

JOHN BURT

By FREDERICK UPHAM ADAMS

Author of "The Kidnapped Millionaire," "Colonel Moore's Doctrine," Etc.

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CHAPTER XXXII—Continued.

"The hotel furnishes matches," responded Blake, coolly.

"Here's a match," said Kingsley.

"Thanks, old chap."

Morris calmly struck a light and, holding the bright new thousand-dollar note a few feet from Blake's head, he ignited it.

"Very clever, Morris," said Blake, replacing his pocketbook. "Must be a new sensation to burn my money? Did you burn your fingers—again—Morris?"

"Don't go too far with me, Blake!" Morris exclaimed. "I'll not stand for it, do you hear? I've lost, and I'm still a gentleman; you've won, and you're yet a cad! You've taken my money and won the woman. Keep away from me."

"I didn't seek this interview," said Blake, his face flushed with rising anger, "but since it's to be our last one, I'm going to tell you something. I've not a dollar of your money and am not your rival in any respect. Listen to me, Morris, and I'll tell you something that will sober you. Do you remember John Burt? I guess you do. He was the country boy who dragged you out of a chair by the scruff of the neck for insulting a young lady upon whom you had forced your society."

"What of him?" demanded Morris, sullenly. At the mention of John Burt's name the scene, with all its horror, came to him.

"John Burt—that of him?" repeated Morris. "That country lout can come back, or stay away, or go to the devil, for all I care."

"That country lout has come back," said Blake deliberately. "I had the pleasure this afternoon, my dear Morris, of transferring to John Burt the various stocks and bonds which you and your father tendered to James Blake & Company in settlement of your liabilities. Permit me to let you into a deep secret, my dear Morris. John Burt is James Blake & Company. I am—nothing. In my feeble way I've attempted to carry out John Burt's instructions. You seemed to stand across his path and he blotted you out. He forced you to dis-

he fell. He turned half over and lay motionless.

"I've got him, John," gasped Burke. "And I guess he's got me! Are you hurt, John?"

He again raised his weapon unsteadily, and pitched forward into John Burt's arms.

"Stand back and give the man air!" roared John Hawkins, pushing aside the morbid crowd which surged around the motionless bodies. "Bear a hand, John, we'll take Jim to my room."

With bated breath John watched the surgeon as he opened the waistcoat and cut away the blood-soaked shirt. For a moment he laid his head against Blake's breast. It seemed an age before the answer came.

"He lives," said the surgeon, reaching for an emergency case. He held a vial to Blake's nostrils, and the watchers saw the faint shudder which told of a halt in the march of death. Then the breast heaved convulsively, and James Blake opened his eyes and looked squarely into John Burt's face.

"Hello, John!" he said, faintly. "What's the matter? What's happened, old man?"

"You must keep quiet, Jim," said John Burt, tenderly clasping Blake's hand and pushing back the damp locks from his forehead. "You are a long way from being dead, old man, but you must reserve your strength and obey the surgeons."

"I don't want a surgeon—not now," declared Blake, in a stronger voice and a quickening intelligence in his dark eyes. "Hello, Hawkins! You won't be offended, will you, Hawkins, if I ask you and the doctors to leave me alone with John for a minute or two?"

"Certainly not, my boy, if the doctors say so."

The surgeon turned to John and whispered a few words, which did not escape Blake's strangely revived senses.

"You'll probe for nothing until I talk to John!" he asserted. "I'm going to live long enough to tell John something that no one else shall hear. Send them out of here, John, or I'll get up and chase them out."



gorge General Carden's fortune. He will wed the woman on whom you have forced your addresses. Do I make myself plain, Morris?"

Morris gazed at James Blake and for a moment seemed incapable of speech.

"I—I—I think you lie, Blake," he stammered, after a long pause.

Blake raised his eyes and saw John Burt and Mr. Hawkins entering the room. Pausing not a second to weigh the consequences, he grasped Morris by the shoulders and whirled him around.

Morris threw one arm behind him, but Blake, scornful of his opponent, and thinking only of the dramatic climax which offered itself, took no warning.

"Calm yourself, Morris," he said soothingly. "Anger does not become you. I want you to look your best, for here comes our mutual friend, John Burt! Hello, John!"

Blake released his grasp and Morris drew back in a defiant attitude. With careless contempt Blake ignored Morris, and his eyes followed John Burt and Hawkins as they came towards him.

At the call of his name John turned and saw Blake. His face lighted with a smile as he stopped and then walked towards the group.

The muscles of Morris' face twitched, and a desperate look came to his eyes. With a quick motion his arm came from behind his back and something glittered in his hand.

"Hello, Jim," said John. "Are we on time?"

"Mr. Burt," said Blake, his dark eyes twinkling with devilry, and his voice clear as a bell, "permit me to introduce—"

He turned to Morris with a mocking smile on his lips. He heard the click of metal and saw the flash of polished steel as Morris raised his arm and leveled a revolver at John Burt.

"I bought this for myself! Take it, John Burt," he cried.

He fired before the words were out of his mouth. The spectators who stood their ground saw James Blake throw himself forward the moment before a spit of fire came from the muzzle of the weapon. They saw his figure reel through the smoke, and they saw Morris fire again.

Like a sharp echo came an answering shot from Blake. He had half fallen, with his right knee and left hand on the marble floor. Morris's second shot was aimed over his head at John Burt, who had dashed at Morris and was almost over the wavering figure of his friend.

The surgeon administered a few drops of stimulant, and motioning to Hawkins and the physician, the three silently left the room.

"Sit close by me, John, and let me hold your hand," said Blake. "Dear old John!"

Tears glistened in his eyes as he clasped the other's hand.

"I don't wish you to tell me anything, Jim," said John, soothingly. "Just keep quiet, Jim, and make up your mind that you are going to get well and be the same generous old Jim Blake that I have known all these years."

"You know what I've done!" exclaimed Blake, his eyes glistening with excitement. "You know all, and yet forgive me! Do you, John? Tell me, old man; it means more for me than drugs or probes."

"I do, Jim. Say no more about it, old partner, but lay quiet and keep all your strength for the crisis which is coming."

John shook his head.

"And yet you know the truth. I loved her madly, John, but a few words from you, John, after you learned the truth, brought me back to earth. I said nothing to Jessie, John. No word of love ever passed my lips. I saw Jessie this evening, and told her that I was to dine with a friend of mine from California—you, John, you! And to-morrow evening I promised her that I would bring that unnamed friend to her house. That was my little surprise, John, but it was not to be."

"I shall call the surgeons if you say another word," declared John, who feared a change for the worse.

"I should like to see Jessie. Will you send for her, John?"

"At once," was the answer.

The door opened softly and Dr. Harkness and other surgeons entered the room.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A Mendacious God.

"Here's a message for you, Jessie! The man says he will wait for an answer. I'm just dying from curiosity."

Jessie Carden was reading when Edith Hancock rushed into her room. Too impatient to wait, she leaned over Jessie's shoulder. The note bore the letterhead of a hotel and was written in a firm but scrawling hand. It read:

"Miss Jessie Carden, Mr. James Blake has been seriously wounded by a pistol shot and may not recover. He wishes to see you, if possible, come at once.

"SAMUEL L. ROUNDS."

When the purport of the message dawned upon her, Edith snatched the paper from Jessie's hand and devoured it with straining eyes.

"He may not recover! Oh, what has happened? I am going to him! He shall not die! Hurry, Jessie, hurry!"

Two white-faced girls rushed in upon General Carden. His lips compressed as he read the message.

"This is Morris' work," he said. "Tell the messenger we will come at once."

The hotel entrance was blocked by a mob when the Bishop carriage drew up. The blue helmets of police officers formed a line which marked the edge of a struggling crowd.

"One moment, sir!" ordered an officer holding his baton in front of General Carden. "Make way for the ambulance corps!"

The folding doors of the side entrance opened and four men slowly advanced bearing a stretcher. It contained a motionless mass covered with a white cloth. Jessie clung to her father's arm.

With a low cry Edith Hancock sprang forward and raised the cloth. She looked into the dead, staring eyes of Arthur Morris. The bearers paused while she gazed intently at the face. She nervously replaced the covering and turned to Jessie and her father.

"It's Arthur Morris! He's dead. Perhaps it is all a mistake about Mr. Blake. Find out, general; find out at once! We'll wait for you here."

General Carden returned and silently conducted Jessie and Edith to a room on the second floor.

A case of surgical instruments lay on the center table, but the room had no occupant. As they stood hesitatingly by the entrance, the door connecting an adjoining room opened and a tall man with red hair, sharp blue eyes and enormous hands entered. Jessie recognized Sam Rounds.

"Heu dew ye do!" he said softly, advancing with an awkward bow. "Sorry to meet you in such a place, but the bitter goes with the sweet. Jim's badly hurt, but he has a chance—so the doctors say."

In whispers the four talked of the tragedy. Sam had entered the hotel office just before the first shot was fired.

"It all happened so quick I couldn't do a thing," Sam explained. "The second shot fired by Morris just missed—some one else—some one Jim was tryin' to save—an' went through the top of Mr. Hawkins' hat. Morris was dead before he struck the floor."

The door opened and a grave-faced surgeon entered the room.

"Miss Carden may see Mr. Blake for a few minutes," he said. In the dimly lighted room Jessie Carden saw two figures—one propped up with pillows so that only the head and arms showed against the white linen. The curling black locks fell back from the pale brow, and the handsome face seemed chiseled in purest marble.

(To be continued.)

GAMBLING FOR A CHURCH.

Mixture of Superstition and Business in Alsace.

About the middle of the last century, when the German Bund sat at Frankfurt, I was an attaché to our legation there, and as Homburg was close by I spent a good deal of time in that cheerful spot.

The most curious thing that I saw was this. A church in an Alsatian village was damaged by fire. The village blacksmith dreamt that he made a machine which, when wound up threw out a counter with a number on it every five minutes. He went in his dream to Homburg with the machine, played on the number and won enough to restore the church.

When he related his dream to his fellow-villagers money was subscribed, the machine was made and he was sent to Homburg with a small capital.

Every day for a week the machine was placed in the gambling-room under his supervision, two peasants stood at the roulette table to play and the village priest walked up and down the room praying. At the end of the week the requisite amount was won. The priest assured me that this was the result of a miracle. He may have been right or he may have been wrong. Anyhow, the money was won and the village church restored.—Henry Labouchere in London Truth.

Answered the Call.

On the bank of the Mohawk river, midway between Amsterdam and Tribes Hill, New York, is the farm of Aaron Pepper. The proprietor is the possessor of several horses, and among them one that is blind, of which Our Dumb Animals tells this story:

The horses frequently resort to the islands in the river for pasture. They ford the stream at a point near the dwelling, and the blind mare usually follows the others. During a recent freshet the horses attempted to return, while Mr. Pepper, anxious as to the result, stood watching them from the north shore. Two horses and colts had entered the stream, then their blind companion followed.

In a few minutes all were struggling against the rapid current and failing to make any headway, the leaders sought the large island, while the blind beast became separated from them and drifted a considerable distance below until she gained a foothold.

Then, discovering the loss of her mates, and realizing her helpless condition, she gave a plaintive whinny. One of the animals, upon hearing it re-entered the stream, and swimming to its unfortunate companion, touched it with the nose and directed it toward the island, which both reached in safety.

French Telephone Girls.

It has recently been decided in Paris that the telephone girl is a public respect and as such she commands the respect incident to public functionaries. The question came up in a case where a popular actress was prosecuted in the criminal court for having insulted the central girl. While defendant was acquitted, the rights of the "démousselles de téléphone" were clearly established.

Japanese Imports.

In 1903 Japan imported commodities from the United States to the value of \$115,500,000 and from Great Britain and India to the value of \$251,750,000. Her imports from Germany were less than one-quarter of the latter sum.

To Feed Lambs on Peas.

Two hundred thousand head of lambs will be fed on peas in the San Luis valley, Colorado, the coming winter. An immense acreage of peas has been grown, and the crop will be fed, without harvesting, to lambs, which will be sent into the valley from northern New Mexico and Utah.

Petroleum Engines in Jaffa.

Petroleum engines for pumping water from wells for the purpose of watering the orange gardens of Jaffa have been used during the last three years; their introduction into the country is due to the Germans, who sold about eighty of them. The British makers followed, and sold about the same number up to the end of last year.—London Engineer.

Evidently New.

"They haven't been married long, have they?"

"I guess not. She still thinks her husband looks like Napoleon."

WALNUT IN GREAT DEMAND.

Germany Ready to Take All America Can Send.

A price is set on nearly every sound walnut tree in eastern Pennsylvania that has attained a diameter of at least three feet. The business of exporting walnut timber to Germany, where it is in demand for veneering, has reached such proportions that agents for the exporters have hunted out and made offers for almost all the limited number of matured trees of his species remaining within easy access of Philadelphia.

Bids are unhesitatingly made for trees that have shaded colonial mansions since the days of the revolution. Sometimes the owner resists the temptation for months. Then the amount of money offered is increased, and the removal of the old tree immediately follows. For a tree three to four feet in diameter at the base \$25 to \$50 is paid, its value depending upon its straightness and freedom from limbs. Trees of this size are generally more than fifty years old.

Sometimes a tree six or seven feet in diameter is discovered, and for this giant, whose age is measured by centuries, the price exceeds \$100. The buyers take only so much of the wood as can be converted into logs at least a foot in diameter. The remainder reverts to the seller. The demand in Europe for American walnut is due to the fact that this wood is, to some extent, taking the place of the fast decreasing supply of mahogany in the manufacture of veneering for furniture.

A Popular Decision.

George Fred Williams, of Massachusetts, tells of a politician in that State who is rather well known for his extremely conservative temperament. A year or two ago the politician was a candidate for the assessorship of a certain county in the State mentioned. Just at the height of his campaign a circus visited the county seat, and local attention was for the moment diverted from the political situation to the wonders of the arena. Among the exhibits of this show was a freak billed as "the two-headed sheep," and there was much discussion as to whether the freak was two sheep with one body or one sheep with two heads. So intense became the difference of opinion among the countrymen that the matter actually got into the newspapers, giving rise to much acrimonious debate.

One day the candidate for the assessorship was approached by a number of individuals who differed with respect to the freak, and they informed the candidate that the matter was to be left to his decision in order to settle a wager.

After careful consideration of the arguments made pro and con, the politician smiled genially and said: "Gentleman, in view of the fact that I am a candidate for the assessorship of this county, I decide that both sides are correct."

The Teacher's Side.

Representatives Mann, Jones and McCleary, all of whom were at one time school-teachers, are fond of exchanging reminiscences of the time when they were respectively engaged in teaching the young idea how to shoot.

During one of these discussions Mr. McCleary touched upon the matter of corporal punishment, and a hearty laugh went up from the others when the man from Minnesota related some amusing incidents of his efforts in that line.

"That reminds me of the remark once made by a fellow that I knew in my school-teaching days," said Mr. Jones. "A number of us were talking of the very question now alluded to, when someone observed that it seemed to him a pretty poor piece of policy for any teacher to lose his temper in the presence of his pupils. 'As for thrashing a pupil,' said this chap, 'that's altogether out of the question. It ought not to be done.' At this," concluded Mr. Jones, "my friend first referred to smiling in a reflective sort of way. 'I suppose I agree with you in that,' said he. 'Really I never became angry with my pupils, but at times I get terribly enthusiastic!'"

The Tide of Love.

As ocean clasps the yielding shore
My love would hold thee near;
I would be the heart's high tide
For tidings of thee, dear.
As one who waits for treasure ships
To cross the sea,
I wait the treasure thy dear lips
Alone can bring to me.

In on the tide of love
Sail to thy victory,
All's a-breeze, the heart's love,
Banners unfurled,
Thou art my argosy;
Come to me presently!
I am the mate for thee,
World of my world!

As night the tired earth enfolds
And falls with soft caress,
My love would share thy every care
And comfort thy distress.
As morning mists greet the sun,
While joyful mists arise,
My pulses toward thee madly run,
While love bedims my eyes.

On the dawn-tide of love
Come to the heart's desire,
Proud with the pride of love—
Fire of fire!
Love, love, wait for thee;
Come to me speedily;
Thou art the mate for me,
World of my world!
—Cincinnati Commercial Tribune.

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"I guess not. She still thinks her husband looks like Napoleon."

Fellow Musicians.

When supper's cleared away at last,
And feeble grows the day,
And stars are gathering thick and fast
Out there across the bay,
The bull frog also clears his throat
And night birds pause to fling
Forth to the breeze a tender note
And Teeny starts to sing.

She's only just a little lass
Who sings straight from her heart
To help the hours of toil to pass—
What more availeth art?
Out from the kitchen rises sweet
Her childlike caroling,
The twilight choir is not complete
Till Teeny starts to sing.

—Washington Star.

The MERTON JEWELS

By W. Q. AMER

Richard Merton, head of the shipping firm of Merton & Co., prospered and grew obese with his good fortune. His progress westward had at length culminated in a pretentious mansion in the charming suburb of Richmond, where he looked forward to spending the rest of his days in placid contentment. It pleased him to provide a liberal hospitality and to surround himself with good company.

Among the crowd of guests on this particular evening was a young man, tall and muscular, with a flowing mustache and distinguished features. Herbert Hendley had never yet taken life very seriously. He had had thoughts of entering one of the professions, but hitherto his modest income had sufficed for immediate needs and he had procrastinated.

He had met the Mertons at a house party in Scotland and had gladly accepted an invitation to renew the acquaintance on his return to the metropolis. He had now been several times to the house and was fast establishing a reputation as a constant visitor.

His attention was directed to the farther end of the room, where a portly, pompous individual was chatting with the charming Geraldine.

"It is stifling here. Would you not like to take a turn on the terrace?" he asked when he reached her side.

"Thank you, it is warm," she assented.

"It is a perfect night," he said enthusiastically.

"Yes, it is very pleasant," and she smiled at his earnestness.

"Do you remember our excursion up the mountain side in Scotland and how we got caught in the Scotch mist?" he mused.

"And how you wrapped me up in your great coat?" she exclaimed. "Am I likely to forget it? What an object I must have looked!" And she laughed musically.

"Well, it was then," she asked softly as he stopped, seemingly lost in reverie.

"That I first loved you," he burst forth. "I had not intended to speak to-night. I have no right; I am a poor man," and he smiled bitterly. "But I love you, Geraldine; you are dearer to me than my own life. If you could wait, dearest, till I am in a position to marry I would work hard to make an income. Am I asking too much?"

"You can not ask me too much," she said simply, glancing up at him with the loveliest shining in her blue eyes.

He caught her to his breast and kissed her lips again and again. Then straining her to him he whispered, "My darling, you have made me happy."

There was considerable commotion in the Merton household on the following morning. A robbery had been committed during the night.

Mr. Merton communicated with the police and called in the aid of a private detective.

Then the household made a discovery. While attending to her duties in Mrs. Merton's room she found a man's gold cuff link. It was passed from hand to hand and scrutinized closely. Geraldine gave a start when it was shown to her.

"Why, it is just like Herbert's—I mean Mr. Hendley's," she said, blushing.

"Most extraordinary thing!" burst forth Mr. Merton, as soon as he had closed the door. "I found this necklace," producing it from his pocket, "one of the stolen articles, on my dressing table this morning."

"Yes, I know," said Dr. Wallace.

"You know!" exclaimed Mr. Merton, staring in astonishment at his companion. "What do you mean? You put—"

"No. It was never in my possession."

"But—how—did—it—come—there?"

"The thief put it there."

"The thief?"

"Yes, so far as there is any theft in the matter. The fact is the jewels have never been out of the house."

made out a common thief, a burglar, a house breaker, and accused of robbing the father of the girl I love. It's—'It's perfectly monstrous."

"It is certainly a trifle awkward," commented George with a smile.

"It's enough to provoke a saint, and—"

"Yes, yes," interposed George, raising his hand deprecatingly, "all that may safely be left to the imagination. Suppose we confine ourselves to the simple facts of the case. You see, at present I only know that you love Geraldine Merton, which shows a pretty taste on your part, and that Mr. Mer-

ton accuses you of committing a burglary."

"Well, the story is soon told. It appears that during the night some thieves broke into the Mertons' place and made off with £5,000 worth of jewelry. A nice little haul. As I told you, I had intended looking up old Merton this evening to ask his paternal blessing in the matter of Geraldine. Imagine my surprise, therefore, when a private detective chap called on me about midday and without too much euphemism charged me with committing the theft, informing me that if I would return the jewelry he thought no further steps would be taken in the matter. I need scarcely say I was dumfounded for the moment."

"No—?" said George, thoughtfully. "How do you account for the presence of your cuff link in the room?"

"Dashed if I know, except—"

"Yes?"

"Well, there's the possibility when I was with Geraldine it might have dropped."

"I see—dropped into the folds of her dress, and she carried it into the room and deposited it unconsciously upon the floor."

"It's the only way I can think of."

"What do you want me to do in the matter?" asked George, steadily puffing at his cigar.

"I thought you wouldn't mind acting as go-between and explain the affair to Merton."

"Hum! Tell him a prospective son-in-law is scarcely likely to rob his prospective father-in-law? Eh?"

"Well—hang it all, man—it's preposterous."

"Quite so, but the cuff link is nasty evidence. However, much depends upon the circumstances of the robbery. Look here, Bert, I won't promise to see you through, but I'll interview Merton and do the best I can for you."

Upon going down to breakfast at the Merton house a trifle late the next morning Dr. Wallace found his host in a state of considerable perturbation. Nothing, however, was said until the meal was finished and they had retired to the library.

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CARE OF WOUNDED SOLDIERS.