

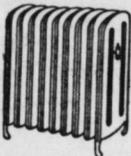


Home Heating Hints

By John Barclay
Heating Expert

FREQUENTLY I get complaints from home-owners about failure of steam or hot water heating systems to keep radiators completely hot.

This condition is often due to air being in the coils of the radiator. This air must be released before the coils can fill with steam. This usually is simple, being remedied by automatic air valves. If your radiator has such valves and the radiators remain air-bound, un-



screw the little plug at the top of the valve, tightening the plug again when all the air escapes from the valves. Putting the vent valves for a few hours in a container of kerosene also helps to eliminate the air.

However, if neither of these operations corrects the trouble—or should the coils fill with water—it would be a good policy to have an expert check the valves and remedy the difficulty.

It is possible also for hot water radiators to become air-choked. To overcome this, open the air valves once in awhile with a valve key and leave them open until water starts flowing from them. Be sure to have something handy in which to catch the water when the valves are opened.

Joys and Sorrows

The joys and sorrows of others are ours as much as theirs, and in proper time as we feel this and learn to live so that the whole world shares the life that flows through us, do our minds learn the secret of peace. — Annie Besant.



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Cattle Kingdom

© Alan Le May

By ALAN LE MAY

WNU Service

CHAPTER XIII—Continued

"Seems to me," he said, "that's a whole lot different from what you were saying just a little while ago." "I wasn't able to believe my own eyes, I guess. I wasn't able to get over the 'settled-up' idea that eastern people have. Nobody but westerners will ever be able to understand our dry land. They'll never believe that a country can be over-settled—and yet have nothing in it but coyotes and jackrabbits and half a dozen poor cows to the mile."

He noticed that she called it "our dry land," now.

"And so—?" "I'm going to stay with my brand, until there isn't one bit of the 94 left. After all, I'm my father's daughter. The country is part of me, bred in."

"I know how you feel," he said slowly. "But—it isn't as if you could really do anything here, now."

"I'll be able to keep you informed of what's happening here, at least. I hardly think Val Douglas would take much interest in that, left to himself. But it isn't that. It's simply—I can't always run away from everything. I've run away from too many things, and sometimes afterward I've been sorry."

He could understand that, but it surprised him to find her looking at things in that way. He had to respect her for it, but it didn't make the set-up any easier for him. "I suppose there isn't anything I can do," he admitted regretfully. "You've already shown me that when you set out to do a thing, you'll do it in spite of all hell and the drouth."

"Wouldn't you rather have me that way?"

"I don't know as I could ever bring myself to want you any different than you are."

He made a cigarette, and lit it, and gloomily studied its smoke. He was thinking that it was pretty near too much to ask of a man to go off on a long trail, the way things were here, and leave this child—

Suddenly he realized that this girl was not any longer a child. He had not known that he had always before seen her as a child, until now he saw her as something else. Her face had a color that was like a child's color, clear and lovely, but its contours no longer suggested a little girl. It was a quiet face, thoughtful and awake, and somehow competent looking; and her eyes, looking into that distance beyond the walls, were looking into the future—understandingly, even somberly, but unafraid.

He wondered why he had not realized before how changed she was. Every movement she made, every pose she took, was different from what he had seen in the girl he had made love to two years before. Two years ago Marian Dunn would not have been able to lounge relaxed upon his bunk in pajamas and an Indian blanket, thinking about the factors of range war, and the business affairs of men; she would have been nervously conscious then of the fact that the man she was with loved her—would have worried about what he would do or say.

This girl did not worry, but steadily faced the situation in which they found themselves.

He looked away from her, unable any longer to think of murder clues or cow mortgages while she was in his eyes. He fixed his gaze upon his thrown-down gunbelt and tried to think of what he must do. Bitterly he was blaming himself that he could not see through this killing case; for he had a persistent hunch that everything necessary for solution was in his hands. He blamed only himself that he must now take a long trail to discover what might be obvious, here and now, to a more brilliant deduction.

He tried to set his mind to the factors he had discussed with Coffee, in one more supreme effort to short-cut the case, but his mind would not work for him. Even with his eyes upon a saddle or a gun he could still see nothing but the girl—every glint of light in the loose bush of her hair, the slim cordings of a wrist, the resting look of a hand that lay palm up upon the blanket.

It was impossible for him not to wonder if things between them might not have been different had he never known her two years before; but all that could have started over again now, to win her in a new way. Then it occurred to him that it was a waste of time to be looking at a gun or a saddle blanket, trying to think, when he might be looking at her. Perhaps it would be a long time before he would see her again; perhaps he would never see her again at all.

So now he let murder and cows and money slide into the lost shadows, and he turned to her; and as he did so he found that her eyes were on his face. They looked at each other steadily, while the moments passed.

If he had held her eyes so long two years ago she would have flushed

and looked away, but she did not look away now. Her eyes looked lazy, but not sleepy; they were as darkly blue as a night sky, but he found them unreadable at first. Then after a moment or two he recognized that she was not thinking about murder clues.

All at once he knew that there was no barrier between them any more at all, and had not been any for a long time, except the barrier put there by his old defeat. And he knew now that he had never failed at all, but that the years had worked for him in ways he would not have guessed.

He said slowly, "I was the one who was a fool."

He never knew what move he made that brought her into his arms. With the barrier gone from between them at last they found themselves in each other's arms as naturally, as unhesitatingly, as inevitably as the dry land takes up the rare rains; and his heart lifted up like the April grass of the dry ranges, when the snow-lock melts off and is forgotten as if it had



His Hungry Mouth Found an Answering Quiver in Her Lips.

never been. His hungry mouth found an answering quiver in her lips; and for a while, under the spell of the gentle warmth that he had thought would never be his, he no longer worried about what might happen to the cow kingdom of Horse Dunn.

Presently she said, "Two years ago it was my fault. But last night in the hills it was yours. If you had only put your hands on me then—but you had to stand with a face like granite, and eyes like death in the foothills—"

"I know that—now." "I don't know how I'm going to let you go. So many things—anything—can happen before we're together again."

"But we have this hour, now." "Nothing can ever rob us of that!"

Each was seeing a person he had never seen before. He was still whipcord and braided leather, the saddle man who could hold his own in the upheaval of markets and the shifting games of the financiers; but all the barbed and dour hardness of him was gone, so that in the arms of this girl it was as if he were reborn. And in the girl the hidden steel of the will he had not been able to bend seemed melted, and the curve of her body within his arm was a surrender without reserve.

They did not know how long they lay together on the bunk that for the time was not his, but theirs, in that lonely and deserted house; and he learned here that she was neither east nor west, but all woman.

A harsh, taut strain that had held them for days seemed to slacken and go out of the night, as if guns and cattle were unimportant things; and in that hour that was theirs alone, one bitterness went out of the world forever. It was not a surprise, but a consummation, when presently he found that she was asleep.

He picked her up and carried her to her own room, and put her in her own bed; and she smiled faintly in her sleep as he kissed her eyes. Then he walked out of the house, by a different door than the one where Coffee sat, and stood listening to the still night.

Then, while his mind was entirely away from hatred and violence for the first time in a week, something in the back of his mind found the answer, and all in a moment he saw through the tangle that had roped the 94. He knew suddenly not only who had killed Flagg at Short Creek, but why Flagg had had more than a hunch that he was riding into death; he knew why Marian had been fired on; and he knew how he could prove, inevitably and inescapably, who had killed Bob Flagg—and the taut strain of range war

came back into the night, turning him cold.

Wheeler walked around the house to where Old Man Coffee still sat. As far as the naked eye could observe Old Man Coffee had not changed his position; he could sit like a rock or an Indian hours on end, as if this were his natural way of living out his life. Wheeler sat down slowly and stiffly on the step beside the old man, he ran his hands over his face, shook his head like a fighter trying to clear away the effects of a killing right cross.

Coffee did not speak and for a little while Wheeler also sat silent, trying to compute how much he wished to say. "Coffee," he said at last, "I see it. I see it all." Coffee took his pipe out of his mouth and looked at Wheeler. "All what?"

"I know who fired on Marian." "Hell, son, you had that figured out last time I seen you, two hours ago." Coffee glanced at the stars which he used as a clock. "Two hours and fifteen minutes," he corrected himself.

"I had the wrong reason," Wheeler said; "this time I know. And knowing that, I know now why Bob Flagg had foretold that he was near his end. And I can prove it."

Old Man Coffee started to say, "You sound like you was full of—," but he hesitated and studied Billy Wheeler sidelong through the thin dark. "Answer me one thing, son," he said at last. "What was the thing that showed you the killer trail?"

"It was two things, Coffee," Wheeler said; "not one. Two kind of trivial-looking things, that I knew and then forgot. But as soon as I saw the meaning of one of them, right away I saw the meaning of the other. Like as if the two clues were tied together by the neck. Coffee, Marian doesn't know a thing in the world about this. But the first thing that came to me was something I remembered that she said. You remember after—"

"Stop," said Old Man Coffee. So sharply had the old man commanded him that Wheeler at first thought Coffee was listening to some distant sound. "What's the matter?"

"I've heard enough."

"Then," said Billy Wheeler, "you know the answer too?"

"I've kind of suspected it these many days. I didn't know for sure until today."

"Do you think anyone else knows?" "Son, I'm virtually certain that no one in the world knows but you and me."

"You must have come at it differently than I did, Coffee."

"Different than you." Coffee agreed. "God knows how you come at it. I don't want to know. In a minute now I'm going to say no more. But nobody else in the Red Rock could have found it out except maybe Cayuse Cayetano—and he's dead."

They sat silent for a little time. "What's the next move?" Wheeler presently asked. "Until you spoke," Coffee said, "I knew what my next move was going to be. My next move was going to be out. But now that you've come onto the right trail, I guess maybe it's kind of up to me to stand by a little while, until I see what you do."

Something in Old Man Coffee's voice bothered Wheeler. "You mean we're not working together, then?" "Seems like we might not be, son. I'm an old man; and I long ago learned that sometimes it's a good idea to leave sleeping dogs lie."

"You mean, you'd have been willing to pull out of this case and leave it unsolved forever?" Old Man Coffee drew half a dozen slow puffs on his pipe before he

answered. "The first murder case I worked on," he said at last, "was a long time ago. Sometimes I think that one first case was the misfortune of my life. Because it gave me a kind of a reputation in a small way, so that ever since then I've been called in on such, from time to time, over and over again. Man hunting isn't a pretty job, Billy, nor anything a man would care to turn his hand to more than once, if he could get out of it. But I've always worked hard and honestly on my case where I once set my hand. And now that I'm old I figure to keep one right to myself—the right to keep my mouth shut if I can't see where clearing up a mystery will serve no proper end.

"Take this case, here. Do you think that solving this crime can possibly come under the head of helping any living person, or preserving the peace? You know better than that. You know as well as I do that the minute the answer is made known the guns will crack out, and good boys that's got nothing to do with either side will be throwing lead into each other's guts."

"You think Horse Dunn will take to the guns?"

"Of course he'll take to the guns! You know him well enough to know that. The guns will be talking before ever the thing is proved."

"The proof ought to be easy enough."

"I got no doubt of that. I see at least one way of proof and maybe you see more. But what I'm telling you is this, son—think what you're doing before you raise this lid. Don't raise it unless you think you'd rather see what will come of it, in place of what we already got."

The moon was gone, and they sat in the chill blackness before dawn; but it seemed to Wheeler that the night was no darker than his mood. "I thought of all that," he said. "I thought of all that the moment it came to me. And first off, I thought like you. But now—I'm not so sure. Sometimes it seems like there's something unsound at the bottom of any plan that calls for just hiding our heads."

"Then I'll give you your answer," said Old Man Coffee abruptly. "I'll give you the whole thing, once and for all, in four words. Think of the girl."

He took a couple of drags on his pipe. "Forget Horse Dunn, and the cattle, and the money, and the range. Forget even the good fighting boys, here on the 94—Tulare and Steve Hurley and Val Douglas—they'll fight while they can hold up their guns. And Gil Baker, he'll be in it if he has to drag a broken leg into the street. But forget all them. And think what this here head-on smash between the 94 and all of the rest of the range is going to mean to the girl."

Wheeler sat silent for a long time. At last, needing to be alone, he got up and walked off into the dark, leaving Old Man Coffee with the darkness and his pipe. He went out and he sat on the corral, and he was thinking about Horse Dunn and the cow kingdom of the 94; but mostly he was thinking about the girl who had at last taken him into her heart, now at the end. He could never think about anything any more except in terms of its effect upon her.

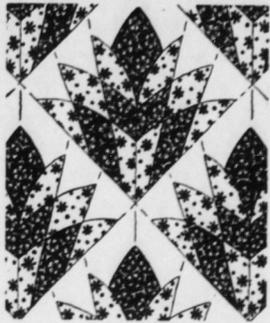
He had an hour to come to his decision there before the first pale, reddish light of the dawn showed at the edge of the world; and it was the hardest hour of his life, because he knew that he held in his hands the future of them all. More than once he turned to Coffee's easier way. But as a gray light began to come slowly across the 94 he thought he knew what he must do.

He went in and rapped on Marian's door; and when she called to him sleepily he went in and stood beside her bed. "You and I are going to inspiration," he told her.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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"Quotations"

We see things not as they are, but as we are.—H. M. Tomlinson.

A poor life this if, full of care, we have no time to stand and stare.—William H. Davies.

Being happily married is merely the development of the art of living to its superlative degree.—William Lyon Phelps.

How mankind defers from day to day the best it can do, and the most beautiful things it can enjoy, without thinking that every day may be the last one, and that lost time is lost eternally.—Max Muller.

Thus each extreme to equal danger tends; plenty as well as want, can separate friends.—A. Cowley.

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