

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

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

night when you reach Kronburg and honor the gentleman with an unexpected call?" "I will, d-n you, but not for the rea-

was the first time in his life that he had ever used strong language to the chancellor.

He dropped the receiver, flung down (at the moment he could have wished that he had no other) and, waving away an offer of change, rushed out of the office.

Under his breath he swore again, the strongest oaths which the rich language of his fatherland provided, anathematizing not the beloved woman, maligned, but the man who maligned her.

There would be death in the thought that she could be false to herself and doubtedly existed could not be unearthher confession of love for him. But, then, it was unthinkable. Let the whole world reek with foulness, his love must still shine above it white and remote

This old man, whose life would



"I will, d-n you, but not for the reason you think !"

or's present mood the two had been his confusion in a way that would together-this old man had a grudge of working, and he had but taken the against the one perfect girl on earth. There was no black rag of scandal he would not stoop to pick out of the mud royalty and common everyday polite- his conscience-if he had one-by say-

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

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

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

He had done his best to disillusion a young man tricked into love for an adventuress. Now neither as chancellor nor friend could he make further open protest unless favored by fate with some striking new development. There were nevertheless other ways first step toward interference. He

meant, since worse had come to worst, to go on relentlessly, and he would in our store is always well spent. You get ferent mean between reverence due to and fly as a flag of battle, soothing hardly have considered it criminal to your full money's worth, besides the satisdestroy a woman of the type to which faction that you are consuming only pure he assigned Helen Mowbray, provided no means less stringent sufficed to snatch her from the throne of Rhaetta. reputable packing houses, with their guar-There were many plans seething in antee that we can warrant the purity of Kronburg. There would not be anoth- the chancellor's head, and Egon's help each article to our customers. Our Pickles, pense dragged on. Then came the er for three hours, he found, and as might be necessary. He might even news that no such persons had passed, nothing could have induced him to have to go so far as to bribe Egon to manufactured today. Here was a stumbling block. Since wait three hours, or even two, he or- kidnap the girl and sacrifice himself dered a special. There was a raging by marrying her out of band before apparently not traveled by the Orient tiger in his breast which would not she had a chance to learn that the cease to tear him until he had seen emperor was ready to meet her de-Helen Mowbray, laid his empire at her mands. Egon had been attentive to Miss Mowbray. It might well be believed even by the emperor that the young man had been madly enough in love to act upon his own initiative, un-





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tion, a little patience, to cool the blood. "It's often bad policy not to lead trumps." replied Leopold.

"Often, but not always. Time and the end of the play will show. Is your majesty's indulgence for the old man quite exhausted?"

"Not quite, though rather strained, I confess." Leopold tempered his words with a faint smile.

"Then I have one more important question to ask, venturing to remind you first that I have acted solely in your interest. If such a step as you contemplate should be my deathblow it is because of my love for you and NEBRASKA Rhaetia. Tell me, your majesty, this one thing. If it were proved to you that the lady you know as Miss Mowbray was not only not the person she pretends to be, but in all other respects unworthy of your love, what would

you do?" "You speak of impossibilities." "But if they were not impossibilitles?

"In such a case I should do as other men do-spend the rest of my life in trying to forget a lost ideal."

"I thank your majesty. That is all I ask. I suppose you will continue your

journey? "Yes, as far as Felgarde, where I

hope to find Lady Mowbray and her

daughter." "Then, your majesty, when I've expressed my gratitude for your forbearance, even though I've failed to be convincing, I'll trouble you no long-

er." The chancellor rose painfully, with a reminiscence of gout, and Leopold stared at him in surprise. "What do you mean?" he asked.

"Only that, as I can do no further good here, with your permission I will get out at the station we are coming to and go back home again."

The emperor realized what he had not noticed until this moment-that the train was slackening speed as it approached the suburbs of a town. His conversation with the chancellor had lasted for an hour, and he was far from regretting the prospect of being left in peace. More than once he had come perilously near to losing his temper, forgetting his gratitude and the old man's years. How much longer he could have held out under a continued strain of provocation he did not know. So he spoke no word of dissuasion when Count von Breitstein picked up his soft hat and buttoned his gray coat for de-

parture. "I've passed pleasanter hours in your society, I admit," said Leopold when the train stopped. "But I can thank you for your motives, if not your maxims, and here's my hand."

to ascertain whether the ladies described had gone out and given up inquire for the next train back to their tickets. A few minutes of sus-Helen Mowbray and her mother had express, where had they gone on leaving the hotel at Kronburg? Had they, after all, misled Baroness von Lyndal as to their intentions for the purpose of blinding the emperor, or had they simply changed their minds at the last minute, as women may? Could it be possible that they had changed them, three more, and it would be close upon so completely as to return to Schloss 9 before he could start with Count Lyndalberg, or had they chosen to van- von Breitstein for the hunting lodge ish mysteriously through some back door out of Rhaetla, leaving no trace which even a lover could find?

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

and await developments or, rather, to power. This was the course he finally possibly be inflicted on the proud and chose, and just as he was about to act upon his decision he remembered his carelessly given promise to Count von Breitstein.

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

"My friends are not here. I'm starting for Kronburg as soon as possible, either by the next train or by special." he announced after a faraway squeak had signified Count von Breitstein's presence at the other end. "I don't see break my promise; that's all. Goodby.

Eh? What was that you said?" "I have a-curious-piece of-news for you," came over the wire in the

chancellor's volce. "It's-about theladies."

"What is It?" asked Leopold.

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

"No," said the emperor.

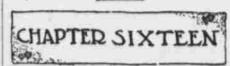
"They gave out that they were leaving Rhaetla, but they haven't crossed the frontier."

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

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

were truths, Leopold hurried away to feet, received her answer and, through it, punished the chancellor.

The special, he was told, could be ready in less than an hour. The journey to Kronburg would occupy nearly which he had promised to visit. But the chancellor would doubtless have his electric carriage ready for the de-Leopold could not help recalling the sired expedition, and they could reach their destination in twenty minutes. This was not too long a time to give up to proving the old man wrong, for She would not be there, and the em-He could think of nothing more to do peror was going because she would but to go dismally back to Kronburg not. He wanted to witness Von Breitstein's confusion, for humiliation was stir them up by every means in his the bitterest punishment which could opinionated old man.



ELL the truth when decation when necessary and never part with the whole truth at one time, ñ since waste is sinful,"

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

> through the telephone, where forgetfulness may be pardonable, but he had arranged his truths as skillfully as he arranged his pawns on a chessboard. It was said by some who pretended to know that Count von Breitstein had had a Jesuit for a tutor; but, be this as it might, it was certain that when he had a goal to reach he did not pick his footsteps by the way. A flower here or there was apt to be trodden down, a small life broken, a reputa-

Rhaetia's standard was to be planted

peror after his promise of plain speaking: "Your majesty's journey today is a wild goose chase. I happen to know

influenced by his brother. The chancellor's first act on parting Family Work a Specialty with Leopold was to telegraph Captain von Breitstein to meet the train by which he would return to Kronburg Therefore on arriving at the station he was not surprised to see Egon's handsome face prominent among others less attractive on the crowded platform. "Well?" questioned the young man

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

"Is anything stirring?" "Say 'any one,' and I can answer you

more easily. Who do you think has arrived at the hotel?" "The devil, probably, to complicate matters."

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

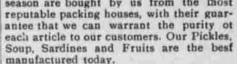
"What! You mean the Prince"-"Of Darkness, you've just named him." Egon gave a laugh at his own repartee, but the chancellor heard neltner. His hard face brightened. "That's well," said he grimly. "Here we have just the young man to see us through this bad pass if he's as good looking as ever and in his usual mood for mischief. If we can interest him in this

affair, he may save me a great deal of trouble and you a misalliance." "But your wedding present to me"-

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

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Gloomy Hamlet. "I went to the theater last night." 'What did you see ?" "A play called 'Hamlet.' " "How was it?" "Fair, only fair. A good, lively sextet would do it a world of good."-



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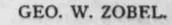
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upon the mountain top? Supposing he had said to the em-

He had told his emperor no lies, even

tion stained, but what of that when