The Scarlet Runner

Vitagraph Company

From the Popular Novel of the same name by C. N. and A. M. Williamson

MR. EARLE WILLIAMS as CHRISTOPHER RACE
LILIAN TUCKER as ELOISE DAUVRAY

Next Week Another Story and New Picture

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"WHATEVER YOU ASK, I WILL DO," SAID CHRISTOPHER, RASHLY.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HIDDEN PRINCE.

Christopher Race stared at the invitation, and stared again. If it had come to him in his palmy days he might not have been thus blankly amazed; but at best who was Christopher Race that he should be bidden to a reception at the Foreign office to meet royalty?

Of course, Christopher said to himself, he would not go. Before the day of the reception he would be away in the country with Scarlet Runner, trailing a fat and vulgar Australian millionaire, with his fat and vulgar millionairess about rural England.

But there was another letter in this morning's mail and he suddenly changed his mind. It covered no more than a page, and was signed "Eloise Dauvray."

That name had wrung in his ears, mysterious and sweet as the music of bells floating over the sea from a city of mirage, since the masked ball, where he had been lucky enough to serve the fair southerner's purpose. Now his heart gave a leap as he read the summons which called him back into her life.

Her letter had no conventional beginning. "Since I have been a grown woman," she said, "I have known only two real men, and you are one of those two. I want you to meet the other. Something great may come of the meeting, and this time you would be with me in an adventure of which neither of us need be ashamed. As for me, I am in it deeply, heart and soul. If you will throw in your fortune with mine, come tomorrow night to the Foreign office reception, for which I will see that you have an invitation. Yours—gratefully for the past, hopefully for the future—

"ELOISE DAUVRAY."

No question now as to whether he would go or not go! He wanted to see Eloise Dauvray; he wanted to know why and how she needed him; he wanted to be in that adventure, whatever it might prove, because she would be in it; and though it was a drawback that he was not the only Real Man on her horizon, he wanted to find out what the other one was like.

Christopher stepped out of his car into a blaze of light and color, and indoors the luscious perfume of flowers, mingled with the thought that he was about to see Eloise Dauvray, went to his head like some rich Spanish wine.

"Mr. Race," murmured a voice that no man who had heard it once could forget; and, turning, he was face to face with Eloise Dauvray—an astonishingly changed Eloise Dauvray.

She had been beautiful before, but she was doubly beautiful now, with the radiant morning beauty of a girl of eighteen. The eyes, once clouded with mystery or tragedy, had been turned into stars by some new happiness; and for a giddy second Christopher asked himself if it could be his presence that—

But the thought broke before it finished; for he saw the Other Man, and, seeing him, knew the secret of the change in Eloise Dauvray. This man was no common man, and suddenly it was as if Christopher saw his tall figure framed in such another niche, glowing with strange jewels, unique and splendid. If there had been jealousy in Christopher's soul it must have been burnt up like chaff in the brave fire of the Other Man's eyes, as they welcomed him.

"Mr. Race," said Eloise Dauvray again, "I wanted you to come and meet Prince Mirko of Dalvania. I have told him about you."

"I am here with my grandmother," said Miss Dauvray. "You have not met her, but she is an old friend of the foreign secretary's wife. Prince Mirko and you and I must talk together."

They found a quiet corner, out of the way of the crowd. "Now I am going to tell you a secret," the girl went on. "You see how I trust you—how we both trust you? For it's a secret that, if known, might spoil a plan whose success means everything to the prince—everything, therefore, to me."

"Whatever you ask I will do," said Christopher rashly. He was in the mood to be rash; not only for Miss Dauvray's sake, but now for the sake of the prince as well. There was something of that extraordinary magnetism about the young man which the house of Stuart had and made use of in enlisting followers.

"You had better wait and hear first," Mirko warned him. But at this moment arrived an anxious looking gentleman, whose face cleared at sight of the group of three. Bowing courteously to Miss Douvray, at whom he glanced quickly with veiled curiosity, he announced in indifferent French that he had been searching everywhere for His Royal Highness in the hope of introducing him—by special request—to a very great personage.

Such a request was a command, and Eloise smiled permission to go.

"That is the Dalvanian ambassador," she murmured, as the tall, youthful figure and the short, middle-aged one moved away together.

"He looks clever," said Christopher.

"He is clever," replied Eloise, "and we believe—he is on our side. Not for me— I don't mean that. I hope and pray he knows nothing, and may guess nothing until too late to interfere. I mean something of more importance to Dalvania than a love affair. Perhaps, after all, it's just as well that I can tell you what I have to tell you alone. First, I thank you for coming, and—isn't he glorious?"

"Yes," said Christopher. "If I were a soldier I should like to fight for him."

"How strange you should say that!" half whispered the girl. "It is exactly what I want you to do. Will you be a 'soldier of fortune' and fight for us both? But no; it isn't fair to ask you that until you know the whole story."

So she told him the story, briefly as she could, keeping down her own excitement, which would grow with the tale. Christopher knew little or nothing of Dalvanian affairs, except that the people of that turbulent country had risen some years ago against their king and killed him; that the queen and her children had been saved only by flight; that a distant relative of the dead man—a person favored by Turkey—had been raised to the throne; and that the Dalvanians, who ought to have been elated at tehir success, had been more or less dissatisfied ever since.

Now, Prince Mirko's errand in the most important island of the world was to enlist sympathy for his cause among those who would lend him their money or their help in organizing a secret raid; and the adventure, so Eloise Dauvray eagerly explained to Christopher Race, was not so hopeless as it might seem.

The Dalvanian ambassador, who had just called the prince away, had been put in his place by Turkey, like all other Dalvanian diplomats of King Alexander's day; nevertheless, he had private reasons for being at heart Mirko's friend. Damiello Rudovics knew what was Mirko's mission in England; knew that he was trying to get together a hundred thousand pounds to buy arms and feed a small army; knew that he was inviting adventurous or rich young Englishmen to join him secretly at the Montenegrin frontier of Dalvania, for a certain purpose; yet Rudovics was giving no hint to Turkey, his real employer, of the business afoot. "And that is not because of any personal love for the prince," finished the woman who loved the prince above all, "but because he wants Mirko to marry his wife's daughter. If Mirko would take her, Turkey would let him gain his throne with no more than a mere theatrical struggle."

"I see," said Christopher. "The plot thickens."

"It grows very thick indeed," answered Eloise, "for Mirko won't think of the Lady Valda—will think of no one but me. Yet he must keep Rudovics' friendship for the present. That's why our engagement has to be secret; and our marriage must be secret, too. Only my grandmother knows—and you. At least, that's what I hope. I daren't dwell upon the things that might happen to Mirko if anyone who wished either of us evil should find out."

"Yes," said Christopher. "I understand, and I'd give anything—even Scarlet Runner—to help."

"We want you both—you and Scarlet Runner."

"What if it carried a prince—the rightful ruler of his country?" smiled Christopher.

"Some such though was in my mind," said Eloise. "It would create a profound sensation. People would think him a god in the car."

"There ought also to be a goddess in the car," remarked Christopher, thoughtfully.

"She need not be lacking—if she had an invitation," said Miss Dauvray.

"She has the invitation now."

"Thank you! And you have—an invitation to her wedding."

"When is it to be?" he asked, with outward calmness.

"That is the greatest secret of all. It is to be next week. I will let you know the day, and should like you to be there. So would Mirko. He knows what you did for me. Already you are to him more than other men, for my sake. And if you would help him—if you would take us into Dalvania——"

"Not only will I do that, but I think, if the prince still needs it, I can get him money."

"He needs it desperately. But you—are not rich?"

"My Uncle James is."

"I heard something of your story from—but you can guess. I hate even to speak his name, in these good and happy days. Your uncle has disinherited you."

"That's still on the knees of the gods. It's partly a question of conduct, partly the question of a girl. I'm not sure he hasn't a sneaking fondness for me. But there's one thing he worships; a title."

Eloise Dauvray's colour brightened.

"Prince Mirko would give him a dukedom and the Order of the Red Swan of Dalvania. Though it's a small country; the Swan is famous—as old as Constantine the First, and has been bestowed on few who were not kings or princes. You may have noticed that Mirko is wearing it tonight."

"I did notice and thought—of my uncle. He would give ten years of his life for the Swan, and a hundred thuosand pounds for a dukedom, even though Dalvanian—or I don't know him. You and Prince Mirko could induce him to do it, if you would let me take you both in Scarlet Runner to Hyde Hampton, his place in Middlesex, to pay an afternoon visit."

"We will go; I can promise for Mirko," said Eloise.

He had not seen his relative for months, nor had he communicated with him since he had taken to earning his own living with Scarlet Runner. Nevertheless, his long and elaborate wire the next day was promptly answered by old James Revelstone Race with a cordial invitation for any day that suited His Royal Highness.

Old James Race was enchanted with the prince, almost collapsing with joy at Royalty's gracious praise of his picturesque Jacobean house and wonderful Dutch gardens. Such an honour had never come his way before; but, snob as the old man was at heart, he genuinely admired Mirko, and was fired by the romance of the young prince's situation. The confidence that Mirko reposed in him he regarded as an overwhelming compliment, and hinted a suggestion of help even before the quickly following offer of the dukedom. That could not be bestowed until Prince Mirko should become King Mirko; but the Red Swan of Dalvania, on fire with the blaze of rubbies and small brilliants, was transferred from Mirko's breast to that of the dazzled old man.

On the way back to London, after this triumphant visit, Eloise told Christopher that the wedding would take place on the following Saturday. The banns of Theodore (one of Mirko's many names) Constantinus and Eloise Dauvray had been read three times in a quiet little church of South Kensington—a church where nobody would recognize either name; and all was now ready. Nor need there be further delay in starting for Dalvania, since old Mr. Race's thousands—added to those already subscribed—would put the prince in funds.

Unless Christopher heard to the contrary, he was to call at the house in Regent's Park at 12 o'clock on Saturday. His car was not to accompany him, but he volunteered her services and his to spin the bride and groom as far as Southsea.

It was after 5 o'clock when he some-what reluctantly returned to Chapel street; and nearly stumbled against the lodging house maid-of-all-work, carrying somebody's tea.

"Oh, sir, what a good thing you've got back!" she exclaimed. "The lady's been waiting for you a good half hour. Missus said I was to take her up this to amuse her, as she was in such a state at your not being at 'ome."

"A lady?" echoed Christopher.

Christopher put no more questions, but ran up the two flights of stairs to the second floor, two steps at a time.

As he opened the sitting room door Eloise Dauvray sprang up. "At last!" she cried. "I've been praying for you to come. You're my one hope!"

"What has happened?" Christopher asked abruptly.

"Mirko has disappeared," Eloise answered.

"Mr. Race, what do you think has become of him? Has Turkey got wind of the plot for the raid, and has he been murdered, like his father?"

"Don't think of such a thing," said Christopher. "They wouldn't go so far as that at worst. A dozen things may have happened—none of them tragic. He may have been motoring with Wenden or some other friends, and have got en panne miles from a telegraph office."

"I thought of that; but he had no plan of motoring today or he would have told me. And I feel that something is wrong—desperately wrong."

"Shall I go to his house and find out what I can from his servants?" asked Christopher.

"Oh, if you would!" she sighed. "It was one thing I wanted you to do."

"I'll start at once," he said. "I can be back in half on hour."

He was back in less; but he had very little that was satisfactory to tell. He had asked for Prince Mirko, alleging an engagement with him, only to hear from the stately hall porter that His Highness had walked out alone about 9 o'clock in the morning saying nothing of his intentions, and had not come in since. Even his valet had no idea where he had gone, nor when he intended to return.

On hearing this, Christopher, knowing that the valet was more or less in his royal master's confidence, asked to speak with him. The man was brought, and Christopher saw him alone, behind doors, in a small anteroom off the hall. All the valet could tell him, however, was that the prince had appeared somewhat distrubed when reading some leters which came by the first post. One of these he had placed under a paperweight, and had put it in an inner pocket of his coat immediately after dressing, which he did more quickly and earlier than usual. This letter the valet believed to be one which he had noticed because it was addressed in Prince Peter's hand, and post marked Paris. Another letter His Royal Higness had read carefully, two or three times over; and then, ordering the fire already laid in the grate to be lighted, had burned it, watching till the paper and envelope were both entirely consumed.

Christopher declared that if he were to help Eloise Dauvray, he could begin in no better way than by learning what manner of man was the Dalvanian Ambassador to the Court of St. James.

He had no friends in the diplomatic service living in England, for Max Lind was far away, but old Major Norburn, an ancient crony of James Race, had a nephew who was a clerk in the foreign office. Christopher went at once to the club where his uncle's friend spent his afternoons; and by a stroke of luck the budding diplomatist had called to keep an appointment with his relative. The two were on the eve of starting out, but had a few moments to spare, and young Norburn was boyish enough to be flattered by Christopher's questions, wheih implied inside knowledge on his part. He perhaps did not know all he affected to know; but he described Rudovics as inordinately vain, endlessly ambitious, subtle and proud of his subtlety, not bad at heart though sufficiently unscrupulous. "His part is a bit above his capacity," said the young man from the foreign office, "and he'd have had no chance of it except through his wife. His marriage was brought about to serve the convenience of the powers that be in Turkey; but the woman—who's half Irish—has been a beauty in her day, and all poor old Rudovics' honours have been given him for her sake. Those who are 'in the know' say he despises King Alexander, and if he weren't afraid of his Turkish master would be in the thick of all the plottings. Of course, if that romantic-looking chap, Mirko, would take a fancy to the stepdaughter, who is naturally a favoured protegee of Turkey, things might get uncomfortable for Alexander in Dalvania."

"What sort of girl is she?" asked Christopher.

"They say beautiful, and quite a woman, though only seventeen. The mother's Catholic, and follows European customs when in Europe; the girl, Valda, has been brought up in a Paris convent. Lately they've had her in London, no doubt, for Mirko's inspection; but nobody seems to know whether the affair marches or not."

Christopher would glady have learned more, but the source of information was pumped dry, and he apologized for having kept the two Norburns so long from their engagement.

"Rudovics is surely in this," Christopher said to himself; and suddenly an idea of what he would do in Rudovics' place sprang into the young man's mind. If Rudovics had done that—well, it would make things difficult. But, perhaps, after all, by this time Mirko had some home, with a simple explanation to the mystery. Before seeing Eloise again he decided to call for the second time at Lord Dendon's house to make inquiries.

"Has His Royal Highness Prince Mirko come back?" he asked of the hall porter.

"No, sir; but His Royal Highness Prince Peter has arrived from Paris," was the answer.

Christopher thought for a moment, and then scribbed a few lines on a card for Prince Peter, whom he had never seen. Presently he was invited to enter the library, where he had once been received by Mirko, and there stood the younger brother, a surprising likeness of the elder.

Such a face as Peter's could be trusted for loyalty, if not for prudence, and Eloise had said that the boy knew of the engagement. Now Christopher, claiming friendship with Mirko and Miss Dauvray, spoke with partial frankness of his suspicions.

"I believe," he said, "that somehow the Dalvanian ambassador has got wind of the prince's engagement, and has tricked him, by means of a letter which your brother received this morning, into calling at the embassy. There he'll keep him, if my idea is right, until after the appointed wedding day, perhaps indefinitely, to separate him from Miss Dauvray, and if possible to bring about a marriage with his stepdaughter.

"Great heavens, sir!" The day that by brother marries Valda will be the day of my death," exclaimed Peter. "I love her—she loves me. But Mirko doesn't know. He might take her without dreaming that he wronged me; and Valda is so young that she would not dare thwart her stepfather. I have been with Mirko often at the embassy and the first moment I saw Valda I loved her—as it was with my brother and Miss Dauvray. I knew I had nothing to fear from his rivalry, so I kept my secret, though I knew his; for there seemed no hope of marriage for me until my brother's rise in fortune should give me something to offer—and I feared he would disapprove, as we are both so young. Mirko sent me to Paris some days ago with a letter to a friend of his who is enlisting recruits and raising money. But yesterday came a telegram from Valda, forwarded to me from his house—(I don't know who could have helped her, unless her maid)—begging me to come back, as she foresaw trouble. I wrote my brother I must return, wound up his affairs as well as I could, and here I am, only to find that trouble has come indeed. What shall I do? Shall I demand Mirko at the embassy?"

"Certainly not," said Christopher. "But I'll tell you what you might do—elope with Mlle. Valda. That would be a valuable move. If her maid helps her to send off secret telegrams, she will help smuggle you into the house. Do you know her name?"

"Anastasia," replied Peter.

"Disguise yourself as a man of her own class, and ask for her at the servant's door. If you can get Mlle. Valda out of the embassy before the day fixed for Prince Mirko's wedding with Miss Dauvray your brother's happiness as well as your own will be assured. Take the young lady to Scotland with her maid for chaperon, and marry her quickly; afterwards you can do things again in proper form. If her stepfather or her mother knows nothing of your love, neither of you will be watched or suspected; you ought not to have great difficulties; and I'll lend you my motor car for the elopement."

"What! The Scarlet Runner, of which my brother wrote? But that will bring me luck."

"I hope so, for everyone concerned," said Christopher. "I can't take you myself, for I shall have business in London; but I'll get you a good chauffeur."

"Your business will be to release my brother?" Prince Peter guessed.

"That's easier said than done," Christopher answered gravely. "If he's in the embassy, it's his own embassy, you see; there's no other power to appeal to. Turkey would defend Rudovics' action, if he declared that it was the only way to save a royal prince from a marriage with an untitled, designing woman. Rudovics has nothing to fear in any case. And if we can learn that Prince Mirko is his prisoner, even if we can release him, still, goodbye to his happiness."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Peter, horrified.

"Something would certainly happen to Miss Dauvray. Their engagement known, those two would never be allowed to come together again. In some way—who knows how?—they would be separated forever. To rescue your brother from the embassy—taking it for granted he's there—means the breaking of his engagement."

"Then, the breaking of his heart. Have you no plan to save ham?"

"I have a plan," said Christopher, "but it's a queer one."

"Can I help?" asked Peter.

"By seeing Anastasia, finding ou the gossip of the servants' hall, if any, concerning your brother, and running off with Rudovics' stepdaughter as quickly as you can."

When Prince Peter of Dalvania and Christopher Race had sketched out something which faintly resembled a plan, and had made arrangements concerning Scarlet Runner, Christopher kept his promise by going to Regent's Park and telling Eloise all that was in his mind.

"You are right," she said, when she had heard him to the end. "That letter the valet told you Mirko burnt must have been from Rudovics. No doubt he asked to have it d stroyed, so that Mirko could not be traced. He would have spoken of important news from Dalvania, and hinted at mysterious reasons why Mirko should let no one know he had been bidden in such haste to the embassy. While they have him there I may be safe enough; but once he escapes, and they know it, I will tell you what they could do. They would have such horrible things published about me in the Dalvanian papers that, for Mirko's own sake, I could never consent to be his wife. The things need not all be true, but they would be believed; and even if Mirko would give his people a queen they could not respect, I would not let him do it. Fitzgerald alone might try something of the sort, but I don't believe that unassisted he'd have influence to get such stuff published; and if only I could appear first in Dalvania as Mirko's bride, the people would love me and be loyal."

"I've thought of all that," said Christopher. "It's exactly what Rudovics and Fitzgerald would do—if they did nothing worse. But once married to you, and the little Valda in Scotland with Peter, Rudovics' hands would be tied. It would do him more harm than good to hurt you then."

"Ah, yes; if once we were married!" sighed Eloise.

"Please be ready at the time already fixed for the wedding," said Christopher, quietly. "And have everybody else concerned in the ceremony ready, too."

"What are you planning?" cried Eloise, the rose of hope blushing in her cheek.

"I can't tell you yet," he answered. "A good deal depends on Prince Peter and Scarlet Runner, and a good deal on my uncle and a house-agent. I'll write you what I'm doing and what you must do the moment I have anything definite to say."

Eloise was bewildered, but she was a woman of tact, and knew when it was wise to be silent.

Half an hour later Christopher, dinnerless, but too excited for hunger, was racing towards Hyde Hampton with Scarlet Runner. Ten minutes at his uncle's was enough, for old James Race was heart and soul for Prince Mirko and Eloise now. Christopher flew back Londonward with a signed check in his pocket; and, calling at Lord Wenden's in the car, found Prince Peter jubilant, just back from the Dalvanian embassy. He had gone there in his valet's clothes and insisted on seeing Anastasia, whose cousin he pretended to be. The maid had permission from Mme. Rudovics to go out on Friday evening; Valda would pretend some slight indisposition, keep her room all day, and leave the house, well veiled, in Anastasia's hat and cloak. Afterwards the woman would do her best to follow unobserved, and a rendezvous would be made somewhere in the neighborhood after dark, with Scarlet Runner in waiting. Then it was not likely that Valda's absence would be discovered till morning, and by that time she and her lover would be far on their way to Scotland.

As for Mirko's presence in the house Anastasia had been able to say nothing definitely, but she did know that since morning one of the rooms had been closed, on the plea that part of the ceiling had fallen, and no one was to go in until workmen should have come to repair the damage. On hearing this Peter had been thoughtful enough to mention the position of the locked room, and had learned it was at the back of the house on the second floor, and on the right of the corridor which ran down the middle of the three upper stories.

"Good!" exclaimed Christopher. "I thought they'd put him there, for knocking on the wall would do no good if he tried it. There's an empty house on the right, you know. The one on the left's occupied. I can imagine old Rudovics inviting the prince into the room, as if for a secret meeting with some emissary from Dalvania, then quietly turning the key. Rather smart idea, that about the fallen ceiling. And as the room's at the back, and the old-fashioned wooden shutters (which all the houses in Queen Anne's Gardens have) are probably nailed fast, your poor brother's as much a prisoner as if he were at Portland."

Next morning at 10 o'clock Christopher Race was at the door of Messrs. Leonard & Steele, estate and house agents, at the moment when it opened for business. He informed the manager that he had been empowered by Mr. James Race of Hyde Hampton to take No. 36 Queen Anne's Gardens for three years (the shortest term permissible), if immediate possession could be given.

The agent thought there would be little difficulty about this, and became certain of it when there was no attempt at cutting down the high rent asked for the old house, unlet for several years. A telephone message was sent to the owner, papers were signed, a check in advance for a quarter's rent was paid; and presently Christopher found himself in possession of the keys of 36 Queen Anne's Gardens, the house adjoining the Dalvanian embassy on the right-hand side.

About 10 o'clock that night, having given all necessary instructions concerning Scarlet Runner to the chauffeur he trusted, Christopher unlocked the front door of his uncle's newly-acquired town house and walked in. He had with him, in a golfer's bag, a pick-ax, one or two other handy tools and an electric lantern. To begin work, he choose the back room on the second floor, which, according to his calculations, was separated from Prince Mirko's prison only by the house wall. With a small hammer he tapped lightly once, twice, without receiving an answer. Then he was rejoiced by a responsive rapping on the other side. At first the knocks seemed to him desultory and irregular, but in a moment he realized that words were beig formed by taps and spaces, long and short, according to the Morse code of telegraphy.

Long ago Christopher had learned it at Eton, when he and another boy had sought means of secret communication. Evidently the occupant of the room beyond the wall had learned it, too.

In ten minutes the two men, thus divided by bricks and mortar, were able to come to an understanding. Christopher was assured that he was talking with the prince. Mirko was informed that he was talking with Christopher Race. Also Christopher was able roughly to communicate his plan to the prisoner, and learned to his delight that there was a good prospect of success. Mirko indicated the position of a large wardrobe which stood in his room against the dividing wall, and suggested that Christopher's boring operations should be conducted behind it. When the bricks should be loosened Mirko would pull out the wardrobe and be ready to push it back into place in case of danger.

All night long Christopher worked, refreshed with bread and wine from his bag; and by early dawn he had dug a hole through which he could speak to the prince. Until this moment he had outlined his plan out vaguely; and what Mirko heard now amazed him.

While London slept, and the old houses in Queen Anne's Gardens kept their wooden eyelids closed, four persons, who had stepped out of a closed carriage round the corner, walked quietly to the door of No. 36. There were three men and one woman, and, having pushed the long-unused electric bell, they were almost immediately admitted into the dark, unfurnished house.

"Is all well—so far?" asked Eloise Dauvray, whispering, in the dim corridor.

"All is well—so far," answered Christopher Race.

It was not until after 10 o'clock in the morning that the absence of little Lady Valda and her maid was discovered by Mme. Rudovics, for she was a late riser by habit, and the girl had posed as an invalid the day before. Under Valda's pillow a note had been slipped. "I have gone away to marry Prince Peter of Dalvania. We love each other." And that news had sent the ambassador in haste to the door of the closed room, where no work had yet been begun upon the "fallen ceiling."

He unlocked the door, and knocked by way of courtesy, two men—tall Dalvanians both, in his own private service—standing on guard as usual lest the prisoner should attempt an escape. Each time since Mirko's capture Rudovics had himself brought the prince's meals in this fashion, twice within twelve hours, bearing also a hundred apologies for his "necessary but regrettable harshness." Not once before had the indignant Mirko answered the knock, but now his voice responded with a cheerful "Come in."

"Congratulate me," he continued, as Rudovics fell back upon the threshold, aghast at what he saw, "And let me introduce you to my dear wife, the Princess Eloise. We thought a wedding at the embassy an excellent plan, and have been married for an hour."

A thousand thoughts raced each other through the ambassador's head as he stood staring first at the pale, smiling girl, the two priests, the registrar and the hole in the wall by which they and Christopher had entered. He thought of his daughter, and was forced to hope—in the circumstances—that she was the younger brother's wife by this time. He thought of his own chances of advancement in Dalvania under a new king. He thought of Turkey's probable attitude towards a struggle in which Valda's husband would be engaged as well as his brother; and he thought of nine hundred and ninety-seven other things, all in the space of one long moment.

Then he bowed and said slowly: "Graciously allow your host to be the first who offers your royal highness and his bride all possible good wishes."

Allies' Aeroplanes Kill Many Belgian Civilians

(Correspondence of The Associated Press.)

Berlin, Sept. 23.—French and Belgian civilians killed behind the western front in August by artillery or aeroplanes of the allies total seventy-five killed, including thirty-one men, twenty-seven women and seventeen children. There were also 181 wounded. For the entire year, ended August 31, the number of killed reached 1,963.

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