

Between Two Fires

By ANTHONY HOPE

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

CHAPTER II.—(Continued.)

"Yes," continued the President, "owing to the recent sales of your real property in this country (sales, due, I fear, to a want of confidence in my administration), you have at this moment a sum of \$300,000 in the bank safe. Now (don't interrupt me, please) the experience of a busy life teaches me that commercial reputation and probity depend on results, not on methods. Your directors have a prejudice against me and my government. That prejudice, you with your superior opportunities for judgment, cannot share. You will serve your employers best by doing for them what they haven't the sense and courage to do for themselves. I propose that you should assume the responsibility of lending me this money. The transaction will redound to the profit of the bank. It shall also," he added, slowly, "redound to your profit."

I began to see my way. But there were difficulties.

"What am I to tell the directors?" I asked.

"You will make the usual return of investments and debts outstanding—but you know better than I do."

"False reserves, your excellency means?"

"They will no doubt be formally inaccurate," the President admitted.

"What if they ask for proofs?" said I.

"Sufficient unto the day," said the President.

"You have rather surprised me, sir," I said, "but I am most anxious to oblige you, and to forward the welfare of Aureata-land. There are, however, two points which occur to me. First, how am I to be insured against not getting my interest? That I must have."

"Quite so," he interrupted. "And the second point I can anticipate. It is, what taken of my gratitude for your timely assistance can I prevail on you to accept?"

"Your excellency's knowledge of human nature is surprising."

"Kindly give your attention, Mr. Martin, and I will try to satisfy both your very reasonable requirements. You have \$300,000; those you will hand over to me, receiving in return government 6 per cent bonds for that amount. I will then hand back to you \$65,000; \$45,000 you will retain as security for your interest in the event of any failure on the part of Aureata-land to meet her obligations honorably, you will pay the interest on the whole \$300,000 out of that sum. That secures you for more than two years against absolute failure of interest, which in reality you need not fear. Till the money is wanted, you will have the use of it. The remaining \$20,000 I shall beg of you to accept as your commission, or rather as a token of my esteem. \$20,000 absolutely—\$45,000 as long as the Aureata-land pays interest! You must admit I deal with you as one gentleman with another, Mr. Martin. In the result, your directors get their interest, I get my loan, you get your bonus. We are all benefited, no one is hurt! All this is effected at the cost of a harmless stratagem."

I was full of admiration. The scheme was very neat, and, as far as the President and myself were concerned, he had been no more than just in pointing out its advantages. As for the directors, they would probably get their interest; anyhow, they would get it for two years. There was risk, of course; a demand for evidence of my alleged investments or a sudden order to realize a heavy sum at short notice would bring the house about my ears. But I did not anticipate this.

"Well, Mr. Martin," said the President, "do you agree?"

I still hesitated. The President rose and put his hand on my shoulder.

"Better say yes. I might take it, you know, and cause you to disappear—believe me, with reluctance, Mr. Martin. It is true I shouldn't like this course. It would perhaps make my position here untenable. But not having the money would certainly make it untenable."

I saw the force of this argument, and said:

"I can refuse your excellency nothing."

"Then take your hat and come along to the bank," said he.

This was sharp work.

"Your excellency does not mean to take the money now—to-night?" I exclaimed.

"Not to take, Mr. Martin—to receive it from you. We have made our bargain. What is the objection to carrying it out promptly?"

"But I must have the bonds. They must be prepared, sir."

"They are here," he said, taking a bundle from the drawer of a writing table. "\$300,000 6 per cent stock, signed by myself, and countersigned by Don Antonio. Take your hat and come along."

I did as I was bid.

CHAPTER III.

It was a beautiful moonlight night, and Whittingham was looking her best as we made our way along the avenue leading to the Piazza 1871. The President walked briskly, silent but serene; I followed the trouble in my mind reflected in a somewhat hang-dog air, and I was much comforted when the President broke the stillness of the night by saying:

"You have set your foot on the first rung of the ladder that leads to fame and wealth, Mr. Martin."

I was rather afraid I had set it on the first rung of the ladder that leads to the gallows. But there the foot was; what the ladder turned out to be was in the hands of the gods; so I threw off care, and as we entered the Piazza I pointed to the statue, and said:

"Behold my inspiring example, your excellency!"

"Exactly," he replied, "I make the most of my opportunities."

I knew he regarded me as one of his opportunities, and was making the most of me. This is not a pleasant point of view to regard one's self from, so I changed the subject, and said:

"Shall we call for Don Antonio?"

"Why?"

"Well, as he's minister of finance, I thought perhaps his presence would make

decorated, a gift from my father on my departure.

I nodded and passed on, saying to myself: "Very industrious, indeed. Not many men have done such a night's work as I have."

And that is how my fortune became bound up with those of the Aureata-land national debt.

CHAPTER IV.

After the incidents above recorded, things went on quietly enough for some months. I had a serious talk with Jones, reproaching him gravely for his outrageous demeanor. He capitulated abjectly on being shown the cable, which was prepared in the manner kindly indicated by the President. The latter had perhaps been in too great a hurry with his heavy guns, for his hint of violence had rather stirred than allayed Jones' apprehensions. If there were nothing to conceal, why should his excellency not stick at murder to hide it? However, I explained to him the consideration of high policy, dictating inviolable secrecy, and justifying a somewhat arbitrary way of dealing with a trusted official; and the marked graciousness with which Jones was received when he met the President at the Ministry of Finance on current business went far to obliterate his unpleasant recollections. I further bound him to my fortunes by obtaining for him a rise of salary from the directors, "in consequence of the favorable report of his conduct received from Mr. Martin."

Peaceful as matters seemed, I was not altogether at ease. To begin with, the new loan did not apparently at all improve the financial position of Aureata-land. Desolation still reigned on the scene of the harbor works; there was the usual difficulty in paying salaries and meeting current expenditure. The President did not invite my confidence as to the disposal of his funds; indeed before long I was alarmed to see a growing coldness in his manner, which I considered at once ungrateful and menacing; and when the half-year came round he firmly refused to disburse more than half the amount of interest on the second loan, thus leaving me to make an interest on my reserve of \$45,000. He gave me many good reasons for this course of conduct, dwelling chiefly on the necessary unproductiveness of public works in their early stages, and confidently promising full payment with arrears next time. Nevertheless I began to see that I must face the possibility of a continual drain on resources that I had fondly hoped would be available for my own purposes for a considerable time at least. Thus one thing and another contributed to open a breach between his excellency and myself, and although I never ceased to feel his charm as a private companion, my distrust of him as ruler, and I may add, as a fellow-conspirator, steadily deepened.

Other influences were at this time at work in the same direction. Rich in the even more freely than before into the gables of Whittingham, and where I was welcome before I was now a doubly honored guest. I became acquainted with the Signorina, the lady to whom the President had referred during my interview with her; and my acquaintance with the Signorina was very rich in results.

This lady was, after the President, perhaps the best known person in Aureata-land—best known, that is, by name and face and fame; for her antecedents and circumstances were wrapped in impenetrable mystery. When I arrived in the country the Signorina Christina Nugent had been settled there about a year. She had appeared originally as a member of an operative company, which had paid a visit to our "National Theater" from the United States. The company passed on its very brilliant way, but the Signorina remained behind. It was said she had taken a fancy to Whittingham, and being independent of her profession, had determined to make a sojourn there. At any rate, there she was. She established herself in a pretty villa, closely adjoining the Golden House; it stood opposite the presidential grounds, commanding a view of that stately enclosure; and here she dwelt, under the care of a lady whom she called "Aunt," known to the rest of the world as Mrs. Carrington. The title "Signorina" was purely professional; for all I know the name "Nugent" was equally a creature of choice; but, anyhow, the lady herself never professed to be anything but English, and openly stated that she retained her title simply because it was more musical than that of "Miss."

(To be continued.)

A Marvelous Tree.

A marvelous tree is reported to have been discovered in the San Jacinto Mountains, on the borders of Mexico. The leaves of the tree resemble those of the fig in shape, but they are of vivid purple and covered with bristly hairs, which easily penetrate the skin, causing painful swellings. The flowers are red, and greatly resemble tarantulas.

The most peculiar feature of the plant, however, is the heavy and sickening odor it gives off. A few whiffs of this produces unconsciousness. In fact, the discoverers of the tree were rendered insensible by it.

As the plant seems to have no botanical name, it is proposed to call it either the "Tarantula Plant," or the "Chloroform Tree."

Sad Story.

Kind Lady—Poor man! You look so lean and seedy. Did you ever have an occupation?

Downan Outt—Yes, mum, I used to be a book agent, but I made a dismal failure of it.

Kind Lady—Indeed! What was the book called?

Downan Outt—"How to Succeed," mum.

Manners.

Jimmy had come to school with dirty hands, says a writer in the New York World. His teacher was shocked.

"Jamie," she said, reprovingly, "your hands are very dirty. What would you say if I came to school that way?"

"I wouldn't speak about it," said Jimmy. "I'd be too polite."

Come Natural to Him.

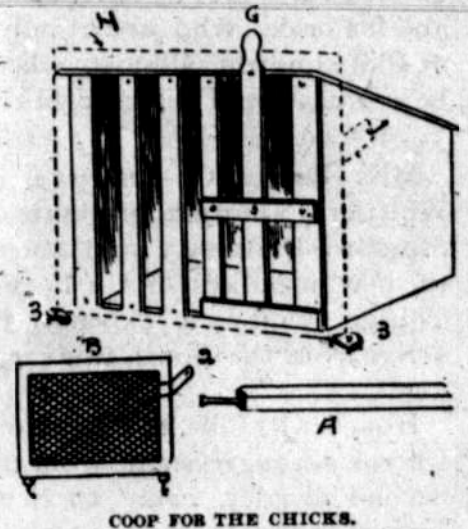
Sinkers—Did you ever notice Reelton's hook nose and fishlike eyes?

Corker—Yes. It isn't any wonder that he tells such fishy stories.



Comfort for Hen and Chicks.

It is a cruel plan which shuts off the air almost entirely from the hen with a brood of chicks by placing a board in front of the coop at night; nor is such a plan necessary if one will take the trouble to build a coop or coops after the following plan. Build the coop after the usual plan, sloping the roof to the rear and covering the front with slats except at one lower corner, where a door should be arranged, so that the hen can be easily let out when desired. To solve the problem of plenty of fresh air and at the same time freedom from prowling small animals, construct a screen; make the frame large enough completely to cover the front of the coop and cover it with wire netting; at either side fasten a strap with a hole in the end, and on the sides of the coop



place a screw, over which the straps are placed to hold the screen in place. To make the screen still more secure when placed have the side pieces large enough so that a long wire nail may be driven in them about one-quarter the length of the nail, at the end; then sink in the ground at either end of the coop two pieces of wood, each having a hole in the end, into which the nail in the end pieces of the screen will fit when the latter is in position. In this way it will be impossible for the screen to get loose. In the illustration, H, at dotted line, shows where the screen will come when in position; A, the side piece of the screen, with the long wire nail in position; B, the stakes in the ground to receive the nails; C, the screen complete; G, the swinging latch by which the door for the use of the hen is kept in place, and 2, the manner of attaching the small strap to the side of the screen.—Indianapolis News.

What Makes Quality in Eggs.

The grocer soon learns that he must send good eggs to his customers or he will not have them long, and the farmer who is progressive will soon learn that he must do the same. The word "fresh," when applied to eggs, may mean a great deal, or it may not. The egg grower who wishes to create a regular demand for his eggs at high prices must market his stock promptly, for there is nothing that so disgusts the experienced handler of eggs as to find that the eggs that he bought for two or three weeks. Storage eggs, that are put into the refrigerator immediately after they are laid, come out better, after four or five months have elapsed, than the eggs that are allowed to remain in the farmer's pantry for a month after they are laid before they are marketed.

Plant Injury from Spraying.

As many still complain about the injury done to the leaves of trees, raspberry bushes, etc., by spraying, it may be repeated that there should be enough alkali, whether lime or soda, used to neutralize the acid of the copper sulphate, says F. Grenier, who is an accomplished gardener. The formula for soda Bordeaux calls for six pounds of copper sulphate to seven and one-half pounds of soda, and even then it might be safer to add a pound of lime. For the ordinary (lime) Bordeaux mixture I would use at least as much lime as copper sulphate, pound for pound, unless I rely (as I usually do) on the ferro-cyanide of potassium test. As long as the mixture has an acid reaction, danger of injury to the foliage, and possibly to the fruit, such as apples, pears, etc., exists.

To Get Rid of Rats.

Dissolve five pounds coppers in ten gallons of water and add enough fresh slacked lime to make a moderately thick whitewash. Apply to all places where the rats congregate and they will desert the place at once. Put some of the wash into and around their holes and along their runways wherever possible to do so. They will change to other places, but you must follow them up with the wash, and eventually they will leave your place altogether and will not return while the wash remains.

The Truck Garden Insect.

Insects infesting truck gardens very often affect field crops as well, but it should be borne in mind that pest exterminating methods that are of no use in large areas are often the best in a small patch where there is more intensive cultivation, and where the price output brings will warrant more outlay.

TRUMPET CALLS.

Ram's Horn Sounds a Warning Note to the Unredeemed.

SOME people seem to think that the only way to make sure of the church getting to Abraham's bosom is to keep her a poor beggar there.

A man does not make hay by letting the grass grow under his feet.

A soft voice may come out of a hard heart.

No-life is more costly than the worthless one.

Salvation cannot be spread without sacrifice.

The just live by faith and the faithful live justly.

The brave man is the last to think of lecturing on courage.

No man has eternal life who is willing to keep it to himself.

His death was the last segment in the perfect circle of His life.

Many a pull is like a rubber string, most effective when it hits back.

He cannot be meek before heaven who turns a marble heart to man.

A good deal of summer religion is so thin you can see right through it.

The devil will let the preacher alone if only he may conduct the choir.

It takes more than rose water to make the desert bloom as the rose.

The attitude of prayer does not depend on its high-sounding phrases.

The call to watch and pray means more than watching your neighbor.

It takes more than polish to enable one to slip through the pearly gates.

It's better to have your feet on the rocks than your head in the clouds.

The uncontrollable tongue does not have to work long to tell all it knows.

Dreaming of great deeds, we miss the doing of thousands of little good deeds.

There are too many preachers trying to make bread of life without the leaven of love.

When we get to heaven we shall think most of the mercies we never mentioned here.

The world would get a good-sized lift if we were as scrupulous about the things that come out of our mouths as we are about those that go in.

Beautiful Cass Lake.

As an Undiscovered Country in the Geography of the Camper.

Beautiful Cass Lake, set in an emerald wreath of 6,400 acres of giant Norway and white pines, contains an island of 1,200 acres known as Star Island, because its five wooded points jutting out into the lake give it the shape of a star, says the St. Paul Pioneer Press. Here also the white pines and giant Norways constitute a bit of the forest primeval. And within this island is yet another lake, the crystal waters of which reflect vividly the evergreen forest that girts its shores. This inner lake is variously known as Lake Helen and Lake Windigo. The latter name was given to it by the Indians and is said to mean the place of the evil spirit, though the fitness of the name is certainly not apparent in the quiet and peaceful surroundings of its placid waters. This lake, which is about a mile in circumference, is almost circular and has no visible outlet or inlet. Its surface is at all times higher than that of the surrounding lakes.

The forest on Star Island is one of its greatest attractions. Many of the trees are two feet through the butt and are capable of being cut into five or six sixteen-foot logs. Norway pine predominates, although many white pines are to be seen.

There is little undergrowth on the island, the surface of which is comparatively even, making it an easy matter to traverse it in all directions. There are high bluffs overlooking Cass Lake which make ideal points on which to pitch a camp. From these bluffs the surface generally slopes gradually to the shores of Lake Helen. There are springs containing the purest of drinking water and wells are easily sunk at all points. From the bluffs the view of Cass Lake, with its numerous bays and inlets and background of pine forest, is enchanting.

The primeval forest stretches away with magnificent sweep to the horizon and nothing in the surroundings suggests the presence of civilized man save the occasional boat of a fisherman.

Star Island is a part of the ten sections, 6,400 acres, forever set apart as a forest reserve by the government. Splendid as this spot is for camping purposes, probably less than a dozen parties availed themselves of its advantages last season. The truth is the spot has not been sought out by outing parties. So far as the great body of summer tourists is concerned, Star Island is yet undiscovered country. Here are all the advantages that go to make an ideal camping spot—pure air, cool, pure water, evergreen forests, high, dry land on which to pitch the tent, myriad lakes and streams and a fisherman's and sportsman's paradise. Added to these advantages is the fact that the reservation is constantly under the police protection of Uncle Sam, which reduces the risk from forest fires and other perils to a minimum. All the camper is required to do is to get a permit from the government; agree to exercise proper care in regard to camp fires and not to injure the trees.

is the use of the implement illustrated herewith. The inventor, an Iowa man, claims that no difficulty is experienced in getting the noose in position. When once it is securely clamped on the hog's nose it is an easy matter to lead the animal to any place desired.

Water Before Feeding.

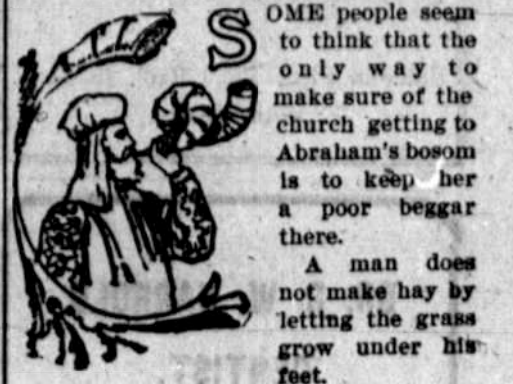
This question of watering before or after feeding has never been settled. A leading English authority states that horses should never be watered until after feeding, but always before, especially if the feed is grain. If a horse is very thirsty give him water and then wait a short time before feeding. If possible, horses should always have access to water. They will drink less and there is much less danger of indigestion or cholera. If a horse is exhausted from overexercise, the supply of cold water should be limited. If water is tepid, a much larger amount may be allowed.

Late Weeds.

The late weeds in the garden—those that come in August and September—are the ones that produce seed before the fact is noticed, and thus stock the ground with weeds the next year. The garden is often neglected late in the summer, but it should be kept clear of weeds until frost, and the result will be a great saving of labor in the growing of small fruits and vegetables, as most of the work required is due to the weeds and grass which spring up at all times.

Growing Cauliflower.

Cauliflowers will not thrive except under the very best conditions. They are grown in the same manner as cabbage, only the soil must be exceedingly rich. Many growers have found it necessary to occasionally water this crop, which is a hindrance to field culture, although the prices usually obtained repay the care. If the leaves are drawn together over the heads blanching will be greatly facilitated.



SUBDUES THE HOG.