

me early tomorrow. If I get stuck, I shall declare myself unable to permit the changes of cravats. But I will not get stuck. I will have the strength to stamp it into my brain and play my roles. I am nothing but a statist anyway.

Every hour I have to ride to the railroad station to help receive new guests. The faithful subjects cheer and shout. I notice that their joy is not so exuberant when I appear as it used to be. Why not? Even now! What have I done to them? Only a little time ago they showed me their trust, their affection, their love. And suddenly they are still. What have I done to them? For their sake I became Cain in my thoughts. For the sake of that mob! And now—I have sharp ears—it is still around me, quite still. Can it be that they have heard the crass lie about me, that they know. . . .

I would make them cheer and shout if I . . . Oh, I would!

To write these things calms my nerves more than the bromide with which the family spirit is feeding me these days. He is absolutely stuffing me with it.

Last night the happy bride arrived. Tomorrow there will be the wedding, coronation, homage, gala dinner, gala theater, illumination, parades, and then at last they will leave King and Queen alone. The unhappy ones!

I was with those who helped the bridegroom to meet his bride. The King wore the general's uniform of the regiment that was given to him by the bride's government. The bride wore a light green toilette and a cloak of old rose velvet, embroidered with silver and the same embroideries on a hat of rose gauze.

The faithful subjects went mad with joy at the sight of the beautiful royal bride, but she was so embarrassed, so shy, so frightened that she could not even bow her head. The King bowed constantly, to all sides, without even a faint shimmer of pleasure on his pale, care-worn face.

With such a countenance he is to be married and crowned! A man with such a face should let himself be laid away in the grave; in his wedding day in the month of May, and a King!

A Royal Lord Marshal had covered himself with glory once more. These wonderful days will be immortal in the annals of the Court. Everything was correct. Every one received what belonged to him. Even that tremendous problem, the order of precedence at all the ceremonies, was solved triumphantly, an intellectual labor of Hercules splendidly performed.

I stared at the young Queen during the wedding ceremony and at the young King during the coronation, a most indiscreet proceeding on my part. But I was curious. When the Queen whispered the "Yes," which no one heard, she had to be supported; and when the Archbishop placed the crown on the King's head he seemed to see ghosts.

My mother had discarded her mourning, and in her white garments covered with gold embroideries and jewels, she looked like a Byzantine Saint's picture—even to the immobility. It surely was a dream that I hid my wretchedness on that breast, that those arms embraced the miserable son, that those eyes wept over him.

Countess Thyra is wonderfully beautiful. Strangers ask who she is. But that is not of interest to me. I am interested in her for another reason, and I notice it more and more; whenever I am near her, something of her proud, calm strength seems to enter into me.

That is very strange. I do not speak with her. Since that last conversation I am unable to indulge in trivial Court gossip with her. We both have greater matters to think of.

Chapter V.

In My Sea-Alp.

I could bear it no longer in the capital. Among my own people I felt as if I were in a vast crowd that was pressing me to death. They had already crushed my heart when they told the big, horrible lie about me and called me my father's true son. Even those who once believed in me and loved me had grown still whenever I passed. So I went away. Nobody held me back. Nobody pursued me.

It is my fortune that I may hide here, bury myself life a mortally wounded animal. For they have wounded me mortally with their big, terrible lie.

Mother, even you! Solitude, dear, loving, motherly solitude, I renounce the King's son and name myself your child.

Just a year ago I arrived here first. Is it possible? Does not a whole lifetime lie between those spring days and these? Then I learned to feel that I was young, and now I feel that my youth has gone.

Then I swore among these rocks to be and remain a good man; now there seems to me to be nothing more pitiful, because weak, than human goodness. "Good" men should be clubbed to death as once they killed the weakling infants in Sparta.

Although I have become evil and malignant I still was touched yesterday when I arrived. The Lord Marshal, of course,

had announced my arrival with the careful notice that His Royal Highness was traveling in strict incognito and that all receptions, of whatever kind, were forbidden.

But they received me for all that. There were no honorable officials, no triumphal arches, no servile addresses and no white robed maids of honor. Instead there were fishermen, wood choppers and mountain folk, all in their Sunday best. They thronged around my carriage, were glad, and cheered. How they cheered.

They cheered and were glad. At least they acted as if they were glad. And I, that saw through the deceit, allowed myself to be deceived, and was so touched that I would like to weep for joy because fishermen, wood cutters and peasants made believe to love me.

It is a weakness that I must fear out of my soul. Away with the beautiful flowers! I need the thorns that tear wounds, the thorns from which Life winds the wreath for the victor.

My boat was garlanded with fresh green birch leaves, so that it looked like the craft for a bride. When the same trees flamed in autumn colors I had them in dress with their scarlet the room in which a dead ruler lay, who had called me his dear son. With such a father's blessing on me I steered to the place of his death that was to be my home.

When we arrived, my Sea-Alp lay flooded in crimson sunset glows—meadow, rocks and peaks. And even from the distance I saw two shapes that leaped toward the shore with mighty strides and danced like madmen. They threw their hats in the air and sent forth yells that sounded more like howls than cheers. They were my two Alpine guides, Tony and Stigel, who thus expressed their joy—a joy in which I will believe.

In the middle of the night I arose and went to the shore. A long, long time I walked up and down, searching for a way out of the labyrinth of my thoughts, and finding none. At last I sank to my knees and prayed.

I prayed not for happiness, but for heavenly protection against the dark forces in my soul, the forces for which I can find no name.

It must have gone far with a man when he cannot pray any more: "Dear, dear Father in heaven, make me happy, for, see I am Thy child."

But there are many orphans on this earth who have not this Father or any other.

Is the Count truly my friend? If it is true that Princes can have no friends why should I expect to be an exception? May I accept as proof of his friendship the fact that he bears with my distraction? Is it a proof that he has followed me into these mountains that must be a prison for a brilliant man like him? Might he not have been sent with me as keeper with promises of rich reward if he guards me well? He will gain a fine career through me. Therefore he has followed me hither.

I watch and spy on him. Every word of his I weigh. I tremble at the thought of making a discovery, and still search and pry always. And if I discover him then I will believe in nothing henceforth, nothing that bears a human countenance.

Today I spoke to him: "I wish to converse with you about my father."

"Do you insist?" "Yes. My father was ailing even while he was Crown Prince, was he not?"

"So I have heard." "In his immediate surrounding everyone knew it then. And they knew that his malady would develop rapidly. Or have I been wrongly informed?"

"I believe not." "And my father became King despite it?" "True."

"The malady, then, was kept secret?" "For reasons of state. The King had wedded while he still was Crown Prince."

"A mortal sin." "Two Princes were born." "A mortal sin! Twice and thrice a mortal sin!"

"Without heirs the land would have fallen to another nation. That had to be prevented!"

"Prevented through a series of crimes perpetrated for reasons of State. As you see, I know what is the matter with us."

He did not reply. What could he have replied, since it was all hopelessly true? After a while he said:

"What could have been done?" "Let our dynasty die out with my ailing father. Give the country another ruling race—a strong, healthy race that could have made the nation great and happy again. If my father had possessed a friend—only one friend—he should have been forced to abdicate despite all reasons of State."

The Count looked at me. I shall never forget that look.

Today I asked him why he looked at me so. Haunted by that glance I had to ask. He answered:

"I had to wonder if your Royal Highness would have permitted himself to be forced had he been in his father's place?" "You mean if I had possessed a friend who would have done such a tremendous work of love for me as to advise me,"

"Assuming that your Royal Highness had possessed such a friend."

"I cannot imagine the case." "And I cannot imagine that your Royal Highness would have permitted such a 'tremendous work of love' to be done for him."

"You do not believe it?" "No."

I looked at him. Then he said: "I might take your 'no' for a proof of your friendship, for only a friend is able to give such an answer to such a question. I regret, however, not to be in position to try your friendship further. You will never be placed in the predicament of inducing me to abdicate, since my entirely sane brother would not permit them to force him to abdicate."

If I had the power I would abolish all courts of justice, abrogate all sentences, open all prisons and leave the guilty to the judgment of their own consciences alone. At least, there would be no legal murders then, the mere thought of which fills me with horror.

Loisel makes me think of it. I had not dared to mention his name, even to myself. But yesterday Tony told me that he had married his sweetheart. To hide my excitement I asked how he had managed to marry, being without work and in disgrace with the forester, owing to his desertion and insubordination.

"Why," said Tony, "don't you know? Miss Fritz brought the two together."

Miss Fritz, the good, strong, splendid Miss Fritz. What a world was recalled to me with the name, a splendid, shining, good world! In it even I was a better man; certainly a happier one.

That is all past now. What had I done to forget this world! What power had I not used to make myself forget! Instead of hurrying to the Alpine farm on the first day of my arrival I had bound myself as with fetters in order to stay away from the place that I could not revisit with a pure heart.

Never, never again! "Miss Fritz," continued Tony, "appointed Loisel her forest overseer and has sent the couple to the upper meadow where his mother is, the poor woman."

And then Tony realized of whom and to whom he spoke, and was so horrified by his thoughtfulness that I did him the favor to go away.

Instead of being sentenced by his evil conscience, a bridegroom! Instead of being cursed and driven by the furies for his crimes he rests in the arms of a beautiful woman! I would that I could hate the man—and I must admire him. I must admire the power with which he wipes the horror out of his life, merely wipes it out.

I said it before: This is a Royal man, this assassin and parricide. So must a man be whose head bears the crown; with such strength he must stride over everything that stands between life and him.

Had I but an atom of the strength of this man who is my brother, I would tear the grinning madness out of my brain as one does a fly from his forehead. Possessed of such power I would be ruler despite everything—a ruler who would make a nation great and strong.

The niece of Miss Fritz is ill. She has been ill more than half a year! Little Judica is ill! Tony told me that, too. "She won't get better." He said it quite calmly.

I have been there. I have seen Judica again, the little Judica, and . . . This "and" shall be completed later. It is a great word that will mould fate. For I have not the Titanic strength to murder with a cold smile.

The meadows were yellow, red and blue with flowers. Butterflies fluttered around us. Birds' songs accompanied our way. Once we crossed a plain that was like fairyland; great, blue gentians stood there in such profusion that their green leaves could not be seen. Blue eyes like gentians were those of the child that was so ill that she "won't get better."

She was ill because I kissed her on the mouth and because the water was too deep. So she had to die.

I had promised to see Judica one last, last time. Now I would see her. And when I turned away it would be a farewell as if she lay on her deathbed.

And the nearer we approached the more I hastened. I thought that she would have to know that I was on my way to her, quite near to her.

No doubt she would meet me! But if she was ill?

Even if she were dying she would arise and wander toward me, toward her beloved, toward life. What mattered then what might follow?

But she did not appear and I became almost angry.

I begged Gebhardt to remain behind with Tony while I went forward alone. I was as one who returns home after a long absence in the wide, wild world, where he had but an evil time of it. If the watchdog had not met me with joyous barks, but had treated me as a stranger, it would have hurt me deeply.

There lay the vine-covered arbor; yonder was the way into the garden where the

raspberries grew; beyond it I could see a bit of the meadow where stood the tree that was struck by the lightning.

Surely I must have dreamed that I had become a different person since then. Surely I needed only to awaken in order to pick raspberries again with another and to catch gaudily spotted trout with much trouble.

When I stepped into the house I perceived the reason for the loneliness and quiet about the farm; low prayer greeted me as if I were in church. It was noon and the household was preparing to sit down to table. At this moment the child would be standing under the picture of Christ. With the little hands folded, the little head bowed, she would be saying the prayer.

I stood still, listened and folded my hands. My mouth remained dumb, but as I thought of Judica my thoughts became prayer.

Since I did not wish to see her in the presence of the servants I went away again, softly, almost creeping, as if she must hear and recognize my step. I intended to return to my companions and tell them that we would wait until the meal was ended. But suddenly I was drawn mightily to the scene of past happiness, into the garden.

The place lay as in noonday enchantment. Even the birds' songs had been hushed. Only the humming of the insects could be heard, soft, mysterious, like a mystic music.

In the beds there blossomed white and yellow narcissus, tulips and hyacinths in all colors, mixing their odors with that of the dear old-fashioned elders. Never before had I seen such spring glories.

Over a blooming hawthorn hedge loomed a wild apple tree full of blossom to its very crown, the buds almost purple, with swarms of bees around it that made the old tree seem to sing and round.

With a strange feeling I stepped nearer. Suddenly my heart began to throb, my breath stopped and I stood behind her.

She sat turned away and seemed to be gazing into the glory and the sunshine. I wanted to call softly: "Judica, dear little Judica!" but fear choked my voice. She might die with fright. For her body had become quite unearthly in its slenderness and delicacy. With such a body she cannot live long. I had to think, and remained dumb, trembling to my very soul.

Motionless she sat under the tree. Her hands lay wearily in her lap.

She still wore mourning. The hands that rested on the black stuff were white as the hands of the dead. She wore no hat. A sunbeam shimmered on her head. It was like an aureole.

Suddenly she seemed to feel the presence of her beloved. I saw her start, press her hand to her heart and turn.

And I was by her side, on my knees before her, held her trembling form pressed tightly to me, smothering her low cries with kisses.

So we remained a long while, without words. We could not even whisper each other's names.

(To Be Continued.)

Around the Earth

P. M. Spencer, president of the Cleveland National bank, who, above all things, takes delight in travel, has under contemplation an attempt to go around the world in forty days. The present record for a complete journey around the world is fifty-four days and seven hours, but Mr. Spencer believes that the long journey can be accomplished in a little over a month.

The plans of Mr. Spencer have not been arranged as to detail, and before the date of departure is decided upon every effort will be made to get the route so laid out that only the unexpected will prevent delays. The proposed globe girdler is now in communication with persons in different parts of the world and the course of the journey is being gradually put into shape.

As has been the case with all persons who have tried to circle the world in record time, Mr. Spencer anticipates that the most difficult part of the whirl will be through parts of Russia. If he makes good connections in Russia he does not see anything in the way of an accomplishment of the trip in forty days.

The particular point where it will be necessary to have previous arrangements for quick connections will be at Vladivostok, Russia, at the eastern terminus of the Trans-Siberian railway. It is at this point that steamer connections are made for Yokohama, Japan. With good luck in the matter of connections it is roughly figured that the trip can be made from Cleveland to Moscow, Russia, in eight days; Moscow to Vladivostok, twelve days; Vladivostok to Nicho, two days; Nicho to Yokohama, a half day; Yokohama to San Francisco, twelve days; and San Francisco to Cleveland, four and one-half days. If this schedule can be adhered to the trip will be made in a little over thirty-nine days and all records badly broken.—Chicago Inter Ocean.

Woman's Work

"Poor woman! After her hard day's work she has to stay up half the night with her babies."

"What's the matter with her husband? Why doesn't he help her?"

"Oh, he puts in all his time agitating for an eight-hour day for the working man."—Philadelphia Press.