

# BARONESS BELOVED BY HOHENLOHE WRITES STORY

## Stormy Cossack Temperament of Alex Von Hedermann Leads Through Tribulation to Happiness

By JEANNETTE L. GILDER

THIS seems to be an era of confessions, some of them fiction some frankly true stories of the lives of men and women. A short time ago we had the life story of Princess Louise of Savoy, which was very frank and very scandalous and very entertaining. Now we have from the same publisher, G. P. Putnam's Sons, "My Friendship with Prince Hohenlohe," by the Baroness von Hedermann. Anything more frank than this lady's story I have not read in many a long time, not even excepting that of the Princess Louise aforementioned. The Baroness von Hedermann is still living and she looks back over her past apparently with no puritanical regrets. She was what she was and that is all there is about it.

Her father was of the race of the Cossacks of the Don. The famous Mazepa was one of this race and the Baroness when she reviews her life seems to find herself "such a creature of the steppes, riding on a foam-bellied horse, my hair a-stream, into the Land of Romance."

Her mother's family was of a different sort, more sober-minded and less romantic, although her grandmother, her mother's mother, when a young girl took the veil and was carried off from the "loister by her lover. She climbed the wall of the garden and threw herself down to him, who was awaiting her on horseback. It looks to me as though the Baroness von Hedermann got her "temperament" from both sides of the house. The first years of her parents' married life were very happy, but this happiness was soon disturbed, for a sad fate hung over the family—"of four children, three died a mournful death. My eldest sister had married the Count R.; she died on the wedding tour, and is buried in Vienna; after two years the Count married my other sister, who took her own life in a violent attack of fever. My brother lived for a long time in America, and there shot himself. And I . . . ."

Later, as a result of a fright, her mother became insane and Alex, the writer of these memoirs, was born in a madhouse. She never knew her mother until she was 16 years old, and her father had long been divorced from her. The father married again and the stepmother and her half brothers and sisters were very unkind to her and her childhood was a most unhappy one.

The Baroness seems to have been a most beautiful woman and was an unusually beautiful girl. Every man that saw her apparently fell in love with her, and she was still in her teens when Herr von Scheffer, a young officer, at that time horse trainer to the Duke of Mecklenburg, fell madly in love with her. They became engaged and the father smiled upon their marriage, but just at this time he lost all his money and the young lovers was if not poor yet of narrow means, so they were forced to resign themselves to separation.

"I, at 17," writes the Baroness, "with the world smiling before me, was too young to suffer very deeply, though the image of my handsome young lover haunted me for many a day. Soon I left the institute with the testimonial: 'She is her own mistress,' and returned to my father's house, full of trust in the future."

Some rich relations at Augsburg invited her to visit them. "When the season of balls began we young girls lived in an uninterrupted whirl of amusements. After one of these balls my uncle appeared triumphantly with the intelligence that he had two suitors for Adele's hand—namely, the banker Erzberger and the Baron H. The Baron, now become our frequent guest and the companion of our walks, and before the season ended he . . . begged for my hand. I was to give him my answer at our next ball. But the poor fellow, riding by our carriage, was thrown from his horse and broke his leg, so that he could not attend on the fateful evening. I had scarcely known how I should answer him. My heart had not spoken. . . . But a strange thing happened: at that ball the banker, Erzberger, too, asked for my hand."

Here was a perplexing situation. She looked into her heart and found that she still loved young Scheffer. Then she went to her father for advice. Of course he eliminated Scheffer from the situation and "weighing the noble birth of the baron against the wealth of the banker, hesitated, then Erzberger himself appeared upon the scene and wooed me with such love and devotion that my father gladly decided in his favor, little as the noble could regard the bourgeois son-in-law. I cried, raised, said: 'No to-day and 'Yes' to-morrow, my youthful passion still possessed my heart. But at last I scolded myself out of romantic nonsense, looked at life as it was, weighed calmly all the prospects before me and ended by saying: 'Yes.'"

On the day of the wedding, as she entered the church, she stepped on a thorn which made her foot bleed. A bad omen, she thought, and truly in this union with a man twenty-four years older than herself, "more thorns than roses were to grow in my path."

words but with published pamphlets, but it was this persecution that led to the greatest happiness of her life, her friendship with Prince Hohenlohe.

"I came—thanks to the pamphlet—to know the man who saved me from moral and material ruin and to whom, for more than thirty years and up to the day of his death, I was a faithful and devoted friend and confidant."

"This was the Prince Chlodwig (Cloviz) von Hohenlohe, Schillingsfurst, with whom I henceforth came into intimate relation. The world—the great world, I mean—has till now known next to nothing of our friendship, although our intimacy was never any secret to a small circle or to the Prince's family."

"Now, when so many, many years have passed by, when my life has lost all resemblance to a tossing stream or to the foam-flecked steed of Mazepa, I can survey calmly those bygone joys and sorrows. I have strength, at this distance, to speak of them."

"The pamphlet I had alluded to was not only circulated in society by my kind connections but for certain reasons reached the cabinets of the imperial council and the embassies and in this way came under the Prince's notice."

Met Through a Poet.

The way the Baroness came to meet this famous man was through the poet Von Bodenstedt, who lived in an apartment opposite hers in Munich. The poet was very much in sympathy with the temperamental and beautiful Baroness. He painted her marital troubles to the Prince in sympathetic language.

"Now, highness, imagine a richly talented and passionate nature transplanted by a marriage de convenance with a much older man into absolutely Philistine surroundings. An utterly commonplace mother-in-law, ugly, envious sisters-in-law, interminable conversations about pickled cucumbers and jam—all combine to drive this young creature to despair."

In her modest abode at 13 Karlstrasse the Baroness, to quote her own story, was "living miserably with the child which Scheffer's love had given me. For days at a time I ate nothing but bread and coffee; little did I dream that my life was being observed with compassionate sympathy from a house opposite. I was no longer living with Scheffer. Not that our love had waned, ah, no! Our beautiful boy Hedermann had but strengthened our mutual attachment, and we had striven with all our might for a legal union. Alas! there was no happy issue for our plans, for we were confronted by countless hindrances, and above all by the inflexible severity of the Church. According to her morality, we might by no means marry, and all steps taken by Scheffer—even his attempt to force the dean's consent at the pistol's mouth—were entirely fruitless."

One day a messenger brought a bouquet to 13 Karlstrasse. A similar "floral greeting" arrived the next day, and so for many days, always anonymous and mysterious, until, she writes, "at last I found in the heart of a lily a note with the humble petition of an admirer to be permitted to make my acquaintance." Half curious, half indignant, she was puzzling over this mystery when a ring came at the door.

"A gentleman entered. I felt at once that it was my unknown flower giver. I saw before me a man not tall, but very pleasant to see, with an attractive face, wonderful eyes and a noble bearing. I was captivated by the soft, sweet tone of his voice."

How the Prince Appeared.

"Gracious lady, forgive my intrusion. I am the Count L., and have been impelled to write to you. I have heard so much about you that the overpowering desire to make your acquaintance has silenced my reasoning faculty. But if my presence is displeasing to you I am ready to withdraw."

me on. "I will and must know all about you," and so I continued my tale.

By the supposed Count L., she told the story of her life, including the affair with Scheffer. From him, she told Count L., she had a thousand times resolved to break off, but as soon as he appeared in his "beauty and his youth, as soon as his arms went round me my good resolutions were forgotten, and the spell of love possessed me with its wild electric magic."

The Count listened with a sympathetic ear not only to this but to the story of her visit to Palestine with her cousin, who had lovingly espoused her cause. They travelled to Jaffa, Jerusalem, Nazareth, Mount Carmel. "The sight of all these holy places made no impression on me from the religious point of view, but their historic and picturesque sides enchanted me."

Count L. was fascinated, thrilled, and declared that he intended to be her true friend forever. He asked questions about things she had not told him.

"Tell me—is it true that, a short time ago, you applied to King Ludwig to save you from your distressed condition?"

"At this reminiscence my eyes filled with tears. 'Yes, I, proud woman as I am, was obliged to beg for a loan, and from the king himself! When, after the divorce, I came for the first time to Munich, I met King Ludwig in the Arcade. Whether it was I myself, or my chestnut plait, I know not, but the king looked round after me and smiled good naturedly. After that I often saw him go by my window, and if he happened to look up,

templated with horror the void that a breach with him would create. The feeling which attracted me to this fascinating talker had nothing in common with the glowing passion which had bound me in the past to Scheffer; it had shivered with time, and had left with me only the memory of a dream of love, in which I seemed to play rather the part of onlooker than heroine. It had been but a fairy tale: I, a little, inexperienced 'Princess Rosalind' Scheffer, a handsome young prince who, had awakened me from sleep and transported me to a strange, unknown world! But now I saw things very differently. Circumstances had matured me quickly. Humiliation, need, grief, pangs of conscience, and above all an ever growing longing for my forsaken children, had ploughed deep furrows in my heart."

Her Wings Were Broken.

After this discovery of the identity of Count L., "Bitter conflict," she writes, "raged in my spirit. Prince von Hohenlohe could not be to me what I had dared

to hope for from Count L., and I regarded the future with terror. . . . for an inward voice relentlessly reiterated: 'If you follow now you are lost forever. But then other comforting reflections occurred to me. My wings were broken; like a wounded bird I must drag them after me in the dust; morally I was already dead. What hope was there of lifting myself from the abyss to my former lofty station? What prospect of ever coming safely to port? All ways were closed to me. Was I to stand henceforth as a pariah by the roadside? To enjoy not one of those delights for which my heart so yearned? Youth, beauty and high birth had destined me to play a leading part in the world, to take glory and admiration as my due—and now what fate loomed before me? In drear monotony to pine or . . . or what?"

"You can fall no lower," whispered the voice in my long, sleepless nights. "Take the hand that offers; he is a noble friend; he gives you love, friendship and will give you consideration and pride of place once more."

"I shall expect you to-morrow between 5 and 7 o'clock. ALEX VON H."

That was the end of her striving. He came. "All struggles, all scruples vanished as soon as he looked in my face with his charming smile, his clear blue eyes. The Prince talked to her and said: 'You possess all the qualities which I most highly prize in a woman, which I have ever sought and many times had imagined I had found—feminine grace and masculine understanding. Especially did your hatred of deception and your instinctive love of truth delight me. I am very honest with myself and I try to be equally so with others. And thus I will make you no vain promises. I cannot, I may not, offer you more than my arm to lean on and trust for protection through all your life.'"

"The Prince stopped for an instant; then in tones of deep emotion, 'Break with all else, Alex; he is my true friend and I will cherish you forever. Be mine; life without you now seems empty and desolate to me, for in you I find the one for whom my heart and soul is longing. Do not withdraw from me your confidences; it has become as necessary to me as are my active part in the higher interests of mankind and the sphere of my political activity.'"

the same smile would play about his mouth, and a kindly nod soon followed."

King Ludwig Liked Her.

"Opposite to me lived Piloty, who had begged me to sit for the arm in one of his pictures. When I was returning one day from my studio, King Ludwig came along, and, incredible as it may appear, he addressed me quite simply. After that he visited me from time to time—merely as he said for the pleasure of talking with me."

The King, she told him frankly, had sent her money when she was in despair. Even the blacksmith with whom she lodged in the country took pity on her and gave her enough money to return to Munich. Evening after evening Count L. passed happily with the Baroness von Hedermann. Now comes the story of a discovery which she made in the summer of 1863 when she was invited by friends to Salzburg.

"It was their reception day, and we were assembled in the drawing room; guests were coming and going."

"Prince Chlodwig von Hohenlohe-Schillingsfurst," announced the servant at the door.

"Through the curtain came my friend—came Count L., with a lady on his arm, who was introduced as his wife. I gazed at him speechless."

"As soon as he came near me I managed to whisper, 'It is you, my friend, my father confessor? Why that mask, that incognito, for me? You are the famous Hohenlohe?'"

"Later," he said quickly, "I will tell you all later."

"When you receive this letter I shall be already in Munich, whence I depart in a few minutes. I implore you, do let me have a word, to my house, saying when I may come to see you. Your unchangedly faithful C. H."

"This note I received immediately after my return from Salzburg. Since I had known 'Count L.' for the Prince von Hohenlohe, my almost regained tranquility had been a thing of the past. Whether was such an acquaintance, which already threatened to develop dangerously, likely to lead me? A faint hope of beginning a new life with the Count L. had gradually grown up in my heart. As a friend and confidant he had become so necessary to me that I con-

Impressed by the truth in his words and the energy in his glowing eyes her soul "abandoned all the conflict of the recent days. In that hour my whole life was altered. My friend lifted me from my critical situation to the level of his own; he became my refuge, my protection; and his love brought me not only the desired joy but also the respect of all the world around me. As the repudiated wife of the banker Erzberger I was an outlaw; as the friend of Prince von Hohenlohe I was courted, especially by those who had formerly turned from me. The very individuals who had pursued me with relentless hatred, such as the fabricator of the pamphlet and my people-in-law, now made attempts to approach me, for each hoped to obtain through me some favor from the Prince. Their attempts were naturally unavailing. The paltry so-called 'great world,' which had so lately thrust me from its midst, would now have been proud and honored to take me to its arms if it could have known that in the years to come the Prince—

Abandoned All Conflict.

He cried like a child when he saw her and though he did not entirely recognize her, said, 'Now that I have seen you again, I am glad to die.' And as a matter of fact he died the next day.

Prince Hohenlohe, as every one knows, was one of the greatest of German statesmen, though I believe Hanoverians prefer to be called Hanoverians rather than Germans. He found time to write poetry to the beautiful Alex.

"You are my oasis," he said so often. "My heart sings when I see you; you give me light, the dreams of youth—you are my fairest world, my peace on earth."

"With your forget-me-not eyes you can charm back the spring into my soul; often, beautiful Alex, I look up to you as to a goddess who in her glory has erringly descended to me, poor mortal, because she gazed compassionately on the urgent weariness of my life and thought she would like to brighten my arid path with her golden rays. See how you revive in the old politician the bygone days of poetic fantasy!"

The Prince was fond of the country and had a charming cottage at Alt-Ausssee, where he loved to spend part of the summer.

"It was the most delightful time for both of us. The Prince loved the quietude of this rural place, where he could give himself up entirely to the welcome ease of country life. The Princess, on the contrary, with her love for social gaieties, preferred to go to one of the 'cures' or to stay in Vienna with her brother-in-law, Prince Constantine. Her husband, though he disliked such restlessness as himself, was too kind and considerate to raise any objection; indeed, no one at all suspected how uncontented the life was to him. His enjoyment began when he had settled his family down in some fashionable 'Bad' and could escape to the tranquility of Alt-Ausssee."

"Near Alt-Ausssee there is an enchanting little spot called the Markt (der Markt), surrounded by hills and woods, filled with light and sunshine—and there I usually spent the summer when Prince Hohenlohe was at his villa."

The Prince and the Baroness not only rode horseback through the woods, but drifted idly on the calm surface of the lake.

"We fastened our horses to the nearest trees and sank down in the grass. 'You lovely thing! Now, with your loosened hair, your blazing eyes, you seem like some wild Amazon at the head of her warlike troop, awaiting only the signal of her leader. In such moments I feel as if you belonged to another world than this petty commonplace one of ours. And yet I may call you mine, my very own.'"

"The sun had meanwhile climbed high and was mirrored in the calm surface of the lake that smiled at us so alluringly."

"Wrapped in the brown mantle of my hair I let myself float slowly with the current, lying motionless with closed eyes. An ineffable sense of well being thrilled me through and through. Suddenly I felt two arms go round me—heard a whisper: 'My lovely Alex!'"

By this time Prince Hohenlohe and the Baroness von Hedermann foresaw that their relationship could not remain forever a secret.

"We therefore decided that I should leave Munich and go to my friends, the von U—s at Salzburg. I remained there nearly six months, but our separation was not so prolonged, for the Prince visited me as soon and as often as was fitting, and when it chanced that he was alone at Schillingsfurst I would go over there and we would spend a day in the quiet isolated castle."

"One visit was to cause us—and me in particular—an unpleasant surprise. 'We were sitting in the Prince's study, talking eagerly, when we heard the sound of wheels, and looking out of the window saw to our unbounded astonishment the Princess getting out of her carriage. She had unexpectedly returned from a journey. 'Oh, I should like to leave the castle as quickly as possible!' I said in some agitation. 'No, you must stay—you cannot go now,' was his decisive answer, upon which he left the room, and in a few minutes reentered with the Prince. 'Dearest Marie, permit me to present to you our guest, the Baroness von Hedermann.'"

"After the usual banal phrases the Princess invited me with charming cordiality to stay for dinner; I sought a pretext to excuse myself, but she said smilingly: 'No, non, restez, Baronne; vous connaissez le vieux proverbe: 'Qui va à la chasse, perd sa place.' 'And I stayed till the evening.' All of which shows that the Princess was indeed a grande dame."

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The Baroness devotes a chapter to mother love. She considers her relation with the Prince "a marriage in the highest sense of the word," and she writes: "From the first days of our acquaintance to the day of his death there was forged between us an unbroken chain of relationships—impulses of passion, friendly emotions, arguments upon art, literature, political projects; each is charged with memories for me. But alongside this tempestuous ocean there lay in my soul that tranquil lake, in whose depths was hidden what was best and holiest in me—my maternal instinct. Perhaps it had been thus powerfully developed, thus intensified to a veritable passion, by the fact that no mother's eyes had watched over my own childhood, and that life had early shown me something of its ruthlessness."

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By Prince von Hohenlohe Baroness von Hedermann had two children, a boy and a girl, both now happily married.

"My daughter," she writes, "became a girl of enchanting loveliness. She was the fairest child of love, blue eyed, golden haired, with a clear, radiant face, and repose in all her movements. And how glad it made me to find in her nothing of my stormy Cossack temperament, but her father's cooler, more restrained nature. With delight I saw in her the image of the beloved man, his character expressed and transfigured by her womanhood."

The Prince loved Gisela idolatrously; with ever renewed admiration he would gaze at her lovely little face, which looked out from its golden frame of hair like a pastel of the eighteenth century; and he often said, "When this captivating child rushes to meet me, all joy and welcome, I feel the freshness of my youth return."

Adored by Her Daughter.

Her daughter seems to have adored her, for she writes: "If I sit brooding over happy memories and spoil illusions, and Gisela never speaks of such things, her blue eyes laugh, and she says: 'Incomparable Mamma! You spoil illusions! You're just the same dreamer as ever, adorning out your hands to friends, acquaintances, nay even enemies, generously alike and with never a thought of self-seeking. 'Tu as toujours des bons marons du feu.'"

"If you hadn't been the most devoted, self-sacrificing wife to dead papa, you might perhaps now . . . . But not just to be my youthful mamma, always ardent for the beautiful and noble ways of thinking. Do you mean to tell me that you really belong to our prosaic world, you happy maker of happiness, you giver of all blessings with those eager hands?"

"And I clasp my laughing daughter in my arms."

At last the Princess von Hohenlohe died. The Prince was now an old man and not far from death himself. He had reached the age of eighty, but with the death of his wife he desired to marry the Baroness von Hedermann, who writes: "I felt myself compelled to refuse my poor friend his last request. My heart all but broke when I stood to hear from his lips this unjust reproach, and could not defend myself. If you won't share the last days of my life with me, let us break now, once and for all."

"Those last despairing words of the Prince sounded pitilessly in my ears as I left him sitting, broken and crushed, in his great chair in the study. Black specks whirled before my eyes. More than thirty years of my life had I dedicated to this man, with all my heart and soul I had served him—and at the end those were the words I had to hear. In that moment I forgot everything—love, friendship, motherhood. . . . Almost crazy, I went from the Wilhelmstrasse to the river, and threw myself without a moment's hesitation over the bridge."

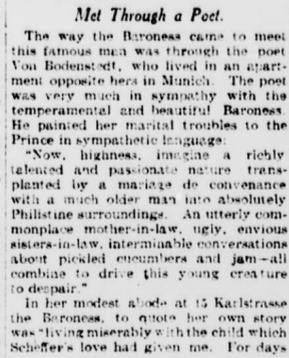
After his death and the marriage of her children, the Baroness spent her life between doing social work and her children whom she visits alternately.

For the last year the Baroness has been living in a chapter house.

"I dwell," she writes, "among happy memories, which outweigh the sad ones. My life was rich in joy and sorrow, and to-day I want for nothing that existence can offer to a mother."

Like a tale in which the Good Fairy made desires which seemed impossible come true.

And here the story ends. It is a strange tale but true and interesting because of its point of view.



PRINCE CHLODWIG VON HOHENLOHE-SCHILLINGSFURST TAKEN DURING THE MUNICH PERIOD.



THE BARONESS VON HEDERMANN IN HER YOUTH.



THE BARONESS VON HEDERMANN HER LAST PICTURE.



ALT-AUSSEE SHOWING HUNTING LODGE OF THE PRINCE.



PRINCE HOHENLOHE.

## SAVAGE TELEGRAPHY SYSTEM

The principle of telegraphy would appear to have been anticipated by the savage tribes of Africa in the heart of Africa. This barbaric system of communication, at once practical and effective, survives to this day and its value has been tested many times.

French explorers seem to have been the first to bring this system to the knowledge of civilized people. By means of it news of important events in the interior of the Sudan reaches all the trading ports on the coast in a very short time.

The communication is made by means of various instruments, the most common ones being horns, tom-toms and whistles. The horns are made of solid ivory, hollowed out of elephants' tusks. The mouthpieces are of various sizes, but the favorite ones are very long and give seven distinct notes, produced by plugging the mouthpiece with corks of different sizes. The ordinary tom-tom is a hollow bit of wood, with a goatskin stretched over one end.

The following instance illustrates the manner in which this native telegraph is employed. The post commander at Stanley Falls was once informed by a native of a neighboring village that a provision train had been attacked two days before a point twenty miles further down the Congo. A week later the party arrived and confirmed the story in part.

They had reached the scene of the alleged attack at the time reported, but the shots that the natives had taken as indications of a conflict with robbers had been fired at a herd of antelope.

At a later period, when an officer of the French Congo came to grief in the rapids, the accident was reported the next morning at a village 180 miles distant.

Among the Bengala tribe a sort of alphabetic system is used with four notes, by means of which the natives communicate over great distances in a kind of telegraphic language.

An American missionary working among the Basutos discovered that the villages had means of conveying messages from one chief to another or of transmitting the intelligence of defeat or victory.

The Basutos hollow out a large gourd and thoroughly dry it. Then kudu skin as hard and as thin as parchment is stretched across the hollow of this gourd. When beaten with a padded drum stick, it gives forth a sound that can be distinctly heard at a distance of from five to eight miles.

In every village there is a class of men who are utilized as scouts. Among these there are always some trained to the use of the gourd drum. The code is what might be called an African Morse alphabet and is beaten on the drum in the open air.

The sound is carried across the valleys and gorges to the next village, where it is interpreted by another scout. If the message is for a distant village he repeats it, his drum and in this way it is carried from village to village, with very little loss of time until it reaches the person for whom it is intended.