

Between Two Fires

By ANTHONY HOPE

"A wise man will make more opportunities than he finds." —Francis Bacon.

CHAPTER XX.—(Continued.)

We had no time to waste in abusing the Colonel; the question was how to outwit him. I unfolded my plan to the Signorina, not at all disguising from her the difficulties, and even dangers, attending upon it. Whatever may have been her mind before and after, she was at this moment either so overcome with her fear of the Colonel, or so carried away by her feeling for me, that she made nothing of difficulties and laughed at dangers, pointing out that though failure would be ignominious, it could not substantially aggravate our present position.

"Are you going to take any of the money away with you?" she asked.

"No," said I. "I don't think so. It would considerably increase the risk if I were seen hanging about the bank; you know he's got spies all over the place. Besides, what good would it do? I couldn't stick to it, and I'm not inclined to run any more risks merely to save the bank's pocket. The bank hasn't treated me so well as all that. I propose to rely on your bounty till I've time to turn round. Now, shall I come for you?" I asked her when we had arranged the other details.

"I think not," she said. "I believe the Colonel has one of my servants in his pay. I can slip out by myself, but I couldn't manage so well if you were with me. The sight of you would excite curiosity. I will meet you at the bottom of Liberty street."

"At two o'clock in the morning exactly, please. Don't come through the Piazza and Liberty street. Come round by the drive." (This was a sort of boulevard encircling the town, where the aristocracy was wont to ride and drive.) "Things ought to be pretty busy about the bank by then, and no one will notice you. You have a revolver?"

"Yes."

"All right. Don't hurt anyone if you can help it; but if you do, don't leave him to linger in agony. Now I'm off," I continued. "I suppose I'd better not come and see you again?"

"I'm afraid you mustn't, Jack. You've been here two hours already."

"I shall be in my rooms in the afternoon. If anything goes wrong, send your carriage down the street and have it stopped at the grocer's. I shall take that for a sign."

The Signorina agreed, and we parted tenderly. My last words were:

"You'll send that message to Whittingham at once?"

"This moment," she said, as she waved me a kiss from the door of the room.

CHAPTER XXI.

I was evidently in for another day as unpleasantly exciting as the one I had spent before the revolution, and I reflected sadly that if a man once goes in for things of that kind, it's none so easy to pull up. Luckily, however, I had several things to occupy me, and was not left to fret the day away in idleness. First I turned my steps to the harbor. As I went I examined my pockets and found a sum total of nine hundred and fifty dollars. This was my all, for of late I had deemed it wise to carry my fortune on my person.

The future must take care of itself. So I thought to myself as I went along with a light heart, my triumph in love easily outweighing all the troubles and dangers that beset me. Only land me safe out of Arestaland with the Signorina by my side, and I asked nothing more of fortune! Let the dead bury their dead, and the bank look after its dollars!

Thus musing, I came to the boat house where my launch lay. She was a tidy little boat, and had the advantage of being workable by one man without any difficulty. All I had to arrange was how to embark on her unperceived. I summoned the boatman in charge and questioned him about the probable state of the weather. He confidently assured me it would be fine but dark.

"Very well," said I. "I shall go fishing; start overnight and have a shy at them at sunrise."

The man was rather astonished at my unwonted energy, but of course made no objection.

"What time do you start, sir?" he asked.

"I want her ready by two," said I. "Leave her at the end of your jetty, ready for me. She'll be all safe there, won't she?"

"Oh, yes, sir. Nobody'll be about, except the sentries, and they won't touch her."

I privately hoped that not even the sentries would be about, but I didn't say so. "Of course, sir. I shall lock the gate. You've got your key?"

"Yes, all right, and here you are—and much obliged for your trouble."

Highly astonished and grateful at receiving a large tip for no obvious reason (rather a mistake on my part), the man was profuse in promising to make every arrangement for my comfort. Even when I asked for a few cashions, he disembarked his scorn and agreed to put them in. "And mind you don't sit up," I said as I left him.

"I'm not likely to sit up if I'm not obliged," he answered. "Hope you'll have good sport, sir."

whether I shall be obeyed or get a bullet through my head."

"Pray be calm," said I. "You didn't let me finish!"

"Let you finish!" he cried. "You seem to think jabber does everything. The end of it all is, that either you give me the money, or I take it—and if you interfere, look out!"

"That is just what I was going to propose, if you hadn't interrupted me," I said quietly, but with inward exultation, for I saw he was just in the state of mind to walk eagerly into the trap I was preparing for him.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

I explained to him that it was impossible for me to give up the money. My reputation was at stake; it was my duty to die in defense of that money—a duty which, I hastened to add, I entertained no intention of performing.

"But," I went on, "although I am bound not to surrender the money, I am not bound to anticipate a forcible seizure of it. In times of disturbance parties of ruffians often turn to plunder. Not even the most rigorous precautions can guard against it. Now it would be very possible that even to-night a band of such marauders might make an attack on the bank, and carry off all the money in the safe."

"Oh!" said the Colonel, "that's the game, is it?"

"That," I replied, "is the game; and a very neat game, too, if you play it properly."

"And what will they say in Europe, when they hear the Provisional government is looting private property?"

"My dear Colonel, you force me to much explanation. You will, of course, not appear in the matter."

"I should like to be there," he remarked. "If I weren't, the men mightn't catch the exact drift of the thing."

"You will be there, of course, but inognito. Look here, Colonel, it's as plain as two peas. Give out that you're going to reconnoiter the coast and keep an eye on the Signorina. Draw off your companies from the Piazza on that pretense. Then take fifty or twenty men you can trust—not more, for it's no use asking more than you can help, and resistance is out of the question. About two, when everything is quiet, surround the bank. Jones will open when you knock. Don't hurt him, but take him outside and keep him quiet. Go in and take the money. Here's the key to the safe. Then, if you like, set fire to the place."

"Bravo, my boy!" said the Colonel. "There's stuff in you after all. And what are you going to get out of it? I suppose that's coming next?"

As the reader knows, I wasn't going to get anything out of it, except myself and the Signorina. But it wouldn't do to tell the Colonel that; he would not believe in disinterested conduct. So I bargained with him for thirty thousand dollars, which he promised so readily that I strongly doubted whether he ever meant to pay it.

"Do you think there's any danger of Whittingham making an attack while we're engaged on the job?"

The Colonel was, in common parlance, getting rather warmer than I liked. It was necessary to mislead him.

"I don't think so," I replied. "He can't possibly have organized much of a party here yet. There's some discontent, no doubt, but not enough for him to rely on."

"There's plenty of discontent," said the Colonel.

"There won't be in a couple of hours."

"Why not?"

"Why, because you're going down to the barracks to announce a fresh installment of pay to the troops to-morrow morning—a handsome installment."

"Yes," said he thoughtfully, "that ought to keep them quiet for one night. Fact is, they don't care twopenny either for me or Whittingham; and if they think they'll get more out of me they'll stick to me."

"Of course," I assented. Indeed, it was true enough as long as the President was not on the spot; but I thought privately that the Colonel did not allow enough for his rival's personal influence and prestige, if he once got face to face with the troops.

"Yes," the Colonel went on, "I'll do that, and what's more, I'll put the people in good humor by sending down orders for a free social in the Piazza to-night."

"Delightfully old-fashioned and baronial," I remarked. "I think it's a good idea. Have a bonfire and make it complete. I don't suppose Whittingham dreams of any attempt, but it will make the riot even more plausible."

"At any rate, they'll all be too jolly to make trouble," said he.

"Well, that's about all, isn't it?" said I. "I shall be off. I've got to write to my directors and ask instructions for the investment of the money."

"You'll live to be hanged, Martin," said the Colonel, with evident admiration.

"Not by you, eh, Colonel? Whatever might have happened if I'd been obstinate! Hope I shall survive to dance at your wedding anyhow. Less than a week now!"

"Yes," said he, "next Saturday's the day."

He really looked quite the happy bridegroom as he said this, and I left him to contemplate his bliss.

"I would bet ten to one that day never comes," I thought, as I walked away. "Even if I don't will I'll back the President to be back before that."

The Colonel's greed had triumphed over his wits, and he had fallen into my snare with greater readiness than I could have hoped. The question remained, What would the President do when he got the Signorina's letter? It may conduce to a better understanding of the position if I tell what that letter was. She gave it me to read over, and after we had compiled it together, and I still have my copy. It ran as follows:

"I can hardly hope you will trust me again, but if I betrayed you, you drove me to it. I have given them your money; it is in the bank now. M. refuses to give

it up, and the C. means to take it to-night. He will have only a few men, the rest not near. He will be at the bank at two, with about twenty men. Take your own measures. All here favor you. He threatens me with violence unless I marry him at once. He watches The Songstress, but if you can leave her at anchor and land in a boat there will be no suspicion. Do not punish me more by disbelieving me."

"P. S.—M. and the C. are on bad terms, and M. will not be active against you."

Upon the whole I thought this would bring him. I doubted whether he would believe very much in it, but it looked probable. Again, he was so fond of a bold stroke, and so devoid of fear, that it was very likely he would come, and see if it were true. If, as we suspected, he already had a considerable body of adherents on shore, he could land and reconnoiter without very great danger of falling into the Colonel's hands. Finally, even if he didn't come, we hoped the letter would be enough to divert his attention from any thought of fugitive boats and runaway lovers.

To my mind it is nearly as difficult to be consistently selfish as to be absolutely unselfish. I had, at this crisis, every inducement to concentrate all my efforts on myself, but I could not get Jones out of my head. It was certainly improbable that Jones would try to resist the marauding party; but neither the Colonel nor his chosen band was likely to be scrupulous, and it was impossible not to see that Jones might get a bullet through his head; indeed, I fancied such a step would rather commend itself to the Colonel, as giving a bona fide look to the affair. Jones had often been the cause of great inconvenience to me, but I didn't wish to have his death on my conscience, so I was very glad when I happened to meet him on my way back from the Golden House, and seized the opportunity of giving him a friendly hint.

I took him and sat him down beside me on a bench in the Piazza. I was in no way disturbed by the curious glances of the three soldiers who were evidently charged to keep an eye on the bank and my dealings with it.

I began by pledging Jones to absolute secrecy, and then I intimated to him, in a roundabout way, that the Colonel and I were both very apprehensive of an attack on the bank.

"The town," said I, "is in a most unsettled condition, and many dangerous characters are about. Under these circumstances I have felt compelled to leave the defense of our property in the hands of the government. I have formally intimated to the authorities that we shall hold them responsible for any loss occasioned to us by public disorder. The Colonel, in the name of the government, has accepted that responsibility. I therefore desire to tell you, Mr. Jones, that in the lamentable event of any attack on the bank it will not be expected of you to expose your life by resistance. Such a sacrifice would be both uncalled for and useless; and I must instruct you that the government insists that their measures shall not be put in danger of frustration by any rash conduct on our part. I am unable to be at the bank this evening; but in the event of any trouble you will oblige me by not attempting to meet force by force. You will yield, and we shall rely on our remedy against the government in case of loss."

These instructions so fully agreed with the natural bent of Jones' mind that he readily acquiesced in them and expressed high appreciation of my foresight.

"Take care of yourself and Mrs. Jones, my dear fellow," I concluded; "that is all you have to do, and I shall be satisfied."

I parted from him affectionately, wondering if my path in life would ever cross the honest, stupid old fellow's again, and heartily hoping that his fortune would soon take him out of the rogue's nest in which he had been dwelling.

(To be continued.)

PRESERVING THE FORESTS.

Conserving Streams by Means of the Forest Reserves.

The destruction of our forests has been going on at so great a rate as to alarm the public mind and prepare the people to accept some remedy, says Outing.

The interests of irrigation and navigation have called attention to the necessity of preserving the sources of our water course by retaining or restoring the forests from which they flow.

Fortunately many millions of acres of wooded lands are still held by the national government, and about \$5,000,000 acres of these lands have been set apart in eighty-three permanent national forest reserves. The primary purpose of these reservations is to conserve the streams and provide means of irrigation and also, in some degree, to influence the rainfall. They are well scattered in the far west and are generally upon land which is of little value for agricultural uses.

They are reserved for the use of man and not reserved from his use. The ripened trees will be cut as they may be needed. There has been much local opposition to many of these reservations, but time and observation have greatly changed the local sentiment. The experimental stage has passed and they can therefore be accepted as an established fact, and the question naturally arises as to what extent they may be utilized for the preservation of the remains of our birds, fish and game and be used as sources of propagation and supply. At least a portion of these lands should be so used. The writer of this article has for many years endeavored to secure legislation to this end. Wyoming has shown her sympathy with the movement by declaring a permanent closed season in that part of the forest reserve adjacent to the Yellowstone National park.

Asked and Answered.

"Oh, what do you call those things you hang clothes on?" said Dumley, who was trying to think of "clothes-tree."

"What things?" asked Jiggins.

"Why, they have arms that stick out like this and—"

"Oh, dudes!"—Philadelphia Ledger.

FARMS AND FARMERS



Destroying Weeds.

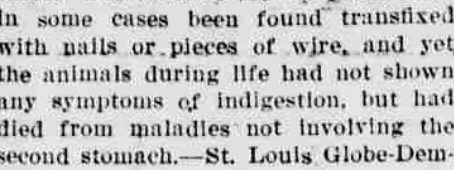
There are two ways of completely destroying weeds. One is to let them have the opportunity to grow, and, by frequently cultivating them, turn them under as fast as they make their appearance; the other being to crowd them out by growing some crop that will not give the weeds a chance to grow. No system of cultivation will kill all the weeds if a crop is desired—such as corn—for the grass and weeds will only be kept down so long as cultivation lasts, especially as corn is usually "laid by" at a time when the weeds are producing seeds, thus establishing themselves for the succeeding year. As a test of what supposed clean culture of corn may be, simply cut down a row of stalks and a row of weeds will remain. As a single weed produces thousands of seed, the labor of destroying the weeds must be repeated next season.

Grind the Hay and Stover.

Alfalfa meal is a standard commodity on the feed market, yet I see but little in print as to the results of feeding it, but the few dairymen, says L. W. Lighty in National Stockman, I heard speaking about the experience they had with it seemed very favorable. A prominent Pennsylvania dairyman a few days ago told me he is about putting in grinding machinery that will handle the timothy and mixed hay and reduce them to a fine ground, crushed condition. Who ever tried this practically? Is there any available information in the experiment station reports? I would not like to commit myself, but it seems to me theoretically that we could do the rougher part of the chewing cheaper with gasoline or alcohol power than with cow power. It has been amply demonstrated that feeding the cow easily digested feed saves feed.

Handy Bag Holder.

To construct this bag holder make a funnel with four boards 10 inches long, 12 inches wide at top; 7 inches wide at bottom; take four laths 1 and



2 inches, 3 1/2 feet long, and fasten on funnel for feet, with sufficient slant to stand steadily; drive four small nails in funnel, 3 inches from bottom, at corners, to hook bag on. For filling corn in ear in phosphate sacks, the funnel should be made larger, so corn could be readily shoveled in with grain shovel.—Farm Progress.

Big Demand for Pork.

The demand for pork this year has astonished even the most sanguine friends of the hog. Both fresh and cured meats have been taken in large volume right along at prices which were so high that they were expected to check consumption. There are three reasons why this condition has existed and still exists. First is the prosperity of the South, a large consumer of cured meats. The Southern trade was never larger than it is to-day. Next is the growing foreign trade, which like our own, seems to proceed regardless of prices. And, finally, the people of this country have learned to eat bacon. Its consumption is unprecedented in our history, and is still growing. There has been no shortage in numbers of hogs, but a vastly increased demand. This is why prophecies based on hog supplies have failed and are likely to fail in the future.—National Stockman.

Handling the Young Horse.

It is so easy to ruin a young horse or let him lose his life that it is a wonder people are not more careful. Country boys often think it "smart" to hitch up a green colt and drive to town the first trip. It looks dashing and brave, but it is really senseless. A frightened young animal threw itself on a paved street of a town the first time it was taken there and broke its leg. It was bewildered by the noise and crowds and had never felt the touch of harness before. Don't go off on Sunday afternoon knowing that your sons and all the boys in the neighborhood will hitch up the colt. A noisy, yelling crowd is enough to scare a steady horse, and a young one will try to jump out of its skin when surrounded by a lot of youngsters eager for fun. It may be fun for them, but the future usefulness of the animal is at stake.—Richardson, in National Stockman.

Cows in Winter.

If cows begin to fall off in milk during the winter, after being given an abundance of grain and hay, it is an indication that the quarters are cold or that they require some kind of succulent food. Where ensilage is used, it serves as green food, but on farms where no silo is filled the food may be varied by allowing sliced carrots or turnips, though the best results can be secured by first cooking the turnips and thickening the mess with bran. When fed warm the cow will relish the mess highly, and the change of food will improve the appetite.

Oats for Cattle.

Ten for ton, many farmers are finding out that unthreshed oats, cut when the grain is in the rather soft dough (milky) state, and cut fine with a stalk cutter, are better than meadow hay—cut equally fine—to feed cattle, especially milch cows. As a rule, good farmers raise far more weight of oats to the acre than of hay.

LEGAL INFORMATION.

Requiring milk dealers to register with the health commissioner, and pay a registration fee, is held, in St. Louis vs. Grafman Dairy Co. (Mo.), 1 L. R. A. (N. S.) 936, to be a valid police regulation.

Prohibiting the sale of milk containing any preservative is held, in St. Louis vs. Schuler (Mo.), 1 L. R. A. (N. S.) 928, to be within the police power, although there may be preservatives which are not deleterious to health.

A gift of his accumulated property by a man to his children at a time when he is earning a good income is held, in James vs. Allen (N. J. Err. & App.), 2 L. R. A. (N. S.) 285, not voidable at his option, although the act may be improvident.

Owners of property abutting on a highway adjacent to a railway track are held in Hyde vs. Fall River (Mass.), 2 L. R. A. (N. S.) 269, not to sustain any special damages by discontinuance of the street within the railroad right of way and the erection of a bridge to carry the street over the tracks so that in order to cross the tracks they are obliged to go away from them until they reach the foot of the bridge approach.

An unattested holographic will, executed in a foreign country according to its laws, by a citizen of one of the United States domiciled there, is held, in Lindsay vs. Wilson (Md.), 2 L. R. A. (N. S.) 408, to pass real property subsequently acquired in that State, under a statute providing that every will made out of the State shall be held valid, if made according to the forms required by the law of the place where the same is made, or where such person is residing at the time that it is made. A note to this case reviews all the other authorities on conflict of laws as to wills.

PENNIES BY THE MILLION.

Twenty-five Tons of Them in London Slot Gas Machines Weekly.

An English penny is so nearly 2 cents of our currency that the difference is negligible. It is given out that the South Metropolitan Gas Company, which does a large business on the south side of London, takes about 25 tons of pennies from the slot machines every week. These slot machines are used for the purpose of supplying gas to the poorer classes who are compelled to buy it in small quantities, a penny paying for about twenty-eight cubic feet. The company has perhaps 250,000 of these slot machines in operation.

It becomes an interesting question how much money is represented by 25 tons of pennies. An English penny weighs approximately 146 grains. As a pound avoirdupois contains 7,000 grains, the pennies run very near to 48 to the pound. A long ton, or 2,240 pounds, would therefore make 107,520 pennies, and 25 tons would mean 2,688,000. These would be worth \$53,760, a large sum, indeed, but hardly so large as the great weight would lead us to expect.

In a year, however, the slot machines would mean payment for four billion cubic feet of gas, which is less than one-third of the amount annually sold by the company. At the same time it shows an immense value for a small retail trade to the classes that are so poor that they buy a penny's worth of gas at a time. In this case a slot machine supplies a real want, and while the poor may pay more for gas in such small quantities, they are at least enabled to purchase it in quantities within their means.—Louisville Courier-Journal.

How to See Four Moons.

A pretty experiment can be made with a hand mirror any night when there is a full moon. Hold the mirror so that the moon's image will be seen in it and you will be surprised to see four moons instead of one. One moon will be very bright, but the other three will be in a straight line and quite dull, one dull image on one side of the bright moon and the other two on the other side. Turn the mirror around slowly, still holding its face to the moon, and the reflections will seem to revolve around a common center.

You can make the same experiment with any one of the very bright stars, such as Sirius, Venus or Jupiter, but with these there will be three images instead of four, as the number seen depends on the breadth of the object.

The explanation is simple. There are two surfaces in a mirror, one in front and the other where the quicksilver is. The brightest reflection comes from the object itself, the others are what is known as "secondary images" reflected from the front to the back of the mirror and thence to the eye. The magic mirror never fails to excite a good deal of wonder and is an interesting experiment as well.

The Best He Could Say.

Goodley—The lines in DeRlier's new comic opera are exceedingly bright and witty. He's quite a remarkable librettist.

Critick—Yes, he certainly has a remarkable memory.—Philadelphia Press.

The Difference.

Nimon—What is the difference between the love of a lover and the love of a husband?

Ninette—About 350 degrees Fahrenheit.

Drug stores in big and little towns are "different."