

Between Two Fires

By ANTHONY HOPE

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

CHAPTER XVII.—(Continued.)

There was in the room, as perhaps might be expected, a washing stand. This article was of the description one often sees; above the level of the stand itself there rose a wooden screen to the height of two feet and a half, covered with pretty tiles, the presumable object being to protect the wall paper. I never saw a more innocent looking bit of furniture; it might have stood in a lady's dressing room. The Signorina went up to it and said it gently on one side; it moved in a groove! Then she pressed a spot in the wall behind, and a small piece of it rolled aside, disclosing a keyhole.

"He's taken the key, of course," she said. "We must break it open. Who's got a hammer?"

Tools were procured, and, working under the Signorina's directions, after a good deal of trouble, we laid bare a neat little safe embedded in the wall. This safe was legibly inscribed on the outside, "Burglar's Puzzle." We, however, were not afraid of making a noise, and it only puzzled us for ten minutes.

When opened it revealed a Golconda! There lay in securities and cash no less than \$500,000!

We smiled at one another.

"O sad revelation," I remarked.

"Hoary old fox!" said the Colonel.

No wonder the harbor works were unremunerative in their early stages. The President must have kept them at a very early stage.

"What are you people up to?" cried Carr.

"Rank burglary, my dear boy," I replied, and we retreated with our spoils.

"Now," said I to the Colonel, "what are you going to do?"

"Why, what do you think, Mr. Martin?" interposed the Signorina. "He's going to give you your money, and divide the rest with his sincere friend, Christina Nugent."

"Well, I suppose so," said the Colonel. "But it strikes me you are making a good thing of this, Martin."

"My dear Colonel," said I, "a bargain is a bargain, and where would you have been without my money?"

The Colonel made no reply, but handed me the money, which I liked much better. I took the \$520,000 and said:

Now I can face the world, an honest man."

The Signorina laughed.

"I am glad," she said, "chiefly for poor old Jones' sake. It'll take a load off his mind."

The Colonel proceeded to divide the remainder into two little heaps, one of which he pushed over to the Signorina. She took it gaily, saying:

"Now I shall make curl papers of half my bonds, and I shall rely on the—what do you call it?—the Provisional government to pay the rest. You remember about the house?"

"I'll see about that soon," said the Colonel impatiently. "You two seem to think there's nothing to do but take the money. You forget we've got to make our positions safe."

"Exactly. The Colonel's government must be carried on," said I.

The Signorina did not catch the allusion. She yawned, and said:

"Oh, then I shall go. Rely on my loyalty, your excellency."

She made him a courtesy and went to the door. As I opened it for her she whispered, "Horrid old bear! Come and see me, Jack," and so vanished, carrying off her dollars.

I returned and sat down opposite the Colonel.

"I wonder how she knew about the washing stand?" I remarked.

"Because Whittingham was fool enough to tell her," said the Colonel testily.

Then we settled to business. This unambitious tale does not profess to be a complete history of Aureatland, and I will spare my readers the recital of our discussion. We decided at last that matters were still so critical, owing to the President's escape, that the ordinary forms of law and constitutional government must be temporarily suspended. The chamber was not in session, which made this course easier. The Colonel was to be proclaimed President and to assume supreme power under martial law for some weeks, while we looked about us. It was thought better that my name should not appear officially, but I agreed to take in hand, under his supervision, all matters relating to finance.

"We can't pay the interest on the real debt," he said.

"No," I replied; "you must issue a notice, setting forth that, owing to General Whittingham's malversations, payments must be temporarily suspended. Promise it will be all right later on."

"Very good," said he; "and now I shall go and look up those officers. I must keep them in good temper, and the men, too. I shall give 'em another ten thousand."

"Generous hero!" said I, "and I shall go and restore this cash to my employers."

CHAPTER XVIII.

It was twelve o'clock when I left the Golden House and strolled quietly down to Liberty street. The larger part of the soldiers had been drawn off, but a couple of companies still kept guard in the Piazza. The usual occupations of life were going on amid a confused stir of excitement, and I saw by the interest my appearance aroused that some part at least of my share in the night's doings had leaked out. The Gazette had published a special edition, in which it hailed the advent of freedom, and, while lauding McGregor to the skies, bestowed a warm commendation on the "noble Englishman who, with a native love of liberty, had taken on himself the burden of Aureatland in her hour of travail." The metaphor struck me as inappropriate, but the sentiment was most healthy; and when I finally beheld two officers of police sitting on the head of a drunken man for toasting the falling regime, I could say to myself, as I turned into the bank, "Order reigns in Warsaw."

General assent had proclaimed a suspension of commerce on this auspicious day, and I found Jones sitting idle and ill at ease. I explained to him the state of affairs, showing how the President's dishonorable scheme had compelled me, in the interests of the bank, to take a more or less active part in the revolution. It was pathetic to hear him bewail the villainy of the man he had trusted, and when I produced the money, he blessed me fervently, and at once proposed writing to the directors a full account of the matter.

"They are bound to vote you an honorarium, sir," he said.

"I don't know, Jones," I replied. "I am afraid there is a certain prejudice against me at headquarters. But in any case I have resolved to forego the personal advantage that might accrue to me from my conduct. President McGregor has made a strong representation to me that the schemes of General Whittingham, if publicly known, would, however unjustly, prejudice the credit of Aureatland, and he appealed to me not to give particulars to the world. In matters such as these, Jones, we cannot be guided solely by selfish considerations."

"Heaven forbid, sir!" said Jones, much moved.

"I have, therefore, consented to restrict myself to a confidential communication to the directors; they must judge how far they will pass it on to the shareholders. To the world at large I shall say nothing of the second loan; and I know you will oblige me by treating this money as the product of realizations in the ordinary course of business. The recent disturbances will quite account for so large a sum being called in."

"I don't quite see how I can arrange that,"

"Ah, you are overdone," said I. "Leave it all to me, Jones."

And this I persuaded him to do. In fact, he was so relieved at seeing the money back that he was easy to deal with; and if he suspected anything, he was overruled by my present exalted position. He appeared to forget what I could not, that the President, no doubt, still possessed that fatal cable!

After lunch I remembered my engagement with the Signorina, and, putting on my hat, was bidding farewell to business, when Jones said:

"There's a note just come for you, sir. A little boy brought it while you were out at lunch."

He gave it to me—a little dirty envelope, with an illiterate scrawl. I opened it carefully, but as my eye fell on the President's hand, I started in amazement. The note was dated "Saturday—From on board The Songstress, and ran as follows:

"Dear Mr. Martin—I must confess to having underrated your courage and abilities. If you care to put them to my disposal now, I will accept them. In the other event, I must refer you to my public announcement. In any case it may be useful to you to know that McGregor designs to marry Signorina Nugent. I fear that on my return it will be hardly consistent with my public duties to spare your life (unless you accept my present offer), but I shall always look back to your acquaintance with pleasure. I have, if you will allow me to say so, seldom met a young man with such natural gifts for finance and politics. I shall anchor five miles out from Whittingham to-night (for I know you have no ships), and if you join me, well and good. If not, I shall consider your decision irrevocable. Believe me, dear Mr. Martin, faithfully yours,

"MARCUS W. WHITTINGHAM,

"President of the Republic of Aureatland."

The President's praise was grateful to me. But I did not see my way to fall in with his views. He said nothing about the money, but I knew well that its return would be a condition of any alliance between us. Again, I was sure that he also "designed to marry the Signorina," and if I must have a rival on the spot I preferred McGregor in that capacity. Lastly, I thought that after all there is a decency in things, and I had better stick to my party. I did not, however, tell McGregor about the letter, merely sending him a line to say I had heard that he had better look out.

This done, I resumed my interrupted progress to the Signorina's. When I was shown in, she greeted me kindly.

"I have had a letter from the President," I said.

"Yes," said she, "he told me he had written to you."

"Why, have you heard from him?"

"Yes, just a little note. He is rather cross with me. Are you going over to him—going to forsake me?"

"How can you ask me? Won't you show me your letter, Christina?"

"No, John," she answered, mimicking my impassioned tones. "I may steal the President's savings, but I respect his confidence."

"You know what he says to me about McGregor?"

"Yes," said the Signorina. "But, curious to relate, the Colonel has just been here himself and told me the same thing. The Colonel has not a nice way of making love, Jack—not so nice as yours nearly."

This encouraged I went and sat down by her. I believe I took her hand.

"You don't love him?"

"Not at all," she replied. "I like you very much, Jack," she said, "and it's very sweet of you to have made a revolution for me. It was for me, Jack?"

"Of course it was, my darling," I promptly replied.

"But you know, Jack, I don't see how we're much better off. Indeed, in a way it's worse. The President wouldn't let anybody else marry me, but he wasn't so peremptory as the Colonel. The Colonel declares he will marry me this day week!"

"We'll see about that," said I, savagely.

"Another revolution, Jack?" asked the Signorina.

"You needn't laugh at me," I said sulkily.

"Poor boy! What are we idyllic lovers to do?"

"I don't believe you're a bit in earnest."

"Yes, I am, Jack—now." Then she went on, with a sort of playful pity, "Look at my savage, jealous Jack. It's pleasant while it lasts; try not to be broken-hearted if it doesn't last."

"If you love me, why don't you come with me out of this sink of iniquity?"

"Run away with you?" she asked with open amazement. "Do you think that we're the sort of people for a romantic elopement? I am very earthy. And so are you, Jack dear, nice earth, but earth, Jack."

There was a good deal of truth in this remark. We were not an ideal pair for love in a cottage.

"Yes," I said. "I've got no money."

"I've got a little money, but not much. I've been paying my debts," she added proudly.

"I haven't been even doing that. And I'm not quite equal to purloining that \$300,000."

"We must wait, Jack. But this I will promise: I'll never marry the Colonel. If it comes to that or running away, we'll run away."

"And Whittingham?"

The Signorina for once looked grave.

"You know him," she said. "Think what he made you do! and you're not a weak man, or I shouldn't be fond of you, Jack, you must keep him away."

She was quite agitated; and it was one more tribute to the President's powers that he should exert so strange an influence over such a nature. I was burning to ask her more about herself and the President, but I could not while she was distressed. And when I had comforted her, she resolutely declined to return to the subject.

"No, go away now," she said. "Think how we are to checkmate our two Presidents. And, Jack, whatever happens, I got you back the money. I've done you some good. So be kind to me. I'm not very much afraid of your heart breaking. You have plenty of useful things to occupy your time."

At last I accepted my dismissal, and walked off, my happiness considerably damped by the awkward predicament in which we stood. Clearly McGregor meant business; and at this moment McGregor was all powerful. If he kept the reins, I should lose my love. If the President came back, a worse fate still threatened. Supposing it were possible to carry off the Signorina, which I doubted very much, where were we to go to? And would she come? On the whole, I did not think she would come.

(To be continued.)

END OF THE LUCY WALKER.

Steamboat Race on the Mississippi that Cost Many Lives.

Passing the place a few days ago where this noted Cherokee Indian used to live, we were reminded of the history and tragic death of the man, Joe Vann, who was the most noted Cherokee of his time, says the Fort Gibson Post.

He used to live about three miles below Fort Gibson, opposite the mouth of Bayou Manard, on the opposite side of the Arkansas River.

He owned 500 slaves, 300 of whom were men. He had thousands of acres of land, many cattle and horses, some being racing stock. He owned the first steamboat that came up the Arkansas River to Fort Gibson, when the United States government had a line of boats to this place to supply the large garrison then stationed here. This boat was named the Lucy Walker, and in those days was noted for her speed. She ran between Fort Gibson and lower Mississippi ports, even to New Orleans, carrying passengers and freight.

Vann was a strange Indian, unlike any known before or since, and was known as a "dead game sport," open-hearted, brave and generous to a fault. He was good to all his slaves and they liked him and would obey him in anything. He won and lost large sums on horse-racing and gambling, but it was all the same to him, for he kept up his end of the sport at all times and seasons. This was along the 30's and 40's, not long after the Cherokees took possession of the country.

Vann had one fault, which ultimately caused his tragic death. He could not brook a boasting rival and would not take a "dare." While his steamboat had no rival for speed on the Arkansas River, from its mouth at the Mississippi to Little Rock and Fort Gibson, there were two or three on the Mississippi River, between St. Louis and New Orleans. One of these boats, said to be the fastest on the river, attempted to pass him on the way down.

Vann had a crew of thirty negroes, said to have no superiors on the river. He told the boys that the Lucy Walker must be kept ahead, no matter at what cost. An allowance of grog was given to each, and all promised to stand up to the work. The rival boat was gaining on them. The usual fall failed to give sufficient speed. Vann went around and told the hands to gather up everything that would burn. Tar and bacon were thrown into the furnace and soon the Lucy Walker was forging ahead of her rival.

Timbers of the boat creaked and groaned. The furnace was red hot. The boilers were seething and foaming. The heat was terrific. The passengers, of whom there were about 150, became alarmed, but Vann was cool as a cucumber. He told his negro crew that they would beat the rival boat or all go to hades together, and they promised to stand by him.

About that time there was an awful explosion and there was nothing left of the Lucy Walker but scattered fragments. Most of the crew were blown to atoms, besides about forty passengers dead and nearly all more or less injured. Vann's body was found horribly mangled.

As a Supplanted.

The Maid—Do you think the automobile will ever supplant the horse?

The Man—No; but it may supplant the mule in the course of time. One is fully as unreliable as the other.



FARM AND GARDEN

Filling the Mow Made Easy.

An easy method of filling mows with straw from the thrasher or with hay when partly full is as follows: Fasten a pulley on a rafter a little beyond beam. Nail two wide boards C on the beams for the bundle to slide upon. The rope D having a hook upon one

end, is placed under and around the straw and fastened. The bundle is then lifted by a man at D. When it reaches the top beam it swings in and is lowered into the mow. It can then be placed where wanted and unfastened. This device is very handy and saves much time.

Macaroni Wheat.

Grant Robinson of St. Paul, Minn., has purchased 40,000 acres of land in Presidio county, Texas, which he will devote to the culture of macaroni wheat on a scale the largest ever attempted in the world. Extensive preparations are now going forward for the consummation of the plans of the capitalist. Seed for planting will be brought to this country from the Volga region of Russia.

The field will be cultivated on the very latest and most improved method of wheat farming. Monster stake plows will be utilized in breaking up the land; in fact, all of the latest types of farming machinery will be used on the plantation.

Mr. Robinson proposes to have the largest and best managed wheat farm in the world. He will build a system of tenant houses and supply the wants of his laboring men from a commissary. A school will be built for the children of the laboring men, as well as churches, etc. The farm is near Valentine, accessible to the railroad, and has proven under tests to be admirably adapted to the culture of macaroni wheat.

Cold Storage for Farmers.

Putting first-class apples in cold storage for sale in late winter or early spring, is usually very profitable, says Farming. Other fruit and farm products may also be stored to advantage. The expense of a cold storage plant precludes its use by most fruit growers. Co-operation among farmers will sometimes be possible along this line. Granges and other farmers' organizations may do educational and practical work also. But available for every farmer are the refrigerator plants now found in almost every city. Rooms or space may be rented as one needs. Generally it is best to store in the city where it is intended to sell, that the produce may be on the ground in case of an advantageous market. Many a grower of fine fruit would be dollars ahead by availing himself of cold storage facilities.

Sheep Shearing Table.

Make a table with a hollow top, on which to lay the sheep. On each side of the board have a strap or rope with a snap hook to hold kicking sheep. The

hollow top places the sheep at a disadvantage in trying to get up. This table is also very handy in tagging sheep; also in cleaning hogs, as the water will fall through the slats and will keep the hogs much cleaner.

Sowing Spinach.

Early spinach is seeded in the fall. The ground should be plowed and made fine, plenty of well-rotted manure applied, and the seed sown in rows about 16 inches apart, which should be done with a seed drill having a small roller to cover and press the earth on the seeds, the depth of planting the seeds being about half an inch. The seed should be sown before cold weather sets in. When the plants are up let them grow until the ground is frozen, and then cover with straw, which should be removed early in the spring. Spinach is a very hardy plant and is seldom injured by cold.

The Secret of Success.

The superiority of butter made in Denmark is known the world over where butter is sold. Many investigations of Danish methods have been made and the conclusion is that cleanliness is the secret of the success of the Danish dairymen in making butter.

Soapsuds for Plants.

The ordinary concentrated lye is really caustic soda, which is cheaper than potash. Soda lye makes hard soap and potash lye soft soap. Soapsuds from soft soap makes a valuable fertilizer, but soda soapsuds are not considered valuable, except for celery and asparagus, which are always benefited by soda in any form. The use of any kind of soapsuds is beneficial in assisting to liberate plant food in the soil, however.

Save Falling Leaves.

When the leaves begin to fall, do not burn them. Save all of them. They make the humus that by and by becomes soil, and is of immense value in all its stages of change. The most irrational work ever done by a human being is to take what nature has spent the whole summer in creating for him, and throw it back into its elemental conditions. These leaves are nature's contribution, and her very best contribution to man's wealth. They are naturally spread all over the lawns each year, as a winter protection; and after they have accomplished that mission they are worked over into a compost of humus. As a rule, do not rake them too completely off the lawns. The leaves you do take instead of burning, use for banking up buildings, for that will save coal; to cover or bank around plants; for stable bedding; or on the floors of henhouses, and in rooms where the hens may scratch during the winter.

Good Poultry Feeder.

Get a flat, empty grocery box and cut a section out of it, as shown in illustration. Nail a strip of thin board over the beveled portion and set the affair against the wall. Here you have a self-feeding box in which can be put grit, bone, charcoal or grain. One or two partitions put in before cutting out the beveled section would make two or three compartments, in which

two or three of the articles could be kept at the same time. This is the easiest possible way to make a self-feeding box. Have the top or cover part of the box slanting, so that the fowls cannot roost on it.

Value of Farm Animals.

The Department of Agriculture has published a statement of the number and the value of farm animals.

There are over a billion and a half dollars' worth of horses in the United States, and the total value of all live stock amounts to \$3,655,389,443. The humble mule leads all other animals in average value per head. The detailed list of classes is as follows:

Farm Animals.	No.	per head.	Value.
Horses	18,718,578	\$80.72	\$1,510,880,000
Mules	3,404,061	98.31	334,680,520
Milk cows	19,738,866	29.44	582,788,592
Other cattle	47,047,656	15.55	731,171,709
Sheep	50,931,819	3.54	179,064,144
Hogs	52,102,847	6.18	321,802,571

No Grain in the Orchard.

There are many ways of caring for an orchard. We work our land in corn as long as possible, in order to cultivate the trees and keep the land clean. This is to prevent us being troubled by rabbits. Where there are no trees or grass we can put the richness back into the soil with clover. If the land is rich this clover may be cut for hay, if poor, it should be left and turned under to enrich the land as much as possible. Never plant any of the small grains in the orchard. Growth is the most necessary item for the young trees.—T. H. Todd, Missouri.

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LITERARY LITTLE BITS

Harvey J. O'Higgins' "Don-a-Dreams," it is said, will prove altogether different from anything he has before published. It is the romance of a Canadian lad, "a lover, a poet, a gentle solitary," who seeks his fortune in New York. Bohemian New York is described; and the characters include a gifted and visionary dramatist, a prominent manager, a clever and flippant dramatic critic and "the most beautiful woman on the American stage."

The mere statement that the sister of A. Conan Doyle has herself written a detective story is enough to arouse public curiosity, aside from the mystery of the plot itself. Here is an opportunity for a family test of the comparative fertility, in certain directions, of a man's and a woman's mind. "The Secret of the Moor Cottage," by H. Ripley Cromarsh, who is none other than the sister of A. Conan Doyle, is announced for immediate publication. This tale of mystery and adventure—as might be expected when written by the sister of A. Conan Doyle—naturally involves a detective, who, although not a professional one, discovers himself in a situation where he finds it desirable, for various reasons, to seek a solution of the puzzle which surrounds him. He tells the story himself, with a supplementary narrative by one of the other characters of the story for the final clearing up of the mystery.

The announcement that Henry George, Jr., author of "The Menace of Privilege" and other books dealing with social conditions, has turned novelist is only less interesting than the statement that his story, which is shortly to be published, is in a measure founded on the career of his father. The remark has often been made, with even more justice than usual in such cases, that the life story of the elder Henry George reads like a romance. No one can be better aware of this than his son, who has seized on some of the most striking and dramatic episodes in his life as the basis for his novel. "The Romance of John Bainbridge" is described as a tale of a young lawyer of high ideals who enters politics for the purpose of fighting the private ownership of privileges in the public highways. It is John Bainbridge's pity for the multitude who suffer at the hands of privilege and his self-consecration to the task of fighting the evil that recall most forcibly the characteristics in the author's father. Other characters in the book are said to be more or less accurately drawn from living models, and the