Old Blazer's Hero

By DAVID CHRISTIE MURRAY.

CHAPTER XII.

When Hackett entered the cool and shaded hotel he saw a sight which surprised him more than a little. The sober and respectable Ned Blane was there alone, at that hour of the morning; and what was more, he had a glass of spirits and water before him.

"Hillo, Ned!" said the newcomer, "I didn't know you did that sort of thing so early."

Blane gave him no answer, and walking into the stone-paved hall, stood there with his back turned to his successful rival. Hackett shrugged his shoulders, smiled meaningly at the landlady, and nodded his head in Blane's direction.

"Changing his ways a little, isn't he?"

"It isn't my place to talk, Mr. Hackett," said the elderly landlady, "but I'm sorry to see it, and I'd a deal rather not have his custom than have it. I like the young gentleman too well to want to see him comin' here too often. I'd say the same to you if I thought there was any use in it."

"Don't cry bad fish, Mrs. Warden," cried Will, with that captivating laugh of his. And taking up a besmeared and tattered copy of last week's journal, feigned to glance over its contents.

In due time Abram arrived with the baggage, received his pay and lingered at the portal to watch the arrival of the omnibus, which was naturally an event of unemployed people.

Blane stood stolidly in the vestibule as if he awaited Hackett's departure, and the latter lifted his eyes from the dog-eared journal a score of times to look at him through the window.

Now Mrs. Hackett's walk had lasted for perhaps an hour, and when she reentered the house, full of grave and tender thoughts, the maid handed a note to her, and she, without so much as looking at it, carried it absently upstairs into her bedroom. The aspect of the place recalled her from her reverie at once. Two or three disordered drawers were stacked one upon the other on the floor, and a hundred articles were lying loosely scattered on the bed. She stood for a moment in wonder, and then, her eyes falling upon the note, she saw that its superscription was in her husband's handwriting. She tore the letter open and made herself mistress of its contents at a glance.

What did this clandestine departure mean? Was Will deserting her? Had he cajoled her from the house in order to get away in secret? She shrank from the fancy, and pushed it away from her with all her force. She would not give houseroom to so terrible an imagination for a second. But the door was barred too late. The thought had found an entrance and insisted on remaining, let her blind her eyes to it as she might. She ran hurriedly downstairs and questioned the maid.

Her suspicions were confirmed by what the servant told her. The maid left her, and she stood for a little while quite still, looking straight before her with the letter in hand; and then, suddenly rousing herself, she left the house and walked at a brisk pace towards the town.

She would understand this strange procedure—and at once. It was her right to understand it. Will had evidently known before he advised her to leave the house, with all those false caresses and all that pretended gentle brightness, that he was going to leave her. She drew her figure unconsciously upright, and trod the pavement like an indignant queen.

But while she was yet at a considerable distance from the main road she heard the sound of the bus wheels. She was wont to be conservative of her dignity, and at ordinary times would have thought it quite a disgracefully hoydenish thing to run in the streets; but this was a moment to banish small scruples, and she ran her hardest.

Hackett was swaggering on the steps of the hotel, delaying to mount the bus until the last moment, and Ned Blane was watching him with eyes of hatred and contempt. Will, who was smiling along the street, turned pale suddenly, and made an active dash for the bus. Blane strolled down the vestibule, and looked out sardonically for the emissary of law.

The whip cracked, the bus went off in a cloud of dust; and Mrs. Hackett came to a standstill in the middle of the street and, turning, retraced her steps. Blane burst into a great laugh, which sounded so oddly that the little crowd of idlers stared at him. His merriment endured for a space remarkable for its brevity, and he looked back surlily and almost fiercely at the people who looked at him, and went back into the hotel.

CHAPTER XIII.

John Howarth, builder and timber merchant, was a small man who mistook himself for a big one. He weighed a hundred pounds, or thereabouts, and walked with as solid and stolid a deliberation as if he weighed two hundred pounds.

The summer air in the neighborhood of Howarth's house was fragrant with the scent of pine boards, and the spiteful noise made by a circular saw, which bit its steam-driven way through timber in a great shed in the rear of the house, was like the sound of a prodigious wasp in a prodigious passion.

The builder stood, with his shoulders squared and his nose in the air, at his own gate, caressing with the finger and thumb of his right hand a chin shaven as clean as a new-laid egg, whilst his left hand toyed with a bunch of seals.

When a thing happened to another man the builder knew how to regard it with an eye of tolerable shrewdness, and could estimate its proportions as accurately as the general run of men could. But when a thing happened to himself, it took on different a color from any it could possibly have worn in occurring to another that his judgment became perhaps a trifle confused. If Will Hackett had married another man's daughter, and had run away from her after a mere three months of married life, Howarth, not being quite so adamantine as he fancied himself, would have pitied the man, and have thought the posture of affairs unhappy. But since it was his daughter who was deserted by her husband the fact had little more effect upon him than to make him feel that he was, if possible, of greater importance than ever in the town and an object of profounder interest.

Whilst he stood sunning himself in a conscious rectitude, which made him feel positively benevolent toward the world at large he heard a footstep, and, turning to the left, saw Hepzibah approaching him with a basket on her arm. He made himself a little bigger than usual, and stepped ponderously into the road. Hepzibah at once displayed an inclination toward a detour, and struck out into the middle of the horse road. Howarth, comfortably understanding that a person of Hepzibah's social position would naturally be humble in his presence, took a step or two into the horse road to encourage her in accosting him. Either Hepzibah's humility or her desire to avoid the honor of passing a "good morning" with the builder, sent her back to the footpath. Howarth, by a sort of majestic chance, returned to the footpath also, just in time to intercept the gaunt domestic.

"Mornin'," he said. "Fine weather if it holds."

Hepzibah, thus arrested, stopped short, with an eminently unconventional aspect. "Yes; the weather's right enough."

"Ah," said Howarth, "it's fine likely weather, and it's pushin' the fruit on beautiful."

He lifted the edge of the snowy napkin which partially covered the contents of Hepzibah's basket, and condescendingly selecting a particularly ripe gooseberry, tasted it and nodded approval.

"I suppose," he asked, "you've been up to Mother Jordan's garden for these?"

"That's so," said Hepzibah, making a movement to get past him.

"How's the young master?" asked Howarth. "I've heerd say as he's got a medal o' some sort for savin' Shadrach Randal's life. Is that true?"

"He's got the medal right enough," said Hepzibah, with the same forbidding aspect, "and dear enough it might ha' cost him."

"Yes, yes," assented Howarth. "Dear enough it might ha' cost him, to be sure. He's a valiant chap, is young Blane, and a fine feller altogether. Between you and me," he continued, taking out his confidential stop, "it's begun to seem to me to be a bit of a pity as I hadn't found that out earlier."

"Oh!" said Hepzibah, shifting her basket from one arm to the other and looking straight before her. "That's come to be the opinion of a good many people, let me tell you."

"That's likely, too," said Howarth; "there's few men o' sense as I'm not at one with in regard to most questions."

"It's a pity you weren't at one wi' most men o' sense wi' regard to that question some months ago, Mr. Howarth," returned Hepzibah.

"I suppose folks are a-talkin'," said the builder.

"They generally are," replied Hepzibah, "about one thing or another. There's some on 'em," she added, making a forward move again, "as has got nothin' better to do."

"What are they saying now?" asked Howarth, lifting up the napkin again and selecting another gooseberry.

"Ask 'em," returned Hepzibah, grimly; "there's some on 'em 'll tell you."

"Very well," said Howarth. "I ask the first I come across. I ask you."

"Oh, well," replied Hepzibah, ominously, "when a thing's asked for it doesn't take much of a bold face t' offer it, Mr. Howarth. They're saying the most of 'em—since you will have it—as it's nigh on a fortnight now since your daughter's husband left the place. They're saying you let the poor thing marry a villain with your eyes open. And they's a-sayin' as you and your wife, as ought to be the only ones i' the world as the poor thing's got to look to, have left her there—to starve for all you know, or seem to care. And there's some of 'em saying it'll be a bit of a pity if Jack Howarth isn't stoned i' the market place next Friday. Now you've got what you asked for, Mr. Howarth, and I'm glad of it, for it's a weight off my mind as I'd a deal rather have off than on it, and I'll say good mornin'."

Therewith Hepzibah departed, bolt upright, and Howarth, with his finger and thumb at his clean-shaven chin, looked after her with an expression altogether piteous and crestfallen.

CHAPTER XIV.

It was essential that Mr. Howarth's spiritual barrel organ should grind out a tune of which he could approve. If anything occurred to disarrange the machinery, there was nothing easier in the world than to find a new tune and to persuade himself that it was no more than a natural variation of the old one. In face of Hepzibah's news his sentiments at once became fatherly, and he was completely aware that he had been fatherly all along, and had only waited for a propitious moment to declare his benevolent intentions. It had hitherto been his opinion that it was Mary's place to come to him; he knew now that it had been his opinion all along that it was his place to go to her—after waiting, as a matter of course, quite properly until now.

Seeing things thus clearly, he walked round to the back of the house, to save the trouble of admitting himself by the front door, and encountered Mrs. Howarth in the kitchen.

"Fanny Ann," said Mr. Howarth, "I'm thinkin' it's about time we were down street and took a look at Mary. We've had no news of her now for full a fortnight, and it's nigh on that time since that young villain of a Hackett cut and left her."

"Ah!" said Mrs. Howarth, "I could ha' told you how that match would ha' turned out all along. I could ha' told you what would ha' come o' that there marriage. You was full of it. You was all for marrying the gell to a gentleman. And where's your gentleman now, John? Ah, where is he?"

"That's just what I should like to know," responded her husband, posing himself in vivid consciousness of his own physical majesty. "I should like to have my hand on that young villain's collar."

"And them as was theer would see how that 'd end," said the wife.

"End?" said the incensed father. "And how would it end?"

"It nd end," replied Mrs. Howarth, safely venturing on prophecy, in respect to this extremely improbable contingency, "in his borrowin' five dollars, an' the two of you sittin' down to drink together."

"It nd end," her husband declared, with a solemn and impressive gesture of the right hand, "in his getting the soundest hoss-whippin' one man ever gave another."

"You'd ha' took no notice of anything I might ha' said, John," she continued, "and that's why I kep' silence. But we'll go and see the gell if you think as go we'd best; though, for my part, I don't see what's to come of it."

"This'll come on it, anyhow," said Howarth, venturing into the domain of candor, if with one foot only. "I've waited as long as I think fit to wait, and now our goin'll stop the tongues as are beginning to wag again' us, Fanny Ann."

"It was Mary's place to ha' come to us, John," said Mrs. Howarth.

"There," returned her husband, "you and me's at one. It was her place to come to us, but sence her has not thought fit to do so, we must make it our place to go to her. Get your things on, and we'll go down at once."

When Mrs. Howarth had made her preparations, the pair walked down the street together, and Howarth noticed, though his wife did not, that their progress toward their daughter's house, and their arrival at its door, created a considerable amount of public interest.

Now, almost at the moment when Howarth arrested Hepzibah on her homeward walk, his daughter had found her way to the actual borders of despair. There had been no further news from her husband, and, of course, no further remittance from him. The little maid's monthly wage happened to be payable that day, and it also happened that the provisions of the house were so far reduced that they would last for the day only. To keep the maid under these conditions was an obvious impossibility. To dismiss her at a moment's warning without an equivalent for notice in the way of salary was equally impossible. So Mary Hackett's last dollar went to the rosy-cheeked maid.

"You can go to-night after tea," said the mistress, "and here are your wages."

The maid, partly understanding the position, began to cry.

"I have no fault to find with you," her mistress continued, "and I shall be glad to give you a good character; but I have no further need of you, and——"

She was about to say that she could not maintain her longer, but pride forbade that disclosure, and she left the girl to form her own conclusions.

It was almost immediately on the top of this scene that her father and mother presented themselves. Mrs. Howarth's was not, perhaps, much of a motherly heart to go home to, but it was the only refuge she was likely to find, and she would fain have gone to it. But mamma, having made up her mind that she was the person injured in this melancholy business, and the one creature to be commiserated, entered with a mien so dolefully resigned and so inapprehensive of sympathy that her daughter's footsteps were arrested half way toward her, and Mary stood still in what she felt to be an atmosphere of accusation.

Howarth, with one hand at his seals and another at his chin, made himself as large as he could, and looked about him as if he gazed upon a scene of open desolation.

(To be continued.)

Needed a Change.

When the tired man entered the office, says the Philadelphia Ledger, he told the doctor he did not know what ailed him, but he needed treatment; he was pretty well worn out.

The physician put on his eyeglasses, looked at the man's tongue, felt his pulse, sounded his chest and listened to the beating of his heart. "Same old story!" exclaimed the doctor, who was of the new school of fresh air. "Men can't live hived up in an office or house. No use trying. Now I could make myself a corpse, as you are doing by degrees, if I sat down here and did not stir."

"I——" began the patient.

"You must have fresh air," broke in the doctor. "You must take long walks, and brace up by staying out of doors. Now I could make a drug store out of you and you would think I was a smart man, but my advice to you is to walk, walk, walk."

"But, doctor——" interrupted the man.

"Now, my dear man, don't argue the question. Just take my advice. Take long walks every day—several times a day—and get your blood into circulation."

"But my business," said the patient.

"Of course, your business prevents it; everybody says that. Just change your business so you will have to walk more. By the way, what is your business?"

"I'm a letter carrier," meekly replied the patient.

Quite the Thing.

"I want my stationery to be attractive and appropriate," said the man who was starting a collection agency.

"How about a light blue paper?" suggested the printer.

"I had thought of gray."

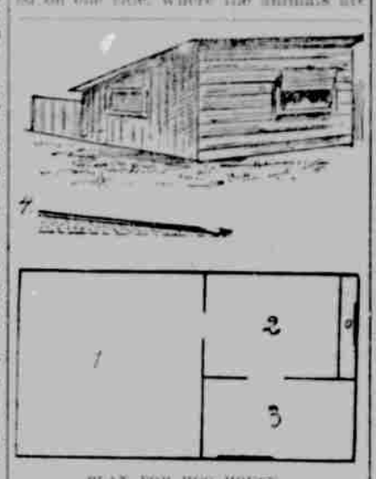
"Well, that's so—a dun color would be appropriate."—Philadelphia Press.

Happiness for many a woman depends upon her ability to stir up trouble among her neighbors.

Perfect Hog House.

After experimenting with a dozen plans for hog houses, the writer found the one illustrated to give the best satisfaction of any at the smallest expense. It will be seen that there is no waste of room; that the building is compact and easily made comfortable even in the coldest climates. It may be made of any material, and by using matched lumber or batten over cracks where unmatched lumber is used, made as snug as desired. In the ground plan of the illustration figure 1 represents the yard in which feeding troughs may be arranged.

Figure 2 is the main part of the pen, the living room, with the trough located on one side, where the animals are



PLAN FOR HOG HOUSE.

fed on stormy days. Figure 3 is the bed room, and a window or board door may be placed in the side of this room, through which the bedding may be thrown. Figure 4 shows the inclined floor, which is filled in underneath with broken stone to furnish firm support. Any variation of this plan may be used if the main arrangement is held to; for this arrangement provides for the best use of the space. The cost of such a structure can be kept down low if the work is done by those on the farm.—St. Paul Dispatch.

Emmer, the New Grain Crop.

The accompanying illustration shows a head of bearded, white-chaff emmer. Emmer has been grown for the past few years in various localities in the West and Northwest with gratifying results, and where known needs no words of commendation. It is making a place for itself among field crops. There is, however, a wider field for emmer. It is well worth a trial in any part of the winter-wheat belt where it is desirable for any reason to find a substitute for oats. As a spring grain crop for feeding purposes it certainly has considerable merit, and some positive advantages over oats. Where the latter are subject to rust and give only moderate yields of light-weight grain, emmer is the better crop to raise. Although not absolutely rust-proof, emmer is affected only a little when wheat and oats are badly injured. Again, it is not damaged in the shock by rainy weather like oats. It is hardy, and should be sown very early in the spring. The growth at first appears backward as compared with oats or spring barley. The blades and stems of the plant are fine, and it does not grow as rank as oats, but it stools out well, forms a large number of short, compact heads and yields heavily. Owing to its habit of growth it is a much safer nurse-crop for grass and clover than oats.

HEAD OF EMMER.

Sheep that Pay.

No farmer should keep sheep because they are scavengers and can pick off a large share of their food from scanty herbage. Such sheep must be active to travel over large spaces in order to find subsistence. To expect sheep to pay without the investment of labor is to sacrifice profits. Success is assured only when the farmer is willing to use breeds that give large carcasses and which respond quickly to care and attention. It is only the labor, after all, that makes profit, but the labor must be bestowed on the best to be had.

Saving the Best Seed Corn.

Where the corn is husked into the wagon from the standing stalks, the best ears may be thrown into a box on one end or side of the wagon, or they may be picked out as the corn is being unloaded into the crib. Seed corn is often injured in ways not fully understood, when stored into bins or cribs, even though it is well protected from outdoor weather. The moisture from live stock which collects on seed corn stored above stables is generally fatal to good seed. The grain should mature on the cobs until nearly corn-cutting time, and purchasers should prefer to buy seed corn on the ear to be grown for grain.

Barley for Hogs.

After several years' experience I am convinced that for growing pigs between the age of 2 to 6 months barley is preferable to corn if only one thing is fed. But to be able to feed barley profitably it must be finely ground and soaked at least six hours before it is given to the pigs. It should always be fed in the form of a very thick slop. Skim milk is preferable to water for making the slop, especially for young pigs. I once fed a lot of pigs 5 months old, and they made a gain of 2¾ pounds a day each on finely ground barley fed as a very thick slop with a liberal quantity of skim milk. For very young pigs I prefer to feed equal parts of shorts and ground barley and then gradually change it to one-half each of corn and barley the last six weeks, when finishing for market.—Lewis O'Follow.

Good Butter Preferred.

Dairy schools are now in operation in many States, and short courses of instruction on butter and cheese-making are given at some of the agricultural colleges. It was not long ago demonstrated that inferior butter could not compete with oleomargarine, and that good butter of choice quality could always be sold at a good price. The fact has also been demonstrated that there was much to learn in making good butter, and that cleanliness and the proper management of the milk were essential in producing the choice article. There has been a wonderful advance in the methods of butter-making, and oleomargarine is responsible for it. Consumers will not purchase the counterfeit article if they can get the genuine, and poor butter is as much a counterfeit as any other imitation.

Feed for Young Animals.

The younger an animal the more mineral matter it requires in its food. When very young pigs are growing they are producing bone very rapidly in proportion to size, and consequently require more phosphates in their food, especially of lime in a soluble condition. Milk contains all the necessary substances for pigs, but after a while they become of such sizes as to be unable to consume enough milk to supply them, as they must drink about eight times as much water in the milk as there are solids. To supply this deficiency corn meal is added, but corn meal is deficient in mineral matter. Bran, ground oats, shipstuff and finely cut clover hay (scalded), in addition to the milk and corn meal, will prove advantageous.

To Turn the Grindstone.

What's the use bending your back or barking your knuckles when grinding the ax, scythe, or the mower knives? Turn the stone with a wooden rod hitched by a slot and pin to the crank. The turner stands at a, out of the way of the knife bar or ax handle. For small stones and heavy work such an attachment is positively needed.—H. B. Fiske, in St. Louis Republic.

Value of Cattle Foods.

The value of cattle foods depends largely upon their digestibility. There is more protein in straw than in corn fodder, but the latter is more digestible. Some coarse foods are valuable, however, in assisting to digest the concentrated foods by giving bulk to the mass, and separating the materials, especially when the coarse foods are reduced to a fine condition. Even if but a portion of the straw foods are digested they are prepared for the manure heap by the animals, and are thus increased in value compared with wasteful use.

Start in Life on the Farm.

The young man who is thinking of leaving the farm for the city may learn when it is too late that while he can earn more in the city he cannot save as much as he could on the farm. If his object is to secure a competence he in nine cases out of ten will do it the sooner on a farm. There are more chances to spend money in the city than in the country, while the cost of living is higher.—Twentieth Century Farmer.

Greater Variety on Farms.

The farmer who confines himself to two or three staple crops and who has not ventured beyond them does not know the full capacity of his farm. He should try some special crops on a small area and endeavor to have a greater variety of articles to sell. The causes of failures in some crops do not influence other kinds.

Economy in Hauling.

When hauling a load it is better to have the horses draw as much as they can, making the load the maximum in weight, as the horses have traveled the distance whether the load is small or large, and it is the time lost in traveling that makes hauling expensive. If the roads are good heavy loads can be carried. If not, then two trips must be made and smaller loads carried. Let any farmer estimate how much he loses as the difference in large and small loads, and loss of time in the mud, and he will make less objection to road tax in the future.

Care of the Pig Pen.

The hog is not able to endure severely cold weather, yet it is kept in the most uncomfortable situation of any other animal. The pig pen should be well littered and dry, and the shelter should contain no cracks or opening for draughts of air.

Hanger for the Broom.

"Every housewife knows that a broom is damaged by standing up in the corner on its brush end behind the kitchen door, and end of the handle of is always breaking or for some reason will not go over the nail when one is in a hurry. I recently saw a convenient method of holding a broom. It was simple and I put up one in our home. A couple of large spools were fastened in the wall just far enough yet a string in the space so their flange would allow the handle of the broom to drop out from between them. These were placed high enough from the floor to allow the broom to hang in an inverted position."—Cor. Iowa Homestead.

Sweet Omelet.

Mix a tablespoonful of fine flour into 1 pint of new milk; whisk together the white and yolks of 4 eggs and add to the milk. Put enough fresh butter to fry the omelet into the frying pan, make it hot over a clear fire and pour in half the mixture. When this is a little set, put 4 teaspoonfuls of currant jelly, or any other preserve, in the center, and the remainder of the mixture over the top. As soon as the upper portion is set send it to the table; or, the omelet being fried, spread the preserve on it and roll it.

Cream of Celery Soup.

Cut a bunch of celery into inch bits and cover with cold water. Stew until very tender, then rub through the colander and stir into it a pint of veal, mutton or chicken stock. Thicken with a white roux made of two tablespoonfuls of butter rubbed into two of flour and pour gradually into this puree a pint of scalding milk to which a pinch of baking powder has been added. When thick and smooth season with celery salt and white pepper and serve.

Bean Salad.

Here, however, is a salad that can be made for canned beans. Pour off the liquor, put in a colander and run cold water freely over the beans. Make a dressing of half a cup of vinegar, a quarter of a cup of sugar, heated together; pour this over a beaten egg, and add a teaspoonful of butter, a pinch of salt, one of pepper, a very little celery seed and a teaspoonful of made mustard.

Cream Doughnuts.

Beat a cup of sugar and 3 eggs together until light. Mix a teaspoonful of soda with a cup of sour cream, and add to sugar and eggs; add a teaspoonful of soda with a cup of sour cream, and add to sugar and eggs; add a teaspoonful of salt, a little grated nutmeg or cinnamon, and flour enough to make a soft dough to roll out. Cut into circles with a ring cutter, and fry in deep hot fat.

Cocoanut Maccaroons.

Mix two cups of grated cocoanut with a cup and a half of powdered sugar and just enough cream to wet the cocoanut. Beat in the stiffened whites of two eggs and drop the mixture by the spoonful upon buttered paper in the bottom of a baking pan. Bake in a quick oven and sift powdered sugar over them.

Potato Salad.

Any cold potatoes may be utilized either boiled or baked or mashed. Allow a raw onion to each half dozen cold boiled potatoes; chop fine and season with a teaspoonful mustard and half as much salt. Make into a thick paste with olive oil and add vinegar to taste, a spoonful at the time, beating it in slowly.

Maryland Pudding.

Cut a stale sponge cake into slices and line the bottom of a baking dish. Fill with stewed cherries or peaches, lay more sliced cake on top and cover with a meringue make of the whites of two eggs beaten with two tablespoonfuls sugar. Set in oven to harden a moment and serve cold with cream.

Nut Fudge or Penotchie.

Into a saucepan put a cup of milk, three cups of light brown sugar and boil until little dropped in cold water may be rolled to a ball between the fingers. Add a teaspoonful of butter, take from the fire, flavor with vanilla and beat in a cupful of nutmeats. Turn into greased tins to harden.

Bluing Clothes.

To prevent blue spotting the clothes put some out on a piece of white cloth, gather up the corners and tie together. Dip this bag in the water and squeeze it until the water is blue enough. In this way the clothes will never become spotted.

Lemon Filling.

Into the unbeaten white of an egg stir a heaping cup of powdered sugar, then beat until light and smooth. Add the juice and grated rind of a lemon, beat again hard, and spread on the cakes. Add more sugar for icing.