

CHAPTER XIII

Of Withered Pastures

The Federal Government had named A.T. Logan as chief preventative officer for the province. A giant of a man with great physical endurance and courage. He meant business. He shook the smuggling racket as a great wind shakes an orchard. One Pictou County smuggler lost over two thousand gallons of rum.

This cross raiding by different batches of prosecutors made the Trade expensive and hazardous. During 1929 the fines were much more difficult to collect.

Liquor "Hides" were becoming more ingenious and hard to locate.

Some of these pieces of ingenuity are worthy of mention. Sometimes we found them by luck, close observation, or a tipoff. A bootlegger should never drink liquor. It arouses his braggadocio and loosens his tongue. He wants to show his friends how he fools the police. These same friends in a moment of spite will soon betray him.

False thresholds, false steps, secret panels are old stuff. One of [the] safest was for one of the "Mothers" to carry several bottles attached to [her] waist under a billowy shirt.

In one dive I knocked out the leg of a stove, shifted the floor protector and found two gallons of rum.

Beer being a bulky article was hard to conceal. But one bootlegger had us fooled. He put up a partition of secondhand sheathing in his cellar and worked the bolts on the inner side of the door with magnets. But he got drunk and showed it to false friends.

Another system was to get an ingenious plumber to manipulate the water pipes and keep the rum in a hidden tank.

But to my knowledge the best and one that was never found out was explained to me years afterwards by the owner when he had gone into a lawful successful business. He had a deep hole dug in his cellar, buried a hundred gallon mollasses cask with an inch pipe long enough to come to the top of the concrete floor. Then the whole thing was cemented over except the pipe, the cask was filled with rum, a cork inserted in the pipe, then coal was shovelled over the whole affair. When rum was wanted a plumbob was dropped from a nail driven directly above the pipe, the cork was pulled and a pump put down.

During 1929 the agitation started for Government control and the Harrington Government at Halifax promised a referendum on the matter. Constable work was brisk and I often more than doubled my salary from this source. In this line of work there were many experiences from the

seamy side of life, the rough side of the lath and plaster.

The most touching sight I've ever seen took place on the steps of the Nova Scotia Hospital for the insane in Dartmouth. Some forgotten committeeman with an eye for landscape beauty had picked that location. It has a sweep of grandeur that can't be surpassed. It was often my duty to take patients to that institution and one gets hardened to that terrible affliction of insanity.

The case in point was that of Mr. Fraser a farmer of forty-five years who in the middle of winter had gone insane from living alone. He was a big man of fine appearance and in conversation showed some appreciation of the finer things of life. It was a cold clear day in February, a feathery fall of snow undisturbed by wind glistened like a million diamonds on the gaunt hardwoods and evergreens.

As we went up the wide circular steps at the public entrance, he turned and said, "Mr. Rose, could I stand here for a little while before I am taken inside?"

"Sure", I said.

At the top step he turned, took off his heavy winter cap and gazed across Halifax Harbour to where the city climbs the slopes of Citadel Hill. Then the tears began to fall as he murmured, "Goodbye trees, goodbye blue sky, Goodbye God, goodbye everything. Take me inside, Mr. Rose".

The worst legal work I was ever called upon to do was to kidnap a little girl from school. It was all perfectly legal. Somewhere in the Lorne district, in the heart of Presbyterian Pictou County, three girls had been left as orphans in the early teens. The two older ones soon became the sport of man's lust and when I knew them they ran a bugbeer joint on Frederick Street in New Glasgow. The youngest girl had been taken into a good home in New Lairg.

As I remember it there lived in this home two brothers, one of them married. These brothers had a sister married to a wealthy man in California. This sister and her husband had come home for a visit and the American had got the idea of adopting and educating the child who was now about twelve. He went to Cape Breton to get the adoption papers.

Someone put him onto my trail so I was given the task of getting the child. The whole transaction had a dirty smell and I had no alibis. I waited in my car behind some trees near the New Lairg school until recess. Then I approached the children and asked them about the girl. She came over and I told her that friends were waiting to see her in New Glasgow before they left for the States. She asked me if she could get her schoolbag. Pausing for a moment to reflect, I said, "No, you can get it when you come back". That was the last she ever saw of the New Lairg school for many a long

year. In California she became educated and married a wealthy man.

But it was a miserable hour for me some days later when one of the brothers came to the police with tears in his eyes asking for his little girl.

The funniest experience to come my way while in police work occurred on a cold January day. Near the boundary of New Glasgow on the West Side there lived two sisters, one a widow with two boys and the other sister being a grass widow. One day the police station got a call from these ladies to have two dogs destroyed that the boys were having around the premises. The grass widow was a looker allright built along the gay Nineties style of beauty with generous curves in the proper places. She might have been in her late twenties, knew all the answers and from her line of talk had evidently "been around".

Not long afterwards, one frosty morning, Rev. Mr. Wilkinson the agent of the Children's Aid Society hailed me to ask, "Mr. Rose could you tell me where Mrs.----- lives?" I liked the good old man for he was trying to do his duty with an earnest desire to benefit destitute children.

"Certainly, Mr. Wilkinson, It's quite a distance, ten below zero, so I'll drive you there."

He thanked me and got into the car. I was curious to see the reaction when he met the grass widow.

The kitchen was small and a roaring fire was in the stove. A sink, a table, three chairs and the stove filled it. Mr. Wilkinson sat near the stove with the gay lady in her dainty revealing negligee across from him. I sat near the outside door where it was cooler.

He tried to explain his errand in connection with her nephews but the heat of the stove and the lady's seductive perfume was too strong for him to make a convincing argument.

"I feel that we have introduced this grave matter concerning the boys as well as the situation will allow at the present time. I have other matters of grave import to look into at the present time. So, Mr. Rose, I feel that I must go."

I agreed with him for that kitchen was hot and I wanted to laugh long and loud. After we got outside he took out his handkerchief to wipe his steaming forehead, as he said, "My, my, wasn't that an amazing and entrancing creature. I'll bet she don't play marbles for nothing".

There have been several times in the performance of my duty when life hung by a hair. The most dangerous that I can recall was the curtain-raiser to the famous Dryden Murder case and it was the last act of police work I did as liquor Inspector.

One morning in early May 1930, Chief-of-Police Caldwell called me into his office, looking worried he said, "Cliff, I have a warrant here for a MacDonald, an Irishman believe it or not, who is locked up in Halifax. He

is wanted here on a burglary charge and Detective Fox has him on a drunk charge. I can't spare any of the officers to go down for him but I thought you might consider it".

"Well, Chief, I am a sick man and I have been in Halifax twice this week, but I'll go, carry on as long as I can".

"Good, be sure to keep handcuffs on him for he has a dangerous reputation around Sunny Brae."

I took the warrant and went to Halifax on the afternoon train. When I got there I contacted Detective Fox and made arrangements to get him out in time to catch the morning train for New Glasgow. He also warned me to keep the handcuffs on the prisoner.

Through the bars he presented a formidable sight. A hulking bear of a man with a chest like a barrel and heavy thighs and arms. The handcuffs would just snap on his wrist and that was all. We went in a taxi to the depot, then I hustled him into the train. He pleaded with me to take off the cuffs but I kidded him along until we got well along on the road back.

As he told me his story I listened to the richest brogue that had ever come to my ears. He was an Irish immigrant from Galway and had left Queenstown bound for New York to marry his girl, Annie Rooney. The boat had called at Halifax and he had strayed ashore, had missed the boat and had somehow landed drunk in Sunny Brae, Pictou County.

"Sure an'begorre 'tis the devils's mess that I've got into. It's not bracelets I'd be wearin' if I'd stayed on the boat. 'Tis the husband o' swate little Annie Rooney I'd be fer the' banns were published in New York. I stole none o' that shedevil's watches in Sunny Brae. 'Tis my poor ol mither's heart that'l be breakin in old Ireland. Would ye take these cuffs o' my hands. I swear by the blessed soul o' St. Patrick that it's peaceful as a lamb I'll be."

"Would you like to get in touch with Annie Rooney or have you told her where you are?"

"Tis ashamed that I am I have not. Oho, ohone. 'Tis a mess I've got in. And it's not in jail I want to spend my life. But sure an'begorre 'tis only Annie on this side o' the water that can do anything for me, if she still loves me, an' I wouldn't blame her if she didn't. How would the likes o' ye get in touch with her?"

"I wouldn't do it. But when we get to New Glasgow I'll take you to the telegraph office and you can wire her collect, tell her where you are and what you want her to do."

"Glory be to the Saints. And would we be takin' of these cuffs?"

"I'll take a chance. But no funny work or you'll never see or hear from Annie Rooney."

So the handcuffs were unlocked and one of the most picturesque

criminals of a generation was taken to the telegraph office in New Glasgow, [and] to jail, where within a short time he was arrested for the murder of Dryden, a hermit, who lived beyond the railroad at Glengarry.

CHAPTER XIV

The Beginning of the End

The agitation for Government Control of the liquor traffic had been growing in intensity throughout 1929. Foreseeing what might happen, I bought a Dodge car, the Dodges having at that time a great reputation for being tough. Politicians promised me a job on the new police force that would be formed but I didn't have the stomach to serve under any officer. I had plotted my own course and had planned my own strategy for too long to be shoved around by any officer. I wanted to be clear of it all and get into some other business. The struggle between Fred Milligan and the rest of the Council had become bitter and it was nerveracking to get the broadsides from both sides. Pressure was put on to raid and railroad bootlegger friends of both sides to the quarrel. In September I managed to get three weeks holidays and with the wife and three friends we went to New York and had a wonderful trip.

The plebiscite on Government Control was held shortly after we got back. The method of carrying it out looked mysterious as all the manipulators of both political parties joined hands to put it down. There was more to this than appeared on the surface so I took a walk down to Dannie's. With his worldly wisdom he would have the correct sights trained on the situation.

"Well, Dannie, it looks as though it was curtains for all the boys and girls in the Trade".

"Right you are, Cliff, and what a setup we are getting. Of course you will be looked after being a good party man, but a lot of us will be left like driftwood on the shore. No use of trying to continue further. The combination against us is too strong." A trace of bitterness crept into his voice, generally so even and placid. It looked worth while getting to the bottom of it.

"How come, Dan? I am baffled by the moves that's going on."

"You saw what happened election day? Deep down the dope is this. The big money men, the men behind the men who run the government, have been looking with envious eyes at the millions being passed around in the illegal liquor traffic. So some bright boys were put to work on propa-