

have amused Leopold in a different mood.

With a manner that essayed the different mean between reverence due to royalty and common everyday politeness, good enough for an ordinary gentleman, the station master volunteered to ascertain whether the ladies described had gone out and given up their tickets. A few minutes of suspense dragged on. Then came the news that no such persons had passed.

Here was a stunning block. Since Helen Mowbray and her mother had apparently not traveled by the Orient express, where had they gone on leaving the hotel at Kronburg? Had they, after all, misled Baroness von Lyndal as to their intentions for the purpose of inflicting the emperor, or had they simply changed their minds at the last minute, as women may? Could it be possible that they had changed them so completely as to return to Schloss Lyndalberg, or had they chosen to vanish mysteriously through some back door out of Rhætia, leaving no trace which even a lover could find?

Leopold could not help recalling the chancellor's revelations, but dismissed them as soon as they had crept into his brain. No matter where the clue to the tangle might lie, he told himself that it was not in any act of which Helen Mowbray need be ashamed.

He could think of nothing more to do but to go dismally back to Kronburg and await developments or, rather, to stir them up by every means in his power. This was the course he finally chose, and just as he was about to act upon his decision he remembered his carelessly given promise to Count von Breitstein.

There was a telephone in the railway station at Felgarde, and Leopold himself called up the chancellor at Kronburg.

"My friends are not here. I'm starting for Kronburg as soon as possible, either by the next train or by special," he announced after a faraway squeak had signified Count von Breitstein's presence at the other end. "I don't see why you wish to know, but I would not break my promise; that's all. Goodbye. Ah? What was that you said?"

"I have a curious piece of news for you," came over the wire in the

guise of his fatherland provided a mathematizing not the beloved woman, unaltered, but the man who married her.

There would be death in the thought that she could be false to herself and her confession of love for him. But then it was unthinkable. Let the whole world reek with foulness, his love must still shine above it white and remote as the young moon.

This old man, whose life would scarce have been safe if in his emperor's present mood the two had been together—this old man had a grudge against the one perfect girl on earth. There was no black rag of scandal he would not stoop to pick out of the mud and fly as a flag of battle, soothing his conscience—if he had one—by saying it was for "Rhætia's good."

Telling himself that these things were truths, Leopold hurried away to inquire for the next train back to Kronburg. There would not be another for three hours, he found, and as nothing could have induced him to wait three hours, or even two, he ordered a special. There was a raging tiger in his breast which would not cease to tear him until he had seen Helen Mowbray, laid his empire at her feet, received her answer and, through it, punished the chancellor.

The special, he was told, could be ready in less than an hour. The journey to Kronburg would occupy nearly three hours, and it would be close upon 9 before he could start with Count von Breitstein for the hunting lodge which he had promised to visit. But the chancellor would doubtless have his electric carriage ready for the desired expedition, and they could reach their destination in twenty minutes. This was not too long a time to give up to proving the old man wrong, for to do this, not to find Helen Mowbray, was Leopold's motive in consenting. She would not be there, and the emperor was going because she would not. He wanted to witness Von Breitstein's confusion, for humiliation was the bitterest punishment which could possibly be inflicted on the proud and opinionated old man.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

"THE truth when desired, spice with pretention when necessary; and never part with the whole truth at one time since waste is sinful."

was one of the maxims by which the chancellor guided his own actions though he did not give it away for the benefit of others, and he had made the most of that prudent policy today.

He had told his emperor no lies, even

through the telephone, where forgetfulness may be pardonable, but he had arranged his truths as skillfully as he arranged his pawns on a chessboard.

It was said by some who pretended to know that Count von Breitstein had had a Jesuit for a tutor, but, be this as it might, it was certain that when he had a goal to reach he did not pick his footsteps by the way. A flower here or there was apt to be trodden down, a small life broken, a reputation stained, but what of that when Rhætia's standard was to be planted upon the mountain top?

Supposing he had said to the emperor after his promise of plain speaking: "Your majesty's journey today is a wild goose chase. I happen to know that those you seek are still at their hotel in Kronburg. When I heard from my brother Egon that they were leaving Schloss Lyndalberg suddenly and secretly I went immediately to Kronburg and called upon the ladies. My intention was to frighten them away by telling them that the fraud was found out and they had better disappear decently of their own accord unless they wished to be assisted over the frontier. They actually dared refuse to see me, alleging as an excuse the sudden illness of their companion, which had prevented their leaving Kronburg, as they intended. While I was awaiting this answer I learned that some person was telegraphing from the railway station to the hotel manager inquiring if the Mowbrays had gone. I guessed this person to be your majesty and ventured to use my influence strongly with the manager, so successfully that I was permitted to dictate the reply and obtain his promise that the matter should be strictly confidential. I judged that your majesty had meant to take the Orient express, but had misused it, and, as you telephoned from the station, I had no doubt that you intended to follow either by the next train or by a special. Soon I learned that no special had been ordered by any one. I ascertained the time of the next train and sought your majesty in it. Had my eloquence then prevailed with you I should have urged your return with me, and thus you would have been spared the useless journey to Felgarde. As you remained obstinately faithful, however, I considered myself fortunate to have you out of the way, so that I could hurry back, and, unhampered by your suspicions, set about learning still more facts to Miss Mowbray's discredit or inventing a few if those which un-

doubtedly existed could not be unearthed in time."

Supposing that Count von Breitstein's boasted frankness had led him to make these statements, it is probable that Rhætia would not long have rejoiced in a chancellor so wise and so self-sacrificing.

It was well enough for the old man to declare his willingness to retire if his master desired it, but he had counted, as people who risk all for great ends do count, on not being taken at his word. He loved power because he had always had it, and without power life would not be worth the living, but it was honestly for the country's sake and for Leopold's sake rather than his own that he desired to hold and keep his high position. Without his strong hand to seize the helm should Leopold's fall for some careless instant he conscientiously believed that the ship of state would be lost.

He had done his best to disillusion a young man tricked into love for an adventuress. Now neither as chancellor nor friend could he make further open protest unless favored by fate with some striking new development. There were, nevertheless, other ways of working, and he had but taken the first step toward interference. He meant, since worse had come to worst, to go on relentlessly, and he would hardly have considered it criminal to destroy a woman of the type to which he assigned Helen Mowbray, provided no means less stringent sufficed to snatch her from the throne of Rhætia. There were many plans seething in the chancellor's head, and Egon's help might be necessary. He might even have to go so far as to bribe Egon to kidnap the girl and sacrifice himself by marrying her out of hand before she had a chance to learn that the emperor was ready to meet her demands. Egon had been attentive to Miss Mowbray. It might well be believed even by the emperor that the young man had been madly enough in love to act upon his own initiative, uninduced by his brother.

The chancellor's first act on parting with Leopold was to telegraph Captain von Breitstein to meet the train by which he would return to Kronburg. Therefore on arriving at the station he was not surprised to see Egon's handsome face prominent among others less attractive on the crowded platform.

"Well?" questioned the young man as the old man descended.

"I'm sorry to say it is very far from well. But between us we shall, I hope, improve matters. You have kept yourself au courant with everything that has happened in the camp of the enemy?"

"Yes."

"Is anything stirring?"

"Say 'any one,' and I can answer you more easily. Who do you think has arrived at the hotel?"

"The devil, probably, to complicate matters."

"I've heard him called so, but a good looking devil and devilishly pleasant. I met him in his motor, in which he'd driven into town from his new toy, the hunting lodge in."

"What? You mean the Prince?"

"Of Darkness, you've just named him." Egon gave a laugh at his own repartee, but the chancellor heard neither. His hard face brightened. "That's well," said he grimly. "Here we have just the young man to see us through this bad pass if he's as good looking as ever and in his usual mood for mischief."

If we can interest him in this affair, he may save me a great deal of trouble and you a misalliance."

"But your wedding present to me?" began Egon blankly.

"Don't distress yourself. Do what you can to assist me, and, whatever the end, you shall be my heir. I promise you. Is the prince at the hotel now?"

"Yes. He had been to call on you at your town house, he stopped his automobile to tell me, and, hearing from me that you would be back this evening, he decided to stay all night at the hotel, so that he could have a chat with you after your return, no matter at what hour it might be. I believe he has left a note at your house."

"I will go to him, and we can then discuss his contents together," said Count von Breitstein, and the chauffeur who drove his electric carriage was told to go to the Hohenlangenwald hotel.

The prince, who would, the chancellor hoped, become the *dans ex machina*, was engaged in selecting the wines for his dinner when Count von Breitstein's card was sent in. He was pleased to say that he would receive his visitor, and, Egon having been sent about his business, the chancellor was shown into the purple drawing room of the suit reserved for royalty.

As he entered a young man jumped up from an easy chair, scattering sheaves of illustrated papers, and held out both his hands, with a "Welcome, my dear old friend."

It would have been vain to scour the world in quest of a handsomer young man than this one. Even Egon von Breitstein would have seemed a mere good looking puppet beside him, and the chancellor rejoiced in the physical perfection of a prince who might prove a dangerous rival for an absent emperor.

MAIL ORDER MENACE

How the Cash Retail Trade Is Being Drawn Cityward.

THE LURE OF THE CATALOGUE

Amazing Growth of Big City Concerns That Drain the Country of Money Which Should Be Spent at Home. How the Evil May Be Combated.

In Maxwell's Tailsman are the following remarks on the mail order business by Richard Hamilton Byrd:

It is a recognized fact that the retail business of the country villages and the large towns, for that matter, is being destroyed. Year by year the once prosperous merchants are being forced to the wall—driven out by the mail order business. And this is taking place in face of the fact that the population and purchasing power of the country districts are ever on the increase.

What is the matter? The mail order houses are drawing the cash retail trade from its natural channels to the cities.

The growth of this octopus has been phenomenal. From a jellylike idea without form—an experiment fifteen years ago, it has grown to proportions that threaten the extermination of the retail country merchant.

An idea of the way the money of the people is being drawn into this mail order trade can be had from the reports of some of these houses.

A certain mail order house of Chicago which began with a few thousand dollars fifteen years ago now carries a capital stock of \$5,000,000 and has arranged to increase that stock to \$40,000,000. It does a business of \$25,000,000 a month and earns a net profit of \$3,000,000 a year.

Like the patent medicine business, the mail order business depends on the gullibility of the general public. Thousands of people every week send in their hard earned cash to some mail order house in payment for goods that could have been bought cheaper at their home store.

Why do they do it? It is owing partially to the desire of the average person to be humbugged and partially to the effect of persistent advertising. The mail order house sends out its attractive literature to every family in the country. In this literature, composed of well illustrated catalogues and cheap magazines known as mail order papers, the goods are set out in the most attractive manner. It is tempting bait, and the fish bite.

All of these millions come out of the legitimate trade of the country merchant, the man who has invested his capital, built himself a home and been active in building up the town, with the expectation that he would be allowed to do a legitimate business in a legitimate way. He is entitled to the trade of his town and the country adjacent. He pays his taxes and contributes to the support of the community. That community owes him a reciprocal duty: the duty to give him the preference of trade, everything else being equal. This is the theory of all organized civilized communities, beginning with the family and going on up through every organization to that of the state. Home protection from foreign robbers is the first duty of every good citizen. If the village and town life that has grown up under natural laws of trade is to be maintained the retail business must be preserved against the unfair inroads of the mail order business. And this can be done only by organization and education. Let the people know the facts about the mail order business, and the offerings on the altar of credulity will grow beautifully less.

Comfort Stations For Towns.

Anything that tends to advance civilization and promote the welfare of mankind is beneficial to a town. Milwaukee intends to do something in this line, as its board of public works proposes to establish municipal comfort stations throughout the city.

"I am heartily in favor of these comfort stations," said Mayor Becker. "In my travels through Europe I saw a number of the stations in the large cities. They are located in the busy parts of the business districts as well as along the boulevards. For a small fee a person can go into one of these stations, get a towel and hot water and refresh himself without having to go to a hotel to do it. People can also get their clothes brushed and cleaned before filling business engagements. It is a good step toward municipal improvement."

Taboo on Dandelions and Chickens.

The Denver city council is working upon an ordinance providing a fine of \$10 for every dandelion allowed to bloom within the city limits. The city council of Florence, Colo., has passed an ordinance imposing a similar fine on the owner for each chicken allowed to run at large.

Fruit and Flowers

ORCHARD PRACTICE.

Individual Trees Should Be Studied Before Pruning.

Pruning is a broad subject and one that is not much understood by most people. Usually when a man buys trees he thinks he must be always pruning them, but such is not the case. Pruning is to assist nature and must be done with certain definite objects in view—namely, to promote growth, to induce fruit spurs, to retard excessive growth and to form the tree the desired shape.

There is a struggle for light, heat and air among the individual branches or twigs of a tree which is commonly



WRONG PRUNING. [This kind of work is never permissible. Always cut close to the trunk and make a smooth wound.]

termed "struggle for existence." Every twig requires air, heat and light, and, as each has not the same position on the tree, some must die or be removed. Those near the center must be watched more closely, as those near the outside receive plenty of air and sun. Almost every variety of tree has its individual shape. If each is studied and pruned according to its characteristic tendencies, the process of pruning will be very simple. After the crown has been properly started the first year the next great important step is to decide at the beginning of the second year whether you are going to grow trees with a central leader or hollow center. These methods of forming trees are much discussed by prominent orchardists, and both methods are being used.

In pruning the fruit trees always make a clean, smooth cut and have a bucket of good wax or paint handy and thoroughly cover the wound. This prevents decay of the wood and allows the new tissue to grow over unmolested by fungi or the elements. The cambium, or inner bark, will begin to cover the wound as soon as the tree becomes active in the spring, but will form only over a limited portion of the cut surface. The growth of the cambium can be encouraged and made to completely cover the wound if cut along the inner side of the callus with a sharp knife. In all your pruning take the branch off just as close as possible to the limb where it issues and never leave a stub.

It is generally thought by fruit growers that the high headed tree is better, as it allows better and easier cultivation. This is the main point upon which the advocates of high headed trees base their whole argument. A high headed tree is generally the worst kind to cultivate under, for usually the lowest limbs are permitted to make a decided lateral growth almost parallel to the soil, and when these limbs are laden with fruit they extend almost to the ground, and it is readily seen that close cultivation is impossible.

The trees in the old orchards and yards all over Oregon show the evolution of the high headed tree. It is simply this: When the lowest limbs interfere with cultivation they are removed, the next set of limbs are permitted to make a lateral growth similar to the first, and eventually these are cut off. Thus it continues until the crown of the tree is ten to fifteen feet from the ground, and the fruit is practically out of reach.

On the other hand, the crown of the low headed tree is started near the ground, and the limbs make an upright slanting growth, which allows far closer cultivation. The limbs by pruning are caused to grow strong and able to support their fruit.—C. L. Lewis

A Twenty year Sentence.

"I have just completed a twenty year health sentence, imposed by Bucklen's Arnica Salve, which cured me of bleeding piles just twenty years ago," writes O. S. Woolver, of LeRayville, N. Y. Bucklen's Arnica Salve heals the worst sores, boils, burns, wounds and cuts in the shortest time. 25c. at Eddy Company's Drug store.



"I will, if you, but not for the reason you think."

chancellor's voice. "It's about the ladies."

"What is it?" asked Leopold.

"I hinted that I had more information which I could not give you then. But I am in a different position now. You did not find your friends in the Orient express."

"No," said the emperor.

"They gave out that they were leaving Rhætia, but they haven't crossed the frontier."

"Thanks. That's exactly what I wanted to know."

"You remember a certain person whose name can't be mentioned over the telephone buying a hunting lodge near the village of Inseleden, in the Buchenwald, last year?"

"Yes, I remember very well. But what has that to do with my friends?"

"The younger lady has gone there without her mother, who remains in Kronburg with the companion. It seems that the present owner of the hunting lodge has been acquainted with them for some time, though he was ignorant of their masquerade. You see, he knows them only under their real name. The young lady is a singer in comic operas, a Miss Jenny Breit, whose dossier can be given you on demand. The owner of the hunting lodge arrived at his place this morning, unadvised into Kronburg, where the young lady had waited, evidently informed of his coming. She invited him to pay her a visit at her hotel. He accepted and returned the invitation, which she accepted."

"You are misinformed. The lady was never an opera singer, and I'm certain she would neither receive the person you mention nor go to visit him."

"Will you drive out to the lodge to night when you reach Kronburg and honor the gentleman with an unexpected call?"

"I will, if you, but not for the reason you think," cried the emperor. It was the first time in his life that he had ever used strong language to the chancellor.

He dropped the receiver, flung down a gold coin with his own hand upon it (at the moment he could have wished that he had no other, and, waving away an offer of change, rushed out of the office.

Under his breath he swore again, the strongest oath which the rich can