LOVE LAYS A GHOST

"Your friends don't concern me . . . but a son-in-law does . . . and that fellow ain't got the courage of a flea," said Maisie's father, But he had good cause to revise his opinion before Christmas Eve was out.

Pa Pepperstrip rolled back his shirt sleeves, and showed the rippling muscles of his giant arms.

"See them?" he demanded of his daughter. "That's force, that is. A man's strength gets respect—there ain't a person knows me in this district as doesn't look at 'Battling Sam' Pepperstrip with respect. And what's the result? I'm on the council an' the general committee. I'm what the papers call a prominent citizen of Cambridgeshire, an' it's all through these here. I tell you a man with muscles like these is bound to get on, they'll pull 'im through."

Mamie looked at her father's broad shoulders and thick set neck with a critical eye.

"P'raps so," she said, tilting a chin every bit as determined as Pa Pepperstrip's. "But you can't deny you're a bit heavy now, father. I don't suppose you could move as quickly as you once did. That's where Archie has it, he's not so big nor as strong as you are, but my goodness, he's quick. They call him 'Lightning Moll' down at the army."

Pa Pepperstrip's thick lips curled in scorn.

"Moll? That's just what 'e is—a pink puddle, mammy's boy. Why, I could wipe the floor with 'im in no time."

"Don't you be too sure, Pa," Mamie said shortly. "Just because Archie is good looking, and wears nice clothes, doesn't say he can't fight. And he can't help his name being Molyneux."

The old man's face set obstinately.

"You ain't going to marry that young jackanapes. If I had known the way the wind was blowing, I'd never 'ave had 'im in the 'ouse."

"But we invited him over Christmas, you can't turn him out, Pa," Mamie said, anxiously. "Besides, you've no objection to us being friends, have you?"

"Oh, I don't say nothing about that. Ayr your own friends they don't concern me. But a son-in-law does. An' I must say as you're 'avin' bad luck in friends. That fellow ain't got the courage of a flea. When 'e asked me if 'e could 'ave you, I reared 'im on to 'is 'aunches 'e was glad to get out of the room."

Mamie looked astonished.

"I think you must have been mistaken, Pa. Archie isn't afraid of anything or anyone. There's only one thing he might be a bit nervous about," she added, as an afterthought, "and that's ghosts."

"Ghosts!" echoed her father contemptuously. "Who'd be afraid of ghosts, there ain't no such things."

Mamie yawned.

"P'raps so," she replied carelessly, and, choosing a book from the bookcase, she went to join the rest of the family in the cosy sitting room.

Archie Molyneux was the only stranger in the Christmas party, and as Archie was of a shy and retiring disposition, the Pepperstrip family of aunts, uncles and cousins were inclined to look upon a young man who couldn't boast such a notable relation as "Battling Sam," who had made a name for himself in a boxing in the good old days, and had lived on his reputation ever since.

Mamie passed the book to the little circle round the fire.

"Why it's about ghosts," said Aunt Susan, with a delicate shudder, and gave the book hurriedly to Uncle Joshua.

Under cover of the conversation Mamie spoke to Archie, who had immediately sought her side.

"It's no good," she sighed, in an undertone. "He won't hear of us being engaged. It'll all my fault, for advising you to agree with him. But you know how Pa hates opposition! How was I to know that he'd welcome it in a son-in-law?"

"Well, a fellow can't go and hit the father of the girl he hopes to marry on the head, can he?" Archie queried, with a quizzical smile.

Mamie pouted.

"It sounds like beginner's French," she said. "The worst of it is, Pa's got the idea that you're timid, now, and once Pa gets an idea, nothing will shake it. You see, he's so proud of the Pepperstrip record. Give him his due, he's not afraid of anything of any one—except perhaps one thing."

"What's that?" asked Archie quickly. An idea was beginning to simmer in his brain.

"Ghosts," Mamie answered in a thrilled whisper, as she moved demurely away to help Aunt Susan wind her wool.

The conversation at dinner that evening ran on spooks.

Only Pa Pepperstrip and Archie were silent. They appeared to be thinking; but presently the old man joined in.

"There was a rumour," he began in a hollow tone, "that one o' these 'are ghosts lived in this very 'ouse."

"Gracious, Sam!" exclaimed Aunt Susan. "I thought you didn't believe in such things?"

"I do now," he replied, looking round mysteriously, and lowering his tone.

"So do I," suddenly volunteered Archie, gazing into space.

A hush fell upon the company, while they looked anxiously into the dark corners of the room, and Aunt Susan and Aunt Martha shivered.

"Pooh!" said Uncle Joshua. "I've been reading a book and it says that ghosts are really human beings, just dressed up for a joke."

"You 'aven't seen what I've seen," responded Sam Pepperstrip heavily, and Uncle Joshua subsided in respectful silence.

"I saw 'er, all in white, plain as I see you. She came walkin' along the 'all, an' all at once there were a kind of holler shriek, an' she vanished."

He looked triumphantly round, and the family who had been accustomed to following his lead always, looked impressed.

"I had a similar experience," Archie broke in, leaning forward. "It was terrifying—the white figure came towards me and I couldn't move. Just as I was nearly dropping with fright it faded away, and I found myself alone."

"I wasn't afraid," rejoined Pa, with slow scorn, "though I admit it were a creepy business."

Once more the family took their cue from Pa, and hid disquieting fears under a brave exterior. But when it was time for bed, everyone was a bit jumpy, though no one would admit it.

But Archie Molyneux was full of an idea. He entered his bedroom, and switched on the light, then he locked the door.

Turning to the mirror on his dressing table, he grinned joyfully at his reflection.

"Christmas Eve," he murmured, "when all ghosts walk, and all's fair in love——"

Rummaging in his suitcase, he found a soft colar, and with his penknife he slit two holes for eyes, and proceeded to fix it over his face.

Then he stripped the bed, and draped the sheet round his shoulders, tying the ends in a firm knot. Finally, having donned rubber soled shoes, Archie gave another grin at the extraordinary spectacle he represented, then switched off the light, and let himself into the passage.

All was dark and silent. The household was in bed. Archie hesitated for a moment, not quite sure of his bearings, then groped his way down the stairs.

Half way down, he was startled by a slight creak.

Then a muffled footstep close beside him caused him to make a grab, but his hands closed on empty air. Something brushed silently past him, and Archie came to a standstill, puzzled.

What was it? Came the faint but unmistakable sound of a window being softly opened, and Archie needed no prompting as he bounded down the stairs.

"Burglars! Jove!" he muttered, and made for a dim square light, which he knew was the front landing window.

For a second he saw a dark figure silhouetted against the faint light. Then more footsteps padded towards him on the landing and, taken completely by surprise, a bulky body threw itself at Archie, and the two rolled over on the floor.

Neither gave the other a chance to do any shouting. Archie discovered that his enemy had a good knowledge of fighting, and if it hadn't been that he was somewhat hampered by his sheet, and that the other fellow seemed to have something tied round his face, Archie would have been enjoying himself.

He was confident of victory. Already his opponent was making peculiar gasping sounds in his throat, as if he was being strangled, and Archie began to exert all his knowledge of the art of fighting.

There were sounds of the opening and shutting of doors and hurried footsteps, coupled with excited murmurs, and one by one all the amazed, scared looking guests appeared. Mamie alone having the sense to switch on the light.

It revealed the astonishing sight of Archie, with clothes awry, the remnants of a sheet hanging from his shoulders, sitting triumphantly on his opponent's chest, on the landing floor.

"Why, Archie, whatever is the matter? Is it a burglar? Oh, you clever boy!" Mamie cried delightedly; then her gaze took in the fallen foe.

"Good gracious! It's Pa!"

"What?" Archie jumped to his feet with a shout, and an indignant old man got up from the ground, and struggled to his feet.

"I thought you were a burglar," stammered Archie, crestfallen.

"Why, Pa, how could you attack one of your own guests?" broke in Mamie quickly, with reproach in her tone.

Her father opened and shut his mouth like a fish on dry land.

"He was getting out of the window," he managed to shout at last, pointing a quivering finger at Archie. I thought he was the burglar, an' I got 'im from behind——"

The young man looked at the open window.

"It was a burglar; he got out of that window," he said, regretfully.

Everyone rushed round the various rooms to see if anything had been taken, and Pa Pepperstrip began to laugh.

"First I try to put the wind up you, and then you do the same for me," he roared, "and then, blowed if we don't go and take each other for burglars while the real thief escapes. It were a darned good fight, too," Pa said, appreciatively.

Archie held out his hand impulsively.

"It was a splendid fight, sir," he said.

Pa Pepperstrip shook hands and Mamie, wearing a pink dressing gown, looked up at Archie with a proud and happy smile.

The whole family had come downstairs to drink to their lucky escape from burglary, and to toast each other's health on Christmas morning.

"Whoever thought we'd be engaged on Christmas morning, and so early, too," Mamie said, sipping champagne, and Archie daringly kissed her in full view of Aunt Susan, who actually clapped her hands and cried "Encore."

Archie rose to his feet, and solemnly addressed the roomful of people.

"Ladies and gentlemen, here's drink health and long life to Battling Sam!"

Loud cheers, and the old man stood up quickly, putting his hand on Mamie's shoulder.

"'S daughter!" he cried, his eyes glowing.

"'S future husband!" finished Mamie shyly, slipping her spare hand into Archie's with a happy smile.

Flying Horse Bites His Boss

Croydon-Paris Air Service Carries First Equine—New Control Tower Greatly Improve Flying Safety

A FIFTY MILE BEAM

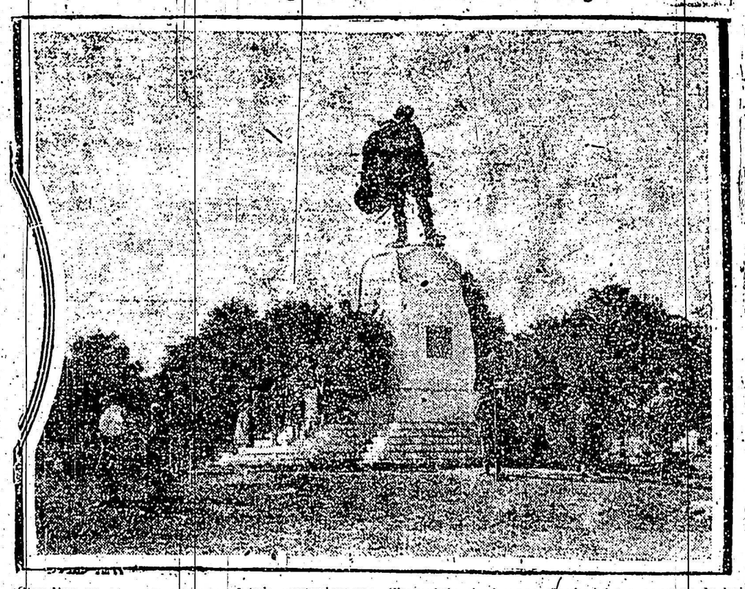
One of the first arrivals at the new Croydon airdrome near London, the most up-to-date in Europe, which was thrown open for the first time recently was the plane bringing a well-known film actress and her horse, from Paris. She had trouble getting the horse into the plane and was bitten in the face by him. At Croydon she had trouble getting him out again. This is believed the first time that a horse has ever travelled by air.

The new airdrome has hangars 300 feet long providing for 32 large planes. Accommodation for passengers includes a restaurant and a hotel.

Another wonder is the new field control-tower, which will not only keep in touch by wireless with all other European airdromes, but with all Imperial Airways planes in the air the tower will send warnings and directions to lost fliers and weather reports to airmen by radio phone. A directional wireless aerial on top of the tower makes it possible for the controller to locate the positions of fliers, whose courses in the air dwill be traced across a steel map by magnetic arrows so that the map at all times shows the position of the planes. Another feature of the field will be a beacon of 750,000 candle-power, which will be visible for fifty miles, even through fog.

Street Orator—"Nah! Any more interruptions and I finishes up leavin' yer ignorant of the 'orrible crimes in which yer lives."

For Ever Gazing Over The Waters of Cochiching



Standing on his own portage of two centuries ago, Champlain, in bronze, flanked by a coureur de bois on the left and missionary on the right, a noble piece of statuary that is the contribution of Orillia, Ont., to Canada's municipal art.

British Quakers Act to Preserve Seclusion of Penn's Resting Place

London.—Aided by more than twenty representative organizations in the United States, Quakers of this country are preparing for completion a scheme to preserve for all time the ample country surrounding the Friends village of Jordans, Buckinghamshire, where William Penn is buried.

Their aim is to raise £10,000 for the acquisition of woodland and open fields, to add to the area already saved from the speculative builder.

Nearly ten years ago a group of British Quakers bought eighty acres, including the fields and beechwoods across the road from the cemetery where Penn's grave is situated.

More distant parts have been developed along the lines of the model village. Unfortunately, the position is complicated by a proposal to construct a secondary road which would pass Jordans and destroy the peace and seclusion of the meeting house.

Opportunity is Still Knocking!

What I Would Tell My Own Son About the Secrets of Success

By Sir Charles Wakefield, Bart, C.B.E.

Sir Charles Wakefield, C.B.E., is the modern Dick Whittington. Beginning life as a clerk in a Liverpool office, he rose to govern the destinies of the capital of the British Empire. His business and public interests are very wide; he is a Lieutenant for the City, President of the Bridewell and Bethlem Hospitals; the Mental After-care Association; the Dickens Fellowship; the Lancashire Aero Club; and has been twice President of the Motor and Cycle Trades Benevolent Fund. He was Lord Mayor of London, 1915-16. Sir Charles is one of the leaders of the oil manufacturing industry in England, and is also actively associated with the insurance world. He has written largely, especially on trade and commercial subjects, and has a number of well-known books to his credit.

I must begin by disclaiming knowledge of any short cut to success. What I propose to do in these articles is to set down some suggestions that are the fruit of a long experience of business life and public work.

Whether I am able to help you, reader, will depend upon your willingness to apply what I have to say, or so much of it as seems to you sound and practical, to your own case. You should know whether you are making the best of your powers. Whatever the extent of those powers, there are few who cannot, by taking thought, add some cubits to their mental stature.

Rule Out the Exceptions.

In discussing how to make the best of life, one must absolutely rule out the exceptions. There are the fortunate or gifted few who are able to take giant strides to the front rank without apparent effort. These articles are concerned not with them, but with the average man or woman. Genius takes its own road, but the rest of us must tread the well-worn path.

That may seem disheartening. We most of us cherish a secret hope that we are 'different' from other people, and do not always like to think that, in reality, we correspond more or less closely to an average.

In a way, it is true—for there is no such thing as an average man. The infinite variety of human character is one of the things that make life so delightful and so interesting. The most "ordinary" man, when you really set to know him, develops character and individuality. That is especially true if you approach him in his hours of leisure.

A Bricklayer Scholar.

One man will most unexpectedly prove to be a passionate Izaak Walton. Talk to him of fishing and his whole appearance will change. His eyes will brighten, and he will tell you things about the habits of trout and roach, and the windings ways of Kent and Surrey streams, that will astonish you and give you a new respect for him. I once heard of a bricklayer whose great pleasure was to read classical Greek and Latin.

But when you consider men and women as bread-winners you must think of the average, for conduct is guided here by external forces. To win success in particular callings you must have, or acquire, definite kinds of skill or knowledge; you must comply with certain fixed standards.

New Methods in Industry.

That means that you must build upon a foundation, and you must have material with which to build.

In the modern world new methods and new inventions are invading every trade or calling. Even agriculture, the oldest industry and the basic industry, demands higher training than ever before. The farmer and his men must be able to use and keep in good repair motor tractors and ploys, must study the chemistry of soils and so on, if the best results are to be obtained.

It is the same everywhere. No progress can be made without education in its widest sense, including thorough technical education.

In commercial life, with which I am naturally most familiar, the question of proper education is most important. There is an ever-present temptation, to which too many young men and women succumb, to adopt a Micawber-like attitude and wait for something to turn up. Now, Mr. Micawber, as Dickens portrayed him, was a likeable old gentleman, but he was no pattern for the youth of to-day.

Yet quite a considerable proportion of the young people in offices to-day seem to imagine that a not very high standard of proficiency in shorthand and typewriting should be enough to qualify them for a prosperous career. Even in these elementary subjects high speed and accuracy are distinctly rare.

Follow a Programme.

To those, therefore, who are about to enter upon a business career, or who have recently done so, I suggest an immediate stocktaking of their capabilities.

As the first step to the making of a commercial career, look ahead and map out a programme. Decide to devote a portion of your leisure to a study of the world in which you have begun to move. If you begin business life at sixteen, as so many do, you have about six years at the end of which you should aim at being ready for real advancement.

What you shall study depends, of course, upon your particular commercial interests. But, whatever they are, in any modern city or large town there are innumerable opportunities of studying the appropriate subjects, state education is available free, and there are in addition many excellent commercial colleges and correspondence courses.

Manners Matter.

Efficient shorthand and typewriting I regard as absolutely essential, and there is no need to despise these accomplishments as beneath the dignity of a really smart young man.

On the contrary, they may well prove to be a direct means of introducing the young aspirant to more confidential work. A busy commercial chief must have the most expert secretary—someone who can keep pace with his most rapid dictation, and understand his desires almost before they are put into words—and such employment is frequently an unsurpassed education in practical business.

In addition to the technical studies that would be suggested by the nature of the business, general knowledge is also important. As time goes on the progressive worker in business tends to come into more personal contact with other commercial men.

Here, knowledge of affairs, a wide interest in things not necessarily commercial, and a certain ease of manner are valuable personal assets. You may know all that is to be known about cost accountancy or some other abstruse subject, but it is just as necessary to make a pleasant impression upon those you meet in connection with your work.

A sufficient command of clear and sensible speech is certainly a tremendous help in business life. In actual daily work, the man or woman who can state a case and explain or defend a course of action with ease and precision, has a considerable advantage over those less gifted.

In my opinion, this is a power which nearly all of us have. It only needs cultivation. Without going in to detail, I can at least give one hint and that is as to the value of debating societies as a part of young people's education.

Success in life is more a matter of "willing" than wishing. You are, may be, inclined to envy Mr. Jones who is only ten years older than you and has a private office, considerable latitude as to working hours, long holidays, and, you rightly surmise, good salary.

Why envy him? Why not emulate him? Mr. Jones has done nothing that you cannot do. He saw, in time, that a knowledge of commercial law, shipping and customs practice, foreign languages, accountancy, office management, markets and prices—some or all of these—was essential if he was to rise to the position of Mr. Jones of his youth.

Waiting to Help You.

He sacrificed some of his leisure and now he has the respect and confidence of his superiors, and the assurance of a better life than you will ever have—unless you take a leaf out of his book.

That is the first objective, then you will allow me to help you with advice. Lay the foundations of a successful career by making yourself worthy of responsibility.

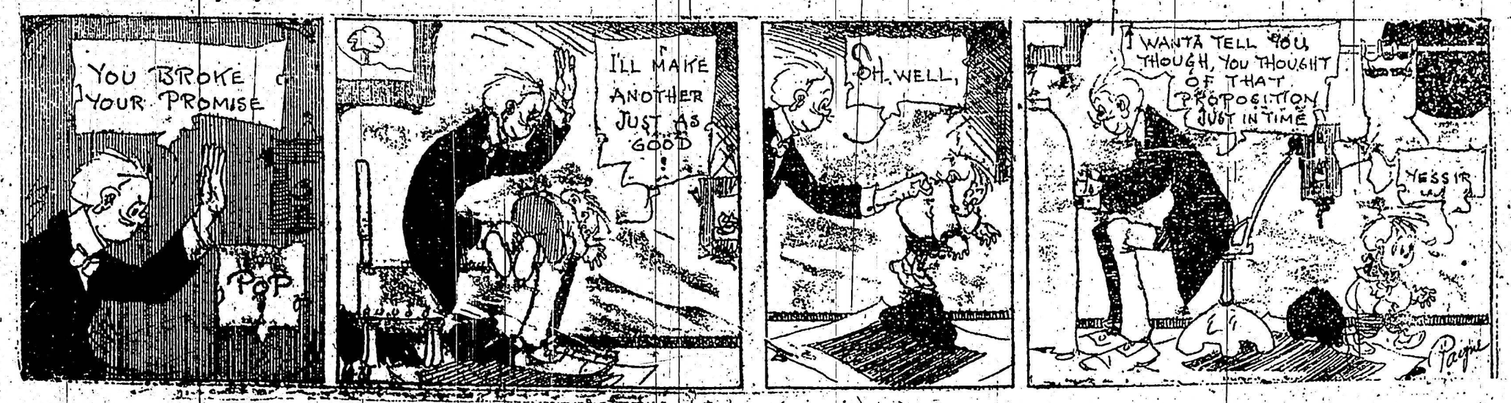
Do not doubt your ability. It is there, and only needs to be trained and equipped. Schools and teachers are waiting to help you; your departmental chief is only too anxious to see in you some signs of an intelligent, far-seeing interest, in the mechanism of the life you have chosen.

There is only one thing lacking—your firm and resolute decision. Make it now. Act on it to-day.

"When the time comes for New Year's resolutions the first thing a man generally gives up is the price of a table reservation."

TOO EASILY BROKEN.

Deacon Turtle (severely): Have you made any good New Year's resolutions, young man?

Rabbit: Yes, I resolved not to make any more resolutions!

S'MATTER POP—By Payne