

Between Two Fires

By ANTHONY HOPE

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

CHAPTER I.

There were fewer revolutions in South America than usual, and the Panama canal had come to the front in a promising and progressive way, but the Republic of Aureatland was certainly not in a flourishing condition. Although most happily situated (it lies on the coast, rather to the north), and gifted with an extensive territory, nearly as big as North Dakota, it had yet failed to make that material progress which had been hoped for by its founders. It is true that the State was still in its infancy, being an offshoot from another and larger realm, and having obtained the boon of freedom and self-government only as recently as 1871, after a series of political convulsions of a violent character, which may be studied with advantage in the well-known history of "The Making of Aureatland," by a learned professor of the Jeremiah P. Jocks University. This profound historian is, beyond all question, accurate in attributing the chief share in the national movement to the energy and ability of the first President of Aureatland, His Excellency President Marcus W. Whittingham, a native of Virginia. Having enjoyed a personal friendship with that talented man, as will subsequently appear, I have great pleasure in publicly endorsing the professor's eulogium. Not only did the President bring Aureatland into being, but he moulded her whole constitution. "It was his genius" (as the professor observes with propriety) "which was fired with the idea of creating a truly modern State, instinct with the progressive spirit of the Anglo-Saxon race. It was his genius which cast aside the worn-out traditions of European dominion, and taught his fellow-citizens that they were, if not all by birth, yet one and all by adoption, sons of freedom." Any mistakes in the execution of this fine conception must be set down to the fact that the President's great powers were rather the happy gift of nature than the result of culture.

To this truth he was himself in no way blind, and he was accustomed to attribute his want of a liberal education to the social ruin brought upon his family by the American Civil War, and to the dislocation thereby produced in his studies.

Starting under the auspices of such a gifted leader, and imbued with so noble a zeal for progress, Aureatland was, at the beginning of her history as a nation, the object of many fond and proud hopes. But in spite of the blaze of glory in which her sun had risen, her prosperity was not maintained. The country was well suited for agriculture and grazing, but the population—a very queer mixture of races—was indolent, and more given to keeping holidays and festivals than to honest labor. Most of them were unintelligent; those who were intelligent made their living out of those who weren't, a method of subsistence satisfactory to the individual, but adding little to the aggregate of national wealth. Only two classes made fortunes of any size—government officials and barkeepers—and even in their case wealth was not great, looked at by an English or American standard. Production was slack, invention at a standstill, and taxation heavy. The President's talents seemed more adapted to founding a State in the shock and turmoil of war, than to the dull details of administration; and although he was nominally assisted by a cabinet of three ministers, and an assembly comprising twenty-five members, it was on his shoulders that the real work of government fell. On him, therefore, the moral responsibility must also rest—a burden the President bore with a cheerfulness and equanimity almost amounting to unconsciousness.

When I first set foot in Aureatland I was landed on the beach by a boat from the steamer at the capital town of Whittingham. I was a young man, entering on my twenty-sixth year, and full of pride at finding myself at so early an age sent out to fill the responsible position of manager at our Aureatland branch. The directors of the bank were then pursuing what may without unfairness be called an adventurous policy, and, in response to the urgent entreaties and glowing exhortations of the President, they had decided on establishing a branch at Whittingham. I commanded a certain amount of interest on the board, inasmuch as the chairman owed my father a sum of money, too small to mention, but too large to pay, and when, led by the youthful itch for novelty, I applied for the post, I succeeded in obtaining my wish at a salary of a hundred dollars a month. I am sorry to say that in the course of a later business dealing the balance of obligation shifted from the chairman to my father, an unhappy event which deprived me of my hold on the company and seriously influenced my conduct in later days. When I arrived in Aureatland the bank had been open some six months, under the guidance of Mr. Thomas Jones, a steady-going old clerk, who was in future to act as chief and cashier under my orders.

I found Whittingham a pleasant little city of about five thousand inhabitants, picturesquely situated on a fine bay, at the spot where the river Marcus debouched into the ocean. The town was largely composed of government buildings and hotels, but there was a street of shops of no mean order, and a handsome square, called the "Piazza 1871," embellished with an equestrian statue of the President. Round about this national monument were a large number of seats, and, hard by, a cafe and bandstand. Here, I soon found, was the center of life in the afternoons and evenings. Going along a fine avenue of trees for half a mile or so you came to the "Golden House," the President's official residence, an imposing villa of white stone with gilt statues of Aureatland, a female figure sitting on a ploughshare, and holding a sword in the right hand and a cornucopia in the left. By her feet lay what was apparently a badly planned cannon ball; this, I learned, was a suggest, and from its presence and the name of the palace, I gathered that the President had once hoped to base the prosperity of his young republic on the solid foundation of mineral wealth. This hope had been long abandoned.

I have always hated hotels, so I lost no time in looking round for lodgings suitable to my means, and was fortunate enough to obtain a couple of rooms in the house occupied by a priest, Father Jacques Bonchretien. He was a very good fellow, and though we did not become intimate, I could always rely on his courtesy and friendly services. Here I lived in great comfort at an expense of fifty dollars a month, and I soon found that my spare fifty made me a well-to-do man in Whittingham. Accordingly I had the entire of all the best houses, including the Golden House, and a very pleasant little society we had; occasional dances, frequent dinners, and plenty of lawn tennis and billiards prevented me feeling the tedium I had somewhat feared, and the young ladies of Whittingham did their best to solace my exile. As for business, I found the bank doing a small business, but a tolerably satisfactory one, and if we made some bad debts, we got high interest on the good ones, so that, one way or another, I managed to send home pretty satisfactory reports, and time passed on quietly enough in spite of certain manifestations of discontent among the population. These disturbing phenomena were first brought prominently to my notice at the time when I became involved in the fortunes of the Aureatland national debt, and as all my story turns on this incident, it perhaps is a fit subject for a new chapter.

CHAPTER II.

When our branch was established at Whittingham there had been an arrangement made between ourselves and the government, by the terms of which we were to have the government business, and to occupy, in fact, much that quasi-official position enjoyed by the Bank of England at home. As a quid pro quo, the bank was to lend to the republic the sum of \$500,000 at 6 per cent. The President was at the time floating a loan of one million dollars for the purpose of works at the harbor of Whittingham. This acute ruler had, it seemed, hit on the plan of instituting public works on a large scale as a corrective to popular discontent, hoping thereby not only to develop trade, but also to give employment to many persons who, if unemployed, became centers of agitation. Such at least was the official account of his policy; whether it was the true one I saw reason to doubt later on. As regards this loan, my office was purely ministerial. The arrangements were duly made, the proper guarantees given, and the June after my arrival I had the pleasure of handing over to the President the \$500,000. I learned from him on that occasion, that to his great gratification, the balance of the loan had been taken up.

"We shall make a start at once, sir," said the President, in his usual confident but quiet way. "In two years Whittingham harbor will walk over the world. Don't be afraid about your interest. Your directors never made a better investment."

I thanked his excellency and withdrew with a peaceful mind. I had no responsibility in the matter, and cared nothing whether the directors got their interest or not. I was, however, somewhat curious to know who had taken up the rest of the loan, a curiosity which was not destined to be satisfied for some time.

The works were begun and the interest was paid, but I cannot say that the harbor progressed rapidly; in fact, I doubt if more than \$100,000 ever found their way into the pockets of contractors or workmen over the job. The President had some holes dug and some walls built; years reached that point, about two years after the interview above recorded, he suddenly drew off the few laborers still employed and matters came to a dead stop.

It was shortly after this occurrence that I was honored with an invitation to dine at the Golden House. It was in the month of July. Needless to say, I accepted the invitation, not only because it was in the nature of a command, but also because the President gave uncommonly good dinners, and, although a bachelor had as well ordered a household as I have ever known. My gratification was greatly increased when, on my arrival, I found myself the only guest, and realized that the President considered my society in itself enough for an evening's entertainment. It did cross my mind that this might mean business, and I thought it none the worse for that.

We dined in the famous veranda, the scene of so many Whittingham functions. The dinner was beyond reproach. The President was a charming companion. Though not, as I have hinted, a man of much education, he had had a wide experience of life, and had picked up a manner at once quiet and cordial, which set me completely at my ease. Moreover, he paid me the compliment, always so sweet to youth, of treating me as a man of the world. With commensurate confidence he told me many tales of his earlier days; and as he had been everywhere, his conversation was naturally most interesting.

Dinner was over and the table cleared before the President seemed inclined for serious conversation. Then he said suddenly: "Mr. Martin, this country is in a perilous condition." "Your excellency," said I, "do you refer to the earthquake?" (There had been a slight shock a few days before.) "No, sir," he replied, "to the finances. The harbor works have proved far more expensive than I anticipated. I hold in my hand the engineer's certificate that \$300,000 has been actually expended on them, and they are not finished—not by any means finished." They certainly were not; they were hardly begun. "Dear me," I ventured to say, "that seems a good deal of money, considering what there is to show for it." "You cannot doubt the certificate, Mr. Martin," said the President. "I did doubt the certificate, and should have liked to ask what fee the engineer had received. But I hastily said it was, of course, beyond suspicion."

"Yes," said he steadily, "quite beyond suspicion. You see, Mr. Martin, in my position I am compelled to be liberal. The government cannot set other employers the example of grinding men down by low wages. However, reasons apart, there is the fact. We cannot go on without more money; and I may tell you, in confidence, that the political situation makes it imperative we should go on. Not only my personal honor pledged, but the opposition, Mr. Martin, led by the Colonel, is making itself obnoxious—yes, I may say very obnoxious."

"The Colonel, sir," said I, with a freedom engendered by dining, "is a beast." "Well," said the President, with a tolerant smile, "the Colonel, unhappily for the country, is no true patriot. But he is powerful; he is rich; he is, under myself alone, in command of the army. And, moreover, I believe he stands well with the Signorina. The situation, in fact, is desperate. I must have money, Mr. Martin. Will your directors make me a new loan?"

I knew very well the fate that would attend any such application. The directors were already decidedly uneasy about their first loan; shareholders had asked awkward questions, and the chairman had found no small difficulty in showing that the investment was likely to prove either safe or remunerative. Again, only a fortnight before, the government had made a formal application to me on the same subject. I cabled the directors, and received a prompt reply in the single word, "Tootsams," which in our code meant, "Must absolutely and finally decline to entertain any applications." I communicated the contents of the cable to Señor Don Antonio de la Casablanca, the minister of finance, who had, of course, communicated them in turn to the President. I ventured to remind his excellency of these facts. He had heard me with silent attention.

"I fear," I concluded, "therefore, that it is impossible for me to be of any assistance to your excellency." He nodded, and gave a slight sigh. Then, with an air of closing the subject, he said: "I suppose the directors are past reason. You occupy a very responsible position here for so young a man, Mr. Martin—not beyond your merits, I am sure. They leave you a pretty free hand, don't they?"

I replied that as far as routine business went I did much as seemed good in my own eyes. "Routines business? including investments, for instance?" he asked. "Yes," said I; "investments in the ordinary course of business—discounting bills and putting money out on loan and mortgage over here. I place the money, and merely notify the people at home of what I have done."

"A most proper confidence to repose in you," the President was good enough to say. "Confidence is the life of business; you must trust a man. It would be absurd to make you send home the bills, and deeds, and certificates, and what not. Of course, they wouldn't do that." "Though this was a statement, somehow it also sounded like a question, so I answered: "As a rule they do me the compliment of taking my word. The fact is, they are, as your excellency says, obliged to trust somebody."

"Exactly as I thought. And you sometimes have large sums to place?" At this point, notwithstanding my respect for the President, I began to smell a rat.

"Oh, no, sir," I replied, "usually very small. Our business is not so extensive as we could wish."

"Whatever," said the President, looking me straight in the face, "whatever may be usual, at this moment you have a large sum—a very respectable sum—of money in your safe at the bank, waiting for investment." "How do you know that?" I cried. "Mr. Martin! It is no doubt my fault; I am too prone to ignore etiquette; but you forget yourself."

I hastened to apologize, although I was pretty certain the President was contemplating a queer transaction, if not flat burglary.

"Ten thousand pardons, your excellency, for my most unbecoming tone, but may I ask how you became possessed of this information?" "Jones told me," he said, simply.

As it would not have been polite to express the surprise I felt at Jones' simplicity in choosing such a confidant, I held my peace.

(To be continued.)

School of Navigation.

As a possible stimulus to river cities in German states, a school of navigation has been established at Mannheim for the purpose of educating young men employed on river boats in the art of navigation and kindred sciences, says the New York Herald. The term lasts about eight weeks in winter, while the Rhine River is icebound. Students are taught penmanship, language, arithmetic, geography, commercial law and everything necessary for them to know regarding shipbuilding and navigation. They must be 16 years old and must have worked at least one year on a river boat. The tuition fee is nominal, and for boys without means entirely free. The men generally graduate after two winter terms of eight weeks each, receive a captain's patent from the government after five years more of practical service, provided they are at least twenty years old. Steamship companies have agreed to give graduates of the school the preference over applicants without a diploma.

An Earnest Seeker.

"Scuse me, boss," said the colored individual, as he entered the merchant's private office, "but Ah's lookin' foh work." "Oh, you are, eh?" rejoined the merchant. "What can you do?" "Scuse me, ergin, boss," said the man of color, "but it ain't foh mahself Ah's lookin' foh work—it's foh mah wife, sah."

Helping It Along.

Oldham—I have decided to lay my fortune at Miss Dimpleton's feet. Yungun—Well, that ought to make it a trifle easier for her. Oldham—Easier for her? Yungun—Yes; to run through it.



The Moth Pest.

Westward the gypsy moth takes its way. It has caused millions of dollars' worth of damage in Massachusetts, has escaped to New Hampshire and Connecticut, and now the invasion is turning toward New York State. This interesting information is conveyed in a letter of warning just issued by E. P. Felt, State Entomologist.

The brown tall moth is a more recent introduction, and, unlike the gypsy moth, flies readily. It is not only a very destructive leaf feeder, but the barbed hairs of the caterpillars cause a very severe irritation upon the unprotected skin.

Two rows of warts down the back of the gypsy moth caterpillar make it easily distinguishable. It is about two inches long and the ten anterior warts are blue, the twelve posterior red. The gypsy moth will eat anything in the tree or shrub line, and on the slightest disturbance leap on passersby and cling to clothing.

Brown tall moths have white spots on each side and a single pair of red spots near the tail. They prefer wild cherry, pear, apple, maple, elm and white oak leaves, and have barbed horns, which, breaking off or blowing from the cocoon, produce an intolerable irritation, the "brown tall itch."

Caterpillars of both species, says Mr. Felt, may be destroyed by spraying with an arsenical poisoning, preferably five pounds of arsenate of lead to fifty gallons of water, though the gypsy moth caterpillars, especially when nearly full grown, are quite resistant to poison. Eggs of the gypsy moth may be destroyed by treating the egg masses with



Nests of the Moths.

A preparation composed of 50 per cent creosote oil, 20 per cent carbolic acid, 20 per cent spirits of turpentine and 10 per cent of coal tar.

Spraying to Destroy Bugs.

The recognized formula for bordeaux mixture for use on potatoes is six pounds of copper sulphate, blue vitriol, four pounds unslacked quicklime and fifty gallons of water. The copper sulphate is dissolved in one barrel and the lime in another. Add to each twenty-five gallons of water and then mix thoroughly. When to be used strain through a wire strainer, preferably one of brass.

Spraying should be started when the potato plants are six inches high and be repeated every ten days or two weeks, according to the weather, throughout the growing season. If bugs are to be destroyed, add one pound of paris green to each fifty gallons of bordeaux mixture, but the bordeaux mixture should be used alone until the bugs are noticed.

When it is figured that the cost of spraying does not exceed \$7 an acre, and it is often less, while experiments have proved that the value of the crop was increased three or four times the cost for spraying, it certainly pays and pays well.

Milk Preservative and Tuberculosis.

The use of milk preservatives has been rather favorably considered by the dairy department at the New Jersey Experiment Station. Thus the author of a recent bulletin believes that the use of formaldehyde added to milk, one part in forty thousand, destroys the tubercle germs and leaves uninjured the bodies found in tuberculous milk which tend to protect against the disease. The chief danger of infection of both calves and children is thought to occur in early life through drinking milk containing germs, although the appearance of pronounced symptoms of the disease may not be noted until later life. Hence the suggested use of the preservative in the quantities mentioned for milk intended for young children.

"Novelties."

New varieties are often sold because they are "novelties," rather than because they are better than the old, tried and standard kinds. It is better to use varieties of trees and vegetables that are known to be the best for the section where they have been tested, in preference to using others, until experience gives an opportunity to know more of the newer varieties. Novelties should be tested in a limited way.

Making Fruit Pulp.

Hard fruits, such as apples and pears, are cut into small pieces without being peeled or having the cores or seeds removed, and placed in cold water containing 1.5 ounces of salt to the gallon to prevent discoloration. The fruit is then boiled to a pulp and strained, a yield of about one-fifth the original weight being obtained. Plums and soft fruits are treated in practically the same manner. With plums the strained pulp is sweetened with about 4.5 pounds of sugar to each hundred-weight of fruit and the boiling continued until the pulp is thickened sufficiently to hang from the spoon without dropping. With raspberries and strawberries the boiling must not be prolonged and the pulp need not be strained through so fine a sieve as in the case of plums. The chief points to which care should be devoted are the processes of boiling the fruit. The first boiling should be continued only so long as the consistency of the mass is such as will enable the pulp to pass through the sieve for straining.

Mules in Strong Demand.

As indicating the steady growth in public favor which the mule is enjoying, we are glad to note that the proprietor of a Missouri Jack farm has just sold some fine animals at high prices—\$3,000, \$2,000, \$1,500, \$1,250, five for \$1,000 each, \$900, \$800, \$700, three jacks and one jennet, \$3,000. A letter from Austin, Tex., says there is a great shortage of mules in that State. They are in strong demand by farmers and ranchers, and the supply is inadequate. As a result, the prices of good mules have gone up to the highest figures ever known in the State. It will be but a few years until this mule shortage, which is said to exist throughout the country, will be relieved, as much attention is now being given to breeding the animals.—Country Gentleman.

To Make Good Corn Drag.

Any farmer handy with the ordinary tools on a farm can make a corn drag attachment for his cultivator that will pay for itself many times in one season, if properly used, says an experienced agriculturist. The common farm harrow is too heavy and unwieldy for harrowing corn after it is up, except under the most favorable conditions of soil and weather. To make, get oak one and one-half inches by three. Make in two sections of three bars each. Let each section be long enough to cover all of space between two rows. Brace same as other harrows. No. 60 wire spikes make very good teeth. Set teeth a little slanting and as close as will work in your soil without clogging. Attach to beams of corn plow. Arrange so that the drag will cover all the ground when you wish by connecting the two parts. You can, with this arrangement, adjust the drag to suit.

Flies and the Milk Yield.

The effect on milk production by the use of fly repellants has been tested at the Missouri Station. Various mixtures were found which would keep off the flies all day if put on in the morning; but a measurement of the milk and test of the butter fat for a period of two weeks indicated that keeping off the flies did not affect the milk yield. As somewhat similar results were obtained by experiments at the Connecticut Station, it seems fair to concede that the injurious effects of the fly pest have been exaggerated. During the fly time the feed in most pastures is growing poorer every day and the cows naturally shrink then, but it is probably a mistake to blame the flies for much of the shrinkage. For all that, it is worth while to use the mixtures to keep off the flies for the peace and quiet obtained in the stable for both the cows and for the milkmen.

Good Crops for Old Grass Land.

The question of what to do with grass land after haying, where the land is run out and poor, is a rather puzzling one, but if we should get rain enough to soften the surface and permit easy plowing, it may be broken up, enriched with manure or fertilizer and immediately seeded with Hungarian. In case the weather should prove too dry for this, barley may be sown either alone or with rye in August for fall feeding. Off good, strong land, well enriched, a crop of late cabbage plants may be set as late as July 15; the turnip seed may be sown even as late as Aug. 1, though July 20 is a better time.

What Merino Breeders Did.

Merino breeders in Vermont took a sheep that sheared nine pounds, and they developed a sheep that sheared forty-four pounds. They took a carcass that weighed 100 pounds, and they made one that weighed 300 pounds. They sold rams for \$3 per head, and they sold rams for \$3,000 per head. They sent merinos to every part of the world where better sheep were wanted.

Agricultural Atoms.

An early piece of ground sown to barley makes the pigs smile. It is most exasperating to attempt to fix a pump when the stock is standing around waiting and making things unpleasant. The man who breeds a breed of Logs because he likes them is sure to succeed. More depends on the man than on the breed. All fence rows should be set to grass so as to keep down a dense growth of weeds. If weeds are allowed to grow it means that they will have to be mowed.



Anemia means a condition in which the blood is deficient in quality or quantity.

It is a question among physicians whether there is ever an actual permanent reduction in the total amount of the blood. The quantity must vary, of course, from hour to hour, according to the amount of fluid that is drunk, and the amount that is lost by perspiration and in other ways, but it is probable that the average remains about the same from day to day, except in cases of actual starvation and deprivation of water.

Anemia, then, is mainly a question of the make-up of the blood, that is, of the number of its red corpuscles, or cells, and the relative amount of hemoglobin—the coloring matter—which these contain. The blood is a complex fluid, but in simple terms it may be said to be a salty solution, containing two kinds of cells—the red and the white corpuscles. The white ones are the scavengers of the body as well as the policemen and the soldiers. They protect the body from the disease germs which threaten its existence. The red corpuscles, on the other hand, are the commissary department. They bring to the tissues the oxygen which they need and remove the gaseous waste products.

If the red corpuscles and the substance of which they are most largely composed, the hemoglobin, are reduced in amount, the tissues suffer for lack of oxygen, and there is a lowering of all the vital processes. The lessened proportion of hemoglobin accounts for the paleness which is the chief outward sign of anemia.

It is common to speak of two forms of anemia—primary and secondary. Primary is the term used when the anemia can be traced to no definite cause, but seems to be a disease in itself. Secondary is the word used when the anemia is evidently the result of some other condition, such as wasting diseases or poor nourishment. It is then only one of the symptoms of such underlying state.

Among the chief causes of secondary anemia are drains upon the system by frequent losses of blood, or by diarrhea or other wasteful discharges, chronic poisoning by lead or mercury, by the essential poisons of certain diseases, such as rheumatism and tuberculosis, and by poisons formed in the body and not promptly removed, which is called "auto-intoxication," and finally the destruction of the red corpuscles by a microorganism, as is the case in malaria.—Youth's Companion.

PATRON SAINT OF MOTORISTS.

By the suggestion and sanction of Pope Plus X., St. Christopher has been created the patron saint of motorists. This came about when the Princess Bianca Colonna, granddaughter of Mrs. John W. Mackay, was presented to his Holiness at the Vatican.

"I came from Milan in an automobile," the little princess said, and the



PRINCESS BIANCA COLONNA.

Pope, with his never-failing interest, replied: "Then I must give you a picture of St. Christopher in order that you may have a safe return."

When the story was heard in Rome its significance was not appreciated, but later it was remembered that St. Christopher has long been the patron saint of travelers.—Detroit Free Press.

How to Save Gas Bills.

A city merchant who has a passion for reading out-of-town newspapers and also for answering many of the advertisements he finds in them tells this on himself:

The other day he answered an advertisement in one of the New York papers stating that for one dollar a method for saving gas bills would be sent. In two days he received a printed slip by mail which read, "Paste them in a scrapbook."

No Dispute About It.

"What's that thing on the end of your tail?" asked the frog. "It's a rattling good thing, that's what it is," answered the rattlesnake.