

The Bumbo of Jiam

by Ambrose Bierce

The Pahdour of Patagascar and the Gookul of Madagonia were disputing about an island which both claimed. Finally, at the suggestion of the International League of Cannon Founders, which had important branches in both countries, they decided to refer their claims to the Bumbo of Jiam, and abide by his judgment. In settling the preliminaries of the arbitration they had, however, the misfortune to disagree, and appealed to arms. At the end of a long and disastrous war, when both sides were exhausted and bankrupt, the Bumbo of Jiam intervened in the interest of peace.

"My great and good friends," he said to his brother sovereigns, "it will be advantageous to you to learn that some questions are more complex and perilous than others, presenting a greater number of points upon which it is possible to differ. For four generations your royal predecessors disputed about possession of that island, without falling out. Beware, oh, beware the perils of international arbitration!--against which I feel it my duty to protect you henceforth."

So saying, he annexed both countries, and after a long, peaceful, and happy reign was poisoned by his Prime Minister