POOR DOCUMENT

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The Missourian

By Eugene P. Lyle, Jr.

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The People of the Story

The Missourian, known in every fight as the Storm Centre. His real name is John D. Driscoll, familiarly shortened to Din Driscoll. At the close of the Civil War he finds himself a lieutenant-colonel in General Joe Shelby's brigade of Confederate daredevils, sent by his comrades as emissary to the Emperor Maxmilian of Mexico.

Jacqueline, who is the Marquise Jeanne d'Aumerle, on a mission of high politics from Napoleon III to the the Court of Mexico.

Berthe, her maid.

Maximilian, archduke of Austria, occupant of the New World throne created for him.

Charlotte of Orleans, the Empress.

Anastasio Murguia, a Mexican hacendado, who acquires riches by running Federal blockades into Southern ports. He is both a coward and a miser.

Maria de La Luz, his daughter.

Rodrigo Galan, brigand and guerrilla.

Tiburcio, blackmailer of the highway, scout and "loyal Imperialist."

Augustin Fischer, "the Fat Padre," a renegade priest of subtle parts.

Michael Ney, grandson of the "Bravest of the Brave."

The Marshal Bazaine, commander-in-chief of the French Army of Occupation in Mexico.

Madame La Marechale, his bride.

Colonel Dupin, the "Tiger of the Tropics," chief of the Contra Guerillas.

Miguel Lopez, colonel of Dragoons, a favorite of the Emperor.

Monsieur Eloin, the Emperor's secretary.

Marquez, Miramon, Mejia, Mendez, Imperialist officers.

Regules, Escobedo, Republican officers.

Daniel Boone, first scout among the Missourians, one-time editor and editor yet to be.

"Old Brothers and Sisters," "Tall Mose" Bledsoe, of the County of Pike, and yet more of the Missouri colonels.

Benito Juarez, president of the Mexican Republic.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Little Monarchs, Big Mistakes.

"How now, good fellow wouldst thou speak with us?"
"Yea, forsooth, an your mistership be emperial."
—Titus Andronicus.

For the moment, Colonel Dupin had established headquarters in the granary, which was a long, low adobe among the stables, with a pasture between it and the house. The pasture opened on the highway through a wide gap in the hacienda wall, and the coaches and steeds of the imperial party which had passed in that morning gave the old cow lot a gala air. The colonel was seated before a box, improvised into a desk, and his rusty jacketed Cossacks lounged everywhere. Tiburcio and other scouts were reporting on the dead and wounded of yesterday's raid. A maimed enemy brought a chuckle deep in the Tiger's throat, but any mishap to one of his own darlings got the recognition of a low-growled oath. He was busy over this inventory of profit and loss when Jacqueline appeared with the Emperor.

Dupin arose and saluted after the grim manner of an old soldier/ The half dozen of obsequious courtiers he did not see at all, but to Jacqueline he bent from the waist with a duellist's punctilio. His countrywomen was the one adversary whom he never thought of cursing.

There was a an opening innuedo. "No, Colonel Dupin," Maximilian reproved him sternly, "I have not come to interfere with justice I merely desire to see what prisoners you have here."

Driscoll and Murguia were brought in. Maximilian stared dumfounded at his new magistrate in the role of criminal Don Anastasio looked apologetic. They had locked him up in his own stable, bronze medal and all. Dupin explained. This Murguia, like many another hacendado, had long been suspected of aiding the guerrillas, and yesterday morning he had actually set him, Dupin, on a false trail. The Contras were tracking one of Rodrigo Galan's accomplices in the abduction of Mademoiselle d'Aumerle, whom they had found at last taking refuge at Murguia's own hacienda. Here he had had the effrontery to welcome them as mademoiselle's rightful escort, had even seemed surprised when a dozen Contras pounced upon him from behind and disarmed him. Dupin added that mademoiselle herself was deceived by the American's cunning, and he did not doubt but that she still persisted in his innocence. He might speak further of the fellow's part in the ambush and murder of Capt. Maurel near Tampico, but he confessed that that required further investigation.

No one could say that Maximilian had so much as listened. Such tangles had long since become irksome, though he never ceased plunging into the mesh. To unravel details, and incidentally confuse them more, was a notorious mania with the poet-prince. But his thoughts now were all for a girl who had fainted. Murguia he would leave to a court martial. If guilty, the medal should be torn from his breast. Don Anastasio's terrors, however, ran on the other penalties of court martial.

"Now you," Maximilian turned to the American, "I understand that you wish to see me. But you must know that law prevails in Mexico at last, and that even the Emperor may not keep a man from trial."

Driscoll's chin lifted eagerly. "Certainly not, but my business with you, sir——"

"Not 'sir,'" whispered Jacqueline. "You must call him 'sire.'" Little she cared for etiquette, but she did not propose that Driscoll should broach his errand.

Maximilian overheard and smiled. "Yes," he said, "one tiny letter added, and you change a man into a sovereign."

Now Jacqueline, for her purpose, had thought to disconcert the man unused to courts. But it struck her at once that nothing of the kind would happen. His easy naturalness was too much a part of him, was the man himself. And she was glad of it. She was glad of the something distinguished which his earnestness gave to the clean-cut stamp of jaw and forehead. He had stopped and looked at them inquiringly, as an eager speaker will when interrupted. Then his brown eyes deepened, and there was a tugging at the corners of his mouth. He seemed to comprehend. If this was their humor, he would play to it. A diplomat must be all things to the people he is after.

"Sire? Why," and his drawl was exquisite, "that's what we call the daddy of a horse."

Jacqueline turned quickly, clapping her hand over her mouth. Maximilian was always uneasy when Jacqueline did that.

"To be sure," he observed affably, "our American friend is not so far wrong. Listen, am I not the father of my people?"

The entourage buzzed admiringly at the imperial cleverness; all except Jacqueline, who now that she should laugh and relieve the situation, obstinately pulled a long, blank face.

Maximilian's tone changed. He meant to wound now, and did. "So," he added, with chilling stress, "it's 'sire,' if you will be so good as to remember."

Driscoll flushed as though struck. He became aware that it was all some patronizing rebuke.

"There is one," he answered gently, "who taught me manners at her knee, or tried to, and she never hurt a mortal human being by a word in her life, but that, that, sir, seems to be where you have missed it. Now look here," he went on, kindling in spite of himself, "I respect any man who has grounds—discoverable grounds—for respecting himself, and if you are a man, then 'sir,' won't overtop you any."

Colonel Lopez of the Dragoons nudged him anxiously. "Don't say 'you'; say 'Your Majesty.'"

"Better let him alone," Maximilian interposed wearily. "He recognizes in me a man, and—it's not unpleasant. But which," he added, "gives me leave to hope that as a man himself he will not cringe before the drum-head."

"May I," said Driscoll quietly, "have one minute with you alone? It's not about myself, I promise you that. But for you, sir, it's of the very greatest importance."

Instantly all stirred with curiosity, except Maximilian. All there were keenly affected by the stranger's mysterious business with the Emperor, except the Emperor himself. And each man's wits were straightway alert, according to the hates and ambitions of each. Even Miguel Lopez, dense of understanding, had his suspicions. Murgia's yellow features darkened malevolently. The hacienda priest whispered to M. Eloin, and M. Eloin, brushing the man of God aside as though he had been thinking of the very same thing himself, tried to get a word with Maximilian. But Jacqueline spoke first to the Emperor. She knew the susceptibility of the royal ear. Maximilian nodded at what she said, and Eloin bit his lip. Maximilian glanced at the American's clothes. Homespun did not correspond with pressing business of state, to his mind.

"My good man," he said, caressing his beard, "it's not regular, you know. Another time, perhaps, when you can have yourself inscribed by Our Grand Chamberlain and when your application for an audience——"

"But if these senores shoot me before then?"

Maximilian shrugged his shoulders. In any case, the Ritual would suffer no outrage.

"But I tell you," cried the exasperated Missourian, "this thing is serious. And it can't wait either, not if it's to help you any. I may be too late now. I don't know what's happened since I started down here three weeks ago. Richmond was in danger then. And the Army of Northern Virginia—General Lee——"

"Have surrendered," calmly interposed the Emperor.

Driscoll stiffened as he stood, his lips parted as his last word had left them. He wondered why these foreign, unsympathetic beings of Austria and France and Belgium and Germany and Mexico looked so blurred to him.

"It is really true," continued Maximilian, addressing them all. "A courier brought me the news this morning. Yes, my friends, the North is free at last to attack our Empire. But," he added blandly, "let us not fear, not while we are sustained by the unconquered legions of France."

"How he remembers us now!" thought Jacqueline.

She thought too of him who had sent the legions. The entire fabric of Napoleon's dream of Mexican empire was builded on the disemberment of the American Union. But, as the Southerners began so well by themselves, Napoleon had left them to do his work alone. He just failed of genius.

The room had filled with murmurs, with awed whispering, with frightened questioning looks at one's neighbor, with ambitions and hates gone panic-stricken. Driscoll came forward. The fellow of homespun held the Empire in his hand, if they but knew it. Now let me deliver my message," he said earnestly. "And afterward, on with the drumhead, I'll not complain."

"There, there," spoke the unseeing monarch, though affected by the dignity of sorrow, "you shall have no cause. I came here, meaning to pardon."

"Pardon?" came the Tiger's growl. "Your Majesty saves so many enemies, does he fear that soon he will have none left?"

"Perhaps, Colonel Dupin, since my imperial brother, Napoleon, sends me so efficient a bloodhound. But I thought the prisoners were already tried and condemned. That must come first, of course. Yet We are constrained to find another judge, one without preconceived notions of guilt, to hold the court martial. Ah yes, as Monsieur Eloin here suggests, I name Colonel Lopez.—Colonel Lopez, you will stay behind with a company of your own men. Finish the trial tonight, if you can, and overtake me before I reach the city.—Colonel Dupin, I have to request yourself and men as escort, to replace the Dragoons left with Colonel Lopez. And you, Mademoiselle d'Aumerle, shall have a carriage. We start this afternoon. You will be ready, mademoiselle?"

"Is Your Majesty quite resolved," Jacqueline asked in French, "that the American must be tried? He can easily be found guilty, I warn Your Majesty."

"And is that not reason enough?"

"Reason enough that he should not be tried, since he is not guilty. But perhaps Your Majesty has thought of sending him under guard to the frontier, back to his own country, where he would not longer be an annoyance?"

"My dear young lady," returned the Emperor, "it seems that you expect me to blot out the process of law simply because even I cannot make them infallible. But you do not answer my question. I offer you protection to the City?"

"He must stand trial then?"

"Yes—but will you be ready to start this afternoon?"

"Your Majesty should know that I cannot accept."

"Does this trial interest you so much, mademoiselle?"

"Thanking Your Majesty," said Jacqueline, coldly, "I should rather not accompany him."

Maximilian swung on his heel and called Lopez aside. "Mi coronel," he said, "when you follow tomorrow, you will offer to bring the Senorita d'Aumerle, if she desires it.—And Lopez, you remember the young Mexican girl we used to meet near here, during the last few evenings?"

"When you and I, sire, would ride over from Las Palmas incognito?"

"Yes. She was able to—to tell me much about the peon life, and I should like to reward her in—in some way. Do you know, Miguel, I suspect she lives on this very ranch. It was at the church here that we would meet her, you know? And now, since I must leave, I wish you to find her. Induce her to come with mademoiselle to the city under your escort. As sure her that she shall have an honored place at court.—love, there's my new order of San Carlos for women! She shall have that for—for aiding my researches among the peons. Now, Miguel mio, do your best!"

With which words Maximilian turned back alone, and as he went, he thought how as a simple man he had won a maiden's heart. He had been learning that a prince may miss one or two very dear things in life. "It's ended, the little ranchero idyl," he murmured. "But there's been no harm. She shall not regret it."

CHAPTER XIX.

A Tarter and a Tartar.

"But all's brave that youth mounts and folly guides."—As You Like It.

As Maximilian crossed the pasture, he suddenly had to jump aside with considerable sprightliness. A brace of horsemen came swerving through the gateway from the highroad and tore down upon him as though the Day of Judgment galloped behind. They were abreast, ten feet apart, but the oddest thing was a lariat that dangled between them, from saddle-horn to saddle-horn.

The thunder of hoofs brought Dragoons and Cossacks and Dignitaries, and emptied the granary. Even insane horsemen could see that the Empire was encamped over that cow lot. Aund as nearer they rushed, the two maniacs seemed to recognize the fact. One was straightway more anxious to arrive; a directly opposite effect was apparent in the other. And there was the rope between them, from saddle-horn to saddle-horn. Their opinions on destination, unexpectedly diverging, promised something. And since one wanted to stop and the other to hasten, the something was not long in happening.

One of the horsemen—he wore a sombrero—leaned back frantically. The other—who wore a battered soldier cap—passed ahead like the wind. The lariat twanged, but held. Sombrero's horse got its feet planted. The horse of Soldier Cap slowed to a standstill, and panted. Sombrero flung out his pistol, Soldier Cap his. They aimed at each other, the triggers snapped, no report. They looked amazed, embarrassed; and tried again. Same result. "Por Dios!" "Sacre nom!" They hurled the pistols, each at the other's head. Both ducked. Sombrero wheeled, drove home the spurs, and headed for retreat. Soldier Cap and horse braced themselves against the shock. The spectators, running nearer, now perceived that the lariat was tied round each man's waist as well as wrapped over his pommel. Soldier Cap weathered the jolt, next plunged suddenly closer, and in the instant of the slack, unwound the rope from his saddle and leaped to the ground. In two leaps more he had Sombrero about the neck. They fell together, rolling and fighting, while Sombrero's horse reared and plowed the soil with them. Dragoons and Cossacks heaped themselves on all three. It was quite an energetic mystery altogether.

Under the soldier cap, under dust and blood and scratches, Jacqueline caught glimpses of a happy face.

"Oh la-la, it's—it's Michel!"

"Rodrigo Galan!" roared the Tiger, in his turn recognizing Sombrero. "Here, up with him! Six of you, quick there, in line, shoot him!"

It was near the sweetest moment of the old warrior's life.

"One moment, colonel!" someone spoke quietly. "Is it a Huastecan custom, by the way, to shoot a cavalier the instant he—ah—dismounts?"

"But this scoundrel is Rodrigo Galan, Your Majesty. And that black horse, mere tonnerre, that is Maurel's horse. Captain Maurel, sire, whom he murdered!"

Don Rodrigo straightened pompously. "Your Most Opportune Majesty—" he began.

"Also Colonel Dupin," Maximilian continued, "he waylaid the Belgian ambassador, sent by Leopold, brother to Our August Spouse."

"The more reason to shoot him, pardi!"

"Without doubt, monsieur. But his executation must have eclat. Europe must know that Mexican outlaws do not go unpunished.—Colonel Lopez, you will take charge of Our prisoner. Guard him well, and bring him with you to the City. He shall be tried there, with every ceremony."

Colonel Dupin, that policeman of the backwoods forced upon Mexico by Napoleon, could only grind his teeth, which he did.

"Now, then," said His Majesty, "let Us see this brigand-catcher who excels the redoubtable Contra Guerillas.—As I live, the young man is a Chasseur d'Afrique! Step nearer, sir, and tell Us who you are."

"Michel Ney, at Your Majesty's service."

"The Prince of Moskowa!" exclaimed the Emperor. In his court, he was grateful for even a Napoleonic prince.

"Sergeant, Your Majesty." It looked as though Ney were hinting to be made something else.

"I see," said Maximilian. "And so Our Empire of romance is to hold a baton for another of the family of Ney. But to start more modestly, how would a lieutenancy suit, do you think?"

"Your pardon, sire, but I report to His Excellency, Marshall Bazaine."

Maximilian's white brow clouded. The French occupation was ever a thorn in his side. He could never quite be Emperor in fact. He could not even promote a likely young man. He had to "recommend" to one Bazaine, who had carried a knapsack.

"Quite so," he answered coldly. "I shall inform Our dear Marshall how well you deserve."

"The fact is, Your Majesty," said Ney in some confusion, "I did no—exactly—capture him. It was, uh, sort of mutual."

Everybody stared curiously. There was the rope, the unloaded pistols. It was a queer puzzle. How did it happen? Ney began with an apology. Would Mademoiselle d'Aumerle forgive him? But he had worried though! He should not have left her, day before yesterday!

"Because of a greater attraction the young woman suggested.

Ney demurred so earnestly that Jacqueline laughed outright. "Don't make it worse, Michel," said she. "I know how you regretted the death of the terrible Rodrigo. Then you learned that he was alive. Oh, no, I couldn't have held you.—But go on. Did the prove interesting?"

The Frenchman told his story. It appeared that, on deserting mademoiselle two days before, he went at the best speed of his horse up the ravine she had so graciously indicated. He hoped to overtake the fugitive bandit, and after an hour, at a turn in the arroyo, did meet him, face to face. Both were equally astonished. Rodrigo was retracing his steps, having been blocked by a dried waterfall. Either man draw and covered the other. The Mexican did not fire. Seeing Ney, he supposed the Contras at no great distance, and a shot would bring them on his heels. But after a time the thing commenced to grow ridiculous, and Ney laughed.

"Monsieur Rodrigue," he said, "I hope you will come along quietly."

Fra Diavolo mistook the Gallic humor for an assurance of armed backing near at hand. "Where to?" he asked.

"The devil take me if I know! Where would you suggest?"

It dawned then on the puzzled brigand that the other knew nothing of the country, and accordingly they struck up an armistice; which, for the rest, the alert revolver of each made imperative. Their protocol's chief clause required the prisoner to conduct his captor to some neutral point. Rodrigo suggested Anastasio Murguia's ranch, and Ney agreed. But as to what might happen on arriving, they left in blank. Michel had a duel in mind, if honest seconds were to be had. The craftier Rodrigo hoped to find some of his own men lurking about the hacienda.

A cessation of hostile moves was further stipulated, though treachery of course warranted the instant drawing of weapons. Should the prisoner try to betray the captor to guerrillas, this was to constitute treachery. Ney for his part insisted on his rights as captor. That is, he could call for help if he got the chance. Rodrigo assented willingly. He knew the neighborhood. He would avoid the Cossacks, and the Frenchman might shout to his heart's ease. To do him justice, the outlaw had no desire to kill Ney, even if Ney gave him leave. A duke and prince in one was too valuable. A pretty ransom loomed brightly. Ney suspected as much, but not being ingenuous enough to obviate the risks, took a huge delight in them.

Conforming to the terms of the truce, each man, simultaneously, put his gun in his holster. Then, good company enough one for the other, though with eyes ever on the watch, they proceeded along tortuous bridle paths until twilight, meeting no one. They camped in the same forest which that same moment held Murguia, Driscoll, and the two girls. They tethered their horses together and made a bed of leaves for themselves. Each laid his pistol a comfortable distance away, so that if either tried to arm himself while the other slept, there would be much snapping of twigs under his feet. Again simultaneously, they sat down and talked, and smoked cigarettes in lieu of supper. Ney progressed in his Spanish that evening. Fra Diavolo wished to impress on the companionable Frenchman that he, Rodrigo Galan, was a more terrible person than Colonel Dupin. He seemed envious, even of the compliment implied in the Tiger's nickname.

During a pause the brigand said, "Now don't jump, caballero, because I'm only getting out my flask."

"The beautiful idea!" returned Ney. "I'll do the same." But each stopped with the liquor at his mouth. It was consolation for lack of food, but if one refrained and the other partook—well, there would be a light sleeper and a heavy sleeper. With the tempting fumes in their nostrils, they waited, each for the other, to quaff first. And neither did. Finally Rodrigo proposed that they equalize the perils of indulgence. Accordingly each lowered the contents of his flask by three swallows, after which they compared the extent of the ebb tide in either bottle.

"But, voyons," Ney objected, "you haven't taken as much as I have!"

Rodrigo admitted the impeachment, and amiably took another draught. But the swallow proved too large, and Ney in his turn tried to balance that one, only to fail likewise. This entailed another effort from Rodrigo, which resulted in still another exaggeration.

"Now you've had more than I have," Michel complained, growing vague on the real point at issue.

"Bien, senor, suppose you try a little of this. It's catalan, genuine, too, smuggled at Tampico."

"Mine's cognac," said Ney. "Have some?"

They exchanged flasks, and that night in the forest their snores were discordant and loud. Ney half awoke once, and remembered that he seemed to have heard the tramp of many horses. Toward morning, when it was not yet light, he was aroused for good by a savage tightening around his waist and a tremendous pull. He sat up, and heard his prisoner scuffling and swearing near him.

"You've tied me, you sneaking animal without shame!"

"It's you that's tied me, tete de voleur!"

But as Rodrigo wrested in the dark, Ney found that the brigand's stumblings corresponded with the tightening about himself. He clutched at his waist, and discovered a rope.

Both men groped vengefully forward with the line, and lurched into one another's arms. Each had thought to come on a tree, only to discover himself tied to the other. In the first start of suspicion, and in no good humor from splitting headaches, one reached for his knife, the other for his sabre. But the knife was gone, the sabre was gone. Forthwith they grappled and wound themselves in the lariat, until at last they lay exhausted on their backs and blinked up at the beautiful innocent morn peeping through the trees.

"Now don't you untie yourself till I get untied," ordered Ney.

"Or you yourself," retorted the other.

"Let us both untie at the same time."

"But one might finish first," objected Rodrigo. The brigand had grown amiable again. He saw advantages in the rope. It was well to have his prospective ransom never more than a few feet away.

They discussed the problem at length, but were not equal to it. So the modus vivendi was stretched a rope's length, and the treachery clause expanded to include any untying or attempted untying before their arrival at Murguia's. Scrupulously simultaneous, they arose, found their pistols, and mounted their horses. To guard against any sudden varying in rapidity of travel and its consequences, each wrapped the lariat once about his saddle-horn. Where necessary, the brigand rode in front, since Ney insisted that the other way would reverse their roles of prisoner and captor. Rodrigo got some tortillas from a charcoal burner, and they lunched and rested within the forest's edge till dark. But they traveled all that night in the open country, and approached Murguia's before noon of the next day. Hoping to find friends about the hacienda's stables, Rodrigo suggested that they race up the highway into the pasture. He was thinking that then the Frenchman might be overpowered the more easily. Ney fell into the trap. He

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accepted the challenge and was keen for the sport. Thus it happened that they all but ran down the Emperor of Mexico himself, and instead of guerrillas, Rodrigo saw Cossacks and Dragoons. But the mystery of the rope, added to that of the unloaded pistols, rested unexplained.

Jacqueline was delighted. "If it were just conventional heroism," she exclaimed, "one might talk of lieutenancies. But sire, this——"

"Never fear," replied Maximilian. "I cannot make him captain, but he shall have his reward.—Monsieur le Prince, I will leave you a half company of my Austrians, if, though a Chasseur, you will deign to command them. In a word, I desire you to have the honor of escorting mademoiselle to the City."

"And I thank you, sire. Parbleu, the sergeant is happier with such an order than—than the captain without it."

"Michel," cried Jacqueline, "and where in the world now did you get that?"

"Why—out of my own head. Really, mademoiselle."

CHAPTER XX.

In the Wake of Princely Cavalcades.

". . . Now swell out, and with stiff necks
Pass on, ye sons of Evel vale not your looks,
Lest they descry the evil of your path."
—Dante.

The Grand Equerry was again the Dignitary of the hour. He held the Emperor's stirrup, while the Emperor, fittingly attired, swung gracefully astride a curvetting charger. Behind was his coach, ready for him when he should tire of the saddle. It was already late in the afternoon, and he meant to travel all night. Flatterers begged him to consider the importance of his health, which but made him unyielding. Some slight martyrdom for his country appealed to Maximilian. No, he said, grave affairs might be afoot since the Confederacy's surrender. The capital needed his presence, and he reminded them that the State came first, as always.

The retinue climbed into carriages. The escort, Dragoons, Austrians and Contra Guerrillas, formed in hollow square about their prince. Colonel Dupin scowled because he was going. Colonel Lopez, when unobserved, scowled because he was left behind. And Monsieur Eloin, at the Emperor's side, thought well of himself in substituting for a rival favorite one so distant from favoritism as the Tiger. The Dragoons and Austrians who were to remain presented arms on the hacienda porch, and Lopez gave them the cue for a parting viva. The emancipated peons, still wet from spiritual grace, swelled the din gratefully and stridently, lured to it by their thoughtful pastor, the hacineda curate.

But Maximilian still lingered. He looked from window to window under the colonnade, and seemed expectant. But Lopez signaled to the buglers, and the trumpet call and the redoubled huzzas of a people thrilled him out of his melancholy. With a sigh he gave over his private loves and poesy. He breathed deep and his eyes flashed. And as the grand monarch and good, he departed with the acclaim of posterity in his ears, conscious that the superb figure he made was for History's contemplation.

(To be continued.)

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HOT FIGHT OVER INCREASE IN FREDERICTON BOOM CHARGES

Company Claims Big Losses in Recent Years Owing to High Wages and Small Logs--Lumbermen Say Modern Methods Should be Introduced and Concern Would Pay---Efforts at Settlement Fail.

Fredericton, Feb. 22.—All other committees gave way to the corporation committee this morning, which for nearly two hours considered the Fredericton Boom Company bill. No decision was reached in the matter, which will be taken up again this afternoon. In the meantime, an attempt is being made to bring the two parties together in some settlement. Messrs. Moore, Kilburn, Gregory, Miller and others appeared to oppose the bill, while C. N. Skinner, E. L. Jewett, J. W. McCready and A. H. F. Randolph were among those in support. Mr. McCready first submitted a statement covering a number of years and showing how the expenses of the company had increased in every way in the past ten years. He repudiated the charge of extravagance in the management. Mr. Randolph pointed out that the financial position of the company has become very bad. In 1905 it went behind $22,000, and now has a total indebtedness of $55,000. The last dividend paid was of 6 per cent in 1900. The company had had a conference with the lumbermen, he said, but with very little satisfaction.

Mr. J. Fraser Gregory, speaking for the opponents of the bill, declared the losses were due to mismanagement of the company's affairs. Already the lumbermen have agreed to two increases in the rates, and the present demand of the company is unreasonable in every way. Mr. Moore intimated that the operators are willing to take over the business of the company on a five year lease, paying what really amounts to 5 per cent on the indebtedness yearly. He also criticized the plant of the company, half of which is unnecessary.

Mr. Skinner said the company could not consider Mr. Moore's proposition. Would the operators, he asked, pay the stockholders 50 cents on the dollar for their stock and take over the property with the debt?

Mr. Kilburn compared the charges of the Fredericton Company with those of the Restigouche Company, which are much lower, and strongly condemned the management of the former concern.

After some further remarks, in which Mr. Gregory complained that many of the company employes are fossils and barnacles, some gentleman suggested the withdrawal of the bill for this year. Hon. Mr. Pugsley suggested that a committee of lumbermen be associated with the directors of the company for a year to see if matters cannot be bettered.

Settlement Suggested.

Chairman King and others urged on the two parties the desirability of a settlement, as in the event of no settlement a great deal of time must be taken up by the committee, largely for the purpose of determining whether or not the company's management has been bad. At this afternoon's sitting of the committee the company will submit a further statement of their finances in other years.

Mr. Randolph, in making his statement, said things had been going adversely for some years, and last fall the company asked the log owners to meet them in St. John and talk over the necessity of increasing the tolls. Only five or six lumbermen attended. They said the management was not satisfactory, whereupon we asked them to come into the company, offering stock at 50 cents on the dollar. They did not accept.

Dr. Pugsley asked for a statement of the company's operation for the past twenty years to enable the committee to intelligently consider the bill's object.

Mr. Gregory said the statistical statements attached to the petition were misleading. In most businesses volume of work tends to cheapen the cost, but it was different with the Boom Company. There had been two advances, totalling over 30 per cent., in recent years in boomage, yet the company say they are still going behind, and try to back up that assertion by figures selected from years that best suited their argument. He admitted that the situation was grave and that something must be done in the interest of the lumbermen.

Mr. Kilburn said he was a kicker when work was not done. The Boom Company had been asking jump after jump, and getting it, too. The trouble on the St. John River was bad management and Boom Company incompetency. Last year's debt was incurred by leaving a big lot of logs in the Sugar Island pocket.

Mr. Randolph—That was done at the instance of the late W. H. Murray, and saved the logs.

Mr. Gregory complained of the poor manner in which the logs were rafted at the booms; that the proper amount of work was not got out of the men; that there was much money sunk in useless plant and worthless steamboats, and that the management was composed of barnacles and fossils. Sweep these men away, said Mr. Gregory, put in new, young blood, and there is money in the undertaking.

Further remarks looking to the possibility of a compromise were made by the premier, attorney general, Chairman King, members of the committee, and several of the delegates.

The corporations committee resumed at 2.30 when L. H. Bliss, the company's accountant, submitted statements of annual losses and gains since 1884, the losses totalling $98,173.85 and the gains $94,703.23, an excess of $3,470.63 in losses over revenue, for thirteen years the average amount spent on repairs was $5,638 and the average per cent of dividend paid since 1884 was 6.18 per cent.

Mr. Bliss defined the company's steamers against Mr. Gregory's attack and showed they were necessary to conveying logs into the booms from the upper borders of the limits as the current is not strong enough to float the logs down from Douglas to the lower boom. For two years there was nothing but low water and the logs had to be towed. Gregory's statement that the company give men so many joints to make up per week is not correct. The men knock off Saturday at 3 p. m. so they can go home and be on hand early Monday morning. They are the best men we can get, available for rafting as the supply is limited. There was no useless plant at St. Mary's.

To Mr. Gregory—Some twelve men are employed all the year round at the end of the bridge. There are none this winter, some had worked there since Mr. Hanneberry took charge in 1884.

Parker Glasier, M. P. P., one of the directors of the company, gave a practical explanation of the various stamps of rafting at the booms and showed how unforseen conditions had to be promptly met to keep the work going and get the logs off to market ere the close of navigation.

Couldn't Agree.

Mr. Hanneberry, agent of the company, testified that he had general charge of the work, hired the men and got the best he could find. The men as a general thing did their duty. In 1904 the booms froze in owing to river closing down unexpectedly. They were cut out of the ice at a cost of $650. These 200 booms were worth $10 a piece and we could not afford to lose them. He had introduced many improvements into rafting during his time, some of the machinery being of his own invention. There are thirteen miles of holding booms and some 8,000 feet of sheer booms above town and about 15,000 feet all told.

Mr. Gregory said the lumber owners and the boom men had a conference during recess and exchanged propositions. The log owners offered to take over the boom outfit for 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 years and pay the company 6 per cent on $50,000 of indebtedness. The company declined this and asked 10 cents a thousand on all logs passing through the booms. That would mean putting their capital stock on a 20 per cent dividend basis, and was absurd. Since 1884 the boom company has lost $3,470, yet from 1886 to 1900 it has paid an average of over 6 per cent dividend, thus giving the shareholders back 96 per cent of their stock. Then they also value their present plant at $150,000, about double the amount of the subscribed capital stock. Surely a company that can do all this is not in a position to ask for a huge increase in its tolls on the ground that the business is not a paying one. He would say no more, leaving the case in the hands of the committee.

Mr. Skinner asked for an opportunity to address the committee next week and on motion of Mr. Hazen, it was decided to hear him next Wednesday morning. Counsel on the other side to be given a like privilege. Committee adjourned till Friday 10 a. m.

SUSSEX SEED FAIR PRIZE WINNERS

Sussex, Feb. 23.—The seed fair continued today has proved to be very successful. About fifty representative farmers attended the classes in grain judging and weed seed identification. The interest shown is very gratifying both to the management of the fair and to Messrs. Newman and Brodrick, the government lecturers.

The instruction classes that have been conducted here are the first given in this province, and judging from the enthusiasm shown they will be beneficial in arousing an interest in the matters of seed selection and weed destruction. Several of the farmers have already planned some systematic work along these lines for next year, under the auspices of the Canadian Seed Growers' Association, of which H. Newman is secretary.

At the conclusion of the classes Mr. Brodrick gave a practical talk on agriculture as affected by local climatic and market conditions. Mr. Newman followed with some advice as to the grading-up and sustaining standard varieties of potatoes.

A vote of thanks was unanimously carried and tendered to the lecturers by Col. H. M. Campbell, president of the society. He expressed himself as agreeably surprised at the interest taken in the second day's proceedings and attributed it to the fact that the lecturers were recognized at once as practical farmers. He promised them, on behalf of the society, an even better reception should they visit Sussex next year.

The prize list is as follows:

Spring wheat—H. B. Parlee, 1st; Orin Hayes, 2nd; McIntyre Bros, 3rd.

Barley, six-rowed—McIntyre Bros., 1st.

Barley, hulless—Orin Hayes, 1st.

Oats, white—Orin Hayes, 1st; S. G. Goodliffe, 2nd; H. B. Parlee, 3rd.

Buckwheat, rough—H. N. Arnold, 1st; R. A. Patterson, 2nd.

Peas, field—S. J. Goodliffe, 1st.

Potatoes, rose—McIntyre Bros., 1st.

Potatoes, late white—H. B. Parlee, 1st; McIntyre Bros., 2nd; H. N. Arnold, 3rd.

W. H. Allen and George E. Armstrong, president and vice-president of the New Brunswick Guides' Association, have gone to New York as the representatives of the St. John and Fredericton Tourist Associations, and will have their headquarters in the C. P. R. exhibit at the in Madison Square Garden.