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**Buckman, Sydney Savory (1860-1929),**

***The Old Shepherd* (1890)**

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“Ay, I bin ‘bout zum time, zur,” the shepherd replied to a question of mine. “Vive-an-vorty year, man an’ bouoy, hev I bin at wuirk yere-about. My faether’ee’d mead a bit o’ mony a keattle-djelin’, an’ ‘ee set ‘isself up in a pooblic on the roäd about twelve mile yerevrom. ‘Ee’d a smartish vamily o’ we bouoys, an’ so us ‘ad to scrobble along ‘s best’s could like. A’ sex yere owld I wur a-ledding vormust a-harvesting, and then wur soon put to drev plough. Ah, thur wurn’t no skools o’ any ‘count ‘bout i’ them days. I wur niver larned nought of that thur---nether reedy, writy, nar zummy---the keärter larnes I most as iver I wur wuth. I wur to do my wuirk wi’out no nise and skulking, and I wurn’t to knock the keattle about. Ah! er wur a sad maggotty cust’mer a’ times, ‘ee wur, if aught upzet un. One daay er caught hold of I, an’ whipped off ‘s belt, an’

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leathered I a rum un. I hollered art I kneaowed. Up come the varmer. “Ullo, Sammiwell, what’s thee got thee’s ‘ool up now fur? thee bist in a maïn teakin’. ‘This ‘ere spiteful little twoad,’ zed the keärter, a-drowin’ I vrom un yed fust into th’ vur-r-r, ‘wur a-knockin’ thaay ‘osses as I leäved un to mind, while I ‘ad ‘m a bit o’ bread, ‘ee wur a-knockin’ ‘um about most skeändalous. I wthowt vur all the wurld’s thaay’d git awaay an’ breäk the tackle arl to pieces.’ ‘Od rot ers little keärliss’, zed the varmer, “pick un up keärter, and gie un another cut or two.’ Wal, yer kneaow, zur, ‘twere a good lesson vur I, vur I didn’t misuse

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hosses nor nothink else no moor; but ‘ow’d it be now? Yer dussn’t lay a vinger on a bouoy now, if er’s iver zo, or e’ll ‘ave ‘ee up vur’saltin’ ov un; and then thaay goes out into the ground to plough and knocks the keättle ‘bout just as thaay be a-minded.

“Wal, yer kneaow, zur, I wur a-zaying to ‘ee as ‘ow I went to drev plough, when one winter the meäster come to I and twold I to go off and yelp the shapperd ‘mong the yeaws. Thur I bid arl that thur winter a-keärrin’ th’ ‘ay to thaay thur ship, an’ a-pecking the tunnups, an’ a-doing a bit o’ hurdle-zetting. I liked that thur job a ‘mazing zight better nor being ‘mong thaay ‘osses; it giv’ ‘ee zummat more to then on, yer kneaow; and shapperd, er zaid’s ‘ow I wur a good bouoy and minded my wuürk, and didn’t git a-messing and a-keäddlin’ and a-oondermenting ‘bout like zum on um. But then I wurn’t long o’ the ship much in the zummer. I ‘ad to go back among th’ ‘osses and sicj; but when next Michulmus comed round, the meäster er zed to I as I wur to go ‘long as keind o’ under-shapperd and help un wi’ the ship, if I wur a-minded to be’ve myself. Wal, so I wur, and I bid along wi’ un vur zum time, and er kipt a-razing o’ my weäges vur a time; but th’ end o’ it wur as I wur a-getting too owld for sich a job as that, and so I telled un one Michulmus as I wur wuth more money. Wal, er zed, er didn’t kneaow as I wur, but I wur vree to try, er zed; ee couldn’t ‘ford I no more, er zed. Wal, I went off to Mop, and I got a pleäce along o’ zum keättle a’ two shillin’ a wick more money, a’most directly. That thur meäster ‘ee wur a maggotty twoad, and ‘twere arl’s iver I could do to sard my time out wi’ un. Yer couldn’t please um, not no waays, so aff

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I zlips next Michulmus. ‘What, yean’t yer a-gwine to stop ‘long of I another year?’ er says; ‘you and I yean’t fell out so skeāndalous bad. I wur quite a-minded,’ er says, ‘to putt up wi’ ee.’ ‘So yer med, zur,’ I says, ‘but I tells ‘ee as I beanr a-minded; and er called I all the neāmes as iver could thenk on,” swearing as er wudden’t gie I no kerecter to go to Mop wi’. Wal, I let un have ers say out, and walked off, and afore iver I’d ‘casion to go to Mop, my owld

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gaffer, as I’d a-zard afore, I met un, and er axed I what I wur a-gwine to do theāse Michulmus, and when I zed as I wurn’t a-gwine to stop, er warnted I to come back wi’ un to his pleāce to zard un agin, and zo I did: and thur I bid a zight of year, and was shapperd vor un till th’ owld genelman died, and’s things wur arl a-zed, and the missus and the vamily went right awaäy thurfrom.

“Wal, yer kneaow, thur wur two or dree on’em arter I then, a-wanting I to be shapperd vor um, an’ I’d ‘bout as lief go to ‘arn on ‘um; but th’ owld squire ‘ee steps in an’ offers I more money nor the tothern, an’ so I went along o’ ‘ee to look after ers ship vor un. An’ thur I bid iver so many years as you do kneaow, a-getting veāmous weāges. Ah! but ‘ee wur a sad ‘oondermenting sort o’ a customer, ‘ee wur, and djousèd prood o’ the ship. ‘Ee let I ‘a just ‘bout what I wur a-minded vor um, Us used to zend to sheaow then, yer kneaow, an’ us went in for Rom brading. Ah! look’ee, thaay wur a veāmous lot o’ ship; arter I’d bin thur a year a two dalled if thur wur a better vlock o’ ship to be voun’ in th’ wull keounty! Ah! an’ thaay thur rom-zale dinners as ee’d a-used to gie, thaay wur zummat ‘nation vine, thaay wur, the weind wur a-sard out to the volk like warter, it do meāke I dry to thenk on’t; an’ the varmers, thaay’d a plenty o’ money in them daays, and thaay’d git that thur weind into um in ‘mazing style, and ‘ud come out, yer kneaow, an’ gie veāmous gurt prizes for thaay thur ship. Ah! but ‘twur good to see thaay volks a-comin’ down the lather. Theāse ‘ere rom-zale dinner wur a gied up in a sort o’ gurt tallet pleāce as wur above the keärt’us, and thaay a-got to clim’ into un up a lather. Up thaay went sprack enow afore dinner, but ofttimes ‘twur a main queer job for zum on’em to find thair waay down arterwards. Lord! I’ve a-laffed thur afore now to

zee how zum on ‘em did boggle at ‘t.”

