

The League of Lost Causes

Being the Romantic Adventures of Paul Lane, American Millionaire

The Prisoner of Hofberg

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ROSNY, the western secretary of the League of Lost Causes, was not in Paris. Paul Lane could not find him. The League's offices were closed and abandoned, while on the window was displayed a sign advertising that they were for rental. The landlord could give no information as to Rosny's whereabouts. He had paid his rent and departed five or six days before, more than that he did not know.

After a maddening search through Paris for nearly a week Paul saw a paragraph in a newspaper which threw a flood of light on his perplexity.

"It is rumored," said the writer, "that the Princess Clothilde will shortly be married to His Highness Archduke Stepan. The match, which is much liked by the Emperor Franz Joseph, was, it will be remembered, postponed some time ago on account of her highness' predilection for what may be called, without lese majeste, foreign travel. It is said by the scandalously inclined, in fact, that her highness has been the heroine of more than one runaway escapade, involving America, the Tripolitaine—where, it is stated, she was present at the Italian army maneuvers—and India."

Paul's heart leaped when he read this paragraph, obscurely tucked away in a column of society gossip. How little that meant to the writer or the casual reader! To him it was everything. For it was at her petition that he had left America to place his fortune and his services at the league's disposal. He loved her, and knew that his love was returned, though a world of tradition kept them asunder. He must find her.

She came to him with a suddenness that was startling. For that same afternoon, lingering as he had become accustomed to do, in the vicinity of the abandoned league offices, in the hope that Rosny would return, he was suddenly aware of a woman, heavily veiled, who stood beside him and whispered his name. Paul started and fell to trembling. He could not form the words that rushed to his lips.

"It is still closed!" she said with a gasp. "And I have traveled here at such risk and all in vain. I must see Rosny, for events of the utmost importance are transpiring at home. The league is divided; all are afraid; the kaiser himself is afraid, and Spain is too far away for help to come from that quarter. You must help me, monsieur," she said, turning suddenly upon him. "Where can we speak?"

Paul led the way to a little cafe not fifty feet distant. "I must tell you something about myself," she said. "I am, as you know, one of his majesty, the Austrian emperor's, many nieces. I was brought up in the stifling atmosphere of the most ceremonial court in Europe. I was betrothed to the Archduke Stepan. I had never even seen him; I hated him; I ran away and entered Prague University, where I came under the influence of Dvornak, the real founder and inspirer of the League. I went to America to solicit your aid—and the rest is known to you. Von Holzrath is the emperor's trusted adviser. He found me in Tripoli, where the interests of the league had called me. He carried me back to Vienna, whence I escaped three days ago at imminent peril, to summon the League to fight for the sacred principle of monarchy. If Austria becomes republican—"

Paul leaned forward and took her hand in his. "I love you, Clothilde," he said. "And you love me. That much I have from your own lips, and a princess of the house of Hapsburg does not deny her word. Leave these affairs to older and more intriguing minds; come back to America with me tonight."

She gasped and looked at him in something like admiration for his audacity. Her face softened. Then she answered frankly. "My feelings Paul Lane, count with me for nothing at all. Whether I love or hate you, whether my word was truly spoken or nothing more than pity for you when you lay dying in the hot sands of Tripoli—all that is nothing to me now. I will never go back upon our cause nor seek for selfish happiness by such an act of self-abnegation. There is great work to be done; will you help me, Monsieur Lane, in a spirit of complete self-forgetfulness, for the sake of the League? Either pledge yourself to this or leave me and never see me again."

Paul knew then that he had met his master; a cooler, yet more ardent spirit than his own. He bowed his head in token of agreement, and the next moment a startling change came over her face and she began speaking eagerly and intently. "The emperor has not seen me since my return from Tripoli," she said. "They told me—those who guarded me—that he was resolved never to see me till my marriage had taken place with the Archduke Stepan. But I was not deceived. My uncle is in his dotage now; he is almost an automaton—just a weak old man dozing away the last hours of his life by his fireside and dreaming of ancient triumphs, and men and events that have long since been translated into history. He lives at Hofberg, at his hunting lodge, perpetually; he has to all intents and purposes abdicated, and all that you read of his activities is fiction. Nevertheless, he is the most important factor and the most venerated figure in Austria today."

"But the movement of democracy, that fatal error of our times, has enveloped Austria in its octopus-like ten-

acious smile. "Come in, Monsieur Paul. My uncle is in a good condition now, and understands something of the plot against him. Two of his gentlemen are here, also. Come in."

Within the spacious room, warmed, though it was mid-summer, by the heat of a fire of oak logs, an old man was seated, wrapped in a dressing gown. Between his fingers he held a fountain pen, and one of his aides held his hand while he affixed his shaky signature to a pile of official documents. When Paul approached he looked up vacantly.

"This is the gentleman, uncle, of whom I spoke to you," said the princess. "I can vouch for his honor and devotion."

The old man nodded and smiled graciously. "Excellent! Excellent!" he murmured in French. "What does he want then—a commission in the Guards? How many quarterings are on his shield?"

"No, uncle, you have forgotten," said Clothilde fretfully. "You want a gentleman whom you can rely upon to convey a summons to the loyal regiment at Freiburg to hasten hither."

"It is on this paper, sir. It is only necessary to sign it," said one of the aides.

Wearily the old man signed the much coveted order; then sank back in his chair, exhausted, and presently nodded into slumber.

"Gentlemen, let me introduce you to Monsieur Lane," said the princess hastily. "Monsieur Lane—Count Von Arnim, Captain Zeller von Thurn. Monsieur Lane is fully acquainted with

the desperate situation and guarantees to reach Freiburg before midnight and have the troops brought here at once."

"Or else," said Von Thurn pessimistically, "there will be another tragedy of St. Bartholomew's day."

"Does Monsieur Lane comprehend fully how desperate the situation really is?" broke in Von Arnim. "Here we are, six loyal gentlemen, the sole bulwark of Austria against destruction. Even the flunkies know what is to take place and are impudent to us. We can rely on none of them; we must be satisfied that the servility of our natures forbids them to offer active aid to our enemies. Well, here we are, six, the emperor's sole friends, and our enemies are so sure of success that they can calmly wait till tomorrow night to make sure of their enterprise. We are beleaguered here, Monsieur Lane; news has just come that guards have been posted outside the castle since the early afternoon, with instructions to let none in or out. The telephone wires have been cut; we have no loyal regiment that can be reached except at Freiburg. So you must leave at once, Monsieur. You know the way?"

Five minutes later, accompanied by Von Arnim, Paul was threading a by-way through the forest which emerged upon an unfrequented road in a suburban district upon the way to Freiburg. At this point the great wall which surrounded the castle was broken by a swift stream, fringed with thick reeds and undergrowth. Von Arnim pressed Paul's hand.

"Once safe beyond the river," he said, "you will come upon the Freiburg road. Horses and automobiles pass continually. I leave the rest to you. Watch for the sentries! Good luck!" He pressed his hand and was gone.

Paul crouched among the reeds, entered the stream noiselessly, and struck out toward the opposite shore. Five minutes later, under cover of twilight, he had passed the besieging out-

posts and gained the Freiburg road. He waited, dripping with water, shivering in the cool of the evening. Presently a slowly trotting pair of horses came along, drawing a barouche in which a stout elderly lady was seated. On the box was an apologetic coachman. Paul drew a pistol from his pocket, walked up, and extended his hand. The man reined in.

"Well, what now? What now?" he commanded. "This is the carriage of the Baroness Blankenburg. What do you want?"

"Your horses," answered Paul, and shoved the pistol under his nose. "Run for your life, my good fellow, or—"

But the coachman needed no second invitation. As he leaped to the ground and began running away, Paul cut the traces and selected the better and swifter of the two fat beasts. From it he removed the harness; he sprang on the animal's bare back and drew it out from the wreckage of the equipment just as the baroness awoke from her nap.

"Home, Friedrich!" she said crossly. "I shall be late, you good-for-nothing!"

Her remarks ended in a shrill scream as she grasped the situation. But Paul was already cantering away through the darkness in the direction of Freiburg. At ten o'clock, and without further incident, he rode into the military cantonment and demanded immediate audience with the commander.

A display of the order, a hurried explanation, and Colonel Heller proved equal to the emergency.

"My men shall start in an hour," he

answered. "We can reach Hofberg at eight in the morning. You will accompany us?"

"No," answered Paul. "I am needed by his majesty."

The return ride seemed endless, the road deserted save for an occasional wayfarer or a belated automobile, appeared to stretch itself out eternally. Yet the stars were still bright in the sky when the black bulk of the castle suddenly loomed out from among the foliage of the encompassing trees. Paul is to take place and are impudent to us. We can rely on none of them; we must be satisfied that the servility of our natures forbids them to offer active aid to our enemies. Well, here we are, six, the emperor's sole friends, and our enemies are so sure of success that they can calmly wait till tomorrow night to make sure of their enterprise. We are beleaguered here, Monsieur Lane; news has just come that guards have been posted outside the castle since the early afternoon, with instructions to let none in or out. The telephone wires have been cut; we have no loyal regiment that can be reached except at Freiburg. So you must leave at once, Monsieur. You know the way?"

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Satan's Present Day Methods

By REV. J. H. RALSTON
Secretary Correspondence Department
Moody Bible Institute, Chicago

TEXT—And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone.—Rev. 20:10.



The ancient conception of the two opposing principles in the universe, although often perverted, is a correct one. There is an eternal, unchangeable and infinitely powerful, holy and loving God, and there is a malicious, wicked and powerful being in the universe whose name is in the text. What is it?

It is a pleasant thought or not, the devil is the god of this age, and is given great power, and, apparently, anticipating his doom, he is intensely active. Being wicked, he would make wickedness universal, and he uses all possible methods of corrupting men, created in the image and likeness of the God he hates, and unfortunately succeeds with a vast number of them.

The Method of Deception. The devil now uses the method of deception rather than force, which in some ages of the world was used very generally. This deception may be of several kinds. The devil may assume an attitude of special sanctity, or goodness; he may direct the thought of man to the acceptance of error; or he may delude man to the reception of something that is branded as truly religious. Taking up the first form of deception, the devil appears sometimes as an angel of light. He appeared in a glittering and fascinating form to Eve in the Garden of Eden, and worked the ruin of the race morally. Many believe that the Anti-Christ, who will presume to take God's place, and thus claim supreme sanctity, will be the devil himself. As we observe the present havoc in religious thinking, and study its evolution, we find that many of those who were champions of doctrinal error have posed as most serious seekers after truth, and have the reputation, oftentimes well established, of being men of sweet temper, most encouraging manners and captivating courtesy. This is not strange, for men of an opposite type, as champions, would at once defeat the devil's purposes.

The method of delusion by leading men away from the truth has one of its strongest features in the persuasion that men should do their own thinking on religious subjects. The specious plea is made that the Christian religion is one of rationality and that therefore men must think out its great problems for themselves. They are urged to let nothing guide them in thinking, not the Bible, nor Christian teachers, but that they should start almost anywhere and work the problems out. The result is inevitable, for man's thoughts are not God's thoughts and God's thoughts only are correct in this sphere, man is ever learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. Indeed, he ordinarily gets further and further from it. Fortunate is the man who sees that he must have some safe starting point for religious thought, and that he must hold himself loyally to the lines of its development.

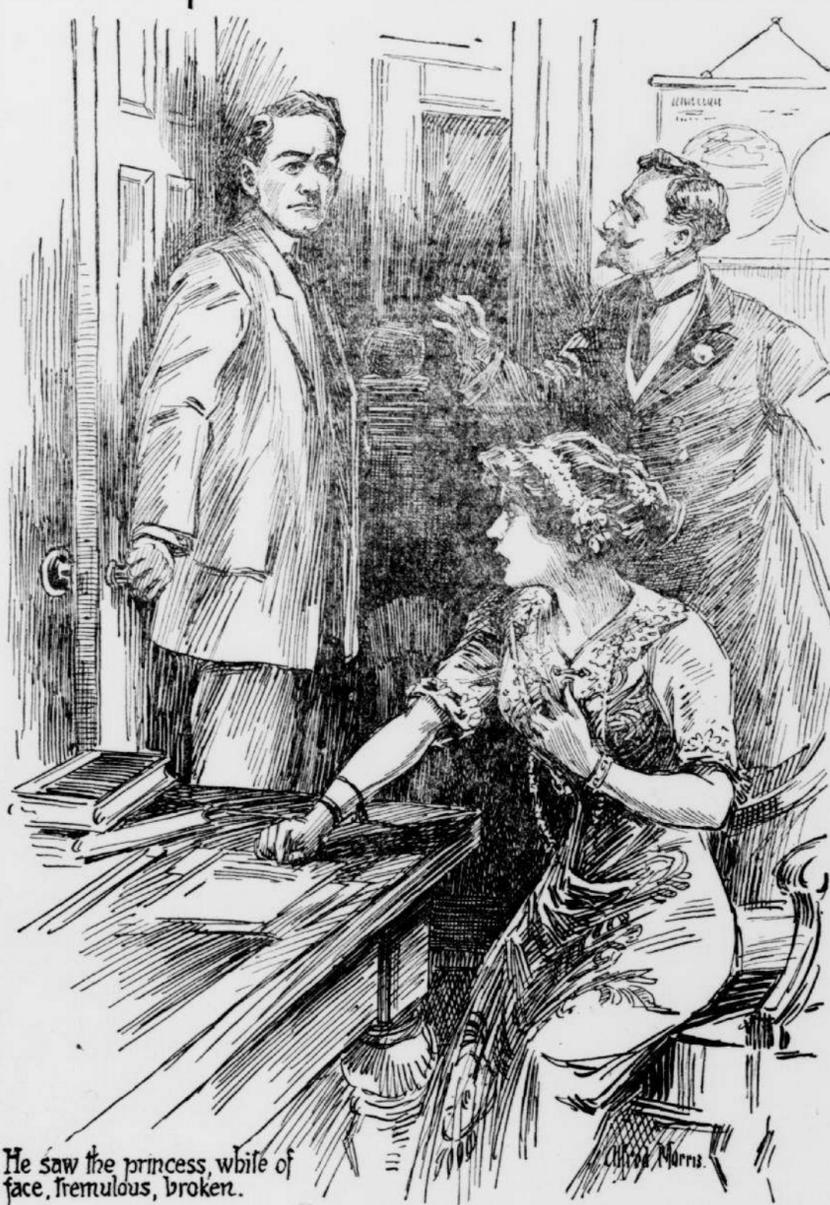
We have the delusion of universal salvation based on a false conception of the character of God, emphasis being placed on the love of God, which is unscripturally defined, the justice and holiness of God being practically eliminated from thought. All those yielding to this delusion are not in the denomination known as Universalists, whose courage in professing what they believe is in itself worthy of commendation.

There is the delusion of religious formalism. Men and women are persuaded to attach themselves to religious societies without any demand being made on them to put into their lives the principles of Christian religion, nor for the necessity of a new birth and genuine repentance, and simple faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and man. Those yielding to this delusion have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof.

There is the delusion of false optimism, which, while not strictly religious, eventuates as religious delusions do. The principle that God is on his throne and all is right with the world, has almost universal approval, being echoed from thousands of pulpits. There is utter blindness to the evils of society, or those facts that are usually designated as evils are excused or explained away with more or less success.

We are in a period of delusions along Biblical lines as in no previous age. A man or woman gets some root of religious thought, and pursuing it independently, discovering that in order to its wider acceptance it must have Biblical indorsement, flies to the Bible and selects from its contents that which ostensibly supports the theory proposed. Within the last twenty-five years there have been several such delusions, and hundreds of thousands of men and women have become their victims. These delusions are propagated at the expense of millions of dollars. The carrying of a limp back Bible is no evidence that the one carrying it is a believer in its teachings as a whole, but may be a believer in some religious fad, and is quite deft in pointing to certain particular verses in support of the theory advocated.

One of the sad facts about these religious delusions is that the deluded when their eyes are opened to the delusion are ashamed to make confession and abandon it. One of the great reasons why these delusions succeed is lack of a well rounded knowledge of the Word of God.



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