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REYNOLDS & SON, BARRE, VT.

The Times' Daily Short Story.

TWO AND A PLUM TREE

(Copyright, 1903, by T. C. McClure.)

They had been standing beneath the plum tree when they quarreled, or, rather, when they parted.

They had set out for the plum tree with the full intention of gathering the great purple damsons which weighed his branches, but when finally they stood in the long shadow which the tree made in the afternoon sun damsons were the last things in the world of which they thought.

Betty, scarlet to the roots of her copper colored hair, withdrew all censorship from her tongue and said things which she would have indignantly disclaimed had any one repeated them to her an hour later. Jeroold listened silently, but in his eyes was a strange look which she had never seen before. When in the midst of the tirade she paused for breath, he had turned suddenly on his heel, and with a curt "goodby" cast over his shoulder—much as a bone would be thrown to a stray dog, Betty thought—he had vaulted the low fence and gone wrathfully across the pasture.

Betty watched him until a clump of scrub oak hid him from view. Then she sat down with her back against the trunk of the plum tree and thought it all over. As she thought angry tears came to her eyes, coarsed down her cheeks and splashed impudently on the hands clasped tightly in her lap. She sat there until the shadow of the tree had reached the fence, and the breeze coming in from the water made her shiver. She rose and turned her face toward the scrub oaks behind which he had disappeared.

"You left rather abruptly, Mr. Jeroold Neil," she said between her white teeth, "and you may stay away as long as you please. You're hardly worth crying over," she added as she brushed away her tears.

Neil next morning sat on the veranda of the casino, solemnly rolling and smoking innumerable cigarettes, which utterly failed to bring him the peace of mind he sought. Catboats with their white sails were darting to and fro in the bay, and each one suggested the joys of a morning sail with Betty. But the memory of the parting at the plum tree was still strong within him. A wretched hour dragged past, and he gave up his vain attempts to interest himself in the columns of the morning paper. He flung away his cigarette and, getting to his feet, strolled down the gravel path.

"I'm a fool," he mused, "and a brute. I needn't have left her in that fashion. By George! I'll go over to the plum tree and get some of those damsons. I'll send 'em up to her by Tom. She'll understand."

Mr. Jeroold Neil strode across the fields whistling a gay aria. He emerged

from the clump of scrub oak in the pasture and made straight for the plum tree. As he spied the tree one note of the aria was prolonged into a whistle of surprise. Against the base of the tree was a step ladder, and among the branches he caught a momentary flash of white muslin. Then he resumed the aria, quite as if this delightful bit of information had not been vouchsafed to him.

He took down the step ladder, folded it up and calmly sat down on it. Something suspiciously like a gasp of dismay came from the branches above his head, but to this he gave no heed. With his chin in his palm he sat on the step ladder and sighed ponderously before he began to muse aloud. "Tis strange," said Mr. Jeroold Neil beneath the plum tree—"tis passing strange how the human heart will always seek the scenes of its affliction. It was here we quarreled"—another sigh. "She said—O Lord, what didn't she say? If I'm all she made me out she's well done with me"—sighs ad libitum.

He drew out a pipe and filled and lighted it. By vigorous puffing he managed to send quite a respectable cloud of smoke up among the branches. A little choking cough rewarded his efforts, and it was with difficulty that he restrained a chuckle. Presently a wee, small voice crept down from the branches.

"Mr. Neil?" Neil started violently. "Ah," he said, "my trouble has brought on hallucinations! Methought I heard my own name. 'Twas Betty's voice, but far too small and weak."

"Mr. Neil!" This time the voice was loud and clear. "There it goes again!" cried Neil. "Surely Betty's, yet she always called me Jerry, with such a pretty accent."

"Jerry, you—you wretch!" came the voice, accented to the queen's taste. "Oh!" said Neil. "So it's really you, eh?"

"Yes—no. Don't look up, Jerry, please put the ladder against the tree, then walk across the pasture, and don't look back."

"Don't look up, don't look back," said he mockingly. "Suppose I comply. What do I get for it?"

"What do you want, you haggard?" "A half hour's talk under the tree."

"You—you've got me cornered," she said. "I'll have to capitulate."

A few minutes later Betty sat on the step ladder, and Neil sprawled comfortably at her feet.

"Bet," he said, "I spent the most miserable morning of my life until I came ever here. Tell me, when I came along were you thinking of me, or what?"

She laughed. "I was wishing I might fall out of the plum tree and break my neck," she said.

"Madam," he said gravely, "since you are so reckless with your own life you'd better give it into my keeping."

And once more the damsons were forgotten. **BARRY PRESTON.**

MARCHING ON PANAMA

Army of Colombians Attempts to Cross the Darien Mountains.

CONTRARY TO REYES' ORDERS

New President of Colombia, Now in Washington, Says He Told His Troops to Do Nothing More While He Was Gone.

Washington, Dec. 10.—The French steamer Versailles, which has arrived at La Guayra, Venezuela, from Savannah, reports by cable that Colombian steamers have landed 1,100 men from Cartagena near the mouth of the Atrato river, on the gulf of Darien, to open a way over the Darien mountains into Panama. Other troops from the department of Cauca, Colombia, are said to be converging on Panama, and from all parts of Colombia troops are reported to be marching or awaiting on the result of General Reyes' mission to Washington.

Dr. Herran, the Colombian charge d'affaires, authorizes the statement that if troops from Cartagena have landed near the mouth of the Atrato river, it is directly in opposition to the advice of both himself and General Reyes.

General Reyes stated that the La Guayra dispatch was the first information he had received of the reported movement of Colombian troops. He declared, however, that if it is true, as stated, that such movement has taken place it was without any orders from him. Upon coming to Washington as the special representative of the Colombian government General Reyes temporarily relinquished the command of the Colombian army, the duties falling upon General Castro, second in command. General Reyes confirmed the statement recently made by Admiral Coghlan in a report to the navy department that prior to his departure for Washington he had given instructions to the Colombian troops to make no hostile demonstration until he was heard from and said that these troops were now awaiting orders which, however, would not come from him direct, but from the government at Bogota.

Asked as to the probable length of his stay in the United States, he replied that it was indefinite. He would, he said, hold another conference with Secretary Hay in the course of the next few days.

United States Won't Permit Invasion.

The general has been fully informed by the president himself as to the intentions of the government of the United States respecting the isthmus. He was told by the president that, as was set out in the president's message to congress, the United States had determined to maintain the independence of the new republic of Panama against all comers. While this guarantee is contained in a treaty now pending before the United States senate and as yet unratified, the administration has for some time past been acting upon the theory that the understanding is in full force. Therefore, all necessary preparations have been made to exert whatever physical force may be necessary to protect the isthmian transit, and instead of confining military and naval operations to the narrow strip of the right of way across the isthmus it has been decided that sound military policy requires the extension of the protected zone to include the entire territory of the republic of Panama. Consequently no Colombian troops will be allowed to cross the frontier into Panama, or, if they cross, they will be ejected in due time.

The Dreyfus Investigation.

Paris, Dec. 10.—M. Victor Mercier, one of the directors of the ministry of justice and reporter of the Dreyfus commission, has completed his examination of the documents submitted to the commission by the ministers of war and of justice. He will now begin the preparation of his report, which he expects will be finished in another week. M. Mercier's conclusions are not authoritatively known, but Dreyfus' friends are confident that he will advise a revision of the case.

Wreck and Fire in New Jersey.

Plainfield, N. J., Dec. 10.—The fire department of this city was called to extinguish a fire that was destroying an engine and several coal cars on the Jersey Central, wrecked here in a rear end collision. Several trainmen were injured by flying splinters, but none was seriously hurt. Escaping steam obscuring the signals is given as the cause of the accident.

Fourth Class Postmasters.

Washington, Dec. 10.—The following fourth class postmasters have been appointed:

New Jersey—Crystal Lake, Mrs. Jennie Lockwood.

Pennsylvania—Gray's Landing, Rush Lake; Keating, Thomas J. Callahan; Marsteller, William A. Watkins; Swartz, Perry M. Brooks.

Norway Rejects Woman Suffrage.

Christiania, Dec. 10.—The Norwegian parliament unanimously rejected the bill conferring the franchise on women. Prior to the vote the president of the house read a letter from the Woman's Suffrage union appealing for the adoption of the measure.

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ing the ratification of the Hay-Bunau-Varilla treaty, now before the senate.

Young Ready to Send Troops.

Lieutenant General Young, chief of staff, authorized the statement to be made that the war department was ready to dispatch troops to the isthmus on short notice should their presence be demanded. Although the statement heretofore has been denied, it is learned that the department has taken notice of the repeated reports that Colombian troops were assembling at different points with the avowed purpose of making a hostile demonstration against Panama and has perfected all military plans to repel such an invasion.

General Young said that should he be called upon to assist the navy it would not be necessary to send to the isthmus more than a regiment or two. Although none of the members of the joint army and navy board would admit that the isthmian situation was under discussion, it is known that such was the case and that both the army and the navy are now in a state of preparedness for any conflict with Colombia which might arise.

TRUST OWNED BETHLEHEM.

George W. Perkins' Revelations in the Shipbuilding Scandal.

New York, Dec. 10.—George W. Perkins, partner of J. E. Morgan, confirmed his story of the relations of the Morgan firm to the Shipyard company and the amassing terms of the sale of the Bethlehem plant to the combination while testifying before Special Examiner Henry D. Oliphant in the bondholders' suit against the trust.

Mr. Perkins testified to a queer loan made by the Morgan company that the shipbuilding trust might borrow from certain trust companies. He also said that the Bethlehem Steel company, for which an exorbitant price was paid, had not belonged to Charles M. Schwab for months before its sale to the shipbuilding concern.

Mr. Perkins explained that the company belonged to the United States Steel company, and it was sold because it was considered a favorable transaction, passing as it did to "friendly interests."

BUTLER DISCHARGED.

Missouri Court of Appeals Decides in Favor of Alleged Briber.

Jefferson City, Mo., Dec. 10.—The supreme court has reversed the decision of the lower court in the case of Colonel Edward Butler of St. Louis, convicted at Columbia, Mo., in October, 1902, of attempted bribery, and discharged the prisoner.

The opinion was written by Judge Fox and was concurred in by all other judges. The court holds that the board of health had no authority to let the garbage contract, but that this power belonged to the board of public improvements. The board of health having no authority to award this contract, the defendant could not bribe members to do something which they had no authority to do.

Mail Box Robber Confesses.

Springfield, Mass., Dec. 10.—George F. Gibbs, arrested here for forgery and robbing the United States mails, has confessed to being the George F. Atwood implicated with a man named Morgan in the mail box robberies in Boston in 1897, a crime for which he served a four years' sentence in state prison. His offense here lay in his stealing two large packages of business mail from the bulk mail window in the postoffice. These letters contained checks aggregating \$700, which he kept, remailing the letters themselves. Two of the checks were cashed in local stores. He was arraigned in police court for forging the indorsements to these and pleaded guilty.

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HOAR WANTS TO KNOW

Introduces Resolution Asking President to Tell All About Panama.

TELLER ATTACKS CUBAN BILL

Declares General Wood Was Perpetrator of Active in Promoting Reciprocity and Says Newspapers Have Been Subsidized.

Washington, Dec. 10.—Senator Hoar has introduced the following resolution:

Resolved, That the president be requested, if not in his judgment incompatible with the public interest, to communicate to the senate such facts as may be in his possession or in that of any of the executive departments as will show whether at the time of the ratification of the treaty with the republic of Panama, lately communicated to the senate, that province, Panama, had successfully established its independence, had lawfully adopted a constitution and had given authority to the persons with whom said treaty purports to have been made to negotiate and ratify the same; also the population of said republic of Panama at that time, its capacity for self government and the race and character of the persons composing it; also whether the officials negotiating or ratifying the treaty on the part of Panama had any personal or private interest in or relation to the construction of a canal across the isthmus of Panama; also whether the constitution of the republic of Colombia authorized the secession of Panama therefrom, and whether Colombia was prevented by the action of the United States or by any officer or force under the jurisdiction of the same from attempting to assert its authority or to prevent such secession and what instructions, if any, had been given by the government of the United States to such officers, whether civil, military or naval and whether if any action had been taken by such officers without special authority what action was so taken, and whether such action has been approved or disapproved by the government of the United States; also at what time information of any revolution or resistance to the government of Colombia in Panama was received by the

government of the United States or any department thereof, and whether any information was received of any expected or intended revolution before it occurred and the date of such information.

By general agreement the resolution went over without discussion.

Debate on Cuban Bill Resumed.

After a suggestion that the Penrose resolution for an investigation of the postoffice department be considered and a statement by Mr. Cullom that the Cuban bill should have the right of way the senate took up the Cuban bill when the routine business was completed.

Mr. Teller continued his speech against the bill. He again took up the question of the activity of General Wood while acting as governor of Cuba in behalf of Cuban reciprocity with the United States. He said there were official records to show that the Cuban government had paid to exceed \$15,000 in that interest during General Wood's administration. He declared that the press of both the United States and Cuba had been utilized in support of the policy of reciprocity and quoted figures showing the amounts alleged to have been paid for newspapers advocating this policy.

The president sent to the senate the following nominations:

Postmasters: New Jersey—James L. Hays, Newark; George W. Cooper, Somerville. New York—Warren J. Martin, Port Chester; George B. Harmon, Brookport.

Also several promotions in the navy. Mr. Payne, chairman of the committee on ways and means, reported when the house convened a resolution providing for the reference of the president's message to committees, and the house went into committee of the whole, with Mr. Burkett (Neb.) in the chair, for its consideration.

Jones Calls Democratic Committee.

Washington, Dec. 10.—James K. Jones, chairman of the Democratic national committee, has issued a call for the committee to meet at the Shoreham hotel in this city Tuesday, Jan. 12, for the purpose of deciding upon the time and place of holding the Democratic national convention.

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