

DARREL of THE BLESSED ISLES

By IRVING BACHELLER,
Author of "Eben Holden," "Dri and I," Etc.

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CHAPTER I.

IT was in 1835, about midwinter, when Brier Dale was a narrow clearing, and the horizon well up in the sky and to anywhere a day's journey. Down by the shore of the pond there Theron Allen built his house. Today, under thickets of tansy, one may see the rotting logs, and there are hollyhocks and catnip in the old garden. He was from Middlebury, they say, and came west—he and his wife—in 1829. From the top of the hill above Allen's of a clear day one could look far across the treetops over distant settlements that were as blue patches in the green canopy of the forest, over hill and dale to the smoky chest of the St. Lawrence, thirty miles north. The Allens had not a child. They settled with no thought of school or neighbor. They brought a cow with them and a big collie whose back had been scarred by a lynx. He was good company and a brave hunter, this dog, and one day—it was February, four years after their coming, and the snow lay deep—he left the dale and not even a track behind him. Far and wide they went searching, but saw no sign of him. Near a month later, one night past 12 o'clock, they heard his bark in the distance. Allen rose and lit a candle and opened the door. They could hear him plainer, and now, mingled with his barking, a faint tinkle of bells. It had begun to thaw, and a cold rain was drumming on roof and window.

"He's crossing the pond," said Allen as he listened. "He's dragging some heavy thing over the ice."
Soon he leaped in at the door, the little red sleigh bounding after him. The dog was in shafts and harness. Over the sleigh was a tiny cover of sailcloth shaped like that of a prairie schooner. Bouncing over the doorstep had waked its traveler, and there was a loud voice of complaint in the little cavern of sailcloth. Peering in, they saw only the long fur of a gray wolf. Beneath it a very small boy lay struggling with straps that held him down. Allen loosed them and took him out of the sleigh, a ragged but handsome youngster with red cheeks and blue eyes and light, curly hair. He was near four years of age then, but big and strong as any boy of five. He stood rubbing his eyes a minute, and the dog came over and licked his face, showing fondness acquired they knew not where. Mrs. Allen took the boy in her lap and petted him, but he was afraid—like a wild fawn that has just been captured—and broke away and took refuge under the bed. A long time she sat by her bedside with the candle, showing him trinkets and trying to coax him out. He ceased to cry when she held before him a big, shiny locket of silver, and soon his little hand came out to grasp it. Presently she began to reach his confidence with sugar. There was a moment of silence, then strange words came out of his hiding place. "Anah johan" was all they could make of them, and they remembered always that odd combination of sounds. They gave him food, which he ate with eager haste, then a moment of silence and an imperative call for more in some strange tongue. When at last he came out of his hiding place he fled from the woman. This time he sought refuge between the knees of Allen, where soon his fear gave way to curiosity, and he began to feel her face and gown. By and by he fell asleep.

They searched the sleigh and shook out the robe and blanket, finding only a pair of warm bricks.
A Frenchman worked for the Allens that winter, and the name, Trove, was of his invention.
And so came Sidney Trove, his mind in strange fetters, traveling out of the land of mystery in a winter night to Brier Dale.

CHAPTER II.

THE wind, veering, came bitter cold; the rain hardened to hail; the clouds, changed to brittle nets of frost and shaken to shreds by the rough wind, fell hissing in a scatter of snow. Next morning when Allen opened his door the wind was gone, the sky clear. Brier pond, largely covered with clear ice, lay under a blanket of snow. He hurried across the pond, his dog following. Near the far shore was a bare spot on the ice cut by one of the sleigh runners. Up in the woods, opposite, was the Moss trail. Sunlight fell on the hills above him. He halted, looking up at the treetops. Twig, branch and trunk glowing with the fire of diamonds through a lacy flecking of hoar frost. Every tree had put on a jacket of ice and become as a fountain of prismatic hues. Here and there a dead pine rose like a spire of crystal; domes of deep colored glass and towers of Jasper were as the landmarks of a city. Allen climbed the shore, walking slowly. He could see no track of sleigh or dog or any living thing. A frosted, icy tangle of branches arched the trail—a gateway of this great, crystal city of the woods. He entered, listening as he walked. Branches of hazel and dogwood were like jets of water breaking into clear, halted drops and foamy spray above him. He went on, looking up at this long sky window of the woods. In the deep silence he could hear his heart beating.
"Sport," said he to the dog, "show me the way." But the dog only wagged his tail.
Allen returned to the house.
"Wife," said he, "look at the woods yonder. They are like the city of ivory promise. Behold I will lay thy stones with fair colors and thy foundations with sapphires, and I will make thy windows of agate."
"Did you find the track of the little sleigh?" said she.
"No," he answered, "nor will any man, for all paths are hidden."

"Theron, may we keep the boy?" she inquired.
"I think it is the will of God," said Allen.
The boy grew and thrived in mind and body. For a time he prattled in a language none who saw him was able to comprehend, but he learned English quickly and soon forgot the jargon of his babyhood. The shadows of mystery that fell over his coming lengthened far into his life and were deepened by others that fell across them. Before he could have told the story all memory of whom he left or whence he came had been swept away. It was a house of riddles where Allen dwelt—a rude thing of logs and ladders and a low roof and two rooms, yet one ladder led high to glories no pen may describe. The Allens, with this rude shelter, found delight in dreams of an eternal home, whose splendor and luxury would have made them miserable here below. What a riddle was this! And then, as to the boy Sid, there was the riddle of his coming and again that of his character, which latter was, indeed, not easy to solve. There were few books and no learning in that home. For three winters Trove tramped a trail to the schoolhouse two miles away and had no further schooling until he was a big, blond boy of fifteen, with red cheeks and large eyes, blue and discerning, and hands hardened to the ax he held. He had then discovered the beauty of the woods and begun to study the wild folk that live in holes and thickets. He had a fine face. You would have called him handsome, but not they among whom he lived. With them handsome was as handsome did, and the face of a man, if it were clean, was never a proper cause of blame or compliment, but there was "that in his soul which even now had waked the mother's wonder and set forth a riddle none was able to solve."

CHAPTER III.

THE harvesting was over in Brier Dale. It was near dinner time, and Allen, Trove and the two hired men were trying fests in the dooryard. Trove, then a boy of fifteen, had outdone them all at the jumping. A stranger came along, riding a big mare with a young filly at her side. He was a tall, spare man, past middle age, with a red, smooth shaven face and long gray hair that fell to his rolling collar. He turned in at the gate. A little beyond it his mare halted for a mouthful of grass. The stranger unsling a strap that held a satchel to his side and hung it on the pommel.
"Go and ask what we can do for him," Allen whispered to the boy.
Trove went down the drive, looking up at him curiously.
"What can I do for you?" he inquired.
"Give me thy youth," said the stranger quickly, his gray eyes twinkling under silvered brows.
The boy, now smiling, made no answer.
"No?" said the man, as he came on slowly. "Well, then, were thy wit as good as thy legs it would be of some use to me."
The words were spoken with dignity in a deep, kindly tone. They were also faintly accented with Irish brogue.
He approached the man, all eyes fixed upon him with a look of inquiry.
"Have ye ever seen a drunken sailor on a mast?" he inquired of Allen.
"No."
"Well, sor," said the stranger, dismounting slowly, "I am not that. Let me consider—have ye ever seen a coonout on a plum tree?"
"I believe not," said Allen, laughing.
"Well, sor, that is more like me. 'Tis long since I rode a horse, an' am out of place in the saddle."
He stood erect with dignity, a smile deepening the many lines in his face.
"Can I do anything for you?" Allen asked.
"Aye—sure me o' poverty. Have ye any clocks to mend?"
"Clocks! Are you a tinker?" said Allen.
"I am, sor, an' at thy service. Could I mend ye, I would have better commerce than with honesty?"
They all surveyed him with curiosity and amusement as he tied the mare.
All had begun to laugh. His words came rapidly on a quick undercurrent of good nature. A clock sounded the stroke of midday.
"What, ho! The clock," said he, looking at his watch. "Thy time hath a lagging foot. Marry, were I that slow, sor, I'd never get to heaven!"
"Mother," said Allen, going to the doorstep, "here is a tinker, and he says the clock is slow."
"It seems to be out of order," said his wife, coming to the step.
"Seems, madam! Nay, it is!" said the stranger. "Did ye mind the stroke of it?"
"No," said she.
"Marry, 'twas like the call of a dying man."
Allen thought a moment as he whitened.
"Had I such a stroke on me I'd—I'd think I was paralyzed," the stranger added.
"You'd better fix it, then," said Allen.
"Thou art wise, good man," said the stranger. "Mind the two hands on the clock an' keep them to their place or they'll beckon thee to poverty."
The clock was brought to the doorstep, and all gathered about him as he went to work.
"Ye know a power o' Scripser," said one of the hired men.
"Scripser!" said the tinker, laughing. "I do, sor, an' much of it according to the good St. William. Have ye never read Shakespeare?"
None who sat before him knew anything of the immortal bard.
"He writ a book 'bout Dan'l Boone an' the Indians," a hired man ventured.
"Angels an' ministers o' grace defend us!" the tinker exclaimed.



"Ye know a power o' Scripser."

Shakespeare, boy—a little of him three times a day for the mind's sake. I've traveled far in lonely places and needed no other company."
"Ever in India?" Trove inquired.
He had been reading of that far land.
"I was, sor," the stranger continued, rubbing a wheel. "I was five years in India, sor, an' part of the time fighting as hard as ever a man could fight."
"Fighting!" said Trove, much interested.
"I was, sor," he asserted, oiling a pinion of the old clock.
"On which side?"
"Inside an' outside."
"With natives?"
"I did, sor; three kinds o' them—fever, seas an' the divvie."
"Give us some more Shakespeare," said the boy, smiling.
The tinker rubbed his spectacles thoughtfully, and as he resumed his work a sounding flood of tragic utterances came out of him—the great soliloquies of Hamlet and Macbeth and Richard III. and Lear and Antony, all said with spirit and appreciation. The job finished, they bade him put up for dinner.
"A fine colt!" said Allen as they were on their way to the stable.
"It is, sor," said the tinker, "a most excellent breed o' horses."
"Where from?"
"The grandisire from the desert o' Arabia, where Allah created the horse out of the south wind. See the slender flanks o' the Barbary? See her eye?"
He seemed to talk in that odd strain for the mere joy of it, and there was in his voice the God given vanity of bird or poet.
He had caught the filly by her little plume and stood patting her forehead.
For a moment he led her up and down at a quick trot, her dainty feet touching the earth lightly as a fawn's.
"Thou'rt made for the hot leagues o' the great sand sea," said he, patting her head. "Ah, thy neck shall be as the bowsprit; thy dust as the flying spray!"
"In one thing you are like Isalah," said Allen as he whittled. "The Lord God hath given thee the tongue of the learned."
"An' if he grant me the power to speak a word in season to him that is weary I shall be content," said the tinker.
Dinner over, they came out of doors. The stranger stood filling his pipe. Something in his talk and manner had gone deep into the soul of the boy, who now whispered a moment with his father.
"Would you sell the filly?" said Allen.
"My boy would like to own her."
"What, ho, the boy! The beautiful boy! An' would ye love her, boy?" the tinker asked.
"Yes, sir," the boy answered quickly.
"An' put a ribbon in her forelock an' a coat o' silk on her back, an' mind ye, a man o' kindness in the saddle!"
"Yes, sir."
"Then take thy horse, an' Allah grant thou be successful on her as many times as there be hairs in her skin."
"And the price?" said Allen.
"Name it, an' I'll call thee just."
The business over, the tinker called to Trove, who had led the filly to her stall.
"You, there, strike the tents. Bring me the mare. This very day she may bear me to forgiveness."
Trove brought the mare.
"Remember," said the old man, turning as he rode away, "in the day o' the last judgment God'll mind the look o' thy horse."
He rode on a few steps and halted, turning in the saddle.
"Mind, too, Phyllis," he called. "God'll mind the look o' thy master. See that ye bring him safe."
The little filly began to rear and call, the mother to answer. For days she called and trembled, with wet eyes, listening for the notes that still answered, though out of hearing, far over the hills. And Trove, too, was lonely, and there was a kind of longing in his heart for the music in that voice of the stranger.

CHAPTER IV.

FOR Trove it was a day of sowing. The strange old tinker had filled his heart with a new joy and a new desire. Next morning he got a ride to Hillsborough, fourteen miles, and came back, reading as he walked a small green book, its thin pages covered thick with execrable fine printing, its title "The Works of Shakespeare." He read the book industriously and with keen pleasure. Allen complained shortly that Shakespeare and the filly had interfered with the potatoes and the corn.
The filly ceased to take food and sickened for a time after the dam left her. Trove lay in the stall nights and gave her milk sweetened to her liking. She grew strong and playful and forgot her sorrow and began to follow him like a dog on his errands up and down the farm. Trove went to school in the autumn—select school, it was called. A two mile journey it was by trail, but a full three by the wagon road. He learned only a poor lesson the first day, for on coming in sight of the schoolhouse he heard a ruck of feet behind him and saw his filly charging down the trail. He had to go back with her and lose the day, a thought dreadful to him, for now hope was

high and school days few and precious. At first he was angry; then he sat among the ferns, covering his face and sobbing with sore resentment. The little filly stood over him and rubbed her silky muzzle on his neck and kicked up her heels in play as he pushed her back.
Next morning he put her behind a fence, but she went over it with the ease of a wild deer and came bounding after him. When at last she was shut in the box stall he could hear her calling, half a mile away, and it made his heart sore. Soon after a moose trod him on the trail and held him there for quite half a day. Later he had to help thrash and was laid up with the measles. Then came rain and flooded flats that turned him off the trail. Years after he used to say that work and weather and sickness and distance, and even the beasts of the field and wood, resisted him in the way of learning.
He went to school at Hillsborough that winter. His time, which Allen gave him in the summer, had yielded some \$45. He hired a room at 35 cents a week. Mary Allen bought him a small stove and a kettle, chair, bed, pillow and quilt and a supply of candles.
She surveyed him proudly as he was going away that morning in December.
"Folks may call ye handsome," she said. "They'd like to make fool of ye, but you go on 'bout yer business an' act as if ye didn't hear."
He had a figure awkward as yet, but fast shaping to comeliness. Long, light hair covered the tops of his ears and fell to his collar. His ruddy cheeks were a bit paler that morning; the curve in his lips a little drawn; his blue eyes had begun to fill and the dimple in his chin to quiver slightly as he kissed her who had been a mother to him. But he went away laughing.
He got a job in the mill for every Saturday at 75 cents a day and soon thereafter was able to have a necktie and a pair of fine boots and a barber now and then to control the length of his hair.
Trove burnt the candles freely and was able, but never brilliant, in his work that year owing, as all who knew him agreed, to great modesty and small confidence. He was a kindly, big hearted fellow and had wit and a knowledge of animals and of woodcraft that made him excellent company. His schoolboy diary has been of great service to all with a wish to understand him. On a faded leaf in the old book one may read as follows:

I have received letters in the handwriting of girls, unnamed. They think they love me, and say foolish things. I know what they say to me. They are the kind my mother spoke of—the kind that set their traps for a fool, and when they catch them use him for a thing to laugh at. They're not going to catch me. Expenses for seven days have been \$14. Clint McCormick spent 60 cents to take his girl to show, and I had to help him through the week. I told him he ought to love Caesar less and Rome more.
Then follows the odd entry under which it is doubtful if the history of Sidney Trove could ever have been written. At least only a guess would have been possible, where now is certainty. And here is the entry:
Since leaving home the men of the dark have been very troublesome. They wake me about every other night, and sometimes I wonder what they mean.
Now an odd thing had developed in the mystery of the boy. Even before he could distinguish between reality and its shadow that we see in dreams he used often to start up with a loud cry of fear in the night. When a small boy, he used to explain it briefly by saying, "The men in the dark." Later he used to say, "The men outdoors in the dark." At ten years of age he went off on a three days' journey with the Allens. They put up in a tavern that had many rooms and stairways and large windows. It was a while after his return an evening, before candlelight, when a gray curtain of dusk had dimmed the windows, that he first told the story, soon oft repeated and familiar, of "the men in the dark"—at least he went as far as he knew.
"I dream," he was wont to say in after life, "that I am listening alone, still night alone. I am always alone. I hear a sound in the silence, of what I cannot be sure. I discover then, or seem to, that I stand in a dark room and tremble with great fear, of what I do not know. I walk along swiftly in bare feet, I am so fearful of making a noise. I am feeling, feeling, my hands out in the dark. Presently they touch a wall and I follow it and then I discover that I am going downstairs. It is a long journey. At last I am in a room where I can see windows, and, beyond, the dim light of the moon. Now I seem to be wrapped in fearful silence. Stealthily I go near the door. Its upper half is glass, and beyond it I can see the dark forms of men. One is leaning through, with face upon the pane. I know the other is trying the lock, but I hear no sound. I am in a silence like that of the grave. I try to speak. My lips move; but try as I may, no sound comes out of them. A sharp terror is pricking into me, and I flinch as if it were a knife blade. Well, sir, that is a thing I cannot understand. You know me. I am not a coward. If I were really in a like scene fear would be the least of my emotions, but in the dream I tremble and am afraid. Slowly, silently, the door opens, the men of the dark enter, wall and windows cry to reel. I hear a quick, loud cry, rending the silence and falling into a roar like that of flooding waters. Then I wake and my dream is ended for that night."
Now, men have had more thrilling and remarkable dreams, but that of the boy Trove was as a link in a chain, lengthening with his life and ever binding him to some event far beyond the reach of his memory.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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THE GENTLE WOMAN'S FAITH

Sunday School Lesson for June 3, 1906
Specially Prepared for This Paper

LESSON TEXT.—Mark 7:24-30. Memory verse, 30.
GOLDEN TEXT.—"Great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt."—Matt. 15:28.
TIME.—Summer, A. D. 25, a few weeks after last lesson.
PLACE.—On border of country of Tyre and Sidon, 40 or 50 miles northwest of Sea of Galilee.
Comment and Suggestive Thought.

V. 24. "From thence . . . went." From Capernaum or its vicinity, Jesus and the twelve went into the neighborhood of Tyre. "Borders." The country district within the domain of the cities named. "Would have no man know it." He did not wish notoriety of any sort. He had come hither that he might quietly teach His apostles. "Could not be hid." It soon became known that the great Healer was there.

V. 25. "For." What is about to be told brought Him such fame that it probably accounts for his brief stay in this region. In the Rev. Ver., this verse begins with "But straightway." Immediately upon hearing of His arrival, a woman who had a great need sought Him out. "Young daughter." A little child. "Had an unclean spirit." She was the victim of what was known as demoniacal possession. "Heard of Him." Perhaps she or her neighbors had been among those who flocked to Galilee to see and hear Jesus (Mark 3:8).

V. 26. "A Greek." Probably she spoke the Greek language. "Syrophenician." She was a Phoenician by race, and lived in the political division known as Syria; some other Phoenicians lived in northern Africa, and were termed Libyo-Phoenicians. "Brought Him." By combining Matthew's account with that of Mark, we see that the following conversation took place:

Woman—Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.
Jesus remains silent.
Disciple—Send her away, for she crieth after us.
Jesus (to disciples)—I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.
Woman (worshipping)—Lord, help me!
Jesus (to woman)—Let the children first be filled; for it is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it unto the dogs.
Woman—Truth, Lord; yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs.
Jesus—O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt. Go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.

As we see how Jesus tried the woman, first by His silence, then by apparent rebuff, we feel sure that He was trying to bring her into "the household of faith," that she, as well as her daughter, might be blessed.

V. 27. "Let the children first be filled." Jesus' words to the disciples (see above), which she had heard, would give her to understand that He meant Gentiles must wait until Israelites were provided for. "Not meet." Not fitting. "Unto the dogs." The Jews thought that they alone were children of God, and they called people of other nations "dogs," to indicate that their lives were unclean, and perhaps that they "barked" at true Godliness.

V. 28. "She answered." One of weak faith might have gone home discouraged or perhaps resentful, but this woman's faith was energized by mother-love, and she was ready to bear anything if she might gain her daughter's restoration. "Yes, Lord." She agreed to what Jesus said, and addressed Him as the sovereign Lord of mankind. "Yet the dogs," etc. The woman humbly accepts what He says, and from the truth of the proverb draws a new plea.

V. 29. "For this saying." Because of the faith and love shown by this saying, Jesus was greatly pleased by her faith, for it put her where He could bless her; she had opened her heart to Him. See Matthew's rendering in our Golden Text. "The devil is gone out." Jesus had not seen or touched the child, but He assures the mother that she is cured.

V. 30. "Was come to her house." Believing Jesus' word, she hastened homeward and found her daughter, released from her malady, "laid"—or more literally "thrown"—upon the bed. Probably a convulsion had accompanied her release. What a happy home that humble cottage now became! Note the obstacles which this woman overcame: (1) Nationality; she was to Jews a "foreigner." (2) Religion; she was a Canaanite and pagan. (3) Speech; she was a Greek, a Gentile. (4) Sex; she was a woman, and not accustomed to appear in public. Beyond all these, Jesus, Himself, seemed to put obstacles in her way.

Practical Points.
V. 25. Sooner or later Christ and the seeking soul are sure to meet.—1 Chron. 28:9.
V. 26. Each soul is tormented by demons of sin, which only Christ can cast out.—Rom. 7:24, 25.
V. 27. When Jesus seems deaf to our cry, He is opening the way and awaiting the time for sending the largest possible answer.—Jas. 1:3, 4.
V. 28. Every difficulty surmounted lifts us higher, makes our faith stronger.—1 Pet. 1:7.
V. 29. Nothing can stand before one who depends on God.—1 John 5:4.

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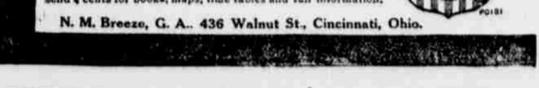
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