



Mr. Menzies' Baby Elephant
Graydon, William Murray

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About Graydon:

American-born writer of historical adventure and detective fiction who emigrated to England. Wrote more than 100 Sexton Blake Stories for the Union Jack and an equal number for the Sexton Blake Library in England; some of the former were later used as the basis for Nick Carter stories published by Street and Smith. Some of his Sexton Blake stories were rewritten and used in the Gordon Keith series in Brave and Bold. His American publications were in Munsey's Golden Argosy and Street and Smith's Army and Navy Weekly, Good News, Half Holiday, Medal and New Medal Library, and Round the World Library. Pseudonyms include Alfred Armitage, William Murray Gordon, William Murray, and Tom Olliver.

Also available on Feedbooks for Graydon:

- *Among The Pathans* (1891)

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A traveler who goes around the world necessarily sees a great deal. This ruby ring which I wear on my finger was purchased at Colombo, the capital of Ceylon, and it always reminds me of a very amusing thing that occurred during my brief stay on that island.

As I was strolling alone one day, whom should I meet but an old friend, Mr. Menzies, whose acquaintance I had made in Calcutta. He was there on business at the time, and had since returned to Ceylon.

He owned a tea and coffee plantation a mile or two north of Colombo, and he insisted on taking me home with him over night. We drove out in a stylish English dog-cart, arriving shortly before luncheon time. The bungalow stood in the center of spacious grounds, which were inclosed by a low stone wall.

The tea and coffee fields were quite a distance off, for the immediate neighborhood was the most fashionable suburb of villas of wealthy English people.

The roads were hard and level, and were planted at intervals with just such lampposts as we have in America.

Mr. Menzies introduced me to his wife, and to his son Donald, a fine lad of 16; and after luncheon we all strolled out on the lawn to see Toby, the baby elephant.

Toby was tethered to a stout tree by a 10-foot rope. He was a pretty big baby, but full of frolicsome gambols.

After a long drive among the surrounding plantations, we returned to the bungalow in time to dress for dinner, and had barely seated ourselves at the table, which was waited upon by Hindoo servants in white linen, when a babel of angry barks and shrill trumpeting rose outside.

Rushing to the windows we saw Toby circling round and round his tree in a vain attempt to get hold of a brown and white dog who was retreating backward with an agility that kept him out of danger.

Toby was in dead earnest, while the dog evidently thought the affair a huge joke.

Several of the servants had already rushed out of the bungalow, but before they could reach the spot Toby had come to the end of his tether. Not having sense enough to go in the opposite direction and unwind himself, he reared and plunged so desperately that the rope snapped.

The moment he was free the cunning rogue's fright vanished. Turning tail on the approaching servants he shuffled rapidly across the lawn, trumpeting with delight as he went. "That means a stubborn chase,"

cried my host, as he snatched a couple of heavy walking sticks and tossed one to his son.

They rushed from the room, and after hesitating a few seconds between a sense of propriety and a desire to see the fun, I snatched another stick, stammered a hasty excuse to my hostess, and followed.

I caught up with them just in time to see Toby dash full tilt at the broad gate, which speedily became a mass of broken pillars and rails.

As we clambered over the ruins we were joined by more of the bungalow servants, several of whom carried coils of thick rope, and off we all went down the smooth road, calling to Toby to stop.

Ladies and children watched the procession from neighboring bungalows as we swept by, and I have no doubt they were highly amused.

Mr. Menzies, Donald and I were in advance, and as we ran the tails of our dress coats streamed out behind us. Donald and I were hatless, but Mr. Menzies wore a canvas sun-helmet, which looked ridiculously out of place with his starched shirt bosom.

As for Toby, he was in high spirits, and paid not the slightest attention to the pursuit behind him. He shuffled along just fast enough to prevent our gaining on him.

Every now and then he lifted his trunk and gave a tremendous roar. It being the dinner hour the road was fortunately clear of pedestrians and vehicles.

This sort of thing soon proved too monotonous for Toby, and so he turned off into a side avenue.

As we swept around the corner after him we saw a light carriage not far ahead. It contained two ladies and a native groom. At sight of the vehicle Toby pretended to be in a tremendous rage. He galloped forward to meet it, swinging his trunk from side to side, and trumpeting shrilly.

The ladies screamed, but they had sufficient presence of mind to turn the horses and drive back the way they came.

A moment later they wheeled into a broad gateway, and Toby reached the spot just as the groom banged the gate shut in his face.

This angered the elephant, and he twined his trunk around the top rail with the evident intention of forcing his way in. But when he saw how near we were to him he shuffled off again.

Toby was going at a pretty fast pace now, and from time to time he glanced wickedly back at us, as much as to say:

"It's no use, old fellow; I'm out for a lark and I don't intend to come home just yet awhile."

Then, in the exuberance of his spirits, he would halt, lie down and roll on his back once or twice and kick up a cloud of yellow dust that settled thickly on our dress suits as we came dashing through it.

"Confound that rascal!" growled Mr Menzies. "He's bent on making all the trouble he can. I'll have a pretty bill for damages on my hands!"

"There he goes!" shouted Donald, "straight for Mr. Forbes' bungalow."

Sure enough, Toby had vanished through an open gate. He was trampling down shrubs and flower beds when we surged in after him, but, seeing us, he instantly forsook that diversion and galloped across the grounds, sheering to one side of the bungalow.

We numbered two dozen or more by this time, having been augmented along the way by laborers from the neighboring estates, a few Europeans, two Malay print-sellers and a greasy Afghan fakir.

Our shouts brought Mr. Forbes out of his bungalow — a red-faced gentleman in white flannels, who shook his fist at the procession and used some very emphatic language.

There was no time to explain. On we rushed after Toby, whose high spirits were evidently on the increase.

A little beyond the bungalow he met the Cingalese postboy, who was taking a short cut across the grounds to the house. He charged on him with a terrific scream, and the terror-stricken lad bolted for the nearest tree, scattering his letters and papers in every direction.

He pulled himself into the branches just in time to dodge a vicious filip of the elephant's trunk. Toby sniffed at the mail and then trampled it under foot and shuffled on.

"We're sure to corner him on the other side of the grounds," cried Donald.

Mr. Menzies seemed of the same mind, for he shouted to the rope bearers to hurry up.

There was no need of their services, however. Toby went clumsily over the low wall, and into the grounds of the adjoining estate, which were of large extent. The bungalow was some distance off, and was hidden by trees.

As we ourselves scaled the wall in hot pursuit of the rascal, we heard faint strains of music.

"Worse and worse," groaned Mr. Menzies as he mopped the dirt and perspiration from his face. "There will be a pretty mess if the brute steers for the house. This is the day that Col. Hardy was to give a dinner to some friends from England."

Sure enough, Toby headed in the direction of the music. I really believe that he knew all about the dinner party, and was determined to be one of the guests.

We strained our utmost to overtake him or head him off, but it was of no use.

As we burst out from the trees, with Toby a scant 20 feet in the lead, we saw a pretty sight on the open lawn. At a long table shaded by an awning of striped canvas sat a dozen ladies and gentlemen, the latter in full dress military uniform. Servants were flitting to and fro with dishes, and two Scotch Highlanders, stationed near by were playing lively strains on their bagpipes.

A few yards away was the bungalow gayly trimmed with flags and decorations in honor of the occasion.

The music had quite drowned the noise of our approach, and the diners had no suspicion of what was coming until Toby charged at them with hoarse trumpeting.

Such yelling and confusion and panic I never heard in my life. The bagpipers fell over each other and the servants in their haste to escape. The guests tumbled off their chairs, some diving under the table, others running for the shelter of the bungalow. Col Hardy himself tried to climb a palm tree.

But the table was Toby's objective point. He whisked it over in a trice and trumpeted with delight as he trampled the linen and silver, and gorged himself with such viands as took his fancy.

When we closed in on him, and tried to throw noosed ropes over his head, he got angry and charged through our ranks.

A union jack suspended between two trees caught on his ears, and with this patriotic decoration for a collar he made off at full speed through the grounds.

By this time Col. Hardy had rushed into the bungalow for a rifle, and had the elephant been within range he would have shot him — and very deservedly, I must confess.

Mr. Menzies tried to pacify the angry officer by apologies and explanations, but he only raved and stormed the more, and ordered us off the grounds with dreadful threats.

So we departed as speedily as possible from the scene of havoc and destruction, expecting nothing less than a repetition of the catastrophe ere long.

But now Toby took a westward direction and led us over scrub, jungle and tea fields for considerably more than a mile. We caught up with him on the sea coast, where he was rolling on his back at the edge of the surf.

He made off at once, and headed inland to a shallow lagoon. Here he rolled and floundered to his heart's content, and when some venturesome natives waded toward him he squirted torrents of water at them until they fled to the shore.

But he grew tired of bathing after a while, and took refuge in a piece of thick woods. By a little strategy we surrounded the place and cornered the runaway against a big tree, where he showed fight and held the rope men at bay.

Finally the Afghan fakir crept up to the tree on the opposite side, climbed into the branches, and managed to get a noose under the elephant's hind leg, and then the other natives quickly threw one over his head.

That did the business, and Mr. Toby was marched triumphantly home by moonlight with the aid of several stout ropes.

When I left for Colombo the next day he was locked in the stables with stout chains clamped to his fore and hind legs, and for all I know he is there yet.

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Robert Michael Ballantyne

Jarwin and Cuffy

Excerpt: "In all the wide expanse of ocean that surrounded that island, there was nothing visible save one small, solitary speck on the far-off horizon. It might have been mistaken for a seagull, but it was in reality a raft—a mass of spars and planks rudely bound together with ropes. A boat's mast rose from the centre of it, on which hung a rag of sail, and a small red flag drooped motionless from its summit. There were a few casks on the highest part of the raft, but no living soul was visible. Nevertheless, it was not without tenants. In a hollow between two of the spars, under the shadow of one of the casks, lay the form of a man. The canvas trousers, cotton shirt, blue jacket, and open necktie, bespoke him a sailor, but it seemed as though there were nothing left save the dead body of the unfortunate tar, so pale and thin and ghastly were his features. A terrier dog lay beside him, so shrunken that it looked like a mere scrap of door-matting. Both man and dog were apparently dead, but they were not so in reality, for, after lying about an hour quite motionless, the man slowly opened his eyes. Ah, reader, it would have touched your heart to have seen those eyes! They were so deep set, as if in dark caverns, and so unnaturally large. They gazed round in a vacant way for a few moments, until they fell on the dog. Then a gleam of fire shot through them, and their owner raised his large, gaunt, wasted frame on one elbow, while he gazed with a look of eagerness, which was perfectly awful, at his dumb companion.

"Not dead yet!" he said, drawing a long sigh."

Jack Douglas

Test Rocket!

It's amazing how much you can learn about absolute strangers if you just stop to think about the kind of an animal they'll put in a ...

Jack Douglas

Dead World

Out on the ice-buried planet, Commander Red Stone led his Free Companions to almost certain death. They died for a dangerous dream that had only one chance in a thousand trillion to come true. Is there a better reason for dying?

Bret Harte

Salomy Jane

When beautiful Salomy Jane resists the romantic advances of a young ruffian, she is rescued by Jack Dart, who has his own additional reasons for tangling with the man.

Mark Irvin Clifton

Eight Keys to Eden

The piercing wonder of man's climb to higher intelligence.

Annie Roe Carr

Nan Sherwood's Winter Holidays

Excerpt:

Ta-ra! ta-ra! ta-ra-ra-ra! ta-rat!

Professor Krenner took the silver bugle from his lips while the strain echoed flatly from the opposite, wooded hill. That hill was the Isle of Hope, a small island of a single eminence lying half a mile off the mainland, and not far north of Freeling.

The shore of Lake Huron was sheathed in ice. It was almost Christmas time. Winter had for some weeks held this part of Michigan in an iron grip. The girls of Lakeview Hall were tasting all the joys of winter sports.

The cove at the boathouse (this was the building that some of the Lakeview Hall girls had once believed haunted) was now a smooth, well-scraped skating pond. Between the foot of the hill, on the brow of which the professor stood, and the Isle of Hope, the strait was likewise solidly frozen. The bobsled course was down the hill and across the icy track to the shore of the island.

George Manville Fenn

The Adventures of Don Lavington

Lindon, known as Don, is a boy in his late teens who has left school, and who lives with his mother and uncle Josiah, his father being dead, and works as a clerk in the office, the business being sugar and tobacco importation, in Bristol, England, which he does not much like.

One day some money is missing from the office. It's pretty obvious who the thief is, but Uncle Josiah continues to accuse Don.

Another worker has a row with his new young wife, and Don and he (Jem) decide to go away for a bit, both feeling rather ill-used.

Unfortunately they are taken that night by the press-gang, and after some attempts to get away, they sail away to New Zealand.

Here they manage to escape from the ship, though the search for

them is keen. They fall in with some Maoris, among whom lives an Englishman, who is actually an escaped convict, but a good chap nonetheless. They assist the Maoris in their own battles against other tribes.

The scene turns to some English settlers. They become friendly with our heroes. A Maori tribe attacks then, having been set up to do so by three villains, who have also escaped from the convict settlement at Norfolk Island. They hold their own, but there is a timely intervention by the police. One of the three villains turn out to have been the man who actually stole the money from Uncle Josiah's office. From this point things begin to turn out for the better, and the two heroes return to England, and all is forgiven.

Charles Louis Fontenay

The Jupiter Weapon

He was a living weapon of destruction—immeasurably powerful, utterly invulnerable.

There was only one question: Was he human?

Lawrence J. Leslie

Afloat On The Flood

Excerpt:

"What's the latest weather report down at the post office, Max?"

"More rain coming, they say, and everybody is as gloomy as a funeral."

"My stars! the poor old town of Carson is getting a heavy dose this spring, for a fact; nothing but rain, rain, and then some more rain."

"Never was anything to beat it, Bandy-legs, and they say even the oldest inhabitant can't remember when the Evergreen River was at a higher stage than it is right now."

William Murray Graydon

Among The Pathans

Excerpt:

When Jack Chetwynd dropped into the Bundar Cafe at Delhi one scorching afternoon in September of last year and informed me that we were ordered off to the Punjaub, I could have shouted for joy. I did not do it, though, for I well knew how scornfully Jack would regard any such demonstration. I merely nodded my head, lazily, and went on reading the Post with as much calmness as if such news was a mere every day affair.

"Yes, my boy," went on Jack, dropping into a chair and ordering a lemon squash, "we are going to have some fun. You know those

rascally Pathans killed two or three of our fellows near the frontier station at Oghi some time ago, so an expedition is going up to give them a drubbing for it. It's a deuce of a country, they say, that Black Mountain region, and these Pathans are terrible fellows, too; fight like tigers. Plenty of chance for glory there, Charlie; so prepare yourself!"



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