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The Prodigal Village
by Irving Bacheller

SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I.—In the village of Bingville thirteen-year-old Robert Emmet Moran, crippled son of a poor widow, is known as the Shepherd of the Birds. His world is his mother and friends, his little room, the flower garden and Jolly Crocker, and every flying thing he sees from his window. The painting of pictures is his enjoyment, and little Pauline Baker, small daughter of a neighbor, the object of his boyish affection. To him, J. Patterson Bing, the first citizen of Bingville, is the ideal of a really great man.

CHAPTER II.—The village becomes money mad, reflecting the great world in its state of unrest. The Bing family is leader in the change. To them the village has become "provincial." Pauline Baker, victim of her surroundings, elopes with a stranger, and her parents are unable to trace her.

CHAPTER III.—Severe winter weather brings distress to Bingville. Spoiled by false prosperity, the citizens have failed to look ahead, and many suffer absolute privation. The Reverend Otis Singleton, one of the few in the village who seek to stem the tide of extravagance and folly, effects a reformation in Hiram Bleskingsop, town drunkard and general "black sheep."

workers! The idle man is a mere parasite and not at heart an American. Generally, I work fifteen hours a day.

"This little lad has been knitting night and day for the soldiers without hope of reward and has spent his savings for yarn. There isn't a doctor in Bingville who isn't working eighteen hours a day. I met a minister this afternoon who hasn't had ten hours of sleep in a week—he's been so busy with the sick, and the dying and the dead. He is a nurse, a friend, a comforter to any one who needs him. No charge for overtime. My God! Are we all going over time? Are you any better than he is, or I am, or than the doctors are who have been killing themselves with overwork? Do you dare to tell me that prosperity is any excuse for idleness in this land of ours, if one's help is needed?"

Judge Crocker's voice had been calm, his manner dignified. But the last sentences had been spoken with a quiet sternness and with his long bony forefinger pointing straight at Mr. Sneed. The other members of the committee clapped their hands in hearty approval. Mr. Sneed smiled and brushed his trousers.

"We're all off our balance a little, but what is to be done now?"

"We must quit our plumbing and carpentering and lawyering and banking and some of us must quit merchandising and sitting in the chimney corner and grab our saws and axes and go out into the woods and make some fuel and get it hauled into town," said Judge Crocker. "I'll be one of a party to go to-morrow with my axe. I haven't forgotten how to chop."

The committee thought this a good suggestion. They all rose and started on a search for volunteers except Mr. Sneed. He tarried, saying to the judge that he wished to consult him on a private matter. It was, indeed, just then, a matter which could not have been more public although, so far, the news of it had traveled in whispers. The judge had learned the facts since his return.

"I hope your plumbing hasn't gone wrong," he remarked with a smile.

"No, it's worse than that," said Mr. Sneed ruefully.

They bade the little Shepherd good night and went down stairs where the widow was still at work with her washing, although it was nine o'clock.

"Faithful woman!" the judge exclaimed as they went out on the street. "What would the world do without people like that? No extra charge for overtime, either."

Then, as they walked along, he cunningly paved the way for what he knew was coming.

"Did you notice the face of that boy?" he asked.

"Yes, it's a God's blessing to see a face like that," the judge went on. "Only the pure in heart can have it. The old spirit of youth looks out of his eye—the spirit of my own youth. When I was fourteen, I think that my heart was as pure as his. So were the hearts of most of the boys I know."

"It isn't so now," said Mr. Sneed.

"I fear it isn't," the judge answered. "There's a new look in the face of the young. Every variety of evil is spread before them on the stage of our little theater. They see it while their characters are in the making, while their minds are like white wax. Everything that touches them leaves a mark or a smudge. It addresses them in the one language they all understand, and for which no dictionary is needed—pictures. The flower of youth fades fast enough. God knows, without the withering knowledge of evil. They say it's good for the boys and girls to know 'll about life. We shall see!"

Mr. Sneed sat down with Judge Crocker in the handsome library of the latter and opened his heart. His son Richard, a boy of fifteen, and three other lads of the village, had been committing small burglaries and storing their booty in a cave in a piece of woods on the river bank near the village. A constable had secured a confession and recovered a part of the booty. Enough had been found to warrant a charge of grand larceny and Elsie Potts, whose store had been entered, was clamoring for the arrest of the boys.

"It reminds me of that picture of the robbers' cave that was on the billboard of our school of crime a few weeks ago," said the judge. "I'm tired of the law, but I'll go and see



Mr. Sneed sat down with Judge Crocker in the handsome library of the latter and opened his heart.

CHAPTER FIVE.

In Which J. Patterson Bing Buys A Necklace of Pearls.

Meanwhile, the Bings had been having a busy winter in New York. J. Patterson Bing had been elected to the board of a large bank in Wall street. His fortune had more than doubled in the last five years and he was now a considerable factor in finance.

Mrs. Bing had been studying current events and French and the English accent and other social graces every morning, with the best tutors, as she reclined comfortably in her bed-chamber while Phyllis went to sundry shops. Mrs. Crocker had once said, "Maude Bing has a passion for self-improvement." It was mainly for not quite true.

Phyllis had been "bent the bush" with her mother at teas and dinners and dances and theaters and country house parties in and about the city. The speedometer on the limousine had doubled its mileage, since they came to town. They were, it would seem, a tireless pair of hunters. Phyllis' portrait had appeared in the Sunday papers. It showed a face and form of unusual beauty. The supple grace and classic outlines of the latter were touchingly displayed at the dances in many a handsome ballroom. At last, they had found a promising and most eligible candidate in Roger Delane—a handsome, stalwart youth, a year out of college. His father was a well-known and highly successful merchant of an old family which, for generations, had "belonged"—that is to say, it had been a part of the aristocracy of Fifth avenue.

There could be no doubt of this great good luck of theirs—better, indeed, than Mrs. Bing had dared to hope for—the young man having seriously courted his intentions to J. Patterson. But there was one shadow on the glowing prospect; Phyllis had suddenly taken a 180° turn. She was moody, as her mother put it. She was listless and unhappy. She had lost her interest in the chase, so to speak. She had little heart for the teas and dances and dinner parties. One day her mother returned from a luncheon and found her weeping. Mrs. Bing went at once to the telephone and called for the stomach specialist. He came and made a brief examination and said that it was all due to rich food and late hours. He left some medicine, advised a day or two of rest in bed, charged a hundred dollars and went away. They tried the remedies, but Phyllis showed no improvement. The young man sent American Beauty

roses and a graceful note of regret to her room.

"You ought to be very happy," said her mother. "He is a dear."

"I know it," Phyllis answered. "He's just the most adorable creature I ever saw in my life."

"For goodness' sake! What is the matter with you? Why don't you brace up?" Mrs. Bing asked with a note of impatience in her tone. "You act like a dead fish."

Phyllis, who had been lying on the couch, rose to a sitting posture and flung one of the cushions at her mother.

"How can I brace up?" she asked with indignation in her eyes. "Don't you dare to scold me."

There was a breath of silence in which the two looked into each other's eyes. Many thoughts came flashing into the mind of Mrs. Bing. Why had the girl spoken the word "you" so bitterly? Little echoes of old history began to fill the silence. She arose and picked up the cushion and threw it on the sofa.

"What a temper!" she exclaimed. "Young lady, you don't seem to know that these days are very precious for you. They will not come again."

(Continued in our next issue)

IN THE SPRING YOUR BLOOD NEEDS A TONIC

Winter Weakens Blood, Makes Faces Pale. Take Gude's Pepto-Mangan

THE BEST KNOWN BLOOD TONIC

Drowsy Spring-Fever Feeling That Comes from Sluggish Blood Will Soon Leave You

As all growing things on earth shoot into new life in Springtime, so do the billions of cells that make up each part of the body renew their vigor.

As you open the windows, breathe the Spring air, and let the sunshine, the red corpuscles in your blood should carry more oxygen to the tiny cells.

The red corpuscles are tiny disc-shaped particles, swimming in enormous numbers, in the blood. They carry oxygen to the cells in all parts of the body, and they carry away worn-out waste matter. Sometimes especially in the Spring, after the winter indoors and more or less sickness, the red corpuscles themselves need rebuilding. Gude's Pepto-Mangan contains just the ingredients to give them greater power to absorb oxygen and to distribute it throughout the body.

That is why it is such a good spring tonic. It helps so much to bring back color to cheeks made pale and wan by the necessary indoor winter life. It adds to the number of red corpuscles. With fine spring days and Gude's Pepto-Mangan you gain in vigor and attain good health.

Don't go around drowsy this Spring. Take that good tonic, Gude's Pepto-Mangan. You can get it in tablet form or in liquid form at your druggist's. Both forms have the same medicinal value. Insist upon genuine Gude's Pepto-Mangan. Advertisement.

An ordinance authorizing the issuance of \$10,000 electric light bonds of the Town of Hamilton, North Carolina, and providing for payment of the principal thereof and interest thereon.

Be it ordained by the Board of Commissioners of the Town of Hamilton, North Carolina:

Section 1. That negotiable coupon bonds of the Town of Hamilton be issued, in an aggregate principal amount of \$10,000, to be known as Electric Light Bonds, for the purpose of establishing a system of electric lights in said town and for the use of said town, and to be owned and controlled by the town, the said bonds to be in denomination of \$500 each, to bear interest at 5 per cent per annum, payable semi-annually.

Section 2. Tax sufficient to pay the principal and interest of said bonds shall be annually levied and collected.

Section 3. The probable period of usefulness of said improvements is thirty years.

Section 4. A statement of Debt of the Town of Hamilton has been filed with the Clerk, pursuant to the Municipal Finance Act, and is open to public inspection.

Section 5. The assessed valuation of property subject to taxation by the Town of Hamilton for the year 1920, as shown by said Statement, is \$400,000.

Section 6. THE NET DEBT of the said Town is nothing.

Section 7. This Ordinance shall be published in The Enterprise a newspaper published every week in the town of Williamston in Martin County, in which county the town of Hamilton is located, the same to be published once a week for four weeks.

Section 8. This Ordinance shall take effect thirty days after its first publication, unless in the meantime a petition for its submission to the voters is filed under the Municipal Finance Act, and in such event it shall take effect when approved by a majority of the voters of the town of Hamilton at an election as provided in said Act.

The foregoing ordinance was passed on the first day of March, 1921, and was first published on the 11 day of March 1921. Any action or proceeding questioning the validity of said ordinance must be commenced within thirty days after its first publication.

H. S. JOHNSON
Clerk.

ADMINISTRATOR'S NOTICE

Having qualified as administrator of the estate of George W. Martin late of Martin county, North Carolina; all persons indebted to the said estate are hereby notified to pay same immediately and all persons holding claims against said estate are hereby notified to present same for payment within one year from this date or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

This 20th day of December, 1920.
R. O. MARTIN, Administrator

NOTICE OF EXECUTION SALE

North Carolina
Martin County
Swift Fertilizer Co., Inc.

S. W. Mizelle, L. H. Taylor, Riddick Mizelle, Henry Bailey and J. M. Cratt.

By virtue of an execution directed to the undersigned from the Superior Court of Martin County in the above entitled action, I will on Monday, April 4th, 1921, at 12 o'clock M. at the courthouse of said county, sell to the highest bidder for cash, to satisfy said execution, all the right, title and interest which the said S. W. Mizelle, L. H. Taylor, Riddick Mizelle, Henry Bailey, the defendants herein, have in the following described real estate, to-wit:

1st Tract. A tract of land in Bear Grass Township, Martin County North Carolina and bounded as follows: Bounded on the north by the lands of Jesse Mizelle and Albert Rogerson, on the east by the lands of S. K. Rawls and on the west by the lands of Albert Rogerson and Thin Branch, containing thirty (30) acres.

Saving and excepting from this tract of land, the following described portion, which was allotted to said S. W. Mizelle as a homestead, starting at L. K. Rawl's line at the gate going north along a path to the garden about 93 yards and then west along the garden to the back end of the garden and then south parallel with the path to L. K. Rawl's line; thence along said line to the beginning of the gate, containing one and one-eighth acres and being the land whereon the house and stables and pack-house are situated.

2nd and 3rd Tracts.

2nd Tract. Beginning at a light-wood stump known as the Martin and Taylor corner; thence a northerly course to L. M. Martin's line to an iron stob a corner in said Martin's line; thence a north-west course to Louis Taylor's line the cart road; thence a west course with the Harrison line to Calf Branch; thence down the run of said branch to the said Harrison's line to an iron stob, a corner in said Harrison's line; thence a southeast course to J. E. Barnhill's line to the beginning, containing one hundred and seventeen (117) acres more or less.

3rd Tract. A tract of land lying and being in Beaufort and Martin County, beginning at an iron stob, a corner, Louis Taylor and L. M. Martin's line; thence a northerly course with L. M. Martin's line to a light-wood stob beside the County Road; thence an easterly course with Taylor's line to the beginning, containing twenty five (25) acres more or less.

Excepting from the operation of this sale, the following described tract of land from the above two (2) described tracts, which was allotted to said Louis Taylor as a homestead

SPRING OFFERINGS

Our Buyer is now on the New York Markets and we are receiving Merchandise every day. We are receiving the latest spring Creations in Coats, coat-suits, and Maid Dresses. Dresses—Come early so as to get first choice—

We have also just received our spring line of Stetson Hats, Walk-Overs and Douglas oxfords and a complete line of Manhattan Shirts and Novelty knit ties. Do not fail to see us before buying your spring outfit.

Yours for better service

MARGOLIS BROS. AND BROOKS

"Just a Little Better—Just a Little Different"

Manhattan SHIRTS



starting in the road and going south along a lane to the tobacco barn; thence south parallel with the road to Martin's line; thence east to the house and garden, containing two (2) acres more or less.

5th Tract. Adjoining the lands of Charlie Rogers, Mrs. J. G. Leary, Ananda Bailey and John W. Bailey, containing twenty acres more or less.

Saving and excepting from this tract of land, the land hereinafter described which was allotted to Henry Bailey as homestead exemption, the house and lot and ten acres of land next to the buildings.

This the 4th day of March 1921.
H. T. ROBERSON
Sheriff of Martin County, N. C.

Now is the time to buy your fertilizer for 1921. See Leslie Fowden first.

About Fifty Dollars

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TWO LOWEST BIDS ON A \$100,000.00 BRIDGE. THIS PROVES ENGINEERING KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE PRODUCE MAXIMUM RESULTS AT MINIMUM COSTS.

BEFORE YOU BUILD, SEE

R. L. GRAVELEY

Certified Member American Association of Engineers

CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER

WILLIAMSTON — N. C.

TAXES MUST BE PAID

Unless taxes are paid by April the first I shall have to levy and make additional expenses and costs to the taxpayer.

I hope everybody will see me promptly and make settlement.

Remember, the law forces me to make collections and I have no power to extend the time.

Respectfully,

H. T. ROBERSON

SHERIFF.

SPRING 1921

OUR SPRING LINE OF COAT SUITS, COATS, DRESSES, SKIRTS, SHIRT WAISTS, MIDDY SUITS, MILLINERY IS NOW READY. WE EXTEND TO YOU A MOST HEARTY INVITATION to VISIT OUR STORE AND SEE THIS NEW LINE OF SPRING GOODS.

YOU WILL FIND THIS SPRING'S GOODS RIGHT MUCH CHEAPER THAN THOSE OF LAST SEASON.

Harrison Bros. & Company

FOR THOSE WHO WANT THE BEST