

Between Two Fires

By ANTHONY HOPE

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

CHAPTER IX.—(Continued.)

I had nothing left to say. I fell back in my chair, and gazed at the Colonel. At the same moment a sound of rapid wheels struck on my ears. Then I heard the sweet, clear voice I knew so well saying:

"I'll just disturb him for a moment, Mr. Jones. I want him to fear himself from work for a day, and come for a ride."

She opened my door, and came swiftly in. On seeing the Colonel she took in the position, and said to that gentleman: "Have you told him?"

"I have just done so, Signorina," he replied.

I had not energy enough to greet her; so she also sat down uninvited, and took off her gloves—not lazily, like the Colonel, but with an air as though she would, if a man, take off her coat, to meet the crisis more energetically.

At last I said, with conviction: "He's a wonderful man! How did you find it out, Colonel?"

"Had Johnny Carr to dine," said that worthy.

"You don't mean he trusted Johnny?"

"Odd, isn't it?" said the Colonel. "With his experience, too. He might have known Johnny was an idiot. I suppose there was no one else."

"He knew," said the Signorina, "anyone else in the place would betray him; he knew Johnny wouldn't if he could help it. He underrated your powers, Colonel."

"Well," said I, "I can't help it, can I? My directors will lose. The bondholders will lose. But how does it hurt me?"

The Colonel and the Signorina both smiled gently.

"You do it very well, Martin," said the former, "but it will save time if I state that both Signorina Nugent and myself are possessed of the details regarding the—(the Colonel paused, and stroked his mustache.)"

"The second loan," said the Signorina. I was less surprised at this, recollecting certain conversations.

"Ah, and how did you find that out?" I asked.

"She told me," said the Colonel, indicating his fair neighbor.

"And may I ask how you found it out, Signorina?"

"The President told me," said that lady.

"Well, as you both know all about it, it's no good keeping up pretenses. It's very kind of you to come and warn me."

"You dear good Mr. Martin," said the Signorina, "our motives are not purely those of friendship."

"Why, how does it matter to you?"

"Simply this," said she, "the bank and its excellent manager own most of the debt. The Colonel and I own the rest. If it is repudiated, the bank loses; yes, but the manager and the Colonel and the Signorina Nugent are lost!"

"I didn't know this," I said, rather bewildered.

"Yes," said the Colonel, "when the first loan was raised I lent him \$100,000. We were thick then, and I did it in return for my rank and my seat in the Chamber. Since then I've bought up some more shares."

"You got them cheap, I suppose?" said I.

"Yes," he replied, "I averaged them at about 75 cents the five-dollar share."

"And what do you hold now, nominal?"

"Three hundred thousand dollars," said he, shortly.

"I understand your interest in the matter. But you, Signorina?"

The Signorina appeared a little embarrassed. But at last she broke out: "I don't care if I do tell you. When I decided to stay here I had \$50,000. He persuaded me to put it all into his horrid debt. Oh! wasn't it mean, Mr. Martin?"

The President had certainly combined business and pleasure in this matter.

"Disgraceful!" I remarked.

"And if that goes, I am penniless—penniless. And there's poor aunt. What will she do?"

"Never mind your aunt," said the Colonel, rather rudely. "Well," he went on, "you see we're in the same boat with you, Martin."

"Yes; and we shall soon be in the same deep water," said I.

"Not at all," said the Colonel. "Financial probity is the backbone of a country. Are we to stand by and see Aureatland enter on the shameful path of repudiation?"

"Never!" cried the Signorina, leaping up with sparkling eyes. "Never!"

She looked enchanting. But business is business; and I said again: "What are you going to do?"

"We are going, with your help, Martin, to prevent this national disgrace. We are going"—he lowered his voice, useless, for the Signorina struck in, in a high merry tone, waving her gloves over her head, with these remarkable words: "Hurrah for the Revolution! Hip! hip! hurrah!"

The Signorina looked like a Goddess of Freedom in high spirits and a Paris bonnet. She broke forth into the "Marsellaise."

"For mercy's sake, be quiet!" said McGregor, in a hoarse whisper. "If they hear you! Stop, I tell you, Christina!"

"Kindly unfold your plan, Colonel," I said. "I am aware that out here you think little of revolutions, but to a newcomer they appear to be matters requiring some management. You see we are only three."

"I have the army with me," said he, grandly.

"In the outer office?" asked I, indulging in a sneer at the dimensions of the Aureatland force.

"Look here, Martin," he said, scowling, "if you're coming in with us, keep your jokes to yourself."

"Don't quarrel, gentlemen," said the Signorina. "It's a waste of time. Tell him the plan, Colonel."

"I saw the wisdom of this advice, so I said."

"Your pardon, Colonel. But won't this repudiation be popular with the army?"

If he lets the debt slide, he can pay them."

"Exactly," said he. "Hence we must get at them before that aspect of the case strikes them. They are literally starving, and for ten dollars a man they would make Satan himself President. Have you got any money, Martin?"

"Yes," said I, "a little."

"How much?"

"Ten thousand," I replied; "I was keeping it for the interest."

"Ah, you won't want it now."

"Indeed I shall—for the second loan, you know."

"Look here, Martin; give me that ten thousand for the troops. Stand in with us, and the day I become President I'll give you back your \$300,000. Just look where you stand now. I don't want to be rude, but isn't it a case of—"

"Some emergency?" said I, thoughtfully. "Yes, it is. But where do you suppose you're going to get \$300,000, to say nothing of your own shares?"

He drew his chair closer to mine, and leaning forward, said:

"He's never spent the money. He's got it somewhere; much the greater part, at least."

"Did Carr tell you that?"

"He didn't know for certain; but he told me enough to make it almost certain. Besides," he added, "we have other reasons for suspecting it. Give me the ten thousand. You shall have your loan back, and if you like, you shall be minister of finance. We practically know the money's there, don't we, Signorina?"

She nodded assent.

"If we fail?" said I.

He drew a neat little revolver from his pocket, placed it for a moment against his ear, and recocked it.

"Most lucidly explained, Colonel," said I. "Will you give me half an hour to think it over?"

"Yes," he said. "You'll excuse me if I stay in the outer office? Of course I trust you, Martin, but in this sort of thing—"

"All right, I see," said I. "And you, Signorina?"

"I'll wait, too," she said.

They both rose and went out, and I heard them in conversation with Jones. I sat still, thinking hard. But scarcely a moment had passed, when I heard the door behind me open. It was the Signorina. She came in, stood behind my chair, and leaning over, put her arm round my neck. I looked up, and saw her face full of mischief.

"What about the rose, Jack?" she asked.

Bewildered with delight, and believing I had won her, I said:

"Your soldier till death, Signorina."

"Better death!" said she, saucily. "Nobody's going to die. We shall win, and then—"

"And then," said I, eagerly, "you'll marry me, sweet?"

She quietly stooped down and kissed my lips. Then, stroking my hair, she said:

"You're a nice boy, Jack."

"Christina, you won't marry him?"

"Him?"

"McGregor," said I.

"Jack," said she, whispering now, "I hate him."

"So do I," I answered promptly. "And if it's to win you, I'll upset a dozen presidents."

"Then you'll do it for me? I like to think you'll do it for me, and not for the money."

"I don't mind the money coming in," I began.

"Mercenary wretch!" she cried. "I didn't kiss you, did I?"

"No," I replied. "You said you would in a minute, when I consented."

"Very neat, Jack," she said. But she went and opened the door and called to McGregor. "Mr. Martin sees no objection to the arrangement, and he will come to dinner to-night, as you suggest, and talk over the details. We're all going to make our fortunes, Mr. Jones," she went on, without waiting for any acceptance of her implied invitation, "and when we've made ours, we'll think about you and Mrs. Jones."

I heard Jones make some noise incoherently suggestive of gratification, for he was as bad as any of us about the Signorina, and then I was left to my reflections. These were less somber than the reader would, perhaps, anticipate. True, I was putting my head into a noose; and if the President's hands ever found their way to the end of the rope, I fancied he would pull it pretty tight. But, again, I was immensely in love, and equally in debt. To a young man, life without love isn't worth much; to a man of any age, in my opinion, life without money isn't worth much; it becomes worth still less when he is held to account for money he ought to have. So I cheerfully entered upon my biggest gamble, holding the stake of life well risked. My pleasure in the affair was only marred by the enforced partnership of McGregor. There was no help for this, but I knew he wasn't much fonder of me than I of him, and I found myself gently meditating on the friction likely to arise between the new President and his minister of finance, in case our plans succeeded. Still the Signorina hated him, and by all signs she loved me. So I lay back in my chair, and recalled my charmer's presence by whistling the hymn of liberty until it was time to go to lunch.

CHAPTER X.

The morning meeting had been devoted to principles and to the awakening of enthusiasm; in the evening the conspirators condensed upon details, and we held a prolonged and anxious conference at the Signorina's. Mrs. Carrington was commanded to have a headache after dinner, and retired with it to bed; and from ten till one we sat and conspired. The result of our deliberations was a pretty plan, of which the main outlines were as follows:

This was Tuesday. On Friday night, the Colonel, with twenty determined ruffians (or resolute patriots) previously bound to him, body and soul, by a donation of no less than fifty dollars a man,

was to surprise the Golden House, seize the person of the President and all cash and securities on the premises; no killing if it could be avoided, but on the other hand no shilly-shally. McGregor wanted to put the President out of the way at once, as a precautionary measure, but I strongly opposed this proposal, and, finding the Signorina was absolutely indelible on the same side, he yielded.

I had a strong desire to be present at this midnight surprise, but another duty called for my presence. There was a gala supper at the barracks that evening, to commemorate some incident or other in the national history, and I was to be present and to reply to the toast of "The Commerce of Aureatland." My task was, at all hazards, to keep this party going till the Colonel's job was done, when he would appear at the soldiers' quarters, bribe in hand, and demand their allegiance. Our knowledge of the character of the troops made us regard the result as a certainty, if once the President were a prisoner and the dollars before their eyes. The Colonel and the troops were to surround the officers' messroom, and offer them life and money, or death and destruction. Here again we anticipated their choice with composure. The army was then to be paraded in the Piazza, the town overawed or converted, and, behold, the Revolution was accomplished!

The success of this design entirely depended on the one man we feared, and on that one man being found alone and unguarded at 12 o'clock on Friday night. If he discovered the plot, we were lost. If he took it into his head to attend the supper, our difficulties would be greatly increased. At this point we turned to the Signorina, and I said, briefly:

"This appears to be where you come in, Signorina. Permit me to invite you to dine with his excellency on Friday evening at 8 precisely."

"You mean," she said slowly, "that I am to keep him at home on Friday?"

"Yes," said I. "Is there any difficulty?"

"I do not think there is great difficulty," she said, "but I don't like it; it looks so treacherous."

Of course it did. I didn't like her doing it myself, but how else was the President to be secured?

"Rather late to think of that, isn't it?" asked McGregor, with a sneer. "A revolution won't run on high emotional wheels."

"Think how he jockeyed you about the money," said I, assuming the part of the tempter.

"By the way," said McGregor, "it's understood the Signorina enters into possession of the President's country villa, isn't it?"

Now my poor Signorina had a longing for the quiet little retreat, and between resentment for her lost money and a desire for the pretty house, she was sore beset. Left to herself, I believe she would have yielded to her better feelings and spoiled the plot.

"I'll do it, if you'll swear not to hurt him," she said.

"I've promised already," replied the Colonel, sullenly; "I won't touch him, unless he brings it on himself. If he tries to kill me, I suppose I needn't bare my breast to the blow?"

"No, no," I interposed; "I have a regard for his excellency, but we must not let our feelings betray us into weakness. He must be taken—alive and well, if possible—but in the last resort, dead or alive."

"Come, that's more like sense," said the Colonel, approvingly.

The Signorina sighed, but opposed us no longer.

Returning to ways and means, we arranged for communication in case of need during the next three days without the necessity of meeting. My position as the center of financial business in Whittingham made this easy; the passage of bank messengers to and fro would excite little remark, and the messages could easily be so expressed as to reveal nothing to an uninitiated eye. It was further agreed that on the smallest hint of danger reaching any one of us, the word should at once be passed to the others, and we should rendezvous at the Colonel's "ranch," which lay some seven miles from the town. Thence, in this lamentable case, escape would be more possible.

"And now," said the Colonel, "if Martin will hand over the dollars, I think that's about all."

(To be continued.)

FARM AND GARDEN

Permanent Trellis of Wire.
The scarcity of bean poles forces me to resort to other means of giving support to my lima beans, says a gardener in Farm and Fireside. At one time I thought we could get around the difficulty by planting the newer bush limas. The latter however have never given me more than a fraction of the crop that I can and do get from my "pole" limas, and now I plant the latter exclusively. They are trained to a post, wire and string trellis.

Posts should be set firmly, and not too far apart. I use galvanized wire of fair strength and find it good for a number of years. It has to stand quite a strain, as the load of thrifty vines is very heavy, and I, therefore, give as much support, by supplementary stakes (between the posts), as is convenient. The wires are made to rest in a crotch at the upper end of the pole or stake.

To make the trellis still stronger, I



now put several rows side by side, and connect the posts and stakes across the rows by cross strips fastened high enough to allow the horse in cultivating to pass under it.

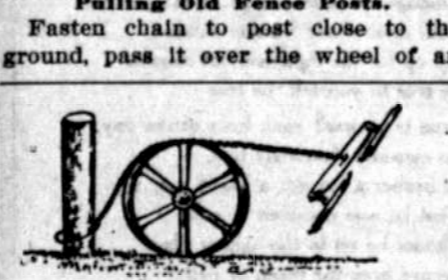
For each row I stretch two wires, one about six inches above the ground surface, the other about five feet from the ground. Common binder twine is wound zigzag around the two wires. It makes a useful and quite ornamental support for the limas, and the vines take readily, particularly and remarkably so, to the strings, even without much assistance or coaxing on the part of the grower.



Superiority of the Mule.
The mule is less nervous than the horse and therefore loses less energy in useless fretting. In fact, one of the chief characteristics of the mule is his ability to take care of himself under all circumstances, says Farming. Much of the apparent shirking which is charged against the mule is an inborn tendency to husband his strength and make every effort count. The result of this instinctive care on the part of the mule is that he is able to turn out more work than would be possible for a horse of the same weight under the same conditions. The mule instinctively avoids holes, sharp obstacles, barbed wire fences and various other forms of danger which are not so successfully avoided by horses. It is a matter of common observation that in instances where mules run away they seldom injure themselves to any serious extent.

Fumigation to Protect Orchards.
In Germany some interesting experiments have recently been made in the protection of orchard trees against night frosts by means of fumigation. A part of an orchard in bloom was thus successfully guarded against an April frost by the dense smoke of naphthalene. But the experiment was very expensive, fifty kilograms of naphthalene being consumed by seven fumes in one hour. Later a new preparation of chemicals was tried, producing a comparatively large volume of smoke with the expenditure of only two kilograms of the material per hour. These trials are under the direction of an experimental gardening association.

Pulling Old Fence Posts.
Fasten chain to post close to the ground, pass it over the wheel of an



ordinary corn planter, hitch team to chain and go ahead. It don't damage the wheel and the broad tire keeps it from sinking into the ground.

Setting Fence Posts.
Some farmers argue that it is best to set posts early in the fall, when the ground is solid. Of course, a post carelessly set at any time will remain in its place, but the fall season is really a much worse time than in the spring. Digging the hole makes the soil loose, and if done in the fall it has not time to become compact again. Water filters down through the loose soil, which will raise the post a little every year until it throws it out altogether. If the soil has time to settle it absorbs less moisture, and after the first year, if the heaving out has not already begun, it will rarely begin.

Anthrax and Earth Worms.
From recent experiments it is certain that earth worms are responsible for conveying the spores and anthrax from various buried carcasses to the surface of the earth and thus bringing about a reinfection. This process of reinfection was urged by M. Louis Pasteur, but without success.

Make an Asparagus Bed.
Here is a reminder from one who evidently appreciates the good things every farmer may have in his garden. He advises everyone to make an asparagus bed, and says very truly it is easily and quickly done. Asparagus needs a rich, mellow, warm soil. Manure the ground thoroughly with well rotted stable manure. Plow eight to ten inches deep or deeper. Plant in a long row. Pulverize thoroughly with disk and harrow. Secure a hundred 2-year-old plants at a cost of from 50 cents to \$1. Open a row with plow or a cultivator. Set plants two feet apart in row with crown three inches below surface. Press soil firmly about plants, fill up the row and cultivate same as corn or beans, and next year you will have an abundance of delicious and healthful food, and the same will continue for years if you keep free from weeds and add each year a fresh supply of farm fertilizer.

Value of a Silo.
It is very important to provide some means by which the dairy cow can be supplied with good food at all seasons of the year in order that she may yield milk most economically. Such medium may be found in the silo which furnishes a place for the storing of food in the form of silage. It is a well-known fact that the nearest an ideal food that can be obtained for the dairy cow is good pasture; but for several months in the year green pasture is not available. At such times the best substitute are corn silage and such roots as mangels and turnips. Corn yields an average of twice as much dry matter per acre as root crops; and since the latter involve much more labor, and greater expense, silage is far more economical.

How to Grow Rhubarb.
Have the ground on which rhubarb is grown very rich, it requires well-rotted manure. Divide the roots, allowing one tuber to the hill. This should be done every other year. Keep the dirt hood up loosely around them and as soon as the first leaves come and begin to droop over on the ground, cut them off; this will start the stalks to growing the taller and straighter. All stalks should be cut when they begin to droop toward the ground. Never pull them, for if you do, you take with the shoots for the next stalks and also break the small roots that help nourish the plant. Cut them one inch above the ground. Always cover with about three inches of straw in the fall. Follow these rules and your pieplant will yield abundantly till frost kills it.

Home-Made Corn Sheller.
This is a cheap way to make a good corn sheller. Get a poplar plank six inches wide, one inch thick and three



feet long. Dress the plank smooth; drive some 8-penny nails into the plank to within one inch of the heads; put them one-half inch apart in rows in a square six inches each way.

Bees and Smoking.
Many times bees are smoked more than is necessary; perhaps, because not every one knows that during a nectar flow some honey is lost every time a hive is opened, says Farming. When bees are smoked they fill themselves with honey and if so much smoke is used that most of the bees in the hive at that time take honey, it will be more than an hour before it is redeposited into the cells and the regular work resumed. Bees sometimes gather nectar enough to make a pound of honey an hour, so one can see that it would be quite a loss if every colony in a fair sized apiary were smoked enough to interrupt the work for one hour.

To Ripen Cream.
Cream left to itself will become sour spontaneously. This is the result of the growth of lactic acid bacteria, which feed upon the milk sugar, and as a final process convert it into a lactic acid. Other forms of bacteria are always present in cream; some have little or no effect in the ripening process, while others, if allowed to develop, produce undesirable and often obnoxious flavors. To cultivate and develop these "wild" germs is called "spontaneous" ripening, and is often attended with uncertainty. Good butter making demands the use of a "starter," either home-made or a pure culture. The former should be made of selected skim milk.

Keeping Hogs Clean.
To give the pigs a thorough scrubbing may appear to be labor thrown away, but if two lots of pigs are treated alike in every respect, except that one lot receives a thorough scrubbing with soapuds once in a while, there will be a marked difference in favor of the hogs that are washed when the time for slaughter arrives. A clean bed of straw with a dry house, so as to afford them comfort at night, will also promote thrift and growth. The hog is naturally a cleanly animal and enjoys a bath. If considered a filthy animal, that devours filthy food, it is because of the treatment given. Hogs will select clean and wholesome food if given the opportunity to do so.

OLD MALIGNMENTS OF JEWS.
Long-Existent Prejudice Against Them Explained.
No other race has been so vilified as the Jew. Hatred for Hebrews has been endemic in Europe since the Dark Ages, and even to-day in France and Germany the anti-Semitic movements have considerable strength. How can this be? Is the feeling a survival of anger at a race which rejected Jesus? Or is it based on desperate hostility toward a race which can succeed in business where a Gentile fails?

The Rev. Dr. S. Schulman of the Temple Beth-El, New York City, in a recent sermon sought to answer these questions. Part of his discourse we quote:

We are the victims of the world's literature, of its prevailing creed, and the popular judgment. The greatest master in the world's literature, seeking a type that on account of peculiar conditions and circumstances could stand for cruel hatred and implacable revenge, deliberately changed the contents of a story and made Shylock the Jew the embodiment of inhuman revenge.

The poet must have felt that if ever in a human soul there could arise such unyielding hate as he desired to portray, it might, in a sense, be justified in one whose heart rankled with the memories of ages of persecution and unjust hatred to which his race had been subjected.

Here was one, the poet seemed to say, who could well execute the villainies he had been taught. He therefore produced a character dramatically consistent, but at the same time he did an everlasting injury to the Jew because he produced a character altogether historically untrue. The Jew is anything but vindictive; he forgets injuries readily; that is why he is so optimistic; he has a horror of shedding blood, and whatever vices the Jew may be capable of, the one of ferocious cruelty cannot be saddled upon him.

Nevertheless, the word Shylock has become in English speech synonymous with everything that is bad. This injustice in literature will persist until some great genius possessing the broad-mindedness of a Lessing and the dramatic power of a Shakespeare shall arise among English-speaking people and create an English Nathan the Wise.

The western world's creed centers in an event which, strictly speaking, belongs to the same category as that of the killing of Socrates, the burning of Giordano Bruno, and of Servetus. Thus classic Greek, Catholic and Protestant were all equally guilty of sacrificing the best of their time. The progress of mankind has, sad to say, often been purchased by the martyrdom of some of the noblest men that walked on earth.

Yet it is the Jewish people that have been singled out to be held up to the world as Delcides, and every child at the time when the soul is most receptive is inoculated with an antipathy against every living Jew because of an event that took place nineteen hundred years ago.

It is therefore no wonder that the world is prejudiced against the Jew. The tendency of the popular judgment is to magnify his faults and minimize his virtues. He is, in plain words, the victim of a traditional violation of the Ninth Commandment. He has to prove that he is good; the assumption always is that he is bad. To such an extent is the thought and feeling of the average man pervaded by this prejudice against the Jew that it even poisons the minds of many Jews themselves who have not given serious thought to Jew and Judaism.

America's Gilded Youth.
It is the ambition of many a well-to-do father in these days to shield his son from the struggles and privations that marked his own career. The man who had to work from 5 in the morning till sundown on a farm or associate with ignorant or brutal laborers in menial callings or deny himself all the luxuries and many of the so-called necessities in order to get ahead in the world says: "My boy must never have such a hard time as I had; his way to success must be made smooth before him by the advantages he will have over those that I had, and he plans to make it easier for him. Yet it is one of the most familiar facts in life that this affectionate ambition of the rich father for his boy fails of realization. Almost every newspaper that falls from a press tells the melancholy story of a rich man's son who has disappointed the hopes of his family and whose principal service to humanity has been to serve as a warning to those who come after him. We know what the gilded youth with a fabulous income does with his money and with himself. His patrimony and his vital forces are consumed in the mad pursuit of pleasure in some new or extravagant form.—Indianapolis Star.

His Life Work.
"The 'king of chiropodists' is dead."
"King?"
"Yes, that's what the newspapers call him."
"I suppose his career shows what may be accomplished by a man who begins at the foot?"
"Yes; he began at the foot and stayed there."—Houston Post.

A Giveaway.
"Since Lottie moved to the city her letters smell of coffee and spices. I wonder what's the reason."
"She lives in one of those condensed flats. The writing desk and pantry are combined in one piece of furniture."—Detroit Free Press.

Well diggers have to do a lot of deep thinking.