

LOS ANGELES MAN CLAIMS RIGHT TO THRONE OF POLAND

Col. John Sobieski, Once Soldier of Fortune, Direct Descendant of Thaddeus of Warsaw.

SAYS INFANT GRANDSON IS ROYAL HEIR

Interesting Predicament of a California Youngster and the Romantic Life Story of His Grandfather—Driven from Austria by Maximilian, He Lived to Command Firing Party That Ended the Career of His One-Time Persecutor.

Los Angeles, Cal.—Sucking his bare pink toes and calling aloud for the royal nursing bottle, the rightful future king of Poland lies in his cradle in a cottage in the West Adams street district serenely unconscious of the fact that a battle of documents and family trees is raging over his crown and estates.

Little does he care that a rude Chicago editor has denied the claim that he is the direct descendant of Thaddeus of Warsaw and heir to a vast confiscated estate—not to mention the shattered Polish throne.

His fond father is L. S. Gilhausen, a clerk in the First National bank. His grandfather is Colonel John Sobieski, the well-known temperance lecturer—the last of the illustrious line of John III, who rescued Europe from the Turks.

From a life of quiet retirement, this grandfather and grandchild have burst suddenly into national fame.

Recently a Polish editor named Slemiradski came into print in the Chicago Record-Herald denouncing Colonel Sobieski as an impostor, or practically that. He denies Colonel Sobieski's claim to direct descent by the eldest-son-of-the-eldest-son route from King John III, the adored national hero of Poland—again not to mention the throne and the great estates.

This editor with a name like a sneeze claims that the last genuine Sobieski died over a century and a half ago. He calls upon Sobieski of Los Angeles to bring forward his



Mrs. L. S. Gilhausen.

proofs of descent. He suggests that his documents and proofs be submitted to the Imperial Academy of Science at Cracow.

He may be somewhat chagrined to learn that the paper containing his defy has come into the hands of Colonel Sobieski, who has promptly accepted the challenge. He has written to the Chicago Record-Herald and to Editor Slemiradski that he will be pleased to leave the question to the institution of learning named in the defy if it can be shown that it is a university of national importance and standing in Poland. Colonel Sobieski confesses that he has never heard of it.

"It is only for my honor that I am preparing these documents," said Colonel Sobieski to the writer.

He Wants No Throne.

"There is no throne in Poland. If there were one and it were offered to me, I give you my word I should refuse it."

The eyes of the old nobleman flashed as he added:

"Rather would I go to the cradle and strangle that little baby as he

lies there than ever to allow him to ascend any throne. Yes, my memories of monarchy are as bitter as that."

His memories of monarchy cannot, indeed, be very happy. This gentle old nobleman who lives so quietly in Los Angeles saw his father led away to be slaughtered by Russian soldiers after long confinement in a prison so vile a dog could not have lived in it; saw his mother driven away from home almost a pauper; saw her driven like an outcast from country to country until she died an unhappy exile.

No wonder his eyes flash.

The intricate question of his right to that noble ancestry will be considered below. The man's own life is so interesting, so thrilling and romantic that it rightly takes precedence over family trees.

Even his nearest neighbors in the pleasant neighborhood of West Adams street little dream that this sunny old gentleman has lived the wild life of a soldier of fortune.

He commanded the reserve firing party that executed the ill-fated Emperor Maximilian in Mexico. It was his revolver that sent a shot crashing into the ear of the emperor after he had fallen wounded at the first unskilled volley.

He was an eyewitness to the famous battle of the Monitor and Merrimac; led a distinguished and sensational career in the regular army; took part in the famous expedition against the Mormons; was under fire 426 times during the civil war—our own civil war, not Poland's. Lastly, he became a soldier of fortune in Mexico—in the Mexican war for independence.

His Remarkable Life.

It was there that fate chose him as one of the firing party, where he wiped out an old score against an emperor, avenging the cruelty of his mother's banishment.

Follows the briefest possible glance at his remarkable life:

He was born in 1842 in Warsaw, being the sixth in line of descent from the great warrior monarch of Poland, John III. His father was John Sobieski, who lost his life in 1848 in the great Polish rebellion.

He says one of his earliest recollections of childhood is of a sleigh-ride and the gay trappings of a Cossack soldier who conveyed his mother and himself to say goodbye to his father—about to be executed.

His father had been captured by the Russian army and had been confined in a vile Russian prison, crawling with vermin, for 13 months.

Before they were allowed to see the doomed husband and father, the young mother was taken before the Russian viceroy, who offered to allow her to retain her estates and honors if she would give up her son—the last Sobieski—to be sent to the Russian capital and there brought up as a loyal subject of the Czar.

Banished by Maximilian.

She proudly refused, and chose banishment, poverty and misery. She bade her husband good-by, and he was shot down the next day. At the same time her father—and brother were killed.

Everywhere went the exiles, ordered out by the authorities; driven out of Austria, Prussia and Italy. They were driven from Italy by the Austrian viceroy, Maximilian—afterward the emperor of Mexico. They took refuge in England at last. The mother died and the son was adopted into the family of a Polish professor, who had been an instructor at the United States naval academy at Annapolis. When the United States ships of war visited Liverpool the cadets used to visit their old professor. One of them persuaded Sobieski to stow away in the old frigate Constellation and come to America.

He was then only a little fellow 12 years old, but managed to enlist in the United States army as a bugler. He enlisted in 1855, and two years afterward was ordered out with the troops that went the desperate journey across the plains to fight the

Many of the young officers under whom he served on that expedition afterward became famous in the civil war—Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston, then a colonel; Capt. Hancock, afterward the northern general; Col. Alexander, who became Lee's chief of staff; Fitz John Porter, Maj. Beauregard, Capt. J. B. Magruder, afterward a southern general, was commander of young Sobieski's battery.

Witnessed Stirring Scenes.

When the war was getting ready to break, young Sobieski's battery was ordered recruited to its full strength and the young Pole was ordered to New York and Washington on recruiting duty, witnessing the inauguration of Lincoln, the closing debates in the senate and many other stirring scenes.

He went all through the civil war and was terribly wounded the first day of the battle of Gettysburg. It was his privilege to be an eyewitness to the most dramatic battle in naval history, the first fight of the ironclads, the fight between the Merrimac and the Monitor.

After the war he went into Mexico and began another fight for a people's freedom. He lived the hunted life of a guerrilla warrior, eating rattlesnakes and living a precarious life off the country. He was commissioned a colonel. He seemed to have a charmed life. He came through a hundred thrilling escapades unhurt—once being the only man of an entire command to survive.

After the imprisonment of Emperor Maximilian, Col. Sobieski became one of the jailers of that Austrian potentate who had driven the two pitiful refugees—Sobieski and his widowed young mother—from Italy. He recalled that incident to the emperor's mind one day in prison.

"Well, time rounds up all things," said the unhappy prisoner.

Maximilian's Execution.

The old Polish nobleman tells of the tragic incident of history—the execution of the emperor—in simple soldier fashion. In writing an account of it for his biography he says:

"The last three or four days of Maximilian's life were spent almost wholly with the priest. On the morning of the execution, June 19, 1867—a bright, beautiful morning—he was taken out of the old convent where he was captured and where he had lived during the time he was in our custody, and placed in an ambulance and driven outside of the walls of the city near an old fortress, where the execution took place.

"Arriving on the grounds, the troops were formed in line, the doomed men were placed in position, Maximilian

one of the firing party, directing them to take good aim.

"The firing party was now ordered to advance, make ready, aim, fire! Strange as it may seem, Maximilian fell mortally wounded, only exclaiming as he fell: 'Oh, my God! my God!' At once the commander of the reserve firing party (Sobieski himself) ordered one of the men from his own party to advance, and drawing his own revolver, ordered the soldier to put it to the ear of the archduke and fire. He did so, and the career of the archduke was ended."

Col. Sobieski's long subsequent career as lawyer and temperance lecturer is well known. He had one son who would have perpetuated the name but he died while a young child. His one daughter married Mr. Gilhausen, of Los Angeles. To them a little son has lately been born.

Sees End of All Throns.

So the last of the Sobieskis is a Gilhausen.

After this long and exciting career of adventure, Col. Sobieski is a calm, handsome, gentle old man—the soul of courtesy. Aside from his bitterness against monarchies whose tyrannies have brought him such misery, he has other reasons for not caring anything about the right to the empty throne to Poland.

"Before you are a middle-aged man," he said to the writer, "every throne in Europe will be swept away in a vast bloodless revolution."

That is the startling theory of the last Sobieski.

He is making a vigorous retort to Editor Slemiradski merely to defend his honor.

Slemiradski claims that there is not a mention in history of any Sobieski in recent times. He wants to know why no Sobieski came forward as a candidate for king at the election of King Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski in 1764 if the family still existed. He denies the execution of Sobieski's father, saying that history has no mention of it, and points out that it would have made the nation thrill.

He makes a great point of the fact that the Almanach de Gotha makes no mention of any living descendants of John III.

No Sobieski Dynasty.

In reply, Col. Sobieski points out many places wherein the Polish editor contradicts himself; he then proceeds. "He (the editor) declares that the Almanach de Gotha has not got me on the list. I could not presume under any circumstances to think that my name would appear in that distinguished almanac, as it is a register exclusively devoted to dynasties. I do not claim to be of any Sobieski dynasty.

"In the first place there was no



standing on the right of the firing party. The firing party consisted of 36 men, formed into two companies, six to each of the doomed men. (Two traitorous generals were executed at the same time.)

"One in each firing party of six had a blank cartridge. There had been a sharp rivalry for the honor of belonging to the firing party. I was selected to command the reserve firing party. When everything was ready each of the men was asked if he had anything to say.

Fate Gives Deferred Revenge.

"Maximilian, speaking in Spanish, said in substance that he loved Mexico and desired its welfare; and if shedding his blood would be the means of bringing peace and happiness to the distracted country he was willing to die. He asked that the commander of the firing party advance to him, and he delivered to that officer six pieces of gold which is equivalent to about ten dollars of our money. He ordered a piece of gold to be delivered to each

Sobieski dynasty. The definition of dynasty is a family of kings. Poland in the days of John III, was an aristocratic republic and elective monarchy. There is a tradition that comes down, however, that when the elective system was abolished by the new constitution in 1791 it was the general understanding that the Sobieski family was to be the royal family. The constitution was only prevented from going into force by the conquest of Poland."

Col. Sobieski denies that the Sobieskis disappeared from Polish history; he says they were in every fight for Polish liberty.

"Regarding the charge that the execution of a Sobieski (his father) would have made a thrill had it really occurred," he says; "Nicholas I. had a wonderfully effective method of quieting thrills, or at least the manifestation of them."

Col. Sobieski has instructed his Chicago attorney to confer with the Polish editor regarding the submission of the case to Cracow university.

DIVISION OF THE PROMISED LAND

The Story of a Hero and His Bride.

AN INCIDENT IN THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN BY THE HEBREW PEOPLE.

By the "Highway and Byway" Preacher

(Copyright, 1907, by the Author, W. R. Edson.)

Scripture Authority:—Joshua 15: 13-19.

SERMONETTE.

This story of Othniel and Achsah is one of the many beautiful romances found in God's Word. True marriages, it has been said, are made in heaven, and certainly the Bible gives evidence in its record of the human race of God's interest and share in the closest tie which can draw two hearts and lives together—that of marriage.

It is evident from God's spoken word when he created man and woman he gave them to each other that he intended them to be one in thought and purpose and aim, that to so bear life's burdens together, and most and best of all, establish the home and raise a family about them.

But too many men and women of to-day have drifted far from the Divine thought and plan for the wedded life. The unhappy homes and the records of divorce courts hear their sad witness to the havoc which selfishness and sin have wrought. No longer does there prevail the same sacredness to the marriage vow. Engagements are a thoughtless diversion, a momentary fancy to be entered into lightly and to be cast aside and broken ruthlessly if whim or caprice so prompt. Marriages are hastily contracted, or with that shallowness of purpose which never so much as entertains the faintest intention of home making and the rearing of a family.

And when the very thought and purpose of God is thus ruthlessly and sinfully cast aside, and man and woman enter into relations which are not sanctified with holy purposes and desires what can be expected of the ultimate outcome?

It has been said, and well said, that the greatest danger which this country faces to-day is the destruction of the home life of the nation. What can be the stamina of the coming generation of men and women, if they are not to have the nurture and training of the pure home atmosphere? How the moral standards of the coming men and women must be lowered if they are reared in the fetid atmosphere of all kinds of social excesses and frivolities, and are cursed with the decrees of the divorce courts. But it is not so where God has a share in the romance, and joins two hearts in loving helpful union.

THE STORY.

THE first one to greet Caleb as he returned with his men victorious from the assault upon Hebron was his young and beautiful daughter Achsah. She had been the last one to bid him God-speed as he had departed on the expedition against the strong-walled city of the sons of Anak, and her words of faith and assurance that God would give him the victory had cheered and strengthened him in all the fierce conflict of the days that had followed, and while he had been warring on the city, Achsah had kept watch for his return, and that morning had gone out along the pathway which led from her home to the high knoll which looked out over the valley through which her father would pass. It had been five days now since his departure, and she felt he must return that day, for he had said as he waved her a last good-by that he would be back surely in four days, and here the fifth day was nearly half gone.

"Can it be that disaster has come to him?" she asked herself, as she looked out across the valley and sought to penetrate the rugged pathway that led up into the rocky heights where Hebron was situated. "No," she exclaimed, half guiltily, because of the doubt that had crept into her heart. "No, that cannot be, for did not God promise him this city as an inheritance? He carries that he may win a yet greater victory. But he will surely come to-day," she added, as she settled herself at the foot of a rock comfortably and gave herself up to joyous anticipation.

When the division of the land had been made under the direction of Joshua, she had felt somewhat rebellious that such difficult portion should be given to her father. "Why," she had asked, petulantly, "did they not give you inheritance in the fruitful valley of the Jordan? You have fought hard and served long in behalf of Israel, is it not time that an easy portion were given you?" And her father had drawn her close to his side and had retold to her all the thrilling early history of Israel. How as one of the spies he had declared that they were able to overcome the strong city of Anakim, and that God had promised that city and the country round as his inheritance. "And do I need an easy portion?" he had

exclaimed, "while yet my vigor is unabated and my courage still strong?" and he had stretched himself to his full height, and had drawn her up in his powerful arms, and held her laughingly before him while he demanded answer.

And she had looked into his eyes and had caught the spirit of his courage and faith. From that moment she entered into his plans for the expedition against Hebron, and had been, as we have said, the last one to say good-by, and she was keeping her vigil there at her lookout post as she called it, that she might be the first to bid him welcome home and rejoice over his victory.

"I am glad Othniel went with him," she said to herself, and at the mention of the name the color stole into her face, "for there is no one father depends more upon in difficulty and danger than he. Yes," she added, after a few moments' pause, "had it not been for his enthusiasm and help, father would not have had enough men to carry out the expedition. Oh, he is so strong, and noble, and brave," and she gave herself up to happy reverie from which she was suddenly aroused by the note of a horn, and looking up quickly she saw coming across the valley below her father and his warriors.

Springing to her feet, she sped down the pathway and was soon clasped in his arms, who hastened forward to meet her, while his men stood watching the happy reunion.

"And you took the city, father?" Achsah asked, eagerly.

"Yes, daughter, and I would have gone against Kirjath-sepher, also, had I not known that you would be anxious about my return."

And Caleb went on to tell her of this second stronghold of the enemy, and how its capture was necessary before they could enjoy the fruits of their victory over Hebron.

Achsah pursed up her pretty lips, and a frown settled upon her brow.

"Could not I have waited? Did not I know that God was with you? Cannot I be brave at home while you are bravely fighting the enemy?" she asked, resentment and disappointment sounding in her voice.

"Well spoken, my brave little girl," exclaimed the father, "I am half tempted to go back even now and lay siege to the city. What say you, men?" he asked, turning to his men.

A look of disappointment passed over their faces at these words, for they were all eager to get home again after their fatigue and danger of the past few days. Caleb noted the look and then glancing at his daughter's animated face, a sudden inspiration came to him, and turning to his men, he said:

"He that smiteth Kirjath-sepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah, my daughter, to wife."

Instantly a half dozen men sprang forward, and as Achsah stole a shy glance over her father's shoulder, she saw that Othniel was among the number.

During the days which followed Achsah's heart was torn by its conflict of hopes and fears. What if Othniel did not take the city, and the pledge of her father should give her to another? Oh, it could not be, for there was no more daring and brave a fighter than he. And she prayed that fortune might favor his efforts.

And in the meantime, Othniel, nerved by the memory of that shy, beautiful face, pushed forward, resting neither day nor night as he worked out his bold plot for the gaining of the inner walls of the city. This he succeeded in doing, and when he had thrown open the gates of the city, he found his brethren ready to aid him in the conquest of the city. And so it was that while Achsah kept her vigil again at the lookout post, Othniel overthrew the city and turned his face homeward.

Achsah saw him coming at the head of his men and, after the first swift glance of joy, she fled in maidenly modesty towards home, but not before Othniel's quick eye had caught the flutter of her robe in the bright sunlight, and, running swiftly by a short cut, he reached a point in her pathway before her.

"Ah! love, you cannot escape me!" he exclaimed, as he sprang from his hiding place and folded her in his arms.

"Oh, how you frightened me!" she cried. "I thought you were back with your men."

"But he who taketh the quarry, doth it by stealth," he rejoined, with a laugh. "Twas thus I captured Kirjath-sepher, and 'tis thus I have taken thee."

Believes in Army Y. M. C. A.

Lord Roberts has interested himself in the extension of the army Y. M. C. A.'s in Canada, which he has just indorsed in these words: "I consider that these associations are doing a great service to the army; that their methods are thoroughly practical and fully serve the purposes for which they are devised, namely, to afford the men an opportunity to occupy their spare time reasonably and to their own advantage."

Officeholder's Gratitude in Korea.

A Korean who was appointed tax collector by the late Minister of Yi Keuntak has determined out of gratitude for this great favor to repair the minister's summer house at considerable expense.—Korea Daily News.

Nation Being Educated.

Ninety-two per cent of the children in Japan are in school. Attendance is compulsory between the ages of 8 and 14. Three languages are taught, Japanese, Chinese and English.