

The Princess Dehra

BY JOHN REED SCOTT.

Copyright, 1908, by John Reed Scott

There was the same gracious manner, the same soft voice, and yet, in those few words, she warned them all that there was now a regent in Valeria—and a Dalberg regent, too.

"There is nothing now but to draw the proclamation for your signature," said the count—"the other matters can abide for the time."

And Lotzen, at the princess nod of permission went slowly from the room, his surprise still stronger than his anger; though, in the end, it was the latter that lingered and left its mark in his unforgiving soul.

While the count was drafting the proclamation made necessary by the changed conditions, the princess sat in silence, gazing in abstracted contemplation through the window. Regent of Valeria! the second the kingdom had known; the first had been a woman, too—Eleanor, mother of the infant, Henry the Third of glorious memory—yet, was it wise—was it in fact her duty—her duty to her house; to her beloved? Surely it was not to her pleasure—she who had been happy in her nearing wedding day—her lover placed next the throne—his bright future and her joy for it. And now—the wait—the struggle—the obligation of right, of justice; the putting off the woman, the putting on the ruler where the woman interfered. Her father! she turned that thought aside sharply—she had turned it aside many times since yesterday, as he had bade her to do:—"When I go, child, do not grieve." Yet, when two have been comrades for years it is not easy.

The count ceased his writing and, laying aside the pen, looked up.

"Will it please your highness to sign?" he said quickly—he had little liking at any time for a woman's reverie, and none at all when it was of the sort he knew this reverie to be—and the woman had work to do.

And Dehra, preoccupied though she was, had missed nothing at the table, and she let him know she understood him, by a smile and a shake of her handsome head. It was not exactly a reproach, and yet neither was it an encouragement to do the like again.

"Please read it," she said.

It was very brief—reciting the death of Frederick the Fourth, the disappearance of the book of laws, the stipulation of the archduke and the duke relative to the succession remaining in abeyance, the creation of a regency during the inter-regnum and the princess' acceptance of the office.

When he had done, she asked if there were any suggestions, and none being offered, she signed it and returned it to the count. Immediately the council arose and she and Armand retired, by the same way they had entered.

As they passed through the library, Dehra went over to the desk.

"Here is where the king sat that last night," she said, "and here the book of laws lay, and here was the box. I can't imagine what he did with the book—nor why he removed it from the box—and the box was in its usual place in the vault when I gave it to you to take to the council."

A door latch clicked, and Adolph, the valet, came in hurriedly.

"Well!" said the archduke, seeing he wished to speak.

"The box, my lord," he answered, "you left it in the council-chamber—is it to remain there?"

"No," said the princess—"bring it here at once." She went to the vault and opened it.

"Put it on the shelf in the rear," she ordered, when Adolph returned. He obeyed and gave her the key.

"There was no need to lock it," she remarked.

"It has a spring lock, mademoiselle," said the man. "It snapped when I closed the lid."

Dehra nodded indifferently. "So it has . . . Shut the vault door." Then motioned to him in dismissal.

"It's of small consequence," she remarked to Armand, as she gave the combination a twist, "the box is of little use without the book."

As she turned away, her glance fell on the big portrait of her

father that hung on the opposite wall—and of a sudden the reaction came, and the tears started, and her lips twitched. She reached out her hand appealingly to Armand. In silence, he put his arm around her and led her quickly from the room.

CHAPTER VI.

The Reward of a Meddler.

When Ferdinand of Lotzen left the council, he passed leisurely down the corridor toward one of the private exits. The pressing business that was demanding his immediate attention seemed to bother him no longer, and he even took the trouble to acknowledge the salute of the guard who paced before the main stairway; whereat the man stared after him in unfeigned surprise, until the duke, suddenly looking back, caught him in the act—and with a frown sent him to the about-face and the far end of his beat.

So no one saw his highness step quietly over and try the door of the king's library, and, when it opened to him—as he had anticipated it would, the princess having come that way to the council—go in and close it softly behind him. Dropping the lock, he went to the door of the private cabinet (which was between the library and the room used for the council meetings) and listened. Hearing nothing, he opened it very cautiously and peered inside; no one was there and he fixed the door a bit ajar, so as to be warned if anyone entered from the council.

The library was a large room, paneled ceiling and sides in wood painted an ivory white; the great, wide windows were half hidden by the Gobelin blue tapestries that hung in folds to the floor; heavy bookcases of carved mahogany lined the walls; the furniture was of the massive Empire style (but the desk was a big, oblong, flat-topped affair that had been made over Frederick's own design—and which more than compensated in utility for what it lacked in artistry. It pleased its owner and so fulfilled its mission. It stood a little way back from the center of the room, its great crystal chandelier above its outer edge, and all the doors directly in focus of the revolving chair behind it.

It was to this chair that the duke went and began hurriedly to go through the papers on the desk, yet taking the utmost care not to disturb their arrangement, and replacing them exactly as he found them. Evidently whatever he was seeking was of the sort that needed no examination to prove it, for he passed over letters and written documents without a glance at their contents. It was not on the desk and he began on the drawers, none of which was locked. One after another was searched without success, and the duke's brow went blacker, until, as the last proved barren, he flung himself into the chair, and again ran over the documents on top and again without finding what he sought.

"It was only a chance," he muttered, sending his glance around the room, "only a feeble chance; . . . He was blotting a page as I entered," was what she said . . . and if it were a fresh blotter it might tell the story." He went over to the vault, the front of which was paneled white and paneled to correspond to the walls, and tried the door.

"Locked, of course."

Suddenly he turned toward the king's cabinet, listening; then sprang quickly behind one of the window curtains; and its swaying had not ceased when the princess and Armand entered, on their return from the council.

Unseen, he was also unseeing; yet hearing, he had little need for eyes—it was easy to picture all that occurred:—Dehra's pointing out the positions of the king, the laws and the box; the entry of Adolph; the opening of the vault; the valet's return with the box; his dismissal; the locking again of the vault. But what then happened always puzzled the duke—that it was something unexpected was proved by the sudden silence, and pause, before either of them moved, followed at once by the closing of the corridor door.

He waited a moment, until he was sure they had gone, then went to the desk. What had disturbed the American and the princess—why had their talk ceased abruptly—why did they

wait, unmoving, and then go out together and still unspoken? . . . Had they seen him? . . . Impossible; even the window did not show through the tapestry; and he had been against the wall. . . . His gloves—had he let them lie somewhere? . . . no, they were drawn through his sword belt. . . . He studied the desk top—the floor—the chairs. . . . They told him nothing; . . . and, yet, it was very queer. . . . Had any part of him been exposed beyond the curtain? He went back and got behind it. . . . It completely covered him—and as he stood there the cabinet door opened and Adolph came in softly.

He glanced around quickly, then went straight to the vault and began to turn the knob, while the duke, one eye just beyond the curtain's edge, watched him curiously. Could it be that this servant was familiar with the combination of the lock, that only the king and Dehra were supposed to know! If so . . . the bolts shot back, the door opened, and the valet disappeared in the vault. In a moment he came out with the box; but Lotzen did not see him, having drawn behind the curtain; nor did he venture again to look out except when assured that Adolph's back was toward him.

Placing the box on the desk, the valet laid back the lid and with another furtive look around, went swiftly across to the wall, where hung the big, life-sized portrait of the king, the escutcheon, on the top of the heavy gold frame, almost against the ceiling. Under it was a tall, straight backed chair, with high arms; and, mounting on them, Adolph reached behind the picture and, from the space between it and the wall, drew out an ancient book, leather bound and metal hinged—the laws of the Dalbergs.

With a faint chuckle, he sprang down and started toward the box; then stopped—the book slipped from his fingers—he gasped—his eyes widened in terrified amazement—his face took on the gray pallor of awful fear; for the Duke of Lotzen had emerged from behind the window curtain and was coming slowly toward him.

"You seem startled, Adolph," said the duke, with an amused smile, "doubtless you thought you were alone." He sat down in the revolving chair. "May I trouble you to give me the book—the floor is hardly the place for the laws of the Dalbergs."

The valet's composure had returned, in a measure, at the tone of the other's voice, but his hand still trembled as he picked up the book and carried it to the desk.

"Thank you, Adolph," said Lotzen, "thank you . . . you seem a trifle shaky, sit down and rest." (indicating a chair nearby). "I shall need you presently."

He watched the man until he had obeyed, then opened the laws and turned quickly to the last decree.

Across the page lay a fresh, white blotter, used but twice, he noticed, as he turned it over. He had come for this very bit of paper, that Dehra had casually mentioned in her story to the council—hoping vaguely that the king had let it lie, and that it had not been destroyed by the servants who cared for the desk. He would have been amply satisfied with the faint chance it might give him of guessing the decree from the few words the mirror would disclose. But, now, he had no need for guesses nor mirrors; and with a light laugh he laid the blotter aside. Surely, the Goddess of Fortune was with him! And to Ferdinand of Lotzen this meant much; for to him there was only one other Divinity, and that other was a female, too.

Thrice he read Frederick's decree; first rapidly, then slowly, then word by word, as it were.

And all the while Adolph watched him covertly, a sly smile in his small, black eyes. He had quite recovered from his fright—though he might be led to pretend otherwise—indeed, now that he had time to think, he could find no reason why the duke should punish him; rather did he deserve an ample reward for having kept the laws from the council. In fact, why should he not demand a reward, if it were not offered—demand it discreetly, to be sure, but none the less demand it. And, as the duke read, and re-read, the reward piled higher, and visions of Paris (it is strange how, under certain conditions, the thoughts of a certain sort of people turn to Paris as instinctively as the needle to the pole) danced before his eyes. . . . And presently he forgot the duke, and

the laws, and Dornitz—he was sitting at a little table along the Boulevard des Italiens, an ab-sinthe at his hand, a merry girl, with sparkling eyes and perfumed hair, at his elbow, a sensuous waltz song in his ears, and light, and life, and love, and lingerie in every breath of air.

"Dreaming, Adolph," said Lotzen, "dreaming? . . . of what, pray?"

"Of Paris, my lord," he answered unthinkingly.

The duke regarded him in frowning surprise.

"Paris?" he muttered, "Paris! has everyone gone Paris mad?"

"It was of the boulevards, my lord—the music and lights and the—"

"Shut up!" exclaimed Lotzen; "to the devil with your Paris and its boulevards! . . . How did this book get behind that picture?"

"I put it there, monsieur."—The reward was not piled quite as high as he had fancied.

"Why?"

"To hide it, monsieur—until I could replace it in the box."—The reward was dwindling marvelously fast.

"Then you stole the laws of the Dalbergs?"

Adolph did not answer. . . . It was queer how chilly the room had got. It had seemed warm enough, a moment ago.

The duke regarded him meditatively.

"Come," he said presently; tell me how you managed it. My time is short—speak up."

The valet slunk a furtive look at his face; it was expressionless—pitiless.—The reward had disappeared.

"Your highness will believe me?" he asked.

"Believe you, Adolph! surely—a valet never lies! Go on."

The man gulped—ran his tongue over his lips—gulped again—then began, his voice husky, full of quavers and sudden stops; while the duke, with steady gaze and searching eye, drove him on as with a lash.

"Your highness heard my story to the council," said Adolph; "all of it was true except as to the last time I saw the book of laws. . . . I happened to witness the scene between her royal highness and the king. It was just as she related it, monsieur. When she had gone, his majesty sat, doing nothing—and presently he dropped asleep. . . . I came to the room a number of times, and always that book stared at me, and my curiosity as to the decree grew hotter every minute. After a while, the king awoke and told me to put the book in the box and return it to its place in the vault—then he went over to the sideboard and poured out a drink. . . . Here, monsieur, was my opportunity—I laid the book in the box and lowered the lid, but slipped in an envelope to prevent it locking, then put it in the vault—which the king himself closed. After he had retired, I opened the vault and got out the book."

"How did you know the combination?" the duke asked.

"By—by—watching the king, monsieur. . . . I had picked up the numbers one by one. . . . long ago."

Lotzen tossed him a bit of paper and a pencil.

"Write out the combination," he ordered—and smiled at the servant's trembling hand and labored motions. . . . "Thank you;—glancing at the paper and dropping it carelessly in his pocket—"proceed—you had just got the book out of the vault."

"While I was examining it, monsieur," Adolph resumed, "I thought I heard the king moving about in his room. I sprang inside the vault, drew the door shut, but not quite tight, and tried to put the book in the box. But I must have been nervous, monsieur, for, in some way, I struck the lid and knocked it down; and it locked, leaving the book in my hand. I could not open the box—the only key was under the king's pillow, on his watch chain. What was to be done?" I dared not try for it that night; the king was too light a sleeper;—nor did I dare leave the book in the vault, there was no place to conceal it, and he was sure to go in there in the morning. What was I to do, monsieur. I listened—everything seemed quiet; I opened the door very slowly—no one was in the room—I stepped out, and the king's portrait confronted me—I stared at it a moment, frightened as though it were my master—then, of a sudden, I knew I had found the hiding place, and I sprang up and put the book behind the picture. . . .

(To Be Continued Next Week)

GREATHAREM OF EX-SULTAN DEMOBILIZED

New Caliph Takes Several of Predecessor's 300 Wives—Husbands Found for 150—More Mates Being Sought.

Universal Service. Special Cable Dispatch. Constantinople, Dec. 3.—Authorities are dispersing the 300 members of the former sultan's harem.

Husbands have been found for 150 of the women, and unless the others can find mates they will be sent back to the interior of the country, whence they originally came.

The new caliph has taken over several of the wives in his predecessor's harem.

A great number of Turks in the national army here in the neighborhood of the straits are going away without leave. Restive and depressed, many of them are leaving to take up civil pursuits.

A director of the Standard Oil company in New York has written a letter to Hamid Bey thanking him for the protection of the Standard plant at Anatolia.

\$2,000,000 FIRE HITS NORTH CAROLINA TOWN

Newbern, N. C., Dec. 2 (A. P.)—Fire which raged uncontrolled, for 11 hours Friday in the western section of Newbern destroyed property value at nearly \$2,000,000 including more than 300 residences, most of them occupied by negroes, an overall factory, two churches, several stores, a tobacco warehouse and other structures in an area of more than 20 blocks. A number of persons were injured, but none, it was said, in a serious condition. No fatalities were reported. The fire had been brought under control last night. Another fire which caused damage estimated at \$250,000 at the Roper Lumber company's sawmill on the opposite side of town, was in progress when the larger blaze began and delayed response to the new call while a high wind spread the flames rapidly among the frame dwellings. Apparatus from four nearby cities, aided in fighting the flames. More than 1,000 persons, mostly negroes, were rendered homeless.

GERMANS SOON TO RENEW PARLEY ON REPARATIONS

Berlin, Dec. 1 (A. P.)—An early resumption between the Paris and Berlin government of parleys on the reparations question is considered a certainty for the near future in political circles here as an outcome of informal steps taken by the Cuno government.

Reports that the German government has been planning a "world appeal" in connection with the reported threatened advance of the French towards the Rhine and into the Ruhr region are said to be wholly unfounded. It is asserted that the new chancellor and his colleagues have viewed such a program as both futile and idealistic. Neither was serious consideration given to the proposal to ration out blocks of stock in German industrial enterprises as part of the reparations payments.

DOZEN PALL BEARERS CARRY BODY OF GIANT
New York, Dec. 3.—A misfit in death as he was in life, Capt. George Auger, 8 feet 4 inches tall, was carried to his grave today by 12 pall bearers instead of the customary six. So huge was the coffin that a special derrick was rigged to lower it into the ground. The giant's dog and inseparable companion, followed the body to the cemetery. The dog tried in vain to jump into the grave.
"Ever since I was six years old I have spent my life stooping and crowding," said the circus giant shortly before he died. And Captain Auger was crowded even in death, for at the last moment grave diggers had to be summoned to enlarge the hole in the ground for the coffin.

HARDING FOR DYER BILL.

Washington, Dec. 2 (A. P.)—President Harding personally favors the enactment of the Dyer anti-lynching bill, it is declared at the White House, although it is made clear that the executive would make no comment concerning the democratic filibuster in the Senate. The executive, it was announced, feels that lynching is "very sore spot on our boast of civilization."

COUZENS TO QUIT TUESDAY.

Detroit, Dec. 2 (A. P.)—James Couzens, recently appointed to the Senate, plans to resign as mayor of Detroit next Tuesday and leave for Washington the following day, according to word received last night by acting Mayor John C. Lodge. The announcement that he planned to retire as mayor immediately set at rest rumors circulated here that Mr. Couzens might seek to retain the office along with his senatorial duties.

A boy was dragged from a boat by a devil fish near Tacoma and drowned before help could reach him.

DAUGHERTY ISSUES DEFINITIVE TO KELLER

Refuses to Turn Over Documents Requested by Accuser—Denies Specifically 14 Charges Filed.

Universal Service. Washington, Dec. 3.—Harry M. Daugherty, attorney general, today sent a scorching, defiant denial to every charge contained in Representative Keller's charge of impeachment now before congress.

He declared that radicals and war grafters are engineering the case in an effort to learn what the department of justice has against them and flatly declined to submit to the committee the documents asked for.

He strenuously defended his action in asking for a sweeping injunction during the railway strike. He said that the conditions at the time left him no other course. To the question of influence of the Morgan campaign he said that wealth in no way influenced him and had nothing to do with his actions.

Regarding Morse Case. Mr. Daugherty declared that the case of C. W. Morse, indicted for shipping frauds, was directed by and still is under the direction of the United States shipping board. His role in this is entirely formal, he says.

He brands as "knowingly false and untrue" the charge that he failed to act against the so-called dye trust. There are 14 specifications in the indictment and Mr. Daugherty treats with each in a detailed denial.

In refusing to submit the department records in 130 cases, including the reports of the bureau of investigation, all correspondence and documents, he said it "would be violative of the rights of those whose confidence, as many of these reflect, were given to the government upon the express understanding that the confidence would not be violated."

Alleges Plot of Antis. "Certain important matters which involve the vital interests of the government," he says, "are now in process of presentation to the proper tribunals, praying for relief."

Mr. Daugherty concludes: "The attorney general cannot escape the conclusion that the sole object and purpose of the proceeding is not to remove him from office, but is in the nature of an attempt to compel the publication and the disclosure in advance of the evidence upon which the government relied and must rely in the prosecution and investigation of cases of the greatest importance to the government."

TIERNAN ESCAPES ARREST WARRANT

Professor and Wife No. 1 Elude Pursuers and Now Believed to Be in Indiana.

Chicago, Dec. 3.—Prof. John Tiernan could not be found in Chicago today. The South Bend law professor is believed by the authorities to have fled the city immediately after an insanity warrant had been issued for him. Perhaps he was surprised, they pointed out, by the arrival of Mrs. Blanche Brimmer-Tiernan, his bride of a day, who came from her home in Iowa to claim him.

Mrs. Tiernan No. 1 and the three Tiernan children, were also missing. She had left the home of her sister, Mrs. Frances Pulaski suddenly last night. Mrs. Pulaski said she left no address but she believes Mrs. Tiernan is with her husband.

"They may have gone back to Indiana," Mrs. Pulaski said.

"The professor appeared to believe he would be safe from the sanity investigation in that state."

The Rev. Charles Hawn, father of Blanche, who came to Chicago with his daughter Friday night seeking the professor, returned to his home in Hansell, Ia., today. Blanche was still in the city and said she would remain a few days in hope of finding Mr. Tiernan.

Judge Harry Tiernan, of New York, brother of Professor Tiernan, telephoned County Judge Regheimer late Saturday that he would come to Chicago to take charge of the professor. It was Judge Regheimer who issued the warrant for the professor's arrest and examination at the Cook county psychopathic hospital.

SHANTUNG AGREEMENT SIGNED

Tokio, Dec. 2 (A. P.)—The foreign office announces the signing Friday of the agreement between China and Japan, concerning Shantung. The transfer of all Japanese interest in the province of Shantung will take place at noon December 5, when all the Japanese troops will be evacuated. Some matters, however, will be left for settlement after the evacuation.

Any man who breakfasts on hard boiled eggs and onion soup, as does Clemenceau, is bound to be in a fighting mood all the rest of the day.

Debt is the prolific mother of folly and crime.—Disraeli.

Production of silk in the Philippine Islands for export is likely to be revived in the near future, after being abandoned for 70 years, according to Dr. Charles S. Banks, who has just supervised the planting of a large tract of mulberry trees.