

Luck and a Woman

By FRED MEERS.

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"Close it up soon if you can," said the manager. "We have put some of our best men on the matter, but they can tell us nothing. If we do not manage to locate the cause of these robberies we might as well go out of business."

"I'll do what I can," promised Danvers, "but if Sykes and Taylor have given up the case I don't see where I get off."

"Neither do I," admitted the manager frankly, "except that you seem to have 'fool' luck, and sometimes that is better than good detective instinct."

Danvers bowed at the doubtful compliment and took himself off. There might be something in that luck theory. Since going to work for the burglary insurance people he had more than once stumbled against a clew that developed into a conviction.

But this promised to be a harder case than usual, and after he had interviewed the watchmen who were on the

ing before them a wheelbarrow with a grooved wheel. One of them carried a Japanese umbrella painted black, with which he preserved their balances while the other pushed. They dumped their load on the roof and turned back. When they had disappeared down one of the scuttles on the other side Danvers stepped out again.

"How long have you been with these men?" he demanded. "You don't look like their sort."

"They were with a circus," she explained. "I ran away with Jim; that's the smaller one. He watches me so that I do not have a chance to get away from him."

"Is this a regular trick?" he demanded. She shook her head.

"Business is bad this year. The boys can't get work. They are fooling one night on the roof and found that the wire was strong enough to bear them. They used to carry me in the wheelbarrow in the show, and they got the idea of robbing the houses. They cut the alarm wire and can come and go as they please. When the men were watching they walked right over their heads."

"I'd like to get after them," he said. "I could drive them down to the street where the watchmen is."

"If you won't tell I'll take you," she volunteered. "Don't be afraid. I can do it."

She caught up another parcel from the roof and spread it. "Ride pickaback," she commanded.

Danvers put his arms about her shoulders and raised his feet clear. Slowly she adjusted her weight to the wire and began to make her way across. Somewhere he had read that it would not do to look down, so he shut his eyes and kept his head straight.

Once or twice the girl seemed to lose her balance and for a moment worked the parcel violently while she regained it. Then she pressed on again, and at last, with a sigh, she stepped off the wire, and Danvers opened his eyes.

They were on the farther side, and just beyond was the open scuttle. "Let me go back," pleaded the girl. "They must not know that I helped you or they would kill me when you got out. You must never tell how you made the trip. Pretend that you saw them and climbed a fire escape. I am going to be gone by the time you get back to the house."

"But how can I reward you?" he questioned.

She threw a glance at him. "I can get a divorce if I am convicted. My freedom is a rich reward." She kissed her hand to him in imitation of the circus ring, and he watched with admiration as her lithe figure sped across the open. Then he dropped through the scuttle.

"Hull luck, I suppose," laughed the manager when Danvers reported the next morning.

Loaded For Hawks

By C. D. LEWIS

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"What is it, aunty?" asked her niece, Miss Nettie Ward, from the city, who had come out to the old farm for a vacation.

"Why, another of them hawks has grabbed another of them chickens," was the reply. "I told pa only last night that he ought to get out and load the shotgun for me. I s'pose that hawks have got as much right to live as other fowls, but I'll be snuffed if—"

"But he did load the gun, and it's there behind the door," interrupted the niece.

"So it is! What an old goose I am getting to be! Nettie, did you ever fire on a gun?"

"Never."

"Then I must show you how to do it. You take it in both hands this way. You draw it up to your shoulder this way. Then you set your eyes and pull on the trigger with your finger, and the hawk drops dead. A hawk is a very fine animal, and you ought to be up and out here alone."

"You want to be shot?" she asked. "You are just as much afraid of a hawk as I am of a snake."

"I ain't seen no strange young men around here myself," was the answer, "but I understand that the Stevenses, half a mile below us, have got a sunnier boarder. I guess he's the one you say."

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She had hardly come downstairs and told it when the rural mail carrier left a letter for the aunt, which stated that a sister living ten miles away was ill and wanted her to drive over at once. She couldn't drive, and so Uncle Joe must go along. There was room for Nettie to go along, but the toothache kept getting the better of her, and she didn't take her long to decide to stay home and doctor it. She could put on a bag of hot ashes, hold hot vinegar in her mouth and now and then press a wad of cotton batting wet with peppermint essence against the offending molar, and there was hope that she would be all right before the night came.

During the long day, if the ache permitted, she could swing in her hammock, hunt the cherry tree after the ripe fruit, climb for hens' eggs in the barn and watch the ducks and goslings in the horse pond.

There is only two things to look out for," said the aunt when she was ready to drive away. "Keep your eyes out for hawks and tramps. As we haven't seen a tramp for six weeks, I guess you won't be bothered, but them hawks are liable to drop down on you any time. If you comes, and you don't shoot it, I've heard that shooting a gun has been known to cure the toothache."

Uncle and aunt had been gone an hour when the toothache ceased, and Miss Nettie piled into her hammock under the pear tree with a book. She was just opposite the kitchen, and only thirty feet away, and just inside the door stood the shotgun. The maid had great confidence that if hawk or tramp came along she would play the part of a heroine.

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