"UNSER KARL"

By BRET HARTE.

(Copyright, 1897, by Bret Harte.) The American consul for Schlachtstadt had just turned out of the broad Koenig's alley into the little square that held his consulate. Its residences always seemed to him to wear that singularly uninhabited air peculiar to a street scene in a theater. The facades, with their stiff striped wooden 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 Schlachtstadt-which were always filled with an equally unreal and mechanical soldiery, who appeared to be daily taken out of their boxes of "Caserne" or "depot" and loosely scattered all over the pretty linden-haunted German town. There were soldiers standing on street corners, soldiers staring woodenly into shop windows, soldiers halted suddenly into stone, like lizards, at the approach of offiziere, offiziere lounging stiffly, four abreast, sweeping the pavement with their trailing sabres all at one angle. There were cavalcades of red hussars, cavalcades of blue huesars, cavalendes of Uhlans, with glittering lances and pennons-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 nowhere and to no purpose. And they one and all seemed to be wound up-for that service—and ap-parently always in the same place. In the parently always in the same place. In the band of their caps—invariably of one pattern—was a butten, in the center of which was a square opening or keyhole. The consul was always convinced that through this keyhole. opening, by means of a key, the humblest "caporal" wound up his file, the "Hauptmana" controlled his lieutecants and noncommissioned officers, and even the general commissioned officers, and even the general himself—wearing the same cap—was subject (through his cac) to a higher moving power. In the suburbs, when the supply of soldiers gave out, there were sentry boxes; when these dropped off there were "caissons" or commissary wagons. And, lest the military idea should ever fall from out the Schlachtstadt burgher's mind, there were police in military street swearers in military the uniform, street sweepers in uniform, the ticket takers, guards and porters at the "Bahnhof" were in uniform—but all wearing the same kind of cap, with the probability

did not seem in the least inconsistent with the decidedly peaceful character of the town, and this again suggested its unreality; wan dering cows sometimes got mixed up with squadrons of cavalry, and didn't seem to mind it; sheep passed singly between files of infantry, or preceded them in a flock when of the march; indeed, nothing could be more de lightful and innocent than to see a regiment of infantry in heavy marching order, laden of infantry in nearly inated the work with every conceivable thing they could want for a week, returning after a cheerful search for an invisible enemy in the suburbs, to bivouse peacefully among the cabbages in the market place. Nobody was ever imposed upon for a moment by their tremendous energy and severe display; drums might beat. trumpets blow, dragoons charge furiously all over the Exerzier platz or suddenly flash their naked swords in the streets to the guttural 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, al-though the officers always were their side arms and at the most peaceful of social din-ners only relinquished their swords in the hall, apparently that they might be ready to buckle them on again and rush out to do "Dot's joost it, the fatherland between the courses. the other guests only looked upon these weapons in the light of sticks and umbrellas and possessed their souls in peace. And when, added to this singular incongruity, many of these warriors were spectacled studious men and, despite their lethal wea pons, wore a slightly professional air, and were to a man-deeply sentimental and singularly simple, their attitude in this eternal Kriegspiel seemed to the consul more puzzling than ever. he cutered his consulate he was con

of having been wound up freshly each more

Yet, in spite of this military precedence, it

fronted with another aspect of Schlachtstad quite as wonderful, yet already familiar thim. For, in spite of these "alarums with out," which, however, never seemed to pentrate beyond the town itself, Schlach'stadt and its suburbs were known all over the world for the manufactures of certain beautiful textile fabrics, and many and file of those warriors had built up the fame and presperity of the district over their peaceful looms in wayside cottages. There were great depots and counting larger than even the cavalry barracks, where no other uniform but that of the pos man was known. Hence it was that the consul's chief duty was to uphold the flag of his own country by the examination and certification of divers invoices sent to his office by the manufacturers. But oddly enough these business messengers were chiefly women—not clerks, but ordi-nary household servants, and, on busy days, the consulate might have been mistaken for a female registry office, so fille and possessed it was by waiting madehen. Here it was that Gretchen, Lieschen and Clarchen, in the cleanest of blue gowns and stoutly, but smartly shod, brought their invoices in a piece of clean paper, or folder in a blue handkerchief, and laid them, with fingers more or less worn and stubby from hard service, before the consul for his sig nature. Once, in the case of a very young madchen, that signature was blotted by the sweep of a flaxen braid on it as the child turned to go, but generally there was a grave, serious business instinct and sense o responsibility in these girls of ordinary peasant origin which, equally with their sis ters of France, were unknown to the English or American woman of any class. That morning, however, there was a slight stir among those who, with their limiting, were waking their turn in the outer office as the vice consul ushered the police inspector into the consul's private

He was in uniform, of course, and I took him a moment to recover from habitual stiff, military salute-a 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 de-He claimed to be an American citizen; he was now in the outer office wait ing the consul's interrogation.

The consul knew, however, that the ominous accusation had only a mild sig nificance here. The term "military de-serter" included any one who had in youth emigrated to a foreign country without first fulfilling his military duty to his fatherland His first experience of these cases had been tedious and difficult—involving a reference to his minister at Berlin, a correspondence with the American State department, a condition of unpleasant tension, and finally the prolonged detention of some innocent German-naturalized-American citizen had forgotten to bring his papers with him in revisiting his own native country. It so chanced, however, that the consul enjoyed the friendship and confidence of General Adlerkreutz, who commanded the twentieth and it further chanced that the same Adlerkreuiz was as gallaut a soldier as ever cried "Vorwarts!" at the head of his men, as profound a military as the head of men, as profound a military strategist organizer as ever carried his own and his men, as profound a military strategist and organizer as ever carried his own and his enemy's plans in his iron head and spiked helmet, and yet with as simple and unaffected a soul breaching 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 it cases where the presumption of nationality was where the presumption of nationality was errong, although the evidence was not present be would take the consul's parole for extending his hand he added the word ent, he would take the consul's parole for the appearance of the "deserter" or his papers, without the aid of prolonged di-

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

"He says," said the inspector, severely "that he is an American citizen, but he lost his naturalization papers. Yet he has made the damaging admission to others that he lived several years in Rome! And," con-tinued the inspector, looking over his shoulder at the closed door as he placed his finger beside his nose, "he says he has relations living at Palmyra, whom he frequent!; sited. Ach! Observe this unheard-of-and-not-to-be-trusted statement!" The consul, however, smiled with a slight flash of intelligence. "Let me see him," he

They passed into the outer office-another policeman and a corporal of infantry saluted and rose. In the center of an admiring and and rose. In the center of an admiring and step that he had been put in uniform und the consul, tremulous with emotion and sympathetic crowd of Dienstmadchen sat the already and allowed certain small privileges reserve verb in his pocket, nose to reply culprit, the least concerned of the party; a stripling-a boy-scarcely out of his teens! Indeed, it was impossible to conceive of a more innocent derelict. With a skin that had the peculiar white and rosiness of fresh pork, he had blue eyes, celestially wide open and staring, and the thick, floculent yellow curls of the sun god! He might have been an over-grown and badly dressed Cupid, who had innocently wandered from Pophian shores. He smiled as the consul entered, and wiped from his full red lips with the back of his hand the traces of a sausage he was eating. The consul recognized the flavor at once—he had smelled it before in Lieschen's

little hand basket. "You say you lived at Rome?" began the consul pleasantly. "Did you take out your first declaration of your intention of becoming an American citizen there?"

The inspector cast an approving glance at the consul, fixed a stern eye on the cherubic prisoner, and leaned back in his chair to hear the reply to this terrible question.
"I don't remember," said the cul rit

knitting his brows in infantile thought. "I was either there or at Madrid or Syracuse." The inspector was about to rise; this was really trifling with the dignity of the municipality. But the consul bald his hand on the official's sleeve, and, opening an American atlas to a map of the state of New York said to the prisoner as he placed the in-scector's finger on the sheet, "I see you know the names of the towns on the Erle and New York Central railroad. But—"

"I can tell you the number of people in each town and what are the manufactures." interrupted the young fellow, with youthfu "Madrid has 6,000, and there are ing for their daily work. Even the postmat delivered peaceful invoices to the consul with "That will do," said the consul, as a mur

nur of "Wundershon!" went round the group his side arms and the air of bringing dis-patches from the field of battle, and the consul saluted and felt for a few moments of listening servant girls, while glances of admiration were shot at the beaming ac cused. "But you ought to remember the name of the town where your naturalization the whole weight of his consular responpapers were afterward sent.

"But I was a citizen from the momen made my declaration," said the stranger smiling, and looking triumphantly at his ad-mirers, "and I could vote!"

The isspector, since he had come to grie yer American geographical nomenciature was grimly tacturn. The consul, however was by no messas certain of his victory. His alleged fellow citizen was too encyclopaedic n his knowledge, a clever youth might have rammed for this textbook information—but then he did not look at all clever; indeed, he had rather the stupidity of the mythologi, cal subject he represented, "Leave him with me," said the consul. The inspector handed him a precis of the case. The cherub's name was Kerl Schwartz, an orphan, missing from Schlachstadt since the age of 12. Relations not living or in emigration. Identity established by prisoner's admission and record.

"Now, Karl," said the coosul, cheerfully, as the door of his private office closed upon them, "what is your little game? Have you ever had any papers? And if you were clever enough to study the map of New York state, why weren't you clever to see that it wouldn't stand you in plac-

"Dot's joost it." said Karl in English, "but you see dot if I haf declarit mine intention of begomming a citizen, it's all the same

"By no means-for you seem to have vidence of the declaration; no papers at all. 'Zo!" said Karl, Nevertheless, he pushes his small, rosy, pickled-pig's seet of fingers through his fleecy curls and beamed pleasantly at the consul. "Det's wots de matter, he said, as if taking a kindly interest in some private trouble of the consul's. "Dot's

The consul looked steadily at him for noment. Such stupidity was by no means them menul nor at all inconsistent with his appearance. "And," continued the consultravely, "I must tell you that unless you ive other proofs than you have shown i vill be my duty to give you up to the au-horities."

"Dot means I shall serve my time, ch?" aid Karl with an unchanged smile.

Exactly so," returned the consul,
"Zo!" said Karl, "Dese town-hiachtstadt—is fine town, ch? comens. Goot men. Und beer und sausage Blenty to eat und trink, ch? Und," looking round the room, "you and te poys haf a ga

"Yes," said the consul shortly, turning way. But he presently faced round again on the unruffled Karl, who was evidently in ulging in a gormandizing reverte "What on earth brought you here, any

'Ves is das?" "What brought you here from America-

wherever you ran away from?" To see te volks." But you are an orphan, you know, and ou have no folks living here?"
"But all Shermany is mine volks—de hole gountry, don't it? Pet your boots!

The consul turned back to his desk and

wrote a short note to General Adlerkreut n his own American-German. He did no



SO PROFOUND WAS HIS ABSTRACTION THAT IT WAS A MOMENT BEFORE HE LOOKED UP.

think it his duty in the present case interfere with the authorities or to offer his parole for Karl Schwartz. But he would claim that as the offender was evidently an innocent emigrant and still young, that any punishment or military degradation be omitted, and he be allowed to take his place it cases isfactory proof, his discharge to claim.

The consul read this aloud to Karl. The solution of the cherubic youth smiled and said. "Zo!" Then extending his hand he added the word,

"Zshake! The consul shook his hand a little re-

It was the cherub Karl, in uniform.

But it had not subdued a single one of his characteristics. His hair had been cropped a little more locally under his cap, but there was its color and wooliness still was satisfied that himself and the intact; his plump figure was girt by belt here consults the control of and shoulders seemed to offer a positive in-vitation to any one who had picked up a pin. But wonderful—according to his brief story—he had been so proficient in the goose

of certifying invoices recommenced.

Late that afternoon he received a folded bit of blue paper from the waistbelt of an orderly, which contained in English characters, and as a single word, "Airight," followed by certain jagged penmarks, which he recognized as Aderkreutz's signature. But it was not until a week later that he learned anything definite. He was returning one like some and at the close of the impossible Karl, struck him oddly.

A month or two clapsed without further news of Karl, when one afternoon he suddenly turned up at the consulate. He had denly turned up at the consulate the had of hearing more about him, however, that he cheeffully accepted an invitation from Adlerkreutz to dine at the Caserne one evening with the staff. Here he found, somewhat it was not until a week later that he learned anything definite. He was returning one five some henor, and at the close of the impossible Karl, struck him oddly.

A month or two clapsed without further news of Karl, when one afternoon he suddenly turned up at the consulate. He had denly turned up at the consulate of his again sought the consular quiet to write a few letters home; he had no chance in the confinement of the barracks.

"But by this time you must be in the family of a field marshal, at least," suggested the consult plantacter. He had the consultation from the cheeffully accepted an invitation from the cha anything definite. He was returning one five courses, and the emptying of many inght to his lodgings in the residential part bottles, his health was proposed by the galust with sublime simplicity, "then I am going of the city, and in opening the door with his pass key perceived in the rear of the half of many syllables containing all the parts of Rheinfestung." night to his lodgings in the residential part of the city, and in opening the door with his lant veteran. Adderkreutz, in a superior of the city, and in opening the door with his lant veteran. Adderkreutz, in a superior of the city, and in opening the door with his lant veteran. Adderkreutz, in a superior of the city, and in opening the door with his lant veteran. Adderkreutz, in a superior of the city, and in opening the door with his lant veteran. Adderkreutz, in a superior of the city, and in opening the door with his lant veteran. Adderkreutz, in a superior of the consult smalled, motioned him to a sear that in his soul friend, the herr consult, at a table in the outer office and left him, and himself was the never-to-be-severed union of Germania and Columbia and in their perfect understanding was the war-defying admiration at some thick official envelopes. It was the cherub Karl, in uniform.

It was the cherub Karl in the consultation at some thick official envelopes, bearing the stamp of the consultate, which were lying on the table. He was evidently were lying on the table. He was evidently struck with the contrast between them and him to a sear the consultance of the consu

and buttons, but he only looked the more unreal and more like a combination of pen-wiper and placushion, until his puffy breast confederation, would feel satisfied with themselves and each other and their never-to-be forgotten earth-labors. Cries of "Hoh! Hoh! rescunded through the apartment with the grinding roll of heavy-bottomed beer glasses -among them evidently the present one. Fully embarked upon this perilous voyage The consul smiled and passed on. But it and steering wide and clear of any treacher-seemed strange to him that Trudschen, who lous shore of intelligence or fancied harbor was a tall, strapping girl, exceedingly popular of understanding and rest, he kept boldly out

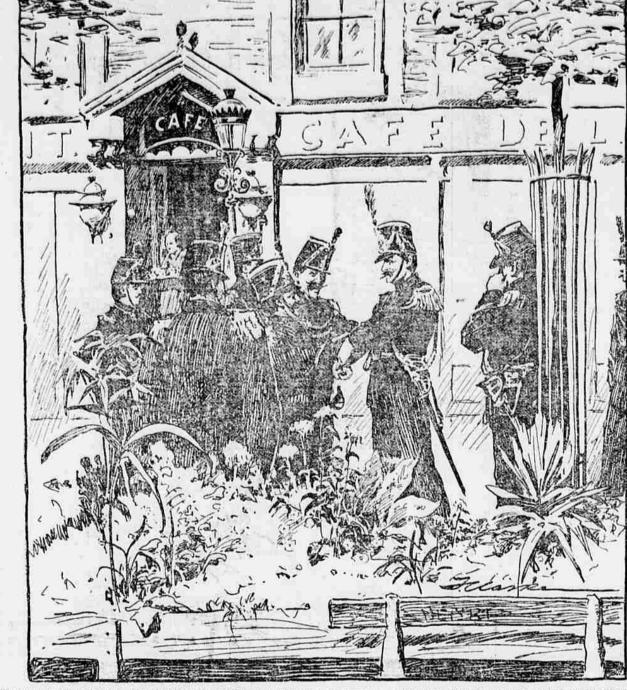
sought the consul—but he wisely concluded this American, who could vote and make that it would be well, for a while, that Kuri—a helpless orphan—should be unfer some sort of discipline. And the securer business of certifying involves recommend.

It seemed to him, however, that Kuri was about follow a merely foreign society craze, or after her English household so as to admit the impossible Kuri, struck him oddly. A month or two clapsed without further

He struck with the contrast between them and the the thin, filmsy affairs he was holding in the his hand. He appeared still more impressed mon when the corsul told him what they were.

"Are you writing to your friends?" con-tinued the consul, touched by his simplicity, "Ach ja!" said Karl eagerly. "Would you like to put your letter in one of these envelopes?" continued the official. The beaming face and eyes of Karl were a sufficient answer. After all, it was a small avor granted to this odd waif who seemed to still cling to the consular protection. handed him the envelope and left him ad-dressing it in boyish pride.

It was Karl's last visit to the consulate.



IT WAS THE DEAD WARL, HIS PLUMP F. IGURE BELTED IN A FRENCH OFFICER'S TUNIC, HIS FLAXEN HAIR CLIPPED A LITTLE CLOSER, ITS FLEECE SHOWIN G UNDER HIS KEPI.

lower than a corporal at least, should accept the attentions of an einjahriger like that. Later he interrogated her.
"Ach! it was only unser Karl! And the ensul knew he was Amerikanish!"

It was such a tearful story." "Tell me what it is," said the consul, with faint hope that Karl had volunteered some ommunication of his past.
"Ach Gott! There in America he was

man-and could 'vote,' make laws, and, God intendant-and here he was nothing but a fine country. Wundershon! There were such big cities—and one, 'Booflo'—could hold all Schlachstadt, and had of people 509,000!" The consul sighed. Karl had evidently no yet got off the line of the New York Central "But does he remember and Eric roads. et what he did with his papers?" said the onsul persuasively.
"Ach! What does he want with papers

when he could make the laws. They were dumb, stupid things—these puters to him."
"But his appetite remains good, I hope?" uggested the consul.

This closed the conversation, although Karl came on many other nights, and his figure quite supplanted the tail corporal of hussars in the remote shadows of the hall One night, however, the consult returned home from a visit to a neighboring town a day earlier than he was expected. As he neared his house he was a little surprised to find the windows of his sitting room lit ip, and that there were no signs of Trudschen in the lower hall or passages. nade his way upstairs in the dark and bushed open the door of his apartment. To his astonishment Karl was sitting comfortably in his own chair, his cap off, before a tudent lame on the table, deeply engaged n apparent study. So profound was his abstraction that it was a moment before he sually beaming and responsive face, which, however, now struck him as wearing a singular air of thought and concentration. When their eyes at last met, he rose in-stantly and saluted, and his beaming smile returned. But either from his natural phlegm or extraordinary self-control, he betrayed neither embarrassment nor alarm.

Trudschen had gone out with the Corporal Fritz for a short walk, and had asked im to "keep house" during their absence. He had no books, no papers, nothing to read in the barracks, and no chance to improve his He thought the herr consul would not object to his looking at his books. The consul was touched—it was really a trivial indiscretion-and as much Trudschen's fault as Karl's! And if the poor fellow had any mind to improve-his recent attitude certainly suggested thought and reflectionconsul were a brute to reprove him. He smiled pleasantly as Karl returned a stubby bit of jencil and some greasy memoranda to his breast pocket and glanced at the table. But to his surprise it was a large map that Karl had been studying, and to his greater surprise a map of the consul's

"You seem to be fond of map studying," said the consul pleasantly. "You are no thinking of emigrating again?" "Ach, no!" said Karl simply, "It is my ousine vot haf lif near here. I find her." But he left on Trudschen's return and the

own district.

attitude toward her had not changed, that the girl exhibited less effusiveness than beher had not changed, that the girl exhibited less emusiveness that fore. Believing it to be partly the effect of the consul down to the gateway and the return of the sergeant, the consul taxed waiting carriage a figure in uniform ran with faithlessness. But Trudschen spontaneously before them, and shouted spontaneously before But the general

"Ah! He has new friends, this Karl of ours. He cares no more for poor girls like us When fine ladies like the old Frau von Wimp-fel make much of him-what will you?" It

with the military and who had never looked, at sea. He said that, while his loving adversary in this battle of compliment had disarmed him and left him no words to reversary ply to his generous panegyric, he could but join with that gallant soldier in his heartfelt aspirations for the peaceful alliance of both countries. But, while he fully re ciprocated all his bost's broader and highe sentiments, he must point out to this gallan assembly, this glorious brotherhood, tha even a greater tie of sympathy knitted him the general-the tie of kinship! while it was well known to the present con pany that their gallant commander had mar ried an English woman, he, the consulalthough always an American, would now for the first time confess to them that he him-self was of Dutch descent on his mother's side. He would say no more, but confidently leave them in possession of the tre mendous significance of this until-then-un-known fact. He sat down, with the forgotten verb still in his pocket, but the applause which followed this perfectly conclusive, satisfying and logical climax convinced him of His hand was grasped eagerly his success.

by successive warriors, the general turned and embraced him before the breathless us-

sembly; there were tears in the consul's

As the festivities progressed, however, he found, to his surprise, that Karl had not only become the fashion as a military page, but that his naive stupidity and sublime sim-plicity was the wondering theme and inexhaustible delight of the whole barracks ing which rivaled Handy Andy's; old stories of fatuous ignorance were rearranged and fitted to "our Karl." It was "our Karl" who, on receiving a tip of 2 marks from the hands of a young woman to whom he had brought the boquet of a gallant lieutenant, exhibited some hesitation, and finally said: "Yes, guadige fraulein, that cost us 9 marks!" was 'our Karl' who, interrupting the regrets of another woman that she was unable to accept his master's invitation, said politely "Ah, what matter, gnadigste. I have still a letter for Fraulein Kopp (her rival), and was told that I must not invite you both.' It was our Karl who astonished the hostess to whom he was sent at the last momen with apologies from an officer, unexpectedly detained at barrack duty, by suggesting the The explanation be gave was direct and dinner from the just served table. Nor were these charming infelicities confined to his social and domestic service. Although ready, mechanical and invariably docile in the manual and physical duties of a soldier-which endeared him to the German drill mester-he was still invincibly ignorant as to its purport, or even the meaning and structure of the military instruments he handled or vacantly looked upon. It was "our Karl" who suggested to his instructors that in field firing it was quicker and easier to load his musket to the muzzle at once and get rid of its death-dealing content. get rid of its death-dealing contents at a single discharge than to load and fire con-secutively. It was "our Karl" who nearly killed the instructor at sentry drill by adhering to the letter of his instructions when that instructor had forgotten the password. It was the same Korl who, severely ad-monished for his recklessness, the next time added to his challenge the precaution. 'Un-less you instantly say 'Fatherland' I'll fire!'
Yet his perfect good humor and child-like curiosity were unmistakable throughout and incited his comrades and his superiors to But he left on Trudschen's return and the some characteristic comment from himconsul was surprised to see that while Karl's Everything and everybody was open to Karl

and his good-humored simplicity.

That evening, as the general accompanied the consul down to the gateway and the "Heraus!" to the sentries. But the general promptly checked "the turning out" of the guard with a paternal shake of his finger to When fine ladies like the old Frau von Wimpfel make much of him—what will you?" It appeared, indeed, from Trudschen's account, that the widow of a wealthy shopkeeper had made a kind of protege of the young soldier and given him presents. Furthermore, that the wife of his colonel had emplayed him to act as page or attendant at, an afternoon gesellschaft, and that since then the wives papers, without the aid of prolonged at the consul had saved plomacy. In this way the consul had saved morsefully, and preceding him to the outer to Milwaukee a worthy but imprudent from resigned him with the note into the brewer, and to New York an excellent inspector's bands. A universal sigh went the hervice of other officers had sought him. Did not the hervice of other officers had sought him. Did not the hervice of other officers had sought him. Did not the hervice of other officers had sought him without reproach. That she

He appeared to have spoken truly, and the consul presently learned that he had indeed been transferred, through some high official manipulation, to the personal service of the governor of Rheinfestung. There was weeping among the Dienstmadschen of Schlach stadt, sad a distinct less of originality and lightness in the gatherings of the gentler omen. His memory still survived in the parracks through the later editions of his former delightful stupidities—many of them it is to be ferred, were inventions—and stories that were supposed to have come from Rheinfestung were described in the slarg of the offiziere as being "colossal." the consul remembered Rheinfes ung, and could not imagine it as a home for Kar or in any way fostering his reculiar qualities. For it was eminently a fortress o fortresses, a magazine of magazines, a depo of depots. It was the key to the Rhine, il citadel of Westphalia, the "Clapham Jun tion" of German railways, but defended fortified, encompassed and controlled by the newest as well as the oldest devices of military strategy and science. Even in the pipingest time of perce whole railway trains went into it like a rat in a trap and might have never come out of it; it stretched out in inviting hand and arm across the river hat might in the twickling of an eye be hanged into a closed flat of menace. You 'defiled' into it, commanded at every step by enfilading walls; you "debouched" out of it, as you thought, and found yoursel only before the walls; you "re-entered" it a every possible angle; you did everything

through it. apparently but pass thought yourself well out of it, and were stopped by a bustion. Its circumvaliations haunted you until you came to the next sta had pressed even the current o the river into its defensive service that only the highest military des ots know and kept to themselves. In a word-it was mpregnable. That such a place could not be trifled with misunderstood in its right-and-acuteangled severities seemed plain to every on But set on by his companions, who were chowing him its defensive foundations, or it his own idle curiosity, Karl managed to fall into the Rhine, and was fished out with difficulty. The immersion may have chilled hi for later the consul heard that he had visited

own with the old story of his American citizenship. "He seemed," said the consul's colleague, "to be well posted about American "He seemed," said the consul' railways and American towns, but he o papers. He lounged around the office for a while and-"Wrote letters home?" suggested the consul with a flash of reminiscence.

the American consular agent at an adjacent

This was the last the consul heard of Karl Schwartz directly. For a week or two later he again fell into the Rhine, this time so fatally and effectually that, in spite of the efforts of his companions, he was swept away by the rapid current, and thus ended his service to his country. His body was never recovered.

A few months before the consul was trans ferred from Schlachtstadt to another post his memory of the de arted Karl was revived by a visit from Alderkreutz. The genera tooked grave.
"You remember Unser Karl?" he said.

"Do you think he was an impostor?" "As regards his American citizenship

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 noti-fied us of the arrival of a Karl Schwartz in this 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. Hein?"

Then you have secured another recruit? said the consul, smiling. "No. For this one has already served his

time in Eleass, where he went when he left there as a boy. But, donnerwetter, why should that dumb fool take his name?"
"By chance, I fancy. Then he stupidly stuck to it, and had to take the responsi-

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bilities with it. Don't you see?" said the onsul, pleased with his own clev. rnets.
"Zo-o!" said the general slowly, in his deepeat 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 whose habitues were several military officers of high rank. A group of them were gath-ered around a table near him. He was idly watching them with an odd recollection of Schlachtstadt in his mind, and as idly gland ng from them to the more attractive boule yard without. The concul was getting a little

Suddenly there was a slight stir in the gesticulating group, and a cry of greeting. The consul looked up mechanically, and then his eyes remained fixed and staring at the newcomer. For it was the dead Karl; Karl, surely! Karl—his plump figure, belted in a French officer's tunic, his flaxen hair clipped a little closer, but still its flecce showing under his kept. Karl, his cheeks cherubic than ever-unchanged for a tiny yellow toy mustache curling over the corners of his full lips. K beaming at his companions in his old way, but rattling off French vivacities without but rattling off French vivacities without the faaintest trace of accent. Could he be mistaken? Was it some phenomenal re-semblance, or had the soul of the German rivate been transmigrated to the French

The consul hurriedly called the garcon. Who is that officer who has just arrived?"
"It is Captain Christian of the intelligence "A famous officer, brave as a rabbit fler lapin-and one of our best clients. So droll, too, such a farceur and mimte. M'sieur would be ravished to hear his imi-

But he looks like a German; and his name? "Ah, he is from Alsace. But not a Ger-

man!" said the waiter, absolutely whitening Christian with indignation. "He was at Belfort. So side him, was I. Mon Dieu! No, a thousand times English: "But has he been living here long?" said

"In Paris, a few months. But his departm'sieur understands, takes him every-Everywhere where he can gain in

The consul's eyes were still on Captain Christian. Presently the officer, perhaps in-stinctively conscious of the scrutiny, looked toward him. Their eyes met. To the con-sul's surprise the ci-devant Karl beamed pon him, and advanced with outstretched

But the consul stiffened slightly, and remained so with his glass in his hand, which Captain Christian by ught his easily to a military salute and said politely "Monsieur le consul has been promoted from his post. Permit me to congratulate

"You have heard, then?" said the consul dryly. "Otherwise I should not presume. For our



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department makes it a business-in Monsieur le consul's case it becomes a pleasure to know everything."
"Did your department know that the real Karl Schwartz has returned?" said the con-

Captain Christian shrugged his shoulders. "Then it appears that the sham Karl died none too soon," he said lightly. "And yet —" he bent his eyes with mischlevous re-

proach upon the consul.
"Yet what?" demanded the consul siernly.
"Monsieur le consul might have saved the unforturate man by accepting him as an American citizen and not helped to force him into the German service."

The consul saw in a flash the full mill-tary significance of this logic, and could not repress a smile. At which Captain Christian dropped easily into a chair be-side him, and as easily into broken German

"Und," he went on, "dees Schlachstadt is fine town, eh? Fine womens? Goot men? Und peer and sausage? Blenty to eat and triak, eh? Und you und te poys

haf a gay times?"

The consul tried to recover his dignity.

The waiter behind him, recognizing only
the delightful mimicry of this adorable officer, was in fits of laughter. the consul managed to say dryly:
"And the barracke, the magazines, the commissariat, the details, the reserves of

Schlachatadt were very interesting?"
"Assurediy."
"And the Rheinfestung—its plans—its detalls, even its dangerous foundations by the river—they were to a soldier singularly instructive?"

"You have reason to say so," said Captain bristian, curling his little mustache.

"And the fortress—you think?"
"Impregnable! Mais!—"
The consul remembered General Adierkreutz's "Zo—o," and wondered.