles of Democracy.

It must be said that he served his term as a sober human being quite gracefully, being a well born youth of some education. A few days he spent mostly in bed, while his friend, who had come on from Hopedale, took care of him. Soon he began to walk about and his friend returned to St. Louis.

His fine manners and handsome form and face captured the little village, most of whose inhabitants had come from Kentucky. A week after his arrival Ann Rutledge walked over to Jack Kelso's with him. Bim fled up the stick ladder as soon as they entered the door. Mr. Kelso was away on a fox hunt. Ann went to the ladder and called:

"Bim, I saw you fly up that ladder. Come back down. Here's a right nice young man come to see you."

"Is he good-looking?" Bim called.

"Oh, purty as a picture, black eyes and hair and teeth like pearls, and tall and straight, and he's got a be-e-autiful little mustache."

"That's enough!" Bim exclaimed. "I just wish there was a knot hole in this floor."

"Come on down here," Ann urged.

"I'm scared," was the answer.

"His cheeks are as red as roses and he's got a lovely ring and big watch chain—pure gold and yaller as a dandelion. You come down here."

"Stop," Bim answered. "I'll be down as soon as I can get on my best bib and tucker."

In a few minutes Bim called from the top of the ladder to Ann. The latter went and looked up at her. Both girls burst into peals of merry laughter. Bim had put on a suit of her father's old clothes and her buffalo skin whiskers and was a wild sight.

"Don't you come down looking like that," said Ann. "I'll go up there and 'tend to you."

Ann climbed the ladder and for a time there was much laughing and chattering in the little loft. By and by Ann came down. Bim hesitated, laughing, above the ladder for a moment, and presently followed in her best blue dress, against which the golden curls of her hair fell gracefully. With red cheeks and bright eyes, she was a glowing picture. Very timidly she gave her hand to Mr. Biggs.

"It's just the right dress," he said. "It goes so well with your hair. I'm glad to see you. I have never seen a girl like you in my life. I'm going to come and see you often, if your mother will let me."

A blush spread over the girl's cheeks to the pretty dimple at the point of her chin.

"You'll see her scampering up the ladder like a squirrel," said Mrs. Kelso. "She isn't real tame yet."

"Perhaps we could hide the ladder," he suggested, with a smile.

"Do you play on the flute?" Bim asked.

"No," said Mr. Biggs.

"I was afraid," Bim exclaimed. "My Uncle Henry does." She looked into Mr. Biggs' eyes.

Mr. Biggs laughed. "That smile of yours is very becoming," he said.

At this point Mr. Kelso returned with his gun on his shoulder and was introduced to Mr. Biggs.

"I welcome you to the hazards of my fireside," said Kelso. "So you're from St. Louis and stopped for repairs in this land of the ladder climbers. Sit down and I'll put a log on the fire."

"Thank you, I must go," said Biggs.

"Can I not stay you with flagons?" Kelso asked.

"The doctor has forbidden me all drink but milk and water."

"A wise man is Doctor Allen!" Kelso exclaimed. "Cervantes was right in saying that too much wine will neither keep a secret nor fulfill a promise."

"Will you make me a promise?" Bim asked of Mr. Biggs, as he was leaving the door with Ann.

"Anything you will ask," he answered.

"Please don't ever look at the new moon through a knot hole," she said in a half whisper.

The young man laughed. "Why not?"

"If you do, you'll never get married."

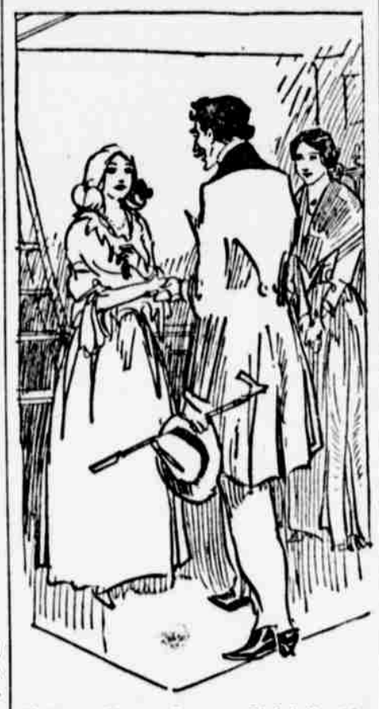
"Don't be alarmed by my daughter's fancies," Kelso advised. "They are often rather astonishing."

So Mr. Eliphalet Biggs met the pretty daughter of Jack Kelso. On his way back to the tavern he told Ann that he had fallen in love with the sweetest and prettiest girl in all the world—Bim Kelso. That very evening Ann went over to Kelso's cabin to take the news to Bim and her mother and to tell them that her father reckoned he belonged to a very rich and a very grand family. Mr. Kelso had gone to Offut's store and the three had the cabin to themselves.

"I think he's just a wonderful man!" Bim exclaimed. "But I'm sorry his name is so much like figs and pigs. I'm plum sure I'm going to love him."

"I thought you were in love with Harry Needles," Bim's mother said to her.

"I am. But he keeps me so busy. I have to dress him up every day and put a mustache on him and think up



"I Have Never Seen a Girl Like You in My Life."

ever so many nice things for him to say, and when he comes he doesn't say them. He's terribly young."

"You told me that he said once you were beautiful."

"But he has never said it twice, and when he did say it, I didn't believe my ears, he spoke so low. Acted kind o' like he was scared of it. I don't want to wait forever to be really and truly loved, do I?"

Mrs. Kelso laughed. "It's funny to hear a baby talking like that," she said. "We don't know this young man. He's probably only fooling, anyway."

Bim went often to the little tavern after that. Of those meetings little is known, save that, with all the pretty arts of the cavalier, unknown to Harry Needles, the handsome youth flattered and delighted the girl. This went on day by day for a fortnight. The evening before Biggs was to leave for his home, Bim went over to eat supper with Ann at the tavern.

It happened that Jack Kelso had found Abe sitting alone with his Blackstone in Offut's store that afternoon.

"Mr. Kelso, did you ever hear what Eb Zane said about the general subject of sons-in-law?" Abe asked.

"Never—but I reckon it would be wise and possibly apropos," said Kelso.

"He said that a son-in-law was a curious kind o' property," Abe began. "'Ye know,' says Eb, 'if ye have a hoss that's tricky an' dangerous an' wuth less than nothin', ye can give him away er kill him, but if ye have a son-in-law that's wuthless, nobody else will have him an' it's ag'in' the law to kill him. Fust ye know ye've got a critter on yer hands that kicks an' won't work an' has to be fed an' liquored three times a day an' is wuth a million dollars less than nothin'."

There was a moment of silence.

"When a man is figurin' his assets, it's better to add ten dollars than to subtract a million," said Abe. "That's about as simple as adding up the weight o' three small hogs."

"What a well of wisdom you are, Abe!" said Kelso. "Do you know anything about this young Missourian who is shining up to Bim?"

"I only know that he was a drinking man up to the time he landed here and that he threatened Traylor with his whip and got thrown against the side of a barn—plenty hard. He's a kind of American king, and I don't like kings. They're nice to look at, but generally those that have married 'em have had one h—l of a time."

Kelso rose and went home to supper.

Soon after the supper dishes had been laid away in the Kelso cabin, young Mr. Biggs rapped on its door and pulled the latchstring and entered and sat down with Mr. and Mrs. Kelso at the fireside.

"I have come to ask for your daughter's hand," he said, as soon as they were seated. "I know it will seem sudden, but she happens to be the girl I want. I've had her picture in my heart always. I love your daughter. I can give her a handsome home and everything she could desire."

Kelso answered promptly: "We are glad to welcome you here, but we cannot entertain such a proposal, flattering as it is. Our daughter is too young to think of marriage. Then, sir, we know very little about you, and may I be pardoned if I add that it does not recommend you?"

The young man was surprised. He had not expected such talk from a ladder climber. He looked at Kelso, groping for an answer. Then—

"Perhaps not," said he. "I have been a little wild, but that is all in the past. You can learn about me and my family from anyone in St. Louis. I am not ashamed of anything I have done. May I not hope that you will change your mind?"

"Not at present. Let the future take care of itself."

"I generally get what I want," said the young man.

"And now and then something that you don't want," said Kelso, a bit nettled by his persistence.

"You ought to think of her happiness. She is too sweet and beautiful for a home like this."

There was an awkward moment of silence. The young man said good night and opened the door.

"I'll go with you," said Kelso.

He went with Mr. Biggs to the tavern and got his daughter and returned home with her.

Mrs. Kelso chided her husband for being hard on Mr. Biggs.

"He has had his lesson, perhaps he will turn over a new leaf," she said.

"I fear there isn't a new leaf in his book," said Kelso. "They're all dirty."

He told his wife what Abe had said in the store.

"The wisdom of the common folk is in that beardless young giant," he said. "It is the wisdom of many generations gathered in the hard school of bitter experience. I wonder where it is going to lead him."

As Eliphalet Biggs was going down the south road next morning he met Bim on her pony near the schoolhouse, returning from the field with her cow. They stopped.

"I'm coming back, little girl," he said.

"What for?" she asked.

"To tell you a secret and ask you a question. May I come?"

"I suppose you can—if you want to," she answered.

"I'll come and I'll write to you and send the letters to Ann."

Mentor Graham, the schoolmaster, who lived in the schoolhouse, had come out of its door.

"Good-by!" said young Mr. Biggs, as his heels touched the flanks of his horse. Then he went flying down the road.

"I am going to try for a seat in the legislature."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Vanishing Indian Language.

Nowhere in America has there been such a diversity of Indian languages as in California. But these languages are now rapidly disappearing. Several of them are known only by five or six, and others by only 20 or 30 living persons, and hardly a year passes without some dialect, or even language, ceasing to exist, through the death of the last individual able to speak it. Efforts are being made to record all these languages for the sake of the light they throw on the ancient history of the Pacific coast.—Sun and New York Herald.

Modernity.

Caller—And have you any old masters?

English Newrich—Old masters be 'anged! Everything in this 'ouse is bloomin well up to date.—Boston Transcript.

THE KITCHEN CABINET

Were I to pray for a taste which would stand by me under every variety of circumstances and be a solace of happiness and cheerfulness to me during life and a shield against its ills, however things might go amiss and the world frown upon me, it would be a taste for reading.—Anthony Donovan.

HOT WEATHER GOOD THINGS.

A good supply of bottled sirups, juices and ginger ale will be a source of comfort and refreshment to the housewife and guest during the hot weather.

Cherry Punch.—Boil together for five minutes two cupfuls of sugar and four cupfuls of water; add one cupful of lemon juice, three cupfuls each of orange juice and cherry juice. Chill and serve with ice.

Grape Nectar.—Boil together one cupful of sugar and one quart of water; after cooking ten minutes add when cool the juice of three lemons, two oranges, one can of pineapple and a pint of grape juice. Let stand three hours then add one thinly-sliced orange. Serve with ice.

Ginger Ale.—Remove the skins from six large lemons and slice them into an earthen bowl. Add to them six ounces of bruised, fresh ginger root, six cupfuls of sugar and four gallons of boiling water. When lukewarm add one-fourth of a yeast cake dissolved in a little water. Cover the bowl with a thin cloth and let stand a day. Bottle and keep in a cool place.

Pear Fritters.—Cut ripe pears, peeled and cored into thick slices; dip into a fritter batter and fry in deep fat. Serve rolled in sugar and with a sauce made from stewing the peelings and cores with a pear or two in sufficient water to cover. Strain, sweeten, thicken with flour; add butter; cook until smooth and thick. The fritter batter is prepared with one cupful of flour, the yolks of two eggs, one-half cupful of cold water, two tablespoonfuls of sugar and a tablespoonful of olive oil or any good salad oil. Beat to a smooth paste; add the stiff-beaten whites and a pinch of salt.

A pair of baking sheets made to fit the oven with the edges turned up and reinforced by a piece of heavy wire are the handiest of baking pans. A whole roll of cookies may be rolled out and baked with one heating of the oven.

Stranger, if thou hast learned a truth which needs
No school of long experience that the world
Is full of guilt and misery, and hast seen
Enough of all its sorrows, crimes and cares
To tire thee of it, enter this wild wood
And view the haunts of nature.

PRESERVES AND CONSERVES.

The season for putting up the good things from garden and field is at hand, and the weather, though hot, will not hinder the thrifty housewife in her preparation for the winter and a full fruit closet.

Fruit Conserve.—Take one pound of raisins, two pounds of tart cherries, the juice and rind of three oranges and four cupfuls of sugar. Chop the fruit, add the sugar and cook 20 minutes. Seal in small air-tight jars.

Preserved Pears.—Take six pounds of pared, cored and halved pears; add four pounds of sugar and two cupfuls of water, the juice of two lemons, the rind of one cut in strips and one ounce of ginger root. Drop the pears into cold water as soon as pared to keep them from discoloring. Boil together the sugar, lemon and ginger for half an hour. Drop the pears, a few at a time, into the sirup and cook 15 minutes. Drop into sterilized jars and pour over the thick sirup when all are cooked. Seal at once.

Spiced Apple Jelly.—Take one peck of tart apples, one-half cupful of mixed spices. Put the spices in a bag and cook the apples in equal parts of vinegar and water to cover, adding the spices. When the apples are soft, drain in a jelly bag. Boil the juice with equal quantities or a little less of heated sugar. When jellied pour into glasses and cover with paraffin when cool.

Rose Pudding.—Pour one pint of raspberry juice into a saucepan with one cupful of sugar, add one-half cupful of corn starch, mixed with a little cold water, to the boiling fruit juice; when partly cooled add a teaspoonful of rose extract and one-half teaspoonful of almond extract. Fold in the stiffly beaten whites of two eggs. Dip a melon mold into cold water and sprinkle with chopped almonds. Fill the mold and sprinkle with almonds. Serve with whipped cream heaped around the unmolded cream.

Nellie Maxwell

The Muse of Dancing.

The Muse Terpsichore was the inventress and patroness of the art of dancing as accessory to the singing or recitation of lyrical poetry. She is generally represented with the lyre and plectrum, crowned with flowers and in a mirthful attitude.

Kid Reviver.

"Baby was taken ill while you were out, ma'am," said the new nursemaid.

"Oh, dear!" said the young wife. "Is he better now?"

"Oh, he's all right now; but he was bad at first. He seemed to come over quite faint; but I found his medicine in the cupboard—"

"Found his medicine? Good gracious! What have you given the child? There's no medicine in the cupboard."

"Oh, yes, there is, ma'am. It's written on it."

And the girl produced a bottle labeled "Kid Reviver."

He Couldn't Say 'Em.

It was Ora's first year in school, and Maurice, two years the younger, looked on his brother with great admiration and awe for the many wonderful new things he had learned. Bigon, as he called Ora for some unknown childish reason, was his idol supreme. An aunt, visiting one day, asked Maurice whether he could recite the alphabet.

"No," he piped. "No, I can't say 'em. I can't say the A, B, C's. But Bigon, he can say 'em. 'Eres the' way Bigon says 'em." And then he proceeded to say them correctly.

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