A Courier of Fortune

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CHAPTER III.
Sinister Hints.

Scarcely had Gabrielle left the terrace before Lucette's wheel stopped and she began to think instead of work.

"Has the day's adventure changed everything?" she mused. "He seems to have been very handsome, this gallant cavalier. It would be a hard fight. I know how her pride can stand like a fortress; and I know how love can pull and pull and pull. Don't I know it?" and she smiled and sighed in turn.

At that moment a frown chased away the smiles, for Master Dauban came out from the maison and approached her.

"I am the happiest of men to find you alone, Mistress Lucette."

"I am not the happiest of women to find you anywhere—near me, Master Dauban," she retorted.

"You are as cruel to me as you are beautiful."

"And you are as handsome as you are honest," she cried, with a shrug. He winced.

"I can be a firm friend."

"To yourself, maybe."

"And an ugly enemy, too, at times."

Lucette looked him up and down, and her lip curled as she answered with almost savage contempt:

"Who has fallen so low as to fear you, Master Dauban? Have you been trounced by some scullion of the kitchen?"

"It is easy to scoff, mistress," he returned, sullenly, stung by her words. "I could tell you things," he said, slyly, lowering his tone and glancing about him.

She paused a moment, and her eyes questioned him. She checked the mocking reply which was on her lips and asked, as if with an assumed indifference, covering real curiosity:

"What could you tell me?"

"I have eyes to see, ears to hear, and I know what I know of his plans—and you would like to know, too."

Lucette started and bent her head over her wheel that her face might not be seen by his ferrety eyes. She resolved to get it from him.

"Bah! Am I a fool, Master Dauban, that you would fill my ears with lies about a good man? You say truly, the Baron de Proballe is in no favor of mine, but at least I know him to be an honest, fair-speaking, straight-dealing gentleman."

"Yes, he is miladi's uncle, and a good man." He laughed with the unctuous suggestion of intense enjoyment. "And all you people here in Malincourt are so sharp and clever—so sharp and clever—as clever as he is good."

"We are sharp enough to know an honest man when we see him, and clever enough not to listen to the tales of a maligner, Master Dauban," retorted Lucette with an appearance of great warmth. Her anger so delighted the man that he threw himself into the seat near her and laughed till his sides shook.

He paused, and then with an accent of great cunning, asked: "Why do you think my good master is so interested in this marriage of miladi with M. de Cobalt?"

Lucette laughed airily.

"That's easy to answer, of a surety. Because he is the brother of Mistress Gabrielle's late mother, and it is a family affair."

"Does a good man like to see his niece, a pure woman, mated with a scoundrel? Does he work and scheme and strive and plot to force it on?"

"What grudge have you against M. de Cobalt that you would set us against him?"

"I am not a well to be emptied by a woman's bucket, Mistress Lucette. You will see, some day."

"I don't believe a word you've said," she replied with a shrug of indifference.

"I could say much more if—" he paused.

"If what?"

He leered at her cunningly, and bending down close to her shoulder, whispered:

"If you'd give me such a kiss as I saw you give Antoine de Cavannes in the wood yonder when Denys St. Jean was at Courtal."

Lucette flushed with anger and vexation, genuine enough now, and a passionate retort rose to her lips, but did not pass them. She had to fight down her anger in a pause which he mistook for confusion.

"You have, indeed, both eyes and ears, Master Dauban," she answered with a quick glance of coquetry. "But you will not tell on me?" she added, as if in dismay and fear of him.

"I may," he replied, enjoying her fear.

"Must every maiden wear her heart on her sleeve, Master Dauban, for you handsome gallants to trifle with?"

"My name is Jacques, by your leave."

"'Tis the sweetest of names," and Lucette sighed and looked down; then started and dashed a look at him and cried as if in distress—"Go away, Master Dauban. You make me so—oh, I don't know how to say it. I feel—oh, do go away. You make me feel so serious and so—so sad. Ah me!"

His hand sought hers. She let him take it and returned the pressure of his fingers, which trembled.

"You have never met me in the wood, Lucette," he whispered.

"You have never asked me, Jacques. I never thought——"and she faltered and broke down.

"Be there at set of sun this evening."

"No, no, I could not; I dare not. I could never do that—but I often walk there—Jacques."

"And this evening?" He was trembling again in his eagerness.

Her eyes said yes, the pressure of her tell-tale fingers confirmed it, and the sigh she gave sent him into an ecstasy.

"I believe you do but play with poor me," she whispered.

"I swear on my soul I am in earnest. I love you, Lucette, I——"

"Hush, not now, not now;" and she snatched her hand quickly from him as if in great confusion and picked up her spinning wheel. "I shall count the minutes till the sun sets—now, Jacques," she cried with a bright laughing smile, and passed into the house.

Her fears on Gabrielle's account having been excited, her quick wits busied themselves with all manner of fanciful conjectures as to what the vaguely shadowed danger could be; and her impatience could scarce be held in check until the time arrived for her meeting with Dauban.

The Baron de Proballe was a man whose aim had been to fill to the brim the cup of pleasure. Handsome, unscrupulous and talented, he had made himself a reputation as a profligate among profligates until his excesses had ruined him. His fortune declined as his reputation grew, and for some years he had been driven to live upon his wits, which meant trading upon his skill as a gambler, until a particularly disgraceful scandal had driven him from Paris.

In Morvaix his evil fame was unknown, and Gabrielle had welcomed him for her dead mother's sake. In the small provincial city he had passed two hateful years, devising means to rehabilitate his fortunes and recover his lost health.

But there was a flaw in his plans which threatened to ruin everything. He had ingratiated himself with the governor, and the duke, as keen a gambler as de Proballe himself, had won very heavy sums of money which could not be paid. He had in this way obtained a hold over him which threatened to have critical consequences.

The duke had acted with deliberate intention. He had been fascinated by Gabrielle de Malincourt's beauty, and he had formed a scheme in regard to her which made her uncle's assistance of the utmost value.

De Proballe, despite his evil past, had at first refused indignantly to have any hand in the vile matter; but the governor, never nice in his methods, had found means to override this opposition; and then De Proballe sought to justify his act to himself by forming a counter-scheme against the governor.

To further the plan Gabrielle's uncle had concocted the story and fabricated the proofs supporting it, of her parents' wish that she should marry a distant kinsman, Gerard de Cobalt. A young reprobate, his life had been if anything more disgraceful than that of De Proballe himself, and his culminating villainy had been the treacherous murder of a friend at Cambrai, a town within the governor's province. For this he was a fugitive from justice. De Cobalt's reward for his part in the infamous scheme was to be a pardon for the affair at Cambrai.

Gabrielle, suspecting nothing of the intrigue which was in progress about her, and deceived by her uncle's consistently considerate demeanor, had grown to trust and like him.

He remarked on her troubled looks.

"It was the scene in the market place," she said, and told him what had occurred.

"I was there and saw it all, Gabrielle. I might be possible to dispatch Denys thither, and thus get time and opportunity to deal with him. Miladi would appreciate any effort to find the cavalier, and some of the roads around Morvaix are not oversafe."

His plan was carried out. De Proballe sent for Denys, and said he had news that the cavalier could be found at Beauchamp, an estate four leagues west of Morvaix. He expressed his desire to please and surprise Gabrielle by finding the stranger, and thus dispatched Denys on the mission before he could get a word with Gabrielle.

As soon as he had seen him start he hurried with his news to the castle and had an earnest interview with the duke.

Thus the train was all laid when at noon the governor came to wait upon Gabrielle.

"You have made arrangements?" was de Proballe's greeting when they met for a moment and were going to Gabrielle.

"I am not likely to fail, m'sieu," was the dryly spoken reply. "Antoine de Cavannes and Henri d'Estelle have ridden out, and know me better than to return with any mission unfulfilled. My men serve me well or do not serve me long."

The next minute he was bowing over Gabrielle's hand.

"The sun never shines for me, mademoiselle, when I have no chance to look into your eyes," he murmured with glances of bold admiration.

"The good opinion of the husband of my dear friend, the Duchess de Rochelle, must, of course, be ever welcome, but I beg you to burden it with less wealth of language."

At the reference to his wife the duke frowned, as he took a seat near her.

"We see too little of you, mademoiselle," he said next, "and rumor says you are of-

HIS EYES WERE GLOWING AS HE TURNED THEM UPON HER.

fear Babillion brought it upon himself. We live in troubled times, child, and authority must be maintained. The duke is hasty in temper, and he thought, I am sure, as did I and others, that the smith meant to attack him."

"It was a foul murder, and I care not who hears me say it," exclaimed Gabrielle vehemently. "And this infamous tax caused it."

"It is about that I have news for you. The duke is considering your request to him and will wait upon you here at Malincourt tomorrow. He is a stanch friend to you, Gabrielle, and your lightest word has weight with him."

He watched her very closely as he said this in his gentlest and most persuasive tone.

"But I despise him," she said with a shudder. "I loathe him, indeed."

"In this world we cannot choose the means we would, but must use those which lie to our hands. Yours is a heavy load of responsibility for such young shoulders to bear, my child. The head of a great house, alone with none to advise save an unworthy old man who has wearied of the affairs of the world, and with the cares of an army of suffering people to plague and oppress you. Let us hope that your marriage will prove the relief it should. Gerard de Cobalt should be here today or tomorrow. Pray heaven he carries a steady head on worthy shoulders—as indeed I hear he does."

Gabrille sighed and lifted and let fall her hand; a half-despairing gesture suggestive of her distracted thoughts.

"You should be all smiles, Gabrielle. My dear sister, your mother and your father, too, built so much upon this marriage. The governor also is profoundly interested in it, and will welcome your husband and give him an honored place in his favor and esteem. You two are destined to do great things for Morvaix."

"Please God it may be so," returned Gabrielle earnestly. "But to take a husband I have never seen is——" The sentence ended in another gesture as hopeless as the first.

"I have made many searching inquiries concerning him, Gabrielle. A handsome gallant and as brave and fearless as comely."

"It may be for the best," she said lifelessly.

"Spoken like a Malincourt; like my sainted sister's own child. Smile on the governor tomorrow, Gabrielle. Smile on him, and the rule of Morvaix will be inspired by your gentle heart."

CHAPTER IV.
The Duke's Proposal.

There was one very bitter heart in the maison on the following morning. Jacques Dauban had spent a bad night, groaning over aching bones and head, and setting his cunning wits to devise a scheme of revenge.

Ill results had followed that meeting with Lucette in the pine walk. She had kept the tryst and had wheedled out of him a part of what he knew. He had not told her much; only warned her to do her utmost to prevent the marriage between Gabrielle and Gerard de Cobalt, hinting at dark deeds of which he dared not speak.

She might have got more from him, but it chanced that Denys St. Jean had also conceived a fancy for a stroll in the wood, and had come suddenly upon the pair in close and intimate talk. His quick temper had fired instantly, and the consequences to Jacques Dauban had been serious. Denys was strong in the arm, and his cudgel, snatched hastily from a tree, thick and heavy; and there was scarcely a bone in the writhing, wriggling spy's body which did not ache and stab and pain.

And Lucette had laughed.

He would be revenged; and as he twisted and turned and groaned in an anguish of mind even more than of body, a scheme came to him which he saw was at once safe and sure. He would remain in the background all unsuspected even by Lucette; and yet Denys would die as surely as if his was the hand which plunged the dagger to his heart.

He would tell the Baron de Proballe that Denys had scent of the scheme laid against Gabrielle and that he meant to divulge it to her. Dauban knew his master well enough to be sure what would happen. The baron would tell the duke, and the tiger of a governor would find means to silence Denys forever.

"Let her laugh then, if she can," he said to himself; and when the hour came for him to go to his master, he had his tale ready and told it artfully with a hundred touches which were all calculated to appeal to de Proballe's imagination and spur his alarm.

"The devil!" said de Proballe. "This fellow Denys must never get to her with his story. But how to stop him?"

"It is not for me to offer counsel to you, m'sieu. But yesterday there was a cavalier who afforded some assistance to miladi in the market place. She is anxious to find him, and sent this Denys yesterday in search of him. If you could have knowledge that the stranger was to be found, say at some place a few leagues away, it ten to be found in many of the humble houses of Morvaix."

"They have unhappily much cause for sorrow," said Gabrielle. "You have considered the petition which I ventured to send to you?"

He smiled indulgently.

"What do you know of these things?"

"My own eyes have seen their distress, their want, their sufferings. We who are rich and have plenty can but scantily measure the pain of those in want."

"Would you have me don a monk's garb and turn bread carrier to a set of worthless wastrels?" asked the governor half in anger, half in sardonic humor.

"Nay, my lord; it is in no such spirit I would approach you. But you have the power to administer relief which all others lack. I would but have you recognize the evil and apply the remedy."

He looked searchingly at her. "Perhaps I may put you to a test. Your petition here"—he drew it out and opened it. "You urge me to recall this last ordinance of mine and take off the new imposts on food. If I were to grant you this favor, make this sacrifice for you, what sacrifice would you make in your turn, what favor would you grant me?"

His eyes were glowing as he turned them upon her while waiting for her reply.

"I do not understand your lordship," said Grabrielle, meeting his glance with her calm innocent gaze.

He paused in thought and then laughed abruptly, almost grimly.

"It is enough," he exclaimed, with a wave of the hand. "The thought pleases me, for I would gladly please you; believe that I will grant your petition if you will fall in with my plan, will lend me your aid in the perilous task of government; will work with me and inspire me with your sweet counsel; and if you will consider what favor you will grant me in return. I will have my answer in a week from now, and until then we speak no more of this. Now I have to offer you my congratulations upon your approaching marriage, in which I take deep interest."

He rose shortly afterward, and when Gabrielle held her hand to him he carried it to his lips.

"Remember," he said, retaining her hand and looking up, his face quite close to hers. "Remember, we have made a compact, and you must make the offer worthy of my acceptance—or it may mean fresh and heavier imposts for your favorites in place of lighter ones," and with that smiling, half-jesting menace he went away, calling the Baron de Proballe to attend him.

Lucette was skilled in reading love in the eyes of men, and with quaking heart and fearsome curiosity she waited now to hear what words the duke had spoken to Gabrielle to inspire the looks which she had seen him cast upon her. And when she heard them, Lucette felt her cheeks alternately flame with rage and chill with deadly fear for Gabrielle's sake.

(To be continued.)

Snuff Boxes.

From the London Mail.

In the days when a snuffbox was considered a necessary attribute to the perquisites of a beau or a belle, for that matter—much ingenuity was brought to bear upon the manufacture of these dainty trifles.

The results were often very novel, and even the most captious and exacting snuff-taker found something suited to his wants. Those with a taste for the morbid could buy boxes made from the wood of scaffolds, chairs that murderers had sat upon or parts of their houses. Sporting men could find pleasure in the little miniatures depicting scenes in the chase. Sailors had their boxes made from the timbers of some historical ship—the hull of the Royal George was turned to this purpose more than once.

Soldiers had battle scenes in miniature upon their boxes, and these were often executed with the finest workmanship and great attention was given to detail.

The Scotch, always great snufftakers, were very fond of manufacturing their snuffboxes from a crumpled horn. The end of the horn was hollowed out to hold the snuff and a little mallet was attached by which to tap the snuff from the sides if it adhered. Sometimes a brush was added to flick away particles from the nose. The ordinary Scotchman had a plain mull snuffbox, but those belonging to the lairds were often embossed with silver mountings and precious stones, making them valuable as well as picturesque.

One of the most popular and well-known of snuffboxes was that given to Napoleon by Pope Pius VI. When Napoleon died he left the box as a keepsake to Lady Holland, who had been very kind to him during his imprisonment on St. Helena. Lord Carlisle, who urged the lady to reject the gift, suggested that every time the box was opened horror and murder would leap out. The box was bequeathed by Lady Holland at her death to the museum.

IN MURDERERS' LAND

Russia's Penal Colony for Her Worst Criminals.

DREARY SAGHALIEN

CONVICTS WHO EARN FREEDOM BY GOOD BEHAVIOR.

Affairs of the Island Are in Their Hands—Women Are in Great Demand.

Written for The Evening Star by M. Marx.

Since 1875, when Russia made Japan give up the southern half of the island, the whole of Saghalien has been used as a penal colony for Russian murderers and other vicious civil criminals. In all these thirty years only one American—I am a naturalized American citizen, born in Russia—has engaged in business on the island.

I have just returned to this country after four summers spent in trading among the various prison posts on the southern end of the island and the military posts that are scattered every few miles along its western coast to guard the sole road running north and to search the straits of Tartary for escaped convicts making for the mainland in "dug outs" or upon log rafts. Saghalien is no place for a trader now. It has been cut off from the rest of the world since the outbreak of the war between its owner and Japan. No trader will be able to make his salt there until hostilities cease and it has been decided whether Russia will keep the island or will have to give back to Japan that which she took from the latter in the days of the little brown men's weakness.

During my months of trading with the military, the exiled peasants and settlers, the convicts themselves and the native Gilyaks, Tungus and Ainus, I was able to become intimately acquainted with many phases of life in what might be aptly termed Murderers' Land; but the condition that interested me most was that appertaining to the women criminals.

Woman is exceedingly scarce on the island; her number is about 8,000 to 30,000 men. As a result, "her price is far above rubies," and her value is not affected by the fact that back in European Russia she killed her lover in a fit of jealous passion, or put poison in the wine of the woman who was luring her husband or sweetheart from her side.

Women in Demand.

So great is the demand for these female criminals as wives and housekeepers on the part of the convicts who have served their terms and become peasants, with land tenures, or artisans in the towns, that long before a convict ship arrives from Odessa hundreds of applications for possession of the few score women aboard have been filed with the military governor, who sits at Alexandrovsk, the principal prison post.

The last ship to reach Alexandrovsk before the war with Japan cast anchor in the harbor in June of last year. By the time the convicts were ready to disembark the wharf was black with claimants for the sixty-odd women among the 300 newcomers. Many a peasant, having heard that the ship was soon due, had trudged from the interior over many miles of forest paths to put in an application for a helpmeet, and to look at more women than he had seen at one time since taking up his few acres of land on his release several years before from prison or hard labor in a logging camp or the coal mines of the north.

Once off the ship the women were taken to the convict receiving station. The several hundred applicants for them followed, each evidently confident that he would surely be one of the fortunates to be designated by the officials as husbands to the sixty. They waited patiently in front of the building for several hours; in the meantime those of the civil and military authorities who wanted wives were busily engaged selecting the best looking and most cultured of the women for themselves. Some twenty of the prisoners were reserved in this manner, and then a minor official went about among the crowd outside and told off the murderers who were to receive the remaining forty, for nine out of every ten persons exiled to Saghalien have the brand of Cain upon their foreheads. These men were let into the room in which the women were confined, one at a time. It did not take long for any of them to make a selection; nearly every one was so anxious for a wife that he took the first woman he saw, without reference to age or looks. As a result, some of the last to be let in secured the pick of the group left by the officers.

Apportioning the Wives.

In determining who shall receive wives, the officials take into consideration the applicant's record since arriving on the island and the propriety of his application for a helpmeet. Bribery rarely, if ever, influences the selection. A wife-hunting peasant or artisan has little enough to live on at all times, and nothing at all to offer as a bribe except a personal favor, and that would be very slight, indeed, in most cases.

A woman convict has never been known to refuse to accompany the man choosing her as a partner. She prefers semi-freedom, with even the lowest of murderers, to prison life in Saghalien, where hard labor means the most gruelling sort of work for twelve or fourteen hours a day, with only soup and black bread, and frequently the knout, for recompense. The four great prisons on the island have yet to shelter a woman convict over night.

Much comment has appeared from time to time in various quarters of the world deploring the government's sanction of these marriages, on the ground that a generation of degenerates will result therefrom. But it is a remarkable fact, and one attested to by all who are conversant with Saghalien life, that not more than 30 per cent of these unions of murderers and murderesses result in offspring, and in these instances rarely more than two or three children are born to a couple. The total number of children is small, indeed, in comparison with the adult population; in the twenty-eight schools of the island less than one thousand pupils are enrolled.

Born of Convict Marriages.

On reaching maturity the native-born boys become artisans, and the girls usually become the wives of officials or of the more cultured among the released convicts. The authorities declare that the native Saghaliens are not degenerate by any manner of means, and in substantiation they point out the fact that the island's best artisans are the very men born of these convict marriages.

Not only the trades, but most of the affairs of the island, outside of the work of administration, are in the hands of former convicts, who have gained their freedom to the island through good behavior. A teacher in the school of Alexandrovsk was formerly a captain in the Russian army, and was sent to the island for killing a brother officer while at cards. All the small shopkeepers at the various prison and military posts, the Caucasian boatmen who swarm the harbor during the open season, and, of course, the peasants, are all ex-convicts.

Many of these released murderers have become commercially prominent on the island and in Vladivostok and Nikolaevsk, on the mainland, where they have settled after having secured permission of the government. And, strange as it may seem to the occidental mind, they generally have the respect and confidence of the community, though even the wharf rats know their bloody records.

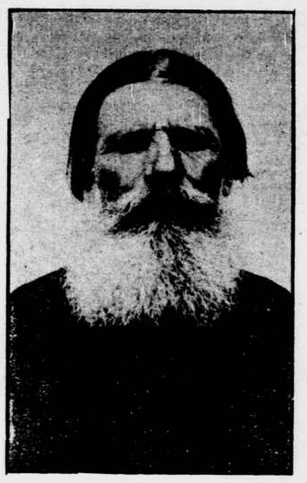
Two of every three of the fishing fleets that put out from the southern ports of the island are owned entirely by men who would not have become wealthy thereby had they not taken life in their home towns in European Russia. Sea-cabbage grows in abundance off the eastern coast of the island, and a former convict whose headquarters is Vladivostok has made a fortune of half a million dollars by gathering and marketing it in the neighboring Japanese island of Yezzo, where it is considered a great delicacy, and is eagerly sought after. One of the principal fur trading firms in Nikolaevsk is composed of three murderers from Little Russia, and many of their furs come from Saghalien, where exiled peasants spend the winter months trapping the otter, the sable, the brown bear, the fox and the squirrel, all of which abound on the island in great numbers. The wealthiest man in Alexandrovsk is also a dealer in furs, and like his Nikolaevsk rivals, has the blood of a brother on his hands.

Killed by Natives.

These fur merchants have sent many a fellow murderer to his death in the wilds of Saghalien. Not that the peasant trappers cannot and do not withstand the rigors of the arctic winter that holds the entire island in its grasp from the last of October to the first of May; but there is a standing reward by the Russian government of 5 roubles for the head of an escaped convict, and when a Gilyak or an Ainu or a Tungus sees a white man in the forest he straightway endeavors to kill him. He does not first make sure that the white man has a permit to roam at large. In many instances he is anxious not to miss the opportunity of making 5 roubles easily, and in others he recalls the atrocities committed on his people by escaped convicts who were leniently dealt with.

So it happens every year that many a peasant trapper disappears into the animal populated forests, with high hopes of coming out in the spring with skins enough to make a fortune, for Saghalien, and is seen no more in his part of the island, the reward for his head being collected at some isolated military post several hundred miles away.

The natives make it particularly hard for convicts to escape with any degree of safety to themselves or hope of ultimately reaching the mainland. The only route for an escaped convict to take is through the forest, northward and then eastward to the straits of Tartary, in some places not



Tried Eight Times to Escape.

over five miles wide. But the natives have their villages in the forests; the military warn them at at once when a convict has made a break for liberty; they are skilled in woodcraft, and thrice lucky, indeed, is that fugitive who manages to elude 5,000 pairs of watchful eyes for the two weeks or more that a hunted man must spend in making his way to a secluded spot on the eastern coast, where he can fashion a log raft or a "dug-out" for the journey across the straits to the mainland.

But Few Escape.

Some few convicts have actually escaped in this manner; another handful have been captured while out at sea, the outlooks in the military posts scattered along the coast sighting and overhauling them. But the big majority of the fugitives who take to the forest never leave it alive. If they escape the head hunting natives they are almost certainly doomed to starvation after they have passed the fringe of clearings made by exiled peasants, who can be depended on to help their fleeing fellow criminals. But the peasants have not conquered many miles of the forest, and the real trials of the fugitive begin after he has left the sheltering roof of the peasant who has pressed farthest into the forest. All roads and even forest tracks give out after two days' journey on foot from Alexandrovsk.

About twenty-five convicts try to escape in the course of a year. Scarcely half of this number ever reach the forest's edge; the rest are captured before they have enjoyed freedom a day, and each man is straightway given a hundred lashes with the knout. This treatment either cures the convict of any further desire for freedom or kills him; but once in a while a man is found who persists in making a break for liberty as often as the opportunity offers. Such a man was one Somoff, a murderer from Little Russia. He ran away eight times; each time he received 100 lashes. He is an old man now; he lives quietly in his little hut in Alexandrovsk, and is at peace with all the world. But his body is one mass of scars, reminders of the days of his terrible punishments; and because he survived his eight ordeals he is known from one end of Saghalien to the other, and his fame even extends over to the mainland.

Murders and Robberies.

Excepting the secret aid they extend to the brodyogas (escaped convicts) the peasants are recognized as being the most law-abiding class on the island. True, murders are committed among them, but not in such numbers as in the towns. Alexandrovsk, with a population of 4,000, has about fifty murders a year and many robberies every day. Still, the town is an exceedingly safe place for any one to live in except a released convict. I spent many weeks there, and was not disturbed or threatened in any way; and in all that time I knew of no one other than a convict being robbed or killed.

When a convict is released and becomes a peasant or an artisan or what not, rations are given him regularly by the government, just as the American government supplies the Indians with food. Not content with his share, many a convict attempts to rob his fellows. Quite frequently he succeeds, and not infrequently he either kills in the bargain or is killed instead.

Where rations result in one murder, vodka causes half a dozen. The stuff is forbidden to be placed on sale anywhere on the island, and it is supposed to be obtained at the government stores only in cases of dire necessity. But there is more than one way to kill a cat, and vodka is continually finding its way into the hands of the populace. Let a murderer get filled with vodka, and he will probably repeat his crime; and let his fellows know that he has a bottle of the liquor in his hut, and they will kill him, if need be, to possess it. Men who have had good records for years have committed murder for a taste of vodka. Saghalien is the only portion of the entire Russian empire where murder is a capital offense. Many men are hanged yearly, but murders are, nevertheless, committed with startling regularity.

Honest Murderers.

While trading in the island I had to come in contact with many criminals, some with exceedingly brutal and repulsive crimes back of them. My escort from trading post to trading post was a man who had killed another in a quarrel over a woman. Most of the employes in my stores were murderers, and I bartered almost exclusively with murderers and perpetrators of other foul crimes. Yet I never had one man threaten me; I found them honest in trade, and I would have trusted myself in the depths of the forest with my escort. Even the Saghalien murderers are human. Treat them as men, as one of your kind, and they appreciate it and will reciprocate your kindness. All the traders on the island go on this principle, and as a result it is safe for them to go about with a good deal of freedom. They go armed, and secure an escort from the government merely to be able to cope with the exception that may come along some day to prove the rule. I am acquainted with the commercial history of the island for fifteen years back, and I know of only half a dozen traders having been murdered in that time; and they were Japs and Chinese, who were arrogant in their bartering with the exiles.

I am going back to Saghalien when the war is over. Perhaps, in spite of the criminal atmosphere of the place, I am becoming attached to it. Attached to Saghalien! More than one convict has refused to leave the island for the Amur country when the authorities informed him that he was at liberty to do so; and they have invariably given as a reason that they have learned to love the place where they have spent years at hard labor and frequently been knouted to boot.

Personal Rivals Fighting for West Virginia's Votes.

In many respects West Virginia is the most interesting of the "doubtful states," whose electoral vote will decide the presidential battle in November.

It is borderland between the democratic south and the republican north. It is the home of Henry G. Davis, the remarkable old man whom the democrats have nominated as their vice presidential candidate. It has enjoyed a tremendous business boom since the last national election, with an increase in population estimated at a quarter of a million. Its seven electoral votes are claimed, with apparently absolute confidence, by both sides. The men who are in charge of the fortunes of the two great parties in the state are personal rivals, and both are leaders of marked personal characteristics.

Cleveland carried West Virginia every time he was a candidate for the presidency, but it turned against the democratic party in 1896, and in 1900 it gave McKinley a plurality of 20,000. Attracted by its liberal laws, many great corporations have made their home in the state. Its tremendous resources in coal, natural gas and oil have been exploited with an accompanying burst of business activity. Thousands of miners have been attracted into the state from Pennsylvania, workmen have come in from Ohio, and lumbermen have been brought from Maine. These states are all republican strongholds, and the leaders of that party believe that the influx will prove on election day to be composed mostly of republican voters.

Personal Popularity.

Mr. Davis' popularity is largely relied upon by the democrats to give them the victory. He is credited with having done more than any other one man to give the state the prosperity that it boasts, and he is closely allied with its business interests. He numbers his friends among republicans as well as among democrats. United States Senator Stephen B. Elkins is his son-in-law, and Senator Elkins has always been one of the republican powers of the state.

Nathan Bay Scott, Mr. Elkins' colleague in the Senate, is in charge of the republican campaign in the state, while John T. McGraw is the democratic leader.

Senator Scott was elected to the Senate in 1899, defeating Mr. McGraw by one vote. There was a bitter contest over the election. A count of the members of the legislature showed forty-seven votes each for Scott and McGraw, with seven votes for Judge Nathan Goff. The democrats believed that they had Mr. Scott beaten, but when the roll was called and just before the result was announced one man changed sides. It was done so quickly that the McGraw men had no time to protest, and Senator Scott was declared elected. Mr. McGraw disputed his right to the seat, but his objections were thrown out by the Senate.

Both Senator Scott and Mr. McGraw are very rich men, having profited largely from the opportunities afforded them. Both men are deeply interested in the industrial development of the state. Both are unassuming and democratic in their manner.

The Republican Leader.

Senator Scott is not a native of West Virginia. He was born in Ohio, the birthplace of so many men who have achieved success in political life. He is now sixty-two years old, and he fought his way up from the bottom of the ladder. He is a man of large frame, with thick iron-gray hair and a beard of the same color. He is one of the most genial and approachable men in public life.

It has always been his custom to work hard, and as a member of the republican national executive committee he is the first man at his desk in the morning, remaining longer than any of the others. He has an active mind, and his interests cover a wide range. He always has something interesting to say on every topic that is engaging the popular attention, and he does not hesitate to say it. This frankness more than once has been the means of getting him into trouble.

Toward the close of the national campaign of four years ago the republican managers assembled at a dinner in the Fifth Avenue Hotel, New York city. The democrats were then pounding away at the trusts, seeking to show that they were fostered by the republicans, and that there was a secret alliance between them and the republican leaders. On the morning after the dinner the newspapers came out with big headlines, declaring that Senator Scott, while speaking at the dinner, had openly declared his approval of trusts. His speech was reported as follows:

"Right here I want to say that I believe in trusts. They are a good thing. The Standard Oil Company put in its pipe lines to all the small towns where oil is produced in my state, and if it was not for the Standard Oil Company this property that we have would not be here today."

This report caused a sensation. The democratic managers eagerly seized upon it, hailing Senator Scott as the "Burchard" of the campaign. It afterward turned out that only one reporter had been admitted to the banquet. Senator Scott insisted that his words, which had been spoken in private conversation and not as a speech, had been garbled.

"It is not true that I said I was in favor of trusts," he explained afterward. "I did say that the Standard Oil Company had been a good friend to the owners of poor and remote farms in my state, because, by means of its pipe lines, it had provided a sale for oil and made many farmers rich."

This explanation was accepted and the remark had no appreciable effect upon the result of the election.

His Start in Life.

Senator Scott is fond of telling of the day when he made his first start in life on his own responsibility. He was born in Quaker City, Ohio, and brought up in a Quaker community. As a boy he worked for a shrewd old Quaker who always had a fund of good advice. He was sixteen years old when the gold discoveries in the west excited the entire country, and "Pike's Peak or Bust" became the watchword among the caravans that turned westward across the plains. Young Scott determined to strike out for himself and make his fortune.

"On the day I went away," he says in telling the story, "the old Quaker for whom I worked called me to him.

"'Nathan,' he said, 'thee has been a good boy. Remember that it is not what thee reads that will make thee smart, but what thee retains; it is not what thee eats that will make thee fat, but what thee digests; it is not what thee earns that will make thee rich, but what thee saves. Farewell.'

"I have never forgotten the old man's advice."

He was then sixteen years old. When he reached the place where Denver now stands he found that the reports of abundant gold had been exaggerated. He went to work driving an ox team for an Iowa man, and one day he saw three men—a father, son and son-in-law—lynched for stealing. In less than a year he was back again with the old Quaker in Ohio.

Senator Scott prides himself on the fact that he never has been beaten in a political contest.

"I have been in politics ever since I was a boy," he says, "and I never lost a fight yet. I do not intend to begin now. We shall carry West Virginia by 25,000, and after that I shall let the other fellows do the work."

He enlisted in an Ohio regiment at the outbreak of the civil war, but as he was under age his father brought him back. His mind was set on becoming a soldier, however, and he persuaded his father to let him go. He served through the war, and when he was mustered out he found employment in a glass manufacturing establishment near his home.

"I was always determined," he said, "to do my best in anything that I undertook. I wanted to do a little better than anybody else."

Success in Business.

This determination, with the remembrance of the good advice the old Quaker had given him, caused him to learn the glass industry thoroughly. With the knowledge that he had gained in Ohio he went to Wheeling and obtained a place in a glass works there. He was advanced to be foreman, and then to be president of the company, which he now owns. He takes pride in the fact that during the thirty years that he has been in control of the company he has never had a strike.

He was elected a member of the republican national committee from West Virginia in 1896, when Senator Hanna took control of the republican party machinery. Senator Hanna recognized his abilities as an organizer, and selected him as one of the members of the republican national executive committee. He has been in charge of the management of the campaign speakers in the last three national campaigns.

A strong affection grew up between him and Senator Hanna. After the assassination of President McKinley he favored the nomination of the Ohio senator for President, and, as usual, he did not hesitate to say so.

Senator Scott always maintained that the war with Spain cost him a fortune. He was appointed United States internal revenue commissioner by President McKinley after the campaign of 1896, and at the outbreak of the war he and some of his business associates were considering the purchase of a western gold mine. They were well satisfied with their investigations, and were about to conclude the purchase when the deputy commissioner fell ill. It was at the time when the new internal revenue stamp laws were going into effect, and the office was overwhelmed with work. Senator Scott was forced to give eighteen hours a day to his official duties, and the plans for the purchase of the mine fell through. The stock is now worth ten times what it could have been bought for then. If the purchase had been made, Senator Scott would undoubtedly have been a much richer man than he is.

The Democrats' Leader.

Mr. McGraw's personality forms a complete contrast with that of his opponent.

By profession he is a lawyer, and his legal training is apparent in his habits of thought and in all that he says. While Senator Scott is impulsive, Mr. McGraw is clear, concise and deliberate. He is a younger man than Senator Scott, and he has every detail of the politics of his state at his fingers' ends. He has proved himself a resourceful and determined fighter in a community where there are few amenities in politics, and where victory is the only thing that counts.

During President Cleveland's first term he was collector of internal revenue in West Virginia, and when Mr. Cleveland was re-elected in 1892 he made Mr. McGraw the government disbursing agent for the state, giving him the distribution of the funds appropriated for public purposes.

Mr. McGraw was born in Grafton, W. Va., and is a graduate of the Yale Law School. He is always faultlessly dressed and always affable. His smooth-shaven face is under perfect control, and it is impossible to infer from his expression what is passing in his mind. The fact that his political opponents in the state hate him with a cordial hatred that they do not attempt to conceal, accusing him of all the crimes in the political calendar, is an indication of their fear of his abilities as a manager.

Active and Alert.

After holding his party organization together for eight years when defeat was inevitable, Mr. McGraw believes that the time has come to turn the tables. He has a rare faculty for marshaling campaign arguments successfully, and for making the best of difficult situations. He is active, alert and quick to grasp opportunities from which advantage may be drawn.

"It is true," he said recently, in discussing the situation in West Virginia, "that there has been a great increase in our population, most of it from republican states. Before this influx most of the men who worked in the mines were negroes, and as we have no registration law, we never could tell how many times they voted, because we could not tell them apart. Many of the men who have moved into the state are of foreign birth. Before they can vote they will have to show their naturalization papers, and unless the papers are correct they will not be permitted to deposit their ballots."

This is one of many expedients that Mr. McGraw has in mind for overcoming the advantage that has been given to his opponents since they came into control of the state.

The battle for West Virginia will be stubbornly fought on both sides, and in a region where "practical politics" has been brought as nearly to perfection as possible. The political leaders of both the two great parties anticipate some extremely interesting developments.

Not Traveling.

From the Cleveland Plain Dealer.

"Where's Clumley?"

"I guess he's on the road."

"What makes you think so?

"I saw him start out this morning on a very frisky horse."

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