

Between Two Fires

By ANTHONY HOPE

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

CHAPTER XXIII.—(Continued.)

I could not pretend to regret the dead man. Indeed, I had been near doing the same deed myself. But I shrank before this calm ruthlessness. Another long pause followed. Then the President said: "I'm sorry for all this, Martin—sorry you and I came to blows." "You played me false about the money," I said bitterly. "Yes, yes," he answered gently: "I don't blame you. You were bound to me by no ties. Of course you saw my plan?" "I supposed your excellency meant to keep the money and throw me over."

"Not altogether," he said. "Of course I was bound to have the money. But it was the other thing, you know. As far as the money went, I would have taken care you came to no harm." "What was it, then?" "I thought you understood all along," he said with some surprise. "I saw you were my rival with Christina, and my game was to drive you out of the country by making the place too hot for you."

"She told me you didn't suspect about me and her till quite the end."

"Did she?" he answered with a smile: "I must be getting clever to deceive two such wide-awake young people. Of course I saw it all along. But you had more grit than I thought. I've never been so nearly done by any man as by you. I'm sorry, Martin; I liked you, you know. But likings mustn't interfere with duty."

He went on, smiling. "What claim have you at my hands?"

"Decent burial, I suppose," I answered. He got up and paced the room for a moment or two. I waited with some anxiety, for life is worth something to a young man, even when things look blackest, and I never was a hero.

"I make you this offer," he said at last. "Your boat lies there ready. Get into her and go; otherwise—"

"I see," said I. "And you will marry her?"

"Yes," he said. "Against her will?"

He looked at me with something like pity.

"Who can tell what a woman's will will be in a week? In less than that she will marry me cheerfully. I hope you may grieve as short a time as she will."

In my inmost heart I knew it was true. I had staked everything, not for a woman's love, but for the whim of a girl! For a moment it was too hard for me, and I bowed my head on the table by me and hid my face. Then he came and put his hand on mine, and said:

"Yes, Martin; young and old, we are all alike. They're not worth quarrelling for. But nature's too strong."

"May I see her before I go?" I asked. "Yes," he said.

"Alone?"

"Yes," he said once more. "Go now—If she can see you."

I went up and cautiously opened the door. The Signorina was lying on the bed, with a shawl over her. She seemed to be asleep. I bent over her and kissed her. She opened her eyes, and said in a weary voice:

"Is it you, Jack?"

"Yes, my darling," said I. "I am going. I must go or die; and whether I go or die, I must be alone."

She was strangely quiet, even apathetic. As I knelt down by her she raised herself, and took my face between her hands and kissed me, not passionately, but tenderly.

"My poor Jack," she said: "it was no use, dear. It is no use to fight against him."

"You love me?" I cried in my pain.

"Yes," she said, "but I am very tired; and he will be good to me."

Without another word I went from her, with the bitter knowledge that my great grief found but a pale reflection in her heart.

"I am ready to go," I said to the President.

"Come then," he replied. "Here, take these, you may want them," and he thrust a bundle of notes into my hand (some of my own from the bank I afterward discovered).

Arrived at the boat, I got in mechanically, and made all preparations for the start. Then the President took my hand.

"Good-bye, Jack Martin, and good luck. Some day we may meet again. Just now there's no room for us both here. You bear no malice?"

"No, sir," said I. "A fair fight, and you've won."

As I was pushing off he added:

"When you arrive, send me word."

I turned the boat's head out to sea, and went forth on my lonely way into the night.

CHAPTER XXIV.

As far as I am concerned, this story has now reached an end. With my departure from Aureatland I re-entered the world of humdrum life, and since that memorable night nothing has befallen me worthy of a polite reader's attention. I have endured the drudgery incident to earning a living; I have enjoyed the relaxations every wise man makes for himself. But I should be guilty of unpardonable egotism if I supposed that I, myself, was the only, or the most, interesting subject presented in the foregoing pages, and I feel I shall merely be doing my duty in briefly recording the facts in my possession concerning the other persons who have figured in this record and the country where its scene was laid.

I did not, of course, return to England, on leaving Aureatland. I had no desire to explain in person to the directors all the facts with which they will now be in a position to acquaint themselves. I was conscious that, at the last of all events, I had rather subordinated their interests to my own necessities, and I knew well that my conduct would not meet with the indulgent judgment that it perhaps requires. After all, men who have lost three hundred thousand dollars can hardly be expected to be impartial, and I saw no reason for submitting myself to a biased tribunal. I preferred to seek my fortune in a fresh country, and I am happy to say that my prosperity

in the land of my adoption has gone far to justify the President's favorable estimate of my financial abilities.

My sudden disappearance excited some remark, and people were even found to insinuate that the dollars went the same way as I did. I have never troubled myself to contradict these scandalous rumors, being content to rely on the handsome vindication from this charge which the President published. In addressing the House of Assembly shortly after his resumption of power he referred at length to the circumstances attendant on the late revolution, and remarked that although he was unable to acquit Mr. Martin of most unjustifiable intrigues with the rebels, yet he was in a position to assure them, as he had already assured those to whom Mr. Martin was primarily responsible, that that gentleman's last fight was dictated solely by a consciousness of political guilt, and that, in money matters, Mr. Martin's hand was as clean as his own. The reproach that had fallen on the fair fame of Aureatland in this matter was due not to that able but misguided young man, but to those unprincipled persons who, in the pursuit of their designs, had not hesitated to plunder and despoil friendly traders, established in the country under the sanction of public faith.

The reproach to which his excellency eloquently referred consisted in the fact that not a cent of those three hundred thousand dollars which lay in the bank that night was ever seen again! The theory was that the Colonel had made away with them, and the President took great pains to prove that under the law of nations the restored government could not be held responsible for this occurrence. I know as little about the law of nations as the President himself, but I felt quite sure that whatever that exalted code might say, none of that money would ever find its way back to the directors' pockets. In this matter I must say his excellency behaved to me with scrupulous consideration; not a word passed his lips about the second loan, about that unlucky cable, or any other dealings with the money. For all he said, my account of the matter, posted to the directors immediately after my departure, stood unimpeached.

The directors, however, took a view opposed to his excellency's, and relations became so strained that they were contemplating the withdrawal of their business from Whittingham altogether, when events occurred which modified their action. Before I lay down my pen I must give some account of these matters, and I cannot do so better than by inserting a letter which I had the honor to receive from his excellency, some two years after I last saw him. I had obeyed his wish in communicating my address to him, but at this time had received only a short but friendly note, acquainting me with the fact of his marriage to the Signorina, and expressing good wishes for my welfare in any new sphere of action. The matters to which the President refers became to some extent public property soon afterward, but certain other terms of the arrangement are now given to the world for the first time.

The letter ran as follows:

"My Dear Martin—As an old inhabitant of Aureatland, you will be interested in the news I have to tell you. I also take pleasure in hoping that, in spite of bygone differences, your friendly feelings toward myself will make you glad to hear news of my fortunes."

"You are no doubt acquainted generally with the course of events here since you left us. As regards private friends, I have not indeed much to tell you. You will not be surprised to learn that Johnny Carr has done the most sensible thing he ever did in his life in making Donna Antonia his wife. She is a thoroughly good girl, although she seems to have a very foolish prejudice against Christina. I was able to assist the young people's plans by the gift of the late Colonel McGregor's estates, which under our law passed to the Head of the State on that gentleman's execution for high treason. You will be amused to hear of another marriage in our circle. The doctor and Madame Devargues have made a match of it, and society rejoices to think it has now heard the last of the late monsieur and his patriotic sufferings. Jones, I suppose you know, left us about a year ago. The poor old fellow never recovered from his fright on that night, to say nothing of the cold he caught in his draughty coal-cellar, where he took refuge. The bank relieved him in response to his urgent petitions, and they've sent a young Puritan, to whom it would be quite in vain to apply for a timely little loan."

"I wish I could give you as satisfactory an account of public affairs. You were more or less behind the scenes over here, so you know that to keep the machine going is by no means an easy task. I have kept it going, single-handed, for fifteen years, and though it's the custom to call me a mere adventurer, upon my word I think I've given them a pretty decent government. But I've had enough of it by now. The fact is, my dear Martin, I'm not so young as I was. In years I'm not much past middle age, but I shouldn't be surprised if old Marcus Whittingham's lease was pretty nearly up. At any rate, my only chance, so Anderson tells me, is to get a rest, and I'm going to give myself that chance. I had thought at first of trying to find a successor, and I thought of you. But while I was considering this, I received a confidential proposal from the old government. They were very anxious to get back their province; at the same time, they were not at all anxious to try conclusions with me again. In short, they offered, if Aureatland would come back, a guarantee of local autonomy and full freedom; they would take on themselves the burden of the debt, and last, but not least, they would offer the present President of the Republic a compensation of \$500,000."

"I have not yet finally accepted the offer, but I am going to do so—obtaining, as a matter of form, the sanction of

the Assembly. I have made them double their offer to me, but in the public document the money is to stand at the original figure. This recognition of my services, together with my little savings, will make me pretty comfortable in my old age, and leave a competence for my widow. Aureatland has had a fun alone; if there had been any grit in the people they would have made a nation of themselves. There isn't any, and I'm not going to slave myself for them any longer. No doubt they'll be very well treated, and to tell the truth, I don't much care if they aren't. After all, they're a wretched lot."

"I know you'll be pleased to hear of this arrangement, as it gives your old masters a better chance of getting their money, for, between ourselves, they'd never have got it out of me. At the risk of shocking your feelings, I must confess that your revolution only postponed the day of reparation."

"I hoped to have asked you some day to rejoin us here. As matters stand, I am more likely to come and find you; for, when released, Christina and I are going to bend our steps to the States. And we hope to come soon. There's a little difficulty outstanding about the terms on which the Golden House and my other property are to pass to the new government; this I hope to compromise by abating half my claim in private, and giving it all up in public. Also I have had to bargain for the recognition of Johnny Carr's rights to the Colonel's goods. When all this is settled there will be nothing to keep me, and I shall leave here without much reluctance. The first man I shall come to see will be you. The truth is, my boy, I'm not the man I was. I've put too much steam on all my life, and I must pull up now, or the boiler will burst."

"Christina sends her love. She is as anxious to see you as I am. But you must wait till I am dead to make love to her. Ever your sincere friend,"

"MARCUS W. WHITTINGHAM."

As I write, I hear that the arrangement is to be carried out. So ends Aureatland's brief history as a nation; no ends the story of her national debt, more happily than I ever thought it would. I confess to a tender recollection of the sunny, cheerful, lazy, dishonest little place, where I spent four such eventful years. Perhaps I love it because my romance was played there, as I should love any place where I had seen the Signorina.

(THE END.)

PRECIOUS STONES AS CURE.

Prescribed as Medicine Away Back in the Second Century.

Truly, among the ancient volumes there are none which yield better entertainment to the student of human nature and its follies and follies than those dealing with ways and means to preserve mankind from ailments and disease, says the Westminster Gazette. And though the present day is said to furnish better opportunities to the quack doctor and the valetudinarian than any former period in the world's history, a glance through some of the medical works of four or five centuries ago shows that it would be difficult to beat some of the suggested cures and prescriptions.

We have come across some information gathered in an ancient volume telling of the marvelous properties of precious stones in curing disease. The compiler of the volume tells his readers that in the second century, A. D., a famous medical man cured King Necho of Egypt of digestive troubles by causing him to wear, tied around his neck, "a dragon cut out of green jasper."

"And whoever wished for valor and daring had only to wear a diamond about his person. 'But if taken internally in any shape or form it is poisonous.' Ten centuries later an Italian medical celebrity caused his patients to wear rubies 'for to make them cautious and to drive away idle and foolish thoughts.' Taken internally, the ruby kept the plague at bay and fortified the system against all manner of disease. The emerald, crushed to powder and administered in doses from six to thirty grains, was an infallible remedy against colic, snake bites, plague and epileptic fits. Likewise it stopped bleeding, strengthened the memory 'and banished the fear of ghosts and evil spirits,' and, in fact, to have been a panacea against all ills, so that one can almost read with approval of this otherwise cruel system of crushing into powder one of the most wonderful bits of color which nature can produce. The sapphire ran the emerald close for remedial virtues, and in powdered form 'strengthened the heart and cured running eyes,' while the 'strengthening of the heart' was also a property of the crushed turquoise and the ruby."

Apart from the curative qualities which each separate kind of precious stone possessed there were various mixtures, mainly manufactured in France, for which fabulous prices were paid, and there was one remedy in particular, composed of a mixture of powdered corals, pearl, sapphire, emerald, topaz, gold leaf, silver leaf, grease of serpent, toad and unicorn, which was considered as indispensable in a household as food and drink.

An old French medical man writes that this powder, notwithstanding its enormous price, is found in almost every home in France, especially in Provence and Languedoc. "But," he adds, "the great popularity of the remedy is the reason why there are thousands of imitations, and it is a very rare thing to find a tiny pot of the real thing."

Among the properties of the topaz was the invaluable one of improving bad temper, and one is apt to think that in this respect it may, even in this day of exploded "superstitions," retain its power, especially if, instead of being held "under the nose" of the sufferer (presumably for inhalation), it is presented in a dainty and artistic setting.

Ireland's high-water mark in population was reached in 1874. She had then 3,175,124 people. She has now fewer than 4,500,000.



FARM AND GARDEN.

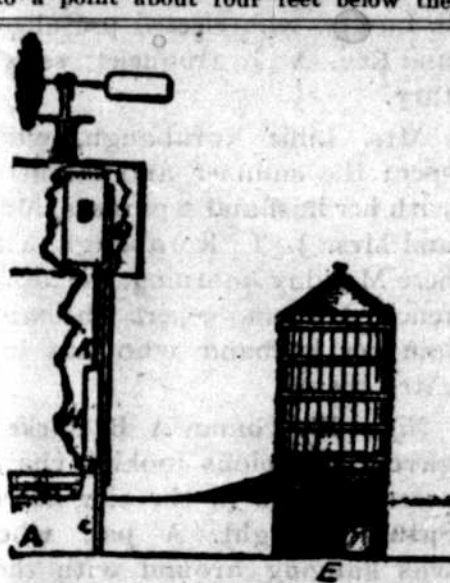
Farm Water Supply.
In establishing a water supply system for a farm, the first thing to be determined is the kind of power to be used in making the supply of water available for the uses of man and beast. Wind power is the most common, though gasoline, as well as horse and tread power are more and more coming into use. As to which power should be used it can only be said that local circumstances and conditions will always determine this.

The illustration is a design of a water system where the supply comes from a tubular well and the water is pumped by wind power. The dwelling



WATER TANK IN THE BARN.

and barn are practically on level ground, hence the necessity for elevating the supply wholly or in part so that water may be easily distributed. The yards for the stock in this instance occupy a slightly lower elevation than is occupied by the house and barn. The supply tank in this case is made of good lumber, and is placed on a good, frost-proof brick wall which extends about two feet above the surface of the ground, and also descends to a point about four feet below the



ARRANGEMENT FOR WATER SUPPLY.

surface. The space below the tank is used as a sort of creamery room.

In this system the water is forced from the well through the pipe (A) by windmill power, directly to a forty-barrel galvanized tank (B) located in the garret of the residence. From here it may be piped to any part of the house. An overflow pipe (E) taps the tank near the top and conducts the water to the large cypress supply tank. By this method the freshest water remains in the galvanized tank in the garret. The pipe (G) leads from this supply tank to wherever the water is required for use, to hog lots, stock tanks, etc. By this plan there is a permanent supply under pressure so long as the well or spring is not exhausted and the windmill kept in order.

Where all buildings are nearly on a level it is sometimes practicable to place the supply tank in the barn as indicated in the smaller figure. This makes it convenient to surround the tank with packing material so that the water does not freeze. If one will go a single step further and place the main drinking tank also inside this building, it makes an exceedingly convenient plan for watering stock in winter, because of putting down the lid at night, it is possible to practically exclude frost.

Orchard Crops.

Potatoes are the best crop to grow in an orchard. The tops cover the ground at the time of year when the ground most needs protection from the hot rays of the sun in midsummer. With many crops the land is left bare and dry at the very time of year when of all others it needs protection. This is true of the winter grain crops, which are cut in early summer. The ground is unprotected during the hottest period and dries out to a considerable depth. In such circumstances trees sometimes stop growing altogether. It is hard on trees the first year to have the ground over their roots devoid of a crop. The roots have not obtained much of a grasp of the earth in any way and the ground dries out to the roots themselves. The trees do well if they keep from dying under such conditions.

Care of the Grindstone.

It is very common on some farms to keep the grindstone out of doors, sheltered only by the foliage of some trees in summer, but in winter it is exposed to all kinds of storms. These stones are always more or less porous. If they were not they would not make good material to sharpen metal-cutting tools. When a grindstone gets wet, and the moisture in it freezes, pieces of the stone chip off and the stone wears away unevenly, thus soon becoming of very little value.

Bacteria in Butter Wash Water.

In a bulletin issued by the Kansas State Agriculture College, C. W. Melick, assistant dairy husbandman, arrives at the following conclusions regarding the effect of bacteria in wash water for butter: It is both practical and economical to sterilize wash water for butter if it can be cooled and used immediately. Otherwise, the practice is a useless expense. A filter for creamery water is only a source of contamination and filth unless frequently cleaned and refilled with fresh filtering material. Water, melted from ice, even though kept at 50 degrees Fahrenheit, may become filled with bacterial growth if allowed to stand for a few hours in a wooden tank from day to day without thorough cleaning. Great care should therefore be taken in the utilization of such water for cooling purposes. There is a direct relation between the bacterial content of the wash water used and the keeping quality of the butter. Water kept at a low temperature from 40 to 50 degrees Fahrenheit for a few hours inhibits the development of bacteria, or destroys from one-half to four-fifths of those present.

Alfalfa and Hog Growing.

Alfalfa pasture for hogs has proved to be very profitable. A hog grower says in the Indiana Farmer: "From March 1 to November 1, I keep 200 head of hogs, including some twenty-five brood sows, in a six-acre patch of alfalfa and cut the alfalfa twice, averaging at these two cuttings more than 32 inches in height. These hogs were in this alfalfa patch all the time every day except when the ground was too wet to permit them to run on it. I fed each of them three or four ears of corn a day, so I do not claim that 200 head of hogs could be run on six acres of alfalfa alone that length of time. I always feed corn to my growing hogs along with alfalfa. Of these hogs, 150 head averaged above 300 pounds on November 1. In wet weather I turn the hogs into a corral where alfalfa hay is stacked, and they seem to relish it, as

HORRORS IN LIFE OF A RUSSIAN COUNTESS.



That the lives of Russian women are frequently mixed with tragedy, is shown by the history of the 23-year-old widow of the late Count Romanoff. The countess is the eldest daughter, by a morganatic marriage of Grand Duke Sergius, who was blown to pieces by a bomb over a year ago. She was married to Count Romanoff in February, last year, and when he was murdered a few months later she was forced to stand by and witness the crime. Then she was seized in her St. Petersburg home and made a secret prisoner by the officer in charge of the soldiers. She resisted him and escaped last June and has since been hiding in London.

WOMEN AS EXPLORERS.

One of Them Crosses Northern Labrador with Husband.

The arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Tasker at Port Kimo on the east coast of the arctic peninsula, adds another to the list of women explorers, says the New York World. As probably the first white woman to cross northern Labrador, she has fairly won her spurs in a field of adventure for which her sex has of recent years shown a rare aptitude. Mrs. Tasker's feat will recall Mrs. Hubbard's venture into Labrador in the track of her husband's ill-fated expedition and the arctic voyage of Mrs. Peary. The return of Mrs. Max Fleischmann from a honeymoon spent in the arctic regions shooting polar bears illustrates new feminine ideals of a wedding journey.

The exploits of Miss Mary Kingsley on the lower Niger still challenge comparison with masculine standards. Accompanied only by native attendants, she penetrated for long distances through the bush in the face of frequent dangers. In her writings she showed rare insight and sympathy with the native point of view, which male explorers have not always done. The reputation made by Miss Annie Peck as a mountain climber is world-wide. From the Matterhorn to the Peruvian peaks, what difficult summit has she left unscathed? She was the first woman to climb Orizaba, and she scaled Mount Sorata, in Bolivia, to a height of 20,500 feet, almost exactly that of Mount McKinley, which Dr. Frederick A. Cook has just conquered.

In mountain climbing woman now asks no odds of man. Miss J. E. Duncan, whose explorations in Tibet carried her into regions previously unvisited, was the first European woman to cross the Changa pass, which is nearly 18,000 feet above the sea, 1,400 higher than any pass crossed by the British expedition to Lhasa. Mrs. Bullock-Workman has scaled great heights in the Himalayas. In April last Mrs. Laura Fitzgerald, an American, was reported to have left Mogador to explore the great Atlas mountains, among which are summits 14,500 feet high. Mountain climbing being in extreme altitudes a test rather of vital endurance than of muscular strength, women who have cool heads find it not beyond their powers. Fitzgerald camped for months at the base of Aconcagua, unable to get to the top, although there were no insuperable difficulties except the strain on the heart and lungs. There are probably many women who could with training have staggered with his Swiss guide to the summit.

Glad the Minn Is Working.

He was a seedy-looking individual and reminded a casual observer of a man who, with Kipling's "tramp royale," had more than once found "his mate the wind which tramps the world." He wandered into small lunch room not far from Pennsylvania avenue and in a low voice ordered a mug of milk. He sipped the beverage slowly and it was evident that he was trying to make it do for a square meal.

Throwing down a dime on the counter, he waited for his change. The spy and observing waiter tossed a nickel out to him, but observing the coin's brilliancy picked it up and looked at the date.

"That's a 1906 nickel," he announced to the tramp.

The tramp verified his words by looking at the date for himself, then muttered sadly as he started out: "Thank God the minn's still working!"—Washington Star.

Held Back.

"That big fondry over there can't get ahead very fast."

"Why not?"

"It's always casting anchors."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

One reason people frequently take a lawyer's advice is that they have to pay for it.