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By ZEB. P. COUNCIL.

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DURHAM, N. C., April 2, 1907.

If you thought Spring was here you were mistaken.

ALL those that have been bragging about having corn large enough to work doubtless enjoyed the weather last Sunday.

It certainly was good for those that had summer goods and Easter hats to sell that the weather remained good until last Saturday.

THE Fifth district combine did not seem to end singly, but from what some of them are saying, there were two—one within the other.

It is no more than should have been expected. Politicians naturally like a fight, and if the Republicans do not make it interesting it is but natural that Democrats should raise a row of their own.

It is rather a difficult problem to decide which was disappointed the worst the fellow that had a new Spring suit to wear Sunday or the one that had already paid for his horse and buggy to go fishing Monday.

It must be rather embarrassing for a man to accept a position that was made vacant because another man would not do as he was bidden by one of the stockholders, especially when that position happens to be editor of a daily paper.

FAR be it from us to say it was anything but simple justice that the Fayetteville negro received at the hands of the court, and while he had no defense to offer, it seems rather bad that the case should have consumed so little time; that is, if you are to consider many cases just as bad that have taken up weeks of the court's time.

FOR a man like J. W. Bailey to leave the editorship of the Biblical Recorder to enter into politics may improve the latter, but if it is the case it will be the first instance of the kind we ever heard of. Politics may be reformed and made a great deal better, but the chances are that the one man that attempts will become worse.

We make it a point to say as little as possible in these columns about delinquents paying up for The Recorder. The date your subscription expires is printed on the label on your paper every week and it should be enough. Soon we are going over our list and if your paper does not come after that date do not be surprised. Your attention to the date for which you have paid will save us the necessity of cutting your name off.

The always alert Chatham Record calls attention to the fact that "express companies, as well as railroads, can now be made to pay promptly claims for loss or damage to property while in their possession. An act for this purpose was passed by the late Legislature, making the existing law apply to express companies as well as to railroads, which was eminently right and proper."
—News and Observer.

Watch "The Rise of Jimmie Johnson."

The Prisoner of Zenda

By ANTHONY HOPE

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[CONTINUED.]
I met his eye full and square, and I read in it an angry warning. How long he had been a listener I knew not, but he had come in upon us in the nick of time.
"We must not keep his eminence waiting," said I.
But Flavia, in whose love there lay no shame, with radiant eyes and blushing face held out her hand to Sapt. She said nothing, but no man could have missed her meaning who had ever seen a woman in the exaltation of love. A sour yet sad smile passed over the old soldier's face, and there was tenderness in his voice as, bending to kiss her hand, he said:
"In joy and sorrow, in good times and bad, God save your royal highness!"
He paused and added, glancing at me and drawing himself up to military erectness:
"But before all comes the king—God save the king!"
And Flavia caught at my hand and kissed it, murmuring:
"Amen! Good God, amen!"
We went into the ballroom again. Forced to receive adieus, I was separated from Flavia. Every one when he left me went to her. Sapt was out and in of the throng, and where he had been glances, smiles and whispers were rife. I doubted not that, true to his relentless purpose, he was spreading the news that he had learned. To uphold the crown and beat Black Michael—that was his one resolve. Flavia, myself—aye, and the real king in Zenda—were pieces in his game, and pawns have no business with passions. Not even at the walls of the palace did he stop, for when at last I handed Flavia down the broad marble steps and into her carriage there was a great crowd awaiting us, and we were welcomed with deafening cheers. What could I do? Had I spoken then they would have refused to believe that I was not the king; they might have believed that the king had run mad. By Sapt's devices and my own ungoverned passion I had been forced on, and the way back had closed behind me, and the passion still drove me in the same direction as the devices seduced me. I faced all Streisau that night as the king and the accepted sutor of the Princess Flavia.
At last, at 3 in the morning, when the cold light of dawning day began to steal in, I was in my dressing room, and Sapt alone was with me. I sat like a man dazed, staring into the fire. He puffed at his pipe. Fritz was gone to bed, having almost refused to speak to me. On the table by me lay a rose. It had been in Flavia's dress, and as we parted she had kissed it and given it to me.
Sapt advanced his hand toward the rose, but with a quick movement I shut mine down upon it.
"That's mine," I said, "not yours—the king's either."
"We struck a good blow for the king tonight," said he.
I turned on him fiercely.
"What's to prevent me striking a blow for myself?" I said.
He nodded his head.
"I know what's in your mind," he said. "Yes, lad, but you're bound in honor."
"Have you left me any honor?"
"Oh, come! To play a little trick on a girl!"
"You can spare me that, Colonel Sapt, if you would not have me utterly

"It's gospel truth," he said. "Thanks to my advice, you could."
"I could marry the princess and send Michael and his brother together to—" "I'm not denying it, lad," said he.
"Then, in God's name," I cried, stretching out my hands to him, "let us go to Zenda and crush this Michael and bring the king back to his own again."
The old fellow stood and looked at me for full a minute.
"And the princess?" he said.
"I bowed my head to meet my hands and crushed the rose between my fingers and my lips.
I felt his hand on my shoulder, and his voice sounded husky as he whispered low in my ear:
"Before God, you're the finest Elphberg of them all. But I have eaten of the king's bread, and I am the king's servant. Come, we'll go to Zenda."
And I looked up and caught him by the hand. And the eyes of both of us were wet.

CHAPTER XI.
THE terrible temptation which was assailing me will now be understood. I would so force Michael's hand that he must kill the king. I was in a position to bid him defiance and tighten my grasp on the crown—not for his own sake, but because the king of Ruritania was to wed the Princess Flavia. What of Sapt and Fritz? Ah, but a man cannot be held to write down in cold blood the wild and black thoughts that storm his brain when an uncontrolled passion has battered a breach for them. Yet, unless he sets up as a saint, he need not hate himself for them. He is better employed, as it humbly seems to me, in giving thanks that power to resist was vouchsafed to him than in fretting over wicked impulses which come unsought and extort an unwilling hospitality from the weakness of our nature.
It was a fine bright morning when I walked, unattended, to the princess's house, carrying a nosegay in my hand. Polly made excuses for love, and every attention that I paid her, while it riveted my own chains, bound closer to me the people of the great city, who worshipped her. I found Fritz's inamorata, the Countess Helga, gathering blooms in the garden for her mistress' wear and prevailed on her to take mine in their place. The girl was rosy with happiness, for Fritz, in his turn, had not wasted his evening and so dark shadow hung over his wooing save the hatred which the Duke of Streisau was known to bear him.
"And that," she said, with a mischievous smile, "your majesty has made of no moment. Yes, I will take the flowers. Shall I tell you, sire, what is the first thing the princess does with them?"
We were talking on a broad terrace that ran along the back of the house, and a window above our heads stood open.
"Madame!" cried the countess merrily, and Flavia herself looked out. I bared my head and bowed. She wore a white gown, and her hair was loosely gathered in a knot. She kissed her hand to me, crying:
"Bring the king up, Helga; I'll give him some coffee."
The countess, with a gay glance, led the way and took me into Flavia's morning room. And, left alone, we greeted one another as lovers are wont. Then the princess laid two letters before me. One was from Black Michael—a most courteous request that she would honor him by spending a day at his castle of Zenda, as had been her custom once a year in the summer, when the place and its gardens were in the height of their great beauty. I threw the letter down in disgust, and Flavia laughed at me. Then, growing grave again, she pointed to the other sheet.
"I don't know who that comes from," she said. "Read it."
"I knew in a moment. There was no signature at all this time, but the handwriting was the same as that which had told me of the snare in the summer house. It was Antoinette de Mauban's."
I have no cause to love you [it ran], but God forbid that you should fall into the power of the duke. Accept no invitations of his. Go nowhere without a large guard—a regiment if it is not too much to him who reigns in Streisau.
"Why doesn't it say 'the king'?" asked Flavia, leaning over my shoulder so that the ripple of her hair played on my neck. "Is it a hoax?"
"As you value life and more than life, my queen," I said, "obey it to the very letter. A regiment shall camp round your house today. See that you do not go out unless well guarded."
"An order, sire?" she asked, a little rebellious.
"Yes, an order, madame—if you love me."
"Ah!" she cried. And I could not but kiss her.
"You know who sent it?" she asked.
"I guess," said I. "It is from a good friend—and, I fear, an unhappy woman. You must be ill Flavia, and unable to go to Zenda. Make your excuses as cold and formal as you like."
"So you feel strong enough to anger Michael?" she said, with a proud smile.
"I'm strong enough for anything while you are safe," said I.
Soon I tore myself away from her, and then, without consulting Sapt, I took my way to the house of Marshal Strakenz. I had seen something of the old general, and I liked and trusted him. Sapt was less enthusiastic, but I had learned by now that Sapt was best pleased when he could do everything, and jealousy played some part in his views. As things were now, I had more work than Sapt and Fritz could manage, for they must come with me to Zenda, and I wanted a man to guard what I loved most in all the world and suffer me to set about my task of releasing the king with a quiet mind.

The marshal received me with most loyal kindness. To some extent I took him into my confidence. I charged him with the care of the princess, looking him full and significantly in the face as I bade him let no one from her cousin the duke approach her unless he himself were there and a dozen of his men with him.
"You may be right, sire," said he shaking his gray head sadly. "I have known better men than the duke do worse things than that for love."
"I could quite appreciate the remark, but I said:
"There's something beside love, marshal. Love's for the heart. Is there nothing my brother might like for his head?"
"I pray that you wrong him, sire."
"Marshal, I'm leaving Streisau for a few days. Every evening I will send a courier to you. If for three days none comes you will publish an order which I will give you depriving Duke Michael of the governorship of Streisau and appointing you in his place. You will declare a state of siege. Then you will send word to Michael that you demand an audience of the king. You follow me?"
"Aye, sire."
"In twenty-four hours. If he does not produce the king—I laid my hand on his knee—"then the king is dead, and you will proclaim the next heir. You know who that is?"
"The Princess Flavia."
"And swear to me on your faith and honor and by the fear of the living God that you will stand by her to your death and kill that reptile and seat her where I sit now."
"On my faith and honor and by the fear of God I swear it! And may Almighty God preserve your majesty, for I think that you go on an errand of danger."
"I hope that no life more precious than mine may be demanded," said I, rising. Then I held out my hand to him.
"Marshal," I said, "in days to come it may be—I know not—that you will hear strange things of the man who speaks to you now. Let him be what he may and who he may, what say you of the manner in which he has borne himself as king in Streisau?"
The old man, holding my hand, spoke to me, man to man.
"I have known many of the Elphbergs," said he, "and I have seen you. And, happen what may, you have borne yourself as a wise king and a brave man—aye, and you have proved as courteous a gentleman and as gallant a lover as any that have been of the house."
"Be that my epitaph," said I, "when the time comes that another sits on the throne of Ruritania."
"God send a far day, and may I not see it!" said he.
I was much moved, and the marshal's wren face twitched. I sat down and wrote my order.
"I can hardly yet write," said I. "My finger is stiff still."
It was, in fact, the first time that I had ventured to write more than a signature, and in spite of the pains I had taken to learn the king's hand I was not yet perfect in it.
"Indeed, sire," he said, "it differs a little from your ordinary handwriting. It is unfortunate, for it may lead to a suspicion of forgery."
"Marshal," said I, with a laugh, "what use are the guns of Streisau if they can't assuage a little suspicion?"
He smiled grimly and took the paper.
"Colonel Sapt and Fritz von Tarlenheim go with me," I continued.
"You go to seek the duke?" he asked in a low tone.
"Yes, the duke, and some one else of whom I have need and who is at Zenda," I replied.
"I wish I could go with you!" he cried, tugging at his white mustache. "I'd like to strike a blow for you and your crown."
"I leave you what is more than my life and more than my crown," said I, "because you are the man I trust more than all others in Ruritania."
"I will deliver her to you safe and sound," said he, "and, failing that, I will make her queen."
We parted, and I returned to the palace and told Sapt and Fritz what I had done. Sapt had a few faults to find and a few grumbles to utter. This was merely what I expected, for Sapt liked to be consulted beforehand, not informed afterward. On the whole he approved of my plans, and his spirits rose high as the hour of action drew nearer and nearer. Fritz, too, was ready, though he, poor fellow, risked more than Sapt did, for he was a lover, and his happiness hung in the scale. Yet how I envied him! For the triumphant issue which would crown him with happiness and unite him to his mistress, the success for which we were bound to hope and strive and struggle, meant to me sorrow more certain and greater than if I were doomed to fail. He understood something of this, for when we were alone (save for old Sapt, who was smoking at the other end of the room) he passed his arm through mine, saying:
"It's hard for you. Don't think I don't trust you. I know you have nothing but true thoughts in your heart."
But I turned away from him, thankful that he could not see what my heart held, but only be witness to the deeds that my hands were to do.
Yet even he did not understand, for he had not dared to lift his eyes to the Princess Flavia, as I had lifted mine. Our plans were now all made, even as we proceeded to carry them out, and as they will hereafter appear. The next morning we were to start on the hapting excursion. I had made all arrangements for being absent, and now there was only one thing left to do—the hardest, the most heartbreaking. As evening fell I drove through the busy streets to Flavia's residence. I

"Flavia, I am not!"
a villain—if you would not have your king rot in Zenda while Michael and I play for the great stake outside— You follow me?"
"Aye, I follow you."
"We must act, and quickly. You saw tonight, you heard tonight!"
"I did," said he.
"Your cursed acuteness told you what I should do. Well, leave me here a week and there's another problem for you. Do you find the answer?"
"Yes, I find it," he answered, frowning heavily. "But if you did that you'd have to fight me first—and kill me."
"Well, and if I had—or a score of men? I tell you, I could raise all Streisau on you in an hour and choke you with your lies—yes, your mad lies—in your mouth."

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Having this day qualified as Executor of the estate of W. H. Atkins, deceased, I hereby notify all persons having claims against said estate, to present them to me duly verified on or before the 8th day of March, 1908, or this notice will be plead in bar of their recovery. Persons indebted to said estate will make immediate settlement.
This the 8th day of March, 1907.
ROBERT J. ATKINS, Executor

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(Continued on fourth page.)