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Baron James Harden-Hickey

THIS is an attempt to tell the story of Baron Harden-Hickey, the Man Who Made Himself King, the man who was born after his time.

If the reader, knowing something of the strange career of Harden-Hickey, wonders why one writes of him appreciatively rather than in amusement, he is asked not to judge Harden-Hickey as one judges a contemporary.

Harden-Hickey, in our day, was as incongruous a figure as was the American at the Court of King Arthur; he was as unhappily out of the picture as would be Cyrano de Bergerac on the floor of the Board of Trade. Judged, as at the time he was judged, by writers of comic paragraphs, by presidents of railroads, by amateur "statesmen" at Washington, Harden-Hickey was a joke. To the vacant mind of the village idiot, Rip Van Winkle returning to Falling Water also was a joke. The people of our day had not the time to understand Harden-Hickey; they thought him a charlatan, half a dangerous adventurer and half a fool; and Harden-Hickey certainly did not understand them. His last words, addressed to his wife, showed this. They were: "I would rather die a gentleman than live a blackguard like your father."

As a matter of fact, his father-in-law, although living under the disadvantage of being a Standard Oil magnate, neither was, nor is, a blackguard, and his son-in-law had been treated by him generously and with patience. But for the duelist and soldier of fortune it was impossible to sympathize with a man who took no greater risk in life than to ride on one of his own railroads, and of the views the two men held of each other, that of John H. Flagler was probably the fairer and the more kindly.

Harden-Hickey was one of the most picturesque, gallant, and pathetic adventurers of our day; but Flagler also deserves our sympathy.

For an unimaginative and hard-working Standard Oil king to have a D'Artagnan thrust upon him as a son-in-law must be trying.

James A. Harden-Hickey, James the First of Trinidad, Baron of the Holy Roman Empire, was born on December 8, 1854. As to the date all historians agree; as to where the important event took place they differ. That he was born in France his friends are positive, but at the time of his death in El Paso the San Francisco papers claimed him as a native of California. All agree that his ancestors were Catholics and Royalists who left Ireland with the Stuarts when they sought refuge in France. The version which seems to be the most probable is that he was born in San Francisco, where as one of the early settlers, his father, E. C. Hickey, was well known, and that early in his life, in order to educate him, the mother took him to Europe.

There he was educated at the Jesuit College at Namur, then at Leipzig, and later entered the Military College of St. Cyr.

James the First was one of those boys who never had the misfortune to grow up. To the moment of his death, in all he planned you can trace the effects of his early teachings and

environment; the influences of the great Church that nursed him, and of the city of Paris, in which he lived. Under the Second Empire, Paris was at her maddest, baddest, and best. To-day under the republic, without a court, with a society kept in funds by the self-expatriated wives and daughters of our business men, she lacks the reasons for which Baron Haussmann bedecked her and made her beautiful. The good Loubet, the worthy Fallieres, except that they furnish the cartoonist with subjects for ridicule, do not add to the gayety of Paris. But when Harden-Hickey was a boy, Paris was never so carelessly gay, so brilliant, never so overcharged with life, color, and adventure.

In those days "the Emperor sat in his box that night," and in the box opposite sat Cora Pearl; veterans of the campaign of Italy, of Mexico, from the desert fights of Algiers, sipped sugar and water in front of Tortoni's, the Cafe Durand, the Cafe Riche; the sidewalks rang with their sabres, the boulevards were filled with the colors of the gorgeous uniforms; all night of each night the Place Vendome shone with the carriage lamps of the visiting pashas from Egypt, of nabobs from India, of *rastaquoueres* from the sister empire of Brazil; the state carriages, with the outriders and postilions in the green and gold of the Empress, swept through the Champs Elysees, and at the Bal Bulier, and at Mabile the students and *grisettes* introduced the cancan. The men of those days were Hugo, Thiers, Dumas, Daudet, Alfred de Musset; the magnificent blackguard, the Duc de Morny, and the great, simple Canrobert, the captain of barricades, who became a marshal of France.

Over all was the mushroom Emperor, his anterooms crowded with the titled charlatans of Europe, his court radiant with countesses created overnight. And it was the Emperor, with his love of theatrical display, of gorgeous ceremonies; with his restless reaching after military glory, the weary, cynical adventurer, that the boy at St. Cyr took as his model.

Royalist as was Harden-Hickey by birth and tradition, and Royalist as he always remained, it was the court at the Tuileries that filled his imagination. The Bourbons, whom he served, hoped some day for a court; at the Tuileries there was a court, glittering before his physical eyes. The Bourbons were pleasant old gentlemen, who later willingly supported him, and for whom always he was equally willing to fight, either with his sword or his pen. But to the last, in his mind, he carried pictures of the Second Empire as he, as a boy, had known it.

Can you not imagine the future James the First, barelegged, in a black-belted smock, halting with his nurse, or his priest, to gaze up in awestruck delight at the great, red-breeched Zouaves lounging on guard at the Tuileries?

"When I grow up," said little James to himself, not knowing that he never would grow up, "I shall have Zouaves for *my* palace guard."

And twenty years later, when he laid down the laws for his little kingdom, you find that the officers of his court must wear the mustache, "*a la* Louis Napoleon," and that the Zouave uniform will be worn by the Palace Guards.

In 1883, while he still was at the War College, his father died, and when he graduated, which he did with honors, he found himself his own master. His assets were a small income, a perfect knowledge of the French language, and the reputation of being one of the most expert swordsman in Paris. He chose not to enter the army, and instead became a journalist, novelist, duellist, an *habitué* of the Latin Quarter and the boulevards.

As a novelist the titles of his books suggest their quality. Among them are: "Un Amour Vendeen," "Lettres d'un Yankee," "Un Amour dans le Monde," "Memoires d'un Gommeux," "Merveilleuses Aventures de Nabuchodonosor, Nosebreaker."

Of the Catholic Church he wrote seriously, apparently with deep conviction, with high enthusiasm. In her service as a defender of the faith he issued essays, pamphlets, "broadsides." The opponents of the Church in Paris he attacked relentlessly.

As a reward for his championship he received the title of baron.

In 1878, while only twenty-four, he married the Countess de Saint-Pery, by whom he had two children, a boy and a girl, and three years later he started *Triboulet*. It was this paper that made him famous to "all Paris."

It was a Royalist sheet, subsidized by the Count de Chambord and published in the interest of the Bourbons. Until 1888 Harden-Hickey was its editor, and even by his enemies it must be said that he served his employers with zeal. During the seven years in which the paper amused Paris and annoyed the republican government, as its editor Harden-Hickey was involved in forty-two lawsuits, for different editorial indiscretions, fined three hundred thousand francs, and was a principal in countless duels.

To his brother editors his standing interrogation was: "Would you prefer to meet me upon the editorial page, or in the Bois de Boulogne?" Among those who met him in the Bois were Aurelien Scholl, H. Lavenbryon, M. Taine, M. de Cyon, Philippe Du Bois, Jean Moreas.

In 1888, either because his patron the Count de Chambord having died, there was no more money to pay the fines, or because the patience of the government was exhausted, *Triboulet* ceased to exist, and Harden-Hickey, claiming the paper had been suppressed and he himself exiled, crossed to London.

From there he embarked upon a voyage around the world, which lasted two years, and in the course of which he discovered the island kingdom of which he was to be the first and last king. Previous to his departure, having been divorced from the Countess de Saint-Pery, he placed his boy and girl in the care of a fellow-journalist and very dear friend, the Count de la Boissiere, of whom later we shall hear more.

Harden-Hickey started around the world on the *Astoria*, a British merchant vessel bound for India by way of Cape Horn, Captain Jackson commanding.

When off the coast of Brazil the ship touched at the uninhabited island of Trinidad. Historians of James the First say that it was through stress of weather that the *Astoria* was driven to seek refuge there, but as, for six months of the year, to make a landing on the island is almost impossible, and as at any time, under stress of weather, Trinidad would be a place to avoid, it is more likely Jackson put in to replenish his water-casks, or to obtain a supply of turtle meat.

Or it may have been that, having told Harden-Hickey of the derelict island, the latter persuaded the captain to allow him to land and explore it. Of this, at least, we are certain, a boat was sent ashore, Harden-Hickey went ashore in it, and before he left the island, as a piece of no man's land, belonging to no country, he claimed it in his own name, and upon the beach raised a flag of his own design.

The island of Trinidad claimed by Harden-Hickey must not be confused with the larger Trinidad belonging to Great Britain and lying off Venezuela.

The English Trinidad is a smiling, peaceful spot of great tropical beauty; it is one of the fairest places in the West Indies. At every hour of the year the harbor of Port of Spain holds open its arms to vessels of every draught. A governor in a pith helmet, a cricket club, a bishop in gaiters, and a botanical garden go to make it a prosperous and contented colony. But the little derelict Trinidad, in latitude 20 degrees 30 minutes south, and longitude 29 degrees 22 minutes west, seven hundred miles from the coast of Brazil, is but a spot upon the ocean. On most maps it is not even a spot. Except by birds, turtles, and hideous land-crabs, it is uninhabited; and against

the advances of man its shores are fortified with cruel ridges of coral, jagged limestone rocks, and a tremendous towering surf which, even in a dead calm, beats many feet high against the coast.

In 1698 Dr. Halley visited the island, and says he found nothing living but doves and land-crabs. "Saw many green turtles in sea, but by reason of the great surf, could catch none."

After Halley's visit, in 1700 the island was settled by a few Portuguese from Brazil. The ruins of their stone huts are still in evidence. But Amaro Delano, who called in 1803, makes no mention of the Portuguese; and when, in 1822, Commodore Owen visited Trinidad, he found nothing living there save cormorants, petrels, gannets, man-of-war birds, and "turtles weighing from five hundred to seven hundred pounds."

In 1889 E. F. Knight, who in the Japanese-Russian War represented the London *Morning Post*, visited Trinidad in his yacht in search of buried treasure.

Alexander Dalrymple, in his book entitled "Collection of Voyages, chiefly in the Southern Atlantick Ocean, 1775," tells how, in 1700, he "took possession of the island in his Majesty's name as knowing it to be granted by the King's letter patent, leaving a Union Jack flying."

So it appears that before Harden-Hickey seized the island it already had been claimed by Great Britain, and later, on account of the Portuguese settlement, by Brazil. The answer Harden-Hickey made to these claims was that the English never settled in Trinidad, and that the Portuguese abandoned it, and, therefore, their claims lapsed. In his "prospectus" of his island, Harden-Hickey himself describes it thus:

"Trinidad is about five miles long and three miles wide. In spite of its rugged and uninviting appearance, the inland plateaus are rich with luxuriant vegetation.

"Prominent among this is a peculiar species of bean, which is not only edible, but extremely palatable. The surrounding seas swarm with fish, which as yet are wholly unsuspecting of the hook. Dolphins, rock-cod, pigfish, and blackfish may be caught as quickly as they can be hauled out. I look to the sea birds and the turtles to afford our principal source of revenue. Trinidad is the breeding-place of almost the entire feathery population of the South Atlantic Ocean. The exportation of guano alone should make my little country prosperous. Turtles visit the island to deposit eggs, and at certain seasons the beach is literally alive with them. The only drawback to my projected kingdom is the fact that it has no good harbor and can be approached only when the sea is calm."

As a matter of fact sometimes months pass before it is possible to effect a landing.

Another asset of the island held out by the prospectus was its great store of buried treasure. Before Harden-Hickey seized the island, this treasure had made it known. This is the legend. In 1821 a great store of gold and silver plate plundered from Peruvian churches had been concealed on the islands by pirates near Sugar Loaf Hill, on the shore of what is known as the Southwest Bay. Much of this plate came from the cathedral at Lima, having been carried from there during the war of independence when the Spanish residents fled the country. In their eagerness to escape they put to sea in any ship that offered, and these unarmed and unseaworthy vessels fell an easy prey to pirates. One of these pirates on his death-bed, in gratitude to his former captain, told him the secret of the treasure. In 1892 this captain was still living, in Newcastle, England, and although his story bears a family resemblance to every other story of buried treasure, there were added to the tale of the pirate some corroborative details. These, in twelve years, induced five different expeditions to visit the island. The two most important were that of E. F. Knight and one from the Tyne in the bark *Aurea*.

In his "Cruise of the *Alerte*," Knight gives a full description of the island, and of his attempt to find the treasure. In this, a landslide having covered the place where it was buried, he was unsuccessful.

But Knight's book is the only source of accurate information concerning Trinidad, and in writing his prospectus it is evident that Harden-Hickey was forced to borrow from it freely. Knight himself says that the most minute and accurate description of Trinidad is to be found in the "Frank Mildmay" of Captain Marryat. He found it so easy to identify each spot mentioned in the novel that he believes the author of "Midshipman Easy" himself touched there.

After seizing Trinidad, Harden-Hickey rounded the Cape and made north to Japan, China, and India. In India he became interested in Buddhism, and remained for over a year questioning the priests of that religion and studying its tenets and history.

On his return to Paris, in 1890, he met Miss Annie Harper Flagler, daughter of John H. Flagler. A year later, on St. Patrick's Day, 1891, at the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, Miss Flagler became the Baroness Harden-Hickey. The Rev. John Hall married them.

For the next two years Harden-Hickey lived in New York, but so quietly that, except that he lived quietly, it is difficult to find out anything concerning him. The man who, a few years before, had delighted Paris with his daily feuilletons, with his duels, with his forty-two lawsuits, who had been the master of revels in the Latin Quarter, in New York lived almost as a recluse, writing a book on Buddhism. While he was in New York I was a reporter on the *Evening Sun*, but I cannot recall ever having read his name in the newspapers of that day, and I heard of him only twice; once as giving an exhibition of his water-colors at the American Art Galleries, and again as the author of a book I found in a store in Twenty-second Street, just east of Broadway, then the home of the Truth Seeker Publishing Company.

It was a gruesome compilation and had just appeared in print. It was called "Euthanasia, or the Ethics of Suicide." This book was an apology or plea for self-destruction. In it the baron laid down those occasions when he considered suicide pardonable, and when obligatory. To support his arguments and to show that suicide was a noble act, he quoted Plato, Cicero, Shakespeare, and even misquoted the Bible. He gave a list of poisons, and the amount of each necessary to kill a human being. To show how one can depart from life with the least pain, he illustrated the text with most unpleasant pictures, drawn by himself.

The book showed how far Harden-Hickey had strayed from the teachings of the Jesuit College at Namur, and of the Church that had made him "noble."

All of these two years had not been spent only in New York. Harden-Hickey made excursions to California, to Mexico, and to Texas, and in each of these places bought cattle ranches and mines. The money to pay for these investments came from his father-in-law. But not directly. Whenever he wanted money he asked his wife, or De la Boissiere, who was a friend also of Flagler, to obtain it for him.

His attitude toward his father-in-law is difficult to explain. It is not apparent that Flagler ever did anything which could justly offend him; indeed, he always seems to have spoken of his son-in-law with tolerance, and often with awe, as one would speak of a clever, wayward child. But Harden-Hickey chose to regard Flagler as his enemy, as a sordid man of business who could not understand the feelings and aspirations of a genius and a gentleman.

Before Harden-Hickey married, the misunderstanding between his wife's father and himself began. Because he thought Harden-Hickey was marrying his daughter for her money, Flagler opposed the union. Consequently, Harden-Hickey married Miss Flagler without "settlements," and for the first few years supported her without aid from her father. But his wife

had been accustomed to a manner of living beyond the means of the soldier of fortune, and soon his income, and then even his capital, was exhausted. From her mother the baroness inherited a fortune. This was in the hands of her father as executor. When his own money was gone, Harden-Hickey endeavored to have the money belonging to his wife placed to her credit, or to his. To this, it is said, Flagler, on the ground that Harden-Hickey was not a man of business, while he was, objected, and urged that he was, and that if it remained in his hands the money would be better invested and better expended. It was the refusal of Flagler to entrust Harden-Hickey with the care of his wife's money that caused the breach between them.

As I have said, you cannot judge Harden-Hickey as you would a contemporary. With the people among whom he was thrown, his ideas were entirely out of joint. He should have lived in the days of "The Three Musketeers." People who looked upon him as working for his own hand entirely misunderstood him. He was absolutely honest, and as absolutely without a sense of humor. To him, to pay taxes, to pay grocers' bills, to depend for protection upon a policeman, was intolerable. He lived in a world of his own imagining. And one day, in order to make his imaginings real, and to escape from his father-in-law's unromantic world of Standard Oil and Florida hotels, in a proclamation to the powers he announced himself as King James the First of the Principality of Trinidad.

The proclamation failed to create a world crisis. Several of the powers recognized his principality and his title; but, as a rule, people laughed, wondered, and forgot. That the daughter of John Flagler was to rule the new principality gave it a "news interest," and for a few Sundays in the supplements she was hailed as the "American Queen."

When upon the subject of the new kingdom Flagler himself was interviewed, he showed an open mind.

"My son-in-law is a very determined man," he said; "he will carry out any scheme in which he is interested. Had he consulted me about this, I would have been glad to have aided him with money or advice. My son-in-law is an extremely well-read, refined, well-bred man. He does not court publicity. While he was staying in my house he spent nearly all the time in the library translating an Indian book on Buddhism. My daughter has no ambition to be a queen or anything else than what she is--an American girl. But my son-in-law means to carry on this Trinidad scheme, and--he will."

From his father-in-law, at least, Harden-Hickey could not complain that he had met with lack of sympathy.

The rest of America was amused; and after less than nine days, indifferent. But Harden-Hickey, though unobtrusively, none the less earnestly continued to play the part of king. His friend De la Boissiere he appointed his Minister of Foreign Affairs, and established in a Chancellery at 217 West Thirty-sixth Street, New York, and from there was issued a sort of circular, or prospectus, written by the king, and signed by "Le Grand Chancelier, Secretaire d'Etat pour les Affaires Etrangeres, M. le Comte de la Boissiere."

The document, written in French, announced that the new state would be governed by a military dictatorship, that the royal standard was a yellow triangle on a red ground, and that the arms of the principality were "d'Orchape de Gueules." It pointed out naively that those who first settled on the island would be naturally the oldest inhabitants, and hence would form the aristocracy. But only those who at home enjoyed social position and some private fortune would be admitted into this select circle.

For itself the state reserved a monopoly of the guano, of the turtles, and of the buried treasure. And both to discover the treasure and to encourage settlers to dig and so cultivate the soil, a percentage of the treasure was promised to the one who found it.

Any one purchasing ten \$200 bonds was entitled to a free passage to the island, and after a year, should he so desire it, a return trip. The hard work was to be performed by Chinese coolies, the aristocracy existing beautifully, and, according to the prospectus, to enjoy "*vie d'un genre tout nouveau, et la recherche de sensations nouvelles.*"

To reward his subjects for prominence in literature, the arts, and the sciences, His Majesty established an order of chivalry. The official document creating this order reads:

"We, James, Prince of Trinidad, have resolved to commemorate our accession to the throne of Trinidad by the institution of an Order of Chivalry, destined to reward literature, industry, science, and the human virtues, and by these presents have established and do institute, with cross and crown, the Order of the Insignia of the Cross of Trinidad, of which we and our heirs and successors shall be the sovereigns.

"Given in our Chancellery the Eighth of the month of December, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-three, and of our reign, the First Year.

"JAMES."

There were four grades: Chevalier, Commander, Grand Officer, and Grand Cross; and the name of each member of the order was inscribed in "The Book of Gold." A pension of one thousand francs was given to a Chevalier, of two thousand francs to a Commander, and of three thousand francs to a Grand Officer. Those of the grade of Grand Cross were content with a plaque of eight diamond-studded rays, with, in the centre, set in red enamel, the arms of Trinidad. The ribbon was red and yellow.

A rule of the order read: "The costume shall be identical with that of the Chamberlains of the Court of Trinidad, save the buttons, which shall bear the impress of the Crown of the Order."

For himself, King James commissioned a firm of jewelers to construct a royal crown. In design it was similar to the one which surmounted the cross of Trinidad. It is shown in the photograph of the insignia. Also, the king issued a set of postage-stamps on which was a picture of the island. They were of various colors and denominations, and among stamp-collectors enjoyed a certain sale.

To-day, as I found when I tried to procure one to use in this book, they are worth many times their face value.

For some time the affairs of the new kingdom progressed favorably. In San Francisco, King James, in person, engaged four hundred coolies and fitted out a schooner which he sent to Trinidad, where it made regular trips between his principality and Brazil; an agent was established on the island, and the construction of docks, wharves, and houses was begun, while at the chancellery in West Thirty-sixth Street, the Minister of Foreign Affairs was ready to furnish would-be settlers with information.

And then, out of a smiling sky, a sudden and unexpected blow was struck at the independence of the little kingdom. It was a blow from which it never recovered.

In July of 1895, while constructing a cable to Brazil, Great Britain found the island of Trinidad lying in the direct line she wished to follow, and, as a cable station, seized it. Objection to this was made by Brazil, and at Bahia a mob with stones pelted the sign of the English Consul-General.

By right of Halley's discovery, England claimed the island; as a derelict from the main land, Brazil also claimed it. Between the rivals, the world saw a chance for war, and the fact that the island really belonged to our King James for a moment was forgotten.

But the Minister of Foreign Affairs was at his post. With promptitude and vigor he acted. He addressed a circular note to all the powers of Europe, and to our State Department a protest. It read as follows:

*GRANDE CHANCELLERIE DE LA PRINCIPAUTE DE TRINIDAD,
27 WEST THIRTY-SIXTH STREET,
NEW YORK CITY, U. S. A.,*

NEW YORK, July 30, 1895.

To His Excellency Mr. the Secretary of State of the Republic of the United States of North America, Washington, D. C.:

EXCELLENCY.--I have the honor to recall to your memory:

1. That in the course of the month of September, 1893, Baron Harden-Hickey officially notified all the Powers of his taking possession of the uninhabited island of Trinidad; and

2. That in course of January, 1894, he renewed to all these Powers the official notification of the said taking of possession, and informed them at the same time that from that date the land would be known as 'Principality of Trinidad'; that he took the title of 'Prince of Trinidad,' and would reign under the name of James I.

In consequence of these official notifications several Powers have recognized the new Principality and its Prince, and at all events none thought it necessary at that epoch to raise objections or formulate opposition.

The press of the entire world has, on the other hand, often acquainted readers with these facts, thus giving to them all possible publicity. In consequence of the accomplishment of these various formalities, and as the law of nations prescribes that 'derelict' territories belong to whoever will take possession of them, and as the island of Trinidad, which has been abandoned for years, certainly belongs to the aforesaid category, his Serene Highness Prince James I was authorized to regard his rights on the said island as perfectly valid and indisputable.

Nevertheless, your Excellency knows that recently, in spite of all the legitimate rights of my august sovereign, an English war-ship has disembarked at Trinidad a detachment of armed troops and taken possession of the island in the name of England.

Following this assumption of territory, the Brazilian Government, invoking a right of ancient Portuguese occupation (long ago outlawed), has notified the English Government to surrender the island to Brazil.

I beg of your Excellency to ask of the Government of the United States of North America to recognize the Principality of Trinidad as an independent State, and to come to an understanding with the other American Powers in order to guarantee its neutrality.

Thus the Government of the United States of North America will once more accord its powerful assistance to the cause of right and of justice, misunderstood by England and Brazil, put an end to a situation which threatens to disturb the peace, re-establish concord between two

great States ready to appeal to arms, and affirm itself, moreover, as the faithful interpreter of the Monroe Doctrine.

In the expectation of your reply please accept, Excellency, the expression of my elevated consideration. The Grand Chancellor, Secretary for Foreign Affairs,

COMTE DE LA BOISSIERE.

At that time Richard Olney was Secretary of State, and in his treatment of the protest, and of the gentleman who wrote it, he fully upheld the reputation he made while in office of lack of good manners. Saying he was unable to read the handwriting in which the protest was written, he disposed of it in a way that would suggest itself naturally to a statesman and a gentleman. As a "crank" letter he turned it over to the Washington correspondents. You can imagine what they did with it.

The day following the reporters in New York swept down upon the chancellery and upon the Minister of Foreign Affairs. It was the "silly season" in August, there was no real news in town, and the troubles of De la Boissiere were allowed much space.

They laughed at him and at his king, at his chancellery, at his broken English, at his "grave and courtly manners," even at his clothes. But in spite of the ridicule, between the lines you could read that to the man himself it all was terribly real.

I had first heard of the island of Trinidad from two men I knew who spent three months on it searching for the treasure, and when Harden-Hickey proclaimed himself lord of the island, through the papers I had carefully followed his fortunes. So, partly out of curiosity and partly out of sympathy, I called at the chancellery.

I found it in a brownstone house, in a dirty neighborhood just west of Seventh Avenue, and of where now stands the York Hotel. Three weeks ago I revisited it and found it unchanged. At the time of my first visit, on the jamb of the front door was pasted a piece of paper on which was written in the handwriting of De la Boissiere: "Chancellerie de la Principaute de Trinidad."

The chancellery was not exactly in its proper setting. On its door-step children of the tenements were playing dolls with clothes-pins; in the street a huckster in raucous tones was offering wilted cabbages to women in wrappers leaning from the fire escapes; the smells and the heat of New York in midsummer rose from the asphalt. It was a far cry to the wave-swept island off the coast of Brazil.

De la Boissiere received me with distrust. The morning papers had made him man-shy; but, after a few "Your Excellencies" and a respectful inquiry regarding "His Royal Highness," his confidence revived. In the situation he saw nothing humorous, not even in an announcement on the wall which read: "Sailings to Trinidad." Of these there were two; on March 1, and on October 1. On the table were many copies of the royal proclamation, the postage-stamps of the new government, the thousand-franc bonds, and, in pasteboard boxes, the gold and red enamelled crosses of the Order of Trinidad.

He talked to me frankly and fondly of Prince James. Indeed, I never met any man who knew Harden-Hickey well who did not speak of him with aggressive loyalty. If at his eccentricities they smiled, it was with the smile of affection. It was easy to see De la Boissiere regarded him not only with the affection of a friend, but with the devotion of a true subject. In his manner he himself was courteous, gentle, and so distinguished that I felt as though I were enjoying, on intimate terms, an audience with one of the prime-ministers of Europe.

And he, on his part, after the ridicule of the morning papers, to have any one with outward seriousness accept his high office and his king, was, I believe, not ungrateful.

I told him I wished to visit Trinidad, and in that I was quite serious. The story of an island filled with buried treasure, and governed by a king, whose native subjects were turtles and seagulls, promised to make interesting writing.

The count was greatly pleased. I believe in me he saw his first bona-fide settler, and when I rose to go he even lifted one of the crosses of Trinidad and, before my envious eyes, regarded it uncertainly.

Perhaps, had he known that of all decorations it was the one I most desired; had I only then and there booked my passage, or sworn allegiance to King James, who knows but that to-day I might be a chevalier, with my name in the "Book of Gold"? But instead of bending the knee, I reached for my hat; the count replaced the cross in its pasteboard box, and for me the psychological moment had passed.

Others, more deserving of the honor, were more fortunate. Among my fellow-reporters who, like myself, came to scoff, and remained to pray, was Henri Pene du Bois, for some time, until his recent death, the brilliant critic of art and music of the *American*. Then he was on the *Times*, and Henry N. Cary, now of the *Morning Telegraph*, was his managing editor.

When Du Bois reported to Cary on his assignment, he said: "There is nothing funny in that story. It's pathetic. Both those men are in earnest. They are convinced they are being robbed of their rights. Their only fault is that they have imagination, and that the rest of us lack it. That's the way it struck me, and that's the way the story ought to be written."

"Write it that way," said Cary.

So, of all the New York papers, the *Times*, for a brief period, became the official organ of the Government of James the First, and in time Cary and Du Bois were created Chevaliers of the Order of Trinidad, and entitled to wear uniforms "Similar to those of the Chamberlains of the Court, save that the buttons bear the impress of the Royal Crown."

The attack made by Great Britain and Brazil upon the independence of the principality, while it left Harden-Hickey in the position of a king in exile, brought him at once another crown, which, by those who offered it to him, was described as of incomparably greater value than that of Trinidad.

In the first instance the man had sought the throne; in this case the throne sought the man. In 1893 in San Francisco, Ralston J. Markowe, a lawyer and a one-time officer of artillery in the United States army, gained renown as one of the Morrow filibustering expedition which attempted to overthrow the Dole government in the Hawaiian Isles and restore to the throne Queen Liliuokalani. In San Francisco Markowe was nicknamed the "Prince of Honolulu," as it was understood, should Liliuokalani regain her crown, he would be rewarded with some high office. But in the star of Liliuokalani, Markowe apparently lost faith, and thought he saw in Harden-Hickey timber more suitable for king-making. Accordingly, twenty-four days after the "protest" was sent to our State Department, Markowe switched his allegiance to Harden-Hickey, and to him addressed the following letter:

SAN FRANCISCO, August 26, 1895.

BARON HARDEN-HICKEY, LOS ANGELES, CAL.:

Monseigneur--Your favor of August 16 has been received.

1. *I am the duly authorized agent of the Royalist party in so far as it is possible for any one to occupy that position under existing circumstances. With the Queen in prison and absolutely cut off from all communication with her friends, it is out of the question for me to carry anything like formal credentials.*

2. *Alienating any part of the territory cannot give rise to any constitutional questions, for the reason that the constitutions, like the land tenures, are in a state of such utter confusion that only a strong hand can unravel them, and the restoration will result in the establishment of a strong military government. If I go down with the expedition I have organized I shall be in full control of the situation and in a position to carry out all my contracts.*

3. *It is the island of Kauai on which I propose to establish you as an independent sovereign.*

4. *My plan is to successively occupy all the islands, leaving the capital to the last. When the others have fallen, the capital, being cut off from all its resources, will be easily taken, and may very likely fall without effort. I don't expect in any case to have to fortify myself or to take the defensive, or to have to issue a call to arms, as I shall have an overwhelming force to join me at once, in addition to those who go with me, who by themselves will be sufficient to carry everything before them without active cooperation from the people there.*

5. *The Government forces consist of about 160 men and boys, with very imperfect military training, and of whom about forty are officers. They are organized as infantry. There are also about 600 citizens enrolled as a reserve guard, who may be called upon in case of an emergency, and about 150 police. We can fully rely upon the assistance of all the police and from one-quarter to one-half of the other troops. And of the remainder many will under no circumstances engage in a sharp fight in defense of the present government. There are now on the island plenty of men and arms to accomplish our purpose, and if my expedition does not get off very soon the people there will be organized to do the work without other assistance from here than the direction of a few leaders, of which they stand more in need than anything else.*

6. *The tonnage of the vessel is 146. She at present has berth-room for twenty men, but bunks can be arranged in the hold for 256 more, with provision for ample ventilation. She has one complete set of sails and two extra spars. The remaining information in regard to her I will have to obtain and send you to-morrow. I think it must be clear to you that the opportunity now offered you will be of incomparably greater value at once than Trinidad would ever be. Still hoping that I may have an interview with you at an early date, respectfully yours,*

RALSTON J. MARKOWE.

What Harden-Hickey thought of this is not known, but as two weeks before he received it he had written Markowe, asking him by what authority he represented the Royalists of Honolulu, it seems evident that when the crown of Hawaii was first proffered him he did not at once spurn it.

He now was in the peculiar position of being a deposed king of an island in the South Atlantic, which had been taken from him, and king-elect of an island in the Pacific, which was his if he could take it.

This was in August of 1895. For the two years following, Harden-Hickey was a soldier of misfortunes. Having lost his island kingdom, he could no longer occupy himself with plans for its improvement. It had been his toy. They had taken it from him, and the loss and the ridicule which followed hurt him bitterly.

And for the lands he really owned in Mexico and California, and which, if he were to live in comfort, it was necessary he should sell, he could find no purchaser; and, moreover, having quarreled with his father-in-law, he had cut off his former supply of money. The need of it pinched him cruelly.

The advertised cause of this quarrel was sufficiently characteristic to be the real one. Moved by the attack of Great Britain upon his principality, Harden-Hickey decided upon reprisals. It must be remembered that always he was more Irish than French. On paper he organized an invasion of England from Ireland, the home of his ancestors. It was because Flagler refused to give him money for this adventure that he broke with him. His friends say this was the real reason of the quarrel, which was a quarrel on the side of Harden-Hickey alone.

And there were other, more intimate troubles. While not separated from his wife, he now was seldom in her company. When the Baroness was in Paris, Harden-Hickey was in San Francisco; when she returned to San Francisco, he was in Mexico. The fault seems to have been his. He was greatly admired by pretty women. His daughter by his first wife, now a very beautiful girl of sixteen, spent much time with her stepmother; and when not on his father's ranch in Mexico, his son also, for months together, was at her side. The husband approved of this, but he himself saw his wife infrequently.

Nevertheless, early in the spring of 1898, the Baroness leased a house in Brockton Square, in Riverside, Cal., where it was understood by herself and by her friends her husband would join her. At that time in Mexico he was trying to dispose of a large tract of land. Had he been able to sell it, the money for a time would have kept one even of his extravagances contentedly rich. At least, he would have been independent of his wife and of her father. Up to February of 1898 his obtaining this money seemed probable.

Early in that month the last prospective purchaser decided not to buy.

There is no doubt that had Harden-Hickey then turned to his father-in-law, that gentleman, as he had done before, would have opened an account for him.

But the Prince of Trinidad felt he could no longer beg, even for the money belonging to his wife, from the man he had insulted. He could no longer ask his wife to intercede for him. He was without money of his own, with out the means of obtaining it; from his wife he had ceased to expect even sympathy, and from the world he knew, the fact that he was a self-made king caused him always to be pointed out with ridicule as a charlatan, as a jest.

The soldier of varying fortunes, the duelist and dreamer, the devout Catholic and devout Buddhist, saw the forty-third year of his life only as the meeting-place of many fiascos.

His mind was tormented with imaginary wrongs, imaginary slights, imaginary failures.

This young man, who could paint pictures, write books, organize colonies oversea, and with a sword pick the buttons from a waistcoat, forgot the twenty good years still before him; forgot that men loved him for the mistakes he had made; that in parts of the great city of Paris his name was still spoken fondly, still was famous and familiar.

In his book on the "Ethics of Suicide," for certain hard places in life he had laid down an inevitable rule of conduct.

As he saw it he had come to one of those hard places, and he would not ask of others what he himself would not perform.

From Mexico he set out for California, but not to the house his wife had prepared for him.

Instead, on February 9, 1898, at El Paso, he left the train and registered at a hotel.

At 7.30 in the evening he went to his room, and when, on the following morning, they kicked in the door, they found him stretched rigidly upon the bed, like one lying in state, with, near his hand, a half-emptied bottle of poison.

On a chair was pinned this letter to his wife:

My DEAREST--No news from you, although you have had plenty of time to write. Harvey has written me that he has no one in view at present to buy my land. Well, I shall have tasted the cup of bitterness to the very dregs, but I do not complain. Good-bye. I forgive you your conduct toward me and trust you will be able to forgive yourself. I prefer to be a dead gentleman to a living blackguard like your father."

And when they searched his open trunk for something that might identify the body on the bed, they found the crown of Trinidad.

You can imagine it: the mean hotel bedroom, the military figure with its white face and mustache, "a la Louis Napoleon," at rest upon the pillow, the startled drummers and chambermaids peering in from the hall, and the landlord, or coroner, or doctor, with a bewildered countenance, lifting to view the royal crown of gilt and velvet.

The other actors in this, as Harold Frederic called it, "Opera Bouffe Monarchy," are still living.

The Baroness Harden-Hickey makes her home in this country.

The Count de la Boissiere, ex-Minister of Foreign Affairs, is still a leader of the French colony in New York, and a prosperous commission merchant with a suite of offices on Fifty-fourth Street. By the will of Harden-Hickey he is executor of his estate, guardian of his children, and what, for the purpose of this article, is of more importance, in his hands lies the future of the kingdom of Trinidad. When Harden-Hickey killed himself the title to the island was in dispute. Should young Harden-Hickey wish to claim it, it still would be in dispute. Meanwhile, by the will of the First James, De la Boissiere is appointed perpetual regent, a sort of "receiver," and executor of the principality.

To him has been left a royal decree signed and sealed, but blank. In the will the power to fill in this blank with a statement showing the final disposition of the island has been bestowed upon De la Boissiere.

So, some day, he may proclaim the accession of a new king, and give a new lease of life to the kingdom of which Harden-Hickey dreamed.

But unless his son, or wife, or daughter should assert his or her rights, which is not likely to happen, so ends the dynasty of James the First of Trinidad, Baron of the Holy Roman Empire.

To the wise ones in America he was a fool, and they laughed at him; to the wiser ones, he was a clever rascal who had evolved a new real-estate scheme and was out to rob the people--and they respected him. To my mind, of them all, Harden-Hickey was the wisest.

Granted one could be serious, what could be more delightful than to be your own king on your own island?

The comic paragraphers, the business men of "hard, common sense," the captains of industry who laughed at him and his national resources of buried treasure, turtles' eggs, and guano, with his body-guard of Zouaves and his Grand Cross of Trinidad, certainly possessed many things that Harden-Hickey lacked. But they in turn lacked the things that made him happy; the power to "make believe," the love of romance, the touch of adventure that plucked him by the sleeve.

When, as boys, we used to say: "Let's pretend we're pirates," as a man, Harden-Hickey begged: "Let's pretend I'm a king."

But the trouble was, the other boys had grown up and would not pretend.

For some reason his end always reminds me of the closing line of Pinero's play, when the adventuress, Mrs. Tanqueray, kills herself, and her virtuous stepchild says: "If we had only been kinder!"