

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 quarreling 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-by, 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 Eng-

land, 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 at 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 hasty flight 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 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 up to 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 my 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 Devarges 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 your draughty coal-cellar, where he took refuge. The bank relieved him in response to his urgent petitions, and they've sent us 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 documents 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 run 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 mongrel 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 reprobation. "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; so 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.)

Glassmaking Methods.

A departure in glassmaking methods threatens almost a revolution in the industry, according to Consul Bock, of Nuremberg, says the New York Herald.

Should it really possess the advantages claimed it would cause serious damage to the blowing glass plate industry in this district, where "three-fourths" glass plates are chiefly manufactured. So far two methods have been employed in the manufacture of crystal plate glass and mirror and window glass, namely, that of casting and blowing. The new third method is the invention of Mr. Fourcault, a Belgian, who has sold his patent to a European syndicate of plate glass manufacturers for \$952,000. This syndicate consists of German, French and Belgian manufacturers and one Bohemian factory. Until now in the making of window glass the molten substance has been blown into cylinders by glassmakers' pipes and subsequently flattened, while in the making of plate glass the viscid mass was cast from the pots and rolled. The new invention draws the molten substance from the pot and conducts it between rollers lying side by side. Seventeen pairs of these rollers are built up towerlike above the pot.

Doing a Good Turn.

"Bedad, Clancy, but that chauffeur was an accommodating chap."

"In phwat way, Casey?" "Phoy, he comes down here ut a mile-a-minute clip awn knocks me ar-rum out of place."

"Awn do yez call that accommodatin'?" "Shure. Don't he come back th' same way an hour later awn knock ut back agin'?"

Boston Exclusiveness.

Mrs. Newrich of New York—Did you bathe during your recent visit to Atlantic City?

Mrs. Emerson Saltonstall of Boston—No, I had intended to do so, but another lady was using the ocean!—Life

Granted in Advance.

The young doctor who had lately settled in Shrubville had ample opportunities to learn humility, if nothing else, in his chosen field.

One day he was hailed by an elderly man, who requested him to step in and see his wife, who was ailing. At the close of his visit the young doctor asked for a private word with the man.

"Your wife's case is somewhat complicated," he said, "and with your permission I should like to call the Brookfield physician in consultation."

"Permission!" echoed the man, indignantly. "I told her I knew she ought to have a good doctor, but she was afraid you'd be offended if she did."

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It's Alcock's, first introduced to the people sixty years ago, and today undoubtedly has the largest sale of any external remedy—millions of boxes sold annually throughout the whole civilized world. There have been imitations, to be sure, but never has there been one to even compare with Alcock's—the world's standard external remedy.

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Table Mustard.

Common, ordinary, every-day table mustard obtained its name in a remarkable curious way. It is said that Phillip, Duke of Burgundy, granted to Dijon some armorial bearings on which was the motto, "Moult me tarde."

This was later carved in a stone archway of the city, but as the years went by the central word became effaced. A certain firm in the city was engaged in the manufacture of snap, which was the former name for mustard, and, wishing to label its products with the city arms, copied the incomplete motto.

Thus, ignorant people seeing the name "moult-tarde" on the jars, fell into the custom of calling the contents by that title. In time "moult-tarde" was contracted to *moutarde* (mustard).

Mexico now has 60,000 American residents and \$323,000,000 American money.

Those Kindly Persons.

It happened in a railway station. The baby cried and cried and cried. "Perhaps he desires his bottle," suggested a fatherly looking old party.

"He has not been raised on the bottle," cuttingly replied the handsome young woman who held the infant.

The baby's shrieks grew terrific. He made unmistakable signs that he wanted his dinner.

"Beg pardon, ma'am," said the elderly party. "but may I suggest that you—permit the child to—er—take nourishment?"

"This baby belongs to my sister," replied the young lady, blushing furiously, "and she won't be here for half an hour. I'm holding it for her."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Mothers will find Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup the best remedy to use for their infants during the teething period.

Philologically Logical.

Mrs. Gayboy—That's where you are wrong. You don't seem to understand the use of words. If a thing is "round" it can't be any "rounder."

Mr. Gayboy—Then there is no such thing as a "rounder." Thanks, dear. You won't call me one again, will you?

Beware of Ointments for Catarrh that Contain Mercury

Mercury will surely destroy the sense of smell and completely derange the whole system when entering it through the mucous surfaces. Such articles should never be used except on prescriptions from reputable physicians, as the damage they will do is tenfold to the good you can possibly derive from them. Hall's Catarrh Cure, manufactured by F. J. Cheney & Co., Toledo, O., contains no mercury, and is taken internally, acting directly upon the blood and mucous surfaces of the system. In buying Hall's Catarrh Cure be sure you get the genuine. It is taken internally, and made in Toledo, Ohio, by F. J. Cheney & Co. Testimonials free. Sold by Druggists, price 75c. per bottle. Hall's Family Pills are the best.

Too Aggravating.

Girl—What made you tell on me when I was whispering in school?

Boy—Because you weren't whispering loud enough so I could hear what you were talking about. —Detroit Free Press.



Have You A Cold Room?

In most houses there is a room without proper heating facilities—to say nothing of chilly hallways. Even though the heat of your stoves or furnace should be inadequate to warm the whole house there need not be one cold spot if you have a

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