

Between Two Fires

By ANTHONY HOPE

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

CHAPTER XXII.

The night came on, fair and still, clear and starlit; but there was no moon and outside the immediate neighborhood of the main streets, the darkness was enough to favor our hope of escaping notice without being so intense as to embarrass our footsteps. Everything, in fact, seemed to be on our side, and I was full of buoyant confidence as I put my revolver in my pocket and, on the stroke of midnight, stole from my lodgings. I looked up toward the bank and dimly discerned three or four motionless figures, whom I took to be sentries guarding the treasure. The street itself was almost deserted, but from where I stood I could see the Piazza crowded with a throng of people, whose shouts and songs told me that the Colonel's hospitality was being fully appreciated. There was dancing going on to the strains of the military band, and every sign showed that our good citizens intended, in familiar phrase, to make a night of it.

I walked swiftly and silently down to the jetty. Yes, the boat was all right! I looked to her fires, and left her moored by one rope ready to be launched into the calm black sea in an instant. Then I strolled along by the harbor side. Here I met a couple of sentries. Innocently I entered into conversation with them, condoling on their hard fate in being kept on duty while pleasure was at the helm in the Piazza. Gently deprecating such excess of caution, I pointed out to them the stationary lights of the Smeralda, four or five miles out to sea, and with a respectful smile at the Colonel's uneasiness, left the sentry I had sworn to grow in prepared soil.

I met a couple of sentries. Innocently I entered into conversation with them, condoling on their hard fate in being kept on duty while pleasure was at the helm in the Piazza. Gently deprecating such excess of caution, I pointed out to them the stationary lights of the Smeralda, four or five miles out to sea, and with a respectful smile at the Colonel's uneasiness, left the sentry I had sworn to grow in prepared soil.

When I got back to the bottom of Liberty street, I ensconced myself in the shelter of a little group of trees which stood at one side of the roadway. Just across the road, which ran at right angles to the street, the wood began, and a quarter of an hour's walk through its shades would bring us to the jetty where the boat lay. My trees made a perfect screen, and here I stood awaiting events. For some time nothing was audible but an ever-increasing tumult of joviality from the Piazza. But after about twenty minutes I awoke to the fact that a constant drizzle of men, singly or in pairs, had begun to flow past me from the Piazza, down Liberty street, across the road behind me, and into the wood. Some were in uniform, others dressed in common clothes; one or two I recognized as members of Johnny Carr's missing band. The strong contrast between the prevailing revelry and the stealthy, cautious air of these passers-by would alone have suggested that they were bent on business; perceiving two and two together, I had not the least doubt that they were the President's adherents making their way down to the water's edge to receive their chief. So he was coming; the letter had done its work! Some fifty or more must have come and gone before the stream ceased, and I reflected, with great satisfaction, that the Colonel was likely to have his hands very full in the next hour or two.

Half an hour or so passed uneventfully; the bonfire still blazed; the songs and dancing were still in full swing. It was close upon the fateful hour of two, when, looking from my hiding place, I saw a slight figure in black coming quickly and fearfully along the road.

I recognized the Signorina at once, as I should recognize her any day among a thousand, and as she passed nearly opposite where I was, I gently called her name and showed myself for a moment. She ran to me at once.

"Is it all right?" she asked, breathlessly.

"We shall see in a moment," said I. "The attack is coming off; it will begin directly."

But the attack was not the next thing we saw. We had both retreated again to the friendly shadow whence we could see without being seen. Hardly had we settled ourselves than the Signorina whispered to me, pointing across the road to the wood:

"What's that, Jack?"

I followed the line of her finger and made out a row of figures standing motionless and still on the very edge of the wood. It was too dark to distinguish individuals; but even as we looked the silent air waited to our eager ears a low-voiced command:

"Mind, not a sound till I give the word."

"The President!" exclaimed the Signorina, in a loud whisper.

"Hush, or he'll hear," said I, "and we're done."

Clearly nothing would happen from that quarter till it was called forth by events in the opposite direction. The Signorina was strongly agitated; she clung to me closely, and I saw with alarm that the very proximity of the man she stood in such awe of was too much for her composure. When I had soothed, and I fear half-frightened, her into stillness, I again turned my eyes toward the Piazza. The fire had at last flickered out and the revels seemed on the wane. Suddenly a body of men appeared in close order, marching down the street toward the bank. We stood perhaps a hundred yards from that building, which was, in its turn, about two hundred from the Piazza. Steadily they came along; no sound reached us from the wood.

"This is getting interesting," I said. "There'll be trouble soon."

As near as I could see, the Colonel's band, for such it was no doubt, did not number more than five-and-twenty at the outside. Now they were at the bank. I could hardly see what happened, but there seemed to be a moment's pause; probably someone had knocked and they were waiting. A second later a loud shout rang through the street and I saw a group of figures crowding round the door and pushing a way into my poor bank. Then I heard a short, sharp order from behind, "Now! Charge!"

As the word was given another body of fifty or more rushed by us full tilt, and

at their head we saw the President, sword in hand, running like a young man and beckoning his men on. Up the street they swept. Involuntarily we waited a moment to watch them. Just as they came near the bank they sent up a shout:

"The President! the President! Death to traitors!"

Then there was a volley, and they closed round the building.

"Now for our turn, Christina," said I. She grasped my arm tightly, and we sped across the road and into the wood. It seemed darker than when I came through before, or perhaps my eyes were dazzled by the glare of the street lamps. But still we got along pretty well, I helping my companion with all my power.

"Can we do it?" she gasped.

"A clear quarter of an hour will do it, and they ought to take that to finish off the Colonel." For I had little doubt of the issue to that melée.

On we sped, and already we could see the twinkle of the waves through the thinning trees. Five hundred yards more, and there lay life and liberty and love!

Well, of course, I might have known. Everything had gone so smoothly up to now, that any student of the laws of chance could have foretold that fortune was only delaying the inevitable slap in the face. A plan that seemed wild and risky had proved in the result as effectual as the wisest scheme. By a natural principle of compensation, the simplest obstacle was to bring us to grief.

"There's a slip," says the proverb. Very likely! One was enough for our business. For just as we neared the edge of the wood, just as our eyes were gladdened by the full sight of the sea across the intervening patch of bare land, the Signorina gave a cry of pain and, in spite of my arm, fell heavily to the ground. In a moment I was on my knees by her side. An old root growing out of the ground! That was all! And there lay my dear girl white and still.

"What is it, sweet?" I whispered.

"My ankle," she murmured; "oh, Jack, it hurts so!" and with that she fainted.

Half an hour—thirty mortal minutes I knelt by her side ministering to her. I bound up the poor foot and I fanned her face with my handkerchief. In a few minutes she came to, but only, poor child, to sob with her bitter pain. Move she could not, and would not. Again and again she entreated me to go and leave her. At last I persuaded her to try and bear the agony of being carried in my arms the rest of the way. I raised her as gently as I could, wrung to the heart by her gallantly stifled groan, and slowly and painfully I made my way, thus burdened, to the edge of the wood. There were no sentries in sight, and with a new spasm of hope I crossed the open land and neared a little wicket gate that led to the jetty. A sharp turn just before we reached it, and as I rounded this with the Signorina lying yet in my arms, I saw a horse and a man standing by the gate. The horse was decked with foam and had been ridden furiously. The man was calm and cool. Of course he was! It was the President!

My hands were full with my burden, and before I could do anything I saw the muzzle of his revolver pointed full at me? Oh, no! At the Signorina!

"If you move a step I shoot her through the heart, Martin," he said, in the quietest voice imaginable.

The Signorina looked up as she heard his voice.

"Put me down, Jack! It's no use," she said; "I knew how it would be."

I did not put her down, but I stood there helpless, rooted to the ground.

"What's the matter with her?" he said.

"Fell and sprained her ankle," I replied.

"Come, Martin," said he, "it's no go, and you know it. A near thing; but you've just lost."

"Let me put her down, and we'll have a fair fight."

He shook his head.

"All very well for young men," he said. "At my age if a man holds trumps he keeps them."

"How long have you been here?"

"About two minutes. When I didn't see you at the bank I thought something was up, so I galloped on to her house. No one there! So I came on here. A good shot, eh?"

In the bitterness of my heart I could hardly speak. But I was not going to play either the cur or the fool, so I said:

"Your trick, sir, and therefore your lead. I must do what you tell me. Take the revolver if you like," and I nodded my head to the pocket where it lay.

"No," he said, "I trust you."

"I bar a rescue," said I.

"There will be no rescue," said he grimly. "The Colonel won't come. Whose house is that?"

It was my boatman's.

"Bring her there. Poor child, she suffers."

"Then carry her up, Martin; and you, send your wife to her."

I took her up, and laid her gently on the bed. The President followed me. Then we went downstairs again into the little parlor.

"Let us have a talk," he said. The President sat down. I was surprised at his leisurely, abstracted air. Apparently he had nothing in the world to do but sit and keep me company.

"If your excellency," said I, instinctively giving him his old title, "has business elsewhere you can leave me safely. I shall not break my word."

"I know that," I knew that," he answered. "But I'd rather stay here; I want to have a talk. You see there's no danger now. There's no one left to lead them against me."

"Then the Colonel is—?"

"Yes," he said gravely, "he is dead. I shot him."

"In the attack?"

"Not exactly; the fighting was over. A very short affair, Martin. They never had a chance; and as soon as two or three had fallen and the rest saw me, they threw up the sponge."

"And the Colonel?"

"He fought well. He killed two of my fellows; then a lot of them flung themselves on him and disarmed him."

"And you killed him in cold blood?"

The President smiled slightly.

"But for your scheme I should have come back without a blow," he continued; "but then I should have shot McGregor just the same."

"Because he led the revolt?"

"Because," said the President, "he has been a traitor from the beginning even to the end—because he tried to rob me of all I hold dear in the world. If you like," he added, with a shrug, "because he stood between me and my will. So I went up to him and told him his hour was come, and I shot him through the head. He died like a man, Martin; I will say that."

(To be continued.)

NEW GAME ON TRAINS.

About Man with Cards and Far Too Sure-Thing Bet.

A forlorn individual, with a "telescope" grip in one hand and an empty pocket book in the other, enlightened the detectives at the union station the other day concerning the latest wrinkle in confidence games, according to the Kansas City Star. The melancholy one had just been relieved of \$50 by a couple of chance acquaintances on a train.

"This is how it happened," said the traveler: "I was coming from Oklahoma, and after leaving Fort Scott sat in the smoker with a man who got on at that station. We chatted a bit and were watching a game of cribbage among some traveling men across the aisle when a man came through the car with a pack of playing cards in his hand. He stopped by the cribbage players and asked them to buy the cards. They refused, so he turned to our seat."

"Gentlemen," he said, "I'd like to sell these cards. They are of unusual good quality, and I'll sell them for the price of an ordinary deck."

"Let's see," said my seat mate, taking the pack. "I don't see anything remarkable about this. They look like ordinary 25-cent cards to me."

"All right," replied the owner of the cards in an offended tone; "if you can't distinguish the difference in the quality of cards, there's no use in my wasting time talking to you."

"He reached for the pack, and as it was handed back to him one of the cards fell to the floor, apparently unnoticed by the owner. My seat mate, however, saw the card fall and said banteringly:

"Those cards may be extra fine, but I'll bet there's not a full pack there."

"The owner of the cards glared indignantly at my seat mate.

"You say you will?" he exclaimed. "Now what will you bet on that?"

"My companion had already covered the card on the floor with his foot."

"Oh, I'll call anything you've got," he laughed.

"Without more ado the card salesman lunged out a bundle of bills and announced that he didn't like to take candy from infants, but that he would bet a hundred, even money, that the pasteboards in his hand composed a full deck of fifty-two cards, not counting the joker. This, of course, looked like Christmas expenses to us, who knew that one card of the pack lay on the floor.

"I'll let you in on half of the bet," said my seat mate generously, and, of course, I jumped at the chance.

"The money was posted, the cards were counted and the deck found to be complete. My seat mate and the card salesman left the train at the next station. Of course, I see it all now—that is, all but one thing:

"Why did it not occur to me that there was something odd in a man having \$100 who had a moment before been trying to peddle a two-bit pack of cards?"

An Uplift.

"Yer honor," protested the seely prisoner, "dis is jist a case of perlice persecution. Dey're tryin' ter keep me down, yer honor. Yea ain't goin' ter let 'em keep me down, are yer?"

"Certainly not," replied the magistrate. "I'm going to send you up for ninety days."—Philadelphia Ledger.

The Usual Way.

"Which hen is it that cackles so much louder and longer than all the rest?" asked the farmer's wife.

"It's that big speckled one over there," said the hired man. "The one that lays those measly little eggs about the size of a bantam's."—Detroit Free Press.

Wise Chaperon.

Eva—Yes, at first my chaperon insisted upon a light in the parlor. Why, Jack actually kissed her in mistake for me.

Edna—Gracious! And what did she say?

Eva—Nothing, only now she insists upon the parlor being dark every night.

The Shrewd Borrower.

"Trumble came into my office to-day and asked me for \$5."

"Of course you refused him."

"No, I let him have it immediately. He was smoking one of those rope stogies and I wanted to get him out and get the window open."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

With Apologies to Kipling.

"New York is to have a new forty-story skyscraper."

"I thought it was to be thirty-nine."

"They concluded to add a fortieth."

"Why?"

"That's another story."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

History of Thanksgiving Day



This festival is of Puritan origin, though the custom of giving thanks for favors of the field and stall has prevailed as far back as written records go; with the Greeks and even the Egyptians in their feasts to Demeter and Isis, with the Romans in their Cerealia, and with the Jews in their Feast of Tabernacles. Coming down to more modern times, we read of public thanksgivings in Germany, Holland, and in England, the recollection of whose "Harvest Home," perhaps, inspired the Puritans to inaugurate the custom.

Though pious and devout, our New England ancestors were yet rigid non-conformists, hence their rejection of Christmas as a relic of popery; yet the yearning of the heart for a religious and family festival had to be satisfied, and so they instituted Thanksgiving Day, which they appointed after the gathering in of the harvest, when the main work of the year being accomplished, families sundred night assemble in the homes of their elders and give themselves up to a short season of solemnity and mirth.

The first Thanksgiving, according to the well-credited chronicler, Edward Winslow, was held in 1621, ten months after the landing of the Pilgrims, when the crops being garnered, they felt spring up within their hearts a feeling of praise and thanksgiving. It lasted almost a week, and was participated in by King Massasoit and ninety of his braves, who were feasted and entertained for three days, the newcomers showing their guests their proficiency in arms, experience in wrestling, etc. But we may imagine that the feelings of the Pale Faces were not wholly unkindled as they departed before these grim and stolid Red Men. To show their prowess in turn, "the Indians went out and killed five deer, which they brought to the plantation and bestowed on the Governor and upon Captain Miles Standish and others," a fine contribution to the feast.

But, although thus inaugurated, the custom was not thoroughly established for some time. Days of thanksgiving were appointed in the different colonies by different Governors for various occurrences—the safe arrival of ships bringing loved relatives, provisions, etc.; for seasons of weather, rain after long droughts, and safe deliveries from perils and foes. These, of course, were at different periods, but most of them occurred in October or November, after the harvest.

On the day appointed, families being assembled, they remembered first their duty to thank "the Giver of every good and perfect gift" publicly, for His bounty during the year; and so repaired early to His house to observe public worship.

But when the family and guests all met on Thanksgiving Day around the hospitable board, there was no lack, but a superabundance, of viands and tempting pastries, game, turkeys and chickens, wholesome vegetables and inviting fruits. The good wives vied with each other in their preparation of toothsome delicacies; indeed, some of them were famed throughout the colony for their culinary skill. To be a good housewife in those days, and to look well after the welfare and comfort of her family was considered woman's vocation.

Thanksgiving Day did not become a national observance until some time after the nation's separate life was assured. There was a general thanksgiving for peace in 1784, but none of a national character until our first President, by request of Congress, recommended one, in 1789, to celebrate the adoption of the Constitution. In 1795 there was a general thanksgiving for the suppression of insurrection in several States, and in 1815, one for the termination of our second war with England.

But these were sporadic instances. Governors of the different New England States often issued proclamations for the observance of the day, until, between the church and state, it grew there into an annual festival. Twice during the Civil War, President Lincoln issued proclamations for general thanksgiving—in 1862 and 1863, because of abundant harvests and certain victories, though in the former year the war cloud was still without a show of a silver lining.

Nov. 2, 1865, a national thanksgiving for peace was held, which was more generally observed, and perhaps more heartily, than any which had preceded it. Since then the custom has become annual—the President, followed by the Governors of the different States, issuing proclamations for the last Thursday in November.—Illustrated Home Journal.

THE THANKSGIVING REWARD.

"And ye did not see whether or nay the savages caught your brother?"

The speaker was a gray-headed but well-muscled man in Puritan garb, and his words were addressed to two young men, one not much more than 15, while the other was apparently 17 or so. The three were gathered in the living room of a rude but stout log house, and the fire-light shone on a great bar dropped across the door, and a pile of muskets, pistols and swords lying on a bench near by.

"Nay," said the elder of the two, "Brother was far from us, and when the savages leaped on us I shouted with all

ness and gain admittance. I tried this, but one of your bullets struck me." The old Puritan sank on his knees. "Humbly I thank thee, O Lord," he prayed, "that thou didst not permit us to harden our hearts." And his three sons, sinking on their knees with him, looked upward humbly and said "Amen!" to what was surely the most grateful Thanksgiving prayer uttered in all New England that day.—Portland Oregonian.

TEN LITTLE PUMPKINS.

Ten little pumpkins sitting on a vine; Through the fence a cow's head came, then there were nine.

Nine little pumpkins growing near the gate; Over one a wagon rolled, then there were eight.

Eight little pumpkins growing round and even; Baby thought he'd found a ball, then there were seven.

Seven little pumpkins with the tall weeds mix; Along came the gardener's hoe, then there were six.

Six little pumpkins left to grow and thrive; On one the pony stepped, then there were five.

Five little pumpkins where ten grew before; One withered in the sun, then there were four.

Four little pumpkins, green as green can be; Johnny made a lantern, then there were three.

Three big green pumpkins; then said little Sue; "Make me a lantern, please," then there were two.

Two yellow pumpkins ripened in the sun; Aunt Mary took one home, then there was but one.

One big ripe pumpkin, left, the last of many; Grandma made Thanksgiving pies, then there wasn't any.

—Sinetta M. Lowater.

Making the Proclamation.

There is a good deal of form and ceremony about the making of the Thanksgiving proclamation. It is composed by the President himself and in most instances written out in his own hand. When this is done the document goes to the State Department, where it is carefully copied in ornamental writing that is almost like engraving on the official blue paper of that department. The next thing needed on the document is the great seal of the government. This seal is kept by the clerk of pardons and commissions, and it is very carefully guarded under lock and key. Its keeper will not produce it without a special warrant signed by the President, and an impression of the seal is quite a ceremony in itself. When the proclamation has been thus duly signed and sealed many copies are made of it by

THANKSGIVING AND YOU.

You are just an average man. Riches have not come to you, nor has extreme poverty followed you. You can triumphantly and truthfully say "I never had a dollar that I did not earn." When politicians speak of the popular will and the rights of the plain people they mean you and the millions like you. Sometimes you are known as the Good Citizen, but it is all the same—you are the majority, 50 to 1, in this grand country of ours. You learned early to use your hands and your brains and found work for both. You toiled and played the part of a man.

You had a fair share of good health. You loved, and because the world is full of good women, you found a mate who was willing to give up romance and become the mother of your children and the bearer of more burdens than a man can know. And there has been joy in your home and young folks have thought and still think that the wisdom of the world is all centered in dad. You bought a home, and by this time perhaps it is yours, every stick and stone, from the tulips around the porch to the chicken house in the back yard. And there is a little bank account that takes away the scare of a rainy day. The masses have many bank accounts in this country.

On election day your vote weighs as much as the vote of the millionaire. You have a voice in government, a hand in the making of laws. There are public schools for your children. There are countless means of recreation that have been gotten down to a plane where a great deal of good can be gotten for very little money. Philanthropists, honest politicians and office-holders are trying to improve the lot of the plain people. Your boy may become Governor, or even President. Most of the men who have held those positions come from the masses.

Of course, there are ills. Forget them if you can. Remember that the sun shines on no land where there is so much of freedom, opportunity, joy, tenderness, sympathy and charity, as in America. Compare your condition with the average of any people on God's footstool and you will find that you, on this national holiday, as one of the millions, have cause to—

"Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

Praise Him, all creatures here below;

touch hearts to the agony of a fellow man."

"You are right, father," said Isaac. "I will run out and drag him in, for he seems a slight lad, if you will cover my path with the guns."

"May God uphold thee," said the old man. Without further words the door was unbarred and the young man rushed out. Quickly he scooped and seized the lad, and even as the forms of the savages appeared among the trees and the arrows began to fly, he won back to shelter unharmed.

He let the wounded man slide to the ground, and the next moment the three Puritans were amazed at hearing the words, "Father! Brothers!" come from his lips.

"Amos!" cried the father.

"Yes, it is I," said Amos, smiling weakly.

"You will wonder to see me painted as a savage. It is simple enough. When I found myself cut off, I lay in the woods last night and crept close enough to the savage camp to steal some paint. Later I stripped one of the Indians who fell in the first night attack. My plan was to try to work through their lines in the night and make the settlement, and I trusted to my disguise to help me through. But when the Indians made the second attack the idea struck me that I might be able to rush close to the door in the dark—

clerks, and one is sent to the Governor of every State in the Union. It is also given out then to the press agents, who telegraph it all over the United States. Each Governor, as he receives it, issues one himself for his State.

Thanksgivings of the Revolution.

There were eight Thanksgiving days appointed by the Continental Congress for observance among the colonies during the war of independence. After the one called for the purpose of celebrating the peace treaty, which was held in 1784, the day was allowed to lapse until 1789, when Washington took his seat as President. The idea in these early days was to offer thanks on some special occasion. That our ancestors could find eight such occasions during the dark days of the Revolution shows that they were ready to be thankful on somewhat slim provocation. But it also shows that the gobbler shed their blood for the country as well as the men.

The Modest Carver.

"Henry, at our next little dinner we won't have any carving done on the table."

"Good! That's where I generally do it."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Thanksgiving.

What though you have no earthly goods Nor land on your brow, If you have not malaria, Be thankful anyhow.

THE EVOLUTION OF A FAT TURKEY.

