A Modern Mercenary.

BY E. & H. HERON.

CHAPTER L.

A Lieutenant of Frontier Cavalry. During four months of the year the in-dependent state of "Mansau," we will call -which is not very noticeable even on the largest-sized map of Europe-is termented by a dry and wearying northeast wind. And nowhere is its influence more unpleasantly felt than in the capital, Revonde, which stands shoulder-on to the hustling gales, its stately frontages and noble quays stretching out westwards along the shores of the Kofn almost to where the yellow waters of the river spread fanwise into a gray green sea-

The tsa was blowing strongly on a certain November afternoon, edding and whistling about the wide spaces of the Grand square as John Rallywood, a tall figure in a military cloak, turned the corner of a side street and met its full blast. He faced it for some yards along the empty pavements, then ran up the steps of his club. A few minutes later he passed through a lofty corridor and entered a door over which is set a quaint invitation to smokers, which may not be written down here, for it is the jealously guarded copyright of the club.

It chanced that the room for the moment had but one occupant, who sat in a roomy armchair by the white stove. This gentleman did not raise his head, but continued to gaze thoughtfully at his well-shaped though square and comfortable boots. Rallywood paused almost imperceptibly in his stride.

"Hullo, major! Glad to see you," he said, as he dropped into an armchair opposite. Major Counsellor stood up with his back to the stove, thereby giving a view of a red, challenging face, heavy eyebrows and a huge white droop of mustache. He looked down at Rallywood consideringly before he spoke. "So you're here; I imagined they kept you pretty closely on the frontier. The world been kicking you?

Rallywood laughed. "No, but it would do me good to kick the world," he answered as he helped timself from the major's cigar case. "Five years, almost six, spent on the frontier, with nothing to show for it, isn't good enough. I've come up to send in my pa-

"Then you'll be a fool," returned the major with decision. Rallywood was busy lighting his clgar; when that was arranged to his satisfaction

"Just so. History repeats itself." Counseller stood squarely upright with his hands behind him.

"Any other reasons?" he asked. "Plenty." "Pity! Are they serious or-otherwise?"

he said easily:

Rallywood pulled his mustache. "Why is it a pity?" he asked slowly.

Because there is going to be trouble here, and with trouble comes a chance." Rallywood smoked on in silence. He was a big, shallow-flanked man with the marks of the world upon him, and that indescribable air which comes to one who has passed a good portion of his time in laughing at the arbitrary handicaps arranged by fate at home instead of coming here?" in the race of life.

"Where do you propose to go?" asked Counsellor after an interval. "Back to Africa, I think-Buluwayo

Johannesburg, anywhere. South Africa's still in the bud, you see. "Yes, but it is a biggish bud and will take

sime to blow. You can afford to wait and it may be worth your while."

Rallywood threw a swift glance at Coun Bellor's inscrutable face. 'Seven years ago," he said in a deliber-

ate manner, "you told me it was worth while, but life has not grown more interest ing since then." "Ah!" Counsellor paused, then went on

with a grim smile, "at your age, John, there are possibilities. Think over it. After hanging on here for more than five years why lose your chance now? Look at those fellows." He pointed out into the

Rallywood rose lazily and gazed out also The prospect was not cheering. A few troopers, their cloaks flapping in the wind, were galloping across the square on the way to relieve guard at the palace, and under the statue of the late grand duke on horseback three men in tall hats stood talking together; then they turned and walked toward the club. "Know them?" asked Counseller.

Rallywood shook his head.

"The man with the beard is Stokes o the Times; next him is Bradley; he's on another big daily. Their belog here speaks for Itself. Maasau is going to take up people's mooner or later." "And you advise me to stop and see it

through?" said Rallywood meditatively from the window; then he lounged back to his chair. "How will it end?" Counsellor shook the ash from his cigar.

"Selpdorf is the man of the hour," he said Maasau was, in the opinion of Maasaun pa- or two he begins to think that the odds are triots, going as fast as it could to the devil. in his favor and he becomes a much more With them, it may be added, the devil was effective fighting machine." personified and bore the name of a neighborfact was the grand duke. With an inset, ing the case, he felt himself at liberty to tact with these huge, peace-trained conscript spend his time in cursing the fate that had monsters. refused blue sens and skies to wintry Rerevenue which depend upon climate, and versation which are enjoyed by places far less natur-

ally beautiful than the capital of Maasau. The duke, prematurely aged by the manper of his life, made it his chief business to the table beside him, then looked at Coun- service of an unpaid man, but gave it the devise schemes for raising money whereby sellor for an answer to his half spoken he might carry on the staling pleasures of question. Counsellor shrugged his shoulders. his youth. Beyond this the administration of public affairs was left entirely in the

e tried, you will never be without them I family." EDW. A. MARK, Albany, N. Y.



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(Copyright, 1839, by Doubleday & McClure supple hands of the chancellor, M. Selpdorf, Co. All rights received.) while the duke, with those who surrounded him, plunged into the newest excitement of the hour, for who knew what a day might bring forth? The court was like a stage lit by lurid light, on which the actors laughed and loved, danced and fought to the music of a wild finale, that whirled and maddened

before the crash of the coming end. Once upon a time Muasau was accounted of no particular importance or value among its bigger neighbors; but of late, for various reasons, its fortunes had become the subject of attention and discussion in at bought and painted in different colors, according as seemed most desirable by the bearded men, who sat in council to apportion the marsh, rock, dune and forest of which the now absorbingly interesting pigmy state was composed.

In fact, Massau, with its twenty miles or so of senboard, containing one excellent port in esse and two others in posse, had become a Naboth's vineyard to a country almost land-bound and yet dreaming of the supremacy of the four seas. On this ambition and its possible consequences the other great powers looked, to speak diplomatically, with coldness. It was generally understood that the En-

glish foreign office desired the maintenance of the status quo; France was supposed to be ready to clap a young republic on the back and to accord it her protection, while Russia played her own dumb and blinding game, of which none could definitely prosounce the issue. The political world thus stood at gaze, watching every change and prepared to take advantage of every chance that offered. The honors of the game so far had lain with M. Selpdorf, who scored each trick with the same bland smile. Whenever the treasury of Maasau was at a low ebb Selpdorf usually had a thirteenth card to lay upon the table, and as the nations cautiously proceeded to frustrate each other's purposes royal remittances from heaven knows where flowed in abundantly to replenish the bankrupt exchequer of the

When Major Counsellor expressed his emphatic disapproval of the intended resignaion of Rallywood a new development was in the air. Hitherto the lead had mosey levolved upon Selpdorf; on this occasion he was known to be hanging back, and the question of who would take the initiative was the question of the day. The fact that Germany had lately accredited a new representative, a certain Baron von Elmur to the court of Maasau, an able man whose eputation rested mainly on the successful performance of missions of a delicate nature, added to the tension of the moment. "So you say they are getting steam up in Maasau?" said Rallywood again. "I have been out in the wilds for the last six months

and don't know so much about events as I might." "Steam up?" growled Counsellor. "Steam enough to wreck Europe! I almost wish I'd never godfathered you into this blerged little stoke hole. Why the deuce didn't you enlist

"That was out of the question, of course." "Why? Isn't our army good enough for ou to fight in?"

"If it was only that!-I could fight in the ranks, God knows, but I couldn't parade in hem! Besides, the life here suited me-

"What's gone wrong with it now? hould have thought you would have got used to it by this time," observed Counsellor with the air of the older man. It was not the first occasion on which he had played the part of elderly relative toward Rallywood during the course of their queer, ough-grained friendship-a friendship of a ype which exists only between man and an, and even then is sufficiently rare.

"Precisely, I'm too infernally used to it! It was not half bad as long as the newness lasted, but I can't stand it any longer! I'm ick of the monotony. Do you know old Fitzadams' criticism on the service here? Dust and drill, drill and dust, and fill in he chinks with homicidal maneuvers."

"Maacau only apes its betters. These

ontinental armies devote themselves very assiduously to rehearsals, and there is no end of waste about the process," remarked the chancellor. "They rehearse in summer and get sunstroke; then they rehearse in winter with rheumatisms and lung troubles growing on every bush. The bill for blank cartridges alone is enormous! And all because they have no India and no Africa, as we have, where we can give our fellows a taste of the real thing any day in the week We carry on a small war with a regiment or dispatch a youngster with half a company attention shortly. The grand duke is in a to teach manners and honesty to 29,000 nigtight place, and there will be a flareup gers. The peculiarity of our army is that it s always at war. In this way we escape the dangers of theory, and get practice, with something for our money into the bargain." "Our plan has its advantages," agreed Rallywood lazily. "I saw in South Africa what a little active service does for a man. The first time he is under fire he is per-On the nutumn evening when these two sunded that he is going to be killed, and that men were talking at the club the duchy of every shot must hit him. But after a trial

"Necessarily he does. We don't half ing nation. The one person who ignored this realize the value of our colonies yet-as a training ground for our soldiers. The stubborn pride he believed that his country British army is the smallest in Europe, but must remain forever, as the long centuries it remains to be seen what account it will had known it, Maasau the Free. This be- give of itself if it is ever brought into con-

"When the duke dies-" began Rallywood, wonde, thus depriving it of these sources of harking back to the former topic of con-

The door was softly opened and a waiter a lieutenant to whom the state owed eightadvanced into the room, bearing a letter for een months' arrears of pay. Rallywood, in Rallywood, who took it and laid it down on return, owed to Maasau only the qualified "Who can tell?" he replied. "Meanwhile take the gifts the gods have sent you to- present moment. He was supposed to be scaled envelope that lay at Rallywood's tion, but he described himself as a bird of ingers upon you.

'He wishes to see me at 9:30. What can want with me?" he asked.

"Probably he has heard you intend to cut he service. It appears to me, Rallywood, sense-and more often than not in favor that your chance has come out to meet you." "How could be have heard that I meant to happen. go? And what can it matter to any one if I went on Rallywood incredulously. Counsellor shook his head, but made no

ther reply. "A lieutenant of the frontier cavalry," re-Rallywood, "is merely a superior

take of excise officer!" "You will be something more or somebing else before 10, I expect. As for what no wants with you, that is for you to find enter the smoking room of any diplomatic

It is to be hoped he may feel moved to et me have my arrears of pay," said Rallyood, relapsing into his usual tone of in-"that is the chief consideration with us on the frontier just now." "He probably will if it suits him-or always formed an interesting subject of con-

and dine with me presently at the Conti- his name became at once important. There's generally a decent dinner

to be had there." John Rallywood, one of the old Lincoln shire Rallywood, had been born to a fortune, and, moreover, with an immense capacity for enjoying it after a wholesome fashion. Queens Fain had fallen in to him while still an infant upon the death of a great-uncle, and with the old place were onnected all those hundred untranslatable ties and associations which go to make up a boy's dreams. He was a man of suppressed, perhaps half unconscious, but nevertheless deep rooted enthusiasms, hence when the blow fell which deprived him not only of his inheritance, but also ut short the life of his mother, the unappeted, almost intolerable angulah he scar upon his personality.

Up to 22 the record of his life, if not striking, had been clean and manly. He had passed through Sandhurst, and joined a dragoon regiment for something over a year, when an older branch of the family, supposed for a quarter of a century to be exenct, suddenly presented itself very much alive in the person of a middle-aged, middle-class American. Within three months melted into thin air.

CHAPTER II. "A Gentleman of the Guard."

Shortly before 9:30 Rallywood presented himself at the granite palace, with its four cupolas, which M. Selpdorf occupied in his capacity of first minister of state. After some slight delay he was ushered into a comfortable study, where he found Selpforf with a reading lamp at his elbow, glancing rapidly through a mass of papers that he threw one after another, with apparent carelessness, on the floor beside him.

The chancellor of a small state might very well have been pardoned had he introduced a certain amount of what an old official test to call "desk dignity" into his dealings with these who approached him, but Selpdorf silently endured had left a deep, defacing habitually affected an easy manner and an ing mustache seemed to add point. For all blundering, the man's claim was substantiated, and his peculiarity of aspect, he was a man who To do Rallywood justice, he was far more least three foreign chancelleries, where old estate, fortune, position and home as far left an impression on the memory of some occupied with this last thought than with the for it maps were being looked up and new ones as John Rallywood was concerned had thing pleasing and attractive, especially in things which here more directly on his own the minds of women.

But you would prefer Revende, believe

his brows.

room for a few minutes." dor, in which Rallywood found himself quite of restrained eagerness.

awakened interest in himself. Also the al-lusions to Counsellor had probably been accident," she replied coldly. "In fact, I was frozen night, and also out of his old life awakened interest in himself. Also the almade with calculated intention.

easy chair. He was a middle-sized man, each of them succeeded with the many, but possessed of a very round head, hald at the failed as between themselves. Selpdorf spurred boot, rown, but having still a lock of dark hair posed as the suave, sympathetic, good-naon the summit of his round forehead; very tured friend of those with whom he came round eyes set far back in smooth holes, in contact; Counsellor, as a man of no acshowing little lid; a nose blunt and thick count, a rugged soldier, honest, strong, outover lips that might have been coarse, but spoken, a good agent to act under the direcwere controlled and betrayed a lurking tion of more astute brains, but, if left to humor at the corners, to which the urstand- his own resources, somewhat blunt and

the name with the faintest contraction of hand toward Rallywood.

alone. He fell at once into speculations as She drew back with a little impatient affair immediately, Captain Rallywood. to the meaning and aim of Selpdorf's fate gesture.

two men had the same end in view; each And, to Rallywood's amazement, she indi- night-blue vault of sky, shone with a keen desired to dissemble his own character, And cated himself.

prospects and future. At this period his

rather, perhaps, if you suit him. Come over vertation, and a political opinion backed by growing tired of Revende. I know nothing hued beauty. Her black, long-lashed eyes to pick up even a carcless word on the were on him and they were full of laughter. sword point. "Enter, then baron," said the girl, glanc-

ing across at the courtier. "Did you guess more to the memorandum. At this moment an attendant appeared you would find me here, or were you seeking with a card upon a salver. Selpdorf read monsiour?" and she waved her bare left the pay on the frontier of late?" he asked "I lost my way, nothing more," returned

"You will excuse me, M. Rallywood," he the baron, coming forward; "but perhaps, as months or so, your excellency," replied bowed deeply once more, this time stooping his eyes The ante-room was a long, pillared corri- to kiss the girl's hand with a certain show

Rallywood understood that each of these ception, had not monsieur detained me." Before he could speak she pointed to his

Monsleur has set his heel on my poor

glove," she added. By his hasty movement in rising he had tion on the edge of the couch. He stooped urved stain of his boot heel. 'Do you always treat a lady's glove so?"

she asked gravely, and held out her hand Rallywood looked down at her very deliberately, and something that was neither his will nor his reason decided his next ac-

tion. He folded the soft suede reverently together. "No, mademoiselle," he answered, as he placed it inside his tunic, "I have never before treated a lady's glove-so. For the

accident I offer my deepest apologies." She watched him with raised evebrows and a slight derisive smile. Then she drew the companion glove from her right hand and, giving it to the lackey, who still remained in the background, she said:

"Throw it away, it is useless, and tell

Nanzelle to bring me another pair." Monsieur, with whom I have not yet the pleasure of being acquainted," interrupted the baron rather suddenly, "monsieur is, after all, the lucky man. He retains what I dare not even ask for." "Shall I call back the servant with its

fellow for you?" mademoiselle asked haughtily. "It is nothing to me who picks up what I have thrown away." With this rebuff to Rallywood she placed her hand upon the German's, as if to ask him to lead her from the room, and added:

"You wish for an introduction? Then allow me to present you to each other. His excellency, the Baron von Elmur." She paused, and her eyes dwelt for a moment on Rallywood's. "A gentleman of the guard." And before Rallywood could explain the mistake the curtain had dropped behind them, and he was left standing In Baron von Elmur he recognized the

oblique carriage of the head and the highshouldered figure of the third man he had seen with the newspaper correspondents in the Grand Square that afternoon. Moreover, he knew that the German had entered the anteroom through no mistake, but with some object in view. As for the girl, who was she and where had she come from? She was not of Maasau, since she had introduced him as belonging to the guard, for not only was every officer of that favored corps individually known, but it was further impossible for a Maasaun to make the slightest mistake with regard to any uniform. It was one of the boasts of the country that even a child could tell at a glance not only the special regiment, but the rank of the wearer of any uniform belonging to the duchy.

Rallywood had no time just then to pursue the subject further, as he was almost immediately recalled to the chancellor's presence. "Now, monsieur," began Selpdorf, as

though no break had occurred in the conersation, "you are in truth tired of keep ing our dreary marches; is it not so?" "These are better places-and worse, your excellency." "Our gay little capital will be one of the

better places, I promise you," continued the chancellor. "A position in the guard of his highness has just become vacant. Am I right in believing that a nomination to that superb regiment would tempt you to remain

Rallywood for once was a little taken

"A gentleman of the guard." He repeated situation and answered, "I am an Englishman, your excellency, and though I have taken the soldier's cath to the Maasaun standard, I have not taken the oath of naticcality. I could not consent to become inturalized citizen even of the duchy of Mansau."

"Ah, so." Scipdorf stroked his chin, the despatching the objection with a wave of that in your case. You have already served the duke for five years with as sincere a Then, as his gaze traveled back, it rested | zeal as the truest Maasaun amongst us on something which had certainly not been We must remember that and overlook a lying where he now saw it at the time of his drawback which is far less important than it seems.'

He turned to a memorandum on the table "You were engaged in the affair at Xan-

thal, I see?" "Three years ago, your excellency," plied Rallywood in a tone that implied his impaired by lapse of time.

Selpdorf moved his shoulders. Here was a man throwing difficulties in the way of his own advancement. Yet he could no turn out to be the Hathor, the one woman | possibly be so indifferent to his own inerests as he chose to assume. "To be plain with you," Selpdorf said

with an air of candor, "the younger officers of the guard have little experience. The latest fashion in neckties or the most charming dancer at the Folie absorbs their attention, to the exclusion of more important matters. There is, as you doubtless know, a certain admixture of French blood in the veins of our most noble families,' he finished abstractedly.

Rallywood had no remark to offer upon this. The officers of the guard bore a very distinct reputation. They were said to be a pleasant set of fellows socially, unless one ran foul of their prejudices, but they were credited with a good many prejudices. As for his personal acquaintance with them, it was limited to acting second in a hastily arranged duel fought out in the yard behind a little country railway sta-

"I should like to see a somewhat different spirit introduced and to be assured that I could always rely on the presence of at least one cool-headed officer at the palace Your experience on the frontier has emi nently fitted you for the position. To you, therefore, will be allotted the quarters reserved in the palace itself for the adjutant of the guard. May I have the pleasure of saluting you as such ?"

Rallywood hesitated. He foresaw certain lifficulties, but they appeared rather attractive than otherwise at the moment. threw back his shoulders, a light of laughter came into his eyes, he raised his head and ooked into Selpdorf's face. "I thank your excellency."

The chancellor understood more than met his ear. He approached the subject deli-

ou, Captain Rallywood," he said, bending forward to shake hands with his visitor in English fashion. "There may possibly be some trifling difficulties at the outset. first step in any undertaking usually cost something, but you will not, I beg, permit yourself to be drawn into, shem, any shall low quarrels. Our friends of the "I have had very little opportunity of was singularly beautiful, with a nale clear, you will understand, are a little too prone

M. Selpdorf paused and referred once "There has been some small hitch about

innocently. "A serious hitch for the last eighteen

said; "I must ask you to wait in the ante- in my heart, all roads lead toward-" He Rallywood, with a smile that did not reach "Indeed? That must be remedied. The pay-

master general shall have a note upon your Good night.

on the point of starting for his highness' re- into the new. Above him the stars, written in their vast, vague characters upon the luster; below his feet, with scarce a break in the great circle, it seemed as if they drew together in denser clusters and set themselves in luminous tiers. These latter were the lights of the city. For the Hotel du Chanceller stands high upon one of the apparently dislodged the glove from its pisi- twin ridges which form the ravine of the with a hurrled word of apology and picked Revonde is built. Rallywood stood and it up. On the delicate palm was stamped the looked down upon the dip and rise of the terraced city with a new interest, for now it held a future for him individually, a future which must be stirring and might be something more. The eyes of the girl whose glove he had

trodden upon still challenged him from the starlit darkness, eyes made of starlit darkness themselves. He followed the broad black line of the river between its sweeping curves of lamps, broadening out seaward into hazy dimness. Then as a great bell across the water boomed out the hour be turned his gaze to the cast, in the direction of the sound, to where the broken brightness of the crowding streets gave place to a majestic alignment of light and shadow, showing the position of the ducal palace upon the river bank. Behind and above it stiene a blood-red gleam like an angry eye; this Rallywood knew to be the great stained dome of the historic messroom of the guard.

Then the late lieutenant of the frontier avairy laughed aloud in the dark, his blood tingled in his veins, for the priceless element of a vague, unknown danger and excitement had entered into his life.

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During this period of disruption and (distantly connected with him, came into his life. They did not meet very often and influence. spoke little when together, but mutual knowledge and liking resulted. Friendship is a living thing; it cannot be made; it

grows. Rallywood, when he turned to seek the means of a livelihood, found himself, as he said long afterwards, standing in the corridor of life with all the doors shut and no

key to open them. His tastes and training alike led in the lirection of a military career, and presently he went out to the cape, where he spent a year or two in a police force which was in time disbanded, and he returned to Eng-

and once more at a loose end. At this juncture Major Counsellor suggested to him the possibility of obtaining commission in the little army of the luchy of Maasau. This hint set him on the right track. The regiments of Maasau, though few in number, carried splendid traditions. Their ranks were drawn from a stolid, silent peasantry, and officered by wire-strung, high-tempered aristocracy, born of a mixed race, it is true, but none the less frantically devoted to the freedom

and independence of their shred of a father-In compliance with a private request o the part of Major Counsellor, the British minister at Revonde bestirred himself to procure a commission for Rallywood, who thus became a lieutenant in the frontier cavalry, and for more than five years had taken his share in riding and keeping the marches of Maasau, gaining much experience in capturing smugglers and in superintending the digging out of snowed-up trains. But life on the frontier, though crammed with physical activity and routine work, was in every other respect monotonously empty, and breaks in the shape of furlough were few and far between. Half liked, wholly respected and a little feared among his comrades, but always remaining

full devotion of a capable officer. As to Counsellor, no one could gulte ac count for his presence at Revonde at the and he pointed to the long, heavily- attached in some indefinite way to the lega-"Selpdorf, I see, already has his passage, whose appearance in any European capital simply meant whim or pleasure, for Rallywood broke the great seals, and, hav- he was growing old and lazy, and could not ng read, he tossed the paper into the other's be brought to account for his wanderings, which he assured those who ventured to in quire were chiefly undertaken in search of health. Nevertheless, wherever he went or came something interesting in a political of British interests-was almost sure to

> In former days he had filled the position of military attache to two or three of the more important embassies, and was said to be the best known man in Europe. He had, moreover, the right to carry upon his breast the ribbon and decoration of more than one exclusive and distinguished order. Of the many rumors associated with him this saying was certainly true, that one could never club in any city in Europe without etanding sellor warming himself beside the stove. Therefore he had naturally an enormous ircle of acquaintances, each individual

ouble Counseller, who happened to be deep personal interest which told with such of interest; there was nothing to look for- aback. happy effect on those whom he desired to ward to and the recent past meant extremes

which had been for some time in contemplation. I recollect having had the pleasure of meeting you not so long ago when you arrived in Maasau."

"Nearly six years ago your excellency," replied Rallywood with a smile, "I can scarcely believe it to be so long At any rate I remember perfectly that I had the honor of presenting you to his highness as the latest addition to our fron-

tier cavalry." "Your excellency might easily have forgotten. From the nature of the case that could not be possible with me."

Selpdorf listened with a little astonish ment. This Englishman was not quite such a fool as one might have expected from the without preferment and only a proportion of his pay for over five years on the frontier. He had hoped to find the fellow adaptable, but this long-limbed, slow-spoken gentleman was not altogether so transparent an individuality as Selpdorf had led him-

self to expect. "Buy why have you secluded yourself for so long among those barbarous marshes and forests?" demanded the chancellor in a railying manner. The young man made no reply, though the obvious one was in his

"By the by," resumed the chancellor, as if struck by a new thought, "I have heard that your countryman, Major Counsellor, has come to pay us a little visit in Maasau?" "He is here. I have just seen him," re-

Selpdorf's round eyes glanced once more at his companion. The simple directness of the reply was admirable but baffling. "Ah, he is invaluable, the good major, quite invaluable! England may well be proud of him. He is one of the ablest men in Europe, besides-" here he smiled, showing a row of strong even teeth-"besides be-

ing one of the most honest. For a diplomatist-what praise!" Rallywood met his glance imperturbably. "For a diplomatist, your excellency?" he

repeated. "But assuredly," replied the chancellor warmly, "figure to yourself, my friend, the condition of politics if all statesmen were like him-honest! An invaluable man!" He paused for a reply, but Rallywood merely bowed. He felt that so much, at was expected of him on the part of England.

"But now, monsieur, with regard to your own affair. You have been five years in the service of his highness. And your com-"At present fifty troopers at the blockhouses above Koin Ford and along the river In the winter, during the long, dark nights,

goods across the frontier, I shall have, perhaps, a score or so more." "And you are not tired of it?" M. Selpdorf raised his hands.

when there are many attempts to run illicit

inclined to let a better man step into my "But come, come, that is impossible!" returned his excellency agreeably. "Are you knowing very little about him, though he also tired of our capital, of Revende?"

of heat and cold, long, solitary rounds the girl's words of introduction mechani-"Ah, my dear licutenant, I understood you ridden by night and days rendered so far cally; then, putting aside the thought of were in Revonde and took advantage of alike by iron-handed rule and method that her, he took up the practical view of the your presence to put into effect a little plan one was driven to mark the lapse of time by the seasons, not by the ordinary divisions

of weeks and months. As he lounged in a chair, full of thes thoughts, a slight rustle, soft and silken, like the rustle of a woman's dress, caught his ear. He turned his head quickly. The corridor, with its slender pillars, which stood at long intervals, was steeped in the clear electric light and from where he sat his hand, he resumed. "We must overlook he could see there was no person visible

throughout its entire length

Not six paces behind him, stretched across the dark carpeting, in the very center of and consulted it. the pillared vista, lay a woman's long glove. A woman's glove possesses a peculiar charm for all men. Perhaps it suggests some of the sweet mystery of womanhood. The first action of most young men in powers of usefulness had probably become Rallywood's place would have been to raise it at once and to examine it, as though in some impalpable manner it could tell something of its unknown wearer, who might

But the circumstances of Rallywood's life and, perhaps, also, some exclusive element in his character, had heretofore set him rather apart from the influence of women. He had grown to regard them without curi osity, which is the last stage indifference

can reach. It must be admitted that it was with a feeling akin to repugnance that he at last lifted the long, soft, pale-bued, faintly scented suede from the floor and dangled it at an unnecessary distance from his eyes. holding it as he did so daintily between finger and thumb. Its subtle appeal to his senses as a man failed to reach him. It simply aroused an old feeling of reserve toward the sex it represented. His face altered slightly and he dropped it suddenly with an odd repulsion, as he might have dropped a snake, on a couch nearby,

come and gone while the sat thinking with his back to the corridor sent him wheeling The glove still lay where he had placed on the edge of the couch palm upward and with a suggestion of helplessness and pleading. It annoyed him unreasonably, He frowned and looked at his watch. Half

Then he resumed his chair and turned his

back upon it, till the reflection that the

woman to whom it belonged must have

At that moment a gutteral voice broke the silence of the house and a heavy curtain over the door at the nearer end of the anteroom was thrust back by a brusque hand and a tall, highshouldered, handsome man, dressed as if he were about to attend some court function, stood in the Behind him Rallywood caught opening. sight of a flurried and explanatory luckey.

an hour had passed since Selpdorf dismissed him.

suid the personage in a bland voice. "So tired, your excellency, that I am half mistake! But I hope you will accord me your forgiveness, mademoiselle?" Rallywood sprang to his feet at this most nexpected ending and looked around. Close beside him stood a tall girl wrapped in a long cloak of fur and amber velvet. She

"Ah, so I have lost my way after all,"

cately "Then you will allow me to congratulate