

marine columns told, had been lost off the Atlantic coast in a collision. Captain John Blake made little comment at the news, but that night he went out for a long walk, and it was far beyond his usual hour for retiring when he returned.

In early autumn he was forced to take to his bed and to remain there most of the time. Heart weakness the doctors diagnosed his trouble. From that time on Captain Blake kept the mysterious black valise on the floor beside his bed, safe from prying curiosity.

One wild November night, while a North Shore twister raged over the lake, Captain Blake awoke at a familiar sound. He sat up in bed listening intently.

It came again—clear, distinct, unmistakable—the homing call of the old Annie B. He would know that siren cry among a thousand others. This time it came as a command joyfully obeyed by the old lake captain, and he sprang from his bed with almost the agility of the old days.

Captain John Blake groomed himself as one preparing to attend at a great social affair. Once again, for the moment, he was the John Blake of years ago, care-free, efficient, purposeful. While he shaved and encased himself in a stiff-bosomed white shirt he hummed softly, "Sweet Rosie O'Grady." He dressed with exacting care—but not in his everyday suit of blue serge. He smiled with satisfaction as he sur-

veyed the results in the glass.

A wave of overpowering weakness suddenly swept over him. He staggered to a nearby chair faint and gasping. Captain John Blake closed his eyes and waited—waited for the third and last siren blast he knew would come.

The local newspapers next day contained appropriate obituary references to the late Captain John Blake, told briefly of his exploits and his exemplary life, and how he had been found dead in a chair in his room. But his relatives withheld as too sacred for sensational exploitation the fact that he was attired in an ancient wedding suit, beside him the black valise—open and empty.

THE DILLY-TANTY LAWYER

FRASER MACKENZIE elevated his feet to the top of the desk in a most unprofessional manner, blew a nimbus of tobacco smoke in the general direction of the ceiling, and frankly admitted to himself that for the past three or four months the law business in old Loyalist City of St. John had been "bum, decidedly bum." He was also forced to admit at the same time that his lack of employment was entirely of his own making; for MacKenzie was known as the richest, laziest and most eccentric attorney at the New Brunswick bar, and was a constant source of amusement or fear to the more orthodox lawyers.

Possessing, as he did, an independent income plus an extremely independent mind, he had resolved at the very outset of his career that he would never take a case unless his client was actually "in the very right of the matter," not legally but morally, and, given such a case he stoutly maintained that he could obtain justice, no matter what the law books might say.

"Justice," he used to argue, "is not the bungling attempts of human and fallible legislators to express the abstract idea in statutes and legal enactments, but means that law whose seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world, all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power," and that in nine cases out of ten "justice" must be obtained not by applying the existing law, but by finding some loophole therein that the lawmakers themselves had never foreseen.

Holding, and rigidly living up to these views, and dubbed "the dillytanty attorney," by his brother lawyers, it is not surprising to find him sitting idly at his desk, gazing out of the window with a little pucker of perplexity bisecting his boyish brow, and turning eagerly at the sound of an unfamiliar step in the outer office.

"Come in," invited MacKenzie.

A stout man of middle age, with a pair of keen blue eyes dominating a square weather-beaten face, entered the office and helped himself to a chair with the free and easy manner of the independent rural New Brunswicker.

"Be you the 'dillytanty lawyer' that they tell about?" he inquired, anxiously.

MacKenzie smiled cheerfully at the informal greeting, and swung round to face his unconventional client with a lively hope that here might be just such a case as he had been wishing for.

"I'm probably the man you're looking for," he laughed; "for a lot of people who are not even fair average dilettantes call me that. Who sent you here?"

"Young Harry Osborne," was the reply. "He's from up our way, you know, and has been working on the papers down here. They say he's a mighty bright newspaper man; but he never seemed to amount to much up home—didn't want to do anything but read books and go to school. Still I'd known him from a kid, so when I got in this here scrape, I looked him up. He didn't know turnips from corn on the farm; but I figured he was up to city ways better than me. He seemed mighty willing to help me, and as soon as he heard my story he sent me right off to you. MacKenzie's the chap to handle a case like that," he says."

"Oh, yes. He has written up quite a few cases

A CASE of Green Mountain Potatoes in New Brunswick. John Scott knew how to fight river-drivers, but when it came to getting even with the potato-skinners he found that a lawyer with ideals plus brains was his "only, only way."

By M. L. HAYWARD

in which I was interested," remarked MacKenzie, "and is a very discriminating reporter."

"He's discriminating enough to want to marry my Elsa," admitted the other grudgingly.

"And you don't fancy the idea overly well?" suggested MacKenzie.

"That's right."

"But if he sends you to me and I help you out of this scrape you speak of, you would have a much better opinion of him?" persisted MacKenzie.

"That's right, too."

"Then I'll certainly do my best if your case suits me," MacKenzie assured him; "for Harry's an especial friend of mine."

"That's what he told me, the client went on, and he says, 'Go to MacKenzie at once; he's what the others call a dillytanty lawyer—just takes cases that suit him, for he's got money enough so's he don't have to practise, and won't touch a case unless he's sure that his man has justice on his side. If that is so he'll take hold of anything and win it too, for he's always up to some dodge that the ordinary fellows never think of.'"

"That's the man for me," says I, "for I've been administerin' some gilt edge justice in this here den of money changers, and MacKenzie's the boy to pull me out."

"HARRY has no doubt exaggerated my slight efforts," interjected MacKenzie; "but tell your story first, for I always prefer finance to flattery."

"My name's John Scott," was the reply; "I live up in Lecarnot County, in the heart of the potato belt, and I raise a few 'spuds' myself. We can raise a hundred barrels to the acre with a quarter of a ton of fertilizer; but the main trouble's always been to get a decent price and keep the brokers from robbing us. We growers got together last year, and I was one of the charter members of the Tri-County Co-operative Potato Growers' Marketing Company that started up to try and get a square deal for the farmers; but the brokers in the city here who make up the Potato Board put us out of business, and now things are worse than ever."

"I am familiar with that, and it's a disgraceful state of affairs," replied MacKenzie. "I'd give a few thousand dollars to get a chance to break up the potato ring that is preying on the farmers of your part of the Province."

"I may be able to give you a chance to get even with some of them," declared Scott.

"Go on."

"Well, after the 'Co-op.' was put 'on the hum'," Scott went on, "We farmers had to go back to the old system of consigning our potatoes to the brokers here and taking our chances, and all of them, of course, are members of the Potato Board."

"And when you did you got fleeced again," averred MacKenzie, lighting a new cigar.

"We sure did," agreed Scott. "This year seemed worse than ever, but we couldn't help ourselves, and I consigned mine to Palmer, McDonald & Ross who

are supposed to be as square a firm as there is on the board."

"That's not saying much," declared MacKenzie grimly.

"So I found out later, but it was simply a case of picking the best of a bunch of thieves. Well, as I was saying, I knew about what good 'Green Mountain' potatoes was selling for, and

figured that the returns would just clear the mortgage that I put on the year of the big drouth. I'd worked like a nigger for years, and it was certainly comforting to see a prospect of being square with the world once more. You can imagine how I felt when I found that they had sold my potatoes for about fifty cents under what I had counted on, and skinned me out of a cool \$10,000."

"That's a common occurrence now," MacKenzie assured him, "and the brokers get together every night at the Dixie Club, where the one who has beaten his customers the least that day has to buy the drinks for the crowd."

"Naturally, I wasn't satisfied, and come here myself and after some trouble and some fairly sharp work on Osborne's part I found that they had sold my potatoes to the Maple Leaf Corporation."

"The 'Maple Leaf,'" exclaimed MacKenzie.

"Sure."

"That's only another name for the commission house you consigned to. That is, they sold your goods to themselves at the lowest possible price, and half of the quotations on the Board are fictitious ones to assist the brokers in skinning their customers."

"That's what I learned afterwards," replied Scott, "but I was lucky enough to find out that they hadn't really sold to the Maple Leaf yet, and I made them give me delivery of them. I was certainly lucky, for I sold them at the top price to a fellow loadin' a schooner for the Cuban market an' got my money right in my fist."

"Where do I come in, then?" queried MacKenzie.

"Well, after I'd got my money and got thinkin' how they tried to do me, I went down to their office and did a little business on my own hook."

"What did you do?"

"Oh, not much; but the more I thought about it the hotter I got under the collar, an' went down to their office and tackled them about it, and they just laughed at me. That pimply-faced McDonald advised me to get back to the farm where I belonged and not interfere with business people. I knew I couldn't get law or justice or anything else in the city here except a crooked deal—Osborne put me on to that—so I just decided to proceed myself and be my own court and jury."

"In what way?"

"You will probably notice that I'm fairly active lookin' for a man of fifty-six," explained Scott, "and I'm one of the pioneers, who's been in some tight places in my time. I've fought about every crowd of stream drivers that ever came down the river—Monquarters, Guimicers, and Nacawicers, and the winter I was forty-nine I killed three 'Injin devils' on Skin Creek, so I just cut loose then and there. I smashed that McDonald in the face and piled the desk on top of him. I booted Ross through a cloudy glass door marked 'Private.' I took the clerks and beat their heads together, and when a big policeman heard the 'rumpet' an' come in I clinched him and got a snake twist that I learned on the So'-West Miramichi an' flung him in on topa' Ross, and walked