

# At Swords' Points;

## OR, A SOLDIER OF THE RHINE.

By ST. GEORGE RATHORNE

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### CHAPTER XXI. Paul Plays for Time.

Rhineland needed no lexicon to tell him facts that were as plainly marked as daylight before his eyes. No sooner had his eyes fallen upon the face of the dapper captain who came last month into the apartment behind the soldiers than the truth burst upon him like a flash.

It was the countess!

The eager look upon her face as she entered the room told him it was with her a moment of considerable satisfaction, a time of triumph.

Paul was calm.

He knew the crisis of his life, perhaps, had come.

There was a foe more to be feared than the duelist through whose living shoulder he had thrust his ready blade in the gray of dawn.

It was his duty, of course, to appear indignant, and to demand what such an unannounced entree might signify.

The major was good enough to listen to Paul's little protest, though the contemptuous smile never once left his florid face.

He begged to assure the gentleman that it was with deepest regret the soldiers of His Majesty the Emperor thus invaded a private house in the city of Metz, but these were times when all ordinary rules and regulations had to be set aside, and they had been given positive assurance that those who were plotting treason against France, had sought refuge beneath this roof.

The one glance Paul swept around showed him his mother, pale-faced, yet brave, surveying the scene in astonishment, Beatrix wringing her little hands in sore dismay, knowing what danger hung over the head of her Karl, and that latter individual, perfectly cool and alert, watching the course of events.

Paul drew out his papers of parole, which he carried as a protection—they gave him the liberty of the city of Metz upon certain conditions which he had thus far faithfully carried out.

"Monsieur le major, will you be good enough to examine these documents?" he said.

The officer caught sight of the signature, and felt compelled to give them a glance.

"They seem regular enough," he grated.

"Then this is, after all, a mistake?" The fat major smiled.

"Oh, no, monsieur. I do not exceed my duty. I assure you, when I come to place you under arrest."

"But—the charge—surely I have a right to visit my mother and my sister."

It was the dandy captain who uttered a cry and fastened his eyes eagerly upon the fair face of Beatrix—perhaps, in that moment, the countess may have wondered whether she might not have been too hasty after all—if one of these charmers thus turned out to be his sister, might there not be some hope of the other proving at least a cousin?

The suggestion vanished almost as speedily as it had leaped into being.

She had gone too far now to turn back—this man had scorned the chances she offered him to come in out of the wet, and she must not enter a complaint if the deluge overwhelmed him.

"Under ordinary conditions—of course—but not to plot against the illes of France," returned the French major solemnly.

"I assure you—I am ready to take my oath that not one word has been uttered here that you might not have heard—that since my parole I have adhered strictly to its provisions, which require that I hold no communication with the German army outside the gates of Metz."

Even while Paul was uttering these words he started and cast a sudden apprehensive look in the direction of Karl.

The thought had come to him that possibly he had unconsciously broken the spirit of his parole by seeking the company of one whom he knew to be in Metz acting for the Crown Prince.

It was a most unfortunate action on his part, since hostile eyes were watching him, eyes that were quick to catch the slightest move and interpret it to suit their fancy.

Not to the fat major did these keen eyes belong—that worthy was endeavoring to collect his scattered senses, and carry out his prearranged part in the program—what Paul asserted had in a measure thrown him off the track, and he did not feel quite easy after seeing the signature at the bottom of the parole.

Had Paul been left alone with the soldier he might have won out.

But there was another with whom he had to deal, one possessed of a mind so subtle and a heart so filled with ideas of revenge that the barriers he might raise would go down before the attack as though made of straw.

He saw the woman glide up to the major, who eagerly bent his head to listen.

Paul feared the worst, for had he not seen her glance toward Karl with the eager look of a hawk seeking its prey.

She knew, or had guessed the truth, and was now posting the old fool of a major.

That this was so could be discovered by a single glance, for the soldier pulled out his stout *fryn* as though he had been suddenly arrested with the

coveted cross of the Legion of Honor. The countess stepped back.

One flash of her eyes Paul had, and the baleful look staggered him.

Was this her hour?

Defeated by fortune in Berlin, would she accomplish his destruction in Metz, even while the guns of his fellow soldiers from over the Rhine were pounding away beyond the forts and beating the devil's tattoo in the determined effort to secure the surrender of MacMahon's fine army?

"Monsieur," said the major, stiffly, "the point you have advanced may be well taken, but I cannot allow you your liberty. Perhaps you have held no communication with the foe without, but can you answer the same as to the spies within?"

Paul was silent, for he hardly knew what to say.

"You do not speak, monsieur—you tacitly admit the charge—therefore, you must not protest if we lead you back again to your prison."

The major knew, then, that he had been in a dungeon—perhaps he was also aware of his engagement with Conrad.

"Monsieur le major, I carry here the freedom of the city, signed by the commandant, Marshal Bazaine, whose signature you know. I rely upon that passport to take me where I please within the city walls. You have been influenced by one who hates me to make this arrest. But, M. le major, I stand upon my dignity as the guest of the city of Metz, and I defy you to arrest me. I warn you plainly that if you order one of these men to place a hand on me you will be the first to suffer. Because my life is in danger from yonder woman I have been generously allowed to carry arms, a most unusual thing in the case of a prisoner on parole. So you see I have here a revolver that contains six bullets, more than enough to finish all those who are opposed to me. Much as I should regret spoiling the neat apartments of my mother, and depriving you of what you evidently need, I shall be under the painful necessity of scattering your brains about this place if you persist. I am willing to go to the commandant and surrender myself, but must object to becoming the prisoner of one whom I know to be as unscrupulous as yonder woman."

The sight of Paul's revolver rather staggered the major, who had, of course, not dreamed that a prisoner on parole could properly be possessed of so dangerous a weapon.

He backed to the door, opened it, and bawled out an order for half a dozen more men to come into the apartment.

At the same time Paul managed to say a few words to his mother that caused her to leave the room by another door—he had thought of a forlorn hope.

It was a faint hope indeed upon which Paul was obliged to lean, and only the desperate condition of affairs could account for him giving it any credence whatever.

Heknew his gigantic bluff had failed to work, except in so far as the major's quick demand for a larger bodyguard went.

With nearly a dozen soldiers to oney his beck and call, he would only make sure that his own precious carcass was well cut of range when the word to advance and fall upon the two men would be given.

All Rhineland could do was to delay this climax as long as possible, and meanwhile pray in his heart that some fair measure of success might accompany his mother's mission.

One thing surprised Paul.

This concerned Karl.

The young German had appeared to be taking no steps toward saving himself.

Could it be that he was in measure stupefied by the alarming conditions? Paul thought not.

He had known the other for some time, and felt sure he was not made of such poor material that the presence of danger would deprive him of his usual sterling good sense.

Was he indifferent?

He had much to live for, and even the customary German phlegmatic temperament could not account for a young fellow with a sweetheart resigning himself to death so calmly.

There must be something back of it. Perhaps he was watching his chance, and when the old major and his guards were caught napping he meant to suddenly galvanize into life, make one mad spring through the door which Paul's mother had left open and, taking his chances with pursuing bullets, attempt to escape.

At best it was a hazardous game, with the odds three to one against him.

And yet, what of that—were not they ten to one he would be hung or shot if he remained?

So Paul was ready to see him fit past into the blackness beyond the door, and felt even in a condition to give him his blessing and good wishes. There was something about Karl's coolness, that warmed the cockles of his heart and gave him renewed confidence for the young German soldier had the confident appearance of a man who possessed faith.

At least there was not an atom of that quality called fear about his composition.

So Paul devoted himself to the task, which was one of the strangest in his

whole adventurous career, of spell-binding the enemy.

Seconds counted, and as a minute, it was precious beyond words.

Perhaps the major might be a little more amenable to reason now that he had things in his own hands.

The spell-binding began.

Paul crushed down his bona fide feelings and bent his energies toward cajoling the man who held their destiny in the hollow of his hand.

To hear him talk one might have been pardoned for entertaining a grave suspicion that his ancestry, instead of dating back to old Holland or some Dutch country extended to the famous region of Blarney Castle.

For truly Rhineland did himself proud upon this occasion, when the incentive that spurred him on was life itself.

So rapidly he talked that the major was not able to get a word in edgewise.

Several times he half raised the arm holding that sword of authority, as though he would fain give the signal for a closing in on all sides.

But the major was a Frenchman, with all the courtesy that distinguished his countrymen from the barbarian outer world, and on his life he could not treat a soldier and a gentleman with so great disrespect as to break in upon the thread of his discourse with an order for his arrest.

Delays are often dangerous, and in this case the old aphorism seemed peculiarly suggestive.

For delay was what Paul desired—the hope of it oiled his tongue, and gave him an eloquence he had never before known he possessed.

The wretch who stands with the noose about his neck, scanning the horizon to see some cloud of dust that might betoken the advent of some courier bearing a reprieve, would appreciate the feelings of Paul Rhineland as he endeavored to so hold the fat major by the power of his eloquence that the soldier would delay giving his signal until the hoped for arrival of newcomers on the scene of action.

At first Countess Aimee listened to his flow of compliments with astonishment, since she had never suspected the young American capable of such a remarkable effort.

Gradually, as she noted the soporific effect of his harangue upon the major, she began to feel some apprehension lest her end might be defeated after all.

She frowned and stamped her little foot, whereat the major started and glanced hastily toward her.

Then ensued a pantomime between the two, he shrugging his shoulders as though asserting his unwillingness to act while Paul kept up this flow of eloquence, while the woman pointed to the American nodded her head vehemently and again stamped her foot in a temper.

Paul saw it all but he did not let a little thing like this disturb him.

He talked on, even faster than before, talked in a way that must have convinced any jury and even inclined the judge in his favor, talked as a lawyer who seldom found occasion to do so in defense of a client, for Paul was holding his own life in the balance.

A few minutes at the most was all he wanted, and, thanks to his surprising tactics, he won.

He had kept the major in suspense just three full minutes, loaded to the muzzle all the while with an order for action, yet finding no opportunity to bellow it out unless he chose to forget he was a gentleman, and he would sooner die than do that.

But patience has its limits, even in a polite Frenchman, and Paul, seeing him puff out his cheeks, knew the time of probation had reached its end; but a sensation of satisfaction came over him when he heard some one clattering up the stairs, some one who presently pushed into the room unannounced.

(To be continued.)

A NERVOUS SOUNDREL.

Served Three Years in Prison, but Made \$3,000 by It.

"One of the nerviest and at the same time one of the most dare-devil escapades I ever heard of was pulled off out in Akron several years ago," remarked D. S. Blodgett, an attorney from the oatmeal metropolis, at the New Willard the other evening. "There used to be a fellow in Akron who was a crook, if there ever was one, and yet he was a man of honor. He could borrow \$10,000 from any bank in town on his word, and nobody would ever lose by loaning to him, but if he got a chance to do a man or an institution that could afford to be done he never failed to make the best of it. His motto was 'Never beat anyone on an honest debt.'"

"One evening he was at the depot talking to the express messenger, who was a friend of his. The messenger pushed an iron box into the wagon, and said: 'There's \$5,000 in that box; don't you wish you had it?' That night the gentlemanly crook entered the express company's office and cracked the safe, securing the money, which he took home and buried in sealed tomato cans in his back yard. Of course, he was arrested, and after a long trial was sentenced to five years, his record and the messenger's story convicting him. He was pardoned after serving three years, came home, and dug up the money. It was in big, yellow boys, and that evening he walked over to the messenger's house, rang the bell and shook the notes in his face, saying, 'There's your \$5,000; let's see you get it.'"—Philadelphia Times.

A man may scold, but the best thing he does on earth is to call for a brace.

# ILLINOIS ITEMS

Willard Underhill, 25 years old, who lived northeast of Paris, committed suicide by swallowing a spoonful of powdered arsenic. A short time after taking the poison he changed his mind and sent for a doctor, but it was too late, and death resulted in a few hours.

Murdoch and vicinity was visited by a destructive wind and rain storm. Trees were blown down, windows were blown out, fences turned over and many small outbuildings and cribs either upset or moved from their foundations. The frame of the Christian church, in process of erection, was blown down.

At the regular meeting of the F. J. city council four dramsop licenses were granted at \$1,000 per year.

Jacob I. McKnelly of Blair township, the Republican nominee for county superintendent of schools, is one of the youngest candidates for office in the history of Clay county, he being but 23 years of age. Harvey B. McCullom, the Democratic candidate for county judge, is but 24 years of age.

The postmaster general has appointed the following carriers and substitute to commence service on June 1, at which time the free delivery service will be inaugurated at Litchfield: William H. Byron, Harry J. White, Perley M. Cox, carriers; Charles G. Barnwell, substitute.

Former State Senator David T. Littler, who, although still seriously ill, seems to have inspired his physicians with a more hopeful view of his case, has been suffering for a year or more with a painful complication of diseases, the principal one of which is dropsy. Mr. Littler for many years has been prominent in the Republican

The new city council of Newton has increased saloon licenses from 11,000 to \$2,500 a year. At the increased rate the city will have two saloons. Heretofore a billiard hall license was \$50 per annum. This was raised to \$300.

Trains are now running regularly over the new Decatur and Springfield railroad between Decatur and Mount Auburn, Ill.

J. L. Hughes, who has been the superintendent of the Centralia schools, has accepted the superintendency of the high school at Charleston, at a salary of 50 per cent more than he received. He is classed as one of the leading educators in the state, though yet a young man.

Herman Renegarbe, aged 15 years, son of Fred Renegarbe, who lives about six miles west of Nashville, was accidentally killed. Young Renegarbe was cutting hay in a barn loft. Near by was a hole in the floor, through which he fell into a bin. The knife he still had pierced his breast.

The will of the late James McCreary has been filed for probate in the county court at Taylorville. The testator bequeaths all his property to the trustees of Oak Hill cemetery for the benefit of the soldiers' monument. The estate is valued at \$2,000.

Geo. G. Will, one of Jackson county's pioneer settlers, died at his home in Somerset township, aged 65 years.

In a fire on Commercial avenue, Cairo, which destroyed a building owned by Charles Powers, and partially destroyed Burke's livery stable, a valuable horse belonging to L. Barnard of Wyatt, Mo., was burned to death.

It seems to be a practically settled fact that the Battle Creek Breakfast Food company of Michigan, will soon open a branch manufactory in Quincy.

James McDivitt, an old resident of Adams county, died on his farm in the Indian Grave Levee district, aged 76 years.

The superintendent of the Jackson-ville insane asylum has recommended that the state board of charities should release Mrs. Ida May Denale, who was sent to the institution from Quincy. Mrs. Denale shot and killed her husband last year and was convicted of the crime in the February term of the criminal court. She was acquitted on the plea of insanity and has since spent her time in the asylum.

The Alton board of education has announced that it will issue \$50,000 in school bonds for the erection of the new high school building. The bonds will bear date of June 1 and will be in denominations of \$500. The first \$2,000 will be payable in seven days and the remaining ones at regular intervals thereafter.

Lenore Filbe, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. H. H. Tibbe of Rangoon, Burmah, died at Alton, aged 11 years. Mr. and Mrs. Tibbe were, until a few years ago, engaged as teachers in Rangoon, but Mrs. Tibbe returned to her old home in Upper Alton owing to the ill health of the children. The father is now in Rangoon.

Mrs. Augusta Gebel, wife of Louis Gebel, of Alton, was seriously burned by the ignition of some gasoline she was using at her home. Mrs. Gebel was sprinkling the gasoline in a closet in her home for cleaning purposes, when a lighted candle near by set fire to the gasoline. She was burned about the face, arms, hands and breast.

The Odd Fellows of Madison county will hold a picnic at Rock Spring park in Alton May 20, and it is expected that the picnic will be the biggest ever held in Alton. Invitations have been issued to prominent Odd Fellows in all parts of the state. A committee having charge of the picnic will bring to Alton the band in the Odd Fellows' orphan's home at Lincoln as an attraction. The Daughters of Rebekah will serve supper to the visitors.

The members of the degree staff of the Alton lodge of Rebekahs are planning to attend the next session of the sovereign grand lodge, which will be convened at Des Moines, Ia., September 16, and the Alton degree staff will enter the competition for valuable prizes offered for the most efficient team in degree work. The Alton degree team consists of twenty-one members.

A project is under way to sink coal mines in the western part of Washington and eastern part of St. Clair counties. The scheme is being furthered by a trust company of Kansas City, Mo., with D. D. Thomas as active manager. Many prominent bankers of St. Louis are also interested in the trust company. The towns at which mines are to be sunk are Venedy and Venedy Station, in Washington county and St. Liberty, Darmstadt and Lenzburg in St. Clair county. In addition to the sinking of the shafts a short-line railroad will be built to connect the towns and to promote a speedy delivery of the product to the markets.

The mutilated remains of Charles Jackson, of Granite City, the young Swede, who was murdered mysteriously in Ridgeley, a suburb of Springfield, were buried at Springfield. John Poole of Grafton is in jail charged with the murder and protests his innocence.

John Steward, an old man claiming Sorence, N. Y., as his home, was struck by an Illinois Central passenger train in the Harrison yards near Murphersboro and was badly injured. It was found necessary to amputate the left leg above the knee.

The L. D. Noble farm of 120 acres, near Cairo, has been sold to F. E. Irwin for \$12,000.

William Heisen, a coal miner employed at mine No. 2 of the Illinois Fuel and Power company at Havana, while riding to his work on a hand-car, fell under the car and was run over. His back and hip were broken and he was also injured internally.

The date of the senatorial convention of the 44th district has been changed to May 31. The convention will be held at Sparta.

Charles Duncan, tenant on the E. L. Watson farm, near Lintner, was killed by lightning. He leaves a young widow.

Willard E. Gage of Blue Mound, a graduate of a St. Louis medical college, has been declared insane. Haselmer chapter, Eastern Star, celebrated the tenth anniversary of its founding at Taylorville by giving a banquet.

The Quincy naval reserves has been increased by nineteen recent enlistments and now has an enrollment of fifty-five members.

The Warren Manufacturing company is making arrangements to establish its plant in Quincy and will soon give employment to 100 persons.

City Clerk John A. Berlin of Quincy reports that the cash receipts for licenses during the past twelve months was \$66,113.30. The rebates amounted to \$20,611, leaving the net receipts \$45,492.69. Most of this license money came from the saloons.

Prof. William Marlow, who for the past two years has been principal of the Mattoon high school, presented his resignation to the board of education and left for Chicago to assume a new position. His place in the high school will be filled by the other members of the faculty.

The damage suit of Mary C. Payne against the Illinois Central railroad was settled by agreement. Mrs. Payne was injured at the Madison street crossing of the Central tracks at Springfield in a collision between a switch engine and a street car. She asked for \$3,000.

The suit of Thomas J. Gaffney against the Illinois Central railroad was settled, and judgment for \$4,500 was awarded the plaintiff. Young Gaffney was run over and badly mangled by a train in the east part of Springfield, and damages were asked for amounting to \$10,000. About two months ago a jury found for the plaintiff, assessing damages at \$7,000, an appeal being taken to the appellate court.

The auditor of public accounts has issued a permit to Howard McEldowney, Joseph Orr, W. G. Caldwell, N. J. Fallows and William J. McEldowney to reorganize the bank of Steger, located at Steger, Will county, with a capital stock of \$25,000.

An effort is being made by Col. Charles F. Mills, commander of Stephenson post, G. A. R., of Springfield, to complete the roster of the dead interred in Calvary and Oak Ridge cemeteries and at Camp Butler. They are now nearly complete with the exception of those who served in the wars prior to 1861. It is known that there are a number of soldiers who served in the Black Hawk and Mexican wars and the war of 1812 interred in the local cemeteries whose names have not been placed on the roster and whose graves have consequently unintentionally been overlooked on Memorial day.

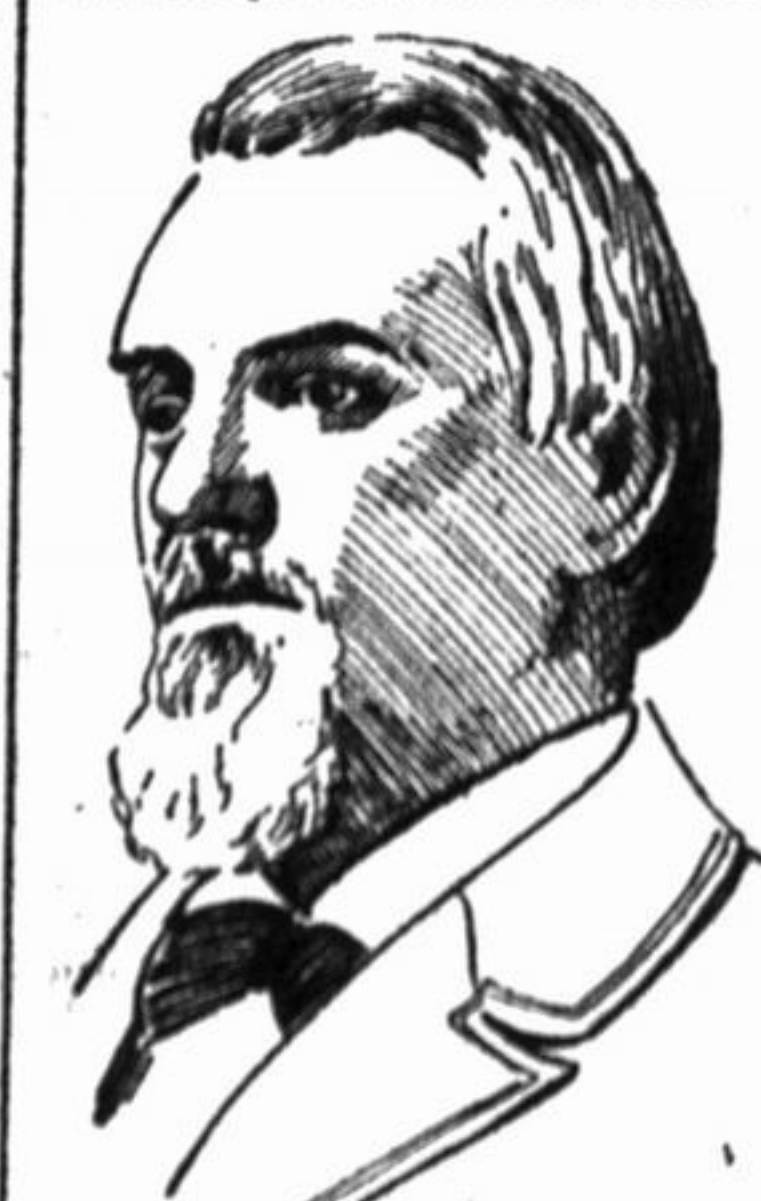
The charter of the Farmers' National bank of Springfield has been extended for a period of twenty years by the comptroller of the currency.

The Alton retail clerks have appealed to the trades and labor assembly for the adjudication of a grievance they are charging against some of the Alton business men. It is alleged by the complaining clerks that some of the business men have not lived up to their agreements.

Through a smooth confidence game Mrs. Mary Evans of Springfield lost a pocketbook containing over \$100 in money and some valuable papers. She employed a man to do some sodding and other work about the premises. He volunteered to procure a girl for housework for Mrs. Evans and introduced a rather engaging woman as his sister and she was taken without further recommendations. Later both man and woman were missing, as was the pocketbook.

A new council of the Junior Order of United American Mechanics has been instituted at Fosterburg with a good membership. The lodge was instituted by State Councillor H. H. Lesmer of Alton and the degree work was done by the degree team of William McKinley council of Alton. In honor of Allegheny (Pa.) Standard lodge, the new lodge will be known as the Standard lodge of Fosterburg, and the Allegheny lodge will present the namesake with a complete outfit of paraphernalia for degree work.

John Davenport, foreman of the Springfield woolen mill, had a battle with a lone highwayman while on his way home, receiving bullet wounds in both legs. Upon being accosted, Davenport struck at the robber, but missed him. Then followed a hand-to-hand scuffle, in which the highwayman used a 44-calibre revolver, shooting Davenport in the left knee and right ankle. Notwithstanding his injuries, the wounded man gave chase, but was overpowered by loss of blood and had to give up.



DAVID T. LITTLER. (Former State Senator of Illinois, who is seriously ill.)