

BRINGING DOWN THE HAWK

(By D. J. Walsh.)

LINDY RAND heard a chicken squawk. Almost instantly a hawk whistled triumphantly. She leaped to the door. The children, Jack and Elsie, ran to her, screaming at the top of their voices: "He got it!" Against the blue afternoon sky sailed a great bird with a half-grown yellow chicken clutched in his talons.

"We were keeping watch, mother, honest!" Six-year-old Jack said earnestly. "But he just swooped right down!"

"It was the chicken with the droopy wing, mother!" said five-year-old Elsie, half crying.

"He'll be back after more," Lindy sighed. She was almost overwhelmed by this new difficulty. A woman alone with two small children, she had to fight more than hawks.

The hawk had perched on the branch of a tree within plain sight of the house and was coolly making a meal. When he had finished he came back for more. Round and round above the chicken yard he circled.

Lindy watched him anxiously. She was desperate. Every chicken meant money. She needed money as never before.

Suddenly she turned and went into the house. Her husband's shotgun rested upon wooden pegs against the kitchen wall. It had never been touched since the last time he put it there. It was loaded. Lindy knew how to shoot, although she had a horror of firearms. She took the gun down and went out of doors again.

"Mother, mother! The hawk! Look, the hawk!" shrieked Jack and Elsie. Lindy had a glimpse of gleaming wings, low to the ground. As the bird lifted into the air with another chicken in his talons she raised the gun to her shoulder and fired. The weapon kicked so violently that she was almost thrown over backward.

"Mother! You got him!" shouted Jack. Breathless, shocked, Lindy saw the bird floundering before her. The shot had broken his wing. She laid down the gun, grabbed an empty chicken coop and put it over the bird.

Down the dusty road from town came a powerful car driven by the one person in the world whom Lindy feared and distrusted. This was Abe Akroyd, the man who had sold the place to her husband. Payment and interest were due that day, and she knew that Abe had come to see about it.

The car stopped under the great spruce tree that shaded the shabby house and Abe stepped out. He was a heavily built man with a gray-bristled jaw and small hard eyes. He had a gold tooth that gleamed hugely when he spoke. Somehow in that moment he made Lindy think of the hawk, potent, relentless, predatory. But she had won the hawk. That knowledge gave her courage to face the man.

"Well, Lindy, how are you coming?" he began. "You know what day this is, I suppose?" He took a small black book from his pocket and consulted it. "Payment and interest—\$530."

"I can pay only the interest," Lindy looked pleadingly into the coarse face. "My chickens came on slow. In the fall—"

"Now, now! I expected better than that of you, Lindy. You've had a whole year in which to get righted since John died."

"A whole year!" Lindy's lips quivered.

Abe consulted the book again and shook his head.

"Business is business. You know that, Lindy. I'd like to accommodate everybody. But if I begin with you the rest of 'em will be on my back. I've got a good bit of property trusted out around the country. And I live by what folks owe me. I got to treat all alike; it don't pay to get too soft-hearted."

"I don't expect anything but fair treatment, Mr. Akroyd. I am doing the best I can. A year isn't very long for a woman that's working alone with two small children to earn \$500 or \$600 outside her living expenses. All I ask is an extension of time, Mr. Akroyd."

Abe squinted upward at the roof of the small house. A corner of the loosely shingled roof had blown off in a recent high wind. When Abe sold a piece of property he always demanded that the buildings be kept in good condition.

"That looks bad," he commented. Lindy knew it. She bit her lips. "Lindy," said Abe, putting the black book back into his pocket, "I'll tell you what you better do. You better give up this place and move into town. You'll find work there. You're never going to get this place paid for, that's fair and square, Lindy."

Lindy went white. She clutched at her throbbing throat. The place was home to her and the children; it had been John's home while he lived. He had brought her there a bride. They had planned to pay for it and improve it and continue there in their old age. She couldn't give it up.

you back cash for every cent due you. The money will give you a start somewhere else. I'm offered more for the place this minute than I asked when I sold it to John Rand. Ed Holmes wants it. Lindy, I can't turn down a good cash offer for it, you know."

"Ed Holmes!" Lindy's face was scarlet now. "I've seen him snooping round on my hill yonder. I don't know what he's looking for. But he's going to keep off the premises as long as I occupy them or—I'll drive him off with a shotgun!"

"What's this?" Abe looked in astonishment at the palpitating little figure of the young woman.

Lindy pointed toward the chicken coop within which the hawk was glowing.

"I just shot him," she said. "Yes, mother did, too!" cried loyal Jack.

Abe looked at the hawk, which he hadn't noticed before.

"Guess I'll have to warn Ed to stay away," he said. Then as Lindy again held out the money to him pleadingly he turned from her and went to his car. Stepping in, he drove swiftly away.

Weak and faint Lindy sat down on the doorstep. Abe had refused the interest. That meant he was determined to get rid of her. He wanted to let Ed Holmes have the place. What did Ed want to for? What was he doing up there in that stone patch?

"Jack and Elsie," she called. "You stay here and watch the chickens. I'm going up on the hill for a little while."

She hadn't been on the hill since John died. It was nothing but an old rock pile anyway; no good land. John had paid much more than the place was worth and now Abe Akroyd was squeezing her for the payments.

She climbed up to where she had seen Ed Holmes a few days before. Just inside the woods she stopped aghast. Before her some freshly dug earth and chippings of rock. Ed Holmes had been digging into her land. What for? What did he hope to find in a barren place like this?

Lindy ran all the way back to the house.

Ten minutes later she was racing toward town, the two children bobbing on the back seat of the old flivver.

Down Main street she drove, past all the lawyers' offices until she came to a shabby house, where on the porch sat an old man reading a big book.

"Mr. White!" Lindy said, going up to him. "You've read just about everything. John always said you were the best informed man in these parts. I've got a mystery to solve. You know what my land is. You know what that hill back of the house is. What would a man like Ed Holmes find there to interest him?"

"Been snooping round there, has he?" inquired the old man.

"Digging dirt, chipping off pieces of rock."

"Ed Holmes, you know, Lindy, has made a great study of the rocks hereabouts. He prides himself on being a genuine geologist. Yes, yes. Guess I'll go home with you, Lindy, and see what I make out."

Back toward home raced Lindy with the one person she felt she could absolutely trust. She boosted him up the hill; she boosted him up. He knelt down. He picked up a bit of rock. He held the specimen close to his eyes. The light and life of youth streamed into his old face.

"Blue granite!" he said. "Yes, yes. Lindy, don't you breathe a word of this to anyone. There's a plot on foot to rob you. But you'll fool 'em, Lindy. If you just keep your mouth shut."

For the second time that day Lindy raced to town. It was near sunset when she located Abe Akroyd. Mr. White had lent her the money to make the last payment, and Abe reluctantly received it.

Ed Holmes had not let Abe know why he wanted the Rand place. When he found out that he couldn't have it he was furious, but not half so furious as Abe himself.

As for Lindy, who had outwitted them both and who found herself about to become a rich woman, she went home and commiserated with the captive hawk.

"Keep up your courage, old boy," she said. "Your wing is going to mend nicely. And then you'll be able to fly again. I owe you something and I always pay my debts."

No White Man Carries Own Parcels in India

Outside the bazaar in Calcutta you observe as you pass in, certain lean little men in loin cloths, each having a large circular basket with two handles.

One of them promptly follows you, padding along noiselessly with his bare feet, and you are half-way through the first alley before you become conscious of his presence.

You tell him to go away. He does not go. You try to shoo him, as you would an over-affectionate dog. Nothing doing. He is there to carry parcels for buyers in the bazaar, and it is not within the range of his understanding to conceive of a foreign sahib, all done up in white clothes and shoes and pith helmet, to be anything else than a prodigal buyer.

So he abides with you, and when you have bought one small brass tea caddy and a carved box 3 by 4 inches, he insists on putting them into his basket to be taken home with you. After trotting around with you for an hour or so, and padding along with you to your hotel, where the packages are delivered to a house boy, he receives four annas—about 10 cents—and he is content.

This system prevails throughout India, where no white man is expected to carry a bundle, however small. The carrying of burdens is the duty of the menial classes, hence the firmness with which the carriers of the bazaars maintain their particular kind of special delivery.—From the Ocean Ferry.

Moral in This Short Story of Absent-Mindedness

A Los Angeles real estate dealer, in addressing a group of salesmen said: "Explain all the documents and make the prospective customer read and understand them. Never let a man sign who doesn't know exactly what he's signing. Never let a customer find himself in the position of the doctor I met on my last trip to Honolulu."

"I've seen a good many changes, the man told me and added, 'I used to be a prosperous doctor but owing to one little slip, most of my patients have deserted me.'

"What was the slip?" I inquired. "Well, sir," replied the doctor, "in filling in a death certificate for a patient who had died, I did not notice that the printed form had been altered, so I absent-mindedly signed my name in the space headed 'cause of death.'"—Los Angeles Times.

Peculiar Thing in Life

If you choose to represent the various parts in life by holes upon the table, of different shapes—some circular, some triangular, some square, some oblong—and the persons acting these parts by bits of wood of similar shapes, we shall generally find that the triangular person has got into the square hole, the oblong into the triangular and a square person has squeezed himself into the round hole. The officer and the office, the doer and the thing done, seldom fit so exactly that we can say they were almost made for each other.—Sydney Smith (1799-1845). "Sketches of Moral Philosophy."

Martyr to Science

Dr. Auguste Marie of the Pasteur Institute died in a search for a serum which would annihilate the bacillus botulinus which produces the fatal disease known as botulism. While experimenting, his left eye was touched by a drop of liquid containing bacilli botulinus. Knowing that he was doomed, he set about recording a complete story of the progress of the disease. Within a fortnight after the accident, in his laboratory he dictated the last word. He was posthumously awarded the Medaille d'Honneur des Epidemies, as a victim of devotion to the cause of humanity.

Chinese Tit-Bit

The Chinese regard as a delicacy the nest of the selangane or of related species of swift or swiftlet of the Malay archipelago. It has the shape and size of half a teacup is attached to the rock in the interior of a cave, and has the appearance of fibrous gelatine or isinglass. It is composed of a mucilaginous substance secreted by special glands, and is not, as was formerly thought, made from a glutinous seaweed.

Considerable "Explanation"

A brother and sister, six and four years of age, respectively, spent a considerable part of each day playing together. One day their father found them sitting in little red chairs, rocking their dolls. He inquired of them what it was they were playing and they replied "Mothers," explaining further that they were both "widows."

Right-of-Way

The movement to clear the tracks for genius brought a snort of derision from the famous California educator David Starr Jordan. "Genius," he declared, "recognizes no obstacles. That is part of the genius. He who must have his way made smooth is but an ordinary mortal."

"Looking back over a long period, it is my opinion that the world always turns aside to let any man pass who knows where he is going."

Marks Birthplace of Father of Locomotive

At Wylam, on the north bank of the River Tyne, under the auspices of the Institutions of Shipbuilders and Mechanical Engineers, a tablet commemorates the birthplace of a man who achieved the seemingly impossible, George Stephenson, the father of the steam locomotive engine. Past the front of his cottage, within a few yards of the door, heavily laden and light trains of coal trucks pass today, as did the tiny chaldron wagons drawn by horses along plate-ways 150 years ago. The cottage itself is a two-story house. Typical of many of those built years ago by the colliery owners for their employees. It was divided into four rooms, in each of which a different family dwelt. The lower room at the western side of the cottage was the home of the Stephenson family, and it was in this room, which served for sleeping, eating and shelter, that George, the second son of a family of four boys and two girls, was born on June 9, 1781. "Old Bob," George Stephenson's father, was a Scotsman who crossed the border as a gentleman's servant, and then married a local lassie, Mabel Carr, the daughter of a dyer. "Bob" found work as fireman of the pumping engine of the Wylam colliery at 12 shillings (\$3) per week.—Edinburgh Scotsman.

Found He Had Financed Small "Deal" in Rabbit

Some Saturdays ago a small boy asked his father for a quarter to buy a rabbit. On being satisfied that a hut was being fixed up in which to keep the rabbit, and being also a believer in the civilizing influence on boys of keeping pets, dad gave him a quarter.

The following Saturday a second youngster came on the same errand, and obtained a quarter. It happened to be a large family, and not wishing to display any favoritism, dad eventually gave a quarter to each of his children for the purchase of a rabbit.

One day he went out to see all these rabbits and was surprised to find only one! He inquired of his children what they had all done with their quarters. Each declared that he or she had bought a rabbit. "Well, where are they then?" he demanded. "Why, dad," explained one of his youngsters, "it was the same rabbit; we bought it from each other."—Exchange.

Forest "Conversations"

A well-known western Canadian guide, born and bred in the great wide open, has given some intelligent observation of the ways of the four-footed inhabitants of the woods, and he sincerely believes that the lower animals have a far of communicating with each other that cannot be explained at present. He believes that radio will eventually solve the question and be the means of interpreting the animal messages, and he hopes to prove shortly that animals utilize wave lengths outside of the range of the human ear. The cow moose will leave her calf or deer her fawn and tell it in animal language not to stray and the little fellow never disobeys its parent. Also the youngster can in some way communicate with its mother in time of danger without uttering a sound or leaving the spot.

On Diet to Conquer Air

"Live on air to conquer the air," was the slogan of a certain school of flying originating with the Taoists of China and also followed by air-minded ancients of early India. This school believed that levitation could be brought about if starvation of sufficient length to lighten the body were practiced rigidly, says Dr. Berthold Laufer, curator of anthropology at the Field Museum of Natural History at Chicago, in his book, "The Prehistory of Aviation." The application of internal remedies to fly was also a Taoist idea. A "flying elixir," compounded by Tao Hung-king, physician of the Fifth century, consisted of mixed gold, cinabar, azurite and sulphur.

Spruce Spikes as Rivals

The spruce tree has a penchant for asymmetrical lines which causes it to go through an unusual contest if, by some mishap, the topmost spike is broken off. When this happens all of the spikes leading out to the side from the joint at which the upstanding spike was attached begin to curve upward.

This continues for some time with each apparently endeavoring to be the "king branch." Eventually one attains this rank, and the others almost immediately begin to droop and resume their former lateral positions.

Who's to Blame?

A leading medical journal announces that Americans are morbid over vitamins, periodic medical examinations, dietetic systems, roughage, therapeutic dogmas and health "isms," and figuratively calls them a "lotta bunk." Well, who started us that way if it wasn't the medicos?—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Consider the Minutes

Minutes are given us to use. Every man gets exactly the same number. How we employ them determines largely our success or failure in life. Remember, therefore, that he who "kills time" often murders opportunity.—Grit.

Banking

Banking has become a varied occupation. The early banks did little more than receive money on deposit, pay it out on checks, and lend to borrowers.

These duties, while still the chief functions of a bank, now are supplanted by many others of importance. For example, National Banks, in recent years, have been granted all the fiduciary powers of a Trust Company, and can act as Executor, Administrator or Trustee. More and more the public is becoming financially interested in our great industries, in public utilities and carriers, through the ownership of stock in these corporations.

Today expert knowledge is necessary to the proper settlement of an estate. We advise everyone to make a Will, and to name a proper bank as Executor.

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