

The Fireside.

THE BATTLE OF THE RIVALS.

The board of directors of the Wharton Manufacturing Company had met to discuss the desirability of establishing a new branch of their business in London. All the details had been arranged but the appointing of a resident manager. The directors were about evenly divided on the choice of two men — traveling salesmen — Franklyn Palmenter and George Arlington.

"Palmenter sells about twice as many goods as Arlington," said one of the directors.

"True," replied one of the Arlington supporters, "but it costs about twice as much in expenses for Palmenter to sell his lot. Add to that his extra salary and as far as results are concerned, I think the worth of the men about equal. His bad accounts are altogether out of proportion to his sales. His practise of 'jolly' up his customers, as he says, 'taking them out to dinners, and throwing a few cold bottles into them,' gets their orders—but it forces them to buy against their better judgment—and we are in hot water all the time until his accounts are collected. Arlington has cut out all unnecessary expenses—no man gives an order for 'sociability's sake.' They buy their goods because they want them, know they can sell them, and therefore pay for them promptly. He makes friends and is constantly increasing his trade while Palmenter's is falling off and only is kept at high tide by increase 'expenses,' which does not speak well for him.

"You will admit, Mr. Rankin," said the first gentleman, "that Palmenter is the senior salesman. He should have the position for that reason. It will encourage other employes to strive for a higher goal—to expect promotion in turn. To have Arlington passed over the heads of several besides him, will cause him to resign."

"I believe in merit promotion and so do you. That's the one way of injecting ginger into all our employes. No one knows who is going to pluck the plum. It may be number one or number ninety-one. That Palmenter will resign, is my estimate of his character exactly, Mr. Wiley. If you think he will leave sometime and leaving attempt to take us trade with him, how foolish it would be to break him into a new field where he can do more damage? Better chance losing a few thousand today than ten times that amount tomorrow. Palmenter's trade will fall off if he leaves. With Arlington it is different, his trade will stick—it was made for the house. And his London trade, if he gets any, will be the same kind—and his reward should be a position of further honor and pay."

"You are certainly opposed to Palmenter!"

"Not at all. It is the 'system' he uses that I am opposed to. What is the use of loading a man up with whiskey in order to sell him a lot of goods he don't want, can't sell, or won't pay for? The wholesaler and retailer should work hand in hand. The prosperity of the wholesaler depends upon the prosperity of the retailer, not the retailer upon the wholesaler. The money you collect, not the money you have outstanding, makes business good

or bad. The friends Arlington makes for the future are worth more to the house than the extra forced sales Palmenter makes today."

"You almost convince me against my will. Why not go further and advocate the non-employment of salesmen who use the system?"

"I am in favor of it. Modern business is taking this turn today. There was a time when the employer did not care, in fact, what their employes did 'after hours,' or what system they used. Today the employer says: 'Men who smoke cigarettes and drink have no place in our employ. We pay you for your best efforts and no man is at his best who tears down his constitution by the aid of drink or by excessive cigarette smoking.' Suppose the working-man does decry this attitude, as 'putting the shackles of a slave upon them,' curtailing their rights and liberties. This relation is no more than the relation of parent and child. The parent protects the child from taking poison; the law steps in to restrain humans from committing suicide. Why not the law of business then step in between the drinker of poisonous liquor, the gambler, the suicide of all that's best in man? If this oversight is for the benefit of humanity we can afford to have our liberty curtailed!"

"I never knew you were an advocate of temperance before, Mr. Rankin."

"I haven't been until lately. But so many things come daily that I am forced to consider the question. If you care to listen to it I will point out to you a few things I glean from the morning papers."

"Go on, I am interested."

"Well, among the news items I see, first chronicled a murder; who committed it?—a drunkard. Here is an account of a hold-up; where was it planned?—in a saloon. A wreck on a railroad; what caused it?—drink. Here is a failure; what brought it about?—gambling and drink. During the course of a strike, valuable property was destroyed, who by?—undoubtedly a lot of drunken rowdies, who may or may not have been personally interested in the strike. Turn to any part of the paper, it matters not where, and you have the same result. A suicide, a highly prosperous and well-known author cuts his throat with a razor while under the influence of whiskey. A separation is granted a wife from a husband on account of non-support; husband spends his earnings in drink. The Nicaragua and Panama canal routes form a great item of news; if either is ever dug it will have to be done by aid of temperance men; the paper says that drink caused nine-tenths of those who died during the construction of the forty miles of Panama—and the death rate was appalling. In comparison with the Suez canal, what do we find? Though in the same latitude, and conditions similar, the temperate Moslems performed their herculean task with an astonishingly moderate death rate. In another item, one about plantation life, I note that northern athletes are employed as overseers; why? Because they are temperate men. This brings me to the sporting page. Would a gambler risk betting his money on a pugilist who drank during his training? Not a bit of it. Turn to the advertisements and the

whiskey cures, you see a few patent medicines advertising the fact that 'alcohol does not form an ingredient in this medicine.' An insurance company offering to insure teetotalers for about half the cost of the premium charged a drinking man. 'None but sober and reliable men need apply' is a much used phrase in the want-ad columns. Need I say more? I might mention the Philippines, the canteen and a thousand other things. Everything is drink. I am getting to be a 'crank' on the subject."

"You have said quite sufficient on the subject. I propose that we leave the matter in the hands of Mr. Wharton. While not opposed to Palmenter, he is prejudiced in favor of Arlington, I think, on account of the very system you have named."

"Agreed," said Mr. Rankin.

Palmenter and Arlington were both in town for the holiday.

"Come out to my house on Thanksgiving day," said Mr. Wharton, to both young men. "There will be the usual turkey, and so-forth, and after dinner I want to have a little talk with you about the installation of our London branch."

The dinner was a success from every point of view. There was the roast turkey done to a nicety, and stuffed with oysters, and served with usual cranberry sauce. Mealy sweet potatoes and rich brown gravy. Nuts, fruits, celery; plum pudding with brandy sauce; wine. In the library cigars were to be had for the taking.

The conversation during the meal was made up in part of compliments to the cook about the success of the dishes served. There was a little gossip in regards athletics—football in general; then rapidly to theatricals. No business was discussed before the women present, but as soon as the dinner was finished, the men folks retired to the library. Mr. Wharton left the two young men together for a short time, while he looked up some statistics he needed to lay before his listeners.

Franklyn Palmenter and George Arlington were rivals in more than one sense. Both had been taken into the employ of the firm as boys, and both had risen to their present positions by hard work, supplemented by the fact that Wharton had been personally acquainted with their parents. Palmenter was a rich man's son, and Arlington was a half orphan for many years and compelled to earn his own living through actual necessity.

Palmenter had no fear of the outcome of his prospects; but he felt nettled to think that Arlington had even a "chance" against him.

Franklyn offered George a cigar from Mr. Wharton's box, lighting one himself, when George refused his offer.

"I never smoke," replied Arlington, seating himself in a window seat, where he could catch all the air he wanted, and at the same time see out of the window.

"One of those goody-goody boys who neither drink nor smoke?" sneered Palmenter, who had helped himself to the wine quite freely before and during dinner. As George did not answer, he continued, "Afraid to taste a little harmless wine when offered you at dinner! So adverse to liquor that you must even refuse the brandy sauce on your plum pudding! A crank!" said he, seeing that George was not paying much attention to him. "One of those people, who, afraid to drink, forever flaunt their views in your face, and try to force others to refrain from it!"

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"I never asked you to refrain," replied Arlington, quietly. "Though it would be better for you if you did. I refrain, which seems to offend you. I take cream on my pudding instead of brandy sauce, and you call that 'flaunting my views in your face!' That is character. We are known by our actions be they good or bad." Arlington was in the mood to resent Palmenter's slurs. For a year he had stood the insults without replying; today he felt, because he was in a place where necessarily Palmenter must talk low and half decently, that he could reply calmly and dispassionately to any argument that might arise.

Palmenter looked surprised at hearing Arlington's retort, and sat down quite close to him. "You vote to close up the saloons—to deprive me of the liberty of buying or not just as I like; but no one forces you into a saloon unless you want to go!"

"True. But I have as much right to

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