



QUIT KICKING.

Quit kicking just because you think The old world's going wrong; There's always something somewhere Of happiness and song; Besides, you never made the world; Life's scheme is not your own; Quit kicking, take what happens, and Just reap what you have sown.

Quit kicking. When the play is bad Remember what you've lost (Some other fellow's gained, and so, In summing up the cost We find that in the end we know What other men have known— Results? We take them as they come— We reap what we have sown.

Quit kicking, man. The world's not bad, At least, it could be worse. We live and dream; that's worth the while; We ponder themes and verse; We sing and love; we hate and feel; We laugh; sometimes we weep— So all the pulsing passions are Compressed in the sweep.

Of what we are and what we feel— Quit kicking, man! The blame, If, in this whirlwind of chance And time, you lose the game, Is with the man who whistles his life Complacently away; Just laugh, old man; just dream, and love; Just live—and live to-day! —N. O. Times-Democrat.

Scoundrels & Co. By COULSON KERAHAN Author of "Captain Shannon," "A Book of Strange Sins," "A Dead Man's Diary," Etc. Copyright, 1899, by Herbert S. Stone & Co.

CHAPTER XII.—CONTINUED.

It was true that they had been fooled, but who was so great a fool as the man who had hugged himself for his own cleverness and had laughed at the conspirators as his dupes, and yet had been so blind as not to know that in coming there that night he was deliberately putting his head into a noose of his own making? But if I was to die I would at least sell my life dearly. Even while Number Two had been speaking, I had sought the pocket where lay my revolver. The next instant would have seen me whip the weapon out, and indeed my finger was already on the trigger, when a derisive laugh from one of the party stayed my hand.

The laugh came from Number Five—the man who, either from jealousy or because he was himself ambitious of being elected to fill the post of the dead leader, had all along endeavored to throw cold water upon Number Two's projects.

"The old story!" he said contemptuously. "Every clumsy bungler, who makes a mess of what he has undertaken, tries to excuse himself by putting the blame on somebody else. You remind me of a schoolboy, who when he is fairly beaten in a game calls out 'Cheat! Cheat!' Why don't you admit that you've failed, and have done with it."

I was thankful for any diversion which turned to another quarter the attention which I had anticipated was soon to be centered upon myself, and I took the opportunity which the respite afforded of edging cautiously towards the door. While I was doing so Number Two's reply came cold and clear:

"Fellow councillors, the traitor among us stands self-revealed. When the bomb which ought to have destroyed the royal family fell harmlessly in the roadway, and while I was standing there gnashing my teeth with rage, I felt instinctively that some one person was watching me when every other eye in the assembly was fixed upon the show. I know instinctively if I am watched, even when the watcher is behind me, and my eyes went straight to the watching person on this occasion. He was sitting on a stand—had chosen the place, no doubt, that he might gratify his jealous hate by being a witness of my discomfiture—exactly opposite. When he saw that I had discovered him he drew back out of sight among the crowd, but not before I had seen that he was long-faced and high-shouldered. Look at the man who has just spoken, the man who is trying to belittle me in your eyes because he fears that you will elect me to the post that he hankers for himself. Look at him, I say, and see whether he is the man I have described or not. He thinks, no doubt, that he is safe because he is wearing the beard which we all wear, and had none when I caught sight of him on Jubilee day. But he has shown his hand too plainly on this occasion. I told you that there was a traitor in our midst and he stands there!"

Here was a curious throw of Fate's dice indeed! Little did I think on Jubilee day, when some instinct of self-preservation caused me to seek to disguise my identity from Number Two by humping my shoulders and dropping my jaw, that I was unconsciously mimicking one of the syndicate of scoundrels and so probably saving my own life.

Before I could ask whether it would not be a cowardly thing to shelter myself under so curious an accident and to let another man be made answerable for my action, Number Five had leapt forward and confronted his accuser.

"Liar!" he screamed, almost hysterically. "Coward and liar! take that!"

As he spoke his hand darted towards the knife in the wall, which was doing duty as a candlestick. I saw him clutch the handle and wrench the weapon from its place, and then as the

candle fell and we were plunged in total darkness, he sprang upon Number Two with upraised blade.

In the second before the candle went out I had seen the other conspirators start forward instinctively with outstretched hands to stay the descending knife; and for the next few seconds the picture so formed remained on my retina like a tableau vivant, in which, as if Time's pendulum had suddenly stopped, we see action frozen in a moment's space into inaction, life caught and fixed in an instant to still life. Then, as the picture thus imprinted on the retina lifted rigidly and edged anglewise away until it swam and dissolved out of ken in an upper corner of the shed, I seemed to see the succeeding and inclosing darkness writhe around me like the coils of two huge wrestling and intertwining black snakes; I heard the scuffle of feet as the two combatants swayed backward and forward on the floor; there was a cry, the thud of a falling body; and the next instant some one struck a match.

The picture that presented itself was exactly like that I have seen in melodramas, when the curtain, which has fallen upon some tragic situation, lifts for a moment to allow the spectators another glimpse of the ghastly sight.

Number Two—his tie and collar torn open and hanging loose—was leaning back white-faced and panting against the door, looking almost stupidly at a gaping cut across the palm of his right hand. The others were bending over Number Five, who lay on his back upon the floor, his features twitching and working horribly, while his nervous hands fumbled at the handle of a knife which was buried up to the hilt in his throat.

I have said that the whole scene reminded me of a "curtain" from a transpantine melodrama, and the staginess of the situation was sustained by the subsequent introduction of the inevitable "comic relief."

The man who held the match was bending over the body on the floor, and the other conspirators had naturally drawn as close to him as possible, in their eagerness to see what had happened or to render help. Suddenly the man who was holding the match dropped it with a yell.

"Damn your clumsy, clumping feet!" he roared, as he stumped backward and forward whistling with pain. "Here am I with an ingrowing nail that has given me hell and Old Harry for weeks, and you must needs go set your hobnail hoof upon it!"

"Beg pardon I'm sure," answered a voice from the darkness.

"Beg pardon be damned!" came the reply. "A man's no right to bring feet like those among gentlemen. They're only fit to hire out, instead of steam-rollers, to crush stones on a country road."

In the meantime another match had been struck, and the man with the ingrowing nail found another grievance.

"Be damned if he ain't standing on the candle with 'em now," he grumbled. "Here, move 'em, will you, if you can do it without knocking anybody down. You'll kill some one before you've done, if we can't have a light. I feel like a black-beetle on a kitchen floor, I do, when you're walking about with those boots on."

"Is he hurt?" asked some one, when the candle had been relit, and attention was once more turned to the prostrate man upon the floor.

"No, he ain't hurt; he's only dead, that's what he is," said the fellow with the ingrowing nail, whose number on the council I subsequently discovered was Number Six. "It would take a power of hurting to trouble a man who's wearing a necktie like that. You might as well talk of hurting a skewered chicken."

"Gentlemen," said Number Two, "you are my witnesses that I struck in self-defense. It was he who drew steel on me, not I on him. Besides, even if this hadn't happened, the necks of none of us would have been safe if he had been allowed to leave this place alive to-night. How he did it I don't know, but there's no question but that it was he who changed the ball that I had prepared for Jubilee day. I saw him with my own eyes sitting in the building exactly opposite. And what would have been easier for a man who knew our plans, and had the run of the building opposite, than to play tricks with the other end of the festoon upon which the ball was hung? No doubt, after I had fixed the bomb and gone away, he managed to pass it in some fashion and then haul it up and change it. If you remember I invited him to assist me in carrying out the project. But he was too clever for that. He knew that if anything went wrong I should naturally suspect him (and, in fact, I was inclined at first to suspect Number Seven, who assisted me) and so, after this fellow had acquainted himself with my proposed plan, he goes and installs himself in the building that faced my headquarters, so that he can spoil the game without incurring suspicion. It was very prettily planned, and, no doubt, if we knew the truth the poor man who went to his account over that attempt on Lord Cranthorpe was a victim of this same Judas's treachery."

As he spoke he spurned the body on the floor with his foot.

It seemed to stir.

"Damn! I don't believe he's dead, after all," said Councillor Number Six. Kneeling down and placing one hand on the prostrate man's shoulder, he began to undo the buttons of the waistcoat.

"Umph!" he grunted. "The 'e's a pound or two of stiff horsehair padding in the man's shoulders. You can feel it jutting out where the coat joins the sleeve. Wanted to make himself look broad and military, I suppose."

A rum fancy. Now let's see if his heart's going." Opening the shirt at the collar, he slipped an open palm over the victim's left breast.

Then he sprang to his feet with a

startled cry. "My God! mates," he said. "It isn't a man at all, but a woman!"

"A woman!" chorused the conspirators.

"Yes, it is a woman right enough!" said the fellow. He stood for a moment or two staring meditatively at the body, and then, with eyes narrowed to slits, he looked curiously at each of us in turn, as if expecting to find in one of our faces something which might indicate a previous knowledge of the victim's sex. In this he was disappointed, for I watched the faces of the others meanwhile, and could detect no such sign as he sought.

This, in fact, was hardly to be wondered at under the circumstances. Some physiologists tell you that if you suspect a man of lying, or an enemy of flinching, you should look him in the eyes. Do so by all means, but better still, watch his mouth. Many men will brazen it out boldly with their eyes, but all their hardihood cannot quite control the traitor mouth from betraying secrets to those who can read the signs aright. Several times eyes have looked unwaveringly into mine, as if steadied by the consciousness of truth, even while the word "liar" was plainly written on the lips.

On the occasion of which I am writing, the lips of those present were hidden by the false beards and mustaches which we wore, and physiognomy (I never yet met a man or woman who did not plume himself, or herself, on being an adept in that science) was disadvantaged thereby. But, if the expression counts for anything, one and all were taken aback and bewildered by the surprise which had been sprung upon them regarding the victim's sex.

"Did you know it was a woman?" asked the man who had made the discovery, wheeling round sharply upon Number Two.

"Indeed, I did not," was the calm but decisive reply. "The possibilities of such a thing never as much as occurred to me. But what you say about her shoulders being padded goes to prove that I was right in accusing this person of having played tricks with my plan for celebrating the jubilee. I distinctly said that the man I saw watching me was high-shouldered as well as long-faced."

"Do you think the chief knew this person was a woman?" inquired the man who had constituted himself spokesman.

"He must have done so. Each member of the council was selected by him, and was known to him personally. No doubt he had good reason for what he did. In fact, if you think of it, there were one or two little affairs planned by him and carried out under his superintendence that, if we had thought of it at all, we might have known only a woman could have worked successfully. All the same, if I suspected we had a woman amongst us, I'm afraid I should have funked the whole business. The woman isn't born yet, and never will be born, but I trust my neck to. Sooner or later they're bound to play you false. I've known a good many bad men in my time—men who were sensual as hogs and as cruel as tigers—but the biggest brute of a man living couldn't stoop to the black treachery that some women are capable of. And they can be as treacherous to the man who's faithful to them and works his fingers to the bone for them, as they can to the blackguard that kicks them to death with hob-nailed boots. I tell you what it is, my friends, it's lucky for us we have made this discovery while our necks were safe. Some one has been playing us false ever since our chief died (and we don't know that somebody didn't play him false, and that he wouldn't have been among us today but for that same somebody). But there lies the traitor, beyond all doubt, and you see if things don't work better with us now that the Judas who has been trying to circumvent us is out of the way."



NUMBER TWO, SCOUNDREL THOUGH HE WAS, KNELT DOWN.

No one dissenting from this view of the case, Councillor Number Two dropped his platform manner, and addressed himself to the practical side of the question.

"Well, my friends," he said, "we don't stop now to argue whether I'm right or whether I'm wrong. Let's have that wig and beard off. It's possible some of us may be able to identify this woman." He plucked off the disguise as he spoke, and then staggered back, his face grown gray as putty, the pupils of his eyes unnaturally dilated, and his breath coming in short, quick inspirations.

"My God!" he gasped; "and I've killed her!"

"Yes," said Number Six; "the job goes down in your account right enough, my friend. You make yourself easy about that. There's no one

here would be so mean as to want to do you out of it."

The taunt passed unheeded, if not unheard, for, to the dismay, and probably to the disgust, of the onlookers, Number Two, scoundrel though he was, knelt down beside the corpse with a look on his face that seemed strangely out of keeping in that company.

Councillor Number Six was apparently not a sentimental person.

"H'm!" he sneered. "First we stick a knife into folk, and then we do the handkerchief business over 'em. Seems to me this syndicate ought to turn itself into an amalgamated murder and mourner company combined. 'Murders committed on the shortest notice; funerals to match; tears always in stock. If you don't see the kind of corpse you'd like in the window, step inside and ask for another. No extra charge for handkerchiefs.'"

He spoke to unlistening ears, as far as Number Two was concerned; seeing which the fellow slapped the kneeling man on the shoulder noisily. "Cheer up, my buck!" he said; "you had a lot to say against women just now, but you seem mighty low down all at once because one of 'em's met with an accident."

"Yes," answered Number Two, rising and looking around wearily; "I've a good deal to say against them, as you observe, and that particular one has a good deal to say against me, if she could say it."

"You've taken good care she can't," sneered the other. "But, look here, my friend. It strikes me that that lady came here meaning mischief. When a woman wants to make it nasty for a man, she ain't too particular if she makes it nasty for his mates, too. That's the worst of a woman. When she's set on a thing she goes at it blind. Now we don't institute too rigorous an investigation into the moral character of those who have seats on this council—not too rigorous, that is—but we hope, for the sake of all our peace of mind, not to say our necks, that there aren't any other ladies who want to get equal with you. Otherwise we might have old Jonah on board at once."

"I don't think you need fear any further trouble of the sort," answered Number Two, with a mirthless smile. Then he turned to address the company more generally:

"I had a proposal to submit to you to-night, gentlemen, but perhaps it will be best for all our safety if we get out of this place as soon as possible, and out of sight of"—he hesitated a moment, gulped at something in his throat, like one suffering from physical sickness, and then, as if impatient of his weakness, pointed deliberately at the corpse—"of that. With your permission we'll postpone this meeting. It won't be safe to meet here again, especially after what's happened. I know it's desirable to change the place of meeting as often as possible, but for the present I'm absolutely positive that the gipsy wagon at Leigh is safe. Let us all meet there at midnight the day after to-morrow. Do you agree?"

"Yes, we agree," said Councillor Number Six. "But first we must get rid of the body. Is there a pond handy? If we button a brick under the coat so that it can't slip out, and pack the pocket with stones, she'd keep down all right."

"[To Be Continued.]

MODERN LOGIC.

As Propounded by a Mischievous Little Miss to Her Accusing Father.

When Edith's papa came in from his office late one spring afternoon he happened to see the little girl playing in apparent innocence by the flower-borders behind the house. So, in order to join her at her play, he entered the yard through the back gate instead of going around to the front, as was his custom, relates Woman's Home Companion.

When he walked up to the flower-borders, which were the pride of his young wife's heart, he was dismayed to find that his small daughter had carefully pulled up all the bulbs which her mother had planted, and was busily engaged in putting them back in their places upside down. She knew she was doing wrong, for her face flushed guiltily when she looked up and met her father's stern, accusing eyes.

Without a word he took her in his arms and carried her to the nursery, where he punished her as severely as he thought the transgression warranted.

That evening, as she sat in her little chair reflecting on her sins, she looked at him reproachfully.

"Daddy," she said, with the shine of tears in her violet eyes, "if you'd 'a' come in the front way, as gentlemen oughter do, you never would 'a' knewed I done it!"

Serial Ablutions.

Joey's mother, who had been away for a fortnight, returned unexpectedly. After the first greetings were over and she had straightened the sofa pillows and rearranged the books on the tables she turned her attention to her son.

"Joey," she said, sadly, after a brief examination, "I don't believe you have had a bath since I went away!"

"Yes, mother, I have. Honestly, I have," protested Joey, "only you haven't looked in the right place!"

"Looked in the right place! What do you mean?"

"You looked at my neck. You ought to have looked at my arms. They were just as clean this morning! You see I've been bathing in chapters—a chapter a day. Legs are one chapter, arms are—"

"O Joey!"

"Well, if you've got to wash yourself, that's the only exciting way I know!" whimpered Joey.—Youth's Companion.

A FILIPINO SENTINEL

Joke Played on the Crew of an American Warship.

They Greatly Admired the Courage Displayed by a Man of Straw—An Amusing Incident of the Philippine War.

Soon after Aguinaldo had established his government at Mololos, and had gathered the main portion of the Filipino army about him at that place, his busy spies brought him information that the American forces were preparing to advance from Manila upon his new capital. Hastily dispatching a considerable force from his army, he sent it to resist the advance of the Americans, and set the remainder at work to erect fortifications about Mololos.

The forces dispatched to resist the advance of the Americans, displayed great activity, and employed every possible means at their command to delay the advance of the enemy. They destroyed roads, burned bridges, and laid an ambush in every tongue of timber that reached the highway, and in every tangle of bushes and vines that offered concealment for a line of troops.

A favorite method employed by the Filipinos called for the display of a high order of courage. Selected marksmen were sent into the tops of tall cocoanut and palm trees, from which concealment they were directed to fire upon the advancing Americans. Owing to the dense foliage of intervening trees these men were seldom able to use aimed fire until the enemy was almost upon them. Many, in consequence, remained in the trees to obtain this advantage, and but few who did so ever escaped capture or death at the hands of the Americans.

Sometimes, however, the sharpshooter remained for some time undiscovered in his perch among the leaves. In the bivouac of one of the regular regiments, made in a grove of palm trees, not far from Mololos, the occasional crack of a Mauser rifle, seemingly overhead, caused a careful examination of

the surrounding tree tops by the troops in an effort to discover if possible the place from which the sound came. The firer was discovered at length, clothed in the green leaves of the palm, lying stretched out at full length on a branch of the tree.

While the land forces were moving forward on the highway not far from the sea, the United States monitor Monadnock followed up the movement abreast of the troops. Occasionally, as she proceeded, she cast a shell into the Filipino entrenchments that lay within view of her decks. Once, just before dark, as the ship neared Mololos, an extensive line of works was discovered, in front of which a white-shirted Filipino sentinel was leisurely pacing back and forth. A shell was quickly discharged at the works, but the missile falling a little short struck the ground near the sentinel. Other shells followed in rapid succession before the darkness put an end to the firing, a number falling so near to the man that they covered him with dust when they struck the earth. He remained, nevertheless, on his post until an officer appeared and took him away. A new sentinel almost immediately took his place, and standing rigidly erect in front of the works gave no evidence of fear, although a number of shells struck almost within reach of his hand.

On the following morning the sentinel was observed still on his post in front of the works, apparently as defiant and fearless as ever. A number of shots were then rapidly fired at him, and more would have followed had not the captain discovered that the gunners were firing at the sentinel instead of at the works, and caused the firing to cease.

After the fall of Mololos, and the retirement of the Filipino forces, the great ship fell back to the place where she had bombarded the sentinels. To the surprise of all on board the sentinel was still at his post, as rigidly erect and immovable as when shot and shell were falling fast and furiously about him. A boat was quickly lowered and a crew sent ashore to reconnoiter. The sailors cautiously approached the sentinel, who stood the meanwhile silently in his place. As they came near they discovered to their chagrin and amusement that the Filipino sentinel whose supreme courage they had so much admired, was simply a man of straw, a substitute, and a dummy.

H. R. BRINKERHOFF, Lieut. Col. U. S. A., Retired.

Made It Warm for Him. She—And did her face light up? Arthur—in a way. Her eyes snaped fire and her cheeks burned with rage.—Town Topics.

THE FILIPINO SENTINEL WAS A MAN OF STRAW.

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Daily Guide to Flattery.—If you meet a woman who strongly suspects that she is a beauty, ask her earnestly if all her family are beautiful.—Baltimore American.

A Remarkable Discovery. A German chemist has discovered a healing agent in coal oil which has created quite a sensation amongst sufferers wherever it has been tested, on account of the wonderful cures accomplished by its use. A few applications are sufficient to cure muscular Rheumatism, Neuralgia, headache, tooth, ear or backache, lameness, sprains, chilblains, in fact every severe pain. It is sold in drug stores as Dr. Bayer's Penetrating Oil in 25c and 50c bottles and warranted to cure or money refunded.

It is the truth that changes the times and not the times that change the truth.—Ran's Horn.

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A man's life is worth what it costs him.—Ran's Horn.

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