

# The Princess Dehra

BY JOHN REED SCOTT.

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"His Grace of Lotzen seems to have discovered a mare's nest," said Armand. "The decree that is required to make me eligible to the crown and to restore me my proper place in the line of succession was executed by Frederick the Fourth the night before he died."

And once again came Lotzen's taunting laugh.

"The night after he died, you mean, cousin," he exclaimed.

The prime minister turned upon him with a frown.

"Your royal highness will permit me to suggest," said he, "the prosperity, under the circumstances, of neither you nor the archduke addressing each other."

And Lotzen, discerning that the council was of the same mind, nodded easily.

"I cry pardon," he replied. "Your excellency is quite right—but you will understand, I deny the existence of this suspiciously timely decree. As to it, at least, there is no presumption of execution—the laws alone can prove it."

The count turned to the archduke. "Your highness has seen the decree?" he asked.

"I have not."

"Did the king tell you it was executed?"

"He did not—but he told another."

"And that other—?"

"Is the princess royal," said the archduke.

The count paused a moment to give the situation emphasis—and Lotzen, chagrin and anger consuming him, yet smiling and unabashed, drew out a cigaret and carefully lit it.

"Do you thing her highness would honor the council with the facts?" Epping asked.

"I will acquaint her with your desires," said Armand.

## CHAPTER V.

### The Compromise.

The princess' suite was across the corridor from the king's, and in a moment the archduke was with her.

"Your majesty!" she cried, and curtsied.

He raised her quickly. "Not yet, sweetheart," he said, "not yet—and, may be, never."

She stepped back and regarded him in puzzled surprise.

"You are jesting, dear," she said; "surely, you are jesting!"

He shook his head and went toward her.

"But the decree—the decree!" she exclaimed, again stepping back.

"The laws have disappeared," he said, "the box is empty and the book cannot be found."

In bewildered amazement she let him lead her to a chair, and listened, frowning and impatient, to his story. Only once did she interrupt—when he mentioned the duke's unexpected entrance—then she struck her hand sharply on the table at her side.

"Lotzen! Oh, Lotzen!" she cried, and with such threatening vehemence that Armand looked at her in sudden wonder.

At the end, she sprang up.

"Come!" she commanded. "Come; take me to the council—I can at least assure they won't make Lotzen king," and seizing his hand she made for the door.

He slipped his arm around her waist and detained her.

"Are you sure, Dehra, you would mix in this unfortunate squabble?" he asked. "Is it—?"

She turned upon him sharply. "Squabble! Do you call a contest for Valeria's throne a squabble?"—then suddenly she smiled—that sweet, adorable smile she ever had for him. "Be very careful, sir, or I shall tumble both you and Lotzen aside, and take the throne myself. . . . Now, will you escort me!"

He looked at her thoughtfully, then smiled and patted her cheek.

"Come, your majesty," he said; "come, and claim your crown; it's yours by right, and I shall be the first to swear allegiance."

"And the first to rebel, dear," she laughed.

They entered the council chamber through the king's cabinet, and as the princess halted a moment in the doorway the ministers sprang to their feet and stood waiting, while Ferdinand of Lotzen advanced and bowed low; not offering, however, to take her hand, fearing it

would not be given, and having no notion to risk a snub in such company.

To his astonishment, Dehra extended her hand and let him kiss it.

"You come on a sad errand, cousin," she said. . . . "I would you were still in Lotzenia." The words were so innocently fitting, yet the double meaning was so deliberate.

The duke slowly straightened, discomfiture and amusement struggling for control, while Armand smiled openly and the ministers looked away.

Meanwhile, the princess passed on serenely to the table and took the chair at its head. Then, led by Count Epping, the council came forward and made obeisance. She received them with just that touch of dignified sadness which the circumstances demanded, and which, with men, a woman must measure with the exactness of fine gold. And with it there was the low, sweet voice, the winning graciousness, and the dazzling smile—now softened just a trifle—that never yet had failed to conquer, and that had made her the toast of the army and the pride of the nation. And Armand had watched her, with glistening eyes, as one after another she sent the ministers back to their places, bound to her chariot wheels; captive and content.

And Ferdinand of Lotzen, seeing, understood; and for the first time he realized fully what her aid meant to his rival, and how little chance he had to win, save with the laws. And straightway the last faint scruple perished, and he set his cold heart against her, as well. Henceforth, for him, there was but one object in life—the crown of his ancestors, and for all who interfered there would be neither consideration nor mercy.

And the princess' eye, resting for an instant on his face, read something of his mind, and with a lift of the chin and a careless smile she turned to the council.

"My lords," she said, "his royal highness has acquainted me with your desires, and I am glad indeed if I can serve you. His majesty, the night before he died, executed the decree necessary to make the Archduke Armand his successor."

"You saw the decree?" Count Epping asked.

"No, I did not, but what I know is this. Late that night I went into the king's library; he was sitting at his desk, with the book of laws open before him and a pen in his hand. He was blotting a page as I entered. 'You have made Armand's decree?' I cried, and went to his side to read it; but he laughed and closed the book, saying: 'You may see it tomorrow, child, after I have told Armand.'"

"And he did not tell you the words of the decree," the count asked, after a pause, "neither then nor the following day?"

The princess closed her eyes and lowered her head.

"No," she said; "no—I never saw my father again—alive."

There was a distressing silence—then Armand spoke:

"The council will understand that his majesty had no opportunity to tell me of the decree. I was with him yesterday only at the review; naturally he would not speak of it then."

"And that was, I suppose, the last time you saw the book of laws?" Epping asked addressing the princess, who had recovered her composure.

"Yes—it was lying on the table when I left."

"May I ask your highness," said Steuben, "why, when you saw that his majesty had been writing in the book of laws, you assumed, instantly, that it was 'Armand's decree,' as you put it?"

"You must know, my lords," she responded, "that it is rare, indeed, that a new law is made for the Dalbergs, there have been but five in the last 100 years, and the making is ever due to some extraordinary circumstance, which is known, of course, to all the family. We had been anticipating the decree, restoring Armand to his rightful place in the line of succession as Hugo's heir, and hence it was very natural to assume it was that which his majesty had written." She paused, and, for an instant, her glance strayed to

the Duke of Lotzen. "But it was particularly natural," she went on, "inasmuch as the king had mentioned the matter to me twice within the week, the last time that very morning, and referring to it as 'Armand's decree.'"

Stengen nodded. "I am satisfied," he said—and Duval and Marquand nodded.

The prime minister turned to Ferdinand.

"We would be glad to hear your royal highness," he said.

The duke laughed softly in sneering amusement. He was still standing behind his chair, and now he tilted it forward and leaned across it, his arms folded of the rail.

"Small chance have I against such a portia," he answered.

"Yet I would remind the council that, where kingdoms are concerned, a pretty woman is a dangerous advocate to follow—and thrice dangerous when against her is the written law and with her only—conjecture."

"Our cousin of Lotzen does not mean to question my veracity?" the princess asked quickly.

"Your veracity!—never, I assure you—only your inferences."

"And yet, sir, what other inferences can be drawn?"

He shrugged his shoulders and turned to the prime minister.

"I reiterate my claim to the crown," he said; "and the only law of the Dalbergs that is before you confirms it. I cannot conceive that the royal council of Valeria will arrogate to itself the right to annul a decree of Henry the Third."

"His highness of Lotzen misses the point," said Armand. "I do not ask the council to annul that decree, but only to assume from her royal highness' story that it was duly and legally annulled by Frederick the Fourth."

"Exactly, my lords, exactly," the duke retorted; "inference against fact—guesses against an admitted law."

Then Armand made the play he had had in mind since it was certain that the book of laws was lost. He was standing behind the princess' chair—now he stepped forward and addressed the duke.

"Cousin," he said, "we are putting a grievous burden on the ministers in obliging them to choose between us, with the proofs seemingly so strong on either side. It is not fair to them to drive them to the embarrassment nor to the misfortune that would attend a mistake. There ought to be no doubt in the mind of the nation as to the title of the king; he who occupies the throne should have his tenure unquestioned; and such cannot be if the one of us who is today made king is liable to be displaced tomorrow by the other. Besides, as I understand Henry the Third's decree, the council has no jurisdiction except by our agreement. You assert the decree of eligibility was not made by Frederick. If that be true, then, there being a vacancy in the royal dignity without such decree being made, it is for the house of nobles to enact my eligibility and so give me the crown, or to refuse and so give it to you. Therefore, I propose that for the space of a year, or pending the recovery meanwhile of the book of laws, we let the question of succession remain in abeyance. If, at the end of the year, the book has not been found, then the house of nobles shall choose between us. And as in the interval there must be some one in supreme authority, let her royal highness be proclaimed regent of Valeria."

Never before had there been such instant, open and cordial unanimity among the ministers of the royal council. Here was a complete solution of the vexing problem, and one, moreover, that would relieve them of a most undesirable duty. Baron Reitz's smile was positively gleeful, and the others nodded enthusiastically and turned to the duke expectantly.

And Lotzen saw that he was losing—and with rage and hatred in his heart, but with calm face and voice softer even than usual, he made his last play, knowing well that though it might not win, it would at least work a sweet revenge upon his rival.

"An admirable compromise for you, cousin mine," he laughed; "and clever, very clever—you and Dehra are to be married on the 27th. What difference, think you, will there be between you as king and you as consort of the princess regent?" Then he faced the council and flung his last card: "Otherwise, my lords," he said with suave frankness, "I would willingly accept his highness' proposition—or I will accept it, if it is engaged that the

wedding shall abide the termination of the regency. . . . how say you, cousin?"

Once again had the duke turned the situation by his devilish cleverness, and Armand's fingers itched to take him by the throat and choke the life out of him; and Lotzen, reading something of this in his eyes, grinned malevolently.

"How say you, cousin?" he repeated, "how say you?"

The archduke deliberately gave him his back. "My lords," he said, "it seems the Duke of Lotzen would force you to the choice."

But the old count did not intend to forego the compromise. He wanted Armand for king because Armand was, de facto, the head of the house, because he was convinced the decree had been executed, because it would make Dehra the queen, and because he despised Lotzen. With the princess as regent, there would be ample means to swing the nobles to the archduke, and to prepare the public for his accession. Of course, it would also give Lotzen time to campaign, yet he who fights the government has a rough road to travel, and usually falls by the way. Leastwise, the count was very ready to adventure it. But he needed aid now; and aid that could come from but one quarter and which he could seek only by indirection—Dehra alone controlled the situation.

"The compromise suggested is admirable," he said, "and though there is force in the objection made to it, yet, my lord," (addressing Lotzen) "you cannot expect the archduke to accept your amendment. It is not for the man to change the wedding day."

The princess sat up sharply. When Armand had suggested her as regent she had leaned forward to decline, but catching Epping's eye she had read an almost imperious order to wait; and having full faith in him, she had obeyed. Now she saw what he wanted; and though it was against her heart's desire and a cheerless business, yet her own judgment told her he was right.

"It is not for the man," the count repeated, looking at her hard, "to change the wedding day, and least of all—"

"Wait, monsieur," she broke in. "It seems that unwittingly I have been drawn into the situation, and put in a position where I am obliged to speak. Does the royal council approve this compromise, and desire me to become regent of Valeria?"

The count smiled in supreme satisfaction.

"I can assure your highness we are of one mind that, in this exigency, it is your duty to assume the office."

The princess arose. "Then, my lords," she said gravely, "I accept, hereby engaging that my wedding shall abide the termination of the regency."

The archduke made a gesture of protest, but Dehra flashed him her subduing smile and shook her head, and there was naught for him to do but to smile back—and add one more to the score that, some day, Ferdinand of Lotzen would have to settle.

The prime minister looked at the duke with a bland smile of triumph, and then at Armand.

"Is it your joint wish," he asked, "that we ratify the stipulation and proclaim the regency?"

"It is," said the archduke; but Lotzen only bowed.

Count Epping drew his sword. "Valeria hails the Princess Dehra as regent," he cried. It was the ancient formula changed to fit the occasion.

And this time Armand's blade rang with the others across the table, and his voice joined exultantly in the answer that echoed through the room.

"We hail the princess regent!"

As the sound died Ferdinand of Lotzen stepped forward and bent knee.

"God save your royal highness!" he said, and again Dehra gave him her hand.

"And grant me strength," she answered.

"Amen," said the count gravely. "Amen."

It was Lotzen who broke the stillness.

"With your highness' permission I will withdraw," he said; "there are pressing personal affairs which demand my presence elsewhere." He turned to go.

"One moment, cousin," said she—then to the prime minister: "Will the council need his highness'?"

(To Be Continued Next Week)

Raymond Collins of Brooklyn, convicted of a murder charge on Staten Island, has become the champion checker player in the Sing Sing death house.

# DECREE FOR DIVORCE WON BY TIERNAN

## Judge's Decision Final Chapter in Professor's Domestic Tragedy—Baby Billy Goes to Mother, Others to Father.

MY GENE FLACK, Universal Service Correspondent.

South Bend, Ind., Nov. 23.—The last chapter in the Tiernan domestic tragedy was written into the records of the St. Joseph county court today, when Superior Judge Chester R. Montgomery granted Prof. John P. Tiernan a complete divorce.

For the second time in the first lecturing year in the life of "Baby Billy" Tiernan, a court of law intervened as official guardian to provide for the welfare of the helpless youngster, whose parentage was made a moot question in one of the most celebrated paternity hearings of record.

"But what about the third child?" interposed Judge Montgomery, after the case had been formally closed and all reference to provision for the helpless infant had been sedulously evaded. "That child was born in wedlock and the question of his paternity is not in contest here. He cannot be ignored and it is the duty of this court to see that adequate provision is made for him."

**Mother Takes "Baby Billy."**

Attorney Samuel Feiwel, representing Mrs. Tiernan, who was prostrated at home and unable to attend the proceedings, then declared that the principals had agreed that the mother would care for the fatherless babe, and the custody of the older children, Irene, 5, and Mary, 4, might be granted to the professor. The court acquiesced.

Although Professor Tiernan had based his petition for divorce upon the charge of "cruelty," to avoid exhuming the scandal of his wife's confessed amours, as he said, the name of Harry Poulin was several times hissed into the record by the cross complainant, reiterating the charge that the debarred campus haberdasher was the father of his wife's third child, and the direct cause for the dissolution of his home.

**Professor Nervous.**

Pale and emaciated, it was with trembling lips and a quivering voice that the usually composed university professor narrated his grievances from the witness stand.

Mrs. Tiernan's open protestation of an ardent love for the dapper clothing salesman as her "ideal" and her solemn declaration that some day she would marry him, after oft repeated promises to ban him from her thoughts, prompted the professor to finally separate and institute divorce action on October 7 last, he testified.

"We were sitting together in the parlor of our home that night," testified the professor. "We had been discussing our turbulent marital career. After a pause, I asked her: 'Gus, do you really love me?' She waited for a moment and then replied: 'Daddy, I respect you as a provider, but I could never—no, never love you as a husband, for I'm in love with Harry. He's my ideal. He is the father of my child, and some day I'm going to marry him and legitimize my baby. No, we can never be happy together again. We must part eventually. Perhaps best now.'"

"I argued with her for a bit, but she was adamant. So I went upstairs to my room on the second floor, and from that day to this I have scarcely spoken a word to her."

Next Tuesday will mark Baby Billy's first birthday. It will be celebrated by the exodus of both the professor and his wife—each going their separate ways. The professor will leave for New York with the two older children, and there enter the independent practice of law. Mrs. Tiernan will go to Chicago to find work to care for herself and her forsaken babe.

## STATES WANT RAIL POWERS RESTORED

### Committee Asks Harding to Recommend Transportation Act Changes.

Washington, Nov. 23 (U. P.).—President Harding was asked today to recommend in his annual message to congress amendments to the transportation act restoring to state railroad commissions the powers they enjoyed prior to the war in control over intrastate rates and distribution of cars.

The request was presented by a committee of the National Association of State Railroad Commissioners, headed by Dwight H. Lewis, president.

It asked:

1. Restoration of authority to state commissions to control intrastate rates.

2. Authorization of state commissions to control distribution of cars of shippers between their respective states regardless of the destination of freight.

3. Congressional support by proper appropriations for the valuation of railroads now being undertaken by the Interstate Commerce commission.

**"EGG STRIKE" IS WON.**

Chicago, Nov. 23 (U. P.).—Chicago fresh egg eaters won their strike today.

Prices on the local market dropped 5 cents after a steady rise to a high level of 54 cents yesterday.

Consumers were buying packed an storage eggs instead of fresh ones, local dealers declared.

# Business Woman Feared She Had Heart Trouble

"Since Tanlac has overcome a bad case of indigestion and nervousness of three or four years' standing for me, my work here in the store is a pleasure, and I am certainly grateful for the good health it has given me," said Mrs. J. W. Pickins, of 516 E. 15th St., Los Angeles, who owns and operates the book store at 219 Mercantile Place.

"I was so run down that I felt miserable all the time. My sleep was broken and restless, I had no appetite, and the gas from undigested food caused my heart to palpitate so I thought I had heart trouble. For a time I had a swelling in my legs, too, and it was an effort for me to get about."

"It is wonderful how Tanlac has given me such perfect relief from these troubles. I eat heartily now, sleep like a child at night, and just feel fine all the time."

Tanlac is sold by all good druggists. —Advertisement.

## Gold From the Sea.

This has no reference to the wild plans that have from time to time been exploited for extracting gold from sea-water, but it relates to the attempts made in Queensland and New South Wales to recover gold and other precious metals from the sands on the seashore. The treatment of these sands has been undertaken, it would appear, with some promise of success. Not only gold but platinum and uranium have been found. It is thought that the metals find their way to the strand from submerged rocks which are broken and triturated by the violent waves assailing the coast.

# Sure Relief FOR INDIGESTION



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6 BELLANS Hot water Sure Relief  
**BELLANS**  
25¢ and 75¢ PACKAGES EVERYWHERE

## A TRUE RAT STORY



Auburntown, Tenn., 6-22-22.  
Stearns Electric Paste Co.

Dear Sirs: Mr. Robert T. Donnell of Auburntown, Tenn., came in our store the other day and wanted something to kill rats, so I sold him a box Stearns Paste. And he put some paste on six biscuits that night and the next morning he found fifty-four big rats. And the second night he put out four more biscuits with paste on them, and the second morning he found seventeen more rats, making a total of seventy-one rats in two nights, and there were lots more that he did not find.

This is some big rat tale, but, nevertheless, it is so. Just thought would write to let you know that your rat paste is good.

Respectfully, KENNEDY BROTHERS.  
**Buy a 35c Box Today**  
Enough to Kill 50 to 100 Rats or Mice

Don't waste time trying to kill these pests with powders, liquids and other experimental preparations. Ready for Use—Better Than Traps. Drug and General Stores sell STEARNS' ELECTRIC PASTE

# Cuticura Soap

The Healthy Shaving Soap

Cuticura Soap shaves without tug. Everywhere 25c.

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CASCARA QUININE

Standard cold remedy world over. Demand box bearing Mr. Hill's portrait and signature. At All Druggists—30 Cents

## Progress in Sahara.

The limits of the great arid wastes of the Sahara desert are slowly being narrowed by the invasion of windmills and motorcars. The oases are being linked together by good motor highways and the sinking of wells is greatly increasing the tillable area. The soil is fertile and, wherever water can be obtained, tropical fruits, millet and other cereals may be raised.

A trans-Saharan railroad has been proposed by the French government, but there are many technical problems to be solved in the construction of such a line. The desirability and value of a rail connection across the desert between southern Algeria on the north and western French Africa on the south is obvious.

## Too Much.

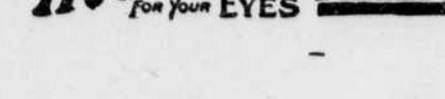
"Is it possible that after your father had deeded the old farm to you in return for your promise of a good home for the rest of his life, you turned him out?"

"Certainly! I told him I wasn't running an asylum for fools."—Kansas City Star.

No funny story should be over three minutes long in telling.

## Look to Your Eyes.

Beautiful Eyes, like fine teeth, are the result of Constant Care. The daily use of Murine makes Eyes Clear and Radiant. Enjoyable. Harmless. Sold and Recommended by All Druggists.



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