

Hawks and Hawks

Being the
Reminiscences
of a
Nature Fakir

By
John Kendrick Bangs

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"I kind o' think," Si Wotherspoon was saying as I joined the company at the post office the other night, "that all birds is highway robbers whether they be the human kind that we calls fall birds or jest plain crows like that feller Jim, the Captain was tellin' us about a little while back. They'll all steal if ye give 'em a chance."

"That all depends on the way ye look at it, Si," said the Captain. "The way I measure a thief is whether he steals jest for the fun o' deprivin' somebody else o' what he's got, or does it because he needs what he takes in his business."

"Well, now, s'pose ye take 'em pigeons o' Joe's," said Si. "I sowed my back lot with oats three weeks ago, an' I hadn't more'n got 'em on the ground when them derned critters come floppin' across th' road, an' sot down there, an' eat up every blamed oat I'd put out. D' ye call that stealin' or jest natural enterprise?"

"It's enterprise," said the Captain. "Nature has provided them pigeons

with a taste for oats, an' when they see you sot o' settin' the table for 'em to come an' have a snack o' lunch, they come, an' they take what's set before 'em without grumblin', an' with no more idee in their minds that they ain't doin' what you expected."

"I see," said Si, "but I think he owes me a peck of oats jest th' same, an' I gorry, if them pigeons shows their pesky bills on my lot ag'in I'll—I'll—"

"You'll receipt 'em, eh?" laughed the Captain.

"I'll blow their derned heads off," said Si, with considerable heat.

"That'll be jest right," observed the Postmaster, quietly. "I've told them pigeons to keep off your place, an' if they don't do as I tell 'em, I'll shoot 'em. Si, I'll sell ye the gunpowder to do it with."

And thus was a truce declared.

"Birds has got to live," said the Captain after good-fellowship had been restored in a dipperful of root beer all around, "an' while it makes me madder 'n a hornet sometimes th' way they have o' swoopin' down on a day's work, an' spillin' it, I'm blamed if I can blame 'em. The bird ketches the grain, the farmer katches the birds, an' the tax assessor katches the farmer, an' the grand jury katches the tax assessors, an' so it goes."

"Then ye wouldn't shoot a hawk that come down an' took a couple o' your best spring pullets, eh?" said the Postmaster.

"Well, they's hawks an' hawks," said the Captain. "They's honest hawks, an' they's dishonest hawks, just like they's honest men, an' men that's crooked."

"An honest hawk's a new one on me," said the Postmaster with a dubious laugh. "'F I could ketch one o' them I'd give up runnin' the country an' open a circus."

"As I hev often had occasion to remark before," said the Captain calmly, "if intelligence was in demand in runnin' th' affairs o' this nation there's a hull lot more plowin' 'd be done by fourth-class postmasters all over the land, an' specially in this here state. But they's allers one good thing about you post office fellers. Ye can always be taught suthin' ye never heard on before, an' some real eighteen karat

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BESSIE'S STORY

By ELLEN FRIZZELL WYCOFF

(Copyright.)

The postman's whistle sounded clear and sharp down the street. Miss Brent's heart gave a quick throb, and she saw her cheeks flush as she tied her hat on before the little looking glass.

Now the whistle was nearer. She went to the door and waited. Suppose she had won the prize! Again her heart throbbed and her cheeks flushed.

She held out her hand as the man stopped before her. A low groan escaped her lips as he handed out a thick package. She went inside and laid it under some books on the hall table.

Again she had failed. She waited long enough to brush the hot tears from her eyes, and then hurried out of the house and down to the store where her long, tiresome days were dragged out.

The lamp was burning in the hall when she came back. Snatching the thick package from its hiding place she went up to her room.

"A letter, Dolly?"

Miss Brent kissed the pale face that turned so gladly toward her.

"Nothing of importance, Bess. How have you been to-day?"

"Pretty well. The sun has been so bright."

Miss Brent looked around the cheerless little room. Each year had found her home poorer and poorer until now there was scarcely a comfort left. She laid her hat on the bed beside the letter; "nothing of importance" she had called it, but how her head had beamed over those neatly written pages! How she had hoped and prayed that good might come to poor, patient Bess from that labor of love! And now here it was before her, returned as utterly worthless.

Tears came, again, to Dolly's brown eyes, but Bess must not see them. She went about the room preparing the evening meal.

"Only one cup of tea, Dolly!" Bess exclaimed when her chair had been rolled up to the table.

"I must be taking care of my nerves, Bess. My hand has trembled to-day," Dolly said, bending her face low as she took up the toast.

Bess stirred her tea in silence.

"And no butter on your toast?" she asked, as Dolly, chatting gayly, ate her dry bread.

"Bess, my dear, look at that!" She leaned over and pointed to a pimple on her pretty, dimpled chin.

"Well, what of that?"

"Just this: I'm not going to ruin my complexion for the sake of having butter on my toast. At 30 a woman needs to take care of her good looks."

"I never imagined you cared for such things, Dolly. I am surprised," Bess said with wide open eyes.

"You pin one down so, Bess. I'm very much ashamed to show my weakness to you, but I abhor pimples," Dolly said with a shamefaced air.

"Oh, I don't blame you, only it must be so hard to not eat things you like," Dolly's lips quivered, but she smiled bravely. "Pride knows no pain," she quoted merrily, and then chatted brightly about the people she had seen in the store, entertaining Bess with many scraps of conversation she had overheard.

After awhile the child was asleep. Dolly covered the little aching limbs that had been rubbing, and turned away from the bed.

She sat down by the lamp, holding the thick, unwelcome letter in her hand. Mechanically she opened it, and instead of the printed slip she had expected, a letter fell out of the envelope. She laid the manuscript on the table, and unfolded the letter.

"Am I dreaming, or are the words really here?" she said aloud, a glad light in her eyes and her hands all a-tremble. She read it again. There was no mistake. The editor had been so pleased with the plot of her story that he returned it, begging her to lengthen it for him, and offering a price for it that amazed her. In the meantime he would buy her short stories.

Dolly wanted to scream with delight. And then, settling down in her joy, she began to wonder what short story she could send.

With the editor's unexpected letter before her, her thoughts, somehow, went back to her own little romance. Why not write that? Nobody would know it as hers, for who would suspect quiet, poverty-stricken little Miss Brent of having a romance tucked away in her uneventful past?

And, after all, it was not much of a story. She had made a very poor sort of a heroine. And Tom, well, there never was anybody like Tom. He was hero enough for any story, for hadn't he wanted to take her, her mother and little pony, baby Bess to his home, where there was scarcely enough for his own widowed mother and the family of helpless girls?

She had said no, and the drifting apart began, and now they were forever lost to each other.

She drew her little desk to her and wove her one little dream into a sweet, homely story, and then until late in the night she wrote, lengthening it, returned story.

At last, cold and tired and hungry, she crept into bed with Bess, and fell asleep to dream of her brave, bonny lover, her hero, Tom.

Her eyes were bright now, and there was no trembling of the steady hand. Hope gave her new life. People turned to look again at the radiant face, and Bess declared that Dolly's abstinence was really making her prettier every day, and Dolly laughingly replied that, after all, she felt herself giving way, and feared that she would drift back into luxurious habits, again.

The weather was growing cooler now, but Dolly laughed at the wind as it tugged at her thin jacket, and smiled as the first rain drops pattered down. "I wonder if Bess sees them," she said, hurrying on. Ah, yes, there

was the dear, pale little face pressed against the window, but—Dolly almost stopped with surprise.

There above the child's face was another. A man's bearded face! Was Bess worse and had some one gone for the doctor? Dolly's heart stood still with fear. Now, that she could do so much for little Bess, was she—she choked Dolly, and she hurried on. Stumbling up the steps she made her way to the room that held her one treasure.

"Oh, Bessie, my darling, what is the matter?" she cried, kneeling beside her sister's chair.

"Nothing, Dolly, not the least thing. This is Mr. Darron, and he has been waiting for you. He is an editor."

Dolly stood up, her face flushed and her eyes wet with tears.

"I was so afraid, sir, that you might be a doctor; I thought my sister—"

"Yes, I see. I came because the story you sent—"

and then he stopped and looked at his face, grave and earnest, looked as if the sun had broken through the clouds.

"The man by the counter lifted his head out of his hands."

"Use it!" he said. "Of course we can. I had the grip last year when it was put up and I've got the grip now. I can take that medicine as well as a new bottle full."

"No, you can't," said the clerk. "Some druggists might permit you to, but we won't. It might upset you for a month. Some medicines never lose their healing power, while others not only fail to produce the desired effect, but become positively harmful after standing a few months. The length of time a medicine retains its efficacy depends upon the ingredients. Some combinations of drugs keep good terms with each other indefinitely, while others get into a row after being mixed together for a while, and the man who swallows a dose of the stuff is apt to feel a good deal worse than before he took it. As a rule medicines that are quite sweet keep their curative virtues longer than those that are acid or bitter. Most any medicine can be taken in safety six months after compounding, and many will be all right six years hence. Those that are not good generally take on a curdled, milky appearance; but that is by no means an infallible test, and the person who wishes to save his system uncomfortable complications would do well to let old medicines strictly alone."

The man looked at the bottle regretfully.

"And that was an expensive prescription, too," he said. "It seems a shame to waste it."

"Never mind," said the clerk. "We are willing to stand the loss. We would rather do that than to take chances on losing a good customer like you."

Amateur Names.

If we have some growing sense of a desire to touch with poetry the terminology of our American towns we have succeeded so far only in securing a slightly plerotic grove of names such as is given off by Lakewood or Riverside.

The rich sentimentalism of the real estate dealer has done what it could considering the hurry he is in. If we have a new manufacturing suburb, the chances are we shall be too lazily and flatly patriotic, call it Lincoln and be done with it, or too crudely romantic, in which case the secretary of the company will report to the directors that he has had the place incorporated as Ivanhoe.

With the slightest dash of poetry in his soul he might keep true to the strenuous character of the place with all its prospective labor agitations, and at the same time give a tinge of beauty to the situation forever by calling it Fretley. Or if it is a place where hammers are to ring from morning to night, why not call it Stroke instead of naming it Smithville after the present chief stockholder in the concern?—Atlantic Monthly.

Collecting His Bill.

One day last summer visitors to a merry-go-round on a vacant lot in the outskirts of Philadelphia were very much touched by the melancholy demeanor of a long, lean, lank individual who, suffering greatly, persisted in riding repeatedly. At last one said to him sympathetically:

"You appear to be in great distress."

"Yes," replied the man on the merry-go-round, "this continual riding round and round makes me seasick."

"Well, then, why don't you quit riding?" asked the inquisitive questioner.

"I can't help it," replied the poor man. "The man who runs this merry-go-round owes me money, and the only way I can collect it is by taking it out in rides."

If Odors Only Were Nourishing.

"If one could live on odors alone," said Mr. Flatdwell, "it wouldn't cost much to live in a flat."

"For there's no odor of cooking kum-ba-tum that you can't smell here. The dumb-water shafts and the various holes through floors and ceilings for steam and water pipes seem to make the whole building a sort of universal smell-conductor in which no cooking odor is lost, in which all odors come to all."

"And so if anybody in the building has roast turkey we know that, but so, alas! do we know it full well if anybody has corned beef and cabbage or onions or fish. There is, indeed, a surfeit of odors, and as I said, if one could live on odors what a place this would be to board—such a variety and how cheap!"

Too Bad.

Little Edgar had been reading about the beautiful paintings on the ceilings and the walls of some of the great cathedrals of Italy. Looking up from his book, he said:

"It was too bad, wasn't it, father?"

"What do you mean?"

"About Raphael and Michelangelo and those other painters not having money enough to buy canvases to paint on."

Under the Stars.

"Don't be serious, Jack. What's the subject. What is that bright star?"

"That's Sirius, too, dear."

MEDICINES THAT ARE HARMFUL

Combinations of Drugs Dangerous if Not Used at Once.

Just one year from the time the medicine was lost it showed up again at the drug store. A woman brought it in.

"This bottle was left at our house by mistake," she said.

The clerk read the name on the wrapper and the date on the label, then he called to a man who sat leaning against the cigar counter with his head propped up in his hands.

"Captain," he said, "here is that medicine we had such a time about. I don't see," he added, turning to the woman, "why you didn't bring it back sooner."

"I didn't think of it," she explained. "The maid took it in one day when we were all out. She thought it belonged to somebody in our house. It has lain around there in a cupboard all this while. It never occurred to us to return it until just this morning, and then it struck me you might be able to use it."

The man by the counter lifted his head out of his hands.

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HORTICULTURE

FOR THE ORCHARDIST.

The Application of Water Pressure as a Spray Power.

Compressed air and gas have been used for some years as powers for spraying. Gas is expensive, and when compressed air is used, the air compressor with engine at charging station give high initial cost and some complications. Still these types of sprayers have been making headway for steep orchards where gasoline rigs

could hardly go, and where the acreage warranted the use of several field rigs which were charged at one compressor. Where high water pressure is available, writes a correspondent of the Rural New Yorker, I know the charging of spray rigs working as above may be simplified, for with an airtight pressure tank connected with the water system it is only necessary to turn in the water valve have the air compressed to the water pressure figure. An air pipe leading from the highest point of the tank will convey the compressed air to the spray rig, either to a portion of the iron spray tank or to a separate tank, as the case may be. In the case of single tank sprayers the spray tank would be filled half full or less of spray material, and the remaining space with air at a pressure of 150 pounds or more, which will expel the spray at a sufficient spray pressure if modern nozzles are used. The charging tank should be large, for it must be emptied as soon as it fills completely with water, and to gain strength it would be well to use several tanks of less size. Separate tanks on the field rig also give the advantage of greater strength, and the pressure may be used at a more uniform rate if desired. Where the water pressure is a little low it may be supplemented by the use of a force pump or a gas tube.

Water Pressure Spray Rig.



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Best Soil for Orchards.

Illinois Fruit Culturist Likes the Clay Soil Best.

My experience in growing orchards and fruit trees has been almost wholly confined to the white clay soil, or the gray silt loam, writes a southern Illinois correspondent of Farmers' Review. This soil, while it varies considerably in different locations, seems to be especially adapted to the production of fruit and fruit trees. To be sure, location and drainage are prime factors in fruit-growing, yet these secured and any of our soil is good orchard land.

On soil not depleted by injudicious farming trees make a good growth of wood and produce fruit of good quality and color. I have one apple orchard on thin, "worn-out" land and by a liberal application of stable manure and the growing of cow-peas have a beautiful and very profitable orchard.

The peach to be successful here is a little more particular. A light, open soil with good elevation makes an ideal location, as the elevation in creases, the danger from freezing and late frosts decreases. I have been most successful in growing peaches on clay soil by the application of stable manure, and while this tends toward a too rapid growth of wood, the fruit is of the very highest color and quality. The excessive wood growth must be removed by cutting back. I have never experienced any difficulty in fruit production by excessive wood growth. Have never had any experience in growing trees on prairie soil and but little on sandy soil, but decidedly prefer the so-called clay.

Of course bottom lands subject to overflow could not be made suitable for orchard purposes, but a soil that is unsuitable by reason of lack of plant food, or is being too cold and wet, can often be made good orchard land by fertilization and drainage.

ORCHARDS ON A HIGH RIDGE.

And Why They Did Better Than Those on Lower Levels.

I believe in and near my county we have about as many different locations for orchards as can be found anywhere, and in my own county in looking back over the results that have been obtained from the different orchards, I find that the two best orchards are on a high ridge running very nearly east and west or southeast to northwest, with deep hollows or ravines on either side, writes C. G. Winn, Pike county, Ill., in the Prairie Farmer. My idea why this has been the case is this:

Most of the failures we have had have been due to a heavy rain in bloom or else a sudden drop in the temperature as it did last spring, with a cold wind blowing from the north-west and the thermometer going down below the freezing point.

Now as the cold will seek the lowest point it would go off down these ravines and the warmer air would be on the ridges making a difference of several degrees between that on the top of the ridges and that down in the ravine, or enough difference to save the bloom or buds on the ridge, while in orchards not so situated it would be cold enough to freeze the bloom or buds, a difference of a few degrees often meaning either a success or failure.

Plants Change.

Plants change their characters according to the conditions in which they are, and this is more true of the artificial plants than any other. Take the wheats by way of illustration. They have been so artificially bred for a long time that they are very susceptible to conditions. A wheat at the Tennessee experiment station that had been bred to have a large amount of protein and a small amount of starch suddenly developed a great deal of starch in a wet year when the leaves grew large. This change, according to season, is the hardest thing to combat in any artificial plant, and any plant that has been modified by man is artificial. The more changes we make with plants the easier are changes made. The last 25 years have seen more new brands of cabbage brought on the market than ever before and some of them are very different from the old varieties.

VEGETABLES NOT WELL KNOWN.

Many Varieties Common in Europe Might Be Grown in This Country.

American gardens yield a few kinds of vegetables in abundance, but that is all. In variety, they are far inferior to European gardens. There is really little excuse for this. More than twice as many kinds of plants could be grown as are now usually found in the home garden, and the family would be benefited, by the variety.

Cardoon is commonly grown in France and other countries of southern Europe, and has lately received some attention in America. It is closely related to the globe artichoke. The leaves of the two plants look much alike. The leaf stalk is the part used, which is blanched by gathering up the leaves and tying with matting or bands of straw in autumn, then the heart should be ready for use.

Although chervil is grown for garnishing, it is not well known that there is another kind which produces an edible root. It is similar to the parsnip and is treated like it. Frosts improve the flavor. There is so little demand for it that few seed catalogues named it.

Among the seeds and roots which the pioneers brought from their eastern homes were cives or chives. They belong to the onion tribe, and are grown for their tops, which are ready for use early in the spring. The bulbs are set six or eight inches apart in a permanent bed, where they will form compact tufts and take care of themselves, being perfect in autumn. They make a pretty border. In the summer they produce heads of purple flowers at the end of stalks, which would be pretty if they were not onions.

What's in a name? Collard or colewort is nothing more than common cabbage. The seed is sown thickly and the young plants used for greens when eight or nine inches high. In the south they are commonly known as cabbage greens, just as they ought to be.

There is nothing difficult about growing adivye, yet it is not as commonly grown as one might expect. For summer use it is sown in April or May, but for fall and winter use it is sown from June till the middle of August. The plants should be thinned or transplanted so as to stand at least a foot apart. When they are about full grown they are blanched by gathering up the leaves and tying at the top. In about two weeks, the hearts should be ready for use. Some gardeners prepare it in a week by putting celery bleachers over the plants. They should be blanched as wanted, as the hearts will soon decay after the process. Unless thoroughly blanched the leaves are tough and bitter.

For some reason, kohlrabi has been slow to find a place in American gardens, though it is highly prized by the Germans, says the Orange Judd Farmer. It might be described as a turnip with a root above ground, or a cabbage with its head in the stem. In flavor, it is a combination of both turnip and cabbage, but more delicate than either. If used before quite full grown it is tender and delicious, but if left standing too long it quickly becomes woody and unfit for cooking. If a succession is desired, the seed should be sown from early spring till midsummer. The seed may be sown in drills 18 inches apart, then thinned so as to stand seven or eight inches apart in the row, or it may be started in a bed and transplanted.

MOVING A LARGE TREE.

Simple Device by Which It May Be Drawn from the Ground.

To move a large tree make a three-sided standard of 2x4 stuff. Loosen the dirt around the roots of the tree, and wrap the tree firmly at the base with old carpet to prevent injury. Place the standard firmly in the ground and tie the cross-piece to the body of the tree.

Ropes, Fasten a strong rope to each side of the standard and hitch a horse to the other end. With a slow pull the tree can be drawn onto the sled and then hauled to the new location. It can then be placed in its new place in the same way.

THINGS TO REMEMBER.

Grade your apples when you take them to market. You get a better price for the best ones and the others will sell better than they would if all mixed in with something else.

Remove and burn all dead limbs and trees as soon as possible; they offer a refuge for germs and it is better to destroy a tree, even though it is a valuable one, than to have the disease spread through the entire orchard.

With newly set fruit trees especially, watering without mulching in times of drought does more harm than good, unless the ground is thoroughly soaked just at evening. If young orchards are watered in dry weather see to it that the surface when water is put on is shaded with mulch.

Plants Change.

Plants change their characters according to the conditions in which they are, and this is more true of the artificial plants than any other. Take the wheats by way of illustration. They have been so artificially bred for a long time that they are very susceptible to conditions. A wheat at the Tennessee experiment station that had been bred to have a large amount of protein and a small amount of starch suddenly developed a great deal of starch in a wet year when the leaves grew large. This change, according to season, is the hardest thing to combat in any artificial plant, and any plant that has been modified by man is artificial. The more changes we make with plants the easier are changes made. The last 25 years have seen more new brands of cabbage brought on the market than ever before and some of them are very different from the old varieties.



"He Drops a Five Pounder."

with a taste for oats, an' when they see you sot o' settin' the table for 'em to come an' have a snack o' lunch, they come, an' they take what's set before 'em without grumblin', an' with no more idee in their minds that they ain't doin' what you expected."

"I see," said Si, "but I think he owes me a peck of oats jest th' same, an' I gorry, if them pigeons shows their pesky bills on my lot ag'in I'll—I'll—"

"You'll receipt 'em, eh?" laughed the Captain.

"I'll blow their derned heads off," said Si, with considerable heat.

"That'll be jest right," observed the Postmaster, quietly. "I've told them pigeons to keep off your place, an' if they don't do as I tell 'em, I'll shoot 'em. Si, I'll sell ye the gunpowder to do it with."

And thus was a truce declared.

"Birds has got to live," said the Captain after good-fellowship had been restored in a dipperful of root beer all around, "an' while it makes me madder 'n a hornet sometimes th' way they have o' swoopin' down on a day's work, an' spillin' it, I'm blamed if I can blame 'em. The bird ketches the grain, the farmer katches the birds, an' the tax assessor katches the farmer, an' the grand jury katches the tax assessors, an' so it goes."

"Then ye wouldn't shoot a hawk that come down an' took a couple o' your best spring pullets, eh?" said the Postmaster.

"Well, they's hawks an' hawks," said the Captain. "They's honest hawks, an' they's dishonest hawks, just like they's honest men, an' men that's crooked."

"An honest hawk's a new one on me," said the Postmaster with a dubious laugh. "'F I could ketch one o' them I'd give up runnin' the country an' open a circus."

"As I hev often had occasion to remark before," said the Captain calmly, "if intelligence was in demand in runnin' th' affairs o' this nation there's a hull lot more plowin' 'd be done by fourth-class postmasters all over the land, an' specially in this here state. But they's allers one good thing about you post office fellers. Ye can always be taught suthin' ye never heard on before, an' some real eighteen karat

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