

"UNSER KARL"

By BRET HARTE.

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The American consul for Schlechtstadt had just turned out of the broad Koehn's alley into the little square that held his consulate. Its residences always seemed to him to wear that singularly unbalanced air peculiar to street scenes in a theatrical town. The facades, with their stiff, stuccoed awnings over the windows, were of the regularity, color and pattern only seen on the stage, and conversations carried on in the street below always seemed to be invested with that perfect confidence and security which surrounds the actor in his painted desert of urban perspective. Yet it was a peaceful change to the other byways and highways of Schlechtstadt—unreal, almost unreal, with an equality which was always felt, with an appearance to be daily taken out of their boxes of "Caserno" or "deput" and loosely scattered all over the pretty Linden-bowered German town. There were soldiers standing on street corners, soldiers staring woodenly into shop windows, soldiers halted suddenly into stone, like liards, at the approach of an officer, officers lounging stiffly, four abreast, sweeping the pavement with their trailing sabres all at one angle. There were cavalades of red hussars, cavalades of blue hussars, cavalades of Hussars, with glittering lances and pom-poms—with or without a band—formally parading; there were straggling "fatigues" or "details" coming around the corners; there were dusty business-like columns of infantry, going now here and now there, in the center of one patterned square opening or keyhole. The consul was always convinced that through this keyhole, opening by means of a key, the "Hauptmann" controlled his Hussars and non-commissioned officers, and even the general himself—wearing the same coat of arms, through his own) at higher moving power. In the suburbs, when the supply of soldiers gave out, there were sentry boxes; when these dropped off from their posts, commissary wagons, and the military idea should ever fall from out the Schlechtstadt burgher's mind, there were police tickets taken guardedly by porters at the "Bahnhof" were in uniform—but all wearing the same kind of cap, with the probability of having been wound up in the consul's office for their daily work. Even the postman delivered peaceful invoices to the consul with his side arms and the air of bringing dispatches from the field. The consul sat and waited for a few moments the whole weight of his consular responsibility.

Yet, in spite of this military prevalence, it did not seem in the least inconsistent with the decidedly peaceful character of the town, and this again suggested its unreasonably wandering, goes something like a flock when it is sheep passed singly between files of infantry, or preceded them in a flock when on the march; indeed, nothing more than a regiment of infantry in heavy marching order, laden with every conceivable thing they could want for an inviolable march, would be bidden to bivouac peacefully among the cabages in the market place. Nobody was ever imposed upon for a moment by the tremendous energy and several drum beats, or the trumpet blow, dragons charge furiously all over the Exerzier platz or suddenly flash their naked swords in the air, or the natural command of an officer—nobody seemed to mind it. People glanced up to recognize Rudolf or Max "doing their service," nodded and went about their business, and though the officers always wore their side arms and at the most peaceful of social dinners only relinquished their swords in the hall, apparently they might as readily be taken to the fetherland between the courses, the other guests only looked upon these weapons in the light of a decorative and possessed of this singular incongruity, many of these warriors were spectators, and despite their military dress, and their slightly professional air, and wore to a man—deeply sentimental and singularly simple, their attitude in this eternal Kriegerpiel seemed to the consul more puzzling than that of a soldier.

As he entered his consulate he was confronted with another aspect of Schlechtstadt as a wonderful, yet already familiar, town. For, in spite of the alarms with-out, which, however, never seemed to penetrate beyond the town itself, Schlechtstadt and its suburbs were a world of their own, a world of their own manufactures of certain beautiful textile fabrics, and many of the rank and file of these warriors had built up the fame and prosperity of the town in the peaceful looms of its domestic cottages. There were great depots and counting houses, larger than even the cavalry barracks, where no other uniform but that of the consul's chief duty was to uphold the flag of his own country by the examination and certification of the invoices sent to his office by the manufacturers. But oddly enough these business messengers were chiefly women—not clerks, but ordinary household servants, and in the consul's office, the consular might have been mistaken for a female registry office, so filled and possessed it was by waiting maids. Here it was that the consul, in his own hands, the cleanest of blue gowns and stoutly, but smartly shod, brought their invoices in a piece of clean paper, or folded in a blue handkerchief, and laid them on a rugger more or less worn and stubby from hard service, before the consul for his signature. Once, in the case of a very young, maid-like girl, the consul, in the sweep of a flaxen braid on it as the child turned to go, but generally there was a grave, serious business instinct and a certain responsibility in these girls of military peasant origin which, equally with their status of France, were unknown to the English or American. That morning, however, there was a slight stir among those who, with their knitting were waiting their turn in the consul's office, and the consul, who had been waiting for the consul's private office. He was in uniform, of course, and it took him a moment to recover from his little stiffer than that of the actual soldier. It was a matter of importance! A stranger had that morning been arrested in the town and identified as a military deserter. He claimed to be an American citizen; he was now in the outer office waiting the consul's interrogation.

The consul knew, however, that the ominous accusation had only a mild significance here. The term "military deserter" included an entire country without first fulfilling his military duty to his fatherland. His first experience of these cases had been tedious and unprofitable, and finally the prolonged detention of some military deserter who had forgotten to bring his papers with him in revisiting his own native country. It was advanced, however, that the consul enjoyed the friendship and confidence of General Adlerkreutz, who commanded the twentieth division, and it further chanced that the name Adlerkreutz was as familiar to a soldier as ever cried "Vorwärts!" at the head of his men, as profound a military strategist and organizer as ever carried his own and his enemies' plans in his iron breast and spiked helmet, and yet with as simple and unaffected a soul breathing under his gray mustache as ever issued from the lips of a child. So this grim but gentle veteran had arranged with the consul that in cases where the presumption of nationality was strong, although the evidence was not present, he would take the consul's parole for the appearance of the "deserter" or his papers, without the aid of prolonged diplomacy. In this matter the consul had said to Milwaukee a worthy but imprudent brewer, and to New York an excellent sausage butcher and possible alterman; but

had returned to martial duty, one or two tramps or journeymen who had never seen anything from the decks of the ships in which they were "stowaway," and on which they were returned—and thus the temper and peace of two great nations were preserved.

"He says," said the inspector, severely, "that he is an American citizen, but he lost his naturalization papers. Yet he has made the same mistake several years in Rome! And," continued the inspector, looking over his shoulder at the closed door as he placed his finger on the lock, "I have known an American citizen living at Palmyra, whom he frequents," said the consul, "Observe this unheeded-and-not-to-be-trusted statement!"

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sought the consul—but he wisely concluded that it would be well, for a while, that Karl—a helpless orphan—should be under some sort of discipline. And the accuser business of certifying invoices recommenced.

The consul, however, saw in a folded bit of blue paper from the wastebell of an orderly, which contained in English characters, and as a single word, "Alright," followed by certain jagged penmarks, which he recognized as Adlerkreutz's signature. But it was not until a week later that he learned anything definite. He was returning one night to his lodgings in the residential part of the city, and in opening the door with his pass key perceived in the rear of the hall his handmaiden, Trudechen, attended by the usual blue or yellow, the very consul, and himself was the never-to-be-severed union of Germania and Columbia and in their perfect understanding was the star-flying salutes of two great nations, and that in the consul's noble restoration of "Unser Karl" to the German army there was the astute diplomacy of a great minister.

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this American, who could vote and make laws, should be subjected to such things?" The consul did not know what to think. It seemed to him, however, that Karl was "getting on"—and that he was not in need of his assistance. It was in the expectation of hearing more about him, however, that he cheerfully accepted an invitation from Adlerkreutz to dine at the Caserno one evening with the staff. Here he felt somewhat to his embarrassment, that the dinner was partly in his own honor, and at the close of five courses, and the emptying of many bottles, his health was propped by the gallant veteran, Adlerkreutz, in a neat address of many syllables containing all the parts of speech and a single verb. It was to the effect that Karl was a very good soldier, and that in the consul's noble restoration of "Unser Karl" to the German army there was the astute diplomacy of a great minister.

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should follow a merely foreign society case, or after her English household so as to admit the impossible Karl, struck him oddly. A month or two elapsed without further mention of Karl, when one afternoon he suddenly turned up at the consulate. He had again sought the consul quiet to write a few letters home; he had no chance in the confinement of the barracks.

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"IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED," TRY SAPHOLIO "CUPIDENE" MANHOOD RESTORED "CUPIDENE" is a great vegetable...

OMAHA... MEDICAL AND SURGICAL INSTITUT. Chronic, Nervous and Private Diseases and all WEAKNESS MEN HYDROCELE and VARICOCELE prominently an successfully cured in every case. Sore Throat, Stomach, Scrofula, Tumors, Piles, Hemorrhoids and Blood Purification. NERVOUS Debility, Spasmodic, Scrofula, Lumps, Night Sweats, Loss of Vital Power, etc. etc. and special course of treatment. "Quality Work" WEAK MEN. The consul hurriedly called the garcon. "Who is that officer who has just arrived?" "It is Captain Christian of the Intelligence Bureau," said the waiter, with proud glances. "A famous officer, brave as a rabbit, an iron lapin—and one of our best clients. So, don't flatter, too, such a farceur and mimic. Showing us his military medals, he was called away by the rapid current of his own military service to his country. His body was never recovered. "A few months before the consul was transferred from Schlechtstadt to another post, the memory of the departed Karl was revived by a visit from Adlerkreutz. The general took great pleasure in the consul's citizenship. "You remember Unser Karl?" he said. "Yes." "Do you think he was an impostor?" "No, sir, he was an American citizen, yes! But I could not say more." "So," said the general. "A very singular thing has happened," he added, twirling his mustache. The inspector of police has not been in the town. It appears that he is the real Karl Schwartz, identified by his sister as the only one. The other, who was drowned, was an impostor. "Then you have secured another recruit?" said the consul, smiling. "No. For this one has already served his time in Europe, when he was when he was here as a boy. But, don't worry, why should that dumb fool take his name?" "By chance, I fancy. Then he stupidly stuck to it, and had to take the responsibility with it. Don't you see?" said the consul, peered with his own eyes. "Zoo!" said the general slowly, in his deepest voice. But the German exclamation has a variety of significance, according to the inflection, and Adlerkreutz's ejaculation seemed to contain them all. "It was in Paris where the consul had lingered on his way to his new post. He was sitting in a well known cafe among those habitués were several military officers of high rank. A group of them were gathered around a table near him. He was idly watching them with an odd recollection of the new town. For it was the dead Karl, surely! Karl's plump figure, belted in a French officer's tunic; his flaxen hair clipped a little closer, but still in place; his eyes, his cheeks more cherubic than ever—unchanged but for a tiny yellow tawny mustache curling up over the corners of his full lips. Karl, beaming at his companions in his old way, but rattling off French vivacities without the faintest trace of accent. Could he be mistaken? Was it some phenomenal resemblance, or had the soul of the German private been transmigrated to the French officer? The consul hurriedly called the garcon. "Who is that officer who has just arrived?" "It is Captain Christian of the Intelligence Bureau," said the waiter, with proud glances. "A famous officer, brave as a rabbit, an iron lapin—and one of our best clients. So, don't flatter, too, such a farceur and mimic. Showing us his military medals, he was called away by the rapid current of his own military service to his country. His body was never recovered. "A few months before the consul was transferred from Schlechtstadt to another post, the memory of the departed Karl was revived by a visit from Adlerkreutz. The general took great pleasure in the consul's citizenship. "You remember Unser Karl?" he said. "Yes." "Do you think he was an impostor?" "No, sir, he was an American citizen, yes! But I could not say more." "So," said the general. 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