

# Old Bazer's Hero

By DAVID CHRISTIE MURRAY.

CHAPTER XIV.—(Continued.)  
 "A pretty market you've brought your pigs to, miss!" said he.  
 Of the two he had been rather more eager for the marriage than she had. It had been her pleasure to him, and because his consent seemed partly to sanctify the effort, that she had imposed upon herself the task of drawing the prodigal from his evil ways.  
 "You speak," she said, "as if I had been to blame."  
 "I reckon," he said, with some acerbity, "as when a girl's husband runs away from her after no more than three months as there's pretty likely to be some sort of a reason for it."  
 Mary's reply to this was disingenuous, or at least she felt it to be so.  
 "You have no right to say he has run away. He has left home on business. There is his letter."  
 "H—m," said Howarth, after having deliberately read the letter through and handed it to his wife. "Thinks he's going to be prosperous, does he? Well, I hope he may. But it looks very much as if I'd got a burden back again as I thought I'd got rid on."  
 "This was intended to mean no more than that his daughter should come home with a due and proper sense of her own poor deservings and of the parental magnanimity. In point of fact, it was Howarth's way of approach to a friendly understanding, but there are methods of approach which have the look of retreat, and this was one of them."  
 "You need not fear, father," answered Mary, "that I shall be a burden to you."  
 "No?" said Howarth satirically. "Well, that's a blessing, anyway."  
 "It's never been my way to be one of them complainin' creatures as ud made you believe as all the worlde is agin' you. The more right to live without labor, with reproach for the wages of idleness, had no enticement for her, and the manner of giving the stone was as sterile of feeling as the gift itself."  
 "Is this all you have to say to me?" she asked, with defiance in the tone and in the eyes.  
 "What d'ye expect we should have to say to you?" asked her father. "Say as we're glad to see you chucked over by your husband, and sent back to be a weight on our old age?"  
 "I should never be a weight on your old age," she answered. "I will work for myself and never ask you for a crust."  
 "You'll make a nice hand at workin' for yourself," said the mother.  
 From the parents' point of view it was absolutely necessary that Mary should be convinced of her own unworthiness, and should demand aid before they were justified in giving it, and to do them justice as they deserve, the couple were much readier to give all the help that was required than they professed to be. But they had made it a condition that the help should be asked for, and their daughter had made it a condition on the other side that it should be offered before she would accept it.  
 "I shall never ask anything from you," she said.  
 Howarth's heart was a little touched at this, and he was almost on the point of saying that the help might be had for the asking. But he deferred that kindly impulse, and the girl went on, with flashing eyes and heightened color:  
 "I have done no wrong. If wrong has been done at all I am the sufferer by it, and you have no right to come here and talk to me as if I were left alone in the world by any fault of mine."  
 "Pride and hunger," said the mother, "are poor companions. Polly, and you'll find that out afore long. I don't see as we've made much by coming here, John," she added, addressing her husband, "and I think we may as well go home again."  
 This maneuver was designed to do nothing more than to bring Mary at once to terms. It had a contrary effect, for Howarth rising to meet his wife's speech by a show of willingness to obey her, Mary advanced to the door with more than actually necessary vehemence, and throwing it wide open, stood on one side, with heaving bosom and pale face and scornful eyes, as her parents left the room.  
 "Her won't be long of that mind, John," said the mother, as the two came upon the street together.  
 "Her'd better not be, for her own sake," the builder answered.  
 And so they made their consciences tolerably easy, and waited for the next overtures for peace to come from their daughter, under the profound impression that they had made offer of the olive branch and that the offer had been refused.  
 In the meantime the little maid, having received permission to go home, fact that she had lost her place. The maid was garrulous, as maids are at times, and she had such a budget of news to open as she had never cried before. She told the wondering old woman, her mother, how Mr. Hackett had run away nobody knew whither, and now Mrs. Hackett had no money left, she was quite sure, and how the shelves were bare in the larder; and how, when she had asked if she should call on the baker or the butcher or the grocer with orders, her mistress had answered quietly in the negative. And it chanced that while the maid was telling his doleful story Hepzibah arrived upon the scene in search of a further consignment of fruit for preserving, and was at once made a partaker of the news.  
 "Do you mean to tell me," asked Hepzibah, "that there's nothing to eat in the house?"  
 "There's barely as much," said the maid, "as'll serve for tea time."  
 The kindly Hepzibah sat miserably acquiescent at this intelligence for a minute, and then brightened.

"It's lucky for him," she said, "I spoke my mind to old Jack Howarth a ready this morning, for if I hadn't I'd ha' had to ha' gone to him now, for all so big as he thinks himself. But look here, my dear," she added, bending suddenly confidential, "this affair of Mrs. Hackett's ain't a thing to be talked about."  
 "No," said the maid solemnly; she would not breathe a word.  
 The maid's mother, who was perhaps the most inveterate gossip in the township, promised a similar secrecy.  
 "And now," said Hepzibah, "have you left your place, or are you going back again?"  
 "I've got to go back for my things," said the maid, "and I've come to get mother's wheelbarrow to bring 'em home on."  
 "Well, then," said Hepzibah, "you be there in half an hour in the back kitchen, and I shall come around to you and have something to say to you."  
 There was an air of benevolent mystery about Hepzibah as she said this, which excited the curiosity both of maid and mother; but she contented herself by mystic nods and smiles, and having secured her supply of fruit, departed. She left the basket at her mistress's house, and ran with a gaunt and jerky gait, at which anybody unacquainted with the nature of her errand might have laughed, to her mother's.  
 "Has that rabbit pie been cut into yet?" she demanded breathlessly.  
 "No," said her mother. "I was a-keepin' it for to-morrow."  
 Hepzibah marched straightway to a cupboard in the corner of the kitchen, and there possessed herself of a substantial pie, which she proceeded to fold up in a snow-white cloth, which she secured by half a dozen pins drawn from a different part of her own person. The old woman looked on at this for a while in dumb astonishment.  
 "What on earth," she asked at last, "beest you to do with the pie? It isn't like you, Hepzibah, to come and steal your mother's victuals."  
 "I'll get time to-night," said Hepzibah, "and come up and make a new one; but I want this now." And to the old lady's infinite astonishment she took up the pastry and marched off with it, still breathless from her run.  
 She bore it straight to Mrs. Hackett's house, and, entering by the back door, confronted the maid, who was already there awaiting her.  
 "Now, mind you," said Hepzibah, warning the maid with great solemnity, "what you have got to do now has got to be handled very proper and polite. You've got to take this here pie to Mrs. Hackett, with Mrs. Blane's best compliments, and to say"—and here Hepzibah began to blush and had some difficulty in encountering the maid's glance—"you've got to say as Mrs. Blane had two of these made, expecting company as never came, and as she's afraid as it'll grow stale upon her hands, and as she hopes that Mrs. Hackett will be so good as to accept of it."  
 Now, this is by no means an uncommon form of rural civility; but it happened, unfortunately for Hepzibah's fraud, that Mary Hackett and Mrs. Blane had never been on terms to offer each other this sort of homely rustic kindness. And when Hepzibah had gone, and the maid, nothing doubting the story she had to tell, but being fully able to divine the real intent of the gift, approached her mistress with the pie and Hepzibah's tale together, it seemed to Mary's outraged feelings the cruelest insult she had yet received. She was a little creature; but for a mere instant she seemed to tower, and she stood over the trembling maid like a statue of indignation. It cost her much trouble to quiet herself, but in a little while she succeeded.  
 "Take the pie back to Mrs. Blane with my best thanks for her kindness," she said, "and tell her that I can make no use of it."  
 The maid, charged with this message, which seemed to her mind to make the deadliest possible breach of politeness, would willingly have abandoned the pie by the roadside, and indeed lingered a good five minutes in front of Mrs. Blane's house before she dared to ring the bell. When at last she plucked up courage to do this, and was rehearsing her speech in preparation for Hepzibah, the door opened and a bearded face appeared, kindly in expression by nature, but looking at this moment stern and white enough to frighten the maid's wits away altogether.  
 "What is it, my dear?" he asked her gently, seeing that she was alarmed.  
 "I'm not my fault, if you please, sir," said the maid, "but missus won't keep the pie, and she sends it back to Mrs. Blane with her best thanks."  
 "Oh," said Blane; "and who is your mistress?"  
 "Mrs. Hackett, if you please, sir," said the maid.  
 Ned Blane dropped the pie dish, which went to pieces within its cover. He stooped with an expression of grave pain to recover it, and stood with it in his hands—a wet and sticky mass—as he looked down at the girl.  
 "Mrs. Blane," he said, "sent this to Mrs. Hackett?"  
 "Yes, sir."  
 "Thank you," said Blane quietly; "that will do."  
 The girl, having discharged her errand, made the best of her way back, glad that it was over; and Blane, having closed the door, walked straight into the kitchen, where his mother sat in her customary place by the side of the hearth.  
 "Mother," he said, depositing the wrecked pie on the table and turning upon her in grave reproof, "this is an insult."  
 "Lawk a mercy!" cried Mrs. Blane, "what's an insult?"  
 "Your sending this pie to Mrs. Hackett."  
 "Pie to Mrs. Hackett?" said his mother, in great astonishment. "What's the lad talking about, in the name of wonder? I've sent no pie to Mrs. Hackett!"  
 At this instant Hepzibah, who had been attending to some duties in the rear of the house, hurried suddenly into the kitchen, and hearing these words stood transfixed with a sense of her own guilty deceit. Blane looked up at her and read the truth in her face at a glance.  
 "It was you," he asked, "who sent this pie to Mrs. Hackett?"  
 Hepzibah paled and held on to the latch of the door for support. "You sent it as coming from my mother!" Hepzibah was silent, and looked as if she were being charged with murder. "Why did you do this?"

"Why? Dear me, Edward," said Hepzibah, recovering herself a little, "how you do talk, and how you do look at a body over a little bit of civility like that! The poor thing's never gone and sent it back again?"  
 "What is the meaning of all this?" said Blane, stern and cold.  
 "The meaning of it," said Hepzibah, shaking herself back into courage by an effort—"the meaning of it is as I wanted to do the poor creature a kindness as her pride wouldn't stand."  
 Blane turned as pale as Hepzibah had been a minute earlier.  
 "A kindness?" he asked. "What do you mean?"  
 "Mean?" said Hepzibah, half crying with the shock of her recent detection and the wretched sense that she was giving intense pain to the one creature she loved best on earth. "What should I mean, but that the poor creature's starving?"  
 "Dear me!" said the sympathetic Mrs. Blane, in a voice as much moved and as expressive of tender interest as she had asked a question about the weather. "Are you talking about Polly Howarth, Hepzibah?"  
 The young man turned about and stood for a minute with one hand on the table near the broken pastry. A curious little gasping sound escaped him. It was so slight that it did not attract his mother's notice, but Hepzibah went white again and made a movement toward him with her hands outstretched, as if she would fain protect and soothe him. He seemed to hear the step behind, and, as if to avoid it, he walked from the kitchen without looking behind him and went heavily up to his own room.

CHAPTER XVI.  
 A man's virtues and offenses are always in accord with each other. This dogma is neither so profound nor so shallow by a good half as it may seem at first sight to different minds. The mean man's virtues are mean, the brave man's vices have at least the credit of being courageous.  
 This being admitted as it must be, it becomes a matter of profound surprise to detect Ned Blane in the act of forgery. Yet, when he had sat in his own bedroom for some half hour he arose and shook himself, and set about that task with an air of resolution. He took pen, ink and paper, and having set a page of his own handwriting before him, he began to write in a legal-looking hand, pausing every now and then to make sure of the form he commonly employed for a given letter, and then painstakingly avoiding a likeness to it. The letter, when completed, ran thus:  
 "Keston Square, Brocton.  
 "Madam—I am instructed by Mr. William Hackett to forward to you the enclosed. Your obedient servant,  
 "JNO. HARGREAVES."  
 He addressed an envelope, and then, having unlocked a drawer in his dressing table, took from it a twenty-dollar bill and folded it up and sealed it with the letter.  
 "I have business in Brocton, mother," he said as he entered the kitchen with the forgery in his pocket. "I shall be back before dark if I can catch the bus, but if I don't manage that, you're not to sit up for me."  
 Hepzibah looked at him with a timid inquiry, and as he left the room arose and followed him, laying a hand upon his arm.  
 (To be continued.)

Not His Forte.  
 Clyde Fitch, the playwright, says that a well-known New York manager was recently much annoyed by the persistent applications for a "job" made to him by a most peculiar looking and seedy individual. Time and time again, it appears, the manager had referred this person to his stage manager. "Talk to Blank," he would say, interrupting the man's attempts to name his qualifications.  
 Finally the seedy man in search of a job did see Blank, the stage manager, who at that time was in the theater, listening to the efforts of candidates for the chorus. As there was a number ahead of him, the peculiar looking individual would, between songs, interrupt the stage manager with his requests for a job. Exasperated, the stage manager at length turned to the pianist and bade him play an accompaniment for the stranger. With some hesitancy the applicant for a job employed what voice he had in song. It was as bad as bad could be.  
 Disgusted, the manager stopped him. "And you have the audacity to ask for a job!" he exclaimed, wrathfully.  
 "Certainly," replied the man.  
 "Why, you can't sing a little bit!" said the manager, astonished.  
 "I don't claim to be able to sing," replied the seedy individual, calmly. "And I don't want to sing. I'm a stage carpenter. I was only singing to please you people!"

Queer Matted Fir Tree.  
 "One of the greatest natural curiosities I ever saw is the matted fir trees of North Carolina," said C. R. Ball, of Raleigh, in the Washington Star. "I have never found a botanist who could explain the phenomenon, but there is a grove of fir trees on the side of Mount Mitchell which when they attain the height of eight or ten feet begin to twine their branches and form flat tops. They grow in this way until the tops are perhaps twenty feet in diameter and these have in some instances combined with the tops of other like trees and a person can walk for a considerable distance upon these tops."  
 "They are undoubtedly a species of fir, but wholly unlike the other fir which are plentiful in that section except in appearance of foliage. I have taken several scientists out to see these trees and have not yet found one who had ever seen or heard of a similar growth. They occupy an area of only a few acres and are found nowhere else in the North Carolina Mountains."  
 No Accounting for Tastes.  
 The pretty girl left her seat and went over to the other side of the car to get away from a passenger who smelled strongly of tobacco.  
 "I don't see how a man can bear to put a nasty old pipe in his mouth!" she muttered.  
 But she muttered it rather indistinctly.  
 She was holding between her rosy lips the battered old 5-cent coin with which she was about to pay her car fare.—Chicago Tribune.  
 Respect for the man who is a better financier than yourself doesn't indicate that you would be willing to let him run your business.  
 Only those get to heaven who help others get there.

Z. R. CARTER. J. B. CARTER.  
**Z. R. CARTER & BRO.,**  
 Wholesale Dealers in  
**Grain and Hay**  
 Halsted and 16th Sts.,  
 Telephone Canal 27. CHICAGO

**M. P. Byrne Construction Co.**  
 GENERAL CONTRACTORS  
 Sewers, Water Works, Conduits, and Electric Plants a Specialty.  
 ROOM 30,  
 88 East Washington Street.

**J. J. VANDERBILT**  
 DEALER IN  
**Hay, Grain and Feed**  
 Baled Shavings and Salt.  
**Washburn-Crosby Co's Gold Medal Flour**  
 WHOLESALE AND RETAIL.  
 Corner Michigan Avenue and 112th Place.

**J. F. SMULSKI & CO.,**  
 565 NOBLE STREET,  
**PRINTERS,**  
 IN ENGLISH, GERMAN AND POLISH.  
 "GAZETA KATOLIKA," the Best Advertising Medium among the Polish residents of Chicago and America.  
 APPLY FOR RATES.  
 ASK FOR *Coune's* VIENNA, NEW ENGLAND, COUNTY FAIR, DADDY DOLLAR, CREAM OF MALTY.  
**AT ANY GROCERY,**  
 —OR—  
**Coune's Bakeries,**  
 164-166 Madison St., and 179-181 Lake St.

An Open Door for more business.  
 THE  
**TELEPHONE**  
 has revolutionized trade methods broadly and brought to the individual opportunities of business growth never before possible.  
 Why not enjoy the advantages and profit of the telephone  
**Yourselves?**  
 THE BEST SERVICE AT LOWEST RATES.  
**Chicago Telephone Co.**  
 CONTRACT DEPT  
 203 Washington St.

**FRAZER**  
 ASK FOR THE OLD RELIABLE!  
 The Best Axle Grease in the WORLD.  
 FACTORIES: New York, Chicago, St. Louis.  
**AXLE GREASE**  
 For Omnibuses, Carriages, Wagons, Drays and Threshing Machines.  
**FRAZER LUBRICATOR CO., MANUFACTURERS**

TELEPHONE NORTH 270  
**WILLIAM EISFELDT**  
 FUNERAL DIRECTOR AND EMBALMER  
 FINE LIVERY  
 86-88 RACINE AVENUE  
 CORNER GARFIELD AVE.

D. M. FULMER, Pres. W. C. KUESTER, V.-Pres. & Treas. W. N. J. H. SCHROEDER, Sec.  
**FULMER, KUESTER, SCHROEDER CO.**  
 MANUFACTURERS AND DEALERS IN  
**LUMBER**  
 LATH, SHINGLES AND POSTS  
 Mill-work and Interior Finish.  
 SPECIALTY CEDAR POLES AND POSTS  
 Telephone Lake View 290  
 BRANCH YARDS: MORTON GROVE, ILLINOIS  
 Mill: Wellgate, Mich.  
 1456-1478 LINCOLN AVENUE, CHICAGO.

**W. A. HINKINS**  
 PROPRIETOR OF THE  
**Erie Livery and Boarding Stable.**  
 199 TO 201 ERIE STREET,  
 CHICAGO.  
 Telephone North 1078.  
 Strictly High-grade Carriages, Broughams and Light Livery  
**E. MUELHOEFER & BRO.**  
**UNDERTAKERS.**  
 112 and 114 Clybourn Avenue,  
 Telephone North 411. CHICAGO.

**PURE as the PUREST**  
 HIGHEST IN QUALITY. ASK YOUR GROCER FOR THESE BRANDS. LOWEST IN PRICE.  
 NONE BETTER.  
**The J. C. Grant Chemical Company,**  
 110, 112, 114 West Lake Street,  
 CHICAGO.