

A Political Vendetta

By

WELDON J. COBB

CHAPTER XVIII.—(Continued.)

Hope thrilled, his eyes glistened with interest.

"Is escape, then, possible?" he demanded quickly.

"And easy?"

"Show me the way to freedom, then!"

"You pledge yourself I shall go with you?"

"Oh, surely!"

"To assist me if I need aid?"

"Yes?"

"To hasten yourself to the execution of the mission, should I be overcome and incapacitated by weakness or accident?"

"I promise you that."

"And you look like a man who means what he says, and I believe in you," earnestly said the other. "Very well, then—our course is simple. Alone, I fear I could not carry out my designs, but you are strong, fearless, while I am a physical wreck. There is a window in my cell, and like your own. An hour's work with the saw—will enable me to break out the framed grating. Then there is a yard to cross, a high stone wall to scale, and—liberty! But we must wait for nightfall, for all day long the attendants here are about the garden."

Hope's energies spurred up as if by magic. His crushing experience of the past week had well nigh dispirited other than gained interest in life, but every man craves liberty, and the prospect of freedom is inspiring.

"I shall certainly hold myself solely at your service while you carry out this mission of yours," he said.

At the allusion, the former agitation of his companion recurred.

"My mission?" he repeated, weirdly, pacing the floor with excitement. "Heavens! when I think of it! And only twenty-four hours left! If I fail—!"

Hope placed a hand soothingly on the man's arm, for he observed that he was becoming frightened again.

"Be calm, my friend," he said, reassuringly. "You are not going to fail. Is not the way to freedom open to us?"

"Yes, it seems so!"

"Will not I be at your side to assist you?"

Then the man's face glowed with hope. He resumed his place on the beach.

"My name is Warren," he said, after a long, dreary pause, "and I am an expert chemist, and agent for the Vulcan Nitro Gas Company of New York."

So peculiar and incomprehensible was this announcement that Hope secretly wondered if, after all, the speaker was entirely responsible for what he said, but the latter proceeded with a manifest powerful effort to be cool and coherent:

"It was exactly two months ago yesterday that I was struck down in the railroad wreck. This I know by computation, for I learned the day of the month from a newspaper and an overheard conversation in the garden. It is, therefore, precisely two months to-morrow morning that I live in the Vandyke House at Murrayville, a satchel containing my latest chemical experiment in dynamite."

"You mean—?"

"What I tell you. It is there now, in the closet of the room I always occupied when a guest there, pushed way back on a dusty, unused shelf."

"Ah, I see," nodded Hope, "you fear someone may discover it, tamper with it, and create an explosion?"

"Ripe?"

"Yes."

"I don't understand you."

Warren wrung his hands.

"As a chemist," he said, "I know that precisely 63 days from the date I made the mixture spontaneous explosion will positively materialize!"

Hope gave an awed start, comprehending:

"Then, indeed—?"

"Listed," proceeded Warren, his tone shaking—"it is nearly ripe!"

"Ripe?"

"Yes."

"I don't understand you."

Warren wrung his hands.

"As a chemist," he said, "I know that when a chemical reaction occurs, it is always spontaneous."

Hope gave an awed start, comprehending:

"Then, indeed—?"

"It must be reached, removed, cast into some deep river bed. Aye! or a hundred innocent lives will be blotted out. Why man! there is enough dynamite in that little satchel to blow the Vandyke House to atoms at an instant!"

It was fated that what Warren had planned should be in a measure carried out.

Just after dusk Gideon Hope and his strange associate in escape removed the sawed-through window frame, let themselves down by a trellis to the garden, found a ladder, and gained the top of the high stone wall surrounding the private apartment.

The broad surface was littered with broken crockery and glassware. About to pull up the ladder to drop it over on the other side, Hope caught a faint moan from the lips of his companion.

"What is the matter?" he inquired quickly.

Warren was tottering, and Gideon grasped him to steady him with his strong hand.

"I have cut my wrist on a fragment of broken glass," panted Warren, and it had bleeding profusely. "I shall not be able to stand."

"Great heavens!" rang from Gideon Hope's ached lips, his heart in a tumult, as he recoiled with a shudder.

CHAPTER XX.

An American author of some note was passing a summer in New Hampshire. One day he received word that a distinguished Englishman was visiting in the country town and would like to call upon the author, of whom, he added in his note requesting an audience, he had heard.

Somewhat flattered, the author wondered to himself who had spoken to the distinguished Englishman about him.

"Some Oxford dignitary doubtless," he reflected, pleasantly, "or possibly some London publisher or critic," and he awaited the stranger's arrival with interest.

"So you had heard of me," he ventured, after the usual greetings had been spoken. "Well, that is odd. Might I ask who?" but his visitor interrupted him.

"Oh, yes," he said, "I heard all about you before I got here. The porter in the Pullman told me that you were the very man to come to to ask about the best route to Niagara and what hotel I'd better stay at."

"That's a funny looking thing," said Frank Davis, of Reed Station, 12 years old, as he hawed on the Lake Erie & Western railway track near his home a torpedo used by railroad men for signaling purposes. Thereupon he hit it with a big stone and was severely injured. A surgeon removed several iron slivers from his hand.

"Yes!" cried Hope, inspired with the hotly purpose indicated.

He leaped backwards. In half a minute he was safe in the shelter of shrubbery, in half an hour, at the end of a keenly four miles away from his now prison place.

Now he sat down on a fallen tree to regain his breath and calculate what was to be done, and the speediest way of accomplishing it.

He had expressed so generally with Warren that lay that he knew he must lose no time in heading straight and swiftly for the hotel where the satchel of dynamite lay.

Hope put aside the exultation of freedom, the complications of the escape, even all thoughts of Kane, of Claire, as he realized the sacred pledge he must fulfill as all hazards.

With that—a quivering indication of

her index finger in the direction of the adjoining room where Kane sat—she had only a moment to think. Then Hope and his guest past a partitioned doorway, the overwhelmed intruder slowly, dubiously moved around, and with vague, dull steps returned to the presence of the man he so hated.

Kane sat as before in the luxurious armchair—as before, the stout chain encircled one wrist, running to the heavy marble pillar, and holding him captive. The pillar that had been occasioned by the first startling and unexpected appearance of Hope had departed. His lip was curled with a mockery that was the secret of his master's innate confidence. He regarded his visitor's face sardonically. Then he burst into a short, harsh and derisive laugh.

Kane poised motionless and silent, trying to study out the situation, striving to analyze the jarring elements that had disengaged him.

With cool and contemptuous demeanor Kane laughed twice again. Then he reached over to the dauntly stand at his elbow, selected a fresh cigar. It lit, and with a white, regular teeth, blushing, and he posed as if to spring upon Kane.

"What you want?" he challenged grimly.

"A horse, or a horse and vehicle," responded Hope promptly. "Only for a few hours. See—I will pay liberally to secure the means of getting at once to Murryville."

"I shall certainly hold myself solely at your service while you carry out this mission of yours," he said.

At the allusion, the former agitation of his companion recurred.

"My mission?" he repeated, weirdly, pacing the floor with excitement. "Heavens! when I think of it! And only twenty-four hours left! If I fail—!"

Hope welcomed a light shining in the distance. He kept it in sight as a beacon, and traced it to the window of a cabin near a quarry.

A knock at its door brought thither an unsmiling laborer, his eyes averse, his white, regular teeth blushing, and he posed as if to spring upon Kane.

"What?" he said.

"What do you want?" he asked.

"To be continued."

While out hunting, Harry Shirley, assistant postmaster of Shoals, shot and killed a large blacksnake. This is unusual as green as in summer.

Charles Heckman, aged 24, foreman at the Mitchell Cement Mills in Bedford, fell from a thirty-foot ledge to a stone below, and sustained injuries which caused death in a few minutes.

Ollie Craven, of Bluffton, was kicked by a horse, and his leg was broken.

The Board of State Charities says the jail at Auburn is in bad condition.

Archie Lockhart, aged 32, a boiler maker of Fort Wayne, ended his life with carbolic acid.

Dr. L. Nuit Plummer, the oldest and wealthiest physician in Shoals, dropped dead from heart failure as he was entering his home.

Charles Heckman, aged 24, foreman at the Mitchell Cement Mills in Bedford, fell from a thirty-foot ledge to a stone below, and sustained injuries which caused death in a few minutes.

T. E. Williams shot an eagle on his farm, three miles northwest of Rockville. The bird measured seven feet and was carrying away a young pig when shot.

C. W. Kinnell, of Kendallville, Senator-elect in the coming Legislature, has resigned the agency of a life insurance company in order that he may be untrammelled in his legislative work.

Taylor C. Shobe, a horseman well known all over northern Indiana, died a few days ago at his home in Ligonier. Mr. Shobe had his spine injured in a runaway accident a year ago and did not recover.

The barn on the farm of Mrs. Gentry, two miles west of Linden, was destroyed by fire last week. Thomas Dennis, tenant on the farm, lost all of his farm implements, buggy, wagons, harness and a quantity of corn. Loss \$900, partly insured.

Mrs. Maud Stonecipher has asked for a decree of separation from Dr. Alva E. Stonecipher, a practicing physician of South Bend. She demands \$75,000 alimony, alleged the defendant is independent of Turkey, and the last named country itself has made radical innovations tending toward a constitutional government.

The barn of the farm of Mrs. Gentry, two miles west of Linden, was destroyed by fire last week. Thomas Dennis, tenant on the farm, lost all of his farm implements, buggy, wagons, harness and a quantity of corn. Loss \$900, partly insured.

As he was sitting in a wagon ready to drive away from the home of a friend, Abraham Long, one of the best known farmers in the vicinity of Lafayette, suddenly straightened up on the seat, pitched headlong to the ground and was picked up lifeless by his companions. The fatal blow broke his neck and caused instant death. It is believed that a stroke of apoplexy caused him to fall from the wagon.

Vernon Stidd, aged 14, son of Benjamin Stidd, and Hazel Allen, a widow, were married at Columbus by Justice Kenneth in his office. The mother of the two children were present and gave their consent to their marriage.

When Perry F. Fields and Miss Amy Jeanne were married at Washington the third brother of the Fields family to whom his bride, the third sister of the Nash family. Often instances occur where two sisters of one family marry two sisters of the same family, but it is unusual that three brothers marry three sisters. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. W. W. Moore.

The principal events of 1908 may be thus epitomized:

JANUARY.

4—Jury disagrees in trial of Caleb Powers for murder of Gov. Gobell of Kentucky. . . . Jury acquits Geo. A. Pettie of Steubenmurder in Idaho.

10—Burial of King Manuel of Portugal.

14—Great race riots in Springfield, Ill. . . . Death of 167 persons and injury of 75 persons . . . Union station annex in Kansas City burns.

18—Death of Edmund Clarence Stedman, poet . . . Three miners rescued after being buried for 46 days in mine at Ely, Mo.

19—Death of Chas. Emory Smith and Wm. B. Allison.

The principal events of 1908 may be thus epitomized:

JANUARY.

4—Jury disagrees in trial of Caleb Powers for murder of Gov. Gobell of Kentucky. . . . Jury acquits Geo. A. Pettie of Steubenmurder in Idaho.

10—Burial of King Manuel of Portugal.

14—Great race riots in Springfield, Ill. . . . Death of 167 persons and injury of 75 persons . . . Union station annex in Kansas City burns.

18—Death of Edmund Clarence Stedman, poet . . . Three miners rescued after being buried for 46 days in mine at Ely, Mo.

19—Death of Chas. Emory Smith and Wm. B. Allison.

The principal events of 1908 may be thus epitomized:

JANUARY.

4—Jury disagrees in trial of Caleb Powers for murder of Gov. Gobell of Kentucky. . . . Jury acquits Geo. A. Pettie of Steubenmurder in Idaho.

10—Burial of King Manuel of Portugal.

14—Great race riots in Springfield, Ill. . . . Death of 167 persons and injury of 75 persons . . . Union station annex in Kansas City burns.

18—Death of Edmund Clarence Stedman, poet . . . Three miners rescued after being buried for 46 days in mine at Ely, Mo.

19—Death of Chas. Emory Smith and Wm. B. Allison.

The principal events of 1908 may be thus epitomized:

JANUARY.

4—Jury disagrees in trial of Caleb Powers for murder of Gov. Gobell of Kentucky. . . . Jury acquits Geo. A. Pettie of Steubenmurder in Idaho.

10—Burial of King Manuel of Portugal.

14—Great race riots in Springfield, Ill. . . . Death of 167 persons and injury of 75 persons . . . Union station annex in Kansas City burns.

18—Death of Edmund Clarence Stedman, poet . . . Three miners rescued after being buried for 46 days in mine at Ely, Mo.

19—Death of Chas. Emory Smith and Wm. B. Allison.

The principal events of 1908 may be thus epitomized:

JANUARY.

4—Jury disagrees in trial of Caleb Powers for murder of Gov. Gobell of Kentucky. . . . Jury acquits Geo. A. Pettie of Steubenmurder in Idaho.

10—Burial of King Manuel of Portugal.

14—Great race riots in Springfield, Ill. . . . Death of 167 persons and injury of 75 persons . . . Union station annex in Kansas City burns.

18—Death of Edmund Clarence Stedman, poet . . . Three miners rescued after being buried for 46 days in mine at Ely, Mo.

19—Death of Chas. Emory Smith and Wm. B. Allison.