

THE LINE FENCE

By ARTHUR RENWICK O'HARA
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"What a beast he must be!" cried Barbara Hilton, attacking her breakfast savagely.

"My dear," said gentle Aunt Lettie, "I don't think the man realizes our position."

"He certainly can comprehend that three women and a Chinaman are not capable of coping with his horrid, prong-horned cattle," cried Barbara. "How many times have the awful creatures broken into our corn this week? Only three times!"

"But each time they got through our part of the fence, dear," said Aunt Lettie.

"And what if they did?" demanded the indignant Barbara. "Does he expect Wing to mend the fence? Or Judy? Perhaps he thinks you might set in a few posts. Haven't we offered double wages for help from his men time and again? But no—he prefers to let those gaunt, hungry beasts get two or three square meals each week out of our cornfield. He hasn't the chivalrous instincts of a Digger Indian."

Mr. Theodore Norris, the owner of the predatory livestock, was a hot tempered, eccentric gentleman of 50 odd summers, who for a score of years had waged unintermittent war against the former proprietor of the Hilton ranch, so when Miss Lettie Hilton and her niece located in the stronghold of his ancient enemy a vague idea that it befitting a confirmed bachelor to cherish animosity toward the weaker sex, and force of habit, impelled him to continue the feud.

Therefore, he resolutely ignored his new neighbors, and repelled their timid advances. In a locality where hired help was almost unobtainable, he refused to allow any of his men to repair Miss Lettie's half of the division



"Mr. Theodore Norris was a Hot Tempered, Eccentric Gentleman."

feice, although, through Wing, she made him liberal offers for their service.

It was Miss Hilton's half of the fence that was defective. It was not his fault if the cattle broke through; so he displayed no undue haste in getting them home. The "grazers" in his employ soon understood that Mr. Norris lightly regarded the maraudings of his stock upon the Hilton crops, and acted accordingly. The leisurely manner in which they drove the intruders out of field and garden moved Barbara to wrath, and the gentle, Aunt Lettie to plaintive tears.

"This has grown unbearable," said Barbara one day, as the three women of the household sat flushed and panting, after a prolonged tussle with Mr. Norris' cattle in the broiling noonday sun. "When Wing comes home I shall send him to Cambria for posts and wire, and to-morrow I shall build a new fence."

"Don't tell me you are in earnest, Barbara!" cried Aunt Lettie in consternation. "Just consider the unpleasant attention it would attract. What would these ranch people think of a young lady, assisted by a Chinaman, building a fence?"

"They will probably think we're tired of being eaten up alive by that old fend's cattle," replied Barbara.

"Wing," said Barbara despairingly, the next day, after Wing had toiled manfully, if awkwardly, for over an hour at his first post hole, "how do you ever expect to find that dirt again to fill in 'round our posts when we set them in? Do they dig that way in China?" For Wing persisted in digging with his long-handled shovel turned toward himself, thus throwing the dirt between his widely trousered legs, and strewn it over an astonishing amount of territory.

"Here," she continued, "give me the shovel. Now watch me." And Barbara, grasping the shovel, proceeded to dig with much energy, carefully making a neat pile of dirt by the cavity for Wing's edification.

"Please let me do that," said a masculine voice, and the young lady looked up with a start to meet the gaze of a handsome, well-dressed young man, who stood bowing, with hat in hand.

"I am Jack Norris. Mr. Theodore Norris is my uncle. I only came yesterday, and I can't begin to tell you how sorry I am about the trouble he has given you with his stock. He has wrangled for so long with the people who lived on this ranch he can't real-

ize that he has really agreeable neighbors now. He is ordinarily one of the kindest and best of men. I never before knew him to be unreasonable, but I'm sure he has never seen you or your aunt," said this wily young man.

"He has never shown any anxiety to meet us," remarked Barbara, "and he has been most uncivil to Wing and Judy."

"I beg that you will let me atone for his discourtesy by helping you with the fence. Please do. I ask as a favor that you let me dig."

"Did your uncle send you to help us?" queried Barbara. "If he did, I shall refuse your aid, but if I thought it would annoy him—"

"It would! It would!" cried Jack, earnestly. "He would be furious."

"Very well, then," said Barbara, relinquishing the long-handled implement, "but mind, if he doesn't have a fit of some kind I shall be very much disappointed."

"It will be nothing short of apoplexy," said Jack, solemnly, as he began to dig.

And Mr. Norris, arrested in his morning stroll by the astonishing spectacle of his nephew digging post-holes for his enemy, while his enemy's niece lightened his toil with pleasant conversation, was so indignant that Barbara, had she known, would have been appeased.

"Bless my soul!" cried Mr. Norris, breathing heavily and staring in angry amazement at the unconscious pair. "I won't have it," he cried, shaking his stick at the young people, who were happily out of hearing. "Do you hear? I won't have it. I'll write to that old hardden (meaning Miss Lettie, whom he had never seen) "and warn her to keep that disgustingly forward creature at home. But no," he continued, "these old maids have such a confounded way of twisting the most harmless sort of a note into a proposal. I'll just go see her, and I'll talk pretty short, too. Lucky I thought of it in time! I might have let myself in for breach of promise by writing."

Well, to make a long story short, he did go to see Miss Lettie, and when he saw the real Miss Lettie, with her wavy brown hair and pink cheeks, instead of the shrewish old spinster of his imagination, he forgot all about the object of his call and apologized humbly and sincerely for his former conduct.

He and Miss Lettie found so many fruitful themes of mutual interest that they spent the entire morning in pleasant discourse, and when he departed they found that much remained unsaid; so after Jack and Barbara had gone to work, he returned the next morning, and yet many more mornings.

"The last day—the very last day," said Jack one sunny morning. "The line fence is finished."

"It seems to me you've been horribly slow," said the ungrateful Barbara.

"Slow!" echoed Jack, reproachfully. "Has the time seemed long to you?"

Barbara did not reply in words, but the smile she gave him was most reassuring.

"Hand the hammer, dear," he said, "and don't go away, for I want you to hold the wire. There now."

"Well, I think I can manage to hold the wire without your supporting arm," said Barbara. "I'm not decrepit."

"I think," said the audacious young man, "I'll just hold you here until you put into words what your dear eyes have often told me. Say: 'I love you, Jack.'"

"My eyes!" cried Barbara, "what extraordinary lies they must tell!" and she favored Jack with another radiant smile. "Now, let me go," she continued. "Wing will be here in a minute."

"Say it, then," said Jack, "for I won't let you go until you do."

"Well, Jack," said Barbara, slowly, "I do not altogether despise you."

"Now say I may speak to your aunt and tell Uncle Theodore we're engaged."

"Gracious! No," cried Barbara, "Aunt Lettie would think me so bold and forward. Do you think she would engage herself to a man she'd only known six weeks? She'd die first. We'll have to know each other at least a year before we can be engaged, and then she'll think it proper for us to wait several years."

"Nonsense!" cried Jack. "We're engaged right this minute, and we'll be married next month. We'll not wait till we're old and gray-haired just to satisfy the prudish notions of venerable old fossils," and Jack emphasized his declaration with a defiant kiss, planted somewhere in the depths of Barbara's subconnet.

"We're standing with our backs toward you," said a bland voice, "and as we can't see you, you needn't blush. We've merely come to inspect your work."

And the startled young folks glanced up to behold a rear view of Miss Lettie and Mr. Norris, who were standing but a few yards away.

"You see before you," said Mr. Norris, with great composure, as he and Miss Lettie confronted the astonished young people, "two venerable fossils who had no time to waste in long engagements; so they slipped away to town and were quietly married this morning, and now you are invited to lunch with the aforementioned fossils—if you have quite finished the line fence."

Few Autos in Chinese City.

The first automobile made its appearance in Shanghai in 1902 and there was an American car. After six years there are but 140 cars there, and only five of them are owned by natives.—Consular and Trade Reports

REALLY FINE HOME

THE WHITE HOUSE AN IDEAL PLACE OF ABODE.

Attention of All Washington Is Centered on the Family Next to Occupy the Historic Old Mansion.

There is an air of great expectancy about the White House now. Attention is all directed toward the family next to occupy the house, and, in fact, to the historic old mansion itself.

It is really the most fascinating sort of a home, aside from the limelight which never dims. When the linen covers were removed from the furniture and the floors, and the curtains hung in their places at the windows and the portieres at the doors a few weeks ago the only new thing to be found was the clean white paint of the woodwork. This is all spick and span, but there were no new furnishings, and not even any new gold paint upon the little chairs which the distinguished companies at the muscled occupy in the great east room.

This being the last year of one administration, and as the forthcoming one is to be dominated by another, the house will remain as it is, all changes and improvements to be made by the incoming family.

This winter will be the gayest seen since the first winter of Mr. Roosevelt's presidency, when his elder daughter was presented to society, as history will repeat itself in the matter of the presentation of the younger daughter. The President and Mrs. Roosevelt will have a ball for Miss Ethel, as they had for Miss Alice Roosevelt, now Mrs. Longworth.

This will be given December 28, and the second daughter will dance her way into society as the first daughter did, in that historic room where Abigail Adams dried her clothes, and which never saw the light fantastic until the Harrison administration, when Mrs. McKee gave a cotillion.

In addition to Miss Ethel's ball, there will be dinners, luncheons, and breakfasts and receptions in quick and strenuous succession, from the first of December until March 4, when Mrs. Roosevelt will turn over the household affairs to her successor as the first lady of the land.

The rooms of Miss Ethel Roosevelt, on the north side of the mansion, would never be recognized by the older generation who were familiar with the apartment of Nellie Grant.

It is more than likely that Miss Helen Taft, who will be her successor as a White House debutante, will be assigned to these rooms.

Instead of being a "room," it is now a suite, for during the improvements to the mansion a few years ago, a sitting room and bath were added to Nellie Grant's former room, and the suite was done over in the most girlish of pale blues, with silk hangings and silver ornaments.

It is no secret that Mrs. Taft will dispense almost constant hospitality during her regime as first lady of the land, for she has such hosts of personal friends in official life and out of it, and in the army and navy circles, that it will necessarily keep her busy to see and entertain them.

It has already been hinted that she will restore to their places on the White House social calendar the popular afternoon receptions to women, which was the custom of the mistress of the White house for many administrations until they were discontinued by Mrs. Roosevelt. Mrs. Taft will follow the precedent established by Mrs. Roosevelt of making music one of the features of the season's entertaining in the White House.

Helen Taft will make her debut next year.

White House Familiar to Mrs. Taft.

Mrs. Taft is more familiar with the White House than was any woman who has ever been called upon to preside over it. Her first visit to Washington was as the guest of Mrs. Hayes, wife of President Rutherford B. Hayes, to whom she was related. She was very young then, being still a schoolgirl, and she acknowledges she can feel the thrills which passed through her while standing close behind Mrs. Hayes on one of her afternoon receptions, at the insistence of "Aunt Lucy."

Later on she was the guest of President and Mrs. Harrison, being also a relative of the latter. During Mr. Taft's service as secretary of war she has been a familiar visitor in the White House, and has, as a matter of fact, had the honor of first lady of the land actually grow upon her.

Mexican Embassy Ranks High.

The Mexican embassy at Washington now occupies a social position equal to that of any of the European powers, its prestige under the Creels having been greatly augmented. Not only the large private fortune of Senor Enrique C. Creel, the ambassador, but the good taste and breeding of Senora Dona Angela, his wife, who is the typical grande dame of Mexico, have accomplished the good work of placing this embassy upon a new social footing.

FOND OF THE FLESHPOTS.

Washington Man Close to the Top When It Comes to Feeding.

My good friend, Alfred Angus Early, who has been doing the—I mean doing things for the national committee during the campaign—is getting fat, writes Irving C. Norwood in the Washington Star. The scales register something like 250 pounds now, with a tendency to trip at a slightly higher figure with each succeeding week. Recently Mr. Early got worried. He sought his family doctor and laid his troubles before him.

"I'm not much of an eater, Doc," said he. "I have my breakfast at eight in the morning and I never get hungry much before ten. Even then I don't indulge myself. Usually I find myself uncomfortably empty I drop into a Dutch restaurant and have a tub of suds, with some sauerkraut and frankfurters, and that carries me over till noon, when I have my lunch, and I'll admit it is usually a pretty square meal. During the afternoon I seldom eat more than a couple of times, with an occasional drink to wash it down, and I have my dinner rather early, so that I sometimes get hungry a couple of times during the evening."

The learned physician kept a straight face. "I can say only one thing," he remarked, gravely; "you must not eat so much. You positively must not. You simply must promise me that you will limit yourself to three meals a day. If you do not I can't answer for the consequences—fatty degeneration and all that sort of thing, you know."

Mr. Early sighed and sighed again and tried to appear resigned.

"All right, Doc," said he, "if I must, I must! But it's hard, it's blamed hard, indeed! However, I promise. But, Doc, on the level, ain't eating the king of indoor sports?"

To Eat or Not to Eat?

That much mooted question, whether the wives of the members of the cabinet shall serve refreshments on their days at home crops up as surely as the season comes around. The pros and cons are discussed and always the debate ends in a "do as you please." It saves an endless amount of trouble to do without refreshments, but the lack of seeming hospitality is painful to some hostesses and they are willing to undertake the "eating" of the crowd and so earn the right to laugh at many amusing incidents that always follow the rush to the refreshment table. And the one who remembers Washington "befo' the wah" and through the Cleveland administration will show open disapproval at the offer of "a cup of tea" instead of salad and punch.

But the capital has grown ever since the days when the late William C. Whitney was secretary of the navy and provided champagne and terrapin for Mrs. Whitney's callers on Wednesdays, and when Mrs. John G. Carlisle offered hot biscuits and home made salad with the hospitality of Kentucky. Such a provision of food would be impossible now. It would be like turning one's house into a restaurant except for the receipts. So it remains to be seen what January will bring forth, for the official receptions will not begin until after the new year, although all of the women of the cabinet circle and many of the wives of senators will receive informally on their days for their particular friends.

Offered to Help Out Friend.

Charlie Hamilton, who came to Washington with Admiral Cockburn back in 1812, and, with that foresight which has been his distinguishing characteristic ever since, saw such a wonderful future in store for Washington that he remained and grew up with the capital, stopped me on the Row the other afternoon.

"Hist!" he said, or words to that effect, taking me by the arm. I histed and he led me around corners, up and down streets, back and forth, and around about, until, finally, we brought up in the shadow of the monument. He paused. So did I.

"You write rotten poetry," said Charles.

"Thanks," said I.

"So," he continued, "I sat down the other evening and dashed off a little Christmas poem. It's a blamed fine poem. I'll let you have it for publication the Saturday before Christmas. You can sign your name to it."

Whereupon we beat it back to the Row.—Irving C. Norwood, in Washington Star.

Blaming the Teeth.

It is to the teeth that the pathologist should first look for an explanation of those emotional crises in the lives of all of us which assume now the form of an exaggeration of the sentiment of romantic love, again an intensification of insomnia, and sometimes a development of religious sensibility to the boundary line of mania. If Current Literature may be trusted. Not only is toothache the cause, but disease of a dental nature involving no pain whatever to the victim works its havoc and leads men and women to madhouses and domestic miseries and every kind of excess.

Seek Proper Championship.

Life's best school is living with people. Living alone nourishes much that is not good and beautiful in human nature. It promotes selfishness. It gives self-conceit an undue opportunity for growth and development. It permits us to do too much as we please, which is bad training for any one of us. One can never grow into true nobleness of character, sweetness of disposition and beauty of life living in solitude.—J. R. Miller.

MAKES A FLOATING COMPASS.

Peculiarity of Magnetized Needle When Placed in Water.

If a thoroughly dry and clean sewing needle is very carefully laid on the surface of the water in a basin the needle will float in spite of the high density of steel—seven or eight times that of water.

On close inspection it is found that the surface of the water is depressed under the needle, very much as if there were a thin film stretched over the water, and slightly incented by the weight of the needle. This property of liquids, of offering a certain assistance to a force exerted upon their surface, is termed "surface extension." The magnitude of the force of surface tension varies from one liquid to another. It is greatest in the case of mercury. The cause of the phenomenon must probably be looked for in the attraction of the liquid molecules to one another. A sewing needle, thus floating upon water, may be used as a compass, if it has previously been magnetized. It will then point north and south, and will maintain this position if the containing vessel is moved about; if the needle is displaced by force it will return to its position along the magnetic meridian as soon as the restraint is removed.

CURRENCY OF FURS AND SKINS.

Primitive Mode of Exchange That Prevailed in Early Days.

In the early days of the United States furs and skins were very generally transferred from hand to hand as money. Thus, in the northern states, a pound of beaver was regarded as the unit of value, and in the south the same weight of deerskin performed a similar function. In the far west furs retained a currency value until quite a recent date. But, after all, as a bale of skins was rather a bulky lot of money to carry about, it was customary to cut off small strips as tokens of ownership and pass them from hand to hand, while the skins were deposited in recognized places of security. Proof of rightful ownership was demonstrated when the strip was fitted to the part from which it had been detached. Trickery in substituting another skin was not so easy as might be imagined, because it seldom happened that two skins would prove so exactly similar in shade and length of fur where the strip was cut off as to deceive even the eye of a novice.

Chess and Checks.

Chess was originally the game of kings, the game of shahs. The word "shah" became in old French "eschac," while the old French "eschecs" was further corrupted into "chess." The more original form chec has likewise been preserved, though we little think of it when we draw a cheque, or when we suffer a check, or when we speak of the chancellor of the exchequer. The great object of the chess player is to protect the king, and when the king is in danger the opponent is obliged to say "check," i. e., shah, the king. After this the various meanings of check, cheque, or exchequer become easily intelligible. Exchequer, or scaecarlum, the name of the chess board, was afterward used for the checkered cloth on which accounts were calculated by means of counters.

The Right Sort of Wife.

An Atchison man recently refused a proposal of marriage. "I like you," he said to the girl, "but you have too many friends. There would be too many at our wedding, for you would be afraid not to invite them all, and your many friends wouldn't be satisfied unless they made fools of us by playing some kind of crazy pranks on us when we started on our wedding journey. You have so many friends that we would get all kinds of wedding presents that we don't want, and would be kept poor in future trying to pay back when the donors got married. You are nice, and I like you, but what I am looking for in a wife is a woman who is friendless."—Atchison Globe.

A Lost Bet.

An Irish waiter named Kenny was noted for his wit and ready answers. A party of gentlemen who were staying at the hotel heard of Kenny's wit, and one of them made a bet that he would say something Kenny couldn't answer at once.

A bottle of champagne was ordered; the one who had made the bet took hold of the bottle and commenced to open it. The cork came out with a "bang," and flew into Kenny's mouth.

"Ah," he said, "that is not the way to Cork!"

Kenny took the cork out of his mouth and replied: "No, but it's the way to 'Kill-Kenny.'"—Ideas.

He Said It.

"Horace," remarked Mrs. Figtree, "we are going to have company at dinner, and I do wish you would brighten up and look less like an honorary pallbearer. Say something humorous."

The company came, and, with a few preliminary coughs and winks, which were intended to announce to his wife that the witticism was about to be perpetrated, Mr. Figtree said, timidly, "Mary."

"Yes, dear, what is it?" asked Mrs. Figtree, graciously.

"Have you got all of your hair on this evening?"—Judge.

Not Her Goal.

"Did you see where a man sued for divorce from his wife because she was a baseball player?"

"Probably he did it because she didn't make enough home runs."

SELF-CONTROL AND PROGRESS.

Vital Truths as Set Forward by Ancient Philosopher.

Where then is progress? If any of you, withdrawing himself from externals, turns to his own will to exercise it and to improve it by labor, so as to make it conformable to nature, elevated, free, unrestrained, unimpeded, faithful, modest; and if he has learned that he who desires or avoids the things which are not in his power can neither be faithful nor free, but of necessity he must change with them and be tossed about with them as in a tempest, and of necessity must subject himself to others who have the power to procure or prevent what he desires or would avoid; finally, when he rises in the morning, if he observes and keeps these rules, bathes as a man of fidelity, eats as a modest man; in like manner, if in every matter that occurs he works out his chief principles as the runner does with reference to running, and the trainer of the voice with reference to the voice—this is the man who truly makes progress.—Epictetus.

HE DIDN'T CATCH THE RABBIT.

Brother Dickey Had Good Reasons for Not Doing So.

"I tole de man dat I wuz mighty short er coal an' wood," said Brother Dickey, "an' he tol' me, dat I know how ter git some, an' I tol' 'um 'no'—dat's what I wuz tryin' ter know, 'an' de man say."

"You go down yander, ter whar de graveyard at, an' fetch me de front foot er a graveyard rabbit, an' I'll give you half a ton er coal. I pettecker wants dat rabbit foot ter take off a spell somebody put on me."

"Well, did you get the rabbit foot?" someone asked.

"No, suh. De place whar de graveyard at is too far fer me ter travel, bein' ez I got de rheumatism; 'sides dat, ef de dead is at peace it ain't de likes er me ter wake 'um up ag'in ter de tribulations er dis sufferin' ol' worl'!"—Atlanta Constitution.

Whence Pie?

The origin of pie, especially mince pie, like the origin of sausage, is shrouded in mystery, but certain it is that it was known as far back as the time of Piers the Plowman, and it may be that in his dinner pail could have been found the precedent which Michael of Pittsburg, now of the hospital, sought to follow. Those who are surprised, after being led to believe that New England is the habitat of the article, to learn that pie is an old English institution can easily accept the further statement that "planted on American soil it forthwith ran rampant and burst forth into an untold variety of genera and species." Like the Irish potato, which is said to have originated in the new world, it has been so ingrafted into the life of its adopted country that it seems more like a native than an alien.

Reward!

The other day a boy received one dollar for restoring to the loser \$50,000 of gilt-edged bonds. Surely this is not a premium on honesty. A porter found \$80,000 of diamonds and pearls in a Pullman car, and got \$25 for returning the trinkets. A prominent man lost a letter that might embarrass him and advertised "Ample Reward!" That letter was not worth a cent to the finder; but when he gave it up he got \$300 in cash, much to his astonishment. "I'm a poor man, all right, all right," he said, "but this is too much. What? Just for picking up a letter in the street? Say, mister; here's your \$300. Give it to some other charity. I read it, of course; but I'll never peach on you. Gimme six dollars to buy my kid a suit of clothes, and we'll call the incident closed forever."—New York Press.

African Races.

The indigenous races of Africa are considered to be four in number, namely: The negroes proper, who occupy a central zone, stretching from the Atlantic to the Egyptian Sudan, and who comprise an enormous number of diverse tribes; the Fulahs (with whom the Nubians are associated), settled mainly between Lake Chad and the Niger; the Bantus, who occupy the whole south, except its extremity, and the Hottentots, who are in that extreme southern region. Some anthropologists include the Kaffirs and Bechuanas as Bantu tribes. The north and northeast are occupied by Semitic and Hamitic races, the latter including Abyssinians and Gallas.

More Psychology.

"Lady," said Plodding Pete, as he finished the luncheon which had been provided, "I said I'd do me best to help out wid de wood-choppin'."

"That's what you said."

"An' I'm a man of me word."

"Then why don't you reach for the ax and go to work?"

"Lady, I merely took de contract. I didn't guarantee to do de work myself. I'm a telepathic wood-chopper, an' if you don't disturb me while I'm concentratin' my thoughts I'll surprise you. Jes' remember, if anybody walks up like he's half awake an' goes to work on dat wood, dat I'm de grateful party who mesmerized him."

Wasted Efforts.

One evening when Tommy, aged five, was having his daily bath his nurse was trying, with small success, to scrub his grimy little knees.

After watching her for some time he said, patronizingly:

"Never mind, Bertha. Don't you know that's the dark meat, anyway?"—Harper's Monthly.