POOR DOCUMENT

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The Missourian

By Eugene P. Lyle, Jr.

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CHAPTER XXXIV.—(Continued.)

In all this Daniel might have said "We," but reportorial modesty forbade.

"And," he went on, gaining momentum, "I don't reckon you'll be forgetting Arkansas, and the ague and rattlesnakes? And how the smallpox swooped down on that camp of cane shacks? And how the quinine gave out, and—and the tobacco? Lawd!—And how those boys forgot how to sew patches, their rags being so far gone! And how they made bridles out of bark, and coffee out of corn! And how they kneaded dough in old rubber blankets and cooked it on rocks! Well, Jack, there they were, in Arkansas like that, and the war was over at last, and Missouri was just a waiting for 'em. And then, to think that they had to face square around another way entirely! Din, you'll just try to imagine that there devil breed facing any other way except to'ds home!"

"Don't, Shanks, you——"

"Devils? They were the wildest things that are. It's a mighty good thing they didn't go back. Think of their neighbors across the Kansas line, getting ready for 'em with every sort of legal persecution under the sun, and carpet-bag judges to help! Outlaw decrees? Well,I reckon those decrees will make a few outlaws, all right, and there'll be unsurrendered Johnny Rebs ten years from now. Shelby's boys had the look of it. Your own Jackson county regiment would have flared into desperadoes at sight of a United States marshal. They were all in just that sort o' mood, as they turned their backs on Missouri. And after four years, too! But there, it's a stiff wind that has no turning, so cheer up! They did, as soon as that deluge got done with and they were headed for Mexico, one thousand of 'em. Soldiers mus'n't repine, you know. For them, Fate arrays herself in April's capricious sunshine."

Driscoll had to smile. "Careful, there, Dan, don't stampede."

"I ain't, but if now 'I hold my tongue I shall give up the ghost,' and I want to tell you first that Texas is a handsome state. We—they—were considerable interested all the way through it."

"But, Meagre Shanks, where'd you leave 'em?"

"Back in Monterey, drinking champagne with Fat Jenny. A-las, 'who can stay the bottles of heaven?'"

"Fat—who's she?"

"Now you wait. They've got heaps to do in Texas yet, before they get to Fat Jenny. First, they helped themselves out of their own commissary department, horses, provisions trains, cannon, everything. Decently uniformed for the first time, and the war over! You should o' seen 'em, a forest of Sharp's carbines, a regular circulating library of Beecher Bibles. There were four Colts and a dragoon sabre and thousands of rounds of ammunition to each man. They had fighting tools to spare, and they cached a lot of the stuff up in the state of Coahuila. And they fed, and got sleek. This ain't editorial, my boy. It's God's own truth. Adventures every step of the way only did 'em good. They saved whole towns from renegade looters by just mentioning Shelby's name. They fought all day and danced all night. San Antone was the best. There they gathered in generals, governors, senators and even Kirby Smith, all yearning to join Old Joe—our Old Joe, who ain't thirty-four yet."

The speaker paused, and when he began again, there was a light ominous of inspiration in his eyes.

"At the Rio Grande," he said, solemnly, "they crossed out of the Confederacy forever, so it was meet and right that there, in midstream, they should consign their old battle-flag to the past. They had not surrendered it, but as a standard it existed for those gallant hearts no more. Woman's loyal hand had bestowed it. Coy victory had caressed its folds mid the powder pall and horror of ten score desperate fields. And now it floated over the last of its followers, ere the waves should close over it forevermore. With bowed heads, they gathered sadly about——"

"Lay it down, Shanks, lay it down," Driscoll pleaded. He was referring again to the pen in hand.

"All right, Din," Boone answered hastily. "Yes, I know, we all got kind of weepy too. No wonder Colonel Slayback wrote some verses. Reckon you can stand just one? This one?

"And that group of Missouri's valiant throng,
Who had fought for the weak against the strong—
Who had charged and bled
Where Shelby led,
Were the last who held above the wave
The glorious flag of the vanquished brave,
No more to rise from its watery grave!'

"And," he added savagely "just let any parlor critic smile at the scared feet of those same lines!"

"Let me once!" said Driscoll. His eyes were moist.

Mr. Boone faithfully traversed the rest of the way with the "Iron Brigade," and no company of errant knights, perhaps, ever had such a junketing as those same lusty troopers. No sooner did they set foot in the enchanted land of roses than a damsel in distress, the Republica Mexicana herself, came to them for succor. Or more literally, a dissident governor, backed by the authority of President Juarez, offered Shelby military control of the three northern states and grants in the fabulously rich Sonora mines, if he would hang high his shield and recruit his countrymen in the republican cause. There is little doubt that General Shelby could have raised an army and become thenceforth a power in Mexico, for Washington would have smiled on the undertaking and all Texas would have afforded a base of supplies. But the Missourian's Round Table voted it down. They awaited Maximilian's reply which Driscoll was to bring. Perhaps, to, they would have a chance to wage war against the United States again, and that was better than being smiled on.

Henceforth they fought the forlorn damsel herself, fought every foot of the way through desert mesquite thick enough to daunt a tarantula. There were guerillas, robbers, spies, deserters, and Indian tribes. It was one eternal ambush, incessantly a skirmish, often a pitched battle. They saved a French garrison. They rescued a real maiden by a night attack on an hacienda stronghold, and did it with strictly de rigueur dash and chivalry. Once or twice they were even stung, by some "langourous dusky-eyed scorpion of a saynorita" to fight among themselves, cavalryman's code. Daniel was never one to spoil a romance by mentioning that a tropical maid was faced like a waffle-iron, though more than likely she was. Finally, as a last stroke, Fat Jenny promised to shoot Shelby and hang the rest.

"You've been derogatory about this lady before," Driscoll interposed, "and I want to know who she is."

"She is the English for Jeanningros, the French general at Monterey, who'd heard about those negotiations with the Republica. But Shelby formed in battle line, to storm his old city, and at the same time sent word explaining that he hadn't ac-

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cepted any offer from the Republica. So, instead of shooting and hanging, Jenny asked us around for supper. That's where I left 'em."

"W'y," said Boone in surprise, "to see if you'd gotten here, and to take back Maximilian's answer."

"But what's the use? The Trans-Mississippi went and surrendered."

"Gra-cious, but you're in a vicious humor! Now, here's the use. Instead of fifty thousand, we're only one thousand, I know. But there are hundreds and hundreds of Americans down here like us, and all of 'em wanting service. There's that colony just starting at Cordova near Vera Cruz. But they'd fight if there was an American to lead them, and more yet 'ud come from the States. Quicker'n that, Old Joe will have a division."

Driscoll ruefully shook his head. "Maximilian wants us," he said, "if we'll give up our arms first."

"If we——"

"If we will surrender, Dan."

Mr. Boone's jaw fell. The phrase that would measure the depth of the proposed ignominy would not come. Finally, he dug from his pocket a bright new gold coin, twenty pesos, and contemplated reflectively the side that bore Maximilian effigy.

"I've got the cub reporter's superstition," he said at last. "You get your cards printed," here he tapped the coin significantly, "and you're sure to lose your job—still we might of helped him."

"There was nothing, though, for Daniel but to turn back and meet the Brigade. Learning Maximilian's decision, the Missourians would probably join the Cordova colony. Boone reckoned that he would. He discovered that he was tired of fighting. Perhaps tht new citizens at Cordova would want an organ, a weekly at least; and already his nostrils were sniffing the pungent, fascinating aroma of printer's ink. Then he asked Driscoll what he thought of doing, now that he was free.

"Don't know," came the reply, lonesomely. "Stir around, I guess. There's a flying column leaving this week to capture Juarez. Maybe that'll do me."

CHAPTER XXXV.

The Black Decree.

"So may heaven's grace clear whatso'er of foam
Floate turbid on the conscience."—Dante.

That unleashed hawk which was the flying column failed to clutch its prey. From the City of Mexico across the far northwestern desert the Chasseurs and cuirassiers rode their swift Arabian steeds, and into the town of Chihuahua at last. But the old Indian for whom they came was not there. Benito Juarez had fled. He must have known. Yet how, no one might conjecture. It was as though some watchful Republican fairy had marked the sturdy, equat patriot as the one hope of the Empire's overthrow, and did not propose to have him taken. Scouts, spies, the entire French secret service, delved, gestured, and sweated. But they laid bare next to nothing. At the Palacio Municipal a number of functionaries told of a peon in breech clout, a wretch crated with alkali dust till the muscles of his legs looked like grayish ropes, who had emerged from the cacti plain ten days before and come running into Chihuahua. The peon had made direct for the Palacio, where, in some way, he had contrived a secret word with Don Benito; and that very day Don Benito with his one minister, Lerdo, had set out toward the north.

Afterward the functionaries had questioned the messenger, but he knew next to nothing. A senor chaparro had sent him, was all he said. It was a ridiculous anti-climax. A senor chaperro, "El Chaparrito," "Shorty," such a one to be the omniscient guardian of the Republic! But for all that "El Chaparrito" was to be heard of again and many times, and always as an enigma to both sides alike, until the absurd word became freighted on the lips of men with superstitious awe. There was an inscrutable, long-fingered providence at work in the blood-strife of the nation. The warning to Juarez at Chihuahua was its first manifestation.

Their quarry had escaped, but Driscoll was not sorry. More than once he had felt a vague shame for the unsportsmanlike chase after one lone, indomitable old man. Driscoll held a commission, which Michel Ney, happily recovering, had procured for him from the marshall. But as the American's healthy spirits, like cleansing by vigorous blood, swept the gloom from his mind, he began to wonder at the craving for bustle and forgetfulness which had made him snatch at such an offer. The corners of his mouth twisted in whimsical self-scorn. He, one of your drooping, unrequited lovers! "Shucks!" that is what he thought. And he persuaded himself that it was all over. Quite, quite persuaded himself. But as a matter of fact, he hoped that he might never have to see her again.

It was not until October of the same year that Driscoll saw actual battle in his new service. With the Fifth Lancers under Colonel Mendez, the best of the few native regiments in the field, he had been assisting at a manner of pacification. That is, they marched from town to town, and received allegiance. Guerillas of course punished the towns later, but Maximilian would not be induced to organize a native army, and 30,000 French could not garrison fifteen thousand leagues. They could only promenade, through sand storms, through cacti. Then the battle took place. It was the last vestige of Liberal resistance to the Empire. A few hundred men near Uruapan in Michoacan flaunted their defiance. Driscoll noticed an expectant and wolfish look in his colonel's eyes. Mendez was a strikingly handsome and gallant Indian, but his expectancy now was not for battle. It was for the battle's sequel. Michel Ney and a squad of Chasseurs had just brought him an Imperial packet from the City, and the packet contained general orders very much to his Indian taste.

The fight was a rousing one, and Driscoll enjoyed himself for the first time in many days. His Mexicans behaved as he could have wished, better than he had hoped. At the start in the familiar uproarious hell, he missed the hard set, exultant faces of his old Jackson county troop, and seeing only tawny visages through the smoke and hearing only foreign yells, he felt a queer twinge of homesickness. But he was at once ashamed for the humble little chocolate centaurs whom he had been set to train were dying about him with lethargic cynicism, just as they were bidden. Wearing a charm, either the Virgin's picture in a tin frame, or the cross, they might have worn the crescent. They were as effective as Moslems. They were ruthless fatalists.

Michel Ney also spent a diverting half-hour. He had lingered for the fray. Waving a broken sabre snapped off at the hilt, he charged with Gallic nerve and got himself knocked under his kicking and wounded horse, and pummeled by Liberal muskets on every side. Driscoll saw, and straightened out matters. Handing the Frenchman a whole sabre, he reproved him soberly, as a carpenter might an apprentice caught using a plane for a ripsaw.

After it was over, the living of the enemy were prisoners. The victors marched them to Uruapan near by, because it was charged that at this place two of the captured Liberals, Generals Arteaga and Salazar, had lately shot two Imperialists. Here, in their turn, they were promptly executed.

Driscoll heard the volleys, ran to the spot, and saw the last horrid spasms.

"What—what——"

Ney turned on him a sickened look.

"Don't you know, it's the new decree."

"What new decree? These dead men were prisoners of war. If murderers, they weren't tried."

"It's the decree I brought from Maximilian, the decree of general amnesty."

Driscoll glared fiercely at such a jest, but to his utter amazement Ney was quite in earnest.

He who had commanded the shooting squad stooped over the corpses, a smoking pistol in his hand. Now he glanced up at Driscoll. "Pues, si senores," he said, "of amnesty, yes," and chuckling, he indicated the bodies with his pistol. "But wait——" He thought he saw a form quiver, one he had overlooked. Remedying this with a belated coup de grace through the brain, he shoved back his white gold-bordered sombrero and mopped his forehead as a laborer whose labor is done.

"Under which general amnesty, caballeros," he went on merrily, "you have just witnessed the first act. My loyalty to the Emperor grows. His majesty has a sense of humor."

It was Don Tiburcio. He had deserted the Contras to waylay the rich bullion convoy of which Rodrigo Galan had told him. But the convoy never came. Rodrigo, the "sin verguenza," had not levied toll at all. He had swallowed it whole, a luscious morsel of several millions in silver and gold. The coup was of a humor of the less appreciated by Don Tiburcio because he had figured on doing the very same thing himself. At present he was chief of scouts under Mendez, and commanded the Exploradores, audacious barbarians who were invaluable for their knowledge of the country.

From Tiburcio and Ney Driscoll finally gathered the meaning of the decree. It was the keynote to the Imperialist hopes. Its cause was the flight of Jaurez across the border. Maximilian was surcharged anew with enthusiasm. Even the United States must now recognize his empire, he believed. And confounding flurry with activity, as usual, he fervently proclaimed the courage and constancy of Don Benito Juarez, but added that the Republican hegira finally and definitely stamped all further resitance to the Empire as useless. Then, august and Caesar-like, he allowed amnesty for those who submitted imediately; he prescribed death for all others. Rebels taken in battle were not even to have trial. Maximilian believed that ink, thus sagaciously besmeared by a statesman's fingers, would blot out further revolution. But it was fatuous, so stupidly unnnecessary! The court martials, or French gardens of acclimatization, as the dissidents called them, were already doing the work of the decree. The poet prince merely lifted the odium of it to his own shoulders. His amnesty became infamy, and was called the Bando Negro, a nefast Decree to blacken his gentleness and well-meaning for all time.

Driscoll left his informants, and walked up and down, up and down, alone. It did not occur to him to fill the cob pipe between his teeth. A scowl settled between his eyes, and it deepened and grew ugly. The desperado was forming in the man—desperado, as contrast to police conventions. Desperado, as primitive man, who hews straight, cutting whom or what he might, cutting first of all through the venereed bark of civilization. For this reason, in this sense, he might be termed outlaw. And walking up and down, up and down, he hewed till he had laid bare the core of the matter. And he saw it naked, without the polish. Thereupon he knew what he was going to do.

He saddled Demijohn, and Demijohn followed at his shoulder to the jefetura. Here, at the entrance, under the brick red portales, Driscoll left the horse, untied, and opened the door and passed within.

The jefetura, or prefecture, was at the headquarters of the command, and in the long front room were assembled a number of officers, including Ney and Tiburcio, besides the jefe of the place and several town magistrates, all chatting with Col. Mendez about the recent victory. They greeted the American cordially, and poured out tequila for him. He had done as much as any to win the fight. Michel laid a hand on his shoulder.

"Monsieur," he said with mock formality, "today, when you permitted yourself to save my skin, you called me a fool. But I would have you observe, monsieur, that only my patron divinity, the god of fools, is permitted to know so much."

Driscoll loosed himself from the affectionate grip, and turned to Mendez.

"Colonel," he said, "I'm going to get out of this."

"What? Oh come, mi captain, find a better one!"

"It's not a joke, sir. Profiting by a commission that does not bind me, I am here to tell you good-bye."

"Jean, mon ami!" Ney cried in protest.

Don Tiburcio waited with keen appreciation, as he always did when the unexpectedness of this Gringo was unfolding. The others stared agape at the man between them and the door. Mendez saw too that he was in earnest, and he began to argue, almost to entreat. The Mexican leader had lost the quality of mercy in civil wars that had touched him cruelly, that had exacted many near to him, but there was sincerity in the man, and men were won by the stirring sound of his voice.

"You would retire now," he exclaimed, "now, when every soul here may look for promotion, and none of them more than you, Senor Dreescol?"

But he did not stop there. He conjured up a tempting vista of long and honored life under an empire that was now supreme. Even the scum of rebellion yet left on the calm surface was that day swept away, and naught remained but to enjoy the favors of his grateful majesty.

"Which only makes it," said Driscoll, "a good time to quit I should mention, too, that I intend to join the Republic, that it," he added, "if there's any of the Republic left."

Don Tiburcio was not disappointed.

Mendez sprang to his feet and his voice was stentorian, as when he rallied his men by the magnet of fury and hatred.

"It's desertion!" he roared.

"Or, simple honesty," Driscoll corrected him. "But it dosen't matter. The penalty is no worse for a deserter, if you catch him."

Mendez curbed his rage. He did not wish to lose this man. That is, he would regret deeply having to kill him.

"Why do you mean to change?" he demanded.

"Because I can't feel right! It's like—somewhow it's like being an accomplice of murderers."

"Dios mio, I suppose Your Mercy and his tender heart refers to the Decree?"

"Partly. That thing is a blanket warrant of death. Just because your enemy can't fight any longer——"

"But you forget, senor, the mines that exploded in the highways. You forget the poisoned springs, the ambuscades, the massacres. Would they not shoot prisoners too, your new friends?"

"Si senor, as you and others may some day experience personally."

"Then, mighty judge, condemn them also."

"Don't I? But I can't blame them. They are punishing crime."

"But not of murder, as we did today."

"That too, for that was murder today. But I was thinking of a worse crime. I was thinking of theft, sir."

"Theft? How can that be worse?"

"Theft of their country, I mean, and as you accomplice I owe restitution. Leaving after a victory ain't so bad, but if I'd know that I was fighting for that Black Decree, I'd of dropped out before the fight. But look at it anyway you please. How it looks be damned!"

"Senor, lay down your pistols and sabre, there, on that table, because, by Heaven, I hall stop you! But if you are armed, I—I shall have to shoot you, too."

"Hang it, Mendez, you're a good fellow! But—I can't help it."

Lay them down, you renegade!"

Driscoll removed his sabre and gravely placed it on the table.

"The guns are my own," he said. "Dupin had them returned to me. He took them. Suppose you take them, Colonel Mendez!"

He was in the doorway, and from there he faced them. The day was hot, and Mendez had taken off his belt with his weapons. But the others were armed. Yet they hesitated. They were brave enough for death, but before the certainty of death for at least one among them and the uncertainty of which one, they paused. Driscoll had not touched the black six-shooters under his ribs. That would have snapped the psychological fetter. As he expected, Mendez sprang first. This put an unarmed man between himself and the others. In the instant he wheeled, was in the saddle, and clattering down the street.

Back in the room Mendez saw his blunder and made way. Ney passed him first, reached the door, aimed and fired. But someone behind him touched his arm, and the ball sped high. Ney turned, and saw Tiburcio filling the door against the others, and regarding him with evil challenge in his eye.

"Oh, don't think that I hold it against you," Ney cried gratefully.

Tiburcio half laughed.

"A man who don't want prisoners shot is better with the enemy than dead," he said.

Tiburcio's chuckle was prophetic. The enemy invariably executed Exploradores, and would certainly do as much for Don Tiburcio if they caught him.

Ney heard the hoof beats, already far away.

"May the god of fools look after him too," he murmured heavily.

The fugitive swept round the first corner of the street and on through the town. None thought to stop him. Soldiers and townsmen supposed him on the Empire's urgent business, and when they knew better, there was no longer hope for their ponies against the great Missouri buckskin, now a diminishing dusty speck mid cacti and maguey.

"The devil of it is," Driscoll muttered ruefully, "I don't know where there's anybody to desert to!"

However, he was feeling much better.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

As Between Women.

"A laugh is worth a hundred groans in any market."—Lamb.

Jacqueline had wrought close to success during that May twilight on the edge of the Cuernavaca pond. She had won a promise of abdication. Yet in the end it was not the Emperor that left Mexico, but the Empress. And Jacqueline was to accompany her, to leave despite herself the scene of her labors. Such was the case precisely, and it all came to pass in this wise.

Maddened by the distance which his temptress kept, also goaded to it by the sorry state of his empire, Maximilian thought only of abdication. Napoleon responded to Jacqueline's cipher dispatch with orders to Bazaine. But Bazaine, urged thereto by Empress and marechale, ignored the orders, and advanced Maximilian more money. And Maximilian, having no longer his excuse to quit, stayed on to spend the money. Jacqueline sighed, and—began all over again. Consequently Bazaine, hearing once more from Napoleon, found himself a defaulter, and virtually recalled. Consequently, Napoleon set dates for evacuation. Consequently the rebellion sprang into new life, and the Empire lost armies and cities, and thousands of men by desertion. But the darkest cloud was formed by one hundred thousand Yankees massed along the Rio Grande. Napoleon took heed. He ordered that the French troops should leave at once, unless hal the Mexican customs were turned over to the French administrator. This was during the summer of 1866, only six months after the bright hopes embodied in the Black Decree of general amnesty. Utterly appalled, Maximilian took up his pen again to sign his abdication.

But there was Charlotte. Even yet she pettishly clung to her crown. The Mexican agents in Paris had availed nothing with Napoleon. Bien, she would herself go to Paris. She would get the ultimatum recalled, and Bazaine as well, because Bazaine no longer advanced money. The imperial favorites ,among them the sleek-jowled padre recommended by Eloin, seconded her intention. And as they all talked so well, Maximilian quaffed of hope. With a spite hardly noble though entirely royal, he predicted that soon the marshal would find himself in a sadder fix than himself, the Emperor.

Suddenly, secretly, a little after midnight, Charlotte left the capital. Maximilian bade her good-bye with a solemn promise to rejoin her in Europe if she failed. Three days later Dupin and his Contra Guerrillas met her in the Tierra Caliente, and offered to join her French cavalry escort. The Empress took his presence as an affront. Of late small things excited her to a feverish agitation which she was unable to control. The Tiger bowed over his saddle, and kept his gray hair bared to a torrential downpour while her carriage passed on. It was the tropical rainy season. The clouds hung low around the mountain base and truncated the more distant peaks, while the valley below was a bright contrast in wet, tender green. The wheels sank deep, and mired in the black, soggy earth. Men tugged constantly at the spokes, and the steaming mules reared and plunged under the angry crack of whips.

The Tiger of the Tropics waited as carriage after carriage toiled past him and creaked and was forced on its way. Behind the dripping windowpane of the very last he saw a face he knew, a beautiful, saddened face, puckered just now by some immediate ill-humor. She frowned on recognizing the French barbarian, but unlike Charlotte, she did not jerk down the shutter. Instead, she lowered the glass by the length of her pretty nose.

"Is it dotage already, monsieur? Then put on you hat!"

"Name the name, yet another petulant grande dame!" But the Frenchman turned his horse and rode beside her coach.

"Did Her Majesty pout, then?" inquired the lady within.

"Almost as superbly as Mademoiselle la Marquise."

"Thank you well, but I have a superb reason for it."

"Because you return to Paris, surely not? Yet, if that is the reason, you need not quite despair."

"Why, what—what do you mean?"

"Only brigands, mademoiselle. When everyone is looking for abdication, a cortege mysteriously leaving the City must be the Emperor who goes back to Austria. The news travels like wildfire. The Indito runners go as fast as when they brought Moctezuma fresh fish from the Gulf. I rather think they have carried the news to an old friend of ours. It's my chance to catch him."

"Not my Fra Diavolo—Rodrigo Galan?"

"None other. But Rodrigo is stirred by more than patriotism these days. Upon it he has grafted a deep wrong, and he swears lofty vengeance by a little ivory cross such as these Mexican girls wear. The conceited cutthroat imagines there is a blood feud between himself and His Majesty. So if he hears that Prince Max comes this way——'

"He will find Charlotte instead? But he must not detain her."

"Tonnerre!" exclaimed the Cossack chief. "Why not? She goes to Europe to sustain the Empire, while we French——"

"All the same, let her go. She will gain nothing there. Listen to me, monsieur. She leaves that he may not abdicate, while if I stay, she fears that——"

"He will abdicate?"

"Your wits, mon colonel, are entirely satisfactory. And so she invited me to go with her, and as first lady of her household, I could not refuse. I wonder, now, if Fra Diavolo would deign to capture just me, alone!"

The sharp look which Dupin gave her from behind the streams tumbling off his sombrero was the sixth of a half-dozen. But it was this last one that seemed to satisfy him.

"Put up the window, mademoiselle," he said, "you're getting wet."

Ten minutes later Jacqueline felt the coach lurch heavily and sink to the hub on one side.

"Go on with your nap, Berthe," she said to her one companion. "They'll pull us out, as usual."

(To be Continued.)

The Wornout Nerves, The Weak Heart, The Tired Brain, The Wasted Strength.

What a multitude of women there are who feel that these words exactly suit their case. From early morn until late at night they have been on the go, year in and year out, attending to the daily household duties, looking after the wants of her children and spending the rest of her time attending to social and church work. Is it any wonder that sooner or later there comes a general collapse? The action of the heart becomes weak and palpitating, the nerves become unstrung, the brain feels in a whirl half the time and the usual force of vitality is lacking.

It is at this time a woman should look after herself, and if she does not, serious female disorders may set in and often cause weary months and years of helplessness and miserable suffering. What she wants is something to build up her system. For this purpose there is nothing to equal

MILBURN'S HEART AND NERVE PILLS

They are the women's friend in every sense of the word.

They will strengthen the weak heart, tone up the shaky, starved nerves, make the brain clear, and restore the lost vitality.

Mrs. George Lohnes, Stanley Section, N.S., writes: "I was greatly troubled with weak and dizzy spells and was so run down I could not attend to my household duties. I bought two boxes of Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills and after taking them I found that my trouble had all passed away. I am now strong and healthy again."

Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills are 50 cents per box or 3 for $1.25. If your dealer does not handle them, send direct to The Milburn Co., Ltd., Toronto, Ont.

YOUR "FAGGED" FEELING IS SPRING SICKNESS

This Unhealthy Weather Will Intensify Your Exhaustion Unless You Have Good Medicine.

Time wont help; matters grow worse instead of better if your system isn't rid of its poisonous burden.

Your blood is not only thin, but it is contaminated with a whole winter's accumulation of wastes.

A stimulating blood tonic is required.

What's it going to be?

Not habit of alcoholic dope, but concentrated cure in the form of "Ferrozone" which is known as the best of all spring regulators.

creates keen appetite.

Produces prodigious digestion.

Converts food into nourishment.

Gives richness and vitality to the blood.

Makes strong nerves and hardy muscles.

Ferrozone possesses power that can't be doubted. It will do for you what it did for Walter Wood, of Beaufort, Car. Co., N. B., who writes: "I can say that Ferrozone has given me a new lease of life. A year ago I suffered much from nervous weakness. I was really scarcely able to drag myself around. My appetite was gone, I had no color or ambition and felt generally used up. The first box of Ferrozone started me back to health. I took a number of boxes, but it was worth while as my health was completely restored."

Get back to health with Ferrozone. Your druggist sells it, 50c. per box or six boxes for $2.50. By mail from N. C. Polson & Co., Hartford, Conn., U. S. A., and Kingston, Ont.

Teachers' Column

Articles for this once-a-week column are contributed by members of the New Brunswick Teachers' Association. . . .

SUSPENSION OR CORPORAL PUNISHMENT, WHICH?

To the Editor of The Telegraph:

Sir,—I think the time has arrived when corporal punishment should be abolished in schools. Let us see what are some of the evils attending its use. The pupil always has a sore feeling towards the instructor who has been compelled to resort to it. The parent, too, is led to feel coldly toward him, saying that his boy has been marked for correction, while undue partiality has been shown to others. This often shows itself in abusive and insulting language and indeed sometimes goes farther than this. Not long since a teacher was violently assaulted on the street by an irate parent.

Again, the boy, especially if he is well up in his teens and thinks he knows how to box, oftentimes resists punishment and the teacher has a serious struggle in his efforts to administer it. The result is even a drawn battle, and when it is a victory, it is at the expense of a great deal of nervous energy, that might far better have been expended in the direct work of instruction. The subsequent effect of such an encounter as I have just spoken of, is this: The boy becomes sulky and yields a forced and unwilling obedience, while the teacher rather than meet with such another fracas, is inclined to pass over a great many offences and thus discipline is impaired. More than this, in a sly way the boy endeavors to entice his comrades to breaches of order and the teacher finds his influence over the other pupils much weakened.

I hear an objector saying, however, "Why discuss this matter in the public press? The teacher can easily in a case like that communicate the matter to the trustees and have the boy suspended or expelled." It is more easily said than done. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred you will find the average trustee unwilling to suspend a boy. Why should he offend a neighbor, he thinks, with whom he has lived a long time, perhaps all his life, to please a teacher who is generally a stranger to him. Perhaps the parent of the boy is related to him, or mayhap the trustee is a merchant, and he would run the risk of losing a regular customer. So he merely advises the teacher to lay the rod on heavily. Worst of all, perhaps the offending pupil is the trustees own son. Then he considers that the instructor has a "pick" on his boy and the trustee becomes henceforth an enemy and a thorn in his side.

Now for the remedy. It is a simple one and it is a wonder that teachers have not seen it and insisted on it long, long ago. Take the power of suspension away from the trustee and place it in the hands of the principals and their staff. In country schools, of course, it would be lodged with the one teacher. If two or three suspensions are not sufficient warning, let them be expelled for the term or year. This, I think, is the method followed in the denominational schools. It is the academic staff and not the board of governors that has the power of suspension or expulsion.

The result of this course of action would be that the teachers thus maintaining sound discipline and free to expend all his talents and abilities in improved methods of instruction, would see far more direct and beneficial results than under the present regime.

BYSTANDER.

Albert county, N. B. March 19, 1906.

NEW BRUNSWICK SCHOOLS

The Editor of The Telegraph:—

Sir,—Everyone admits that the educational system of New Brunswick is not what it should be; that its results have not, on the whole, been satisfactory. Why is this so?

In the first place, the plan of laying out our rural school districts is wrong. Our population is so thinly distributed that they with but a few exceptions have schools of only one department and one teacher each. Each of these schools has at least five grades, generally more. The same teacher has to teach all subjects, to pupils of all ages—she has to impart the elements to the little tots, and everything for which she finds time (which cannot be much) to the intermediate and advanced scholars. In such a school, the teacher can do very little more than maintain discipline and impart the mere rudiments of instruction. There is no time for drill and review. This is why the average pupil is so deficient in mental arithmetic and kindred subjects. There is no time to take special pains with the dull pupils, and, in consequence, they are neglected and become discouraged, producing the large proportion of failures that may justly be charged to the school system that at present obtains. In one, department schools, only the naturally bright pupils have a chance. The backward ones are seriously handicapped from the start.

The conditions in village two-department schools are somewhat better, but even there the primary teacher has four different grades and the principal six. It is impossible for either, especially the principal, to do as good work as a teacher with only two or three grades. Until two-department schools are done away with, the number of grades in each room should be equalized.

The remedy for the country schools is the union of all districts in a parish into one, and the wholesale consolidation of schools. Let a four-department school house be built for each five or six of our present little districts, and let the children be conveyed thither in vans. Thus the children of back districts would have the same educational facilities as those of the towns. Every child, no matter where he is born, or who his parents are, has an inalienable right to the same advantages as his city-bred fellow-citizen; and the state is under obligations to see that he gets his rights, which are now denied him. This consolidation scheme (which has long been urged by the chief superintendent and others) may cost something extra; but the province would soon reap a return in the superior quality of the graduating pupils. To keep up with the onward march of progress we must have up-to-date schools, and be prepared to pay for them.

Another drawback is the irregular attendance of children at school. It is impossible to make much of a pupil who attends only now and then. The average teacher has so many classes that she cannot take time to review the lessons lost by the stay-at-homes, consequently the lessons are never well learned.

To remedy this, we need a law compelling every child of school age to attend school every day the latter is open. There should be no excuses taken, except for sickness. The government should see that neither because of the parents' need nor for any other reason is the child kept away from the school house.

A third drawback is the low class of many of the teachers employed and the low salaries of all. No town or city employs local licensed or third class teachers. Why? Because the latter are not considered properly qualified. Then, why should country children have to accept what the larger places reject? Hasn't a country child, in a small district, the same rights as the city child? Are not the back settlements as necessary to the welfare of the province as are certain blocks of the cities? It is argued that "poor" districts cannot afford high classed teachers. Let the county fund be increased so as to provide a sum sufficient to enable those back places to have teachers who are fully qualified.

It has been objected that high classed teachers will not go to small and out-of-the-way places. If so, this unwillingness can be overcome by the consolidation of small schools, which will locate the school houses in more desirable centres; and (which is more important) by the increase of the teacher's salary to a respectable figure commensurate with the benefit he confers upon the community. Most of our teachers remain in the profession less than three years. Why? Because the remuneration is so low that they soon see better chances of gaining a livelihood—almost any line of business offering better financial inducements. Now this continual change of the presonnel of the profession is the weakest point in our educational system. One does not become a good teacher without several years' practice, and to become the best teacher takes many years. Teachers should be permanent, as civil servants. They should be enabled to make their profession a life work. But, at present, there is no inducement for the great majority of those who graduate from Normal School to remain teachers for more than a year or two. Only a few heads of superior, grammar, town and city schools get sufficient salary to even moderately support a married man and his family. Until this state of affairs is remedied by the province greatly increasing its outlay for education, our schools will, for the most part, remain in the hands of those who come and go every year or two—often every term.

About one-quarter of the schools of New Brunswick are taught by third-class teachers; but, worst of all, there are nearly 400 districts that have no teachers at all. If this state continues several years longer, a large proportion of our young men and women will be unable to read and write. An ignorant populace is the greatest curse of any country; and to save New Brunswick from sinking intellectually, heroic measures are needed, and at once.

HENRY HARVEY STUART.

Harcourt (N. B.), March 19, 1906.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

[The opinions of correspondents are not necessarily those of The Telegraph. This newspaper does not undertake to publish all or any of the letters received. Unsigned communications will not be noticed. Write on one side of the paper only. Stamps should be enclosed if return of manuscript is desired in case it is not used. The name and address of the writer should be sent with every letter as evidence of good faith.—Ed. Telegraph.]

THE GAME LAWS

To the Editor of The Telegraph:

Sir,—Some time ago I noticed in a St. John paper a communication, purporting to be from Petitcodiac and which referred to the game law in uncomplimentary terms. To-day there is scarcely a place in eastern or southern New Brunswick where one can go and bag in a day a half dozen of partridge. One can travel all day and not see a bird, where a dozen years ago or perhaps twenty-five years ago one could not go along the road without seeing them running across the road or seeking shelter in some fence corner and even in orchards near dwellings. In fact if you ask one where to go in order to shoot partridge the answer invariably is, "I do not know; they are very very scarce."

Some few years ago a law was made prohibiting for a time the shooting of partridge for any purpose, and had that law been kept in force and rigidly enforced it would have done some good and our country would be in a short time so that not only non-residents but residents would be willing to pay for a license to shoot small game. But it would not be any use to charge for a license now for there is really nothing to shoot but a few rabbits. There is now a law in force which allows partridge to be shot but does not allow them to be shipped away. This gives one an opportunity of breaking the law without saint and the quicker that law is repealed and the prohibitory law adopted and enforced the better it will be for our small game resorts and the sooner will our forests be filled with birds. In one case the game warden who is ever on the alert for game poachers found that one man had the name of shipping birds out of the province and he determined to catch him if possible. He succeeded and no sooner did he set the law in motion in order to punish the offender than one who had helped to make the law and who should have assisted its game warden in enforcing the law, came to the rescue of the accused and did what he could to free him from the charge and make it appear that the game warden was entirely at fault in trying to enforce the law and that the law itself was wrong and defective. If the law is wrong and defective why did that very man assist in making it, and did he do so in order that he could pick flaws in it, make money out of it and thus hold the very law up to ridicule that he had helped to frame and pass in the house of assembly?

We have a game warden in this section of the country, S. E. McDonald, who has always done his level best to have the game law enforced. In fact he does not allow one section of the law infringed upon in any respect if he can possibly help it. True, he has made a number of enemies in enforcing the law so strictly and with such vigilance. No poacher can very well escape his vigilant eye; but we must admit that since his tenure of office the big game of this section never was so plentiful and the treasury never so well filled with the money paid for licenses for non-residents and residents. Now if the government will stand by this officer in enforcing the law which they and their supporters have made and passed, and if their supporters will be consistent and assist in prosecuting those who violate that law instead of encouraging people to gross violation ,then will they see the fruits of their labor and the small game on a par with our big game. But just so sure as supporters of the government in the house of assembly use their influence to tear the law to pieces and condone the offences of those who violate it wantonly then will our officers of the law be discouraged, and those who have been silent spectators will endeavor to get their share of the plunder. The farce will go on and our forests will remain naked as they are at present. I might say here our game warden is not spiteful nor vindicative. He cares not who the offender is, nor what his political sympathies are. In the case referred to the accused was not of the same political stripe as the warden or the present government, but in other cases where big game was concerned some uncompromising supporters of the present administration have felt his blows and noted his determination to enforce the law irrespective of friend or foe.

Yours,

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Mrs. Whitney, Authoress, Dead.

Boston, March 21—The death of Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney, the authoress, at her home in Milton, was announced today. She was born in 1842.