

# At Swords' Points;

OR,  
A SOLDIER OF THE RHINE.

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## CHAPTER XII (Continued.)

Three against one is always heavy odds, even when the lone individual is built in heroic mold, and Paul was not averse to calling for assistance from such a source.

So he stroiled up and down, nursing a cigar and keeping close to the line of carriages.

A singular thing happened, which gave Paul cause for much speculation later on.

Glancing down the line, he saw a woman's head projected suddenly from the window of a first-class carriage.

It was so quickly withdrawn, and somehow he was under the impression that the sight of him so near at hand had been the cause of its disappearance.

More than this, Rhineland was almost ready to take his oath that he had seen something familiar about the head.

In fact, he had good cause to believe the party was no other than the Countess Almée.

When he walked slowly past the compartment he found the shade drawn down and all dark within, so that he could discover no confirmation of his suspicion.

At any rate, it gave him food for thought.

He really needed something of the sort to take his mind away from his troubles, at times threatened to overwhelm him.

All aboard again, and they were off.

Paul saw no reason to regret his little saunter, since, besides giving him an opportunity to enjoy a good cigar in the open air, it had also settled his convictions regarding his fellow travelers, and at the same time opened his eyes to the possible presence of the countess.

Several times, from the adjoining compartment, had come the sound of a gruff laugh, and there was something very familiar about its genial nature, though Paul could not manage to just place it.

He wondered whether these men meant him ill or if he had drawn largely upon his imagination in thinking so.

They appeared to have settled down and were all locked in Morpheus' arms—somehow the air seemed to grow heavier, and Paul's resistance of less avail, until, finally, half way between midnight and dawn, he crossed the borderland of sleep.

## CHAPTER XIII.

In Durand's Vile.

Perhaps half an hour had elapsed, when the stout Teuton merchant raised his head and with eager eyes surveyed the corner where Paul was sprawled out asleep.

Convinced that everything was propitious, he gave the foot of the younger tourist a sudden kick that brought the scholar erect at once.

The merchant pointed and grinned, whereupon the other arose and approached Paul, who still slept on, utterly unconscious of impending woe.

They seized upon the American. Paul struggled desperately—alas! he was taken at such disadvantage that he found himself almost powerless against these men.

One had a knee upon his chest and was choking him, while the other gathered his hands together and proceeded to tie them in a most ignominious fashion.

When this had been accomplished they suffered Paul to rise, which he did with alacrity, at the same time demanding to know what such an indignity meant, and threatening them with all manner of punishment when their destination was reached.

But all that had no effect, so Paul lay back in his corner and thought. Again that laugh in the adjoining compartment.

Like a flash it came to him where he had heard that cheery sound before.

It was the English surgeon who had stood at his back in the student duel, and whose words of genuine sympathy and good luck he could distinctly remember. What would not the big Briton do to the pretended keepers once he was let loose among them?

Then Paul considered that the Englishman might fall him—might prove a myth, after all, so he set about to free himself from his bonds.

It was hard work, but at last—how he breathed a sigh of relief when the stretched bonds fell off his wrists.

Free again, thank heaven! and ere he would allow those ignominious cords to be again wrapped about his arms he would die.

Now, to lay hold of the weapon.

Steady! one of the fellows was eyeing him in a suspicious manner, and it would not do to let the game be discovered at this stage.

As the man rose from his seat and drew back the traveling rug, the American struck him with all his force, at the same time springing to his feet. He reached now for the firearm.

The situation took a sudden turn, however, from the plan of campaign which he had laid out, for just at this interesting moment there came several shrill pipings from the motor ahead, then a crash, and a tremendous upheaval that betokened a serious accident on the road; and, of course, Paul found no immediate use for his little persuader.

A smash-up on the railway is seri-

ous enough at any time, but it seems to possess an added horror when one is so situated that the freedom of limbs is denied.

Rhineland felt the carriage violently upheave, then toss to the right and left as if in the grasp of a hurricane.

All manner of horrible sounds burst upon his ears, very nearly deafening him.

Then came a tremendous crash, followed by a shock.

When he crawled out from the wreck he found quite enough to engage his attention in rescuing those less fortunate than himself from the wreck.

One good turn this accident did Paul—he was free from the unwelcome attentions of the men who had watched him so closely, and who had been taking drastic measures to get him into their power, at the time the smash occurred.

Just then Paul heard a voice from close by, a voice that calmly begged assistance, a voice that showed no trace of fear or alarm.

He knew it belonged to the Englishman, and with all speed he made for the spot, eager to render Sir Noel what help he could.

No doubt the other was surprised to hear an English voice address him, but under the conditions he did not ask any explanation until his limbs had been extricated from their predicament.

"Any serious damage, Sir Noel?" asked Paul, seeing the other make a cursory examination.

"Thank heaven, I have come out better even than I might have expected. A beastly piece of business, isn't it? But you seem to know me—we have met somewhere. I am glad to shake your hand and thank you for the help you gave."

As he did so, he leaned forward, endeavoring to see Paul's face.

"I am Paul Rhineland—we met under peculiar conditions at Heidelberg," Paul said, quietly.

The big Briton squeezed his hand some more.

"By Jove! You cut out some brave work for us—thirteen stitches, my boy, it took to cover that fellow's cheek. A rare mark he'll carry for life. Glad to meet you again, doubly glad to be under obligations. But I may be the only doctor at hand. See you later, my boy."

He hurried off to where a fire was burning, and in which quarter they were carrying the injured as fast as rescued from the wreck.

Just then a shriek from feminine lungs somewhere in the distance reminded Paul of what he had seen.

Was the Countess Almée on the train, as he had some reason to believe? He hurried to the carriage where he remembered having seen her, but when he looked the nest was empty.

A man with a lantern rendered him some assistance, since by the aid of the light he discovered certain articles in the snug nest so recently occupied by a lady as served to prove her identity.

Then his suspicions were not overdrawn, and she had been the genius whose hand manipulated the strings by which he had been trapped.

The accident had, unfortunately, taken place at a lonely part of the road and this assistance could hardly come before dawn.

Curiosity caused Paul to draw closer to the fire and survey the groups near by.

He was searching for the countess, and though the women were hardly in a condition to appear presentable, still Paul believed he could have recognized the adventuress in any guise.

To his surprise he failed to discover her! Then he turned to make inquiries of Sir Noel, and in this way discovered the truth; but before he reached the doctor, the female assistant, who was flitting about like an angel of mercy, binding up wounds and carrying water to parched lips, came between his eyes, and the blazing fire, and Paul was stunned to discover in this tender-hearted sister of charity the woman he had looked upon as a cold-blooded adventuress, Countess Almée.

The sight of the countess in the role of charity gave Paul a queer sensation—he had seen her rope in the dupes in Paris, men with titles and fortunes falling into her net galore, but this was a new feature which he had never dreamed could exist in her nature.

It only went to show that she was a woman after all, with a tender heart beneath the exterior—perhaps, had fortune been more kindly in surrounding her with luxury she might have been a blessing rather than a curse to mankind.

At any rate Paul found himself condoning her faults and feeling more charitably disposed toward her.

She had seen and recognized him, and instantly came to his side.

"The doctor told me you were unhurt," she said, and he knew then that his safety had been upon her mind while she worked.

"I regret to tell you that one of your friends has vanished and the other has a broken leg—possibly you have found him yonder," he remarked.

She did not blush at all, but simply laughed.

"Yes, I have attended to him. He groans horribly and has not the nerve

of a child. No doubt you condemn me for using such heroic measures to accomplish my purpose, but I am a believer in the adage that the end justifies the means. You know that which may ruin me should it come out, and I am surely at liberty to defend myself. Besides—I had other reasons for my actions."

Paul knew what she meant, and his old feeling of repulsion came back.

Such determination appalled him—it was it possible to escape from the clutches of this wonderful woman once she set her mind upon his capture?

A less stubborn man might have yielded to what he was pleased to call the inevitable, but Paul was saved from this fate by the memory of a face.

Though Hildegard might be lost to him forever, he could not forget the charm of that modest blush which signaled the condition of her heart toward him.

By that memory he was ready to steer his craft, whether dire disaster or the favoring winds of fortune overtook him.

"My visit to Berlin," he said, "is one of pure defense, but in clearing the innocent it will be necessary to place the blame just where it belongs. You understand what that means. Germany is no place for you, Countess, and if you are as wise as I take you to be you will pass over the border without much delay."

She looked at him strangely.

"I am unable to quite fathom the motive that influences you to warn me. I had imagined that you hated me," she said, slowly.

"Not that, Countess; not that. I only regretted that I was unable to return the unfortunate regard you expressed for me. A man can not force his heart to act—that is, beyond his control."

"Then, in spite of my work, you say you have not despised me, Paul?" with a vein of eagerness in her voice.

"I am afraid I was beginning to when suffering the indignities your agents chose to heap upon me; but as I saw you ministering to these poor suffering wretches all that passed away. I would not have harm come to you, Countess."

"Then turn back to Heidelberg."

"I have too much at stake to do that. Come what will I shall go to Berlin."

"There is war in sight."

"I know it, and perhaps I may be given an opportunity to see some action. In my present frame of mind nothing would suit me better."

She looked troubled.

"Surely you would not take up arms against my beloved France?"

"You forget that German blood flowed in the veins of my forefathers. And, in truth, I am utterly indifferent as to the cause that takes me to the field, since it is only the excitement of battle that I desire."

"You grieve me very much, Monsieur. I would see you fighting for the lilies of France with the keenest of pleasure. Perhaps a commission—"

"Do not mention it. Remember, Countess, I have given you ample warning of my intentions once I reach the capital. If you are wise you will vanish immediately. At any rate, I shall not hold myself in blame should something unpleasant happen to show you the interior of a gloomy German fortress."

"Have no fear. I am well able to look out for myself. Perhaps I have influential friends closer to the throne than you may suspect."

She was called away at this juncture by Sir Noel, who had need of her valuable assistance in binding up a wounded arm.

A remarkable woman! Yes, Paul was compelled to acknowledge that he had never met nor heard of her equal. He hoped he would never see the Countess again; but fate willed otherwise, as future events would prove.

His next concern was to reach Berlin.

(To be continued.)

## MEMBERS OF SACRED COLLEGE.

Italians Have Majority in Selecting a New Pope.

The sacred college enters on the new year so nearly complete as to mark a new record. The plenum is seventy, and there are now sixty-six red hats, with heads under them, if one may so express it, which leaves little or no margin, as it is a tradition to leave the number of the princes of the church incomplete. At the beginning of 1900 there were only fifty-six; during the year two have died, and twelve have been created. During the twenty-four years of Leo XIII.'s pontificate no fewer than 137 cardinals have died. Recently the sacred college was so reduced as to have only fifty-one members, and was re-enforced by only one consistory by the creation of twelve cardinals, who substantially modified that institution, and who will have a notable influence on the election of a new pope, says the Pall Mall Gazette.

The proportion of foreign and Italian princes of the church, which until recent years had been kept about equal, is now, however, much altered, the Italians being in the majority. In fact, the sacred college is at present composed of forty Italians and twenty-six of other nations; of these seven are French, six Austro-Hungarian, one Portuguese, one Belgian, one American, one English, one Irish, etc. Given that the sixty-six cardinals all enter the conclave, the Italians would at once be in the majority in favor of their own countrymen, a majority of one only being necessary to make the election valid. But agreement is necessary, and this is the saving clause in favor of the minority, which can make their weight felt through the disagreements of the others.

## MATCHED COINS FOR WIFE



MISS CELESTE MCGANN

Miss McGann, who is the stepdaughter of a wealthy Philadelphian, met A. Kulp, a Pittsburg druggist, and Harry E. McCune, a Braddock, Pa., dentist, at Hot Springs, Ark. Both fell in love with her and agreed to match coins to settle who was to retreat from the field. Druggist Kulp won, but gracefully gave in when he found Miss McGann had a slight preference for Dentist McCune. She was married to McCune at Cincinnati. When the bride's stepfather, after the marriage, demanded to know something of the standing of her husband, Druggist Kulp again showed his gallantry by helping to look up McCune's relations and business standing in Braddock and Pittsburg. Mrs. McCune is said to be only 16 years old.

## Grandson of General Grant

Algernon Sartoris, who has entered a machinist shop to work at the bench in order to prepare himself for a course in electrical engineering, is the grandchild of Gen. Grant and the eldest son of Mrs. Nellie Grant Sartoris. Young Sartoris is now in his twenty-fourth year and one of the most promising of the descendants of the great American soldier and President. He was born in Washington and studied for a few years in the Columbia University Law School. At the outbreak of the Spanish war he at once offered his services as a volunteer, although untrained in military art. He is an earnest, strong young man and has numerous friends. An interesting contingency hangs on his success in the profession he has set about learning. It is nothing less than the hand of Miss Edith Davidge, daughter of the late W. C. Davidge of Washington. If Mr. Sartoris makes a success of his studies Miss Davidge, who has been conditionally engaged to him, will become his wife.



ate and in the speaker's lobby of the house. Hundreds of people daily correct their watches by them.

## A Writ of Ouster.

An Illinois man wrote Bob Wright, of Dodge City, the other day, complaining that Wright had fenced up in his big pasture a quarter section belonging to the Illinois man, says the Wichita Eagle. Wright replied: "Dear Sir: I did not know I was using your land. I insist that you remove it from my pasture at once."

## DISTINGUISHED FRENCH WOMAN

The most versatile woman in Europe is without doubt Marguerite Durand, the owner and editor in chief of La Fronde. Besides being an able writer

comedian he would want nothing better than to have Mlle. Durand in the leading female role.

In all the large cities of France Marguerite Durand has pleaded the cause of woman with signal success. Since her agitation many doors have been opened to the services of woman both in commerce and in the professions.

It was due to the indefatigable energy of Mlle. Durand that La Fronde, the only successful newspaper in the world, owned, edited and printed by women only, was founded in December, 1897. The first day's issue exceeded 200,000 copies. Since then it has become a popular daily. Scoffers have stopped their sarcasm and it is regularly quoted by the press of Paris.

Mlle. Durand is a handsome woman, full of life and energy, usually the center of attraction at social gatherings.

## Hotel Center of the World.

An idea of the abundance of hotel accommodations in New York may be had from the statement of the president of the Hotel Men's Association there that New York has become the greatest hotel center in the world. It has more hotels than London, Paris and Berlin combined. There are twice as many hotels in New York today as there were a year ago, and they are being put up by the dozen, by the score, by the hundred, and they are reckoned the best investment there is going.

## Medals for the Navy.

According to a rough estimate prepared by the Navy Department, 7,504 medals will be required for the officers and men of the navy and marine corps who participated in the engagements in and adjacent to the West Indies during the war with Spain.

## CHINA'S CREDIT BAD.

PEOPLE HAVE NO CONFIDENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT.

Native Journal Comments on the Difference Between Its Own Country and the Western Nations—Use of a National Debt.

The Shen Pao, a Chinese journal, laments the fact that the Chinese people are not as ready as people in the West to lend money to the government. In China the rulers look upon the empire as a family to be administered for their private advantage. In Western lands the people are the kingdom and the rulers act according to that principle.

For example, if a wealthy land owner wishes to borrow money and applies to his children and servants they are all willing to help him according to their ability, for they know the land owner has property enough to make repayment sure. Now, the emperor is the father and mother of his people. Why can not he, on the same principle, borrow money from his people? It must be because they do not trust him.

All foreign countries have national debts, which they owe to their own people chiefly and only to other countries in a smaller degree. The governments have no difficulty in floating loans, which are at once covered by their own people, who have such confidence in their governments that they lend money freely. There is mutual trust and love between upper and lower classes. Even if the time for repayment is hundreds of years off they do not mind, for they know they will get their interest as long as the kingdom lasts.

How different it is in China. The people will not lend their money to the state, and no promise will move them. The curious thing is that the bigger the national debt of these foreign countries the more prosperous is the country. Thus, Japan is an instance in point. This is because the money was borrowed for the benefit of the people, that railways, etc., might be built. Inasmuch as much money has been loaned to Japan by other states these are unwilling to injure her by going to war with her. Now, Turkey is loaded with debt and seems an exception to the rule above enumerated. But she only proves the rule. Why is she so poor? Because she borrowed money and wasted it. She did not use it to build public works, which would bring in vast profits. If China borrows for right uses a national debt need be no hindrance to her prosperity; nay, it may be an indispensable help on the path of progress.

## IMPULSIVE CHARITY.

Large Man, and Aggressive, But He Could Do a Good Act.

He was a large man with a large mustache and an aggressive way. It was New Year's eve, and he was monopolizing at least one-third of the bar in a Sixth avenue drinking place. Over in one corner there was a feeble gas stove, which a man was embracing in a futile effort to get warm. His lips were blue with the cold, and while he rubbed his hands his eyes wandered from one to the other of the haggard dishes on the free lunch counter. There were a great many men in the place. Suddenly the big man went into action. From each of the many men he demanded a dollar. No one stopped to reason why. He was a large man and his way was aggressive. When he had received his toll from them all he thrust his hand in his own pocket, took the first bill his fingers touched—it was a ten—and, crumpling it in with the others, approached the man that was embracing the feeble stove. "Get out o' here," he demanded, catching him by the shoulders and shoving him toward the door, "and take this with you," thrusting the crumpled up bills into the man's pocket. There was a look of contentment on the faces of the many men. Sometimes it seems pleasantest to contribute to the charity that does not reason why.—New York Post.

## Surely This Lie Was Forgiven.

One wild night in October, 1894, the fishing smack, Highland Mary was running before a gale such as seldom thunders against the Welsh coast, even with the Irish Sea, white with fury.

Skipper McKewan, with set teeth, had lost hope, and, grim and silent, was holding to the shattered rigging as the boat floundered shoreward. Near him his son Hugh, clung to a battered rail, and the one hand, named McAllister, also had made himself secure. McAllister and the skipper each had a life belt. In the dark the father called to the son:

"You've got a belt, Hughie?"  
"O, aye," replied the lad, cheerily.  
"We can't last another five minutes, lads," said the skipper. "Look out for yourselves, lads, and God be wi' you."

Then a great wave rose under them flinging the smack upon the reefs. All three men headed for the rocks. Aided by the belt the skipper landed first, followed in a moment by McAllister.

But it was daylight when the body of Hugh McKewan came ashore. And it had no belt round it.

## "Figaro" Out of Politics.

Gaston Calmette, who was elected as managing director of the Paris Figaro after a four-hour meeting of the paper's shareholders, says the Dreyfus affair is dead and buried, and there will be scarcely any space devoted to politics in the Figaro hereafter.

Our doubts are traitors and make us lose the good we oft might win by fearing to attempt.