

## Outwitting Monsieur Arnotte

"Then I say that you are a liar," said Jules Arnotte.

The speaker was seated in a cafe in a certain town somewhere near the Sahara. The settlement was situated in a district, by name Auteran, over which the French Government claims overlordship, and was under the local supervision of Jules Arnotte, a gentleman of Portuguescum-French extraction.

The Consul, for such was the title Arnotte enjoyed, was a crafty gentleman, who would stoop to any depth to gain his ends.

At this particular moment his company in the cafe consisted of two Englishmen and a number of other men whose nationality it would have been hard to discover; suffice it to say they were not British.

The two Englishmen, Harry Foster and Dick Ainslie, had arrived one day in Auteran, just as Englishmen do turn up in every corner of the earth. They had been in town for nearly a month, and in that time had become intimate with most of the townspeople.

It was to Harry Foster that the Consul, during a political argument, had addressed his unflattering remark, and after a moment's pause he repeated it again.

Crack! Jules Arnotte was lying on the floor with Harry Foster standing over him and inviting him to insult him again.

At length Arnotte stood to his feet, his face pale as death, save where a livid mark showed where Foster's fist had been.

"You shall pay for this, you rascal Englishman," he hissed, and then he rushed from the cafe.

The other customers sat round in silence. Inwardly they approved of Foster's action, for Arnotte was generally disliked; but it was best to keep in with the Consul, so nobody applauded.

"I'm sorry I did that," murmured Foster; "I was too hasty."

"Yes; I should think we'd better clear out of this as quickly as possible," said Ainslie. "What say you?"

"I'm agreeable," rejoined Foster.

The two chums soon got their belongings together and made preparations to start from the town. They decided to work through the forest to the westward and make their way to the coast.

They left the town at nightfall, so that their departure occasioned no comment, for the good reason that there were no witnesses to it. The night was spent in a hut about twelve miles away.

By about midday on the morrow they were crossing the rocky plateau which marks the extreme western boundary of Auteran. Here they rested for a while and partook of their dinner.

The ground about them was of a peculiar formation; many tiny cracks and fissures ran hither and thither. As Foster took out his pipe, it accidentally fell from his grasp into one of the little crevices. It was too deep down for him to reach with his fingers, and, in consequence, he took out his clasp-knife and cut away the earth. While in the act of doing this a startled exclamation left his lips, which brought Ainslie to his side.

Together they peered at the earth which Foster's knife had cut away, and then they stared at each other with wide-open eyes.

"It's gold," muttered Ainslie, hoarsely. "Simply thick with it."

Then, actuated by a common impulse, both men began to dig up the earth all around them. Everywhere it was the same—gold, gold, and gold again.

"Man, there's millions here," cried Foster, excitedly, "and it's ours, too, by all that's lucky."

"One moment," said Ainslie; "how is it ours?"

"Why, we have discovered it."

"Yes, but discovery does not give possession. This land presumably belongs to the Government of France as represented here by Jules Arnotte."

"Well, we can buy it," returned Foster, impatiently.

"And give the game away at once," rejoined Ainslie. "No one in their senses would buy a piece of ground like this, all these miles from civilization, unless there was some very good reason. You may depend upon it, were we to approach Arnotte upon the subject of the purchase of it, the wily fox would pretend to treat with us whilst he sent a messenger to find out why we wanted it, and then he would regret his inability to enter into an agreement with us. Six months afterwards he would resign his enviable post and go to Paris and live in the lap of luxury. No, Harry; we've got to think of a plan to circumvent Monsieur Arnotte."

The day was drawing to a close when Ainslie suggested they should turn in and think over matters. The turning-in consisted of wrapping themselves up in rugs—one to sleep and the other to keep watch. Turn and turn about.

The sun was well up ere Ainslie

roused his companion. Foster sat for a few moments rubbing his eyes, then he turned excitedly to Ainslie.

"I've got it," he cried. "What do you think of this?" He forthwith briefly unfolded a plan, which he had concocted during his watch on the previous evening.

"It's a bit low down, don't you think?" said Ainslie, when his chum had finished speaking. "I mean, I think it makes us look like a couple of swindlers."

"Only in Arnotte's eyes, and that only for a short time," cried Foster. "You see, as soon as he tries to make it public it will be at once disproved, and no one will believe him."

Eventually the plan was agreed upon, and the two friends retraced their steps back to the town, which they reached during the evening.

Their return did not cause any surprise, for, as yet, no one had given much thought to their absence, it being quite usual for townsmen to be absent for a few days on some mysterious expedition into the interior; then they were usually wealthy for a day or two, and there was mourning in some far-off native village.

It was part of the plan that negotiations should be opened up with Arnotte, and for obvious reasons it was considered desirable that Ainslie, and not Foster, should conduct these

The offices of the Government from which the law was dispensed in Auteran consisted of two villas, built on raised iron foundations and connected by a glass-roofed passage. The office was the largest building in the town, and above it flew the Tricolor.

At eleven o'clock the Consul entered his private office to transact his daily business, but Ainslie was before him and was waiting. The Englishman sat cooling his heels until half-past twelve, when the Consul signified his readiness to see him.

"Good morning, Mr. Ainslie," said Arnotte, through the smoke of his cigarette. "What can I do for you?"

"Give me the favor of a private interview with you."

Arnotte looked suspiciously for a moment at his visitor, and in a seemingly thoughtless manner toyed with a revolver on his desk. He watched Ainslie as though he would divine his intentions, but the Englishman's face was like a mask.

"Now, then, Mr. Ainslie, what is it you want?"

"I want to enter into a little compact with you. You have doubtless heard that there is a good deal to be made out of mining; you know, company promoting and that sort of thing. Somebody finds a mine out in some unknown land, a company is formed, and the mine is sold to them; of course, there is a lot of gold in the mine." Ainslie paused and solemnly winked at the Consul.

"Ah!" said Monsieur Arnotte, whilst his heavy eyes glittered.

"We have discovered a wonderful mine," said Ainslie, and he once more winked at the Consul.

The Consul winked at Ainslie.

"Of course," continued Ainslie, "if we could get a lease of the ground we would not mind paying the Government a good price for it." Here both men smiled, for Ainslie had accented the word "Government."

"And," he continued, "say 10 per cent. for yourself on the price we realize on the mine."

"Well, I see no official reason why such a lease should not be granted," said Arnotte, after a little consideration. "Where is your mine?"

"On Thakre Plateau."

"Ah!" said the Consul. "It's some way in the interior; it will be awkward getting machinery there." Once more he winked.

"Shall we have an agreement drawn up, then?" asked Ainslie, whilst he smiled broadly.

A map was produced, and an area, the bearings of which had been roughly taken by Foster and Ainslie the day before, was marked off by Ainslie in an apparently careless manner. A deed was then made out by which the land was secured to Ainslie for all time at the payment of £5 per acre; the land in question had an area of about forty acres, but land was worthless at a distance of more than four or five miles from the town. Ainslie suggested a clause being put in the agreement to the effect that Arnotte was entitled to 10 per cent. of the amount realized on the sale of the property, but to this the wily Consul objected, not wishing his name to be on paper in such a manner.

"No," he said. "I will rely on your honesty. Has it not been said that all Englishmen are honest even to a fault?"

The agreement was signed by both parties and duly witnessed and stamped. A sum of £200 was then handed over to the Consul, in the shape of a draft on a London bank.

"Well, good day, Mr. Ainslie," said Arnotte. "I must congratulate you on your fortunate discovery."

"Yes, I am indeed lucky," returned Ainslie.

Once more both men winked, and then the Englishman withdrew.

Left alone, the Consul laughed softly and rubbed his hands.

"Ah, my fine English friends, I've got you this time, and I'll pay a little of what I owe you," by Heaven, you shall suffer now!"

Outside, Ainslie met Foster and acquainted him with the success of his interview, and together they laughed over the precious document which had been obtained so easily.

"Now the next thing to do," said Foster, "is to get Matthews out here. We had better telegraph for him."

Matthews was a mining expert of considerable repute in London. He was very friendly with both Foster and Ainslie, and had told them, prior to their departure on the nomad tour, to let him know by cable if they discovered anything in his line. He added that he would be only too glad of a chance to join them, and, as he was empowered to treat for his firm (one of the largest mining syndicates existing), they decided to send the cable as quickly as possible.

This meant a two days' journey to the coast, which was accomplished by river one day and by train during the other. This brought them into English territory, from where they were able to send the telegram. The reply came on the following day to say that Matthews would leave by the first boat, which was due on the coast in about three weeks.

The two Englishmen retraced their steps to Auteran, for they deemed it necessary to keep a watchful eye on Arnotte's movements.

The time seemed to go by on leaden wings whilst Ainslie and Foster waited the coming of Matthews. Only once did they make any reference to the mine to Arnotte, and then Ainslie said that a mining engineer was on his way to inspect the mine; at the same time he winked vigorously and the Consul smiled, but inwardly that worthy gentleman rejoiced in the fact that his time for revenge was drawing nigh, as he was still smarting under indignity of the blow from Harry Foster.

Matthews arrived, and the trio proceeded at once to Auteran, and then on to the Thakre Plateau. In a few moments he was congratulating Foster and Ainslie on their luck, pronouncing the find to be an immensely rich "pocket field." As the gold was all near the surface, working would be comparatively cheap.

"But what are you going to do—hang on to it, sell the place, or what? By the way, how long does your option hold good?"

"The land is ours for ever," cried Ainslie; and then he told the engineer of the manner in which he had obtained the ground.

"That's rather smart, but 10 per cent. is a heavy lump for this Consul friend of yours."

"Oh, that's all right," said Ainslie, with a laugh. "I'm going to sell the mine to Harry, here, for two hundred and fifty pounds; I shall then present Mr. Arnotte with twenty-five pounds."

"Well, at any rate, your fortunes are made, whatever you do, whether you sell or work the mine. But I should like to make a more minute inspection."

Matthews went very carefully over the ground, and as soon as possible sent a long cable in code to his firm in London. During the next few days messages hummed backwards and forwards over the wires, with the result that Matthews was empowered to offer Foster and Ainslie £200,000 and 20,000 shares in a company to be formed, in return for the deed they held. The partners asked time to consider the matter, and in the meantime they returned to Auteran. Their first business was to visit the Consul to whose private office they were speedily admitted.

"Good morning, gentlemen," said Arnotte, his smile making his evil face look even uglier than usual. "What can I do for you?"

"You will remember granting me a lease for a portion of Thakre Plateau?" began Ainslie.

"Ah—yes," murmured the Consul, his evil smile growing still more evil.

"I am glad to say that I have succeeded in disposing of the property," continued Ainslie.

"Permit me to congratulate you," beamed the Consul.

"Mr. Foster purchased the property off me for the sum of two hundred and fifty pounds."

As Ainslie said these words the Consul's face assumed a most malevolent expression, although he tried to mask it with a smile.

"And," continued Ainslie, "I have much pleasure in handing you a draft for twenty-five pounds. I have also taken the trouble to prepare a receipt, which I shall be glad if you will sign."

"Ah, you did not realize much on your property," said Arnotte, restraining himself with difficulty.

"No, I did not; but will you please sign this receipt?"

"Sacre!" hissed the Consul. "No, I'll—" he paused, whilst he studied the muzzle of a revolver held in Ainslie's hand.

He signed the receipt.

When his visitors had gone out, Arnotte shook his clenched fist after them, speechless with fury. When at length he found his tongue, he filled the air with maledictions against the Englishmen.

"You think you have foiled Jules Arnotte, do you? Wait and see, my sharp friends; wait and see."

In the meantime a wooden house was in course of erection at Thakre Plateau, and on the following day Arnotte rode out to see how matters were progressing. He watched the workmen for a while, a sinister smile playing over his dark features.

"It is almost time," he murmured. "They will be here in a few days."

Two days afterwards two civilians came into the town and proceeded direct to the Consul's office. They

remained there for some time in close conversation with Arnotte.

On the following day the Consul, accompanied by his visitors and a file of soldiers from the Legion, proceeded to Thakre.

Here they found a number of Kroonmen at work on the ground, whilst others were busy with the house, which was springing up with marvellous celerity.

The three Englishmen could be seen walking about and directing operations. At the sight of them Arnotte's face darkened, and he turned to his visitors.

"There are the men," he said, "and this is the land that I spoke to you about."

The civilians surveyed the ground with critical eyes; but Arnotte would not let them hesitate, and made all haste towards the spot where the three Englishmen were standing.

"Halloa!" muttered Ainslie, "here's Arnotte with a crowd. What does he want, I wonder?"

"Nothing of any good to us, I'll be bound," replied Foster.

At that moment their visitors came face to face with them.

"This is an unexpected pleasure, Monsieur Arnotte," said Ainslie, with ironical courtesy.

"So I anticipated," returned the Consul, a triumphant smile illumining his face. "Permit me to introduce Monsieur de Stanton and Monsieur Lessac."

There was considerable bowing, and then the Consul continued speaking, the malicious triumph in his voice being visibly apparent.

"These gentlemen are mining experts sent down by the Government," he said, whilst he watched the Englishmen narrowly, expecting to see them cowed, but to his disappointment his words had no effect on them. "They will proceed to make an examination of your so-called gold-field. Meanwhile, you will consider yourselves under arrest."

He motioned to the sergeant, who stepped forward with his men and ranged themselves alongside the Englishmen.

"What do you mean?" cried Ainslie. "What is the meaning of this outrage?"

The Consul paid no heed to his remarks, but began to converse with the mining experts, who commenced to examine the ground.

"Look here, my friend," said Matthews. "What charge do you make against me?"

"The charge is only against these two," replied the Consul, as he indicated Foster and Ainslie. "You can go where you like and do what you like."

"My friend," cried Ainslie, "if you don't shift your toy soldiers there'll be trouble. What are we under arrest for?"

"What for?" returned the Consul, with a triumphant laugh. "Why, for 'salting' this ground with intention to defraud."

His reply was a hearty peal of laughter, which considerably disconcerted him. Shortly afterwards the two experts, who had been joined by Matthews, came along.

"One of the finest fields I have ever seen," said Monsieur Lessac.

"Yes," assented De Stanton; "I really do not know why Monsieur the Consul brought us down here."

Jules Arnotte was staring at the men, his countenance livid with rage. "What!" he screamed. "Do you mean to say there is gold here?"

"Why, the place is simply full of it," replied De Stanton.

"Merciful heavens!" cried the Consul. "And I have given it away."

"Pardon me, you received two hundred and twenty-five pounds for it," remarked Ainslie. "Now, kindly order your men away."

In a state of stupefaction the Consul did as he was bid.

"Just to think!" he gasped. "And it might have been mine."

He turned and, mounting his horse, rode away. Before he was ten paces distant he turned in his saddle and shook his fist at the Englishmen.

"Wait," he shouted. "I shall win yet."

"You'll have to get up very early in the morning," was Foster's retort.—London Tit-Bits.

### BEWARE OF THESE PEOPLE.

Beware of people who are constantly belittling others, finding flaws and defects in their characters, or slyly insinuating that they are not quite what they ought to be. Such persons are dangerous, and not to be trusted. A disparaging mind is a limited, unhealthy mind. It can neither see nor acknowledge good in others. It is a jealous mind; it is positively painful to it to hear others spoken well of, praised, or commended for any virtue or good point. If it cannot deny the existence of the alleged good, it will seek to minimize it by a malicious "if" or "but," or try in some other way to throw a doubt on the character of the person praised. Whenever you hear a person trying to belittle another, discard him from your list of friends—unless you can help him to remedy his fault. Do not flatter yourself that those who tell you of the failings of other people, and criticize and hold them up to ridicule will not treat you in the same way when an opportunity presents itself. Such people are incapable of true friendship, for true friendship helps instead of hinders.

The vast majority of the Japanese have never heard of Japan. They call their country Nihon, or Nippon.

## THE USE OF GOOD OFFICES

### GREAT NATIONS AS PEACE MAKERS.

#### But Mediation Sometimes Leads to Hostilities Between Powers.

Although most nations are supposed to be perpetually engaged in making mischief between other States, they are generally sorry when it comes to a case of actual war. Our Government appears to have done its best to prevent the war between Japan and Russia, and the great friendship that has suddenly sprung up between England and France is partly due to their desire to become peacemakers as soon as the opportune moment arrives.

International law recognizes several kinds of interference in the conflicts of nations. The first stage is the offer of "good offices." The United States was anxious to use its good offices to stop the Boer War, but Lord Salisbury politely declined them.

Mediation is the second degree; but before it can come into play, both combatants must be willing to accept it. Obviously, so long as either combatant sees a reasonable prospect of victory, he does not want mediation. Only when both are exhausted, have lost many men; and are on the verge of national bankruptcy, is mediation welcomed.

There is a third form of peacemaking called "intervention"—that is, by the use of force, or the threat to use it. And with regard to this a great writer on international law says that "intervention to secure peace has frequently been the cause of

### THE BLOODIEST WARS."

History contains innumerable examples of the use of good offices, mediation, and intervention. But in 1823 there was a case of real good offices, when England tried to mediate between France and Spain. This was not backed by force, and so it failed.

Greece appealed to England in 1825 to obtain their reconciliation with the Ottoman Porte. England talked the matter over with Russia, and both Powers agreed to propose to the Porte certain terms of settlement if, as the official document politely says, "that Government should accept the proffered mediation." But the mediation was accompanied by such threats that the Sultan, although he gave in, must have regarded it as an example of anything but good offices.

As showing how mediation sometimes leads to hostilities we have the case of the civil war in Portugal in 1847. England and Spain tried to mediate, and induced the Queen to offer very good terms to the revolutionists. But latter rejected them, and then England and Spain, with France, helped the Queen with naval and military forces.

In 1876, when the Servians and Montenegrins rose against Turkey, Lord Derby therefore hinted to King Milan that if he made an application for the good offices of the Powers it would be favorably received by England. Serbia made the application, and England induced the Powers to intervene. But they were all very soon

### AT SIXES AND SEVENS.

First, Turkey was asked for an armistice of not less than a month. She refused this, but agreed to suspend hostilities for a week. Serbia would not accept anything less than a month's armistice, and went on fighting. Russia then proposed that if Turkey would not agree Bulgaria and Bosnia should be occupied, and the fleets of the Powers should enter the Bosphorus. England would not agree to this.

A little later Turkey proposed a six months' armistice. England and France agreed, but Russia and Italy thought six months too long, and Germany proposed six weeks instead. Turkey agreed to this, and then there was a conference of the Powers, which made recommendations to Turkey. Turkey would not carry them out. Serbia, after making peace on her own account, started fighting again, and in April, 1877, Russia declared war. Then Turkey appealed to the Powers to mediate. England reproached Russia with breaking the Treaty of Paris, and finally the Powers avoided a general set-to only by the skin of their teeth.

### NEW TYPE OF MOTOR-BOAT.

Some experiments made on the Seine with a remarkable automobile boat of a new type have yielded surprising results. The boat is described as a "slider," from the fact that it really glides upon the surface, leaving no wash whatever, and not through the water. With a motor of 14-h.p., the extraordinary rate of speed of eighteen miles an hour was reached on a measured kilometre. Along the keel are five inclined planes, the pressure upon which when the motor begins to act lifts the bottom of the boat to the surface. Count C. de Lambert is the inventor.

The business man who knows how to write business advertising will find satisfactory returns come from the announcements developed with business judgment.