The World Against Him

By WILL N. HARBEN.

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stood on the flat stones round the spring. The officer wore his eyeglasses, and had his cigar between his lips. The grass muffled Ronald's steps, and as Winkle was looking towards the house as if expecting some one, he did not notice our hero's presence till he stood beside him.

"Ah!" ejaculated Winkle, as he turned, and then through his glasses he eyed Ronald coldly from head to foot. "Ah!" he repeated, and then he took a puff at his cigar and blew the smoke towards the house as he looked again up the walk. One familiar with the tricks of Winkle's sallow face might have found a hint of uneasiness there as Ronald caught his eye and held it steadily for a second.

"There is a matter that you and I must settle, sir," said our hero, calmly.

For a moment Winkle gazed almost defiantly at the speaker, then his glance wavered just a little.

"A matter that you and I must settle?" he echoed, with a faint sneer, "and what is that, my good fellow?"

"You deliberately drove your horses against me last night in the road and I have come to demand satisfaction."

The officer sent another glance up the walk towards the house; it was as if he were hoping some one would arrive to prevent what seemed inevitable. He did not like the expression of the face before him; he dreaded the awful threatening tranquillity of it.

He removed his cigar from his lips and held it in his fingers, that quivered nervously.

"I don't want to have trouble with you," he said.

"Then you should not have driven over me," answered Ronald, "for nothing under high heaven can avert the consequences of that cowardly act."

"I—I am not a good driver, Mr. Fenshaw—I believe that is your name, sir. Just as I passed your brother my hand slipped, and—"

"You are a deliberate liar!" Ronald interrupted him.

Winkle started, paled a little and made a half threatening gesture with his right hand, but as he gazed into our hero's eyes his arm sank slowly down to his side and he made a lame pretense of trying to restrain his anger.

"You must not use insulting words to me," he said.

Ronald smiled. "You would not be so inartistic as to deny that you lied, Winkle, but the fact that you tacitly admit you are a liar does not satisfy me. I tell you we have got to settle this matter right here and now."

"I don't know what you mean," Winkle found himself saying. "I do not want any trouble with you. I've said that the—the thing was an accident, and—"

"And I have said that it was not an accident, and that I will fight you or have the satisfaction of knowing you are a coward. If you are a coward I would not soil my hands with you."

Winkle was very white now; his cigar fell from his lips and he caught it against his breast. "I am unarmed and" (he looked Ronald over again) "you are physically stronger than I am."

Thereupon Ronald drew the two revolvers from his pockets and held them out. "I thought that pistols would be fair," he said. "You may take your choice; they are practically the same. This is a quiet place; we can have it over in a few minutes. I have thought out a plan that will be perfectly fair to both of us. The plantation bell will ring in a few moments; we can get ready and at its first stroke we may turn and fire till the revolvers are empty or one of us is down."

Winkle stared fixedly.

"Why, that would be deliberate murder," he gasped, shrinking back a step or two from the extended revolvers.

"It would not be any more murder than death in any duel would be, Capt.

"THERE IS A MATTER THAT YOU AND I MUST SETTLE, SIR."

Winkle. If you do not fight I shall know that you are a coward, sir."

Then an idea was born in the officer's almost benumbed brain.

"I cannot fight a—a man in your position in—in life," he said. "Surely you know what is considered proper."

Ronald's face grew purple with suppressed rage.

"Do you mean to tell me that you may drive a carriage over a man in a public road and then resort to such a petty subterfuge to get around the consequences? Capt. Winkle, I would strike you in the face if I could keep from feeling that I was striking a baby."

Winkle gave a furtive glance towards the house. He looked slightly relieved as if he thought by the tacit confession of cowardice he was going to escape a duel, which he feared quite as much as death itself.

"You may think what you please of me," he said, "but I am not willing to fight a duel with you—of course, considering all the circumstances."

"I see your plan, Winkle, "said Ronald. "You have insulted me in the presence of others, and if you avert trouble with me, you leave the witnesses under the impression that I yielded to the indignity without a murmur. That, I see, I must bear; but I assure you, in your refusal to fight me, you have relieved my mind, for no coward can insult me."

Winkle began to breathe more freely; he even allowed a defiant smile to play about his lips as he took a match from his pocket and relighted his cigar.

"As you please," he said, with a slight suggestion of a sneer. "I cannot fight you."

"But I am not through with you," Ronald burst out, flaming up again. "You are an officer in the pay of my country." He had taken a penknife from his pocket when he restored the revolvers to their places, and he now deliberately grasped Winkle's coat and cut off the top button.

"What are you doing?" gasped the officer, pulling back.

Taking a firmer grasp on the lapel, Ronald jerked the captain back to where he had stood. "Stand still!" he thundered. "You are unfit to wear the uniform of any country. You'd make a gallant soldier in time of need, wouldn't you?"

Without another word Winkle stood still and allowed Ronald to sever from his coat his buttons and shoulder straps.

"Now good morning, captain," was the parting injunction, "if you ever dare to drive over me again, I shall simply strangle you."

As if afraid another word might further enrage his antagonist, Winkle retreated towards the house, taking long, swift strides.

Ronald stood for a moment watching the walk towards the house, then still holding the buttons and shoulder-straps in his hands, he sank on a rustic seat near the spring. His passion had already spent itself, and a strange revulsion of feeling came over him.

He had drawn back his hand to throw the buttons and shoulder-straps into the high grass, when he heard a clear, ringing voice behind him.

"Don't throw them away," and Evelyn Hasbrooke, her big white apron piled with maiden-hair ferns and wild flowers, emerged from behind a thick hedge.

Before her words had died out he was on his feet, speechless with surprise.

"I heard every word," she said, with a sigh, "and at first I was almost frightened to death. I was going to interfere if he had—had accepted your challenge, but when I saw that he did not intend to fight you I remained silent. I was an eavesdropper—I confess that—but I simply had to listen It was really terrible—your voice—your looks!"

He was overwhelmed with confusion.

"I feel as if I could never be pardoned, Miss Hasbrooke," he managed to say, after a little pause. "I am on your grounds and Capt. Winkle is the guest of your house."

She shrugged her shoulders and sat down on the seat he had just left.

"I am going to say what I really would not say if it were not all settled between you, Mr. Fanshaw," she was putting the stems of her fern leaves together in her left hand, "and that is that I do not blame you much."

"You do not really?"

For a moment she gave him a full glance from her deep sympathetic eyes.

"I did not sleep a wink last night, Mr. Fanshaw. I was so angry with him that I could not close my eyes. I came near asking my father to send him away. From a man's standpoint I presume you have done all that can be done."

He sat down by her.

"I never let my temper get the best of me. Miss Hasbrooke, without feeling dissatisfied with myself. I refrained from striking him when I found he would not fight, but what I finally did was just as bad." He was looking at the buttons and shoulder-straps in his hands.

Evelyn laughed softly.

"He may not have any more buttons here in the country," she said, "and he may have to discard his favorite suit for awhile."

"I did it in a spasm of uncontrollable anger," was Ronald's defense.

"He deserved more than that slight humiliation," she smiled; "and yet you must not try to conquer the divine inclination you now have to pity him. It shows you are truly noble—noble!"

Ronald blushed to the roots of his hair.

"When he refused to fight me," he said, "I ought to have left him. I think I could if his reasons for not fighting had not been quite so exasperating."

"I am going to help you about the buttons and the shoulder-straps," answered Evelyn. "I have a maid who can hold her tongue. I am going to get her to borrow the captain's coat from his room, and I shall restore his plumage."

He smiled, a new light in his eyes.

"I really think I should like to have you do it, if you will," said he.

"He will wonder who did it," she laughed, "and I half hope he will suspect me of knowing something about it; he is tiresome in all things, but he has more to say about his courage than anything else."

Just then the plantation bell rang.

"Oh, you men are awful—awful!" she went on, grown suddenly serious. "If Capt. Winkle had been of a different type you would have been shooting at each other at this moment—" she checked herself; there was a tense look about her lips. "You would have been in great trouble (for no man can escape it who has killed another). Then he might have taken your life."

He understood, and his heart beat wildly.

"If he had been of a different type he would not have treated me as he did, and I should not have been here this morning."

She gathered up her ferns and flowers and rose.

"That is quite true," she rejoined, with a look towards the house. "I must be going now; good-by."

She took the buttons and sleeve ornaments from him, and put them into her pocket, and then held out her hand. "Good-by," she said again.

When Evelyn reached the house and had entered the great hall she called to her maid, Marie, a mulatto girl, to take care of her ferns and flowers.

"Have you seen Capt. Winkle this morning?" Evelyn asked.

The maid laughed impulsively as she filled her hands with the damp green things.

"Yessum, I seed 'im, an' he acted mighty strange. I never seed a man act so quar in my life." Again Marie laughed.

"What do you mean, Marie?"

"Wellum," answered the maid, "I noticed 'im go out fur his walk to'ds de spring, an' I would er bet my life dat he had on his brass buttons an' de straps on his shoulder, kase I seed um shinin' in de sun; he was smokin' an' walkin' as chipper as er game rooster, but about fifteen minutes ago I seen 'im slinkin' up de servants' stairs on his tip-toes. I met 'im face to face, I did, an', young miss, as God is in Heaven, he didn't have a sign of a button on 'is coat, an' he'd cut off his shoulder straps, too, an' more dan dat, he looked as mean as a egg-suckin' dog."

Marie giggled again. She had, with the usual perspicacity of her race, divined that the officer was not in high favor with her mistress.

At this juncture Capt. Winkle, dressed from head to foot in snowy duck, came down the front staircase, and, bowing to Evelyn, he went out on the veranda. Without speaking again to Marie, Evelyn turned into her own room to take off her damp apron.

She decided that she would, later in the day, ask Marie to get the captain's coat.

CHAPTER V.

After supper that night the three gentlemen remained at the table after the ladies had left, to smoke and drink their wine. The windows of the big dining-hall opened like a door onto the veranda, and Capt. Winkle, faultlessly attired in Tuxedo coat, low waistcoat and snowy shirt and necktie, watched the three ladies furtively as they, arm in arm, promenaded back and forth in the light of the big kerosene lamp on a post where the carriages stopped. It was not the colonel's habit to dress for the evening meal, especially in the hot season, so he still wore his cool suit of brown linen, and, in this respect, Mr. Hardy was glad to keep him company, as he had really come to the country for an easy, unceremonious outing. The colonel liked nothing better than good listeners, and, as he sipped his wine and smoked, his pink complexion fairly shone while he discoursed on a favorite topic of his—the beauty and many virtues of the only lady guest in his house, Mrs. Lancaster, a snowy-haired widow not far from the colonel's age.

"I am glad she came to-day," he said. "She is hard to get at; she travels so extensively, and I am sure we never would have her now if it were not for Evelyn; they love each other like mother and daughter. Why, I'll bet Mrs. Lancaster doesn't stay in her Charleston home one winter in five; does she, Hardy?"

"No, I think she likes Italy," said the gentleman appealed to. "I think I should have had the pleasure of meeting her before this if she were often at home, but she goes out very little in Charleston and has few intimate friends. I should say she was by all odds the most exclusive woman in the city."

"I am pretty sure," remarked the colonel, tentatively, "that she is very well to do—that is, I judge so by the life she leads; it is one of expensive luxury from beginning to end."

"I happen to know that she is decidedly rich," replied Hardy. "It seems that her husband, who was killed in the war, owned extensive lands in the south upon which phosphate beds have since been discovered."

"Her husband was not killed while actually in service," explained Hasbrooke, "and his death was a most tragic one." The colonel looked round the room and seeing James, the black butler, standing behind his chair, holding a napkin and corkscrew, he said:

"I shall ring when I want you, James."

When the negro had bowed himself from the room, Col. Hasbrooke continued. "Yes, Mrs. Lancaster's life has been a sad one; she has revealed the great grief of her life to very few, and then only to her most intimate friends. She had been married to Lancaster only about two years when the first shot from Fort Sumter set his blood on fire. He was one of the first in South Carolina to offer his services, and as he had had some military training and was highly educated he was made a captain of a company. He made a good record but was taken ill when his regiment was stationed at a little town in the mountains of East Tennessee and was ordered home on a furlough. As it was in the month of August, Mrs. Lancaster thought that the climate of Charleston would not be so good for him as that of Tennessee, so she telegraphed him to wait and she would join him. She met him with her only child, a baby in arms, and they started through the mountains to a retreat that had been recommended to them as a highly suitable resting place. But on that journey they met with the catastrophe which blighted her whole life. The mountains in that section, like the mountains here, were infested with bandits who lived upon plundering stragglers, no matter of what politics. And it was a gang of these reckless ruffians into which they ran. They were in a spring wagon driven by a negro, who had all along shown himself to be an arrant coward. The first notification of danger was the sudden appearance from the bushes of half a dozen armed men, who demanded that the party alight that the vehicle might be searched. Evidently Capt. Lancaster, who happened to be holding the child in his arms, thought that immediate obedience was best, so he got out, telling the men that he had in his pockets all the money and valuables the wagon contained. He was still holding the child on one arm and opening his pockets with another when the negro, seeing that the robbers were not noticing the wagon, whipped up the horses and drove away at full speed. Mrs. Lancaster tried to stop him, but he was wild with terror, and as the robbers were now firing after them, he ducked his head and applied the lash. The woman was helpless; the negro was strong and half insane. She argued with him and pleaded with him to stop and let her out, but he drove on like a madman. It was not till they had reached a farmhouse nine miles from the scene of the robbery that she induced the negro to stop. Here they were received by a family in which there was one man too old to do service in the war. He said he was willing to do what he could for her, but that the 'bushwhackers,' who were a power in the land, would hang him if he molested their plans. He went out to see if he could get together any of his neighbors who would help her, but

THE LITTLE CAP WORN BY THE BABY STAINED WITH BLOOD.

when he returned at dusk he brought the intelligence that he could find nobody who would dare take a hand in such an enterprise. She spent that night in the farmhouse and the next day she drove back absolutely alone in search of her husband and child. Near the spot where she had been separated from them she found her husband's hat, the little cap worn by the baby, stained with blood, and a pool of blood by the roadside. She spent all that day alone on that road and returned at night to the farmhouse. Here she stayed a month making inquiries and searches in all directions for more conclusive proof of the death of her child and husband. Finally the old farmer came to her one day with the report that one of the robbers had just died and that he had made a deathbed confession that he had shot and killed Capt. Lancaster. The baby, he said, was not killed at the time, as there was some reluctance among the men as to who should do it. They had gotten over this difficulty by drawing straws and the man upon whom the task had fallen had promised that he would drown the child, that its death might be an easy one. This was the only crumb of comfort the poor lady got; think of that, gentlemen, she could only hope that her son's death had been quick and painless. The dying man refused to tell who had undertaken the crime." The colonel paused, stroking his gray Van Dyke beard. "Is it any wonder that her face is sad and her hair white?"

"It is reported in Charleston that she has had many advantageous offers of marriage," put in Mr. Hardy, as he emptied his wine glass.

"Hundreds of them," enthused the colonel. "Why, Gen. Beauclare followed her about like a slave and so did Senator Waugh; I couldn't count the men who were in love with her, but she turned 'em all down."

The promenaders had quitted the veranda, and there was a light touch on the piano in the drawing-room and a sweet voice singing an old song.

"That is her!" cried the colonel, whose enthusiasm was not often governed by rules of grammar.

This was the signal for leaving the table, and the men went into the big, ancient-looking parlor where the lights burned low and the breeze from the distant mountains fanned the lace curtains into the room. Evelyn sat in a rocking-chair, her eyes on the singer's face. Caroline was noiselessly placing a whist table and playing cards near the center of the room. She, her father, Mr. Hardy and Capt. Winkle were the only ones who were fond of the game.

"But we shall interrupt the singing," protested the colonel, when he noticed the preparations.

"I shall stop if you don't go on with the game," declared the gentle old lady, a smile crossing her sweet, sad face; "and furthermore, I shall not sing unless you all talk over your game."

To this the jovial host agreed under protest, and the whist-players took their places. Evelyn sat at the end of the piano near enough to touch the elbow of the singer. There was infinite pathos in Mrs. Lancaster's voice as she sang:

"Dey ain't no use fer to fret an' pine,
Steady on de way, believers;
It's de some ole worl' w'en de sun don't shine,
Steady on de way, believers;

The colonel was dealing the cards, but he made a mistake in the count, and with a low laugh he threw the cards down. "I must wait till that one is over, anyway," he whispered. "That blamed thing always gets the best of me."

"It's de same ol' worl' in de sun an' de rain—
Same on de hilltop an' same on de plain,
So keep up yo' shoutin' an' keep on yo' prayin'—
Steady on de way, believers.
'Dey's a great big blossom on de watermelon vine,
Steady on de way, believers;
Fur peace come 'long w'en you done wid yo' pain,
So keep up yo' shoutin' an' keep on yo' prayin',
Steady on de way, believers."

There was just the faintest quiver in Mrs. Lancaster's voice, which Evelyn alone noticed, and a hint of moisture in her eyes as the melody died in the still room. She turned towards the card players, who, with the exception of the dapper captain, seemed deeply moved by her song.

"I knew I would stop your game," she laughed, "you are too polite to enjoy life. Come, Evelyn, let's take another stroll."

The view from the veranda was beautiful, and as the two walked back and forth across the wide floor arm in arm they enjoyed it silently. The moon had risen and hung like a great globe of yellow light just beneath a floating canopy of filmy clouds. Two rows of wind-moved elms stretched out past the great iron-wrought gates and between gleamed the white chert drive. On a sloping lawn to the left lay luxuriant parterres of flowers diversified by well-kept walks, and smooth plots of grass. Near the center stood a fountain, its sprays gleaming like rain in an April shower against the dark background of magnolia trees. The air which fanned their faces was laden with the perfume of hyacinth and roses. When they had walked several minutes in silence they paused at the window from which they had reached the veranda, and looked in on the players. Mr. Hardy was dealing the cards and Capt. Winkle was relating some sort of experience of his own which seemed to have roused the interest of his host.

"Of course," the captain was saying, "the fellow's challenge was a great surprise to me. I confess that I did drive against him out of pure devilment, for I had heard what an egotistical, presumptive ass he was, an' I wanted to pay him back for throwing my tip in the river as if he were the prince of Wales, but heaven knows, I didn't think I'd get a bloody duel on my hands. As you know, colonel, there was nothing for me to do but to—to make him see the absurdity of the thing."

"I suppose not," returned the colonel, in a noncommittal tone. Whatever may have been his secret opinion of Winkle's valor he knew his duty as host too well to impugn it, or to render his guest uncomfortable by sharp criticism. "And what did you say to him?" he ended.

"Why, I told him, of course, that his challenge was a proof of downright cowardice; that he knew well enough that a man in my position could not fight a man in his. That settled him. He retired like a whipped cur."

"And you did not explain or apologize?" slipped almost unconsciously from the lips of the colonel.

"Not I, I assure you; ha, ha! Apologize to him! That would have ruined him forever."

Evelyn grasped the hand of Mrs. Lancaster, nervously, and drew her across the room to the players.

"Your story, Capt. Winkle," she said, her eyes flashing, "reminds me very much of a piece of fiction I have read somewhere. The circumstances were identically the same except that the officer in the story allowed the hero to humiliate him by cutting off the buttons and shoulder-straps from his uniform. I am so glad your experience did not end that way. The truth is your case was far more agreeable than the fiction in the other."

Capt. Winkle paled and interlaced his fingers tightly on the smooth top of the mahogany table. For one second he glared like a condemned man at the speaker and then the fierce stare of her eyes bore his own to the ground.

"Perhaps," spoke up Mr. Hardy, whose jests were rare and often too personal, and who did not admire the captain, "perhaps Capt. Winkle did not tell us all the story after all. I noticed that he was not wearing his togs today."

Capt. Winkle seemed to have lost his speech. And the colonel, fearing that his daughter had inadvertently made a disagreeable comparison, frowned up at her.

"What are you talking about, Evelyn?" he asked sharply.

"Oh, only a little story I have read," she said, coolly. "I shall try to look it up. It had a beautiful moral."

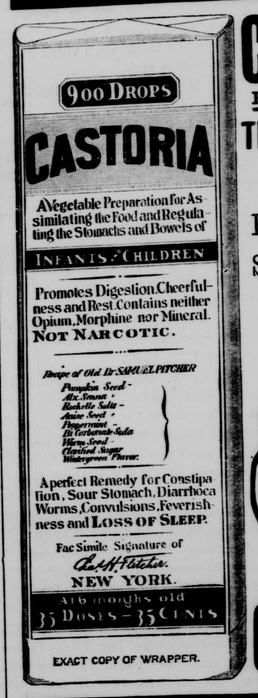
With that parting shot at the cowering victim of his own folly, she drew Mrs. Lancaster again out on the veranda.

"Why, dear, you have almost frightened me," said Mrs. Lancaster, under her breath. "What did you mean by what you said?"

"I meant to cut the very soul of that little coward, if he has one," the girl said, fiercely. "I almost feel as if I ought to have exposed him to the others before whom he was posing as a brave man when he is no more than—"

Evelyn had been speaking so rapidly that her words ran upon one another and became a jumbled, unintelligible mass.

continued next week.



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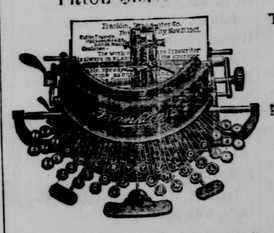
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5 17	9 43	Clayton	8 50	3 45
5 26	9 53	Kenton	8 41	3 35
f 5 33	f 10 00	Hartley	f 8 33	f 3 26
f 5 37	f 10 03	Slaughter	f 8 30	f 3 24
5 44	10 10	Marydel	8 22	3 17
f 5 50	f 10 16	Henderson	f 8 17	f 3 11
f 5 56	f 10 22	Goldsboro	f 8 11	f 3 05
6 05	10 31	Greensboro	8 02	2 56
6 14	10 40	Ridgely	7 53	2 47
6 23	10 48	Queen Anne	7 44	2 38
f 6 31	f 10 57	Cordova	f 7 35	f 2 29
f 6 33	f 11 0	Chapel	f 7 29	f 2 23
6 40	11 13	Easton	7 20	2 14
f 7 00	f 11 29	Trappe	f 7 04	f 1 58
7 12	11 38	ar. Oxford lv	6 55	1 49
P. M.	A. M.		A. M.	P. M.

"f" stops only on notice to Conductor or Agent, or on signal.

W. W. ATTERBURY, Gen'l Manager.
J. R. WOOD, Pass. Traffic Mgr. GEO. W. BOYD, Gen. Pass. Agent.

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Daily Ex. Sun. P. M.		STATIONS		Daily Ex. Sun. A. M.
4.00	Lv	Baltimore	Ar.	12.00
6.00		Love Point		10.10
6.50		Queenstown		9.15
7.15		Centreville		8.50
7.04		Wye Mills		8.02
7.20		Queen Anne		8.47
7.40		Denton		8.30
7.59		Hickman		8.13
8.16		Greenwood		7.57
8.37		Ellendale		7.33
8.52		Milton		7.10
9.12	Ar	Lewes	Lv	6.45
P. M.				A. M.

JOHN C. BOSLEY, General Passenger Agent.

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Dyspepsia Cure
Digests what you eat.
This preparation contains all of the digestants and digests all kinds of food. It gives instant relief and never fails to cure. It allows you to eat all the food you want. The most sensitive stomachs can take it. By its use many thousands of dyspeptics have been cured after everything else failed. It prevents formation of gas on the stomach, relieving all distress after eating. Dieting unnecessary. Pleasant to take.
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