

# At Swords' Points;

OR,  
A SOLDIER OF THE RHINE.

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## CHAPTER IV.

"Hoch! The American!"

It was indeed a pretty sight, if one could only overlook the disfiguration of the principals necessitated by their armament, and both men handled their rapiers in tierce and guard with a cleverness that would have brought out cheers from an American audience to make the very rafters ring, while three score of Germans sat or stood around, watching every move, with a grim silence that was only broken by the clash of steel upon steel, or the sharp cries of the umpire directing the affair.

Those lights had never shone upon a more gallant fight, and each student hugged himself with delight because fortune had been kind enough to make him a witness to it.

Those most experienced in such matters saw, however, that when ten minutes of this terrific work had passed by with but a few slight cuts on either side, Hoffman was gathering his forces and preparing to end the duel with one of his hitherto invincible tactics, and they trembled for the brave American.

To Karl's eager inquiries during an interval between the bouts, Paul only gave a short laugh and assured his second he was but playing with his opponent.

Again the rivals faced, but this time Paul was in deadly earnest, and amid a clash of steel it was seen that Hoffman's face was covered with blood.

Then the sonorous voice of the umpire was heard calling a halt while the surgeons ascertained just how serious the Prussian's wound might be. Hoffman seemed to be wildly pleading with him to tell the battle to go on—it was his first defeat and unusually bitter—but the doctor, realizing the gravity of the wound, was inexorable. "Abfuhr!" he called out, signifying that the Prussian should be allowed to fight no more.

The umpire repeated the word, and in a loud voice declared the result in the stereotyped phrase:

"Saxo-Prussian is led away."

Then something occurred that had, perchance, never been heard upon a similar occasion—the glorious result, the signal downfall of the proud duellist who had lorded it over them so long, was too much for the students to witness without giving relief to their pent-up feelings.

"Hoch, hoch, hoch the American!" they shouted. And "hoch, hoch, hoch" it was while they bore Rhineland, bloody as he was, into the ante-room to resume his street dress.

Paul had received a few slight scratches, but fortune had been very kind to him in this respect, for none of them were more than bagatelles.

As he, dressed again for the street, was about to break away from the admiring groups that surrounded him, he saw a tall figure pressing through the throng, and recognized the Englishman who had been assisting the surgeon who attended his bout. His eyes, blue as the summer skies, beamed with good nature, and Paul was drawn to him unconsciously.

Then, too, the impulsive clasp of his hand, how hearty it was after almost formal congratulations of the Germans! Well, blood seems thicker than water, after all, and the day is surely coming when these cousins may stand shoulder to shoulder for peace throughout the whole world.

"A thousand congratulations, my dear boy. It was beautifully done, and I am proud to have been a witness to your victory. I hope we may meet again. Sir Noel Travers is my name, and I am probing into the colleges and hospitals of our German cousins."

Paul was dragged away by his comrades at this juncture, but he had a singular premonition that he would run across this big, frank Briton again at some uncertain future date.

To Paul's lodgings they rode. The day passed as had others, but Paul discovered what he had not known before, that he had many warm friends in the university.

And, of course, he was by courtesy compelled to accept their invitation to be a guest of honor at the grand meeting in the Kneipe or korps drinking hall of empty beakers on the table opened and closed the festivities.

Still he was glad when the end came and he could leave the hall without giving offense, for other matters of a more personal nature demanded his attention.

One of the objects that had brought him to Europe—to Germany—gave promise of being attained.

He had seen the one he sought, the sister who had for so many years been lost to him.

How the memory of her thrilled him, and what agony swept through his mind as he remembered in whose company he had seen her.

The name of Hoffman, what a curse it had been to his father. Was the son fated to perpetuate his sire's infamy?

## CHAPTER V.

A Serpent in the Dovecote.

It was night again in Heidelberg when Paul wandered about the streets of the classical city. Rhineland was

not aimlessly wandering. The little god Cupid had to do with his wanderings. Paul was thinking of Hildegard.

That haunting face, with its melting, brown eyes, was the lode star that drew the recluse from his den.

And pray, who was Hildegard?

Truth to tell, Paul would not have been wholly able to have given a definite answer to that question had he been asked.

Some weeks ago he had met her in rather a strange way that bordered a little on the romantic. Chance had allowed him to do her a favor, slight enough in its way, but when she thanked him so sweetly, the mischief was done, for with the modest grace of those velvet brown orbs the little god of love had shot an arrow true to the mark, and ever since Paul had felt its point in his heart.

Several times he had seen her since, and on each occasion had received a bow and a blush of recognition. But no more.

However, on the occasion of their meeting, she had dropped a small kerchief, which Paul had discovered, and now he was on his way to her house to, he hoped, become definitely acquainted.

He found the house readily enough, and was shown into a small, dimly lighted parlor where he was to await the coming of the lady of the house. It was just at this moment that his ear caught the sound of laughter.

It came from the next room, and was as merry and free from care as any sound he had ever heard—fresh, girlish laughter that quickened his pulse, since he could give a very good guess as to the source from whence it came.

Few temptations arise that there does not also appear the means of gratifying the desire, and in this case he noted the fact that the connecting door between the room in which he awaited the pleasure of the tardy aunt and the adjoining apartment was ajar.

Utterly unconscious of what awaited him, he advanced gently toward the opening, and with eager eyes sought the object of his solicitude.

Success immediately attended his efforts, for he discovered the nymph of the hazel brown eyes in direct range. She had evident cause for merriment, and as Paul turned his eyes toward her companion he saw that it was a man.

The party's back was turned to him so that he could not discover whether he were young or old, comely or ugly, though he hoped the latter.

While Paul stood there wondering what all the fun was about and chagrined to think he was not in it, the man faced about, and the American felt a cold chill chase up and down his spinal column when, amid the multi-bandages he discovered the handsome, sinister countenance of his bitter enemy, Conrad Hoffman.

## CHAPTER VI.

Paradise Lost.

Probably in all his adventurous life up to date young Rhineland had never before experienced such a chill as beset him when he made this astounding discovery, and saw his hated enemy apparently quite at home in the apartments occupied by Hildegard and her aunt. The familiarity with which she received Conrad, the lack of conventionality, declared that they must be related in some way.

And if so, what must follow? His very blood ran cold at the thought—this fair, angelic creature connected with ties of kinship to the family, father and son, whom he had such reason to curse!

The idea was appalling. In that minute of time Paul had as severe a mental struggle as comes to most men.

He conquered his weakness, too, and resolved to meet the emergency just where he stood.

There had been time to leave the house and avoid the encounter, but Rhineland was not the man to shirk a duty, no matter at what expense to his feelings.

And when the lady entered, presently, with apologies for keeping him waiting, Paul was himself again, resolved to play his part to the bitter end, no matter what the cost.

After a few minutes' conversation the good lady begged him to excuse her for a brief interval while she brought her niece into the room, saying she knew the young people would be friends since they seemed to have many views in common.

The time, then, had come, the fateful moment which but a short while back he had been anticipating so eagerly, while now, alas, he dreaded it still more.

He felt his courage oozing from his finger tips when Hildegard entered with her aunt, and he saw the sudden wave of crimson that suffused her face and neck as she caught a first sight of him.

Ah! that telltale color would have brought amazing satisfaction to Paul but for the wretched discovery he had made.

Then he saw Hoffman, bandages and all, looming up in the doorway. Paul was quite composed and ready to give and take fully as cheerfully as he had done when, sword in hand, the Saxo-

Prussian leader slashed and hewed in the endeavor to down him in the schlager combat of the arena, but Hoffman promised to entiven matters speedily enough.

He was rapidly working himself up to a white heat, when an explosion would follow.

Meanwhile the good lady of the house had introduced the young people and at least Paul might henceforth have the privilege of addressing Hildegard upon their meeting, unless she took up Hoffman's quarrel and cut him direct.

Knowing what was coming Paul actually felt relieved when the man of bandages advanced to have his little say.

Hoffman was a man whose talents lay somewhat in the line of oratory. Consequently, when he let loose his vials of wrath upon the American he said some very bitter things in his tongue lashing.

The ladies were aghast.

Paul smiled through it all.

Wearing at length of the tirade, which he could not answer, he put up his hand as if to signal that enough had been said.

And Hoffman actually stopped, though in all probability it was more on account of his lack of breath than any desire to humor his enemy that influenced him.

Having gained the floor, Paul stated his case in a frank and manly way, calculated to gain the respect of the gentler sex.

"Ladies, I am sure you will believe me if I say I had not the remotest suspicion when I came here to-night that I should find this gentleman present, or that he was connected with you in any manner whatsoever.

"Unfortunately he chose to take offense in the concert garden recently, accusing my friend and myself of an action of which we were entirely innocent, and as you doubtless know there followed the passage-at-arms in which I had to take part.

"I do not regret my action in the premises, but deem it my misfortune that I should have been compelled to disgrace any relative of yours. Since my presence here is evidently unwelcome to Myneher Hoffman, I shall insist upon withdrawing myself without further ceremony."

The effect of this manly speech was evident from the fact that both ladies smiled upon him.

Seeing which, the miserable Hoffman, smarting in the bitterness of his first defeat, snarled:

"One of you did insult the lady, and a German knows how to resent such things."

Then it was the American turned upon him with flashing eyes, fully aroused.

"I say you know that is a base lie, since you should be aware of the sacred bond between that young woman and myself—that I would sooner cut my right hand off than offer her the slightest harm. I will even go further and solemnly declare, as you well know in your cowardly soul, that your presence in her society was the basest insult she could receive. I shall stand by these words always.

"And now, ladies, since this scene is painful to you and to me, permit me to retire with the hope that possibly we may meet again under other and more agreeable conditions."

Hoffman looked almost as white in the face as the bandage that padded his split cheek.

Evidently he knew to what Paul referred, and the consciousness cut him to the quick.

He glided over to the door, and as the other, having bowed politely to the ladies, was passing through, the Teuton said in a low but passionate tone: "This is only the beginning between us."

(To be continued.)

## A MAN OF INTUITION.

Investment of a Small Sum of Money to Good Advantage.

"I had just come back to the store from my lunch one day," said the merchant, as burglar-proof safes were under discussion, "when a middle-aged man with a hard-up look entered my private office after me. The object of his call was to strike me for half a dollar, and I am surprised yet that I didn't at once turn him down. I guess it was because he had the look of a first-class mechanic out of a job, and because trade was rushing with me. To accede to his request I had to open my big safe, and as I handed him two quarters he thanked me and added: 'Excuse me, sir, but isn't that safe of yours too dead easy?' 'How do you mean?' I asked. 'Why, it's a four-number combination, but you have it set only on two. I think I could open it in a couple of minutes.' 'If you can I'll give you \$5,' I said, feeling a little nettled at his disparagement. I shut and locked the door and stood back for him, and in less than forty seconds he had swung it open. 'I told you it was dead easy,' he said, without a smile. 'But how did you get on to the combination?' 'Oh, it's intuition, I guess. Better call in a man and have the lock set on four numbers. It could be opened then, but it might take an hour or two. Thanks again, and good day.' I didn't let the grass grow under my feet," continued the merchant, "and from that day on I carried a heap less money in the safe. The man might have been a mechanic, but somehow I've always had the idea that he was a safe-cracker, and that I made a good investment when I handed over that \$5.50. He might have got \$2,000 that night as easy as rolling off a log."—Detroit Free Press

A Tonawanda (N. Y.) milkman has been struck three times by the same train at the railroad crossing.

# Pictorial Humor

## A SURE SIGN.



Ethel—What makes you think they are engaged?  
Maud—He stopped taking her to the theater, and takes her to church instead.

## Over the Danger Line.

"Weary," said Shiny Patches, as the two were resting as usual, "this is my birthday, and I draw a deep breath of relief, for I am out of danger."

"What are you talking about?" asked Weary.

"I am 35 years old, and for some time I have known that between the ages of 29 and 35 men do their greatest work. It has kept me worried, but now I feel safe."

## Modest.

"Do you think that literature is likely to assume a higher standard?" inquired the serious thinker. "I do," answered the man with long hair and black-rimmed glasses. "In fact, as I am now at work on my masterpiece, I feel almost justified in giving a personal guarantee to that effect."

## Had It Ready.

He—Of course, dear, I'll be back from the club in time for the opera, but in case it should turn out to be impossible I'll send you a note by messenger.

She—That's not necessary; it just dropped out of your overcoat pocket.

## ARROGANCE REBUKED.



"I am the Duke de Bossa."  
Hotel Clerk—Well, so long as you don't get noisy, and pay in advance, we'll let you stay here.

## Did She Take the Hint?

A distinguished cavalry leader was once at a dinner party to which he had been invited as the guest of honor.

Beside him was a loquacious widow, with hair of raven black, who rudely interrupted the conversation by asking the warrior why it was that his beard was still black, while his hair was turning gray.

With great politeness the old warrior turned toward her.

"I fear I cannot give you a satisfactory answer," said he, "unless, possibly, the reason is that I have used my brain a little more than I have my jaw."

## Her Way.

Mr. Hennypeck (musingly)—I wonder why a woman never gives her husband the kind of a Christmas present he wants?

Mrs. Hennypeck (severely)—Because she doesn't try to. She gives him the present he ought to want.

## He "Reckoned."

Johnny—Paw, what does it mean when it says "sound the tocsin?"  
Mr. Wise—Oh, I reckon it's one of these fights about anti-toxin.

## Hazarding a Guess.

Della—"Phwat is this copper company that the man o' the house does be talkin' about so much?"

Bridget—"Shure, Oi suppose 'tis a policeman's union, no less."

## Would Be First on Record.

"Ah," said the great singer. "I have hit on a plan which will indeed bring me distinction." What is it? asked a friend. "I shall make a farewell tour, and—I shall not go back."

## One and Two-Tenths Drunk.

"Judge, your honor, this man was one and two-tenths drunk last night," a policeman told a police court judge yesterday, when a decrepit old fellow named Kelly was arraigned on a charge of vagrancy.

"What's that?" asked the court. "How do you figure that out?"

"Well, your honor, your theory is that if a man takes 10 drinks he's loaded," replied the policeman, counting on his fingers. "Kelly told me he had 12 drinks."

Kelly went down for 30 days.—Washington Times.

## Had Its Compensation.

"I am afraid, madam," said a gentleman who was looking for apartments, "that the house is too near the station to be pleasant."

"It is a little noisy," assented the landlady; "but from the front veranda one has such a fine view of people who miss the trains," she added, with an air of triumph.

## WHISKY IN THE KLONDIKE.



First Klondike Miner (looking down the shaft)—What is it, Bill?  
Second Klondike Miner (from below)—I wish you'd step over to the cabin and cut me off about two drinks of whisky. The ice-saw is under the bed.

## A Pleasing Result.

"You know that measly little cur that my wife made so much of?"

"The dog that bit me in the leg?"

"Yes. A motorman ran over and killed him. Yes. And I had to go down to the railway office and report the motorman so he could be promptly discharged. I went."

"What was the result?"

"The man was promoted."

## One Explanation.

"How did the United States Senate get the reputation of being such an exceptionally dignified body?" inquired the man who is always eager to learn.

"Probably it was going into executive session at precisely the proper moment," was the cold-blooded man's answer.

## Stains Were Gone, Weren't They?

"You told me, sir, that all I had to do was to leave the tablecloth outside during the night, and the fruit stains would disappear. Well, I did so last night."

"Ah! then the stains—"  
"No! It was the tablecloth that disappeared!"

## KNOW THE REASON.



She—Wonder why tall men always marry little women?  
She—They take the lesser evil.

## Accounting for It.

Maud—Mr. Wellalong seems entirely wrapped up in his bride. I wouldn't have expected it in the case of such an old, old bachelor as he was when he was married.

Mabel—He had kept his heart in cold storage all those years, perhaps.

## Why He Was Coming Home.

"Is your uncle coming home from the Philippines soon?" asked the visitor.

"Yes," said the editor's little boy, "his subscription has expired."