

The Princess Dehra

BY JOHN REED SCOTT.
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"You go too far with your facts, dear," she said; "I, too, thought that every inch of the king's suite had been searched, but I've changed my mind; it hasn't been—if it had, we would have found the laws."—She gave a cry and sprang up. "The box, Armand! the box! the book's in it!"

He looked at her in amazement.

"The box was empty," he said.

"Yes—was! was! but is not now! When did you look in it last?"

"At the council."

"Exactly—so did I—and Adolph brought it to us, lid down and 'locked,' he said. Oh, I see it all now—it wasn't locked, and he put the book back in it, and told Lotzen, and Lotzen killed him—and then, when he came for the book, he found the combination changed—you did it, you know—and as long as Moore was in the suite he could not break the vault; so he lures us all away; if he can kill you, he will be king and can get the book at his leisure; if he fails, as he has done, then it's the laws before we return." She flung her arms around his neck. "Don't tell me I'm mistaken, Armand! don't tell me I'm mistaken!"

He held her off, and looked at her in wondering admiration.

"Oh woman!" he said, "oh faith, and intuition, and loyalty beyond the stars! No, Dehra, I will not say you are mistaken! I do not know; we will test it. We will go straight to the palace—you and I, without a word as to our purpose—and we will open the vault, and the box—and if the laws are in it, yours be the glory!"

"And yours the crown!" she cried, and kissed his hand.

Then the train ran into the station and stopped, and the archduke stepped out and gave his hand to the princess. The platform was empty save for Count Epping.

"Your royal highness will pardon the informality of your reception," the prime minister said, when the greetings were over; "I assumed you did not want Lotzen to know of your coming; I even waited until 9 o'clock to call the council;—and I did not notify him, and so warn him that we had penetrated his disguise."

"Where is he now?" the princess asked.

"At Ferida Palace—he went there last night and has not left it since."

"I think I want him at the council," she said; "Colonel Moore, will you and Colonel Bernheim please go and summon him; then follow us at once; and do you, my dear count, come to me as soon as the ministers have assembled."

The brougham flashed away, and the archduke drew down the blinds.

Dehra gave a satisfied little sigh and sank back in the corner.

"We seem to have beaten him," she said; "we shall have the first look into the box."

Armand put his arm around her, and drew the fair head to his shoulder.

"I have already beaten him," he said—"we fought first for you, little girl. A fig for the box, and the book and the crown!"

At the gate of the park the princess signaled to halt, and raised the blind.

"Who of the royal council have arrived?" she asked the officer on duty.

"His royal highness the Duke of Lotzen, General Du—" he got no further.

"To my private entrance! quick, quick!" she called, and the carriage shot away.

"What does it mean?" she demanded; "Epping said Lotzen had not left Ferida."

"It means that you have solved the puzzle. Lotzen has not come to the council, he does not even know of it; he has come for the book."

They drew up at the door, the archduke opened it with Dehra's key, and they dashed up stairs. She snatched a master-key from a drawer of her writing table, and they crossed the corridor and entered the king's suite through the small reception room, between which and the library lay a cabinet and a bedroom.

As they entered the latter,

trading cautiously, they heard the Duke of Lotzen's voice in the library, the door of which stood ajar.

"It's a pity to break it," he was saying, "but—" and there was a snap and crack.

Under the archduke's hand the door opened noiselessly, and through the narrow rift, between the hangings, they could see within.

The duke, no longer disguised but wearing the undress uniform of his rank, was standing at the large desk; beside him an officer in a long cape and a cuirassier helmet; and before him the big, black box of the laws. He had just forced the lock; now he laid back the lid, and took out the book.

"We win, duchess!" he said, "we win! thanks to your marvellous fingers and quick brain," and lifting the helmet from Madeline Spencer's high piled hair, he kissed her ardently.

"Not so, cousin!" said the princess, flinging aside the curtain, "you lose—it is we who win."

For a moment the duke stood staring, too amazed to speak, and Mrs. Spencer, with a sharp cry, fled to his side; then, as he saw the end of his dream, the passing of his hopes, the fierce and fiery spirit, that was always burning deep in his soul, burst through the gyves of studied equanimity his stern will had imposed.

"Not yet!" he cried, "not yet!" and turning quickly he tossed the book into the big chimney behind him where a wood fire burned.

"Come on!" he taunted, flashing out his sword, "come on, cousin Armand!—there's your crown, come get it!"

"Look to the book, Dehra!" the archduke called, and sprang at Lotzen, with a joyful smile.

"At last!" he said, and the fight began.

"Push the book farther into the fire, Madeline!" the duke ordered, the words timed to the beat of the steel.

Dropping her cape Mrs. Spencer, with the easy hand of a practiced fencer, whipped out the sword she was wearing, in her disguise as an officer, and was speeding to obey, when Dehra caught up one of Colonel Moore's swords from the corner and rushed upon her.

"Guard yourself, duchess!" Lotzen cried; and she swung around just in time to throw herself between the princess and the fireplace. Instantly their blades rang together.

The archduke heard, and out of the side of his eye he saw, and his brow wrinkled in anxiety. Spencer was no novice; she, too, he knew, had learned the gentle art of the foils in her youth, and under French maitres, and she was not to be despised even by one so skillful as the regent. He had little doubt that he could kill the duke, but what profit in it if Dehra died.

He hesitated to speak, it might disconcert her, and yet he must warn her.

"Watch her play in tierce," he said, in the most casual tone; and almost shouted for joy, when he heard Dehra's little laugh, and her voice calm and easy.

"Thank you, Armand!" But it very nearly cost him his own life, for in trying to catch a glimpse of her he had loosed his eye-grip, and Lotzen's point shot out viciously, and only a lucky swing aside sent it scraping along the skin instead of through the neck.

"Rather close, cousin!" he remarked.

"The next will be closer," said the duke softly. "Meanwhile, the book burns."

But the archduke did not fall into the trap, and loose the eye-grip a second time.

"Let it burn!" he answered, "I'd rather kill you than save it—but I will do both."

"If you can, cousin! if you can—" and the swords rang on.

And the duke was right—the book was burning, slowly, but burning none the less. His throw had been a trifle short, and instead of being in the heart of the fire it was on the outer edge, where the coals were not so glowing. There the leather and metal cover had protected it for a short while, but now the tiny flames were crawling along the edges, shooting up quick pencils of light

that flared ever higher and more frequent.

And Dehra caught the gleam when it flashed the brightest, and in a fury of desire she drove at Madeline Spencer. Hitherto she had aimed only to disarm her, now it was the book at any price.

But the American woman's defense was still impenetrable; defense was her forte—trick, feint, attack, she knew every one, and always her sword blocked them or turned them aside. But there she had stopped; never once had she herself assumed the offensive. She would take no chance of killing the regent; and she had soon discovered the regent was not aiming to kill her. But now she felt the change, and she knew that it was a matter of only a little while until she would have to yield or be sped. She could hear Lotzen and the archduke, at the other end of the room, still fighting as fiercely as at the beginning—the taunting laugh; the quip given, and returned; the crash of a chair as one of them kicked it away; but all she saw was the flitting steel before her, and the princess' glowing eyes.

Of a sudden there came a burst of voices, the door toward the council chamber was dashed open, and Count Epping rushed in, and all the ministers behind him.

Madeline Spencer drew back and lowered her sword; the princess sprang to the fire-place and rescued the book, smothering the flames with the hearth rug; but Lotzen ground out an oath and flung himself with fresh fierceness at the archduke.

(To Be Continued Next Week.)

FREEDOM.
London Times.
Freedom has its own laws. It may call us to rebel against the law, and prove ourselves intractable to convention, but it imposes its own commandments. There is the perfect law of liberty, and men must obey it if they would be free. That law comes to its fruition in fellowship with others and with God. Men cannot attain freedom in solitude. Liberty must be shared. He who renounces the claims of his fellow-men on his time, his money, his effort, in the desire to be free from all demands but those of his own wishes and interests, finds himself held captive within the narrow prison of his own selfishness. In the effort to be free from duty's claim, he has been sold to the galling and degrading servitude of a self.

Record Sailfish Catch.
From the Key West Citizen.
The largest sailfish to be caught in Florida waters was captured yesterday at the edge of the Gulf stream about five miles from this city by Captains Fred and Paul Demerit of this city. The captured fish weighed 26 pounds and measured 7 feet, 9 inches.
Walkers.
From the Los Angeles Times.
Bishop Rodman Armstrong said in a Washington address:
"The party system is perhaps inevitable. No so a mean and rancorous party spirit."
"A mean and rancorous partisan saw a policeman of the opposite party conscientiously pacing his beat in the small hours of the night."
"Look at that somnambulist, snarled the partisan. 'I'll have him freed!'"

Pulling Himself Together.
As usual, Rastus Jefferson couldn't find his clothes and was pestering his mother as to their whereabouts. Finally his Sunday attire was complete except for shoes and stockings. "Ma," he whined, "do you all know where mah shoes and stockin's am?" "Rastus," said his mother with a deadly calm, "yo' is de goofiest thingest chile I ever seen. Yo' shoes am in de kitchen and yo' stockin's is undah de bed and yo' feet am on yo'. Now see if you all can mingle them."

The postmaster at Blackwell, Okla., holds the record of champion twine saver among the government's thousands of postal workers, who have been urged to cut down requisitions by using over again the string on paper incoming mail is wrapped. Tower City, Pa., put up the record that it had requisitioned no twine in several years, and this was passed aside by several others, among them being Marshallville, Ga., which carried it to 30 years. Now comes the Oklahoma postmaster who says clerks, carriers and charwomen work continually and are experts at winding up the twine, and that they are the twine-tyingest bunch in the United States.

A member of the forestry service states that near Champaign, Ill., there exists an isolated oak grove, about three miles long by one mile broad, and that this is indeed a peculiar phenomenon. It is known as Burr Oak grove and is surrounded on all sides by open prairie, being situated at a considerable distance from the nearest stream, whereas all the other forest tracts in central Illinois lie along the larger water courses. It is believed from the character of the trees in the grove that it "migrated" into its position from the north-east. It lies on a large glacial moraine, formerly, it is believed, covered with similar trees, and has been protected from forest fires, which have destroyed the remainder of the wooded area, by the water standing in the low grounds scattered throughout the grove.

Today the most sought after things of money value in Europe are American bills. Nearly every outgoing ship, for north European ports says a report from New York, carries American paper money most of it being \$1, \$2, \$5 and \$10 bills. In Berlin a premium of 65 per cent is being paid for American bank notes over what is given for a New York draft.

Workmen are carrying out repairs to the masonry at the very summit of Big Ben, the great Westminster clock tower in London, which is more than 300 feet high. A large Tudor rose recently fell from the highest point of the spire, and to reach the spot it was necessary to erect a scaffold 100 feet above the highest gallery. It was then found that five other roses were loose, and these have been taken down, repaired and refixed.

TAFT'S ANNUITY OF \$10,000 IS TARGET

Socialists Demand Impeachment or Resignation From High Bench.

Chicago, April 30 (A. P.)—The national executive committee of the socialist party announced today that it had adopted resolutions urging the resignation or impeachment of William Howard Taft, chief justice of the United States, because of his continued acceptance of a \$10,000 annuity from the late Andrew Carnegie.

"Said William Howard Taft has continued to accept said annuity since his appointment to the supreme court of the United States," said the resolution, "and the acceptance of this annuity coming indirectly from the steel trust, the most powerful and predatory corporation in the United States, is not only unethical but a menace to the integrity of our courts and detrimental to the best interests of the American people."

The resolution concluded with a demand "that congress take steps to secure his resignation or impeachment."

WEIRD VANISHING OF MAN PROBED

Evidence Points to Murder of Retired Attorney, Distant Relative of Abraham Lincoln.

Universal Service.
Aurora, Ill., April 30.—Warren J. Lincoln, retired attorney and distant relative of Abraham Lincoln, is believed to have been mysteriously slain and the body hidden. Evidence of the crime was revealed early Monday when the Lincoln cottage was found deserted.

After 15 hours of investigation, here is what the authorities learned: Mr. Lincoln retired Sunday night. His bed was empty Monday morning, the room in disorder and there were indications that a body had been dragged through the bedroom window.

An Indian club, the probable instrument of death, was found in a green house, 300 feet from the house. A whisky bottle was near the club, both bloodstained.

Find Nightshirt, Glove.
Mr. Lincoln's nightshirt, his night cap and a woman's glove, tied in a bundle, were fished from an old cistern.

Mr. Lincoln had separated from his wife and brought suit for a divorce a month ago.

Three persons were being sought by the authorities Monday night. They are:

Mrs. Lina Lincoln, the estranged wife.
Byron Shoup, her brother.

A "sandy haired stranger" seen lurking around the green house.

Death Threats Reported.
Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln were married in 1912, and according to neighbors, had quarreled frequently during the last few years. They separated last January. Mrs. Lincoln is said to have threatened her husband with death if he sued for divorce. He filed a suit a month ago charging cruelty.

Byron Shoup, her brother, had made his home with the couple and it is said to have threatened to "beat him up" if Mr. Lincoln sued for divorce.

The "sandy haired stranger" was brought into the case after John Lincoln, 20 years old, a son of Mr. Lincoln by a previous marriage, was taken into custody in Chicago late Monday. He is said to have told the authorities about the stranger having been seen at the green house.

Brother Discovers Crime.
Mr. Lincoln established the green house in partnership with his brother, Edward, after he quit practicing law several years ago. It was Edward Lincoln, who discovered the crime and notified the police.

The woman's glove found in the cistern was identified by Marie Kine, a neighbor girl, who had taken care of the house for Mr. Lincoln. She had left it in the cottage when she quit work Saturday night, she said.

RUSSIA DEMANDS SEAT AT LAUSANNE GATHERING

Lausanne, April 30 (A. P.)—An official protest against "Russia being arbitrarily kept out of the conference" was sent to the Near East peace conference today by M. Verovsky, the soviet representative here. He declared such a decision was indirect violation of the terms of the invitation sent to Russia by Great Britain, France and Italy, preceding the first Lausanne conference on November 14, 1922.

Verovsky in his protest says Russia cannot accept the ultimatum of the conference that she must sign the convention fixing the status of the Turkish straits before being admitted to the conference.

SETTLEMENT SATURDAY.

Washington, April 30.—The United States and Great Britain will reach a final agreement on the debt settlement at a conference here Saturday, Secretary of the Treasury Mellon indicated Monday.

JAPS SEND DELEGATES.

Tokio, April 30 (A. P.)—The Japan league of peace has decided to send five representatives to the International Educational conference which will be held in Oakland, Cal., from June 27 to July 6.

Recent action by London music hall managers in placing a ban on colored jazz orchestras from the United States should help relieve the shortage of negro cotton field workers in the southern states.

IN DEFENCE OF THE TRUTH

BY THE REV. H. C. HENGELL, PH. D.

Reprinted from the Capital Times of Madison, Wis.

In the past I have often urged, in written articles and lectures, the sympathetic consideration of justice to the worker. The conviction has been growing upon me recently that the whole institution of private capital is becoming unjustly discredited in the mind of the public in general and of employees in particular by the unfair propaganda of many prominent self-styled "progressive" politicians whose aim is to ride into power by heading an agitation to nationalize the railroads and other big industries of the country. Not only private capital, but labor as well, that is to say, the whole nation, is in need of friends and defenders against these unscrupulous agitators, among whom are even a few United States senators.

These agitators deceive the people both by flattery and by partly ignorant and partly dishonest misrepresentation of facts.

They flatter the dear people by pretending to work for the operation of the railroads, the mines and other big industries by the people themselves. That seems to imply the extension of more and more power to the people. It is called "progressive."

The progressive politicians tender rather dubious flattery to the people, however, in assuming that the latter do not perceive that the transfer of industry from private owners to the public really means the management of industry by the politicians. Private capitalists have their faults, but they are paragons of efficiency in serving the public compared to the majority of politicians. The latter are too lazy or incompetent to care properly for the streets and alleys of a small city like Madison.

Public ownership and operation of the railroads and of other big industries would indeed be a calamity in America, where professional politicians are grounded in a tradition of graft and incompetency. If the politicians of today, given authority and a mandate from the people, are so grossly incompetent in the business of government that they cannot keep the streets and alleys in proper order, how can they be expected to manage competently and economically the greatest highways of the country, the railroads? It is not really a question of public or private ownership of the railroads, but of public or private management of the railroads. Under public ownership and operation the politicians would do the managing, or rather mismanaging, and the public would be compelled to pay for the economic waste incurred by men who traditionally do not know or care enough about business to run a peanut stand successfully.

The senatorial and other demagogues in our American political life who are coveting their neighbor's goods, are not only attempting to flatter the people into the extravagance of public ownership, but they are deliberately misrepresenting the facts regarding the railroads and other big industries. Many of them are shameless liars in their propaganda for a socialism in which they hope to be dictators and bosses. A few examples of such lying will suffice to justify my rather blunt statement.

We are constantly told that the Esch-Cummings act "guarantees" the railroads a return of 5% per cent per annum. Since August 31, 1920, there has been no guaranteed return of any

per cent to any railroad in the country. If, in the face of constant governmental regulation and revision of rates and wages any railroad is so marvelously well managed as to be able to show a net return of 5% per cent with which to pay interest on its bonds, etc., it is, under the Esch-Cummings act, entitled to the 5% per cent, but no more, no matter how efficiently it may be managed. Thus, while the Esch-Cummings act limits the possible net earnings of the railroads to a maximum of 5% per cent, it no more guarantees anything to the railroads than the Volstead law guarantees one-half of one per cent alcohol to the users of near beer.

We are further told that the railroad stocks are largely "water" and that the poor, long-suffering public is expected to guarantee 5% per cent return to this "water." This charge is also false.

The physical valuation, without reference to stocks or bonds (capitalization), made under the LaFollette valuation law of 1913, plus actual-cash-investments made since, less depreciation, is greater than their capitalization by millions of dollars. In other words, there is no room for the alleged "water" in the railroads even under the Eighteenth amendment.

It may be true that shady deals in over-capitalization (watering) of railroad securities may be proved in some notorious instances, but these cases should be specifically named and condemned without involving all the railroads. It is unjust to make sweeping generalization preparing to depreciate the value of railroad securities to the value of German marks, a process which amounts to ruthless confiscation of the property of railroad stock and bond holders. Russian sovietism goes no further than this.

A further lie against the railroads that deserves to be nailed is the charge of excessive freight rates, of rates so high as to rob the farmer and other producers and the consumer alike.

Records show that the average freight rates on western railroads are only about 40 per cent higher than they were seven years ago, while wages are 80 per cent; taxes 90 per cent; fuel 100 per cent higher than they were at that time. Stories of freight rates higher than the total price received for wheat, etc., are pure buncombe. In January, 1923, wheat was \$1.25 a bushel at Minneapolis, that is, 40 cents higher than in 1913. The freight rate from points as far as South Dakota was only four to five cents higher than in 1913.

I hold no brief for the railroads or for any other industry, but I love fair play and detest unfair propaganda. I am a Catholic priest, but I write neither as a priest nor as a Catholic, but as an American Citizen who views with alarm the creation of prejudice and class hatred by men and organizations, not recognized as socialists or communists, but imbued with the same destructive philosophy, and pursuing the same ruthless methods. Ignorant or malicious, they are endangering American ideals of freedom of opportunity in favor of the servile state in which citizens in business as well as politicians, will be the prey of scheming politicians.—Advertisement.

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