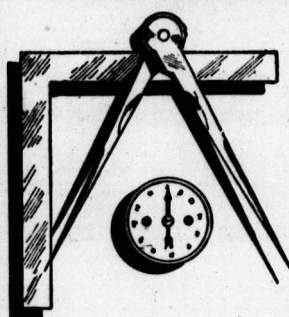


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G. T. P. HOLD UP IN WEST
A CLEAR CASE OF STEAL

Edmonton Induced to Grant Them a Cash Bonus of \$100,000 and Exemption from Taxation for a Term of Years in Order to Induce the Company to Make That City a Divisional Point—Robbing the People by Threats.

Impudence and "commercial diplomacy" have triumphed over this city in Alberta. The Grand Trunk Railway, with characteristic arrogance, has succeeded in holding up Edmonton for a cash bonus and exemption from taxation, and the people of this enterprising provincial capital have accepted the dictates of the magnates. In consideration of the company's choice of Edmonton as its divisional point between Winnipeg and the coast the Edmontonians have agreed to pay the railway \$100,000 in cash or debentures and to exempt it from all taxation for five years, and for twenty years thereafter to assess on present valuations. For the Grand Trunk to select any other town as a divisional point would be as absurd as for the Canadian Pacific to decide to stop its

trains at Mission Junction and haul its freight by wagon from there to Vancouver. In view of this fact this diplomacy is nothing but a steal, and the Edmonton council can only explain its granting of this concession by a confession of corruption or stupidity. It is scarcely possible to believe that in the economic wisdom and intelligence of the twentieth century the ratepayers of Edmonton would themselves endorse any such deal. This railway company has already secured millions from the Dominion treasury. Canada is literally building the G. T. P. and giving the road, laid and equipped, to its stockholders and directors as a present. Yet, unsatisfied with this, the company proceeds to rob the people by threats or buying a corruptible council—Collier's Weekly.

A Princess to Be Won

(Continued.)
"Of course, Armand, that is your privilege; but then, you must pardon the further inference that to decline to answer is, really, to answer in the affirmative."

"You are responsible for your infirmary, not I," I replied curtly. He leaned a bit forward. "Let us take up my first question," he said. "Have you ever considered what you were likely to encounter if you undertook to rich the Crown?"

"Rich?" I interrupted. "Steal, then, if you prefer. I forgot we were to use plain terms."

"Very true," said I. "Proceed."

"Do you think that I, who have been the heir presumptive since the instant of my birth, almost, will calmly step aside and permit you to take my place?"

"I looked at him, indifferently, and made no answer."

"Do you fancy, for an instant," he went on, "that the people of Valeria would have a foreigner for King?"

"I shrugged my shoulders."

"And even if old Frederick were to become so infatuated with you that he would restore you to Hugo's place in the Line of Succession, do you imagine that the House of Nobles would hesitate to annul it the instant he died?"

"From the written words, one might infer that he spoke loudly and in open anger; whereas, in fact, his face was smiling and his voice was even more soft than usual. It behooved me to meet him in kind."

"As you seem to have been doing my thinking, cousin, perhaps you are also thinking of my answer. If you have, I shall be glad to hear them; it will save me the labor of thinking them out for myself."

"His smile became a laugh. 'Let us pass to my second question. If, how ever, demands no thinking. There is ample evidence of your intention as to the Princess.'"

"Then, why ask it?" I enquired.

"Because, of her intention toward you, I am not so sure—but, women are queer creatures and prone to take queer courses. You aim to marry her; and so, having won the King and stolen my birthright, to use her popularity to secure you on the throne. You see, all roads lead to the throne."

"All roads which His Highness of Lotzen travels," I observed.

"He smiled back in the chair; then let it drop sharply to the floor. Just so, cousin, just so," he said. "And one of those roads passes by your Chateau?" I asked.

"For an instant, he seemed to suspect my true meaning, and I regretted the words. Then the suspicion faded and he accepted them at their face value."

"Morals have nothing to do with a King," he laughed; "nor with the subject under consideration."

"A couple of the latter," said I, "I suppose I am very stupid, but I don't quite understand why, if you feel so about the Princess, you offered to aid me in getting rid of Mrs. Spencer."

"Pure selfishness, cousin. I have taken a liking to the lady, myself."

"Then, at least, I may thank you for your selfishness," I sneered. He smiled; then turned and looked at the clock on the mantel behind him.

"Come, Armand," he said. "I must be going. Will you condescend to answer?"

"I rose."

"You won't? Well, it's not really necessary—but, have you a dice box handy?"

"I have not."

"A pack of cards, then?"

"No."

He shrugged his shoulders. "Take my advice and go home—you are far very far, out of the fashion, cousin mine. However, this will serve, though it's rather low class, and he took out a gold coin and rang it on the table. 'You were an American officer and, I understand, they are as game a lot of men as wear swords. Will you bear that out and try a toss with me?'"

"And the wager?" I asked.

He slowly drew the chair backward; but, instead of dropping it with a crash, he leaned far over it toward me and said, very slowly:

"Two tosses and two wagers. The first, for the Princess; the second, for the Crown."

"I waited a moment until I could control my voice."

"It would give me the most intense pleasure, my dear Duke," said I, "to toss you—not with yonder coin, but out of the window. I fancy a second toss would not be necessary; but, if it were, I could do it with as much pleasure as the first."

"Lotzen's face got crimson; then, gradually, pale—like red hot iron passing to a white heat. He let the chess fall slowly into place, and so easily that I could not hear the soft strike the floor."

"So, for a piece, we stood at gaze. Then, he spoke, and I marvelled at the continued calmness of his voice."

"You are my superior officer, so I may not strike you nor draw against you. But you will, I trust, pardon me, my dear cousin, if I tell you that you are a snivelling fellow."

"Pray, don't hide behind my temporary rank," I answered hotly. "I waive it. Gladly anything for a chance to puncture that rotten carcass of yours or to get a good fair crack at your smooth face."

"It was a foolish speech. I knew it the moment it was out. But I never had acquired self-restraint when aggravated by those I disliked—and I despised Lotzen. Possibly, he had far better ground despising me. Had our positions been reversed, I am quite sure I would have viewed him quite as he did me—a foreigner—an interloper—a scheming usurper—a thief."

"My explosion seemed to calm the Duke. He looked at me, intently, for a moment; then bowed gravely."

"I beg your pardon," he said. "You are not a coward."

"I might not be, outdone, so I bowed back at him. 'Thank you,' said I. 'I also beg your pardon and withdraw the adjective.'"

"Merci, Your Highness," he answered. "Let us consider the matter closed."

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