

Between Two Fires

By ANTHONY HOPE

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

CHAPTER XV.—(Continued.)

Thus far the Signorina. I must beg to call special attention to the closing lines of her narrative. But before I relate the very startling occurrence to which she refers, we must return to the barracks, where, it will be remembered, matters were in a rather critical condition. When the officers saw their mess room suddenly filled with armed men, and heard the alarming order issued by the Colonel, their attention was effectually diverted from me. They crowded together on one side of the table, facing the Colonel and his men on the other. Assisted by the two men sent to my aid, I seized the opportunity to push my way through them and range myself by the side of my leader. After a moment's pause the Colonel began:

"The last thing we should desire, gentlemen," he said, "is to resort to force. But the time for explanation is short. The people of Aureatland have at last risen against the tyranny they have so long endured. General Whittingham has proved a traitor to the cause of freedom; he won his position in the name of liberty; he has used it to destroy liberty. The voice of the people has declared him to have forfeited his high office. The people have placed in my hand the sword of vengeance. Armed with this mighty sanction, I have appealed to the army. The army has proved true to its traditions—true to its character of the protector, not the oppressor, of the people. Gentlemen, will you who lead the army take your proper place?"

There was no reply to this moving appeal. He advanced closer to them, and went on:

"There is no middle way. You are patriots or traitors—friends of liberty or friends of tyranny. I stand here to offer you either a traitor's death, or, if you will, life, honor and the satisfaction of all your just claims. Do you mistrust the people? I, as their representative, here offer you every just due the people owe you—debts which had long been paid but for the greed of that great traitor."

As he said this he took from his men some bags of money, and threw them on the table with a loud clink.

Major DeChair glanced at the bags, and glanced at his comrades, and said:

"In the cause of liberty, heaven forbid we should be behind! Down with the tyrant!"

"And all the pack yelled in chorus! "Then, gentlemen, to the head of your men," said the Colonel, and going to the window, he cried to the throng:

"Men, your noble officers are with us." A cheer answered him. I wiped my forehead, and said to myself, "That's well over."

CHAPTER XVI.

I will not weary the reader with our further proceedings. Suffice to say we marshaled our host and marched down to the Piazza. The news had spread by now, and in the dimly breaking morning light we saw the Square full of people—men, women and children. As we marched in there was a cheer, not very hearty—a cheer propitiatory, for they did not know what we meant to do. The Colonel made them a brief speech, promising peace, security, liberty, plenty and all the goods of heaven. In a few stern words he cautioned them against "treachery," and announced that any rebellion against the Provisional government would meet with swift punishment. Then he posted his army in companies, to keep watch till all was quiet. And at last he said:

"Now, Martin, come back to the Golden House, and let's put that fellow in a safe place."

"Yes," said I, "and have a look for the money." For really in the excitement it seemed as if there was a danger of the most important thing of all being forgotten.

The dawn was now far advanced, and as we left the Piazza, we could see the Golden House at the other end of the avenue. All looked quiet, and the sentries were pacing to and fro. Drawing nearer, we saw two or three of the President's servants busied about their ordinary tasks. One woman was already removing Johnny Carr's life-blood with a mop and a pail of water; and a carpenter was at work repairing the front door. Standing by it was a doctor's brougham.

"Come to see Carr, I suppose," said I. Leaving our horses to the care of the men who were with us, we entered the house. Just inside we met the doctor himself. He was a shrewd little fellow, named Anderson, generally popular, and, although a personal friend of the President's, not openly identified with either political party.

"I have a request to make to you, sir," he said to McGregor, "about Mr. Carr."

"Well, is he dead?" said the Colonel.

"If he is, he's got himself to thank for it."

The doctor wisely declined to discuss this question, and confined himself to stating that he was not dead. On the contrary he was going on nicely.

"But" he went on, "quiet is essential, and I want to take him to my house, out of the racket. No doubt it is pretty quiet here now, but—"

The Colonel interrupted:

"Will he give his parole not to escape?"

"My dear sir," said the doctor, "the man couldn't move to save his life—and he's asleep now."

"You must wake him up to move him, I suppose," said the Colonel. "But you may take him. Let me know when he's well enough to see me. Meanwhile, I hold you responsible for his good behavior."

"Certainly," said the doctor. "I am content to be responsible for Mr. Carr."

"All right; take him and get out. Now for Whittingham!"

"Hadn't we better get the money first?" said I.

"I must have a bit of food. I've tasted nothing for twelve hours."

One of the servants, hearing him, said: "Breakfast can be served in a moment, sir." And he ushered us into the large dining room, where we soon had an excellent meal. When we had got through most of it, I broke the silence by asking:

"What are you going to do with him?"

"I should like to shoot him," said the Colonel.

"On what charge?"

"Treachery," he replied.

"That would hardly do, would it?"

"Well, then, embezzlement of public funds."

We had a little talk about the President's destiny, and I tried to persuade the Colonel to milder measures. In fact, I was determined to prevent such a murder if I could without ruin to myself.

"Well, we'll consider it when we've seen him," said the Colonel, rising. "We've wasted an hour breakfasting—it's seven o'clock."

I followed him along the path, and we entered the little room where we had left the President. The sentries were still there, each seated in an armchair. They were not asleep, but looked a little drowsy.

"All right?" said the Colonel.

"Yes, excellency," said one of them. "He is there in bed."

He went into the inner room and began to undo the shutters, letting in the early sun. We passed through the half-opened door and saw a peaceful figure lying in the bed, whence proceeded a gentle snore.

"Good nerve, hasn't he?" said the Colonel.

"Yes; but what a queer nightcap," I said, for the President's head was swathed in white linen.

The Colonel strode quickly up to the bed.

"Done!" he cried. "It's Johnny Carr!"

It was true; there lay Johnny. His excellency was nowhere to be seen. The Colonel shook Johnny roughly by the arm. The latter opened his eyes and said, sleepily:

"Steady there! Kindly remember I'm a trifle fragile."

"What's this plot? Where's Whittingham?"

"Ah, it's McGregor," said Johnny with a bland smile, "and Martin. How are you, old fellow? Some beast's hit me on the head."

"Where's Whittingham?" reiterated the Colonel savagely shaking Johnny's arm.

"Gently!" said I; "after all, he's a sick man."

The Colonel dropped the arm, and Johnny said sweetly:

"Quits, isn't it, Colonel?"

The Colonel turned from him, and said to his men sternly:

"Have you had any hand in this?"

They protested vehemently that they were as astonished as we were; and so they were, unless they acted consummately. They denied that anyone had entered the outer room or that any sound had proceeded from the inner. They had kept vigilant watch, and must have seen any intruder. Both the men inside were the Colonel's personal servants, and he believed in their honesty, but what of their vigilance? Carr heard him sternly questioning them, and said:

"Those chaps aren't to blame, Colonel. I didn't come in that way. If you'll take a look behind the bed you'll see another door. They brought me in there. I was rather queer and only half knew what was up."

We looked and saw a door where he said. Pushing the bed aside, we opened it, and found ourselves on the back staircase of the premises. Clearly the President had noiselessly opened this door and got out. But how had Carr got in without noise? The sentry came up, saying:

"Every five minutes, sir, I looked and saw him on the bed. He lay for the first hour in his clothes. The next look, he was undressed. It struck me he'd been pretty quick and quiet about it, but I thought no more."

"Depend on it, the dressed man was the President, the undressed man Carr! When was that?"

"About half-past two, sir; just after the doctor came."

"The doctor?" we cried.

"Yes, sir; Dr. Anderson."

"You never told me he had been here."

"He never went into the President's—into General Whittingham's room, sir; but he came in here for five minutes, to get some water, and stood talking with us for a time. Half an hour after he came in for some more."

We began to see how it was done. That wretched little doctor was in the plot. Somehow or other he had communicated with the President; probably he knew of the door. Then, I fancied, they must have worked something in this way. The doctor comes in to distract the sentries, while his excellency moves the bed. Finding that they took a look every five minutes, he told the President. Then he went and got Johnny Carr ready. Returning, he takes the President's place on the bed, and in that character under-

goes an inspection. The moment this is over he leaps up and goes out. Between them they bring in Carr, put him into bed, and slip out through the narrow space of open door behind the bedstead. When all was done, the doctor had come back to see if any suspicion had been aroused.

"I have it now!" cried the Colonel. "That doctor's done us both. He couldn't get Whittingham out of the house without leave, so he's taken him as Carr! Swindled me into giving my leave. Ah, look out if we meet, Mr. Doctor!"

We rushed out of the house and found this conjecture was true. The man who purported to be Carr had been carried out, enveloped in blankets, just as we sat down to breakfast; the doctor had put him into the carriage, followed himself, and driven rapidly away.

"Which way did they go?"

"Toward the harbor, sir," the sentry replied.

The harbor could be reached in twenty minutes' fast driving. Without a word the Colonel sprang on his horse; I imitated him, and we galloped as hard as we could, everyone making way before our furious charge. Alas! we were too late. As we drew rein on the quay we saw, half a mile out to sea, and sailing before a stiff breeze, Johnny Carr's little yacht, with the Aureatland flag floating defiantly at her mast-head.

We gazed at it blankly, with never a word to say, and turned our horses' heads. Our attention was attracted by a small group of men standing round the storm-signal post. As we rode up, they hastily scattered, and we saw pinned to the post a sheet of note paper. Thereon was written in a well-known hand:

"I, Marcus W. Whittingham, President of the Republic of Aureatland, hereby offer a reward of five thousand dollars and a free pardon to any person or persons assisting in the capture, dead or alive, of George McGregor (late Colonel in the Aureatland army) and John Martin, bank manager, and I do further proclaim the said George McGregor and John Martin to be traitors and rebels against the Republic, and do pronounce their lives forfeited. Which sentence let every loyal citizen observe at his peril."

"MARCUS W. WHITTINGHAM, President."

Truly his was pleasant!

CHAPTER XVII.

The habit of reading having penetrated, as we are told, to all classes of the community, I am not without hope that some who peruse this chronicle will be able, from personal experience, to understand the feelings of a man when he first finds a reward offered for his apprehension. It is true that our police are not in the habit of imitating the President's naked brutality by expressly adding "alive or dead," but I am informed that the law, in case of need, leaves the alternative open to the servants of justice. I am not ashamed to confess that my spirits were rather dashed by his excellency's Parthian shot, and I could see that the Colonel himself was no less perturbed.

The escape of Fleece seemed to Macbeth to render his whole position unsafe, and no one who knew General Whittingham will doubt that he was a more dangerous opponent than Fleece. We both felt, in fact, as soon as we saw the white sail of the Songstress bearing our enemy out of our reach, that the revolution could not yet be regarded as safely accomplished. But the uncertainty of our tenure of power did not paralyze our energies; on the contrary, we determined to make hay while the sun shone, and, if Aureatland was doomed to succumb once more to the tyranny, I, for one, was very clear that her temporary emancipation might be turned to good account.

Accordingly, on arriving again at the Golden House, we lost no time in instituting a thorough inquiry into the state of the public finances. We ransacked the house from top to bottom and found nothing! Was it possible that the President had carried off with him all the treasure that had inspired our patriotic efforts? The thought was too horrible. The drawers of his escritoire and the safe that stood in his library revealed nothing to our eager eyes. A foraging party, dispatched to the ministry of finance (where, by the way, they did not find Don Antonio or his fair daughter), returned with the discouraging news that nothing was visible but ledgers and bills. In deep dejection I threw myself into his excellency's chair with the doleful reflection that this pleasure seemed all I was likely to get out of the business. The Colonel stood moodily with his back to the fireplace, looking at me as if I were responsible for the state of things.

At this point in came the Signorina. We greeted her gloomily, and she was as startled as ourselves at the news of the President's escape; at the same time I thought I detected an undercurrent of relief. When, however, we went on to break to her the nakedness of the land, she stopped us at once.

"Oh, you stupid men, you haven't looked in the right place. I suppose you expected to find it laid out for you on the dining room table. Come with me."

We followed her into the room where Carr lay. He was awake, and the Signorina went and asked him how he was. Then she continued:

"We shall have to disturb you for a few minutes, Mr. Carr."

(To be continued.)

Now They Don't Speak.

Clara—Don't be surprised if Willie Sapleigh proposes to you to-night.

Maude—Gracious! Do you think he will?

Clara—Sure I do. When I refused him last night he said he didn't care what became of him.—Chicago News.

Two of a Kind.

"George!"

"Yes, darling."

"Don't you think that the best fruits of romance are the wedding date and the bridal pair?"—Baltimore American.



Corn Root Louse.

Time spent in killing insect pests must usually be set down as so much time lost from the constructive work of improving the tilth of the soil, and attending to the other needs of the crops. Occasionally, however, an improved system of cultivation gets rid of our insect enemies at the same time. This is conspicuously the case in the method recently proposed by Prof. Forbes, of Illinois, for destroying the corn root louse.

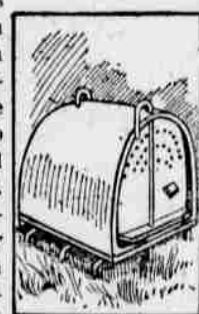
The pest works havoc to both sweet and field corn. The small brown ant attends the louse and is responsible for carrying it about the field. Professor Forbes found that by using a disk harrow one to three times early in the spring, before the corn is planted, from 80 to 95 per cent of the ants and corn root lice are destroyed, and no further treatment is required during the season. The peculiar virtues of this remedy are that it is simple, effective and good for the corn, since the soil is thereby put in a better state of cultivation.

Safe Chicken Coop.

It has been proven by statistics that the raising of chickens is the greatest industry in the United States. Of course this includes

those who are in this business on a large scale for profit, and also those who probably keep a half dozen fowl in the back yard. Nevertheless, whether for business or pleasure, chicken raising is an interesting pastime that appeals to every-

body. It is claimed that chickens should have as much care as a human being to insure the best results, and modern methods certainly tend in that direction. The chicken coop shown here is a good example. It is simple, efficient and durable. As shown here it is rectangular in form, being made of sheet metal. The top and sides are bent to shape, with flanges at the bottom which connect with the flooring. At each side are supports which hold the coop slightly above the ground, tending to keep the coop moisture-proof and preventing rain or other water from entering. At each end are perforated doors, which are very easily held in position. At the bottom of each door is an extension, through which passes a rod, the latter extending through the top of the coop and also into the ground, preventing the coop from being displaced. In this way the fowl are rendered safe against the attacks of animals.



CHICKEN COOP.

At Weaning Time.

At weaning time, there is not so much danger of losing the pigs as of checking their growth. The pig is not yet a hog, and he can hardly subsist as the hog does. A good deal of nourishment in liquid form is needed, and also some tender grass. It does not take much grain, but they like a bit of oats, wheat or corn. Their teeth cannot handle much that is hard; hence softening it by soaking will be beneficial. Sweet milk and middlings warmed with hot water will appeal to their appetites at weaning time, and it need not be made as strong as when fed later. It is generally known that your milk should not be given.—Field and Farm.

Routing Crab Grass with Clover.

Crab grass is like the dog in the manger, it kills out every other stem of green grass and then turns brown itself. It makes a coarse and ugly cover in the lawn and the individual who attempts to eradicate it by digging and cultivation may be entirely without a lawn for two or three years. If anything can get the best of crab grass in a fair contest, it is white clover. In a number of lawns in Washington and elsewhere white clover has furnished the means for a final victory over crab grass. The white clover gradually invades the area of crab grass, replacing the latter with a close, dark-green carpet.

Home-Made Kerosene Emulsion.

The amateur can make this very easily: Take of hard soap half a pound and dissolve in one gallon of boiling water; then add two gallons of kerosene and churn thoroughly for ten minutes. The efficiency of the preparation depends upon thorough mixing. This stock mixture is diluted four times for scale or up to twenty times for lice. The stronger dilution will have one gallon of kerosene to six and a half of water. Where the water is very hard, use one gallon of sour milk to two gallons of kerosene.

Dry Farming.

The Campbell system of dry farming, which was first tried in the semi-arid portions of North Dakota and about which much has appeared in newspapers and magazines within the past year or two, is doing great things for many portions of the Western States, where with a rainfall of but ten or twelve inches per annum bumper crops of corn, wheat, beets and other crops can be grown. This system of crop culture is based on the conservation of practically all of the moisture in the soil through a dust or surface mulch, and under it as high as forty bushels of corn to the acre have been grown in North Dakota, fifty bushels of wheat per acre in western Nebraska, while better than twenty tons of beets have been produced in Colorado. While this method of crop culture has little value in those portions of the country where there is an abundant rainfall, it does have a tremendous import in all territory where there is fertility in the soil, but an annual rainfall of less than twenty inches.

Sheep the Market Demands.

Says a Western writer on sheep: The market calls for sheep with a dark face and legs, and a close fleece is an advantage. There never has been a time when a fair profit could not be obtained from the keeping of sheep. There are in the world to-day 90,000,000 fewer sheep than twelve years ago, and the consumption of mutton and wool is rapidly increasing, hence it is safe to conclude that sheep to the farmer is a safe proposition. Do not start on a large scale; begin low and work up. The Western farmer does not like to do this, and you are no exception. You have never planted the apple because you did not expect to stay to eat the fruit. You must rush on and do big things. Do you not know that in the animal as well as the vegetable world rapid growth means rapid decay? Plant this live stock business and then give it time to strike its roots deep down, and after it is fairly rooted allow the top to grow.

Care of Orchards Pays.

Fruit growers about Saugatuck, Mich., have been busy trimming their apple trees, says Country Gentleman. Ten years ago they were thinking of cutting them down and setting out peach trees. To-day every half-dead tree is trimmed, and if there is not enough manure, fertilizer is bought for these half-dead trees. Six years ago one of Saugatuck's young farmers married a Chicago girl who used to spend her vacation there. She loved country life, and was a subscriber to agricultural magazines. Her husband's orchard was just like the rest, untrimmed and had never been sprayed. She made him buy manure, trim the trees, plow and spray. Two years ago he began to hire his neighbor's orchards. Last year he was the only one who had apples to sell, and cleared \$2,000.

Grow Feed on the Farm.

The Massachusetts State crop report contains an article by Prof. F. S. Cooley on "Some Causes Affecting the Profits of Dairying." On the subject of feeding dairy cattle the professor urges that feeds be produced on the farm as far as possible. Usually the best practice is to purchase only feeds rich in protein and raise the coarse fodders on the farm. Cows fed on starvation rations yield no profit, and those over-fed with expensive feeds are also kept at a loss. The point of highest profit in feed must be determined by experiment and calculation, and varies with the locality and circumstances of the feeder.

Easy Way to Get Rid of Stumps.

A method of getting rid of stumps which has been highly recommended and which, to be effective, should be done now, is as follows: Bore a hole one or two inches in diameter and about eighteen inches deep into the center of the stump. Then put into this hole one or two ounces of salt-peter. Fill the hole with water and plug it up. In the spring take out the plug, pour in about one-half gallon of kerosene oil and light it. The stump will smolder away to the very extremities of the roots, leaving nothing but the ashes.—Farming.

Improving the Herd.

Select as far as possible females which conform to the standard of excellence of the breed. If this is accomplished it will insure a uniformity in type that is highly desirable. If in addition to this it is possible to select cows and heifers that are similarly bred they will be more likely to produce uniformity in their offspring.

Care of Machinery.

Thousands of dollars' worth of farm machinery is now being shipped into the country that will never again be protected from the weather.

This exposure means an appalling financial loss to the farmers, since it reduces fully one-half the period of usefulness of an intricate machine.

When buying your new implements, promise yourself that you will provide them shelter and the best of care. Make your arrangements for housing before you purchase. Summer rains are as destructive as winter snows.