

vanity, and her radiant, beautiful eyes pleased him more and more.

At length the guests departed in the gayest of moods, and Valleral mounted his horse to return to his garrison.

When he rode in at his gate, his man stood on the threshold, awaiting him, with pale cheeks and disturbed air; but Valleral was in too merry a mood to notice this, thrust him the reins and entered the house.

There on the table in the sitting room, gleaming in the lamp light, lay a couple of gold pieces. Cyprian drew near and glanced at them. A hundred marks! What did that mean?

He went to the table.

"Hig, August, what is that money on the table?" Where did it come from?

August drew himself up and reluted, his face anxious, his voice hoarse.

"That is for our ram, count."

"For the ram?" Valleral's voice thundered through the low room. "Devil take you, what do you mean?"

"Does not the count know about it?" stammered the hussar, anxiously.

"I have no suspicion. Where is Hans? What has happened to my ram?"

Lankwitz threw open the door of the adjoining stable in wild excitement and raised a lantern.

The stall was empty. No sign of Hans. The blood left the young officer's cheeks.

"What has happened to the ram August? Has anyone killed him?" he asked from between his teeth.

The man stutted again.

"The count had scarcely left the yard this noon when the captain came with another man, and without calling me, went to the stable and drew nearer respectfully. But the captain did not look at me, but said to the other man: 'Here is the ram. Trained for the circus. He can do all kinds of tricks. What will you give for it Levi?'"

"The dealer, whom the count knows, bargained for a long time, said that such an animal was of no value, and then they talked in a low tone, and finally came to an agreement. Levi drew out his purse and paid the captain something, and he said: 'I will add something to that so the count may have a fair price.'" Then Levi tied a rope around our Han's neck, and dragged him off, and when I tried to say something the captain snubbed me, so that I went back to the stable, for I could say nothing more. But our Hans is gone, and now—now they have perhaps already killed him, for Levi said he was in fine condition."

Valleral had listened in silence, his brow was flushed, his eyebrows contracted, betokening storm.

"Good," said he shortly. "Bring me a bottle of sherry, August," and he turned his back and returned to the house.

He sat there half the night, puffing wreaths of blue smoke, and drank one glass of wine after another. Finally a light dawned in his eyes, he laughed softly and raised his head triumphantly. Now he knew how to answer the captain, and went happily to bed and slept until broad daylight, for the next day was Sunday, and the captain always spent that day in the neighbouring city.

This Sunday Captain von Angerschultz returned home early, and, in accordance with his custom, made a tour of house and stables to see if all were in order.

His man's face had never had the slightest interest for the captain, nor did he notice to day how changed it was, as the fellow silently waited to be questioned, and to-day the captain asked no questions, for he was in a very bad temper. He had called upon the parents of Baroness Soldau and for the first time had been denied admission without reasonable excuse. And this time he had intended to ask for the hand of the lady of his choice. Could it be true what he had heard rumoured, that Lankwitz had dared interfere with his superior, and that Miss Bianca was really interested in his enemy?

A feverish unrest tormented Angerschultz. He resolved to ride out to Soldau that evening. He had counted with such certainty upon this match, that failure would be of considerable moment to him.

Followed by his man he entered the stable, raised the lantern he carried and gazed around.

"Confound it—where are the horses?" came breathlessly from his lips. As no answer followed immediately, he turned and stared at his man. Guttlieb stood before him with shaking knees, the picture of distress.

"Fellow!" thundered Angerschultz. "What has happened to the beasts?"

"They—they—Count Lankwitz sold them to Levi this afternoon, captain," stammered the hussar. "There are two hundred marks on the table."

An inarticulate cry of rage. The lantern crashed on the paved floor, the stable door banged, and Guttlieb sat alone in the dark, overwhelmed with despair, and wished the ground would open and swallow him and Count Lankwitz.

Never had a story created such a sensation in military circles as the account of Valleral's bold act in calmly avenging

himself on his captain, who had sold his coat, by selling the captain's horses.

Of course, the affair caused much talk, became serious, and passed from one official board to another, but Valleral did not worry over it. He knew that his prank was heartily laughed at and applauded, and his colonial did not look very fierce when he gravely told him that it was impossible for Count Lankwitz longer to remain in his regiment, and to be prepared for a transfer as punishment.

The young offender did so with the most charming grace, and had no fault to find with being ordered, until the matter was decided, to send her squadron, where, under agreeable superiors, he led a most charming life.

Valleral had always been lucky. Why should Dame Fortune desert him now, when he had amused a whole country with his ready revenge?

The dreaded transfer came, but a loud cheer rang through the club-room, in which, for two weeks, Cyprian and his young comrades had each evening drowned their grief at parting with champagne, when, stammering with surprise he read aloud the ominous letter from the regimental adjutant. Transferred to the St. L. body-guard of Ulans, to one of the most elegant of regiments, where a dual court resided, and his father-in-law already possessed a magnificent villa. O most delightful of colonels, to "punish" his young lieutenant thus. His ears should have rung with all the enthusiastic cheers that Valleral proposed for him.

And Cyprian's father-in-law? Ah, that was another story.

The evening that Captain von Angerschultz sought his horses to honour Castle Soldau with a proposal, Valleral had sat at the feet of Baroness Bianca, and asked her laughingly if she would not think him, the youngest lieutenant, quite too bold if he already thought of matrimony.

With a deep blush, she assured him that she would think him merely very sensible.

"Brilliant. Then we are quite of one mind," he had cried, thus encouraged, seized her two cool, ugly hands, and drew them hastily to his lips, "and if you think it sensible for me to fall in love with you Bianca, then be sensible, too, and take me."

"This she had done, with radiant face, and thus at twenty, Valleral was engaged and soon married.

Over this prank, which surely was planned merely to drive the captain to desperation, people had at first vaguely shaken their heads, for to engage oneself merely to vex another seemed too frivolous, and they pitied the deluded girl, who surely was about to make a most unhappy marriage. Never was a greater contrast between a couple than between gay Cyprian and the grave, misanthropical Bianca. How soon the young butterfly would tire of his plain, uninteresting wife, and neglect her—this catastrophe was awaited with true eagerness.

But they had utterly mistaken Valleral's honest heart. If, at first, the fact that Angerschultz was driven wild at the loss of the horses had lent a zest to his courtship, his fiancée's radiant happiness made a great impression upon him, and her whole manner which expressed the tenderest, most adoring love, made him rejoice to meet her with the same tenderness. What at first was somewhat feigned, soon became reality, for Bianca's was a deep, richly gifted nature, which revealed itself in all its wealth to her husband as fully as it concealed itself from the world.

Count Lankwitz's marriage proved a most happy one, and his treatment of Bianca fairly exemplary.

After a year a son was born to the young couple, and Valleral, the twenty one-year-old father, was beside himself with pride and happiness. He was as much of a favourite in the new garrison as he had always been everywhere, and so all felt the deepest sympathy with the count in his great and sincere grief when, after scarcely two years of wedded life, his wife was taken from him by death. A severe inflammation of the lungs had laid her upon a sick bed, and Cyprian tended her with unselfish devotion until her last breath, which was a blessing upon him.

With Bianca his good angel departed. His sense of duty to her, as well as the young wife's good influence, had restrained him. Now that he was alone again, he fell back into his bachelor ways and soon became the gay, brilliant young man of former days. He became a man of the world in the good sense of the word—always active, ready for anything, handsome, elegant and a universal favourite.

He resigned while captain, and spent most of his time in travelling, while his little son, Cyril, was brought up by his mother's parents.

The child was said strikingly to resemble his mother. His nature had from infancy proved to be unusually grave and thoughtful, and he seemed unnatural in contrast with other children of his age.

Cyril was as exemplary a child as his father had been spoiled and wastrel. Cyril

scarcely need training. He obeyed without questioning, played quietly by the hour, and when he had once given a promise, held to it with a fidelity which amazed everyone. He had also inherited his mother's extreme sensitiveness. Easily deeply offended, he would brood over an injury and ponder for days how to revenge himself; and he would revenge himself each time, not in a malicious or sly way, but so as to show the offender how bitterly he had wronged the boy, how unjustly he had acted.

The child was somewhat pedantic, although he had also inherited his father's talents and capabilities; for Cyril learned with the utmost ease, and took delight in writing little stories which displayed great imagination. That these were chiefly of a deeply religious and sternly moral nature surprised the friends of the family most of all, and they could not marvel enough at the strange streak of nature which had created in father and son each absolute extremes.

As Lankwitz, senior, had been nicknamed 'Valleral,' some wit nicknamed the pious, grave, steady Lankwitz, junior, 'Hosanna,' and this odd name was circulated widely.

But, strange to say, the relations between father and son were most affectionate, and their devotion to each other remarkable. Whoever saw the two together would think them brothers, the gay, laughing, youthful father would even have been taken for the younger, now that Cyril had grown taller than he, and his dark eyes gazed out at the world with the same look of premature age that his mother had had.

But Valleral and Hosanna wandered through life arm in arm, in fond affection, and the older Cyril became, the more did he occupy the place of his early deceased mother, like her, acting as a beneficial restraint upon his vivacious father.

(To be Continued.)

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