

# Old Blazer's Hero

By DAVID CHRISTIE MURRAY.

### CHAPTER XXIII.—(Continued.)

Since he had broken the bond which for a little while had held him, he had fallen back into all the regular ways of his youth, and among other revived habits was that of taking his mother to the old-fashioned chapel in which she had worshipped, after her own fashion, all her life. He used to sit in sight of Mary Hackett there, and without criticizing motives too closely, it is just possible that he continued that revived habit of his as much for the sake of seeing her as for any reason which the pastor of the place might have found more solid.

It happened one gusty Sunday night in midwinter, a month after Hackett's return, that he went to chapel alone, and returning homeward, overheard a phrase which, in its own due time, brought him the supreme temptation of his life.

The bard was dutifully elbowing Hepsibah homeward, and the two were butting against the wind, head downward and shoulders squared, when Blaine came up behind them. Hepsibah, with the wind in her ears, was unconscious of the footsteps in her rear, and shouting to Shadrach, said:

"Trust a woman for readin' a woman's heart. It's Ned her cares for."

The unwilling listener stood suddenly still, and all the blood in his body seemed to riot for a moment in his heart's head. He was conscious of nothing for a while, and when he recovered himself he was surprised to see the dark figures still but a little way in front of him. He seemed to have been absent from himself and them for a long time. Hepsibah's voice reached him, blown backward by the wind.

"No," she was evidently answering some saying of Shadrach's, which Blaine had missed. "No harm'll come on't. Her's as good as gold, and so is he; but it's him as her's grown to care for, though it's a million to one her never guesses it."

Now Ned Blaine had never played the sveddropper in his life before, but if all self-respect had hung forever upon the issue of that temptation, he would have let it go. He had followed to hear, simply and purely because he could not do otherwise, but now that he had heard he stood still in the roaring wind.

If that were true!

The thought haunted him thereafter day and night, and brought with it such temptations as the simplest minded may fancy. But in a little while the true temptation came. That howling wind turned due north and blew for days. It bore bitter frost upon its wings, and locked every stream and canal and lake and standing pond deep in black ice. There had been no such frost for years, and all the skaters in the township must needs turn out day by day or night by night to revel on Parker's mill pond, a space of water some dozen acres in extent, which, being sheltered by thick wooded slopes from the wild wind, had frozen marble smooth. Ned was not such of an expert, but the feet passage through the stinging air at once inspired and soothed him, and he was there night after night amongst the crowd who sped to and fro in the coming and going of numberless torchlights and the sturdier glare of crescent fires which burned upon the bank.

Saturday afternoon left him free for an hour or two of daylight, and he set out for the pond. As he reached the edge there was a great noise of applause, and a huge horseshoe line of spectators was formed upon the ice to watch the evolutions of some skilled performer. Ned, dangling his skates in his hand, walked over drearily enough to see what might be seen, and shouldering through the crowd at a place where it was less dense than at most points, beheld his enemy, who, with half his world for balookers, was rolling hither and thither with an enchanting grace and surety. His habitual swagger became him here, and was converted into a beauty. He skirted, poised on the outer edge, at apparently impossible angles, soaring like a bird on even wing, waving and darting with a bold and sweet dexterity, and leaping, as it seemed, more by volition than by mere force of skill and muscle.

And as he skimmed the ringling ice, followed by the hurrahs and hand clapping of the crowd, restored to all his old kingdom, Ned looked on, and was aware of such an inward volcano of rage and hatred as scorched his heart within him. There is no speaking of these things. The mere truth is that these extreme rages of great passion, whether they be of love or hate, are so rare that no words have been coined for them. We find words for the commonplace, because all men and women have felt it. But the little hate is as common as glass, and the great is, happily, as rare as the Kohinour.

With that phenomenal and unnamable hate, Ned Blaine watched his blackguard rival as he swam in perfect grace and mercurial swiftness on the frozen surface of the pond. The mere presence of the man was enough; but the popular applause choked him as if with sulphurous ashes.

There was at the south end of the sheet of water a mill wheel, now frozen out, but it had been working until yesterday, and near it the ice was known to be squaggy and unsafe.

The bases of the horseshoes line were fanned away from this unsafe spot of ice, and in the middle of it was a low post with a cross piece upon it, and on the cross-piece was pasted a strip of paper, whereon was printed the word "dangerous." Now that day, as every day of late, Hackett had been drinking, and the sign of danger lured him nearer and nearer. He did things in spirituous wickedness which he would not have dared to do had he been altogether sober. In that state his nerves were apt to be sagged at very simple matters.

But now he was no more of everyting, but, in spite of warning cries, so must Ned, in spite of swimming and calling nearer

and nearer to the warning post, trusting to his own swiftness to carry him harmless over the treacherous ice. And Blaine, since one must needs tell the whole truth about him, stood looking on in satisfaction in the certainty that by and by the ice would give way with him, and maybe drown him, and so rid the earth of a villainous grown phenomenon.

Crash! Hackett was through, and the ice started right to the feet of the horseshoe line. The people started backward with a wild stampede, which set the solid floor walking like the slow movement of free water beneath free wind. Ned Blaine held his ground.

"Down!" he said within himself.

Then in one mere second—for at such times fancy will busy herself, and will get through more work than she will do in a common year—he saw all that might happen from this unnamable villain's death, and justified himself to let him die, and exulted in the thing that lay before him.

Up came Hackett, spouting and screaming with struggling arms, and down again he went like a stone. The crowd yelled and screamed, and went silent. He came up again and clutched at a square of ice, and went down with it. And then and there, with one incredible lightning flash, Blaine read his own heart, and snatched his own salvation.

### CHAPTER XXIV.

On a spring morning the wind was changing and the bells were pealing, and rent clouds charged over the chill blue field of the sky at such a pace that the random gleams of sunshine cast between them swept hill and dale with a bird-like speed. The strong sunshine breasted the heathy hills and climbed them in a flash; the surly shadow crept in its rear, and the new bright racer leaped behind the gloomy edges of the cloudy shade, as if eager to annihilate it.

Shadrach, standing at the door of his mother's cottage, clad in his Sunday best, with a white fater in his coat, and his hands enshrouded in monstrous gloves of Berlin thread, fixed his new hat with an air of resolution, as if prepared to hold to it in any extremity of the wind's boisterous jollity.

"I tek it," he said, turning to Hepsibah, who stood behind in a summery costume of white muslin and a very triumph of a bonnet—"I tek it as a kind of honor as ain't often done the likes of huz."

"I should think it," answered Hepsibah.

She spoke almost snappishly, being engaged with a hairpin and a refractory glove-button, but she looked up a second later with a frank and smiling face.

"Yes," said Shadrach's mother, hovering about Hepsibah and touching her here and there with decided fingers, and retiring with her head on one side to observe the artistic effect of each stroke.

"It's a thing as you'd ought to remember to your dyin' day, Shadrach. To be teked by the same words—it's a noble honor, Shadrach, and I hope as it be speaks well for your future."

"Ankore to that, I says, ma'am," said Hepsibah's mother, who was weak like Shadrach, whilst Shadrach's mother was jerkily decided, like Hepsibah. "Hepsibah," she added solicitously, "you're lookin' a bit coldish already. You'll be froze in that book muslin afore you reach the church. You'd better have a shawl across your shoulders."

"Rubbridge!" said Shadrach's mother. "The wind'll keep 'em warm enough. It's time we started, ain't it, Shadrach?"

Shadrach, with difficulty unbuttoning his coat, drew from an inner pocket a great turp of a watch and consulted it with pride.

"There's a good three-quarters yet," he answered. "There's no use in arrivin' before iverybody. Ned and his good lady'll be on the stroke of time, I bet. Nayther too soon nor yet too late, that's Ned's method."

"Well, then, shut the door and sit down," said his mother; "and for goodness merr's sake let me button up your coat! You'd leave all your finger tips 'n the button holes."

"There's many curious things as comes to pass," said Hepsibah, seating herself with a slow, angular precision, and spreading out the book muslin with careful hands, "as nobody ud iver dream on, and this is one of 'em."

"Ah!" returned Shadrach. "Mister Ned's got the wish of his heart at last, and I'm gay and glad of it. Her held him off and on a longish time, though. Her might ha' got it over this time last year, without seemin' sayhow uncommon. I've no mind to speak ill of 'em as is departed."

"Departed!" repeated his mother, cutting him short with an air of disdain. "I wonder how you can use such a word about such a creature! A raller, as was took by judgment! And you may say what you like, Shadrach, I shall aliver think it anythin' but a straightfor'ard flyin' 'n the face of Providence as Mister Ned should ha' tried to fish him out again. He was meant to be drowned, an' he was drowned; and what's meant to be wool be, in spite of all the Neds 'n the world. And as for 'departed,' all I got to say is, you might know better than try to turn your own mother's stomach on your waddin' morning."

"I used the word," said Shadrach, meekly, "because I didn't wish to be too hard upon him."

"Let him rest, poor creature!" put in Hepsibah with unexpected gentleness. "He was a fine figure of a man, but 'd got a bit too much of his grandfather and farther in him. He had nothin' to do with the malik' of either of 'em, so far as I know, and Them Above'll know how far he was to be made to answer."

"That is undoubtedly the way to look at it," returned the Bard, "undoubtedly the way to look at it."

"Then we was off, Shadrach," said Hepsibah. They passed out at the door and over

the windy heath, the bridegroom sheepishly arming the bride.

"We shall have a run for it yet, I declare," cried Shadrach's mother. "There's the carriage a drivin' to the church. I can see the white favour on the coachman's bosom."

The wind-swept music of the bells rolled round them, and as they reached the gate, panting in indecorous haste, Mary Hackett stepped from the carriage and greeted them with a smile. The last ray of cloud was borne away by the boisterous wind, and the sky shone clear, as if for a happy omen.

(The end.)

### AMERICANS IN PERSIA.

Yankee Enterprise Is Noticeable in the Shah's Dominion.

"Persia, I dare say, is a country little known to a majority of the people here, but your countrymen, nevertheless, are very much in evidence there in the commercial sense," said Sir Charles Ross, who was in 1892 the British consul-general for south Persia. Sir Charles is here on a visit, and is staying at the Albemarle, says the New York Commercial Advertiser.

"When I was consul to South Persia," he continued, "I frequently commented in my reports on America's growing trade in that country, and I made particular mention of your practical methods, because I believed they deserved the attention of the leading business men in England."

"A year ago I visited Persia, and, although I was not much surprised, I was certainly amused at the wonderful energy and originality America had displayed in pushing her trade interests since I was there as consul. I found that American merchants had opened up commercial museums in most of the great centers of Persian trade, so that the natives could see for themselves all the classes of goods that are to be had from this side and your merchants had been advised to study carefully the form in which their Persian customers like to receive their wares. At the commercial museums, too, I was surprised to find Americans who could speak Persian fluently, ready to answer all questions that relate to the goods exhibited."

"Russia is, of course, England's chief foreign competitor commercially," Sir Charles continued, "and her trade influence in Persia is largely on the increase. She has only recently, too, started a regular steamship service between Odessa and the Persian gulf. The Russian Steam Navigation company supplies the ships, but it is known that the Russian government has undertaken to subsidize the venture for a term of years."

"Russia, too, is Persia's dominant creditor, and is credited with a very shrewd piece of business in connection with a Persian loan. The money was borrowed in Paris at a low rate of interest, and lent to Teheran at a high rate; so that the wily Muscovite, without putting hand in pocket, draws a snug little annual income from Persia, which is, of course, not wealthy enough to borrow cheaply."

"Persia, however, has a great commercial future. The country is immensely rich in natural resources, and the greater part of its cultivation will rest in the hands of either England or Russia. If America, too, continues to pursue her enterprising commercial methods there, it is quite possible that she may become a third party in the trade development of the country. To gain such a place would certainly be worthy of America's best efforts."

Radium and Millenium.

There seem to be no limits to the strange ideas which the new principle of radio-activity may compel us to accept, says an English expert. Dr. Rutherford has recently shown that radium compounds project atoms into surrounding space with a velocity of twenty thousand miles a second, a speed which no other form of matter has been known to reach. A train going at sixty miles an hour—a mile a minute—travels one-sixtieth of a mile per second; so that the radium emanation flies one million two hundred thousand times as fast as an express train. Nevertheless, we are not yet prepared for the view that radioactive emanations from the sun give poor mortals on the planet headache. More likely are the causes business worries, want of fresh air and the fiscal question, public and private. But perhaps the most advanced conception is that of M. Gustave le Bon, the French physicist, who, after discussing the "Energy Intra-Atomic" of atoms, foresees a millenium when "an illimitable source of power will be placed at the service of humanity, without price, and man will no longer need to work for it. The poor will then be equal to the rich, and the social question will trouble us no more"—unless, possibly, which M. le Bon seems to have overlooked, some Yankee trust got hold of the whole supply. We fancy a few thousand years may elapse before mankind has yoked the atoms to his machines.

New Arms for Soldiers.

Within three years the United States army and militia will be armed with the new Springfield magazine rifle. The hundreds of thousands of krag-jorgensen guns on hand will eventually have to be broken up as valueless.

California's First Prune Tree.

The first prune tree was planted in California in 1870 by a Frenchman, who brought the tree to this country from France. The first orchard—of ten acres—began to yield in 1875.

Colombia and Her Many Changes.

Colombia has had seven constitutions and the title of the republic has been changed three times.

A snob's idea of a superior person is one who has more money than himself.

### GOOD Short Stories

Among the office-seekers who came before President Harrison, was one who wanted to represent the United States at Yokohama. "Do you speak Japanese?" asked the President. The applicant faltered; then said he did. "Well," said the President, "let me hear you speak it." "All right! Ask me something in Japanese."

In Provo, Utah, there dwells a vegetarian with whom Senator Reed Smoot loves to argue. The vegetarian declared, during one of their heated debates, that one should not eat eggs, even, as they hatch into meat, and therefore are meat. "Well," said the Senator, "the kind of eggs I eat wouldn't hatch into meat. I eat them boiled—not raw."

Vigor of speech was a characteristic of Judge Burr, of Connecticut, who lately resigned from the bench on account of deafness. A New Haven lawyer once introduced to Judge Burr an almost unknown but very self-confident novelist, whose good opinion of himself has been justified since by events. In his conversation with the judge, he did not fail to make known his estimate of his own brilliancy. Judge Burr observed the young man closely and sternly. Finally he said, "So you expect to be famous some day, eh?" "Some day," said the young man, "I expect to have the world at my feet." "What have you been doing all this time," said the judge, "walking on your hands?"

While stories were going the rounds at the Lamb's Club, one night, Francis Wilson contributed one about a leading man of a theatrical company that had become stranded at Saginaw. The leading man installed himself at a hotel, and lived a precarious life, while waiting for remittances. One morning he rang the bell in his room for half an hour. Nobody answered. Then he went out in the hall, leaned over the railing, and called: "Boy! Oh, boy!" "What is it?" snarled a hell-boy from the lobby beneath. "Have you seen anything of my laundry?" "Aw, gwann!" said the boy; "you ain't had no shirt since you've been here." "That," said the actor, with great dignity, "is the one to which I refer."

The following remarkable essay on the horse is said to be from the pen of an Indian student: "The horse is a very noble quadruped, but when he is angry he will not do so. He is ridden on the spinal cord by the bridle, and sadly the driver places his foot on the stirrups, and divides his lower limbs across the saddle and drives his animal to the meadow. He has four legs; two are on the front side and two are afterward. These are the weapons on which he runs. He also defends himself by extending these in the rear in a parallel direction toward his foe, but this he does only when he is in an aggravating mood. There is no animal like the horse. No sooner they see their guardian or master than they always cry for food, but it is always at the morning time. They have got tails, but not so long as the cow and such other like animals."

Guests at an Alaska Hotel Are Surprised to Observe Certain Index.

One of the best known of the early settlers of Alaska is Captain Mayo, who has recently started a bunkhouse at Rampart in that territory. A friend of his received a letter from him announcing the fact of his venture, written soberly and with dignity as befits the old frontiersman. The letterhead, however, was unique. It is set in paragraphs, three in a line, and is as follows:

"Captain Mayo's Saloon and Chop House.

"The Best Bunk House North of Mexico.

"First class in every particular. Every known fluid, water excepted, for sale at the bar. Private entrance for ladies by ladder in the rear. Fire escapes through the chimney. Electric lights throughout last Summer. Doz Hodgkin, Medical Examiner. Rates one ounce per day.

"Indians and niggers charged extra. Special rates to ministers and the gambling 'profess.'"

Among the gems of the house rules are the following:

"Guests will be provided with breakfast and dinner, but must rustle their own lunch.

"Dogs not allowed in bunka.

"Candles and hot water charged extra.

"Towels changed weekly."

As hints to guests are the following printed instructions:

"Craps, chuck-a-luck, horse poker and blackjack run by the management.

"Dogs bought and sold.

"Insect powder for sale at the bar.

"Always notify the bartender the extent of your joke."

HIS MUSTACHE WAS GONE.

Former Member of Congress Was Not Recognized by Old Friends.

A portly, smooth-shaven man walked into the house yesterday and greeted members with "Hello, Bill," and "Hello, Sam," with all the assurance of an old acquaintance.

The members addressed stared at the stranger in blank amazement. They were sure that they had never laid eyes on him before, and were not quite able to make up their minds whether he was possessed of unusual gall or was demented. Some were inclined to resent the familiarity, but the stranger didn't seem to mind. He appeared, in fact, to accept as a huge joke the sensation he was creating.

An assistant sergeant-at-arms might have been summoned to eject the intruder had not Mr. Cowherd of Missouri solved the puzzle.

"Hello, 'Rilly,'" was the cheerfulness with which the stranger addressed the Missouri member.

"You have the advantage of me, sir," said Mr. Cowherd, as he straightened with a suggestion of ruffled dignity. "I don't think I have the pleasure of your acquaintance."

"Sure of that?" queried the stranger, with assurance unabashed.

"Yes I am quite cer—Why, he-e-i-o Dave!" and the Missourian threw his arms around the presumptuous visitor.

It was "Dave" Mercer of Nebraska, former chairman of the house committee on public buildings and grounds. By the removal of his mustache, a complete transformation has been worked in the appearance of the former member from Nebraska.—Washington Post.

It's easier to pull your ideals down than it is to live up to them.

### WHAT BUSINESS TO TAKE HOME

Try to Handle Your Work in Working Hours.

It is a reflection upon your own business ability that you cannot make a living during business hours. Your ill humor is a confession to your wife of your weakness and incapacity, and of your not being master of the situation or equal to confronting emergencies. Women naturally admire strength, capacity, efficiency and courage in men. They admire a man who can not only make a living, but also make it easily, without fretting, stewing or worrying. Your wife will think less of you if you continually lug home your business cares.

This does not mean that you should not keep your wife informed about your business. Every man should talk over his affairs with his wife, and she should always know the exact condition of his business. Many a man has come to grief by keeping his wife in ignorance of his strained circumstances or declining business, or of the fact that he was temporarily pressed for capital and unable to indulge in certain luxuries. A good wife will help a man amazingly by his business troubles or struggles. If established if she knows just how he is situated and what is returned to her. Her economy and her planfulness may give just the needed support, her sympathy may take out the sting of the pain, and enable him to beat his trials. This confiding frankness in a wife is a very different thing from everlastingly harping on the disagreeable features of business or letting them ruin your attitude toward your family, making life miserable for those not to blame.

Good cheer, a feeling of good will toward one another and toward other people, and a spirit of helpfulness and utter unselfishness should always be present in the home. It should be regarded as the most sacred spot on earth. The husband should look upon it as the one place in all the world where he can get away from business troubles, and the excitements, grinding and crowding of life's struggles—a place to which he can flee from all inharmonious and discontent and find peace and rest, contentment and satisfaction. It should be a place where he always longs to go, and from which he is loath to part.

MUST NEED GOOD DECORUM.

Guests at an Alaska Hotel Are Surprised to Observe Certain Index.

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### SEVENTY YEARS OF CABS.

Renowned First Appeared in London Three Score and Ten Years Since.

On Christmas day seventy years ago Housins Hansom took out a patent in Chancery Lane for his improved hackney carriage, which throughout the world has been known ever since as the "hansom cab." Curiously enough in this anniversary the death blow comes to the vehicle which for so many generations has tyrannized over English speaking people. In the streets of London to-day appear a number of electrically propelled hansom cabs modeled much like the hansom, but carried on four wheels. The two-wheeled vehicle has long ago been condemned as an intolerable nuisance, and it is only because English people are the very adamant of conservatism that it is possible for 14,000 hansom cabs to ply the streets of London at his very day. I know of dozens of people who have discarded them and have taken refuge in the slower, but far safer, four-wheeled hackney carriage, the ancient rattle box which teach used to love to caricature, and which required early rising and much patience for a trip across London. The swift hansom had its advantage in that it captured rapidly along the streets, lashing in and out of the traffic, through almost impassable crushes, but it had its more than counterbalancing advantages in that one never knew when there would be an accident which might prove fatal.

Seventy years ago Mr. Hansom had much difficulty in introducing his innovation. Eminent men signed documents condemning the hansom as a wicked invention, and old ladies vowed a thousand times that they would rather go to China than ride in such monstrous carriage. But Mr. Hansom lived down all the clamor of the kind and all the buffoonery of the wits, who called his cab "the modern rillotine in disguise," and saw his invention the most popular of all the vehicles in the metropolis. The hansom has now seen its best days. The electric cab will improve year by year and in the meantime the old, despised, but now up-to-date four-wheeler has gone into its own. There are already hundreds of fine four-wheelers, practically first-class thoroughbreds, in the streets, so that one need no longer be ashamed of looking out of its windows for fear of meeting the eye of an acquaintance who might, as has often been the case in the past, cry something that sounds like "old woman" or "coward"—London Letter in Pittsburg Dispatch.

POKES FUN AT JOHN BULL.

Canadian Has His Own Views About This Country Across the Sea.

Peter McArthur is a Canadian whose views on England and English society are interesting and original. In his new book, "To Be Taken With Salt: An Essay on Teaching One's Grandmother to Stick Eggs," he gives a number of aphorisms that set orthodox philosophy at defiance. Here are a few samples:

Sensitiveness has kept more enemies out of England than her prowess in war.

London takes more for granted than the rest of the world knows.

The great trouble with the English is that they are trying to repel the American invaders with business methods that came over with William the Conqueror.

Most of the things talked about in London society are fitter subjects for prayer than for gossip.

To be original is to be wrong.

Culture is the consciousness of truth expressed in conduct.

Good form appears to be the accumulated weariness of centuries expressed in a general air of boredom.

One of the blessings of being a humorist is that all your mistakes pass off as jokes.

Conservatism and laziness are hard to distinguish.

In order to carry on an argument you must descend to the other man's level.

One should never spoil a good theory by explaining it.

Let me make the jokes of the empire; I care not who makes its blunders.

London is full of clever people who expect to get salvation in a moment and spend the luxury of being damned over a lifetime.

The cuckoo of philosophy has successfully laid her egg in the nest of theology.

London is overcrowded with serious-minded people who stand in awe of their own ignorance.

An Englishman's social standing seems to depend on the number of people he can afford to despise.

The average Englishman has so deep a reverence for antiquity that he would rather be wrong than be recent.

This country is full of people who are starving up to their positions—London Express.

Cost! Not Favor Union.

The city of Toronto recently called for bids for firemen's clothing and the lowest competitor was the Crown Tailoring Company. The contract, however, was awarded at a higher price to a concern using the union label. Thereupon the Crown Tailoring Company obtained an injunction. In rendering a judgment Chancellor Boyd declared that in issuing its specifications the city could not demand the use of any particular union label and thus discriminate against certain classes of laborers who might be as capable as those entitled to use the label. The true test of ability, he held, is not membership in a union.

Might may not make right, but it usually manages to make good.