(Copyright, 1899, Doubleday & McClure Co.) | Synopsis of Preceding Chapters. Massau, a little duchy in Europe, which has maintained its independence because of the Jealousies of the Jerge surrounding countries, seems about to be swallowed up. Germany is represented at Revende, the capitol, by the shrewd statesman, Baron von Elmur. England's influence is strong and Major Coursellor's presence means much. France and Russia are also playing the diplomatic game. At the time the story opens John Railywood, a young Englishman, who has served seven years in the Massau frontier cavairy, is about to resign his commission, when Selpdorf, the chancellor and, 'man of the hour,' sends for him and makes him a Gentleman of the Guard. Hallywood meets Valerie Selpdorf, the chancellor's daughter. The Gentlemen of the Guard object to the appointment of the Englishman, Unziar, a leader and a suitor for Valerie's hand, arranges for the affair of honor involved, misses his shot and, with his companions, is overcome by the manly bearing of Railywood. The guests at the palace hall overwhelm the young Englishman with congratulations. Countess Sagan takes a great interest in Railywood and invites him to Castle Sagan with a party. Von Elmur plots with Selpdorf in behalf of Germany to disband the Guard. At the castle Valerie offends the duke. Sagan, fearing that the women will spoil the plot, wishes to cause the death of Valerie and still believes he can carry out his plan with Selpdorf. Meantime, the Guards, Unziar, Collendorp and Railywood, must be disposed of. Von Elmur, Unziar and Railywood woo Valerie. Countess Sagan foresees the danger of the young Englishman and warms hym, Collendorp refuses to be a traitor to the duke and is murdered by Sagan in the presence of Von Elmur. Massau, a little duchy in Europe, which

### CHAPTER XVII.

Iris.

The duke retired to his room at an early hour under the plea of weariness. He was as a matter of fact, worn out by the flood of fears and enxieties that Valerie's one reckless sentence had let loose upon him. So long was it since he had placed these weightier matters of diplomacy and government in other hands that the renewed sense of responsibility and the imminent need for action seemed to be crushing in his brain. But the instinct of self-preservation, backed by the one kingly attribute left him-love of his country-strengthened him to attempt a final effort to combat the overpowering odds which he felt rather than knew to be against him.

Tossed and harried by a hundred terrifying thoughts, the self-enfeebled creature broke at length into that dreadful crying, the scanty, painful tears, the aching sobs which is the weeping of age or of an ex hausted constitution.

When the paroxysm was over he lay back in his bed, absolutely drained of strength and of all power to think longer. Whether he dozed or not he scarcely knew, but after an interval he seemed to awake as if from sleep, with his thoughts once more under

Unziar and Rallywood, with two troopers watched in the guardroom, through which lay the only approach to his sleeping chamber. Unziar, could Unziar be trusted? He had heard something of Unglac and that handsome vixen of Selpdorf's. Then Collendorp-ah, there was no doubt there! Dark and resentful, his poverty and his pride were the bywords of the barracks; he, what ever the temptation, would never fall from

There remained Rallywood. He, too, was to be depended upon, the duke decided quickly, though for no special reason but that he had taken some vague fancy to the Englishman's bronzed face and swinging stride. Yet Simon was powerful and unscrupulous; how could this handful of men oppose him?

He sprang up in his bed as the door opened and a man stood on the threshold. "Sire, there is treason! Collendorp has been murdered."

"Is it you, Unziar?" The duke's voice came strangely from his pillows. "Send for the whole escort of the guard from their quarters.' "Impossible, sire! The corridors are held

by Count Sagan's men. Mile Selpdorf has brought the news." 'What! You told me not two hours ago

she was engaged to Von Elmur. She is the price of Selpdorf's treason." Unglar stepped pearer

"Mile. Selpdorf has already risked her life to warn us that we are in danger. I'd stake my soul she is loval."

"Good, indeed, Anthony! I'd sooner have your honor than your soul. But go, in the would be always kind and true. I think name of the Virgin, and since the corridors are closed to the men of my guard, send the girl for Major Counsellor. She can

Unziar saluted and hurried back to the waiting. In spite of his personal horror at somewhat callous diplomatic memory. the thought of her danger, he was well aware that only by Valerie's aid could they hope to reach Counsellor.

Valerie listened to the duke's order, then, wrapping the lace as before about her head. turned to Rallywood. He accompanied her through the guard room and some little way along the passage. It seemed as if he could not let her go forth on this perilous enterprise.

"For God's sake, take care of yourself!" he said. "If anything were to happen to

The prolonged excitement of events, the sense of responsibility and danger, the exaltation of such a moment must have reacted on Valerie. Whether prompted by some instinct of coquetry, or betrayed into a touch of real feeling, or perhaps moved by the knowledge that death stood close beside them both, she drew her hand from his arm and raising her face asked in her soft voice:

"Do you remember what you said to me once-on the night of the palace ball?" He saw the deep eyes upturned to his, though their meaning in that dim place he could not be sure of, but a rush of quick memories came over him.

She gave a little excited laugh. "Then expect me!" she said, and she was

When Valerie returned to Mme. Sagan, half an hour later, she was still white and breathless. Isolde, in a fever of impatient terror, caught her by the arm

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"Where is he? When is he coming? Valerie-Valerie made a supreme effort to control herself.

"He is on guard." "Yes, I know. I know! But he is com-

failed, you asked him for the clgarette case? stepped forward.

sent them. The duke lies practically in my power at this moment," Count Simon "Gustave is a coward. continued grimly. The way to his presence lies open and I think you will agree with me that his highness of Maasau will consent to most things his highness." rather than look the fear of death in the

can't afford scruples tonight!" After a short interval he went on,

'Once we have Gustave's word, we are win what matter the means we use? Is and a figure stood beside him. your conscience so ticklish, baron?"

absolution. In the political courts where points of the golden star of Maasau blazed our actions will be judged they make no upon his breast. provision for failure. Success is recognized "Cousin, I would speak with you, but ing?"

"It is impossible! He could not leave his highness. Isolde, you would not wish his highness. by the standard applied to ordinary crime. "What does anything matter unless it's Thus you will see that I risk as much in my draw your men," said Rallywood aloud. "His highness begs you, my lord, to with- a brave woman, although she joined so gaily in the merry talk passing from side to

"It is quite impossible, my lord," repeated Rallywood without moving. "You force me to extreme measures," cried Sagan. "Remove this man," he ordered, "as quietly as may be. We must not afarm

There was a clatter of arms as Sagan's "There must be no violence." Elmur be-"That shall be exactly as I choose," Sagan elbow, but his sword blade passed through they ventured from their rooms. Four huge would not dare to brazen it out. Sagan at the barsh features, which, but for their swore with an oath. "By the good God we his opponent's shoulder. The man sank fires roared in the four great chimneys argued that the British envoy could not be livid color, were little aftered by death.

"Shoot them down!" shouted Sagan, but He is too proud to own that he gave the words were still on his lips when the and leggings, stood at the upper window the result of the visit, or would there be it unwillingly. Besides, so long as we door behind John Rallywood slowly opened overlooking the courtyard, where the hunts- any? Selpdorf held the duke's confidence.

Its appearance checked the rising struggle,

found out?" cried Isolde, giving in her ad- place as you risk in yours." Perhaps this Sagan, scowling, ordered his men to the herence to a common creed. "Did you was as near an approach to a threat as had further end of the long room. Meantime no more than the self-control common to give him all my message? Did you make ever been uttered in the ears of the fierce Rallywood, with evident unwillingness, women of her social standing. It is a him understand? Then, when all else old count. With a violent movement he pulled away a portion of the barricade.

passed into the duke's room.

CHAPTER XIX.

In Diplomatic Relations. It was late on the following morning befollowers advanced. The foremost of them fore the castle was awake. It almost ran in upon Rallywood, the swords met, seemed as if the guests had waited for the after the rencentre of the previous night, ready frozen to his brow and a black wound Rallywood's sleeve was ripped from wrist to appearance of the reassuring daylight before Most likely disappear from the castle. He gaped open at his throat. Rallywood gazed

Sagan, in his weather-stained hunting suit men and gaunt dogs, the famous Sagan boarhounds were already collected, in anticipa-"Politics have their exigencies and are for the figure was that of the grand tion of the boar hunt arranged to take place. No half courses could any longer avail in inevitably rigorous, my lord," answered duke of Maasau. He was wrapped in his on that day. The sky had cleared, but the Maasau. Elmur slowly. "To be successful means headed robe of green velvet, and the five tsa raged and howled after its perennial

custom about the castle. Mme. de Sagan, entering later, cast a neryour clance at the grim red face and bullneck and then fell into a laughing conversation with the people round her, although her heart felt cold. She was far from being side; but her marvelous self-control was Through this the duke advanced with a quired, of which the finest instance is a mat-

With that he leaped the barricade and where our man has got to. His absence is doubtless due to some trifling cause." As Rallywood retired Sagan cast a comprehensive glance around the tables and

satisfaction. down into a sitting posture, coughing oddly; around the vast hall where the breakfast was his head dropped forward. In progress. very sure of his position yet. What had he proposed to the duke? And how had large flakes of snow came floating down. the duke answered him? What was to be

He must checkmate England and openly throw his influence into the German scale. Here his reflections were interrupted, for Counsellor's big burly figure was bending punishing spurs.

over Mme, de Sagan's chair, before he accepted the seat at her side with the assured hope to gain by making a meandal in the manner of a favored guest. Even the Russian attache blinked. Ah.

these islanders! What next? As an immediate result Count Sagan was forced to accept the situation thrust upon

sardonically. "No bad dreams, ch?" "I dream seldom-and I make it a point in the morning to forget bad dreams if I have had any," replied Counsellor, with a good-humored raising of his big eyebrows. "That is wise," said Sagan, "for dreams and schemes of the night rarely have solid foundations."

"So they say, my lord; but I do not trouble myself about these things. A man of my age is forced to consecrate his best energies to his digestion."

The duke had decided upon returning to Revende during the forenoon, but most of the guests were to remain for the projected boar hunt. The hunting party had already started when Blivinski and Counsellor drove out of the castle courtyard on their way to the nearest railway station, which lay under the mountains some miles away.

The tsa had blown the snow into heavy drifts, leaving the roads and other exposed places bare and almost clean-swept. Near the station they passed a squadron of the guard, sent by Wallenloup to escort the duke back to the capital.

The pair in the carriage talked little, but when the jingling of accoutrements had died away Bhvinski said, in an emotionless "You met with Count Sagan last night,

then-in your dreams?" "Yes, or Duke Gustave would have been over the border by this morning."

"And history goes to prove that reigning sovereigns are fragile ware—they cannot be borrowed without danger." "You allude to Bulgaria?" Blivinski asked promptly, with an air of gental inter-

"Why, for the sake of argument, Alexder can stand as a case in point." "If-I say if-we borrowed him, we also

returned him." Counsellor's reply was characteristic and justified his companion's opinion of his race. "Damaged-so they say."

Blivinski considered the dreary landscape. "We must not believe all we hear. In diplomatic relations, my friend, ethics cease to exist. Diplomacy is, after all, a simple game-even elementary-a magnificent beggar-my-neighbor, which we continue to play into eternity."

"But there are rules even in beggar-my neighbor." said Counsellor. Blivinski kicked the rug softly from his

feet as the carriage drew up. "One rule, only one," he remarked; "Britain loves to feign the Pharisee. We smile -we others-because we understand that her rule and ours is, after all, the sameself-interest."

"If that be the case, we come back to the law of the beast," said Counsellor. The Russian put his gloved hand upon the walls of the Conciergerie during the Reign opened door and looked back over his stood across the low mound of the finished shoulder at Counsellor.

grave. "Always, my dear friend, by very many turnings-but always."

### CHAPTER XX.

Under the Pines. It was a day that would be dark an hour before its time. Rallywood rode out under trooper clattered down the rocky roadway in the rear of the duke's carriage, for upon the arrival of the squadron from Revonde Therefore, when allywood, booted and he had received orders to remain behind, the spurred, passed up the hall, his entrance search for Collendorp having so far proved

Rallywood rode slowly down the shoulder saluting, spoke for perhaps a minute in a of the mountain spur. Under the gray light of the afternoon the limitless swamps stretching to the sky line looked cold and his lowering face growing darker as he naked under their drifted snow. From the listened. Then, advancing to the head of sky big with storm overhead to the scanty the table prepared for the entertainment of grass that showed by the wayside blackened the duke, he called the attention of all by the rigors of the winter the whole aspec Before he plunged into the lower ravine Rallywood turned to look back at the angry towers of Sagan. He was thinking of Collendorp. Under their shadow that lonely and reckless life had come to its close. Why or by whose hand might never be made clear but Rallywood's mind had worked down to tention for a moment," the count's words the conviction that the count might be able

Well, it was good to know that Collendorp

the defeat of Sagan's plot. Then he rode away into the heart of the winter woods, where the branches groaned and thrashed under the driving wind Valerie raised her eyes to Railywood, who Through gloomy and pine-choked gorges he wound his way to the riverside, for he had decided that if Collendorp had met his death in the river his body would in time be

beached near Kofn Ford. Between Rallywood and the ford the Koft widened out into a big bay-like reach, upon ered thickly, their bare branches overhanging the water. On the nearer side ragged headed pines stood in sparse groups and amongst their lofty, upright stems Rallywood presently became aware that a strange

rested. On that bleak site at the foot of an outstanding pine two or three men with the frost-bound earth. Close beside them what looked like a long military cloak flung

The meaning of the incident was manifest he did the bluff thing bluffly and said the The clouding sky, the river, the broken pine trees were looking on at a lonely funeral, darkened by a suggestion of fur

Rallywood put spurs to his horse and galloped down toward the burial party. Another rider coming at full speed across the open sheered off to intercept him. It late to see what the Russian had seen. was easy to recognize Sagan by his bulk and the imperious gesture of the hand with which he signaled to the younger man to fixed upon her plate. It was some time be- stop. But Rallywood rode the harder. There was a shout from Sagan and the men ran toward the black object on the snow, and by

> At the same moment Sagan on the other side of the grave pulled up his big horse waiting on the count's wishes. He looked over their heads at Rallywood.

> "Collendorp has been found," he said with his most ourly bearing.

> Rallywood glanced down into the shall low grave; a lump of frosty earth slipped from the rugged heap above and settled into crevice of the cloak that covered Collen-

"By your orders, my lord?" "By my orders. Can you suggest a bet ter use to make of a dead man?

"No, my lord, but a better manner of

burial. "Dismount and see for yourself." Rallywood awing off the saddle, and givnoted Counsellor's absence with a sinister ing his horse to one of the foresters stooped and threw back the covering from the dead All the morning he had been speculating man's face and breast. His dead fierce upon the course Counsellor would pursue eyes stared upward, his wet hair was al-

> "Are you estirfied now?" Rallywood stood up and faced the count. "How did he die?"

"You can see that. Suicide as plain as & knife can write it. "I do not think so," said Rallywood

slowly. The count's horse plunged under the "Captain Rallywood, may I ask what you

(guard?" he neked. "Justice, perhaps, Collendorp had no reason to take his life, my lord." "You will not find many to agree with

you. The man was always ill-conditioned. He had debts and the pride of the devil. "Have you slept well, major?" he inquired His affairs came to an impossible pass, I conclude. In any case a man has a right to his own secrets." "Yes, his affairs came to an impossible

pass, perhaps. For the rest, this seems to me less like Collendorp's secret than the secret of some other man." Rallywood met the red eyes full of smoldering wrath. Pardon me, my lord, but in the name of the guard, I protest against the burial of Captain Collendorp in this place." "I have given my orders," answered

Sagan. The guard must consider their reputation. We have had too many scandals already and no one will thank you for dragging a fresh one into Revende for public discussion."

Sagan was amazed at his own moderation in arguing the question at all. He looked to see it have its due effect upon the

Englishman. But Rallywood stood unmoved and stubborn beside the grave. "We have murder here!" The words fell like an accusation. Rallywood's eyes were alight It took little penetration to how Collendorp had met his death. Round

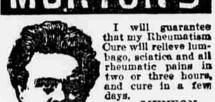
the grave Sagan's horse with its heavy smoking quarters trampled and fretted under the remorseless curb. The count could bear no more opposition. His fury overcame him. Roaring an oath he slashed at Rallywood with his riding whip.

"By St. Anthony, sir, you forget there is room in that grave for two," he shouted. You try me too far-your infernal officiousness-go! It is useless to oppose my wishes here." Which was obvious. The foresters, lithe and strong as panthers, waited only the orders of their master. They needed but a word and would as lief have buried two dead men as one in the grave under the torn pines. You may find the same type in the mountains of Austria, where a poaching affray means a vendetta and the game laws are framed on corresponding principles. "I see I can do nothing now," said Rally-

wood, remounting in his leisurely way. "The guard must deal with the affair." But Sagan had another word to say to

"And I, also, Captain Rallywood, shall know how to deal with you. Do not forget that! Your conduct cannot be overlooked. You will find that in Maasau we are still able to get rid of those who eater for a cheap notoriety. We shall know how to deal with you! I am the colonel of this guard. Are you aware that it is in my power to break you? Aye, like that!" He smashed his riding whip across his knees as he spoke, and, flinging away the pieces, he added; "And, by the powers above us, I will!"

Rallywood saluted and rode away. At once the foresters fell to work feverishly to fill in the earth over Collendorp's body. Once more through the falling snow Rallywood looked back. Sagan's great horse



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That would remind him-" Mme. de Sagan spoke in growing agitation.

Valerie looked into her wild eyes. "I forgot that," she admitted.

'You have killed him! Valerie, you have corridor. been jealous of me, and by your jealousy

among the cushions. Her slender hands were clenched, her turquoise eyes stared wide and blind from

her white face. She seemed to hold her breath, as if waiting for the inevitable blow to fall. Valerie, greatly moved, knelt down beside her. 'What does it matter if we die tonight or a month hence?" Isolde spoke in a low voice; her heart had unconsciously been gathering up bitterness against Valerie, and

she had no longer the strength to conceal it under this unbearable strain. "Valerie, you have stooped to meanness-you who have so scorned meanness in others. You knew long ago what-Rallywood's love was to me. Amongst all who pretend to love me there is not one like him, not one! He these are English qualities, for in another way there is Major Counsellor-" the weary

voice broke off here as if too tired for more. It was well Counsellor never heard that little expression of opinion concerning himanteroom where Valerie and Rallywood were | self; it might have proved the thorn in a "You have betrayed me! You!" she repeated, with a bitter laugh; then, springing up, she ran toward the spot where her sables lay heaped upon the floor, just as Valerie

had dropped them from her shoulders. "It may be too late, but I can go myself. I will save him if I can!"

Valerie wrapped the cloak around her. "Isolde, I will go with you." Isolde turned with a startling "You!" look of dislike and suspicion.

you and I choose to go alone!" Valerie drew back and Mme, de Sagan passed by her and flung wide the door. As she did so a confused noise could be heard and the two women stood listening while a distant hubbub of voices rose louder, then a pistol shot followed by others echoed down

the passages. "He is dead! By your fault!" Isolde turned upon Valerie with a wild

gesture, as if she would have struck her. Valerie drew back. "If you really loved him, Isolde, you rould rather he was-there-with his honor -than-here-without it," she said.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Sword of Unziar. The castle of Sagan may be roughly di-

vided into three irregular parts. The massive old keep dominates all, standing high and back against the skyline; then the varied cluster of buildings immediately around its foot contain the principal reception and living rooms and lowest of all the court yards, kitchen, stables and offices. To the right of the keep a wing, curved like the fluke of an anchor, slopes down to a lower This portion is fairly modern and arranged for the housing of guests. The countess' own apartments were situated at the junction of this wing with the main building, while the quarters assigned by ancient custom to the use of the reigning duke during his visits to Sagan occupies the whole upper floor of an old and bulky annex that juts out from the base of the keep. The passage leading to this annex branched from the head of the grand stair-Upon the landing rows of heavily armed men were gathering noiselessly.

count turned to his companion "Have you proposals ready to lay before his highness?' he demanded.

As Elmur and Sagan stood together wait-

his pocket. "That is well, for you are about to pre-

"There is no hindrance in our path that stately deliberation and walked slowly up | ter of history and was witnessed within the darkness of the body. A turn brought them in sight of Un- stop our conversation now!"

you have killed him! Had you spoken as ziar's tall figure, standing sword in hand. The duke made no attempt to release him-I told you he would be here now-and safe! on the lowest step of the flight that led self from the rough hug that held him pris-As it is he is lost!" she flung herself down up to the embrasure covering the door leading to the royal apartments. while he fell back to whisper a few words to tenance not four inches from his own. the man immediately behind; then he took

> precedence once more. "I request an audience of his highness. Lieutenant Unziar." he said. "Centainly, my lord, if you will give me the password of the night," replied Unziar courteously.

Sagan's answer was the countersign he had given to his own following in the eastle. Unziar shook his head. "You cannot pass, my lord."

"What-not see my guest and cousin in "His highness gave orders that none should be allowed to enter without giving the countersign chosen by himself."

Sagan considered a moment or two

"True, I had forgotten. Come here, Unziar; your trooper there has long ears; 1 must speak with you. Stand back, men! he said roughly. "Baron von Elmur, pray remain, and you, Hern," addressing the man behind. Unziar still stood upon the step. "Come here! I tell you, man, I must see the duke tonight-at once," continued Sagan, you afraid of?" Unziar stepped down as to himself and toward the narrow entry.

the count pulled him confidentially nearer But while the count whispered a hand suddenly darted over his shoulder and seized Unglar by the throat, at the same moment when a well directed kick from Sagan, delivered cunningly behind the knees, brought the young man to the ground. He lunged at Sagan as he fell with his sword, then it was knocked from his hand as his assailants swarmed over him, but not before he had fired his revolver into Hern's body. The man fell across him, but Unziar, again swinging clear, rose on his elbow and sent second shot into the face nearest him. Meantime the trooper at the door was making a gallant fight, but the odds were great. The struggle was soon over, the trooper's dead body flung aside, and Unglar, frantic and helpless, was tied hand and foot and left upon the bloody flooring to recriminations before the common enemy! of the outer pasage while the count's peo-

ple forced the door. This was a matter of some difficulty, but it was presently accomplished. The besieging party pushed through into the guard room, which seemed brilliantly lit in com-

parison with the gloom outside. Most of the furnitue and the screen had been utilized by Rallywood to make a barricade in front of the duke's ante-room single trooper with his musket leveled knelt

behind it.

Sagan, who held a handkerchief to his cheek, spoke loudly. "Do you see who I am? Clear the way!" At this Rallywood stepped into view from behind the screen.

"The man acts under orders from his highness, my lord," he said. Sagan stared at Rallywood with haughty SCOTE. "It is of the utmost importance that I should see his highness at once. Inform his

highness that I urgently beg to be granted an interview." "With pleasure, my lord," returned Rallywood formally, "if you will be good enough to give me the password, without which it is quite impossible for any one to have an ing at the mouth of the duke's corridor the audience tonight. Our orders were very dis-

sword upon the top of the barricade. Unziar "His highness could not foresee that I"the count dweit upon the pronoun imperi- scabbard. "In form," returned Elmur, touching ously-"should desire one. Stand back, Captain Raflywood! I must pass and am will-'ing to take the responsibility."

cannot be cut through with a sword, and, by the count.

Walls of the Conciergerie during the Reign of Terror, where men and women unflinching the sudden hoarse shout of triumph of Terror, where men and women unflinching the count. Then, looking around, he gave the word to Sagan flung his great arms about the duke's ingly carried on a hollow semblance of the "By St. Anthony, Gustave, no man shall laughing into the tumbrils.

oner. He merely raised his hood with one hand, so that Sagan, his coarse mouth still Count Simon pushed Elmur ahead of him wide in laughter, could stare into the coun-Consternation and fury swept over the count's features. From under the hood a red, challenging face, a big white moustache

and shaggy-browed, humorous eyes met his gaze. The sight held him gaping. But only for a second. Then he whipped out his pistol. "An English plot, by heaven!" But Rallywood was quicker still. A sharp

knock on the count's wrist sent the bullet into the ceiling. "Have a care, my lord," Counsellor said authoritatively. "You cannot do as you will even in this lonely and remote room in your lonely castle of Sagan, since England and"with a low bow toward Elmur-"Germany

are looking on." Sagan still threatened Counsellor

the revolver. "Can you see any reason why I should not kill you as a traitor to my country at this moment, Major Counsellor?" he shouted. "Only one, my lord. Russia also, in the erson of M. Blivinski, knows where I am and is awaiting my return to arrange for approaching Unzlar. "What the devil are our journey to Revonde-which we propose to make in each other's company," replied Counsellor, pointedly.

> "Your nation has well been called perfidious, Major Counsellor. A stab in the back-"Why, no, my lord, said Counsellor; "our greatest vice is admittedly that we are always well in front!"

"Come, baron, have you nothing to say to

this?" Sagan asked, ready to spring at his

friends in his torment of baffled rage.

curses.

tend him.'

huskily.

"Nothing, my lord. You will remembe I am here tonight entirely at your request." Sagan's laugh was not altogether a pleasant one. "Put it how you like, monsieur, I should not have been here, either, but for you!" Elmur stood with folded arms. To stoop

there was the future and in that future the fool who figured as his ally should become his slave! Germany had, after all, gained something in gaining the knowledge of British designs afoot. "Then his highness refuses to see me, al-

The cause was lost for the moment, but

though he can give audience to-you?" the count at length broke the silence. "On the contrary, my lord, he looks forward to the pleasure of meeting you tomorrow. That is the message with which am charged. Captain Rallywood, highness wishes Lieutenant Unziar to at-

Count Simon made a sign to his men and "My sword, Count Sagan," he

"Your sword! Is it lost?" returned the

count, with an angry sneer. "In my day it was not the custom of the guard to lose their swords.' "When I saw it last it was sticking in your cheek, my lord," said the young man and then I will wipe out the remembrance with studied insolence, pointing to a bleeding cut on the count's face.

grasped it and thrust it back into the "It was lost by treachery!" he flung out. "And I leave it to these gentlemen to say where the shame lies."

old joyous comedy of life till they mounted Although nothing was known about the

events of the previous night except by those who took part in them, a sense of excitement pervaded the party. The strained relations existing between the duke and his possible successor gave rise to an the gate at the castle of Sagan as the last amount of vague expectation and conjecture. Anything might happen with such dangerous elements present in the atmosphere. attracted every eye. He walked straight up unsuccessful. to the count at his distant window, and,

low voice. At the first sentence Sagan swung round,

present by striking it loudly with the of the frontier was ominous and forbidding riding-whip he carried. An instant hush settled upon the room. Sagan glared around into the waiting eyes and in the pause the tsa broke in a crash

upon the castle front with the pebble-shifting sound of a breaker. "I have to beg the favor of your atrang out. "Captain Rallywood reports that to tell the story. an officer of his highness' guard is missing -Captain Collendorp. Inquiries have been had not died in vain; indirectly, but nonmade, but he cannot be found. It seems the less surely, his death had brought about that he was last seen leaving the billiard room. If any one in the hall can give us

further information will they be good Sagan burst into his habitual storm of nough to do so?" stood behind the count. As he met them the young man's stern face softened sud-

denly. M. Blivinski, who happened to be sitting beside her, caught the exchange of looks, and for a moment was puzzled. Selpdorf's daughter? Well, well, the English are a the further shore of which the trees gath wonderful people, he said to himself. Neither subtle nor gifted, but lucky. Lucky enough to give the devil odds and beat him! Here was Selpdorf laying his plans deeply and with consummate skill, while this pretty, scene was in progress. clever daughter of his was ready to give him away because a heavy dragoon of the the low-lying ground where the snow still the low-lying ground where the snow still fast table. Pah! The ways of providence are inscrutable it remains for mortal men picks and shovels were hurriedly digging in to do what they may to turn them into

more convenient channels. Then there was Counsellor, political importance could not be denied. Yet obvious thing obviously, and blundered on from one great city to another, but blundered triumphantly! Still there were compensations. The good God had given the Russian craft and a silent tongue, and a facility for telling a lie seasonably.

Elmur was by a fraction of a second too Valerie was very white, but she was talking indifferently to M. Blivinski, with her eyes a moment later Unziar stalked into the fore she seemed to grow conclous of Elmur's room, maddened by the outrage put upon gaze; a slight fleck of color showed and paled in her cheeks, and then at length her long the time Rallywood reached them the dead lashes fluttered up and the German per- body was already laid in its grave. ceived in the darkness of her eyes a trace of unshed tears.

are going back to Revonde in a day or two, of everything that has happened at Sagan from my mind forever!" Elmur was about to reply when Sagan One of the men, coming forward, laid the spoke again.

"Mademoiselle, you are tired," he

"No one appears to have heard or seen anything of Captain Collendorp. We will have the dogs out, Captain Railywood. Pray tell his highness that in the course of an hour or two we hope to be able to tell him

with solicitude. "Yes," she answered smiling. "But we

whose at full length lay upon the ground.

tiveness and haste.

said on its haunches. The foresters stood rigid,

"My men are burying him."