

Autocrats

Part 2.

Sunday

Magazine

Section
October

12 1902

THE CALL'S new departure of publishing the standard fiction of the day at a minimum cost to its readers marks one of the greatest successes ever known in journalism. The first book to appear under this new plan was "None But the Brave," a sterling historical novel; then followed "Lazarre," and after that appeared "The Mystery Box," which was just concluded last Sunday. The popularity of this new scheme is easily understood; it lies in the fact that the reader is afforded the opportunity of reading a standard novel by the purchase of but two, or at the most three, issues of The Sunday Call. There is no waiting from week to week as is the case in fiction published serially; there is no waiting at the library until your turn comes around when you shall be enabled to take the book home; there is no expense, as there would be if you went to the bookstore and were obliged to lay down a dollar and a half for one of these books that The Call gives you for ten cents.

This week The Sunday Call, besides its full quota of news matter and the many feature of its Magazine Section, publishes the second half of one of the strongest political and social studies of the day—a novel called "The Autocrats," from the pen of Charles K. Lush. The first half of the book was published last Sunday—so for ten cents you get the whole story, besides having received every bit of news and a corresponding value of Sunday feature matter that is published in any newspaper in the world.

"The Autocrats" is a story filled with the atmosphere of Western enterprise and energy, making a dramatic incident of a combination of politicians and capitalists to secure a street railway franchise in a Western city. A prominent character in the book is a powerful and capable man who is a master hand at the manipulation of city councils. But the game he is playing for is not only the coveted charter, but the United States Senate. It is the most lifelike picture in fiction of the modern trust, the financial promoters and the group of men that always surround him—bankers, promoters, newspaper men and hangers-on. A charming love story runs through the whole tale.

On October 19, next Sunday, the first installment of "Alice of Old Vincennes" will be published. It will be completed in three editions. Nothing more need be said to the thoughtful reader.

(Continued From Last Sunday.)

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"WITH twenty-three votes there is no reason why we should not go right ahead," said Ledlow, rubbing his hands together and beaming on Bidwell. "Our securities will rank with the best in the world."

"Do not be frightened again if I say we have a long fight before us," observed Bidwell. "There is no sense in clipping coupons before they mature—I have worked night and day, gentlemen, and I feel now that everything will come out in the end. We must have something like public sentiment behind us in this matter, and that is what I have been preparing. Without it we shall be beaten."

"If it hinges on public sentiment," exclaimed Ledlow, his jaw falling again, "I would not give much for what we have put into this venture."

"To hell with public sentiment!" growled Sprogel. "You are both wrong now."

"No," said Bidwell, quietly. "we are both right, Herman. The public sentiment that Ledlow speaks of will be against us. But I propose to have some public sentiment for us—for the ordinance. I shall make it."

"When do we begin?" asked Ledlow. "Would it not be well to have the papers start in now?"

"Newspapers follow public sentiment—or, at least, try to," answered Bidwell. "They do not make it, nowadays."

"They do and they don't," answered Sprogel, grimly.

"An unprofitable discussion," exclaimed Bidwell. "Here is the situation in a nutshell: We have the Mayor, the President of the Common Council, ten of the Aldermen and all the newspapers."

"Have we control of the Watchman stock yet?" queried the banker. "I meant to see you about that matter."

"I am not so sure we shall need it," answered Bidwell. "But we will discuss that later. The stock is not worth what I figured it to be. But to continue. With what we have now, we can get the rest. The business element of the community will be with us this time, and that is what I have been looking after."

"It was the business element that defeated the ordinance before," said Ledlow. "These men are all on record now as being opposed to an ordinance such as we have drawn. I do not see how we can expect to have their support now."

"Let us begin work and perhaps you will understand," said Bidwell, drawing a book bound in red leather from his pocket. He opened it at the first page and read aloud the name "Arendorf." He stopped then and looked at Ledlow.

"He will be all right," observed the banker, with a little smile.

"I thought so. Well, here is another, 'Abbotsford.' This time he directed his glance to Sprogel.

"I have got him," said the millionaire.

"He will do anything I ask him—I have got him where he had better be real good to me."

"As I surmised," said Bidwell, dryly. "Here is another, 'Addicks.'" This time he glanced from one to the other, and the two gentlemen glanced in turn from each other back to Bidwell.

"Very well, let us see," remarked Bidwell. He studied a few figures on the same line with the name, and then turned back in the book. He paused to study a moment, and then turned to another name further along in the book.

"Zaebelmann. Yes, it is Zaebelmann." He looked at his two companions with a question in his eyes that they both understood.

"Why, of course, we have Zaebelmann," exclaimed Sprogel. "What is the use of asking that? You know that as well as we do."

"Just a minute," said Bidwell. "Neither of you can reach Addicks—"

"But Zaebelmann can," exclaimed Ledlow. "I understand."

"No; Zaebelmann does not even know Addicks. But Zaebelmann knows Troesser very well—so well, in fact, that he will do whatever Zaebelmann might demand of him. But Troesser does not know Addicks. No; but it so happens that he has a hold on Bentford, who, curiously enough, just happens to have a grapevine lock on Addicks. It is very simple when you come to look at it."

Ledlow and Sprogel gazed at their leader in mute admiration for a moment.

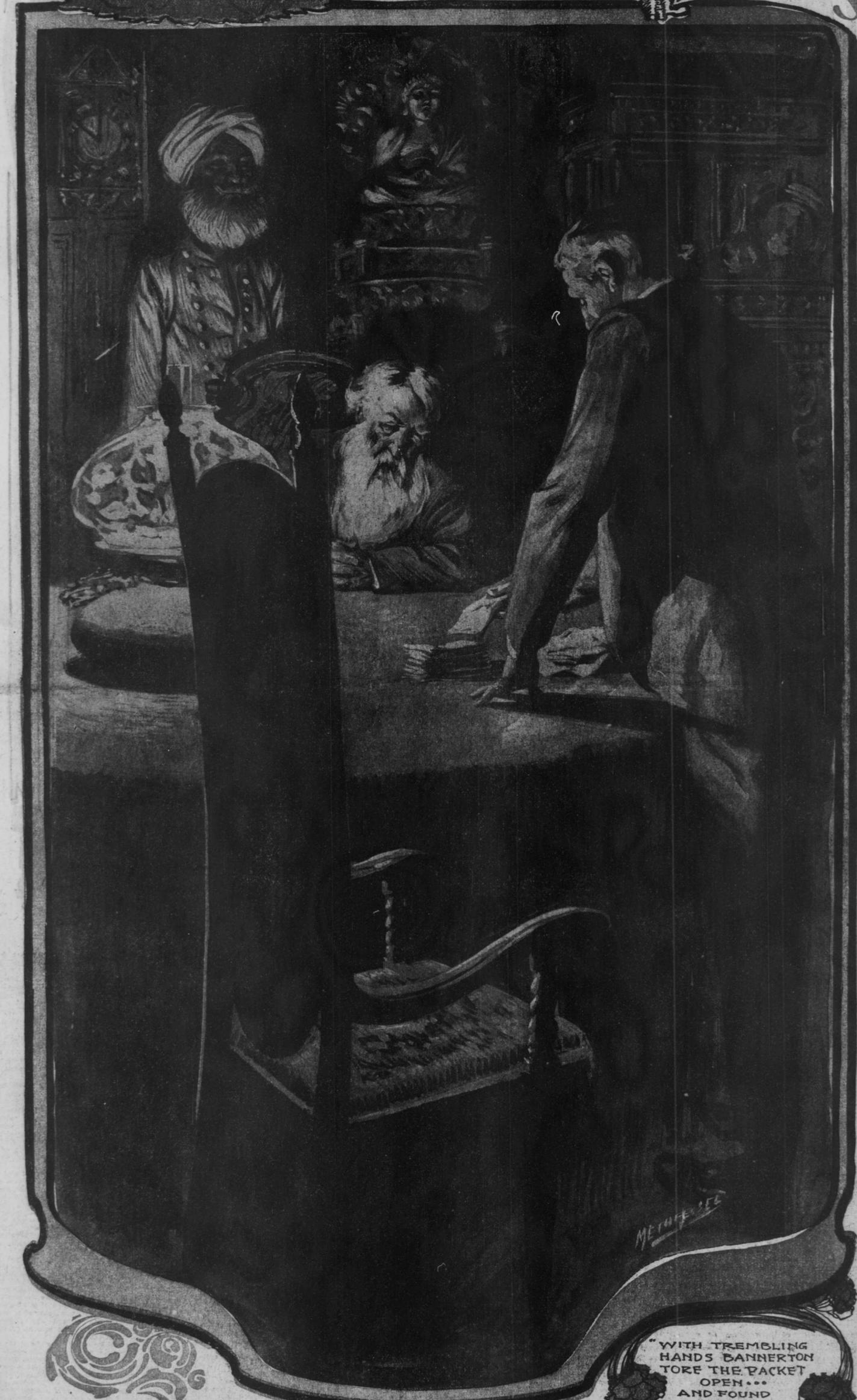
"Henry," said Sprogel, extending his hand, "let me see that book a moment."

"To you, Herman, it would be simply a list of names," returned Bidwell, laughing.

"That is just it. I want to see if my name is on the list."

"It is, Herman, and it was put down there a long, long time ago. No; I cannot let you see inside its covers. The names are not those of men alone."

"Very well," assented Sprogel; "but promise me that you will leave me that book, together with the key to the cipher, when you die."



"WITH TREMBLING HANDS BANNERTON TORE THE PACKET OPEN... AND FOUND \$21,000"

"Then see that it is burned before you die," answered Sprogel. "There are only a few men who should have such a book as that. It might be abused."

"That is easy enough," said Sprogel. "Connie Moran is ready to introduce the ordinance at any time. He asked me only yesterday when he was to receive the word."

"It is from Shuttle," he explained. "I had an appointment with him in reference to some arrangements for the presidential banquet. I must see him."

"But he considers it his right to do so," explained Sprogel. "His right!" exclaimed Bidwell, his face becoming stern in an instant. "He has no rights. We own him now, Herman. Have we not made the first payment? No; Alderman Rabner will introduce the first resolution, which will bring the matter before the Council."

"Rabner!" exclaimed Ledlow and Sprogel together. "Rabner has always been one of our strongest opponents in the Council," added Sprogel. "Precisely," returned Bidwell, "and that is just the reason he is the man to open the way for us. He has a friend who will give him some advice on the matter. His name is in the red book," he added, tapping it through his coat. "But we must not keep Shuttle waiting. By the way, Ledlow," he said, with his lit-

tle smile. "Be careful how you handle our editorial friend. He has a habit of shying at things he does not understand."

"Yes," put in Sprogel, with a rumbling chuckle, "be mighty careful, for he does not understand half the things he is standing for now."

"There are others," thought Bidwell, grimly, as he and the fat millionaire politician passed out of the room together.

Two hours later Ledlow seated himself beside Bidwell at the club.

"I took your advice, Henry," he said, "and eased Shuttle along for a good two hours' talk. He is really a very interesting fellow, and has some excellent ideas."

"Yes," said Bidwell, throwing aside his paper; "it is a pity he did not come to us when he was younger. So he sees things in a proper light, does he?" he asked, carelessly.

"Oh, yes," replied the banker, rubbing his hands together, "and I encouraged him, so that he talked freely and unreservedly. That little dinner you gave made a great impression on him. He is disposed to be fair, and he has broadened out since the other ordinance was beaten. But he is suspicious of the Mayor."

"An instance where he is in strict accord with us without knowing it," observed Bidwell.

"He is a great admirer of yours, Henry," continued the banker. "He speaks in the highest terms of you, and thinks you have been greatly misunderstood."

"Ledlow," said Bidwell, placing a hand on the banker's arm, "I will be frank with you. I have taken great pains to have Shuttle misunderstand me. I have sent men to him by the dozens, and I have had him and lost him twenty times. No; I have no abiding faith in him. He bends too easily to every shifting wind. He is brave by fits and starts to do wrong or do right. Give me the consistent man, be he thief or saint. You know what you have got."

"Well," said the banker, slowly, "I am confident he is with us this time. He has a plan for coming to our aid even now, before we make a move, and I took pains to encourage him."

"To come to our aid!" exclaimed Bidwell, quickly. "What do you mean, Ledlow?"

"Why, he is so much in favor of our receiving fair treatment from the city that he has prepared an editorial urging it, and has even drafted an ordinance, which The Watchman will publish in a few days."

"Fair treatment! Fair treatment!" gasped Bidwell. "Good God, Ledlow, and do you think fair treatment is all we are looking for? And you encouraged the man in his folly? Why, man, we are ruined if this is not headed off. Come," he exclaimed, seizing his hat, "this is no piece for us now. There is just one move to make, and it must be done at once. Come."

He arose from his chair and, catching the astounded banker by the arm, hurried from the club.

"I do not quite understand," began the banker, who was now white-faced and trembling so that he could scarcely walk. "Where are we going?"

"To my office as fast as the Lord will let us," answered Bidwell, curtly. "It is no time for explanations. I must act, and explain afterward, if you will pardon me."

The two men hurried along in silence, and were soon in the office of the company.

"Telephone Stalker to come to me at once," was Bidwell's first order. "You will catch him in the City Clerk's office now. Open the vault, and bring me 4 B."

He threw up the cover of his desk, was lost in thought for a moment, and then turned to his companion, who had sunk into a chair.

"Ledlow," he said, speaking softly, and without the faintest trace of his former excitement, "we are very lucky indeed, and you have brought the right information at the right time. You have done a great piece of work for us to-day."

Before Ledlow could answer, the clerk had placed a package of papers on the desk. At once Bidwell turned to them. In a twinkling he fished out a small scrap of paper, and handing it to the secretary, said: "Put that in the form of a resolution. Make three copies."

"Now," he continued, settling back in his chair as the clerk left the room, "I will explain. First of all, damn the agent in an affair of this kind. Control those that are with you, and fight those that are opposed to you. This doddering idiot has come within an ace of tipping over all our plans."

"I confess I do not understand," began the banker, at last finding voice. "It is Mr. Shuttle's idea to propose a very liberal ordinance, and in this way the company would not be taking the initiative. We—"

"Excuse me," interrupted Bidwell, "you are an excellent banker, but there are some things about this business that you do not understand. The ordinance that Shuttle would bring forth would be fair and liberal enough if we were not gunning for big game. Don't you understand? How could we refuse a fair and liberal ordinance if it were thrust at us? We want our ordinance or nothing."

The banker saw the danger for the first time, and his face became again an ashy gray. The door opened, and a stout man entered and respectfully removed his hat. He bowed to Ledlow and took a chair.

"Rather a hurry call, for a fat man," he remarked, giving vent to a resounding laugh, while his face remained unceasingly by any of the lines of mirth. The laugh was his stock in trade, and it worked automatically.

"Stalker," said Bidwell, "I have a resolution that I wish introduced by Rabner. He is all right, is he not?"

"He's from Missouri," replied Stalker, again sounding his hollow laugh.

"Very well. Have him introduce this resolution as early as possible to-night. Have it referred to a special committee. I have spoken to Moran, and he understands. But, for fear he may make a mistake, here is a list of the men to make up that special committee."

He passed the papers to the lobbyist, who placed them in his pocket, and then asked: "Is that all, Mr. Bidwell?"

"Well, Stalker," said Bidwell, pursing his lips, and then chucking, "you might denounce it as an outrage after it is done. You understand?"

"Oh, I am great on the outrage talk," answered Stalker. "The company harassed by marchists, and all the rest of it. Rabner will stand for anything now. Good evening, gentlemen, as there is not much time to lose."

He backed out of the room, and Bid-