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DAILY EDITION.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 27

WILL McBRIE ACCEPT?

Rumor is again rife that Premier McBride is to be offered a seat in the Federal Cabinet. Rumor even goes further. It says that all arrangements have been made for Premier McBride's acceptance of the post, and namely the reward that Mr. Stevens, the member-elect for Vancouver, is to receive for vacating his seat to allow Mr. McBride to enter the Ottawa House. It looks as if British Columbia is soon to lose her "picturesque Premier."

Many observers thought that Mr. McBride had forfeited his chance of entering the Federal Cabinet by declining to enter the Federal lists. Possibly in Mr. Borden's estimation, caution is esteemed a political virtue. Apparently Hon. Robert Rogers' stock did not go down at Ottawa as a consequence of his reconsidering his intention to contest the Winnipeg seat. That which is not considered a vice in the case of the Manitoba Minister of Public Works, might very well be considered a virtue in the case of the Premier of British Columbia.

Certainly the gods were on Mr. Borden's side, when Premier McBride announced that he would not enter the Federal fight. How different might have been the interpretation of the national turnover had Mr. McBride entered the field. Mr. McBride with his record for having changed the political complexion of British Columbia would then have received most of the credit for the change in the political complexion of the Dominion. Fortune would have crowned his brows. The Premiership of Canada would have been his, and many a Conservative politician would have visited the woodshed and kicked himself for not getting rid of Borden before.

In these things the public judges unfairly. Men go to victory on the crest of the wave more frequently than by fighting and conquering the tide. Mr. McBride was Fortune's favorite when the popular wave threw him into the leadership of an almost solidly Conservative Legislature two years ago. Fortune gave him another and a greater chance two months ago but he did not take it. Premier McBride must be angry with himself now for not accepting her invitation. It is not likely that she will repeat it. But all lovers of justice must feel glad that the coquette had to return and bestow her favors on Mr. Borden. It would have been tragic in its irony, if his fifteen years of toil and waiting had gone unrewarded, and the jade had gone off arm in arm to the altar with his younger, more picturesque but less deserving rival.

If the Fates have decreed that Richard McBride is to enter Federal politics, then it is fit and proper that he enter as a subordinate to Mr. Borden, who has fully earned his title to the Premiership. Whether Mr. McBride will consent to accept a portfolio under Mr. Borden remains to be seen. The reports from Victoria and Vancouver suggest that he is quite willing if the offer is made.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

As an example of patriotism grown little, nothing could be more paltry than Alderman Clayton's objection on patriotic grounds to loaning the city's Union Jack for the McTavish-Craig nuptials.

If the News could have its way, it would present every young couple with a house and lot as a wedding gift, and defend the transaction on economic grounds as intelligent patriotism.

But judged merely for the standpoint of the other kind of patriotism, our "heaven-born one" made a bad blunder when he would have the city of Prince Rupert deny the loan of its Union Jack to the wedding of the grandson of Sir James Douglas, our greatest patriot.

Alderman Clayton once told a Prince Rupert audience that he was not a British born subject, so he is to be excused for knowing little of British Columbian history. For his future guidance our foreign born patriot from Detroit, Michigan, is informed that Sir James Douglas was the representative of the British Crown in the colony of Vancouver Island, and the First Lieutenant Governor of the Province of British Columbia. It would have been an insult to the memory of a great and patriotic gentleman to have refused the use of the Union Jack at his grandson's wedding.

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A TENDERFOOT'S WOOING

By Clive Phillips Wolley

(AUTHOR OF GOLD, GOLD IN CARIBOO, ETC.)

CHAPTER XIV.

It seemed to the doctor that his pace was suddenly accelerated. In his dream flight he began to move with quite phenomenal rapidity. In all previous expeditions of the kind, the motion had been a steady sailing, so steady that if he had not seen the steeples and towers going by below him, he would have considered himself absolutely stationary in space. But now he was going at a great speed and jerkily. Yes, certainly jerkily, and the atmosphere was becoming distinctly colder. He had entered a stratum of cold air. Ah, yes, that must be it. He was getting higher; he was in fact rocketing. That was it, he reflected. Quite natural, he reflected. You hit a bird in the head and it rockets. The whiskey has hit me in the head and it rockets. Certainly I am rocketing.

But as his thoughts grew less vague his body grew more and more cold. The spirit was dying out in his blood, and his tightly bound extremities were beginning to freeze.

He became conscious that he was no longer in the streets of Soda Creek. He could hear horses' feet and gravel which rattled and slid beneath them, and a jerk which threw him heavily upon his horse's neck woke him to the fact that he was riding down an extremely steep incline into a grey sea of icy vapor.

It had been said that Doctor Protheroe was one of those men who had the faculty of becoming drunk a dozen times in the twenty-four hours. His recovery from the effects of drink was as rapid as his lapse into drunkenness and now his brain began to work again almost normally.

He realized that he was riding tied in his saddle, his arms pinioned and his mouth gagged, and that someone, also riding, was leading his horse along the edge of a grey flood from which came a roar and an incessant grinding sound. Dr. Protheroe's earliest impression of a river was the union of a dozen tiny springs which well up from the earth's heart amongst meadow sweet and fritillaries, in his native Wiltshire, or at the wildest a junction of little brown rills which wind chattering to their meeting place through the purple heather of that which English folk call a mountain, and so gathered and united, wander on, picking up a little friend here and another more fully grown further on, until together they turn a miller's wheel or dream through lush hay fields to the sea.

But the Fraser, by which that silent figure led him, is not a river of this kind. Born of the snows in that barren land where earth's ribs show above the last of the black pines, the Fraser is bitter and savage from its birth. There are no lush grass lands for it to flow through, no miller's wheels for it to turn.

Its course is through sand and gravel; that it is gold gravel makes it no more beautiful; past grey benches stained in leopards patches by vivid metallic colors. It has nothing to do with farming until, weary of life and retired from business, it reaches its muddy delta, where it farms because it is too feeble to do anything else.

Its life's work was mining. It is the great sluice box of northern British Columbia, the great water power which eats away the gold-bearing rocks, which builds the sand bars and feeds them year by year with much fine gold, which tempts the strongest of our men with the possibility of quickly earned wealth, and having sucked their lives out of them, leaves them stranded in such back waters as Soda Creek.

The banks of it under which Jim Combe led the doctor's stumbling horse, were sheer cliffs of gravel, the raw edges of a great earth wound, through which the river tore its course, and the brim of it was no place of primroses, but a fringe of great boulders, too heavy even for its strong waters to move, and here and there the bones of a stranded pine.

Far overhead the two could see a few tall cedars, towering in the night mist, and behind them, up stream, the red light which marked the centre of such life as there was in Soda Creek.

When a cable crossed the river they paused, and Jim dismounting went down to the water's edge. The ferry was there, moored to the bank, the ice-cakes gathering round it as it lay, but there was no boatman by it, and the little shack in which he sheltered was empty. Jim got into the ferry and tried to move it, but the chain of it was secured by a great padlock. It was kept for the public's convenience and the ferryman's profit, and the ferryman had gone.

"You might as well untie my hands whilst you are about it. They are nearly frozen already," said Protheroe in a matter-of-fact tone.

Jim looked at him in some surprise. The sobering effect of the ride had been even greater than he had anticipated.

"I guess you can sit on then by yourself," he remarked, unfastening the rope which bound his wrists. "Steady! Don't fall off as you ride back, and don't try any monkey tricks with me. It ain't worth it," and then, reassured by the doctor's appearance, he let his hands go.

"Now you might as well ride back and finish the night with your pals. Sorry I troubled you."

But the doctor remained sitting where he was.

"You ain't afraid of finding your way, are you?" asked Combe. "They'll be here pretty soon now, if they don't fall in and get drowned. I'm not coming along. Soda Creek might not be healthy for me just now."

Still the doctor sat where he was, stretching his cramped legs, feeling the stiffened muscles of his arms, swaying a little in his saddle, and looking at Combe.

"You must have wanted me pretty badly," he said at length, and there was no trace of anger in his voice, no protest against his attempted abduction.

"Guess I did, or I shouldn't have took you."

"What is it? A woman? You aren't married?"

Jim laughed a hard laugh.

"What is it then? You aren't drunk or anything?"

"Ain't I? That new tenderfoot, Anstruther, has broke himself up pretty badly. Miss Clifford is nursing him and wants a doctor."

"Ah!" grunted the doctor, and whistled a strange hollow whistle like that of a fog horn. It was a curious trick he had on occasions of insight. He knew the Risky Ranch pretty well, though he was no favorite there, and he knew its internal history, and could have made three guesses about Miss Clifford and Jim Combe, and even about Mr. Anstruther. The ways of the world are very much alike everywhere, and doctors know them better than most men.

"What is the matter with Anstruther?"

"Ribs broke, two or three, and may be something worse inside."

"Will he get over that without my assistance or die. Does it matter?"

Jim looked at him stupidly.

"No, I don't know as it does matter a whole heap. I rode that devil here in a day and a night to get you. He wasn't broke when we left, and he pointed to the weary roan. "I've lied to poor old Bill; I've stolen a horse and done my best to steal a man. I don't suppose it does matter," and he sat down on one side of the boulders whilst the hue and cry came nearer. He could see their lanterns flashing row like drunken stars along the edge of the bank not half a mile away.

"If you had told me that it was for a woman I would have come."

"But it wasn't."

"No?" hesitating questioningly on the monosyllable, "but you told Bill so. Why didn't you lie to me?"

"It wouldn't have helped. You didn't go for Bill's woman."

The doctor flinched for the first time, and opened his mouth as if to defend himself, but thought better of it, and shrugging his shoulders asked:

"Have you got all my instruments and things there? That is my bag, I think," and he pointed to the satchel strapped upon Jim's horse.

"Yes, I got them before I left."

"Very thoughtful of you. Hand them up for me to look at. I'm too stiff to get off my horse yet."

Jim obeyed, and by the faint light of a match, which Jim had to hold for him, the doctor explored the interior of his grip-sack.

"Our friend Bill got these, I imagine," he said. "He was thinking of his own case. He always is. Wrap them up in this and put them on the bank. Someone will find them and we shan't have any use for them on this trip. We don't want to carry any more than we are obliged to."

Jim struck another match and the doctor finished his examination.

"They have all the ordinary appliances for cases of accident at Roli's, I suppose?" He was quiet now and business-like.

"I guess so."

"Well, these will do then. We shall make them all in a devil of a mess, but the water-proof case will save some of them. I'm glad you brought that, Mr. Combe."

There was a pause whilst Jim fastened the bag in its place again, the lights were growing very close now, and the voices of the searchers plainly audible. Combe could distinguish his own name, uttered from time to time.

"Well, what are we waiting for? Aren't you coming?"

"Back to Soda Creek?"

"No, to the Risky. Isn't that where you wanted to take me?"

"We can't. That blanked ferryman has gone and I can't break the lock."

"Is that so, and Jim Combe can't cross this bit of a river without a boat to get back to the man Miss Clifford is nursing?"

"Shaw! Shaw! Here is the way," and the dare-devil, crammed the only top hat in Cariboo more tightly on his head, spurred his beast into the edge of the grey flood that went roaring by, slipped and recovered, sitting his horse now as firmly as Combe himself might have done; slipped again, and the next moment was swimming, horse and man, deep in the angry waters of the Fraser.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Oh, You Empire!

A search party has been at work for the last week looking for "the thirty miles of wagon road," reported in the "Empire" as having been constructed between Masset and Rose Spit, but up to the present little trace had been discovered.—Queen Charlotte Islander.

Letters to the Editor

A LIBERAL VIEW OF THE OUTLOOK

During the past few days, doubtless due to the unexpected overthrow of the government, I have heard some gloomy predictions as to the welfare of the country and of Prince Rupert in particular. I do not share such views, but on the contrary, am inclined to be optimistic of our future. While I believe in reciprocity and look upon it as a priceless boon, yet it is something we have not hitherto been enjoying and the Conservatives may give us something substantial as a substitute.

Mr. Borden holds a reputation for honesty and fair-mindedness, and may be depended upon to do his utmost to govern our country wisely. It is very rare in the history of a nation that any man or set of men is indispensable to its existence or progress in the sense that the elder Pitt was, and it is probable that in the immediate future, things will go along very much the same as in the past. Mr. Borden may revise the tariff, thereby approaching the benefits which we would have received under reciprocity. I look to see the Grand Trunk Pacific railway completed without any unnecessary delay, and when the time comes to ship fresh fish and other commodities across the continent from Prince Rupert, the Americans may have thrown off the duty against Canadian fish, or else special bonding privileges may be granted to enable fish to be shipped from this port. I believe there is no doubt whatever but that the fish caught in these northern waters will be shipped from Prince Rupert.

I am less sanguine as to the effect of the quietus to reciprocity upon the Alaskan trade, but it will be some time before we are in a position to go after that trade, and then conditions may have adjusted themselves. We have been looking at conditions as they are, but we must remember that this vote does not conclude our trade arrangements with the United States. There is such a thing as evolution in the world of politics just as real as in the organic world.

To those who have thought differently from me upon the question of reciprocity, I wish to say that I do not deride their victory nor resent their celebrations or songs of triumph. They have won a great victory and I am pleased to see that they appreciate it. Power stands for opportunity and is to be desired, but it also involves responsibility. It is up to them to legislate for and administer this greatest of youthful countries with wisdom and integrity, and I wish them God speed, for so long as the country is well and progressively governed, the cold shadings of opposition have no horrors for me. What makes our people happy and contented, pleases me; what makes our country prosperous, benefits me; what makes our country great, makes me prouder to be a Canadian. There is the task, be unto them the wisdom and courage.

For the grand old man who steps from the wheel of state, I have nothing but the most sympathetic feelings and highest admiration. He has proved himself to be a great Canadian; a broad minded and sincere statesman; wise and progressive in policy, fearless in pursuit of it; firm and upright in administration; mighty in honesty of purpose and robustness of soul; clean and wholesome in private life; gentle and considerate in conduct; adorned and embellished with dignity and culture; ripened and mellowed by time—he leaves the wheel, but his white plume is untarnished, his glory undimmed, our love stronger—God bless Sir Wilfrid Laurier.

W. E. WILLIAMS.

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