

THE INVENTIONS OF HAWKINS

By EDGAR FRANKLIN

THE CHEMICO-SPRINKLER SYSTEM.

The gathering at the Hawkins' home that night was, I suppose, in the nature of a house-warming. The Blossoms, the Ridgways, the Eldridges, the Gordons were there, in addition to perhaps a dozen and a half other people whom I had never met. Also, Mr. Blodgett was there.

Old Mr. Blodgett is Hawkins' father-in-law. There is a Mrs. Blodgett, too, but she is really too sweet an old lady to be placed in the mother-in-law category.

Blodgett, however, makes up for any deficiencies on his wife's part in the traditional traits. He seems to have analyzed Hawkins with expert care and precision—to have appraised and classified his character and attainments to a nicety.

Consequently, Hawkins and Mr. Blodgett are rarely to be observed wandering hither and thither with their arms about each other's waists.

Finally, I was there myself with my wife.

It seems almost superfluous to mention my presence. Whenever Hawkins is on the verge of trouble with one of his contrivances, some esoteric force seems to sweep me along in his direction with resistless energy.

Sometimes I wonder what Hawkins did for a victim before we met—but let that be.

Dinner had been lively, for the guests were mainly young, and the wines such as Hawkins can afford, but when we had assembled in the drawing-room, conversation seemed to slow down somewhat, and to pass over to a languid discussion of the house as a sort of relaxation.

Then it was that a port miss from one of the Oranges remarked:

"Yes, the frescoing is lovely—almost all of it. But—whenever could have designed that frieze, Mr. Hawkins?"

"Er—that frieze?" repeated the inventor, a little uncomfortably, indicating the insane-looking strip of painting a foot or so wide which ran along under the ceiling.

"Yes, it's so funny. Nothing but dots and dots and dots. Whoever could have conceived such an idea?"

"Well, I did, Miss Mather," Hawkins replied. "I designed that myself."

"Oh, did you?" murmured the inquisitive one, going red.

Hawkins turned to me, and the girl subsided; but old Mr. Blodgett had overheard. He felt constrained to put in, with his usual tactful thought and grating nasal voice:

"It's hideous—simply hideous. I don't see—I can't see the sense in spending that amount of money in plastering painted roses and undressed young ones all over the ceiling, Herbert."

"No," said Hawkins, between his teeth.

"Folly—pure folly," grunted the old gentleman. "No reason for it—no reason under the sun."

Hawkins at least reserves family dissensions for family occasions. He held his peace and his tongue.

"Yes, sir," persisted Blodgett, "everything else out of the question, the house might catch fire to-night, and your entire sock of painted babies go up in smoke. Then where'd they be? Eh?"

"See here," said Hawkins, goaded into speech, "you just keep your mind easy on that score at least, will you, papa, dear?"

"What's that? What's that?"

"This house isn't going up in smoke," went on the inventor, tartly. "You can take my word for it."

"Isn't, eh?" jeered the elderly Blodgett with his nasty sneering little chuckle. "And how do you know it's not? Eh? Smarter men than you, my boy, and in better built houses have—"

"Look here! This particular place isn't going to burn, because—" Hawkins rapped out.

"What isn't going to burn, Herbert?" inquired Mrs. Hawkins, with a cold, warning glance at her husband as she perceived that hostilities were in progress. "Is he teasing you again, papa?"

"Teasing me!" sniffed Blodgett with an unpleasant leer at Hawkins.

"Teasing that antiquity!" Hawkins growled in my ear. "Say, isn't that enough to—"

"Don't whisper, Herbert—it isn't polite," continued Mrs. Hawkins, the playfulness of her manner somewhat belied by the glitter in her eye. "Let us all into the secret."

"Oh, there's no secret," said the inventor, shortly.

"No dance, either," pouted the girl from Jersey, who was an intimate of the family.

It was the signal for the light fantastic business to begin. Hawkins is notoriously out of sympathy with dancing. He took my arm and guided me stealthily from the drawing-room.

"Pshaw!" remarked the inventor when we had settled ourselves upstairs with a couple of cigars. "Say, Griggs, do you still wonder at crime?"

"Meaning?"

"Meaning dear Papa Blodgett," snapped Hawkins. "Honestly, do you believe it would be really wicked to lure that old hump puss-cat down cellar and sort of lose him through the furnace-door?"

"Don't talk nonsense, Hawkins," I laughed.

"It isn't nonsense. It's the way I feel. But I'll get square on that spiteful tongue of his some day—and when

I do! There isn't anything sweeter waiting for me in Heaven than to feel myself emptying a pan of dishwasher on that old reprobate from one of the upper windows."

"Why, Griggs, sometimes in the night I dream I have him on the floor, that I'm just getting even for some of the things he's said to me and about me, and I wake up in a dripping perspiration and—"

"Stop, Hawkins!" I guffawed.

"Strikes you funny, too, does it?" the inventor cried angrily. "I suppose you think it's all right for him to talk as he does? Criticize my decorations, tell me they'll all burn up some day, and all that?"

"Well, but they might."

"They might not!" shouted Hawkins in a fury. "You don't know any more about it than he does. You couldn't burn up this house if you soaked every carpet in it with oil!"

"Why not?"

"Aha! Why not? That's just the point. Why not, to be sure? Because it's all prepared for ahead of time."

"Private wire to the engine-house?" I queried.

"Private wire to Halifax! There's no private wire about it. See here, Griggs, do you suppose that poor little brain of yours could comprehend a truly great idea?"

"It could try," I said, meekly.

"Then listen. You remember those dots on the frieze all through the house? You do? All right. Just close your eyes and conceive a little metal tube running back into the wall. Imagine the little tube opening into a large supply pipe in the wall."

"Is that clear?" Then conceive that the supply pipe in each room connects

a wooden affair, lined with lead. Over the top, and some two feet above the tank proper, the heavy cover was suspended by a weird system of pulleys and electric wires. To the under side of the cover was fastened a big glass sphere filled with white stuff.

It was a remarkable contrivance. "There—that's simple, isn't it?" said Hawkins, with a happy smile. "It may be if you understand it."

"Why, just look here. See that big glass ball? That's full of marble dust—carbonate of lime, you know. The tank is filled with weak sulphuric acid. When the ball drops into the acid—what happens?"

"You have a nasty job fishing it out again."

"Not at all. It smashes into flinders, the marble dust combines with the sulphuric acid, and forms a neutral liquid, bubbling with carbonic acid. Even you, Griggs, must know that carbonic acid gas will put out any fire, without damaging anything. There you are."

"I see. You smell fire, rush up here and knock that ball into the tank, and the house is flooded through the dots in your frieze. Remarkable!"

"Oh, I don't even have to come up here," smiled Hawkins. "See that?"

"That" was a little strand of platinum wire in a niche in the wall.

"That's just a test fuse, so that I can see that she's all in working order," pursued the inventor, leaning his cigar against it. "There's half a dozen of them in every room in the house. As soon as the heat touches them, they melt and set off my electric release—and down drops the cover of the tank—ball and all. The ball breaks, the valve at the bottom opens

"I'm sure I don't know."

"But I had it up-stairs. We were both smoking."

"So you did," I said. "The last I saw of it you leaned it against that fuse thing—"

"Great Scott! That's what I did!" gasped the inventor, turning white.

"Well, what of it?"

"Why, suppose the infernal thing has burned down to the fuse!" cried Hawkins, hoarsely. "Suppose it melts through the wire and sends down that top!"

"Will it start the stuff running?"

"Start it! Of course it'll start it. Gee whizz! I'm going up there now, Griggs!"

Hawkins made for the stairs. I smiled after him, for he seemed rather worked up.

I turned back to the dancers. It was a pretty scene. To the rhythm of a particularly seductive waltz, the guests were gliding about the floor. I noted the gay colors of the ladies' gowns, the flowers, the sparkling diamonds.

And then—then I noted the frieze! My eyes seemed instinctively to travel to that stretch of ugliness—they fastened upon the dots with a kind of fascination. And none too soon.

From one of the dots spurted forth what looked like a tiny stream of water. Another followed and another and yet another. The whole multitude of dots were raining liquid upon the dancers from all sides of the room!

The streams came from north, east, south and west. They came from the hallway behind me—a hundred of them seemed to converge upon my devoted back. I was fairly soaked through in a second.

The panic can hardly be fancied. Men and women shrieked together in the utter amazement of the thing. They laughed aloud, some of them. Others cried out in terror.

They leaped and sprang back and forth, to this side and that, in the vain endeavor to dodge the innumerable streams. Some slipped and almost fell, carrying down others with them. And all were doused.

Then, as suddenly as it had started, the flood ceased.

"Well, God bless my soul!" ejaculated Mr. Blodgett, putting up a hand to wring his collar. "What in Heaven's name happened?"

"Great Caesar's ghost!" said Hawkins' voice behind me.

He had returned from his trip to the top floor extension.

"It's all right," he called with cheery indifference to the contrary sentiments of two dozen people. "There's no danger. It won't hurt you."

"But it does. It bites!" cried the girl from Jersey. "What is it? Where did it come from?"

"Yes, it does bite! It smarts awfully! By Jove! The stuff's eating me! What is it, Hawkins? Oh, Mr. Hawkins, wherever did it come from? Why, it ran out of those dots—I saw it! What is it?" echoed from different parts of the room.

"It's only my sprinkler—my fire-extinguisher," Hawkins explained. "It went off by accident, you see. There's nothing in it to hurt you. It's



The Streams Came from North, East, South and West.

with a supply in the rear of the house, and that the big pipe terminates—rather begins—in a big tank on the top floor?"

"But what on earth is it all?"

"It's the Hawkins Chemico-Sprinkler System," announced the inventor.

"For the Lord's sake!" I gasped.

"Yes, sir! It's something like the sprinkling system you see in factories, but all concealed—perfectly adapted to private house purposes. Every one of those dots is simply a little hole in the wall through which, in case of fire, will flow quart after quart of my chemical fire-extinguisher? How's that?"

"Er—is the tank full?" I asked, gliding hurriedly away from the wall.

"Of course it is. Oh, sit where you were, Griggs, don't drag in that asinine clownishness of yours. Or, better still, come up with me and see the business end of the thing—the tank and all that."

"The stuff isn't inflammable, is it? We're smoking, you know."

"An inflammable fire-extinguishing liquid!" cried Hawkins. "Why, can't you understand that—bah!"

He laid a course to the upper regions and I followed.

"Out here in the extension," he explained, when we reached the top floor.

"There!"

We stood in a bare room, whose emptiness was accentuated by the cold, electric light.

Furnishings it had none, save for the big tank in the center. This was

automatically—and down goes the tank, full of extinguisher."

"Well, I must say it looks practical."

"It is!" asserted Hawkins. "Some night—if the night ever comes—when you see a roaring blaze in one of these rooms subdued in ten seconds by the gentle drizzle that comes out of that frieze, you will—"

"Mr. Hawkins, sir," interrupted Hawkins' butler at the door.

"Well, William?"

"Mrs. Hawkins, sir, she says as how your presence is desired down-stairs."

"Oh, all right," said the inventor, wearily. "I'll be down directly."

"No rest for the wicked," he commented to me. "Come on, Griggs, we'll have to dance."

The festivity was in full swing when we descended.

Mrs. Hawkins came over to us and remarked in low tones to her spouse:

"Now just try to make yourself agreeable, Herbert. It's not nice for you to steal away and smoke."

"I'm not smoking."

"Mr. Griggs is."

"So I am," I said, suddenly realizing the fact. "William, will you dispense of this, please?"

"Now go right in, both of you," Mrs. Hawkins began. "Then she was called away."

"Griggs!" muttered Hawkins, thoughtfully tapping his forehead.

"Yes?"

"What—what the deuce did I do with my cigar?"

exilement we had entirely forgotten them, and Morgan offered to go back after them. I guess he was glad enough to get away from those pesky little bees. By the time he got back I had killed all the bees, and he hastily filled our pails and hurried off to camp. The old man came to see the colonel next day, but we had covered our tracks well, and he found nothing suspicious about camp. As soon as he went we boys took the colonel some of the best honey."

perfectly neutral. It can't bite—that's imagination."

"But it does!" cried Mrs. Gordon. "It stings like acid. It actually seems to be eating my skin!"

"Bite! I should say it did!" growled Mr. Blodgett. "It's chewing my hands off—I believe it's carbolic acid. I do—I'll swear I do. No smell—but it's been deodorized. That's it—carbolic acid!"

"Carbolic fiddlesticks!" said Hawkins.

Then a puzzled expression came into his eyes. He raised one of his wet hands and tasted it—and spat violently.

"Say! Hold on! Wait a minute!" he cried.

Hawkins darted off up-stairs. I could hear him bounding along, two steps at a time, until he reached the top.

Silence ensued for a few seconds, save for an exclamation here and there, as one or another of the guests discovered that his or her neck or ear or arm was smarting.

Then the servants piled up from below. They, too, were wet and frightened. They, too, had discovered that the liquid emitted by the Hawkins Chemico-Sprinkler System bit into the human epidermis like fire.

"That is it! That is it!" the cook was shrieking, when hurrying footsteps turned my attention once more to the stairs.

Hawkins was coming down at a gallop. In his arms he carried a bag, which dribbled white powder over the beautiful carpet.

"Say," he shouted to me. "That ball didn't bust!"

"It didn't," I cried.

"No! There's no marble dust in the stuff!" said the inventor, landing on the floor with a final jump and tearing into the parlor. "It's pure, diluted sulphuric acid!"

"Acid!" shrieked a dozen ladies.

"Yes!" groaned Hawkins, depositing his keg on the floor. "But we'll get the best of it. William, bring up a wash-tub full of water! Mary, go get all the washrags in the house! Quick!"

The homely household articles arrived within a minute or two.

"Now," continued Hawkins, dumping half the keg into the tub. "That's baking soda. It'll neutralize the acid. Here, everybody. Dip a rag in here and wash off the acid."

"Oh, hang propriety and decency and conventionality and all the rest of it!" he vociferated as some of the ladies, quite wretchedly hung back. "Get at the acid before it gets at you! Don't you—can't you understand? It'll burn into your skin in a little while! Come on!"

There was no hesitation after that. Men and women alike made frantically for the tub, dipped cloths in the liquid, and laved industriously hands and arms and cheeks that were already sore and burning.

Picture the scene: A dozen women in evening dress, a dozen men in swallow-tails, clustered around a wash-tub there in Hawkins' parlor, working for dear life with the soaking cloths.

Ludicrous, impossible, it was just the sort of thing that could happen under Hawkins' roof and nowhere else—barring perhaps a retreat for the insane.

Later the excitement subsided. The ladies, disheveled as to hair, carrying costumes whose glory had departed forever, retired to the chambers above for such further repairs as might be possible. The men, too, under William's guidance, went to draw upon Hawkins' wardrobe for clothes in which to return home.

The inventor, Mr. Blodgett, and myself were left together in the drawing-room.

"Well, it's a good thing that was diluted acid instead of strong, isn't it, Griggs?" remarked Hawkins. "Originally I had intended using the strong acid, you know, for the reason—"

"Aaaaah!" cried Mr. Blodgett. "So that was more of your imbecile inventing, was it? Fire-extinguisher! Bah! I thought nobody but you could have conceived the idea like that! What under the sun did you let off your infernal contrivance for?"

"Oh, I just did it to spite you, papa," said Hawkins, with weary sarcasm.

"By George, sir, I believe you did!" snapped the old gentleman. "It's like you! Look at my coat, sir! Look at—"

I was edging away when Mrs. Hawkins entered. She was clad in somber black now, and her cheeks flamed scarlet with mortification.

"Well!" she exclaimed.

"Well, my dear," said Hawkins, brazing himself.

"A pretty mess you've made of our house-warming, haven't you? You and your idiotic fire-extinguisher!"

"Macam, my Chemico-Sprinkler system is one—"

"And not only the evening spoiled, and half our friends so enraged at you that they'll never enter the house again, but do you know what you'll have to pay for? Miss Mather's dress alone, I happen to know, cost \$200! And Mrs. Gordon's gown came from Paris last week—\$450! And I was with Nellie Ridgeway the day she bought that white satin dress she had on, it cost—"

"Glad of it!" interposed Blodgett, with a fenshish chuckle. "Serves him jolly well right! If you'd listened to me 15 years ago, Edith, when I told you not to marry that fool—"

"Griggs! W-w-w-where are you going?" Hawkins called, weakly.

"Home!" I said, decidedly, making for the hall. "I think my wife's ready. And I'm afraid my hair's loosening up, too, where your fire-extinguisher wet it. Good night."

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GIRL KEEPS VOW TO IGNORE MEN.

HAS NOT SPOKEN TO ONE FOR TWENTY-FIVE YEARS.

WAS DISAPPOINTED IN LOVE

Father Ordered Her Flance from the House, and Daughter Has Not Spoken to Him or Other Man Since.

New York.—The vow taken by the beautiful Caroline Osborne 25 years ago, when a stern father forbade her marriage to her betrothed, that she would never look upon or speak to a man again, has been kept so religiously all these years that the few remaining people of the once prosperous village of Bakersville, in the Litchfield hills, near Waterbury, Conn., no longer regard her with curiosity. They have come to respect the sad consistency of the recluse, whose beauty has slowly withered under the blighting influence of her great disappointment.

They say in Bakersville that "Callic" Osborne, as she is known, will go to the grave without taking the slightest notice of the existence of the father whose opposition to her marriage seared her soul and caused her to renounce the world. He passed her life that fateful Christmas eve a quarter of a century ago, when, in terrible anger he ordered her sweetheart, Arthur Lumpkins, from his door, and told him never to seek his daughter again.

Albert Osborne, the father, is now 76 years old, and if he has ever regretted the act he has not given sign of it to his neighbors. The daughter lives with the father, but in separate apartments. When she appears on the street she is always veiled and hooded. She never looks at a man, and the times she has spoken to her girlhood women friends can be numbered.

More than 50 years ago Albert Osborne married Caroline Baker, the second daughter of Anthony Baker, then the richest man in Bakersville, and the son of Scot Baker, who about 100 years ago founded the hamlet which bears his name. Upon the death of Anthony Baker his daughter inherited most of his wealth.

To the Osbornes was born a daughter, who was christened with her mother's given name, Caroline. Three years after the baby came Mrs. Osborne died. The mother left her fortune in trust for the daughter.

Thus it was that Caroline Osborne became in later years the heiress whose hand and heart were sought by the eligible swains of the neighborhood. Early she gave promise of beauty, and as she blossomed into

womanhood the promise was fulfilled. Caroline was of a vivacious temperament; with rosy cheeks and fair hair. Some said in those days that such a blithe, care-free girl was bound to have some great trouble in her life. Caroline laughed at these. "I'm going to enjoy youth while it lasts," she had been heard to say. "There will be time for serious trouble later."

There was a change, however, when Walter Lumpkins came along. He had been used to city life, and was unlike the men of Caroline's acquaintance. He was a handsome fellow, about two years older than she, and wore clothes that looked and fitted better than those of the young men of the vil-



For Twenty-Five Years She Has Gone Heavily Veiled.

lage. In a few months' time she and Lumpkins were accepted lovers.

Finally the young people became secretly engaged. The village people say it was upon a Christmas eve that Walter Lumpkins asked Albert Osborne for the hand of his daughter. It is said that there was a scene which ended in the father ordering the young man from the house, despite the pleadings of the daughter.

"I will never speak to you or any other man again. Neither will I look at or allow any man to see my face," were the words that Bakersville people say Caroline spoke to her enraged father.

A long illness followed, and when she grew well the roses had fled from her cheeks, never to return. For many years the girl did not leave the house.

Lumpkins is now a wealthy merchant in a city not far from New York, and has a wife.

ROOSTER AS MICE CATCHER

MISSOURI MAN RAISES FOWLS WHICH ARE USEFUL.

A Brood of About Fifty Have All Become Expert at the Business.

Jefferson City, Mo.—Frank Ramsey, of this city, has made a discovery that



Ramsley's Sagacious Roosters are the Terror of Mice.

will interest chicken fanciers and arouse the envy of some writers of snake stories. It is to the effect that game chickens can be taught to catch mice, and that when one of a brood once acquires this knowledge, all the others readily take it up. Mr. Ramsey says that no mice can live around premises when game chickens have once learned to kill and devour them.

YEAR FULL OF CALAMITIES.

Disastrous Record of 1906 Not Likely to Be Broken Soon.

This year will pass into history with a black record of calamities unexcelled in length. We hope it will be many a year before the record of 1906 shall be broken. Russia and Japan have been famine stricken, but as that was at least in part the result of war it cannot wholly be charged to the account of nature. But while we were taking up collections for the famine stricken of those countries there occurred the terrible eruption of Vesuvius. The sufferers from that had been only partially relieved when the San Francisco earthquake and fire appalled the world. Then came like disasters to Valparaiso, which in proportion to the population and resources of that city and of Chili were more terrible than those in San Francisco.

A few days ago a typhoon destroyed millions of dollars' worth of shipping and water front property in Hong-

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He is the owner of a game rooster that has taught mice killing to a brood of about 50 game chickens. Where the rooster acquired this knowledge Mr. Ramsey does not know. He was first apprized of it by finding the rooster almost choked to death as the result of trying to swallow a mouse that was too large for his throat. Following this discovery he watched the chickens more closely. As the young ones grew up they acquired a taste for mice, and now they are all wonderfully expert in catching these little rodents, and hunt for them with as much show of zeal as a cat exhibits in the same pursuit. These chickens have not only rid his father's barn of mice, but they engage in hunting expeditions in the neighborhood.

Mr. Ramsey is the son of Col. George C. Ramsey, a well known politician, and a big tie and timber contractor. He resides with his father in the southern part of the city, and is a great chicken fancier. He says he will pit his old game rooster against any cat in the country in the matter of killing mice, both in number of mice killed and in quickness in catching the same.

It's Different There.

"I read somewhere the other day," said the sweet young thing, "that one of the Russian grand dukes granted to the extent of \$35,000,000 in one year."

"Yes," replied the insurance official, "over there a man doesn't have to divide up with so many people in order to get them to keep their mouths shut."—Chicago Record-Herald.

Bagged an Angel.

It was night time, and a man was passing Crayford Parish churchyard with his gun over his shoulder, when he saw what he took for a ghost. He leveled his piece, and fired, but his aim was wild. He had failed to wing his quarry. Investigation showed that the ghost was a sculptured angel on a tomb, and he had shot off one of its toes.

He Was Only Half Shot.

When Harry Smith was in the employ of the R. H. White company, says a writer in the Boston Herald, he was well known for his dry wit, and when he went on the police force in Charlestown he was missed by his fellow-workers.

On the 17th of June he had occasion to arrest a man who was pretty well under the weather. As they were on their way to the station house some one threw a torpedo which landed squarely on the man's straw hat, and he dropped to his knees, crying, "I'm shot! I'm shot!"

"Come on," said Smith, cheerfully, "you're only half-shot." And they went on their way to the station.

U. S. SOLDIERS ON A BEE HUNT

C. Childs, company I, Twenty-seventh Massachusetts, tells the following amusing incident of his war experiences in the National Tribune: "One hot day at Newbern, N. C., in 1863, when our regiment was doing picket duty at Deep Gully, about eight miles up the railroad from Newbern, two of my comrades came up and proposed that we go and get some honey. We took two pails and left

camp for a plantation about one mile out. We arrived safely and found ten swarms of bees, but as luck would have it the owner of the insects, his wife, daughter and a bloodhound were watching them. Though we tried, we could make no headway with the vigilant watchers, and finally resolved to move on and try our luck at another plantation where I knew there were two swarms of bees. The hives

were located on either side of the door of the house, a small one-story building containing two rooms. We decided that one of the boys should engage the old man in conversation and keep him to the rear. I was to stop up the holes in the hives and keep a lookout for the lady of the house, in case she tried to interfere with our operations, and the third man, Morgan, was to take the bees

exilement we had entirely forgotten them, and Morgan offered to go back after them. I guess he was glad enough to get away from those pesky little bees. By the time he got back I had killed all the bees, and he hastily filled our pails and hurried off to camp. The old man came to see the colonel next day, but we had covered our tracks well, and he found nothing suspicious about camp. As soon as he went we boys took the colonel some of the best honey."