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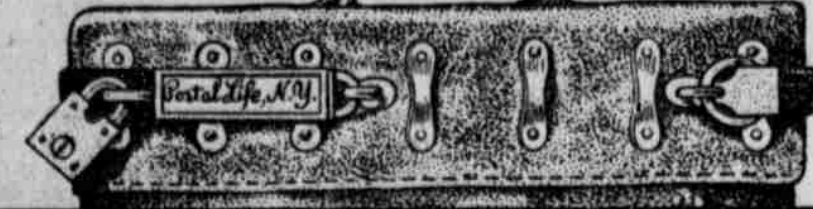
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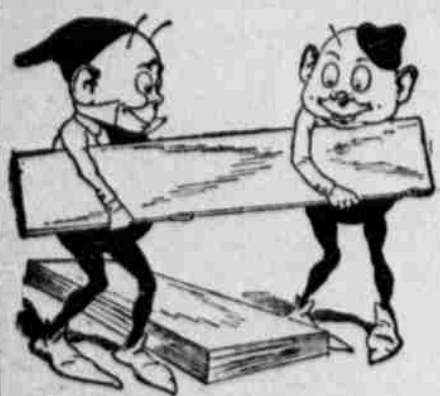
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His Dinner With Dorsey

By STACY E. BAKER

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HAWKINS, having read his "Arabian Nights," was cynically appreciative of the situation.

"Have some more turkey," insisted Hiram Dorsey. "Isn't this quite the finest bird you ever put lips to?"

With a quizzical glance at the old man Hawkins silently passed his empty plate.

"You don't enthuse," complained the other. "This bird is of a rare breed—lineal descendant of one of those blessed fowls the pilgrim fathers sacrificed on the first Thanksgiving. I understand. Quite a sacrifice this, serving one on New Year's day."

John Hawkins favored his garrulous host with a rueful smile and fell to making a most unnecessary noise with his knife and fork, unnecessary because there was absolutely nothing on

for every steaming dish which by precedent should have graced the table—and didn't.

"You certainly are an appreciative youth," contributed the manufacturer. "You have made a mistake by leaving Boston to come over to me."

After invisible dessert, demitasse and cigars as subtle as all that had gone before, the long drawn out dinner was done. Once again the host and his guest sought the library.

A fluttery vision arose, startled, from in front of a heavy mission writing desk.

"I—I wasn't aware that there was any one in the house," explained the girl confusedly. "Why, papa, you told me that you were dining out. I—"

"So I did. So I did," interrupted the old man hastily. "Mr. Hawkins," turning to the youth, "this is my daughter, Miss Alys Dorsey."

Miss Dorsey had made an instant impression on the youth from Boston. The delicate rose petal flush on the perfect oval of her cheeks, the half frightened light in the great eyes, dresden blue; the daintiness of the dress gowning the slight form of the girl—all these and the alluring gold of her wonderful hair had promptly thrilled the hitherto unsusceptible heart of the Hubite.

He acknowledged the introduction with a bit of diffidence in the formality foreign to his usual self confident grasp of things.

"You have had dinner, papa?" asked the girl after the eyes of the young people had met and the telltale color had crept again to the temples of the girl.

"Just left the dining room," answered her father. "But how happens it that you are here? I thought you had decided to spend the day with your aunt in Brooklyn."

"Not at home," briefly explained Alys Dorsey. "Now, gentlemen, if you will excuse me, I will see what Corliss has left for me. I am hungry."

"But, Alys," suggested her father uneasily, "wouldn't you rather take dinner at a—er—good restaurant?"

The girl stared. "I should say not," she answered indignantly. "I would much rather dine at home."

"But—er—what is left from dinner is quite apt to be cold by this time."

"I'll risk it," assured the girl, with a laugh. With a smile and a nod at the fascinated Hawkins she left the room.

Dorsey was plainly worried. Hawkins watched him curiously, blowing invisible smoke rings from his imaginary cigar.

"Fine weed this," he complimented. Dorsey scowled.

"Let's put an end to the comedy," he growled.

The heavy brows of Hawkins raised in polite interrogation. "Don't do that," came from the older man testily. "Can't you see the game is done?"

"It was partly a joke," continued the manufacturer, "and partly a test I have always been bothered by sales-



"DORSEY IS A LITTLE BIT OFF."

his plate. The turkey so highly praised by the little gray haired one at the opposite end of the table was conspicuously absent, as was everything else of a food nature.

Hiram Dorsey, manufacturer of Dorsey fliers, that popular car so well and favorably known to followers of the fad, had sent to Grove Bros., his Boston representatives, for a capable young salesman who wished to establish himself with the New York concern.

John Hawkins, after a long talk with the elder Grove, had decided to try out this offer.

"He's a peculiar one," cautioned Grove. "Don't cross him in anything and you will find him the best boss in the world. Do otherwise—and well, you will be hunting for another job. Some people say that"—Grove tapped his bald head suggestively—"Dorsey is a little off. But I don't believe it."

"He must be," responded Hawkins, his face a bit gloomy. "to insist upon me, a total stranger, taking New Year's dinner while we make business arrangements."

"Don't cross him," cautioned Grove again. "Go, by all means. If he takes a liking to you your fortune is made."

The tall, pleasant faced youth who handed his card to the pretty maid answering the bell at the Dorsey domicile was unprepared for the effluent greeting vouchsafed him by his stranger host.

"You are prompt," he enthused, grasping the young man's hand in a firm clasp. "I appreciate promptness."

In the library the conversation touched upon all subjects except the business which had brought Hawkins there. The older man proved to be of keen mental caliber. The appreciative youth smiled as the cautioning words of Grove came back to him. "Don't cross him."

The dark eyes of the lad inventoried the tastiness of the place. Dorsey, Grove had told him, had one motherless daughter. Hawkins felt that he would like to meet this girl, doubtless the spirit responsible for the clever arrangements of this man's room.

The manufacturer touched a bell. "You may serve dinner, Corliss." This to the smug mental responding.

"We dine alone," explained the old man, turning to his guest.

The rather small dining room was a symphony in tastiness. The table was resplendent with polished glass, glistening silver, snowy linen.

They seated themselves. The stolid butler brought a great platter, and, with a picturesque flourish, Dorsey proceeded to carve, his lip curving to many an eulogizing word—

Nothing!

The platter was empty. So were the various other dishes from which the host heaped imaginary vlands to the plate of this hungry guest.

Hawkins, surprised almost to a point of remonstrance, suddenly recalled the words of his late employer. His black eyes took unto themselves a humorous twinkle, and in all seriousness he sat about making a meal from the make believe bird.

As the "dinner" progressed Hawkins fell firmly into the spirit of the jest. He praised the fowl and extolled the merits of the extraordinary celery. He summoned a compliment



HE PRAISED THE FOWL AND EXTOLLED THE MERITS OF THE EXTRAORDINARY CELERY.

men who through their quick tempers and surliness lost me thousands of dollars. I decided on this dinner before putting you on. If you could go through with the joke it would indicate three things—tact, tolerance and an ability to adjust yourself to most unusual situations." The old man sighed ruefully. "Well, you made good. The joke is on me—doubly so, because Alys has returned. She doesn't think much of practical jokes, and—and—"

"Papa!"

Dorsey turned a crimson face to the door. His daughter stared at him long and meaningfully.

"Don't you think, papa, that you would better phone the garage and have the big car sent up? I have a mind to dine at the Aldorf, and I am sure Mr. Hawkins is hungry."

"Yes, my dear," answered Dorsey humbly.

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