

THE STRONGEST JUDGE

Mr. Justice Deane was the strongest judge on the Bench. Stern, unbending, learned in the law, and never taken unawares, he dispensed justice with a hand that never wavered; and if his judgments erred but seldom on the side of mercy, none, even of the unhappy creatures who came before him, was ever heard to question their absolute impartiality. Not all who have worn the ermine can claim so much.

In private life his lordship was the most amiable of men. He doffed his sternness with his robes, and became easy-going even to the point of indifference. Having always in his official capacity to take a hard-and-fast line and say what should and what should not be, it is quite conceivable that he was glad enough out of it to leave the task to others; and this, as a matter of fact, was his invariable custom. He fell in with whatever views were expressed, and sank his own when he had any—with the utmost complacency.

When his wife told him that their only daughter had fallen in love with a clerk, he was perhaps momentarily astonished, but quite affable. If the happy man had been a bagman his concern would have been just as much—and as little.

"Oh, let her marry him, my dear," he said, cheerfully. "Let her marry him if she wants to. I have no objection. We were young ourselves once!"

"Yes, but not necessarily idiots!" retorted her ladyship. She, it may be remarked, was of different mould. When she had made up her mind, wild horses could not drag her from it. "Do what you like, of course; but don't expect me to be a party to it! A beggarly clerk with a hundred and fifty a year! How Amy can be so foolish as to dream of it, I don't know!"

Needless to say, her ladyship carried the day, as she had done hundreds of times previously. When the "beggarly clerk" called upon him a week or so later, Sir Charles had quite come round to his wife's way of thinking. He was most urbane—a bad sign, had his visitor only known.

"My dear sir," he said, "I am delighted to make your acquaintance—delighted! I have heard—ahem—already of my daughter's—little romance, and I congratulate you. She is a good girl, though I say it! Unfortunately, if I understand you correctly, your—ahem—present circumstances hardly warrant your taking a wife just yet. Still, in a few years' time, of course, things may be—er—different; and then I should be only too pleased to—er—"

Sir Charles coughed again by way of saying that the situation was really very delicate; and the crestfallen savior, who had imagined other things, not being so dense as he probably looked, took the hint and his departure. There the matter might very well have ended, but for the fact that the young lady herself possessed a generous share of the family firmness. She made no comment at the moment, but a little more than a month later she went out at eleven one morning and sent a note home later in the day to say that she had been married to the man of her choice and was then starting on her honeymoon.

Here was a bombshell. Who would have dreamed of such a thing? Lady Deane at once took refuge, as most strong-minded women do in crises, in a fit of hysterics, and, as soon as she recovered, tried to cast the blame for it on her husband. Sir Charles said little. His love for his wife was of the sort that suffereth long and is kind. He doubtless reflected that it was an unfortunate business, but for the time being, at all events, kept his own counsel.

As the months tolled by, became years, and there was still no news of the truant, the strain began to tell on him. He made no sign outwardly of his grief. He was still the calm, logical, clear-headed judge; but those who watched closely noticed an added severity in his manner. The counsel who stepped just outside the bounds of fair comment, the witness who prevaricated, invariably quailed before the weight of the judicial rebuke; while the prisoner who had obviously could subsequently reflect—if reflection was in his nature—that his lying had added six months or so to his sentence, and be remarkably near to the truth.

Five years had gone by when the unexpected happened. Sir Charles took the Midland circuit that term, and at Hillborough, where he arrived about the middle, the calendar was heavy. He commented gravely on the fact. Late on the second day a case of forgery came on. The accused, a young man, pleaded guilty. A starving wife and child was his excuse for his lapse; an uncrossed cheque, found in the street and drawn in favor of the employer who had turned him away shabbily three months before, made up the story. The temptation to forge the signature and buy food for his family was too strong to resist. He did so and, being only half a rogue, was promptly found out.

The barrister who defended made

much of his theme. He played with consummate skill on his hearers' emotions, and soon had many eyes welling with tears. But those of the emerald figure on the Bench were dry enough. Sir Charles had heard many a harrowing story. When counsel sat down, after a final impassioned appeal for mercy, he summoned up in terms as grim as they were brief.

Forgery, he said, was a grave offence. It involved serious issues. To allow an individual to commit it simply on the plea that he was destitute was impossible—would literally be placing a premium on wrong-doing. The duty of the jury was plain; the prisoner's own admission, in fact, made their presence a formality only. It was well to remember that in these cases they had to be guided by the head and not the heart.

Without leaving the box the twelve good men and true returned their verdict: "Guilty!" A cry of anguish rang out from the back of the court, but the dramatic moment was not yet. Those who were lookers-on only even went away with a sense of having been cheated of their right, for his lordship curtly intimated that in view of the lateness of the hour he should postpone sentence till the morrow.

Five minutes later he was on his way to his lodgings, the prospect of rest and a comfortable meal before him. It turned out, however, that he was to enjoy neither. Hard on his own arrival came a woman asking to see him. She was breathless with hard walking, her eyes had the look of a hunted animal.

"Impossible!" said his valet, to whom the question was addressed. "His lordship can see no one."

"It is a matter of life and death," she urged.

"I cannot help it," was the reply. "My orders are strict. If you know his lordship you wouldn't ask me to break them."

If she knew his lordship! Down came her last card.

"Tell Sir Charles that his daughter is here!" she flashed out.

Urged into compliance, and yet doubting her veracity, the man went. "A lady wishes to speak to you, sir," he said, deferentially. "She says—"

"I have no wish to know what she says, Jackson. You know very well that it is out of the question."

"Is it?"

His lordship wheeled round angrily. That he should be bearded like this was too much. But the words on his tongue were never spoken.

"Amy!" he gasped.

"Yes. You didn't count on seeing me?"

"No-o!" His heart throbbed wildly. "Where—where have you been?"

"Where? Oh, many places!" She dismissed the man with a nod. "I was in court just now when—when you tried my husband."

"Your husband! Heavens, what a tragedy! And I could not think—"

He was going to say that he could not think where he had seen him before. All the last hour it had bothered him—the dim knowledge that he had met the man previously. Now it came to him with a rush. He was five years older, and he had grown a beard. That was all.

"My husband." She paused dramatically. "I am the starving wife you said was no excuse for forgery!"

"Starving! And I did not know!" The words fell from him half unconsciously. "Why did you let it come to this?" he said, turning on her fiercely. "Why did you not write—come to me—before?"

"Because we were proud. We wanted to pull through it if we could. I should not have come now if—things had not been what they are. Do you think I like suing for mercy—I, who have kept away all these years?"

"Troud? Yes, a fine pride!" There was bitterness in his tone. "When I could have helped you held aloof! Doubtless you thought I should refuse—should turn you away empty-handed! Why? Was I—was I hard before?" Something like a sob broke from him. "Now you come—ah, Heaven! you come—when it is too late!"

"Too late!"

"I can do nothing now! My duty is to administer the law."

"And the law?"

"Says that he shall be punished!"

"But you are given discretion!" Her voice rose shrill. "You have only to say the word and he is free. And he is no criminal—you know it as well as I. To punish him as you would another would be outrageous—sheer cruelty."

Sir Charles shook his head. "You do not understand! My discretion is limited. Sometimes—in certain cases—I can soften the possibilities of a wrong verdict. Here"—he leaned against the wall, a pathetic figure—"I am helpless!"

"Hel! less! You, the strongest judge on the Bench!" She laughed—a laugh that startled him by its bitterness. "I will not believe it! You will send him to gaol, brand him a criminal, for that he stole bread when his wife was starving? Well, do so!"—she faced round sharply—"and kill him! For that will be the end! He is delicate—look at him to-morrow and see! How long will he stand prison life, prison fare? And when you have wreaked your vengeance on him, when your miserable law has exacted even more than its penalty, may the memory of it never leave you! May you never have a day without thinking of it—never forget that your daughter and his are cursing you! Ah, that I was a man—"

"Amy! Stop!" His voice was hoarse. "Stop—before you kill me! I—I will think it over. I will see if—if anything can be done. But not now—not now! Come and see me to-morrow!"

To-morrow! It was only half a victory, and her heart ached; but she was a woman—and his daughter.

"Father!" Her arms were round him in a trice. "You have made me happy! It is all I ask—that you will think it over. And I know that you will be merciful; I feel it—here!" She put her hand over her throbbing heart. "Good-bye—and Heaven be good to you and me! Till to-morrow!"

She kissed him with lips that burned his cheek and went, and his lordship sank heavily into a chair. Five years' separation, and at the end—this. If the junior Bar could have seen him as he sat head hanging forward, eyes closed, in the vain effort to blot out the memory of it, and fingers closing and relaxing with the sudden gusts of tempest in him, it would have stared long in astonishment. This the man of iron nerve! This the man who had lost count of joys or sorrows! This the machine called Sir Charles Deane!

He sent his dinner away untouched, and sat far into the night staring hopelessly at the problem before him. A problem? Yes, that is the right word!

On the one hand, affection counselled him with strenuous voice to be merciful—to throw all other considerations to the winds. If he would regain his daughter's love here was the way—the only way. On the other, obedience to duty claimed him. It had played a strong part in his life, and the call was loud.

Were the man and the woman any other he knew well enough what would be the end. The knowledge that if he followed the dictates of his heart he would be acting against his convictions was gall and wormwood to him.

And he would inevitably be criticized. They would say justly that he had been swayed by personal considerations—he who had endeavored all his life to hold the scales of justice so evenly that none should complain. At one stroke his reputation would be gone. Midnight had long struck when at length he trudged wearily upstairs to rest.

Soon after the dawn came creeping up in the east he rose and dressed. Open-eyed he had lain the long night through, his brain on fire and his whole being racked with indecision. To stay there longer was impossible; physical action had become an imperative need if he would save his sanity. Putting on a light overcoat he went out of the house. It was a raw, chilly morning, but the nip of winter in the air was grateful; even the discomforting lash of rain in his face came as a relief from the other.

Hillborough was just awakening. The first workmen were hurrying off to their places of toil, one or two sleepy maids-of-all-work came to the door as he passed and, uttering an expressive "Ugh!" retreated with a shiver, and boys carrying newspapers under their arms hurried here and there, urged to an alacrity that was unusual by the need of warmth. But none looked at him, or, if they did, passed him by without notice. He was glad. Recognition would have meant stares and pointing fingers, and he hated publicity.

More than ever he wished to avoid it now. He pulled his coat up well to his ears, and averted his face from passer-by. A new idea had come to him. He would walk as far as the gaol and see his son-in-law. Possibly he might glean some fresh scrap of information which would let him incline with a free conscience towards the consummation his heart desired. At any rate, he could see what stuff he was made of.

It was a course altogether without precedent, and at best desperate hope. A weaker man would have hesitated; but he pressed forward vigorously, and soon reached his destination.

The governor of the great stone building was astonished when told that Sir Charles Deane had called on him. He wondered what could be the meaning of it.

Sir Charles explained briefly. The governor was more astonished. He fidgeted a little before replying and seemed at a loss for words. When he spoke his voice was low.

"A most extraordinary thing, my lord. A sad one, too, if all that is true!" His voice sank to a whisper. "I have only just heard, and do not know how it happened. Of course, there will be an inquiry."

Sir Charles gathered that he was being told of a tragedy. He bent forward so that he might miss nothing. What a mercy that he had entered into no detail!

"A terrible thing!" he murmured, when the other had finished. "Terrible! I—I was somehow attracted to the man. His manner, you know! I am deeply sorry!"

But even as he said it he knew that he lied. Was it not the way out—the delirance?

He walked back a different man. His heart beat faster; his brain had thrown off the dead weight of despair that clogged it. The world seemed changed. A new horizon—the old horizon—had come in view.

Not that the other side of it was lost on him. He realized gravely that to one at least it meant that all the beauty, all the light of life had been torn away—that to another, too young as yet to understand, its protector

had gone. But here again was there not a way out? Henceforth that one should be his own especial care; that other should never, could he avoid it, realize the extent of its loss.

She was there when he arrived. He opened the door to a gentleness that was unusual in him, and tipped into the room. She came forward with a little cry, her hands held forth beseechingly. The dark-rimmed eyes held the question that the quivering lips could not utter.

"Amy, darling! You must be brave!" His voice broke, and he groped for words. "Brave little girl! He—he will not need my poor sympathy! He has taken his case to a Higher Judge—"

She heard to the end unflinchingly—dry-eyed.

"I—I am glad!" she whispered. Then suddenly the whole meaning of it came to her. She turned away with a strained little cry; and for an instant her heart seemed to stop beating.

"Oh, my poor Ronald!" she moaned; and the tears that had been denied her came in a great rush of relief. And the strongest judge on the Bench, drawing her head to his breast wept with her. So were they reconciled.—London Tit-Bits.

RULES WITH BAGPIPES.

The Undisputed Monarch of Tierra del Fuego.

In new kilts and plaid and playing a pibroch of triumph on his pipes, John Farquharson Macrae, formerly of Scotland, but now of Tierra del Fuego, strode the gangway of the Oruba at Liverpool the other day, bound once more for South America. During twenty-two years, spent for the most part among the hostile natives of the Land's End of the Western Continent, John Farquharson Macrae clung to his pipes as he clung to his Scottish accent. When he had no human companion to converse with, his pibroch resounded over the waters of the Magellan Strait.

As a youth he left his native heath for Argentina and reared cattle. After a few years he found himself in possession of over five hundred horses and a couple of thousand sheep.

These animals he trekked over two thousand miles, with the aid of a compass and chart, to Southern Patagonia. He watered and fed his flocks and herds by the way with only five men to assist him, but at the end of a year of hunger and thirst and fatigue he found himself in possession of a fine stretch of country over 80,000 acres in extent. After leasing this land for ten years, he sought fresh territory, and trekked over into Tierra del Fuego.

He was the first Briton to penetrate into the country, and the natives resented the intrusion. The tall Aonas, the stunted Yaghans came in herds, attacked his little castle, and lay in wait for him with arrows.

An intrepid rider and an unerring shot, however, he would ride away concealed by the horse's body, and shooting with deadly effect. For several years he carried his life in his hands, but at last the savages began to regard him with such respect and fear that they christened him "Sorto," the native equivalent for "the devil."

For some years past the Scottish pioneer has been undisputed monarch of Tierra del Fuego, where he has amassed a fortune. It is with the bagpipes that he rules.

VIENNA'S GREAT HOSPITAL.

One of the Most Complete Organizations of Its Kind.

When the new hospital in Vienna, of which the foundation stone was recently laid by the Emperor of Austria, is completed, it will form quite a town in itself. The total area covered is 2,400,000 square feet, and there will be forty separate buildings, of which thirty-two will be clinics or hospitals, and the remaining eight will be devoted to offices and residences for the staff. All the clinics, says the Marconigram, will have flat roofs with gardens, so that patients, particularly consumptives, can be in the open air as much as possible. Each patient will have 1,000 square feet of space, the largest proportion of space allotted to a patient in any hospital in the world. The ultimate cost will be from \$7,000,000 to \$8,000,000. The hospital will be on the "pavillion" or "cottage" plan.

Each pavillion, with its sick wards operating and lecture rooms, will form a hospital by itself, and of these there will be eighteen. The hospital will have 2,300 beds. The magnificent operating rooms will be of a new type. In the clinics for infectious diseases the patient will be separated from the professor and the student by a glass partition. A number of medical students will live in the hospital for the purpose of close study and observation. The latest technical achievements will be utilized throughout the institution.

Fond Mother—"I wonder what baby is thinking of?" Fond Father—"He is not thinking; he is listening to hear if his first tooth is coming."

Nervous Youth (to charming girl who has been trying to set him at his case)—"He, he! I always—ho—felt rather shy with pretty girls, y'know, but I'm quite at home with you!"

MORE THAN FIGURE HEAD

DUTIES OF THE CANADIAN GOVERNOR-GENERAL.

The Powers of the Position—Place in a Scheme of Imperial Federation.

From the point of view of a constitutional lawyer, the Governor-General of Canada is powerless to affect the working of the Constitution, or of the political machinery which supplies the motive-power, says the London Morning Post. Theoretically, he is the sovereign in partibus; practically he has not a tithe of the prerogatives which the sovereign possesses in this country, though he rarely exercises them. Something can be done by royal warrant in this country, but who ever heard of a viceregal warrant! In these days when Canada has made up her mind to be a sovereign State and is anxious to be styled a kingdom rather than the King's Dominion, the Canadian Governor-General would be the merest figure-head, but for the power of his own personality and the accumulated prestige—to which he succeeds—of former occupants of the viceregal office. Rightly used, however, his personality is a great power that makes for political righteousness not only in the sphere of domestic politics, but also in the large arena of political affairs.

GOVERNOR'S POSITION.

If he gives his full confidence to the men in power, who are styled, as a courtesy to him, his political advisers, and at the same time keeps on friendly terms with the Opposition leaders, he is in a fair way to use his personal influence rightly. It would appear at first sight almost impossible to be on friendly terms with two warring factions, more especially in Canada, where party feeling is better in inverse proportion to the dwindling importance of party issues. But Queen Victoria and his Majesty King Edward have given remarkable object-lessons in this most difficult business, and not only Lord Minto, but his predecessors have proved themselves apt pupils. One and all have done much to reconcile the forces of the "Ins" and the "Outs," to purge Canadian politics of its bitterness, and to prevent the spread of political corruption by means of their moral influence.

IMPERIAL FEDERATION.

To-day everybody has his pet scheme for realizing the ideal of Imperial Federation. Nine in ten of those who speak or write on the subject seriously believe that it is necessary to create some sort of a brand-new constitutional machine. Each man evolves an Imperial Committee out of his own inner consciousness, describes it at length, and thinks he has produced a Constitution for the Empire. Meanwhile they cannot understand, just because they lack the imagination that interprets facts, that the required organism is actually in being.

Already the various self-governing colonies have agents or representatives of their Governments in London. In one case that agent is also a member of the Imperial Parliament; it would be no breach of British constitutional practice to make him a Cabinet Minister.

COLONIAL REPRESENTATION.

If steps were taken to give the official representatives of the other self-governing colonies seats in the House of Lords and to bring them together on occasion, the Colonial Governments would be adequately represented at Westminster. The Governors of the various colonies would be stationed abroad to discuss any matter of importance to the Empire at large, the Colonial Prime Ministers would arrive at this or that decision, with or against their advice, and their agent-generals or High Commissioners would be informed of the result.

In the future, when the existing machinery is elaborated and improved in this way, perhaps the Governors would be appointed as are the great officers of State.

GOVERNOR AS MEDIATOR.

The point to remember is that it is now necessary to bring people into a single "talking-shop" in order to get business done. It would be easier to put business through without a net "talking-shop." A telegram goes over land and under sea and there you are. It requires a little imagination to grasp the meaning of this fact in its application to the question of an Imperial Council. Once it is grasped it will be seen that the Canadian Governor-Generals will be the mediator between the British and Colonial Governments—as, indeed, is already the case—and that, without their assistance, the Imperial Council of the future would be an ineffective body.

The annual consumption of salt in England is forty pounds per head. France consumes thirty pounds; Russia, eighteen pounds; Austria, sixteen pounds; Prussia, fourteen pounds; Spain, twelve pounds; and Switzerland, eight pounds.

Becker—"My congratulations on your marriage with the charming widow, old man. I know you called on her occasionally, but I had no idea you intended to marry." Meeker—"Neither did I until she had it all arranged."