

Old Blazer's Hero

By DAVID CHRISTIE MURRAY.

CHAPTER X.

Mary did not appear at the supper table, in spite of Hackett's injunction, and when the latter went upstairs to insist upon obedience, he found the bedroom door locked against him. He rapped to himself the right to express his opinion with regard to this open defiance later on, and controlling himself without much difficulty—for he was one of those people who need to say how indignant they are before they can get up any great force of steam—he descended to his companions. They were easily contented with his apologies, and were, indeed, rather pleased than otherwise to be freed from the restrictions a hostess' presence would have imposed upon them.

Hackett's convives were four in number. Two were old cronies of his—so means the pick of his old acquaintances, but such as fate and his own courses had left to him; and the other two were strangers to him, found in his friends' companionship on that day's race course.

"My friends' friends," said Will, with his own genial and delightful swagger, "are mine. I won't offer you amonilledo and turtle, gentlemen, but plain fare and a hearty welcome you can have."

There are people who do not care for these sudden expansions of the heart; but then, on the other hand, there are people who do, and Mr. Hackett's new acquaintances happened to belong to the latter type. They said they would be delighted, and they accepted with almost as much effusion as Will himself had displayed in his invitation. They were in all the better humor with themselves, and with the world at large, because the day's ventures had been prosperous; and they were all the more pleased with their host because his inspirations had for once in a way led him to choose the right horses, and they had followed his lead.

"And now, Will, my lad," said one of them when the cloth was cleared away, "before we settle down I've a favor to ask you. This gentleman is a mighty fine judge of music. He ought to be, for he ran the opera in New York for three years—didn't you, Bob?—and I particularly want him to hear you sing. In fact, it's a treat I've as good as promised him—haven't I, Bob?"

This gentleman was a bald man in spectacles and evening dress. He had apologized on arrival for the character of his costume by saying that he had been obliged to look in at the theater in the great town hard by for an hour or two; and Hackett had been told, with an air of mystery and importance, that he had his eye on a singing chambermaid there, and had half a mind to engage her. The great man said, with no particular enthusiasm, that he should like very much indeed to hear Mr. Hackett sing.

"I'm not in particularly good voice lately," said Will, "but I'll do my best for you."

The entrepreneur leaned back in his chair and prepared to suffer. His experience had made him familiar with the amateur tenor, and he dreaded him as the burnt child dreads the fire.

At this ebb of his fortunes Hackett called with all his heart the chance of singing before such a man as this. He displayed no eagerness, but he had two much tact to make the common fuss, and wait for the usual eager pressure. He sauntered to the piano, and carelessly turned over a heap of music there. He decided that he would not sing more than once unless the important personage especially pressed him.

Before he had sung through the first line the man of music rose softly from his chair, and dropping his elbows noiselessly on the mantelboard suffered his chin to fall upon his hands and put his heart into his ears. From first to last—not a false note, phrasing and expression absolutely just. The listener had heard finer voices, but he could count them on the fingers of one hand. What pleased him, even more than the voice, was the management of it.

The tender, melting rapture of the captivating raspy voice reached his wife as she lay sobbing in her bedroom. He warbled on, never thinking of her, and charming all listeners' ears but hers and one other's.

Ned Blane must needs torture himself, as happens with most young men who find themselves in similar case. He would have made choice among a score of streets and lanes to stroll in if he had a fancy for getting wet through; and by this time the threatening storm had burst, and the warm summer rain had soaked him to the skin in the first five minutes of his fall. But he must submit himself to being near his suffering idol, whom he had no right or power to comfort, and by the grim hate which was taking root in every fiber of him against the man to whom she was wed. And the song which struck up as he was passing for the fifth or sixth time made such an appeal to him as any man of common sympathy can understand.

When the song was over three of the singer's guests were noisy in approbation. The important man turned his back to the fireplace, and for a while said nothing. By and by, when the other had done with their compliments, he spoke.

"Mr. Hackett," he said, "will you be so good as to tell me where you studied?"

"Oh," Will answered, "I never studied at all, to speak of. My grandfather went through three or four years in Italy. He taught my father, and my father taught me, what little bit he knew."

"Ah," said the stranger, "you come of a musical family. What was your father's name?"

"Hackett, of course," said Will.

"Of course," the other answered smilingly. "But his stage name?"

"some ten miles around," said one of the young men.

"I beg pardon. Did you ever think of carrying that fine voice of your own to market, Mr. Hackett?"

"No," said Hackett, carelessly, fingering the pages of his music and looking round upon his questioner as he did so. "I'm not a rich man, but I've never had need to do that yet."

"There's a good two thousand a year in the voice if you cared to use it," said the stranger guest.

"Oh," said Hackett lightly. "That's a bait, if I could see it to bite at."

"Is it?" asked the other. "It's there to bite at if you like to bite."

"It's there to bite at if you like to bite," said the stranger, "as another song, Mr. Hackett?"

This judgment from a man who ought to be competent warned the vocalist's heart. He had been thinking of little else than of carrying that fine voice of his to market for a month or two past, but his habit of putting things off was native and rooted by habit, and what with that and his pride and his not quite knowing how to begin, his thinking had led to nothing.

"Do you sing in Italian?" asked the manager, fingering the pile of music.

"What's this? 'Spinto gentile?' Try that, Mr. Hackett."

"No," said Will. "I'd rather not. I can sing it in a way when I know there's nobody by to see where I go wrong in the lingo. Here's 'My Pretty Jane.' I'm not afraid of that, if you like."

"My Pretty Jane," by all means," said the manager.

So Will sang "My Pretty Jane," and confirmed the good opinion of the important personage had formed of him. The man in possession stole into the hall to listen, and so the vocalist had three more auditors than he counted on, or thought about.

"And now," said Hackett, when his song was finished and the applause was over, "let us have a turn at the post-boards." And the other assenting, they set down to the table and began to play.

It was the host's style to play wildly, and so it almost always happened that he lost or won with great rapidity. To-night the run of the cards favored him, and he won a great deal more than two at least of his guests could have desired to lose. At last, what with his winnings on that day's racing, and his run of luck at cards, he had more than enough in hand to discharge his unwelcome visitor in the morning. He grew radiant, and he laughed louder than all his guests together.

There is a gambler's superstition, which, like all superstitions, will fulfill itself at times, to the effect that it is a fatal thing for a winner to count his gains before the end of the game. Mr. Hackett went on plunging, carrying all before him, until he had made the calculation just mentioned, and then his luck turned. His play was no less scientific than it had been—that was impossible; but the seeming magic had gone out of his hand, and the pile before him dwindled, dwindled, dwindled and vanished. Then he was for playing on credit; but somehow his friends were all very timid and sleepy on a sudden, and protested with unanimity that it was really time to be off, and that they could hardly see the cards. There was no holding them there by force, and they went their way. And when they were outside, the theatrical manager laid a hand on the shoulder of the man who had called him Bob and said he.

"Your friend seemed rather hard hit at losing, didn't he?"

"Well, you see, said the friend, in friendly excuse, "he's on his last legs, poor beggar!"

"Oh! what's become of the family land?"

"Like grandfather, like father. Like father, like son."

"Ah! Does he drink? That fine voice won't last long if he does."

"Oh, he takes his glass like the rest of us. That's all."

"There's money in that voice," said the manager after a minute or two of reverie. "Not so much as I said at first, perhaps, but money. He wants a practical man behind him. On his last legs, is he? What does he do for a living?"

"Nothing."

"M—m. I think I'll give him a look-up to-morrow."

Meantime Hackett sat staring at the ornamental fire-paper in the grate. Three months married. Not a half-dollar in the world. And then the Man in Possession. Well, he was told by a man who ought to know that his voice was worth two thousand a year to him. How could a man with a treasure like that come to grief? He sat thinking until he fell asleep.

CHAPTER XI.

The Man in Possession remained in possession for the space of three days, and at the end of that time departed, his claim having been satisfied. Mary Hackett did not know how the money had been paid.

"It's been got honestly," said Will, in answer to her inquiry. "And that ought to be enough for you."

She made it enough, but it was a day or two before she so far conquered the shame with which this public disgrace had filled her as to face the streets again.

It happened on the third morning that Mary, coming downstairs an hour or two before her husband, found a letter addressed to him in a strange handwriting, and, without knowing why, was a little dismayed by it. The envelope was long and narrow. It was made of blue paper. Its contents, whatever they might be, were rather unusually bulky for a letter, and altogether, for a woman of her recent experience, it had a legal and disturbing aspect. Lying on the table before her, beside her husband's plate, it spoiled her breakfast, but when Will came down, looking rather fishy about the eyes and rather dull and ill-temper-

ed, as was his custom of a morning, he brightened at the sight of the envelope and pounced upon it almost gaily.

The document he drew from it looked no less legal than the envelope had done, but Hackett, having merely glanced at it, thrust it into his pocket and sat down smilingly to breakfast. Suddenly he looked up at his wife, who was gazing at him with an anxious and distressed expression.

"My dear," said he, "you are looking like a ghost this morning. Why don't you go out? A walk in the fresh air would do you good."

This solicitude for her welfare, which would have seemed quite natural a month earlier, was surprising now, but Mary was still more surprised when her husband arose from his seat, and taking his place behind her chair, caressed her cheeks with both hands. The surprise grew when he stooped down and impressed a kiss upon her forehead.

"It's a walk, my darling," he said; "it will do you all the good in the world."

She hardly cared to face her little world again after what had happened, but Will's changed manner aroused new hopes and made her eager to obey him. He was so gracious and affectionate and gay that she knew not what to make of him, but she obeyed him, and in spite of the timid reluctance with which she ventured into the street, the broad summer sunshine without was answered by some uncertain and feeble gleams within. She drew down her veil and hurried toward the fields, and once there sauntered in quiet solitude, thinking of many things, but most of all of Will's changed manner.

She had begun to know, quite a long time back, it seemed, that her husband's nature afforded by a sandy and precarious soil to build upon. But if only she could woo his short-lived affection back to life again, she could gain some gentle permanent influence over him—awake his better instincts and justify her own dreams! And so she dreamed her dreams and prayed her prayers and went home again, comforted. In the meantime her husband was likewise engaged in preparations for the future. When the door had closed behind his wife he drew the legal-looking document from his pocket and read it keenly. He had had, of course, no business training, but he read this particular document with a shrewd business mind, and in spite of certain numerous and bewildering legal technicalities mastered every word of it.

When he had mastered the contents of the paper he took pen and ink and set his signature at the foot of it, doing this, as he did most things, with a mighty flourish. Then having pen in hand he wrote a note.

"My Dear Polly—I have had a sudden call from home. It is quite on the card that I may be away for a week. I leave you a twenty-dollar note for immediate expenses, and all the tradesman's bills are paid and receipted. You will hear from me again in a day or two, and I think we are going to be prosperous. Always your affectionate husband."

He enclosed with this the money he spoke of, then went upstairs, spent a vigorous half-hour in packing his belongings together, took a good look around to be sure that nothing had been left behind, and with his own hands carried his satchels into the hall. Next he rang the bell for the maid.

"A man will call to carry these in half an hour's time from now," he said consulting his watch. "Wait a minute. He stood still to consider, poring upon the door. "I shall be late. I'll carry them a part of the way myself. I shall meet somebody who wants to earn a quarter, I dare say. And there's a letter on the breakfast table. See that your mistress has it when she comes in."

The maid opened the door for him, and he walked out, carrying a satchel in either hand. He looked right and left as he went, with an air which would have given an observer a right to imagine that he was not anxious to be seen. The satchels were heavy, and the summer sun was powerful, and Will Hackett was neither accustomed to exercise of this character nor fond of it. He hailed, therefore, with great pleasure, the appearance of the man late in possession, who was lounging along with his hands in his pockets and a general air of having nothing to do upon him.

"I suppose you're willing to earn a quarter, Abram?"

"I've got to earn what I can lay my hands on, Mr. Hackett, whether I'm willing or not," said Abram, with a superior snarl of philosophy. "What's the job? Carry them leather boxes? How far?"

"To the hotel," said Hackett.

"All right," responded Abram, and seized upon the luggage Hackett had relinquished.

(To be continued.)

Progress Demands Great Wealth.

No community ever made much progress with half-million capitalists. The required investments are too great the risks are too colossal for small capitalists to undertake. People with limited experience, which small fortunes imply, have not the foresight, capacity or industrial mettle, to take the risk of losses involved in such immense undertakings. Our great railroads, most of which have been placed large, unsettled areas, have been built by men of great wealth. In the hands of small men, timidity and incapacity to risk would have compelled waiting until population and business would make a railroad pay; but in the hands of these millionaires, with the confidence of small capitalists behind them the great railroads were built as a final force to the country's development and business growth.—Gunter's Magazine.

From Steam to Electricity.

The results of the change from steam to electrical power on New York elevated railways are: A reduction of cost per passenger from 2.24 cents under steam to 1.98 cents; an increase in gross earnings of \$400,000, accompanied by a decrease in expenses of \$90,000.

In Congo Free State.

The eight societies at work in the Congo Free State are represented by 211 missionaries, 283 native evangelists, 327 native teachers, 5,641 Sunday schools.

This is a cold world—but what does the coal dealer care?



FARM AND GARDEN

Sanitary Milking Apparatus.

With the recent report of a State health board official that an epidemic of fever in one of our largest cities could be traced directly to a case in the family of a milk dealer in that locality, the urgent necessity for sanitary inspection of the milk supply is again made apparent to even those individuals who are rather inclined to scoff at such advanced and scientific theories. No doubt the time will come when all milk will have to be sterilized before being offered for sale, but



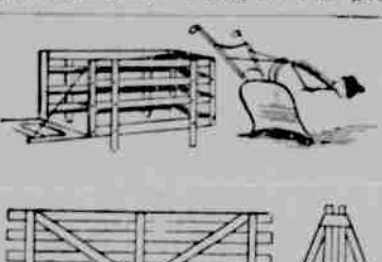
MILKING APPARATUS.

even should that desirable condition of affairs be reached it will still be obligatory upon the milkman to see that no opportunity is afforded for the contact of the lactical fluid with contaminated atmosphere in the stable. Probably the best way in which this can be accomplished is by the aid of the pneumatic milking machine here illustrated. It is so arranged as to not only milk the cows automatically, but also incloses the milk in an airtight receptacle as long as it is in the proximity of the animal. This is accomplished by a reservoir suspended overhead and connected with the teat cups by a short section of hose. By means of a vacuum created in the pipe to which the reservoir is attached the milk is drawn from the teats and deposited in the receptacle, whence it can be removed to the creamery for further treatment before being placed on sale.

Farm Conveniences.

The first two figures show conveniences originally sketched in the Farm Journal, which says of them:

This crate should be about three feet high and fitted with sidepieces extending below it that will just fit into the side irons of the wagon body. It can thus be set upon the wagon bed in an instant and will be found most useful in moving calves, sheep, pigs or other stock. It will fit on to a sled in the same way for winter use. It is also convenient when handling loose material. If this is long the rear gate



PORTABLE FENCE AND MOVABLE BUREAU.

can be hinged to let down, as shown. It can also be hinged to open at the side. The slats should be of hard wood three-quarters of an inch thick.

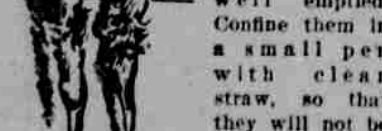
When there is plowing to be done close to fences or trees have your smith put extension rods on the plow and a clevis to hitch the team to, like the cut. The sketch was sent us by one of our readers in Kansas, and he says it works well for him. If the beam of the plow is adjustable to draft it should, of course, be adjusted before the rods are bolted to the handles.

The lower figure shows two views of portable sheep fencing used at the Colorado experiment station. It is easy to move about and set up and very readily made.

Dressing Ducks for Market.

Ducks need much the same treatment in dressing for market as do fowls. They should be kept without food and water for twenty-four hours previous to killing, so that the crop and intestines will be well emptied. Confine them in a small pen with clean straw, so that they will not be dirty. Bleed through the mouth, and when dead, scald in water at a temperature of 185 degrees. After scalding, wrap them up in a flannel blanket for ten minutes, which will help wonderfully in picking.

If scalding is properly done and birds are wrapped up in this way, they can be picked easily and quickly. It is customary with many to leave feathers around the neck for about two inches, also the feathers on the first joints of the wings, including the main flights. After picking clean, put them into hot water for a few seconds and then throw into ice water, leaving



READY FOR MARKET

them for several hours, until thoroughly cold, when they may be taken out, dried, and are then ready to pack for market—E. J. Lawrence, in Farm and Home.

How Stored Grain Shrinks.

The advantage to the farmer of storing his grain and holding it till spring is not always represented by the increased price he may get for it. The shrinkage during the winter storage must be taken into consideration, and this shrinkage not infrequently more than offsets the increased price. In such cases it pays the farmer to sell his grain as soon as it is in shape to go to the market. A good many investigations have been made to discover the percentage of shrinkage in various grains. The results have varied immensely. In some of the humid States and with early gathered crops the shrinkage has been as high as 30 to 40 per cent, while grain raised in arid States and hauled to humid States and stored has gained in weight during storage. The shrinkage of wheat has not generally been as great as that of some other grains.

Wheat stored in Michigan elevators lost from 5 to 10 per cent during winter. A lot of corn very heavy and in the dry at the time of storing lost 30 per cent in weight by February Tests made in other States have shown shrinkages of 19 to 26 per cent. One lot of corn that was gathered at the time of year when it was well glazed, but containing a large amount of water as possible and passed in a State fair competition shrank about 40 per cent. Oats shrink little, but are reported to have lost about 4 per cent in weight during a winter.—St. Louis Republic.

Roughage for Stock.

While both horses and cattle are sometimes troubled with a throat difficulty that needs the attention of a veterinarian, in the majority of cases it will be found that that trouble is due almost wholly to the feeding of dirty hay. Horses are much given to this acute throat trouble in connection with shoeing, which will stop almost immediately if the hay is well moistened before being fed.

It is a good plan, if hay is fed in a manger instead of a rack, to sprinkle a little water in the bottom of the manger each time before feeding and then moisten the hay. Do the same when the hay is fed to cattle. It is a good plan to wet the corn stover also, for while there is less dust in it than in hay there is enough to trouble the cattle, besides, the wet fodder is always more palatable.

The Farmer's Wife.

Don't make a hired man of her. A woman on a farm has no more place in drudgery than she has in the city. The duties of any home are sufficient for the wife. No woman can be a milkmaid and do the general chores about the house. No woman ought to submit to such work, and no man will allow it. He who does so can severely be called a man. Women wear out fast enough in the general course of life, and just because they happen to live on a farm it is no reason why they should enter into a life of slavery.—Exchange.

Cultivation of Oats.

At Cornell University oats were sown broadcast, in the usual manner, the yield per acre being thirty-seven bushels. On another plot the oats were drilled in, fifteen inches apart, the hand-wheel hoe being used to work between the rows. This may appear to some as giving a large share of labor in that manner, but as the yield on the drilled and worked plot was sixty-one bushels per acre the method is worthy of attention. A man with a wheel hoe can go over a large piece of ground in a day, and it is possible that the method will pay.

A Dairy Painter.

The Toronto Globe says a Canadian farmer who kept twenty-four cows and two hired men tested his cows with the Babcock test, and found that eight were unprofitable. He disposed of them and let one hired man go, and at the end of the year found that he had made as much money from the sixteen as from the twenty-four. Now he has got down to twelve good cows, and expects as much from them as he made from twice that number. Now he can increase up to his original number as fast as he can find or grow good cows and increase his profits.

Migration of Seeds.

Dr. Howard, the new secretary of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, writing of the manner in which seeds are carried to great distances by birds, recited an experiment of Darwin which had a curious result. Adhering to the leg of a wounded partridge, Darwin found a ball of earth weighing 6 1/2 ounces. From the seeds contained in this ball he raised thirty-two plants, belonging to five distinct species.

Shredding Fodder.

The fodder shredder is doing good work in one respect, and that is in reducing the number of shocks of corn that stand in the field all winter. As the shredder husks the corn and shreds it at the same time, farmers find that it is more comfortable to haul the fodder to the barn than to stand out in the fields to husk the corn and then waste the fodder.

Value of Corn-cobs.

Corn-cobs are exceedingly rich in potash, containing over 23 per cent (in the ash), and are worth saving. They are not available, however, unless burnt and the ashes saved. On farms where heavy crops of corn are grown the amount of potash that could be saved by burning the cobs is consequently very large.



From the latest earthquake data it is inferred that the crust of the earth is not more than forty miles thick, and that the nucleus is more uniform in chemical and physical conditions than is usually supposed.

In the New York Zoological Park considerable attention is given to the raising of chimpanzees and orangutans. These animals, it is said, seem to be particularly susceptible to teaching, and the methods employed will bear resemblance those used with untaught children. Coaxing and perseverance are the two strongest and most effective aids in their education.

In some countries walking sticks are manufactured from shark fins. From the skin of the animal is obtained a leather suitable for making sword-grips and many fancy articles.

Sharks abound on the coast of Nicaragua, and Mr. Gottselink, the United States Consul at San Juan del Norte, suggests that the fins, back bones and skins might with advantage be imported into the United States for industrial purposes. The killing of sharks is encouraged by the Nicaraguan fishery laws, and there appears to be no export duty on any industrial product derived from them.

In June, 1883, the waters of Lake Rotomahana, New Zealand, seemed to find their way to the heated rocks near the surface of the earth in this locality, when there was a sudden generation of steam, and the lake was emptied and an enormous mass of rock was blown out. In place of the old lake, which was one and one-half miles long and three-quarters mile wide, a much larger one is forming. It is now six miles long, containing on times the old volume of water, and may rise many feet more before finding an outlet. A tremendous eruption is feared if some shock should bring this water in contact with molten rocks.

From what is now known of radium or S. G. Trucey reaches these conclusions. The discovery may make it necessary to change our theories about matter and the conservation of energy. Radium may possibly open up the way for a cheaper and more wholesome lighting of houses by phosphorescence. It is a practical agent to differentiate genuine gems from artificial. It may be considered a valuable agent for the treatment of lupus, cancer, tuberculosis, and a possible agent to improve the eyesight and overcome blindness. Later discoveries will doubtless show service in other diseased conditions.

Last summer the Geographical Society of Baltimore sent to the Bahamas Islands, in a chartered and provisioned sailing vessel, a party of explorers, among whom were twenty or thirty scientific investigators, who during two months, made a thorough survey of those islands, with regard to their geography, geology, products, inhabitants, and so forth. The surrounding sea was explored with deep-sea thermometers, seines, and other marine apparatus; the atmosphere was explored with high-flying kites; the soil and its productions were tested and examined; the question of the rising or sinking of the islands was looked into, and, in short, a kind of scientific conquest was made. All this was done, of course, with the consent and assistance of the local government.

The Fifth Commandment.

The lesson reaches the commandments, and Theodore holds his breath until the second and fourth are passed. John and Alex got those, and it falls to his happy lot to rattle out the fifth.

"What does it mean?" asks his mother.

"Not to listen to Mose sing on Sunday, or fight Alex, or be cross to Mammy, and to clean your teeth, and wash behind your ears every morning, and not say 'dog out!'"

"Not say 'dog out!' is the third commandment," objected John.

"Then it's in both, 'cause mother told us not to, so it's in the mind-your-mother commandment. Most everything is in that."

"So it is," approved father, from his chair. "You observe that, boys, and everything will come out right."—Leslie's Monthly.

Repetition Not Enough.

Pokely—You should have heard Mr. Britton laugh when I repeated your joke to him.

Jokely—When you what?

Pokely—When I repeated and explained your joke to him.

Jokely—Ah! That's different.—Philadelphia Press.

Railway Journeys.

In the United States the distance of the average railway journey is twenty-nine miles, in England it is scarcely ten miles, while in Germany it is fifteen miles, in France twenty-one miles and in Russia sixty-five miles.

Just His Luck.

Pinnegan (who has found a quarrel)—Now, I'm an unlucky devil! If anyone else had found that 'twould have been a dollar!—Ally Sloper.

When you attempt to strike a match in the dark the head is always on the other end.

Most writers who drop into poetry manage to drop clear through.