

When the Votes Tied

By CLAUDE PAURARES

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It was an off year in politics—that is, it was a bad year for the politicians. The electors had taken the bit in their teeth and run away, and the cut and dried nominees had failed to become candidates. It was because of this that Abe Hewson had been elected to the legislature from one of the mountain districts. When his friends and neighbors had talked of nominating him he had replied:

"Shoo! Why, I hain't got no eddecashun!"

"Don't you reckon you need any to be an honest man?"

"But I can't make no speech."

"The less gab the better. Been too much talk already."

"But them eddecated critters will git me all tangled up."

"Nobody can't tangle up a square man."

Abe Hewson was nominated and elected. He didn't have to pay out a shilling for campaign expenses, and he didn't make any promises. They knew him throughout his district as an honest man. They said of him as they said of a January coonskin—that was "prime."

His wife was not puffed up with pride over his nomination. She had little to say during the campaign. It was only when he came home and told her that he was elected that she motioned him to sit down and then said:

"Abe Hewson, nobody could dun say that you wasn't an honest man when I married you."

"I was tryin' to walk straight, Tilda."

"Fur ten years you was buyin' and sellin' mews. Abe, did you ever lie and cheat in that business?"

"Drat me, but I was so squar' that I couldn't make a livin' at it."

"For six or seven years you have been buyin' coon and skunk and woodchuck skins. Have you been a liar and a cheat?"

"No, Tilda. I could have lied once and made \$3 on a b'arskin, but I s'et my teeth hard agin it."

"You kin borrow a dollar of most any man, can't you?"

"Reckon so."

"And when a man has got your word he depends on it?"

"Pears that way."

"And all this is why you've been lected. It's cause you've got a good name; it's cause you're a squar' man. Abe, we uns is pore folks. We hain't eddecated. Planers and silks and broadcloths are not for sich as us. We squatted yere twenty years ago, and we'll stay squatted till the end. I hain't makin' the least complaint over it. I don't believe I'd care to be rich and have grand things. I'm satisfied to go right along just like this, but don't fling us down, Abe—don't do that."

"What d'ye mean, Tilda?" he asked

"I hain't much of a reader, but I can make out 'nuff in our weekly paper to know that heaps o' men are willin' to part with their honesty to get ahead in the world. Don't part with yours. You are goin' whar you'll be tempted, but s'et your teeth agin it. I'm holdin' my head high and feelin' jest as good as any one on this here mountin, not becase we've got money, Abe, but becase you are a squar' man. If you should lose that name you'd lose me. I'm lovin' you as much as a wife can, but I'm speakin' mighty straight when I tell you that if so much as a whisper should come back here that you had lost your squar'ness I'd walk off and starve to death in the woods rather than live on with you."

"And I wouldn't be blazin' you, Tilda," quietly replied Abe as he went out to walk about and think.

Abe Hewson went down to the capital of the state in fear and trembling. He was marked down by certain members and lobbyists as a good thing, but they gave him time to shake himself down into his place. There were axes to grind on every hand, but it was the coal men who had the largest. They wanted a charter for a railroad to run to certain undeveloped mines. It wasn't a line to build up the country and accommodate the people, but to bring coal out to market. They wanted a grant of state lands to recoup themselves.

A powerful lobby, well supplied with money and arguments, was on hand. Those who saw through the scheme and knew that it was a steal also knew that they had their hands full to fight it.

Abe was moving along slowly and trying to look ahead for pitfalls when the matter of the railroad came up and he found himself in the thick of it. He found himself in the position of many another before his time. The state employs no lobbyists to protect herself. All the argument and sophistry and money are in the hands of those who would rob her. The opponents of the railroad scheme sat down with Abe Hewson and tried to make him under-

stand. They found him dense, but realized that he wanted to be honest. They contented themselves by telling him that it was his duty to vote against the bill. It was clear enough to Abe that day, but not so clear the next. The lobby had got after him.

Your congressional or legislative lobbyist is a smart man. He is a student of character. He is a diplomat. He is sleek and slick. In this case when it became apparent that the vote would be close the Hon. Abraham Hewson was given especial attention. Cigars and champagne met him at every turn. Men were solicitous about his health. He came to know that shawls and dress patterns and jewelry were being sent to his mountain home. Tailors were ready to measure him for new suits without cost to himself, and hints were thrown out that after the adjournment he would be wanted to fill an important position down in the lowlands.

All this was very soothing and seductive to Abe. He had always been used to plain speech. A spade was either a spade or not a spade. The sophistry of the lobbyists tangled him up. He was made to see that under certain circumstances a long handled shovel became a short handled spade. He was a man without a grain of natural vanity, but when gentlemen of wealth and education asked him to sit down and drink and smoke with them and deferred to his opinions it was only natural that he should feel puffed up.

The day came when a poll of the house showed that the vote on the railroad bill would be a tie. Abe Hewson could not be counted for certain on either side. Both sides claimed him, but he had made no direct promise. The casting vote would be his. Some of his mountain constituents had come down, but between the lobbyists for and the members against the bill they had soon been reduced to a state of uncertainty. For the first time in the history of the legislature an ignorant but honest "coonskin" member held the balance of power with the most important bill of two decades in the balance.

Queerly enough, the lobbyists had not resorted to direct bribery in Abe's case. They might argue and cajole and throw hints of rewards, but they felt afraid to go further. Both sides felt that he was trying to figure things out for himself and then cast his vote as conscience dictated.

The day finally came when the bill was to be put on its final passage. That it would be a tie vote every one was assured. Abe Hewson was in his seat, pale, nervous and hesitating between two opinions. He was no nearer a decision in his own mind than a week before. Some preliminary business was being transacted when a messenger called him out. Just outside the doors he found his wife. She had on her poke bonnet and heavy shoes and calico dress and had been the sport of a crowd for the last ten minutes. It was thirty-six miles over the rough mountain road to the log cabin, and she had walked all night. She had never been in the city before, never seen such crowds, never beheld such buildings, never looked so many men in the face.

"Gawd, Tilda, but you yere!" exclaimed Abe as he laid a hand on her shoulder.

"Yes, Abe."

"But what for? What dun brung ye?"

"That railroad bill, Abe. I've been readin' of it right along, and I've dun been prayin'."

"And—and—"

"Prayin' to Gawd, Abe—prayin' that he might dun gimme light to see my way clear and make you see yours. The light come yesterday. Gawd he dun wants you to vote agin that railroad and still be an honest man. I've walked all night to get here and tell you. I was skeered by the darkness, and I'm skeered by the people. They are laughin' at me now. I'd never have come, Abe—I'd never have come in this livin' world if Gawd hadn't dun sent me."

Half an hour later the bill was put on its passage, and one of the messages going over the wires to people interested read:

"Railroad bill knocked into a cocked hat. Abe Hewson's wife did it."

The Irish Fairies.

Fairies still play a prominent part in the life and belief of the Irish people. It is lucky to spill milk, a servant assured her mistress when she once dropped a jugful. "Them little people will be pleased with th' sup ye're lavin' them," she added. It was the same servant, says a writer in the Grand Magazine, who said that the good folk were very dainty in their habits and would not touch anything that was soiled or dirty.

"Let me tell ye," she continued. "Me own little nephew in the County Tipperary, a lovely young b'y of three weeks, was pinin' away, an' th' poor mother was distracted to know what was allin' him, till she called in a woman who had th' name o' bein' wise, an' she told me sister th' fairies was takin' th' child."

"An' what'll I do?" asked me sister.

"C'mear him wid dirt," said th' wom-

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an, for whatever's anyway dirty th' fairies 'll lave after them."
"Me sister done that, an' th' young child recovered, for when they seen th' dirt th' fairies let him be."

When Auntie Was Silenced.

Auntie was showing off her little nephew, aged two, to an admirer who was calling upon her for the second time. He was a very bright youngster and during a pause in the performances specially requested by auntie he suddenly remembered the way she had been teasing him before the caller arrived and decided to turn the tables on her, so he pointed a chubby finger at the door and said, "My rug!"

Auntie at once caught the spirit of the thing and cried emphatically, "No, my rug!"

"My dress," said her little nephew, pointing to auntie's gown.

"No, my dress," replied auntie, delighted to have an opportunity to show how cute he was.

Then the little boy sidled over to the caller and, pointing at him, cried, "My man!"

Silence on the part of auntie.—Pittsburgh.

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England's Youngest Bride.

The youngest bride who was ever led to the altar in England, so far as we can discover, was little Catherine Apsley, who had only seen four summers when she became the wife of the first Earl Bathurst, who was exactly double her age. The tiny ring worn by Catherine on this occasion, over two centuries ago, is still preserved. Lord Bathurst survived to see the eighty-third anniversary of his wedding day, while his lady was a wife for seventy-six years.—London Chronicle.