THE HOUSE OF ISSTENS.

By Sir D'Artagan Isstens, Cadet of a Great House, Knight of the Royal Order of Wassmark and One Time Embassador to the Court of Charles I of England.

MADE INTO A ROMANCE BY THEODORE ROBERTS.

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"We are glad of your return," she said.

And now my fing[illegible]ers. I thought of my good s[illegible]gn away in Wassmark, and I laughed a little.

"Sir," whispered the princess.

"Madame," I replied—"little princess, my heart presumes far." I slipped on to [illegible] knee, holding both her hands, and the Princess Barbara leaned and kissed me lightly on my lips.

When I returned and found Tom waiting patiently before the pier glass, I thought me of the court gown.

"Where is it?" he asked.

I shook my head.

"Ho, ho, Isstens! So you are no longer a pet," he jibbed, "even unable to borrow a little apparel."

I did not speak, but turned to the wardrobe and smiled.

So poor Tom was forced to appear in his court suit of pale green silk, his old Flemish lace and his English sword.

He led off the queen and I the Princess Barbara in the opening quadrille. My partner's hand trembled in mine. Our eyes met and held. We seemed to be gliding there alone. And at one time, in crossing, I sighed into her powdered hair, "Now I will dream of another—until I get it."

Then the grand quadrille ended. We leaned over the ladies' hands, and the music ceased with a clash.

I saw little of the princess during the remainder of the evening, but the other ladies of the court were very kind and pretended not to recognize any of the other gentlemen. They were good enough to say that not my arm, but my manner of dancing, made plain my identity.

There was little rest for me when I returned. I watched the bright sun come in at the curtains and the shadows slide along the floor. Thus I lay until high noon. In the clear light of day how my freedom of the night appalled me! The fumes of the wine, the scent of her hair, had left my brain now; but, curse it, the memory of all this was still deep in my heart! Oh, princess, princess!

Looking over at the corner of my chamber, where the tapestry took only a little of the light and the shadow of a pier glass fell, I could see her slight figure standing—the red brown hair all powdered as it had been in the dance, the gray eyes questioning, the pale face kind and queenlike.

"It is worth a king's game," I muttered, "and the king may hang me for it, but love a princess I do, so God help me!"

Then I cursed myself for a fool.

I might have lain all day, picturing the lady's face and figure and building toppling air castles, had not Tom burst into my room, looking for his sword.

After the barber had done with me I ordered Hagart and rode out in the autumn forests. The little wild flowers, the odorous ferns and the red and yellow leaves fluttering from the trees all laughed at the song in my heart. And so I staid in the greenwood until sunset, listening to the scurrying of partridges, the whispering of the brown oaks and the occasional and faroff bugle calls in the city. At the end of it I untied Hagart's bridle from a sapling, and, mounting, vowed that I would forget the princess and leave Cloburg for Flanders or any place where one might die fighting. This I had vowed when leaving Marion. The thought came to me, and I laughed.

"Hagart," I said to my black horse, "I will stay, for the princess is so far above me, and I am her very humble cavalier." And I should have been woefully cast down at the hopelessness of it, but instead I went whistling up the avenue that runs through the park. For what is there that a man feels far [illegible] his reach when his best horse is [illegible]m and his tried sword swings [illegible] his leg!

Mat[illegible] that I became so good a court- [illegible] our embassador in Cloburg [illegible]ne to become his secretary. So [illegible]d my fingers with ink, drew [illegible]ay and wrote two letters a day [illegible]dly. The receptions at court [illegible]dom without me, and, though [illegible]cess and I spoke little, our eyes [illegible]y things.

Beverley was high in favor, and [illegible]jesty decorated him with the [illegible]ar of the Order of the Royal [illegible]. One night, when Tom was [illegible]ver the wine with me, he said: "[illegible] you ever notice, Isstens, how [illegible]thing lies between the deed for [illegible]ne man is hung and another [illegible]?"

[illegible]had become since entering on [illegible]etaryship something of a philosopher I nodded assent and replied, "Truly, and sometimes they would hang a man and afterward see reason to crown him."

"Which nearly happened in my poor case," said Tom.

He filled the bowl of a long pipe with tobacco and lighted it at the flame of a candle. Smoking had become fashionable in Cloburg—almost as much so at this time as in London itself. With the fragrant clouds floating about his head he talked of his old home in Devon. There was a girl there high in rank and very young whom he had loved. He was very careful to avoid all names save that of the Englishman whom he had so valiantly killed in the Unicorn's Head.

For half the night he rambled on in his narrative of old things while I sat, outwardly attentive, grunting ever and anon, but in reality thinking only of a little, amber haired princess.

The big clock in my chamber chimed 2. He ceased talking of England and looked at me with his old smile.

"What color is her hair?" he asked.

"Red brown—that is, whose hair do you mean?"

"The hair of the lady you used to dream about," he said.

"Oh, yellow!" I answered. I remembered the time I had called it golden.

Then Tom wandered off to his bed, taking his pipe and his tobacco with him and leaving me to dream there in the window seat till sunrise. When I looked out at early dawn, a white frost lay over the grass and walls and glistened on the roofs. I blew out the flaring candles, threw aside my clothing and got to bed before 6.

When I awoke, to my amazement I beheld old Red Harding grinning at me between the curtains of the bed. How heartily we embraced and laughed and glared at one another, as if we had been parted for years. I did not appear, pen in hand, before the embassador that day, but spent my time reading the Gazette and listening to Red

One of them had a song in memory of the slaying of Willis Howard.

pade with Tom Beverley, and he wrote upon the subject at great length, beseeching me, for the love they bore me in the house of Isstens, to take care of my neck. Tears filled my eyes when I read my mother's note, and the little message from Marion, which was wondrous humble. The captain sent me a poem, most heroic, of his own composing, and they all prayed me to come back before Christmas.

Tom took Red Harding out with him, while I wrote many pages in reply to all these. I think my letters must have been like the works of the poor poet who for money, wrote on husbandry, the church and state, military matters and Latin prose and was forever verging on his one dear subject, poetry, but nowhere mentioned it. So did I write of this and that, ever thinking of the princess and tingeing my sentences with her; yet nowhere wrote her name.

When I finished, it was time for candles. Tom and Red Harding had not returned, so I put on my cloak and hat and went down into the gardens. Some of the flowers were frozen in their beds and the air was chilly. I looked at the royal wing of the palace, where it fronts along the crest of the terrace. The windows gleamed out, one by one, as the servants lit the candles. One casement glowed as a red rose before my eyes. I stood until all twilight failed—until the stars glinted and the moon swung up above the great woods where I had dreamed.

Then I turned to go, and in my first step my foot sent something singing along the gravel. I stooped and peered low to discover it. Then I dropped on my knees and felt about with careful fingers. After searching for some time I found, on the frozen mold at the edge of the path, a silver buckle set with rubies. And the same I had so often seen in the hunting hat of a certain great lady that I held it fondly and went on toward my apartments in the palace.

Fumes of the Virginian leaf greeted me at the door, and, upon entering, I found our old retainer and Tom Beverley comfortably seated.

"What think you?" cried Tom. "This cavalier from Isstens has been making love to the princess."

"Truly," said Red Harding. "We met the lady in the garden and walked up and down and around, like priests after mass, many times together. And her highness showed much interest in me and all my friends. A great soldier ever aims high."

Tom winked at me and asked what I held so closely in my fingers.

The old lieutenant's eyes protruded. "By heavens, it is the buckle I saw in the princess' hat!" he exclaimed.

"My dear friend, were there never two buckles made alike?" I answered.

It was Red Harding's intention to start the following morning on his return journey to Blatenburg, and as he had not seen enough of the taverns of Cloburg during the day Tom and I took him along after tea.

Outside we found the moon obscured and the air turned mild. The lieutenant swore roundly, thinking of muddy roads for the morrow. The first tavern we came to swung the sign of the Blue Bull. It was a little snug place, and, aping foreign fashions, was much frequented by poets and actors, who would come here and scribble their rhymes or voice their parts as the whim took them. Some of these gentry were present when we entered, and they made such merry company that we tarried long and drank deep. One of them had a song in memory of the slaying of Sir Willis Howard, in which he was pleased to call Tom "a valiant, skillful gentleman, the pride of all the town," and Howard "so vile a dog, it did us good to see him tumbled down."

We pledged many more glasses to this astonishing poet, and he promised to immortalize us all.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE TRYST WITH THE PRINCESS.

As we were about to leave the place a fellow of the swashbuckler stamp came in with great clashing of his scabbard.

He reeled against me, and on the instant I felt something plucked from the inside of the open breast of my cloak.

"This is a pretty bauble," he grinned, holding Princess Barbara's buckle in his hand, and even as I clutched at him he discovered the great price of the stones and dashed past toward the door. With shouts of rage and many threats we all sped after him, the poets dropping their verses and running lustily.

The street was empty save for the flying figure of the thief. With a fair running ground before us, Tom and I kept our wind for the chase, but the rhyme writers and Red Harding continued bellowing out and waving their swords, much to the danger of each other's head.

Soon we saw that the man with the buckle, by the manner of his running, was much further in wine than any of our party. He stopped frequently to take breath. He fell over twice, and at last, with Tom at his heels, dashed aside in the doorway of a tall house. In we went after him like a pack of hounds.

Then began an awful tripping across each other's legs and overturning of tables, for the hall was pitch dark. The door slammed shut after the last yelling poet had scrambled in. For awhile we had a devil of a time, and when by some unseen agency the candles were lit we had a much worse one, for we found ourselves in a trap of robbers and cutthroats, all garbed and armed like soldiers and gentlemen. And the man who had led us here was not so far gone in drink as we had at first supposed.

There, in the narrow, richly appointed hall, occurred a woeful fight. The inmates were two to our one, but happily, owing to broken furniture and limited space, this gave them little advantage.

At the very first of it I lunged at the thief, who still held Barbara's buckle, and spitted him clean through the side.

It was but the work of a moment to snatch the trinket from his twitching fingers and fasten it on my own breast.

While engaging a burley, thick legged rascal across a bench I saw with the corner of my eye one of the poets shouting and stabbing at a man of twice his size. They spun about and leaped back and on like crazy men and were both very drunk. But presently the scribe changed his rapier to his left hand and brought down a cracking broadsword cut on his antagonist's head which ended that little passage of arms.

Red Harding, after sorely wounding his man, went back and kicked the door until it fell out into the street. Dragging one of the wounded with us we retreated, and the enemy forbore following.

After helping our wounded friend to the nearest inn we then returned to the palace, thanking the saints for taking us out of so merry a scrape alive.

I awoke early on the morrow, and in getting out of bed felt a severe pain in my left knee. I put my foot to the floor and the agony brought an impatient oath to my lips. Dropping back on to the bed I examined the painful joint, and, to my disgust, found it puffed and blue. This is what came of fighting in the dark.

After the doctor had looked at it and punched the swelling with his lean finger, he shook his head till the wig settled over one ear.

"You must go on crutches for a week or two, my good sir, and no more riding nor fencing till the inflammation has gone," he said.

The gentlemen of the guard, who were clustered about, drew down their mouths in sorrow, all feeling that crutches were second only to the coffin.

The doctor stamped toward the door, but turned on the threshold and delivered a last remark:

"Wine or malt liquors in the system will add to the inflammation, Cavalier Isstens."

He left amid a thunder of groans.

Ten minutes after I sat with my foot on a chair and played a game of chance with Beverley and two of his fellows, and the decanters stood on the table.

In the evening the big poet-guardsman came in and found me alone.

After exchanging commonplaces he began to fidget in his chair and look at me uneasily.

"Pray part with it, my friend," I said gayly.

"By the sword of St. Peter, how did you know I had anything to say?" he asked.

For answer I passed him a tobacco pipe, knowing that the fashionable habit was strong upon him.

After blowing out a few wreaths of white smoke he said:

"Have you heard about the letter your king wrote to Princess Barbara?"

I shook my head.

"Some one told me that a few days ago he sent her a letter accusing her of faithlessness."

"How did the countess come to hear of it?" I interrupted.

The big guardsman blushed and clapped his heels together.

"The person who told me heard it from the princess, who does not seem concerned at all," he replied.

I looked out of the window and bit my lip.

"She has written back a missive that will not mend matters, and his majesty Rufford is wrathy as the devil," he continued.

"Which is all passing strange," I said at last. "But of what interest to me?"

The poet grinned and poured a glass of wine. "A health to you, you sly dog!" he cried, and drained the glass.

"On second thoughts, Isstens, I advise you to put away that buckle before the king comes to inquire after your knee," he said.

Then he clattered out, singing one of his own songs.

In the shadows I was glad to sit alone and think. Could it be that the princess was really out of love with her sovereign lover! Could it be that she loved some one without a crown and a kingdom—loved him beyond a passing fancy! "Poor fool, cadet," I whispered, "you are a fitting youth to enliven the dull days with, but"— And I laughed cynically.

At that moment a servant entered with a note and candles. I held the note unopened until the man left the room, for the little seal was familiar. Then I broke the seal and read: "Bring me my silver buckle to the garden tomorrow morning. Near the dog fountain at 10. I will await you in the company of my ladies. I think you have been thoughtless in the wearing of it."

Upon finishing which my courage and hope fled, and I cursed many things.

Ten minutes before the appointed hour I reached the dog fountain in the palace garden, having hobbled there on my crutches. During the night a light covering of snow, the first of the winter, had fallen. The clipped shrubs, the statuary and the roofs of the buildings were shrouded in it, but overhead the sun crawled up the bluest of skies. But my fool heart was heavy. I was lost in meditations not pleasant when there came a soft rustling down the arbored path. Turning, I beheld the princess, in a cloak of red cloth and gray fur, nearing me unattended. As well as I could, with my crutches under my shoulders, I bowed, and upon her reaching my side, I very humbly kissed her hand. Then, without speaking, I gave her back the silver hat buckle set with rubies.

But instead of bending her head and looking at the returned trinket, she lifted her face and surveyed me with her gray eyes. Her glance was kind, and I immediately forgot all the brave vows I had made to dream no more of the love of one so far above me.

I know that my voice came huskily and that my eyes pleaded that morning I laid bare my heart to the Princess Barbara.

And yet she listened with no tinge of anger nor surprise in her clear eyes, only love—and pity. Upon saying my last word I turned to hobble away, but her voice softly recalled me.

"D'Artagan," she said—then, with her face bowed in her hands, she sat upon the steps of the fountain and wept.

The little threads of sunlight through the cedar branches drew a halo about her hair, and my heart was rent within me, so that my voice deserted me in the anguish of it. But presently, going closer, I said:

"Princess, it is something only to have loved like this, and, before God, I would never have returned to trouble you had I known the full sweet story of it."

Then she arose and with trembling fingers fastened the silver buckle on my shoulder.

"And now," she said, trying bravely to smile, "will you promise never to try to see me again and to leave the town if I tell you two things?"

For answer I bowed my head and drove the tears back on to my soul.

"First," she said, "I will never marry king nor prince, nor, God pity me, any man, and, second, you, Sir Cadet, I love with my true heart!"

For a bright, bright second her lips pressed mine, her hair was over my eyes, and then she sped away down the arbored path and left me leaning on my heedless crutches.

I staid in the garden for several hours, limping up and down the paths or staring away at the trees of the park like one dazed by a blow.

When Beverley came to have a dish of tea with me in my room, I asked him to get a leave of absence from the king and to come with me to Blatenburg.

At first he looked at me in piteous amazement; then, leaning closer over the table, he put out his hand on my shoulder and said that he would come.

With many excuses, hinting at state trouble and a message from the king, I bade farewell to the court of Cloburg, and, though the ladies in waiting made great ado, Rufford seemed only too pleased at my departure.

I started on the journey at midday, a week after our tryst at the dog fountain. Tom rode in the coach with me (my knee forbade the saddle) and a servant rode alongside on Hagart.

Poor enough company I made all the first day, and Tom respected my silence and spent his time between reading a book and staring from the window. But on the second day, toward evening, we heard a great rumpus ahead, and the coach came to a standstill. Tom got out to see what the matter was, and immediately two pistol shots rang on the frosty air and past the window went a man in a red cloak reeling in his saddle. Tom returned, relating how our former acquaintance of the mountains had tried to hold us up and how a pistol ball somewhere in the leg had been his only satisfaction. After telling which he coolly returned to his reading of the book, the snow still melting on his boots.

We reached Blatenburg in safety without further adventure. Instead of riding up to the palace we took rooms and stabling for Hagart at the Cavalier's Pride, and next morning sent the coach back to Cloburg. On the night of the second day, when I was sitting alone with Barbara's hat buckle in my hand, a low knocking came on my door.

My knee being greatly improved, I crossed the room and admitted a man with his cloak wrapped close about him.

His face was covered, but something in the width of his shoulders and the tallness of his figure reminded me of a former acquaintance. After closing the door behind him he dropped the cloak from his shoulders and doffed his hat, disclosing to my startled gaze my sovereign, king of Wassmark.

"I have called," he said, smiling, "to speak to you on a matter of private interest to both of us, and to another whom it is not necessary to name."

I stared at the king with challenging eyes, my heart fluttering and uncertain, my mind made up to a just punishment for my impudence in loving her.

His smile took on its old broadness, and he sat himself down on the edge of the bed and motioned me back to my chair.

"You have been a good servant, sir, and a true fighter," he continued, "and have many times saved your king and your country much blood without knowing it. You will kindly pass me your sword. Mine I have forgotten."

I brought my sword from the corner of the room. He bared the blade and looked at the war dents.

"It is a right fitting sword to knight a man with," he said, and, requesting me to kneel, which I did as gracefully as possible under the circumstances,

I stared at the king with challenging eyes.

he smote me sharply on the shoulder and cried, "In the name of God and by the touch of proved steel I proclaim you a knight of the Royal Order of Wassmark."

"And so honor comes when she is least wanted," thought I, and raised his royal hand to my lips without fervor.

"You are not surprised!" he said, drawing up his red eyebrows.

"Yes, sire, I am surprised and honored beyond measure," I answered.

He pinned the cross of the order on my breast and then handed me a letter. But before I could open the sheet he snatched it back, saying, "It is from the princess, Sir What's-your-name."

I flushed crimson and replied: "Very good, your majesty. I have no desire to see your private correspondence."

"Come, come, my good Isstens, I crave pardon, but my pride is still somewhat sore at being crossed in love by my embassador's secretary."

I said nothing to this.

"But remember, sir," he continued, "it touches nothing beyond my pride."

"And yet the thing remains hopeless, sire. I am but the cadet. And how does a poor sword weigh against a crown?"

"You forget," he said, "that you were but now made knight of a great order."

He got ready to go against Beverley's return, and, with his hat on, asked if I was still of the old, adventurous spirit.

I answered that my sword was always at his service.

"Then postpone your visit to Isstens and stand ready for further word from me," he said and bade me a friendly good night.

When Beverley came in a little past midnight, I told him of the change in my plans and something of what the king had mentioned, and, last, of my new honor.

"Your king is a true gentleman," he exclaimed, "and, by heaven, I see into it a little."

"And will you share this unknown adventure with me?" I asked.

"I would to God I could, Isstens, but loyalty to Rufford holds me out of it."

"What causes you to think that? The king said nothing of it," I answered.

Whereat he but shook his head and began preparations for his night's rest.

[CONTINUED.]

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NOTICE OF APPOINTMENT OF ADMINISTRATOR.

STATE OF IOWA, Delaware County,—ss.

Notice is hereby given, that the undersigned has been duly appointed and qualified as Administrator of the Estate of ANNA B. ROBINSON late of Delaware County, deceased. All persons indebted to said Estate are requested to make immediate payment, and those having claims against the same will present them, duly authenticated, to the undersigned for allowance.

R. R. ROBINSON, Administrator.

Dated August 16, 1899.
Bronson & Carr, Att'ys. for Estate.

Farm for Rent on Shares.

We want to rent on shares our well improved farm in Coffin's Grove township and stock owned by us thereon, to a good farmer, who is able to furnish work horses, tools and machinery, and half the cows, hogs, feed, seed and other things necessary to carry on the place.

This farm is first class and our offer is a rare opportunity for the man who secures it. Enquire at the office of Bronson & Carr, Manchester, Iowa. 38tf

In the District Court of Iowa, in and for Delaware County.

OCTOBER TERM, A. D., 1899.

In Re Estate of Vincel Warneck, deceased. | NOTICE OF FINAL REPORT.

To Barbara Warneck, widow, and Joseph Warneck, Catharine Barta, John Warneck, Frank Warneck, Mary Van Vors, Barbara Warneck-Knettle, Rosie Zemanek, and Thomas Warneck, heirs-at-law and legatees of said decedent:

You and each of you are hereby notified that on or before the 20th day of September, 1899, there will be on file in the office of the Clerk of the District Court of Delaware County, Iowa, the Final Report of Barbara Warneck, Executrix of the estate of Vincel Warneck, deceased; and, unless you appear thereto and file exceptions on or before noon of the second day of the October, 1899, term of said Court, which will commence and be held in Manchester, Iowa, on the 9th day of October, A. D. 1899, said report will be approved and said Executrix discharged and her bond exonerated. BARBARA WARNECK, Executrix of Estate of Vincel Warneck deceased. 36-W4.

NOTICE OF PROBATE OF WILL.

STATE OF IOWA, Delaware County,—ss.

TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

You are hereby notified that the last will of ANNA CHRISTINA GODKEN, (GORDKEN) deceased, has been filed, opened and read, and Monday, the 9th day of October, A. D. 1899 fixed as the time, and the Court House in Manchester the place for hearing and proving the same.

Witness my hand and seal of said Court this 12th day of August 1899.

F. H. PAUL, Clerk District Court.

(SEAL)

34w3

Miss Elizabeth Ewing,

an Osteopathic physician from the American School of Osteopathy, of Kirksville, Mo., has located in Manchester for the practice of her profession. She may be found at the residence of Mrs. Stringham, on east Main street, four blocks east of court house. Office hours, 9 to 12, 1 to 5 daily, except Sunday. 29tf

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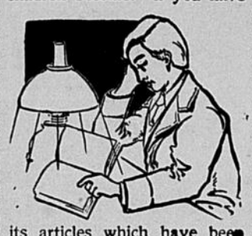

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