

THE RECOIL of THE REPEATER

By MARVIN L. HAYWARD

IT was the evening before the general election of 19—, and the "inner committee" of the "Out" party in the County of Lecarnot were holding their final meeting, arranging the countless last minute details, dividing up the "educational fund" and assigning the different workers to their portions of the "mission field" for the fateful morrow.

"Will you go up to the Monquat poll?" asked the secretary, turning to a young man at the foot of the table.

Arthur Perley adjusted his cigar at an independent angle, thrust his thumbs into the arm-holes of his vest in the most approved "money power" manner, and elevated his feet to the top of the worn table.

"Sure," he replied, with all the jaunty confidence of an old-time campaigner. "I'm ready to try anything for the benefit of the party."

"It needs a careful man," cautioned the secretary.

"Yes, it's pretty tough country up there," said one of the old workers. "They've furnished all the murder trials in this county for the last fifty years."

"I guess there's no danger of them scaring me," averred Perley.

"Well, according to a local tradition in the upper part of the county, they scared a pretty nervy party once," was the reply.

"Don't think I ever heard of it."

"Of course, I can't vouch for its truth," replied the other; "but it is said that his Satanic Majesty the Devil was coming down the St. John River years ago, and some of his friends found him sitting on a rock in the middle of the river two or three miles above the Monquat weeping bitterly."

"What's the trouble?" they asked.

"Monquat's just below here," says he, "and I've heard so much about it that I'm afraid to go by."

"Times have changed since then," laughed Perley; "and the 'higher criticism' has disposed of that story long ago. At any rate they'll not scare me."

"I hope not," agreed the secretary, who proceeded to give him very careful and explicit instructions; and the next morning Perley started for Monquat by the early train, arriving there a few minutes before the poll opened.

"I suppose we have some pretty tough fellows on our side that we have to restrain?" he remarked to one of the local workers.

"We've quite a bunch of them," was the reply; "but of late we have sworn in the worst of them as special constables for election day, which gives them a feeling of responsibility so that they don't cut loose until after five o'clock. There comes one of them now," he remarked, as he glanced up the street.

"Will the other side do any challenging?" Perley asked.

"It is reported that they have not much money and are going to put the oath to every doubtful voter, and they've probably started in on our friend Peter," replied the local man, as the approaching voter drew near.

WHAT'S the trouble, Peter?" queried the local man, solicitously.

"Don't you know," explained the voter. "I went into the poll there to cast my ballot, and that reprobate of an agent took it upon himself to challenge my vote."

"What did you do?"

"Took the oath and voted, of course."

"I hope you didn't make any disturbance?" was the anxious query.

"Of course not," replied Peter, in an official tone. "I was an officer of the law and charged with keeping the peace, therefore, I could not smite him as he deserved, but after five o'clock my office will expire and my arm will be free, and I will then wait for him to come forth that I may plant my billowy fist between his dewy eyes."

Arthur and his guide moved on.

"There'll likely be something doing about the time the poll closes," laughed the local man, as they proceeded towards the poll, where they found quite a crowd gathering and a free fight under active way. As they approached, however, things quieted down and the workers scattered in search of voters whom

they thought they could influence.

"What's doing now?" inquired Perley.

"We are simply construing a section of the election law," replied one of the local workers, who had entered the poll through the glass in the door, and whose clothes were rather dilapidated.

"You have a rather strenuous method of construction," laughed Perley. "What was the point under discussion?"

"We were proving that the constable has no right inside the poll, and as we couldn't convince them by argument, we just removed him by main strength and awkwardness," was the reply.

By this time things were moving with a spirited swing. Teams loaded with free and independent voters were arriving from the surrounding country and the workers were dodging in and out of the shifting crowds picking out the men they could "handle."

Perley at once got in touch with the local workers, and assisted them all he could, keeping track of the countless details of a country poll.

At ten o'clock he was called up by the County Secretary, who gave him a code message, which, translated, read as follows:

"Joe Clayton is shipping up twenty repeaters on the noon express. Look out sharp."

"Repeaters!"

Clayton was one of the chief heelers on the opposite side who was selected for any dangerous and illegal work; from what he had seen of local conditions, Perley was excited. He felt satisfied that Monquat was capable of producing almost any sort of a disturbance, but repeaters! Here was his chance to show his resourcefulness. Having a superficial knowledge of criminal law, he started off to a Justice of the Peace who was on his side.

"I have just got a private tip," he announced, "that Clayton is sending up a supply of rifles on the noon express; if these fellows here get hold of them there will be trouble, and if there is any shooting to be done we want the weapons ourselves."

"Ah!" said the Judge. "What do you suggest?"

"You will note by Section 23 of the election law that no person who has not resided in the polling division for at least six months shall come into the polling division armed with offensive weapons of any kind, and section 260 is to the same effect."

In a Letter

DO you remember how,
"Somewhere in France,"
Men of Guy's company
Once "took a chance?"

Broken, he came to me,
Came with a smile;
"Mother, dear, patch me up!
It was worth while!"

So he is mine once more.
He does not know
What the great doctor said,
He cannot go

Back to the ghastly trench
For his "Well done"—
No more for me the wrench—
"Good-bye, my son!"

So he comes back to me,
His manhood spent;
Crippled. . . . How glad am I,
Glad that he went!

—Florence Randal Livesay.

"Do you want a warrant?" asked the magistrate.

"I don't think so," replied Perley; "all that is necessary is to instruct our special constables whom you have sworn in to watch the trains and disarm any persons they see carrying weapons. They can't conceal rifles at least."

When the noon express came up a swarm of constables were on hand, and, although quite a number of strangers got off, none of them gave the slightest indication of carrying concealed weapons, and Perley concluded that the message had been a false alarm.

THE afternoon wore off without any further excitement, and about ten minutes before the poll closed a south-bound "accommodation" passed through the village. As the express would follow in less than half an hour, Perley decided to wait for it, and strolled down to the poll to take a last look at the situation.

"Has our friend Peter forgotten about the agent who challenged his vote?" he asked of the local worker who accompanied him.

"Don't you worry about Peter forgetting anything like that," was the reply. "He and about twenty others who were challenged are at the poll now, all standing around the door waiting for him to come out."

"What are we to do?" asked Perley. "Things have gone quietly so far, and we don't want any trouble."

"Oh, we fixed that," replied the local man. "We sent word inside to our agent; they gave the other fellow the tip and let him out the back window down on the shore; he dodged down the beach and across to the station without them seeing him, and he is now on his way to Woodville on the freight that just went through."

"They will certainly be a surprised bunch when they find out that he got away," laughed Perley.

Before they reached the poll the waiting crowd evidently got word of what had happened, and were indulging in fluent profanity—Peter being the chief mourner.

"What's the matter?" inquired the local man, innocently.

"Why, you know," replied Peter, "now that my office has expired and I am a free man, me and my friends were waiting for the agent to come forth that we might deal with him according to his manifold sins, but some traitor must have sent word inside, and while we waited at the front door, like Paul of old, they let him out the back window and he hiked like h— for the C. P. R. He is the first man on that side I ever saw in this election who loved the C. P. R."

They were interrupted by one of the local workers who hurried up in a state of evident distress.

"Do you know what has happened?" he demanded. "Everything seems to have gone all right," replied Perley.

"Gone all right," exclaimed the local man. "The other fellows had a bunch of strangers in here and voted them on fifteen or sixteen dead and absent names, and some of them even repeated two or three times. 'Repeaters!'"

"Re-repeaters!" Perley scarcely had time to digest this startling information, as the whistle of the express summoned him to the station.

As soon as the train reached Woodville he hurried to the central committee rooms, where the first man he met was the county secretary.

"Why in h— did you let them run in those 'repeaters' on you?" inquired the truculent secretary.

"You can't blame me," remonstrated Perley. "Our inside agent should have known better, and I never knew a thing about it until two or three minutes before the train left."

"Didn't know anything about it," exclaimed the secretary. "Didn't I telephone you about ten o'clock that the 'repeaters' were coming?"

Perley gazed at the truculent secretary in open-mouthed surprise.

"Repeaters," he gasped, and this time the truth got through to his understanding. "Why, I thought you meant rifles!"

The secretary looked at the young man in deep and abiding disgust.