

thing when they most wish to do the right, by interfering in the affairs of their fellow-beings. Besides that, he had another reason, and for a moment his thoughts dwelt somewhat savagely on the 'very nicest little lieutenant.'

The Baron had risen to a high government position. But the double duties of his office and of the life necessitated by his daughters being such prominent members of society, had been very hard upon the aging man, who was now somewhat ailing and run down. A furlough seemed immediately necessary. Foreign travel was suggested, but the Baron protested that at present he could not afford it. He would go to his estate. There was quiet there, too much quiet, though it was only a few miles away. Then the doctor thought it might be well if he took his youngest daughter along for company, the underlying idea being that the girl herself would be happier away from the society that would but snub her.

But now the doctor began to feel very uncomfortable. If she found this society so diverting would she want to leave it? Diffidently he began to unfold his plan.

'O you dear, good doctor!' Rottraut called out, springing up from her seat. 'O you dear! Papa is going into the country and I am going along with him! Why, that is the loveliest idea you could have had. Am I not right? Everything nice always comes to me—I have the best of everything.'

'But it will be very quiet and lonely out there,' protested the doctor. 'No balls, no nice little lieutenants.'

'Oh, there I shall be the enchanted princess, and of course the handsomest and bravest prince in the world will come to wake me, as old nurse used to prophesy. But just think how astonished the prince will be when he sees me open my eyes—first a blue one and then a brown. I am afraid he will lose courage and run away. And you will come out some time, won't you doctor? All the doors shall open of themselves when you come. What did papa say and will mamma have no objections?'

'No, mamma had no objections—mamma was glad to have one girl less to take round. Elsie thought it best to have her youngest sister out of the way a while longer, and Gertrude hoped that she would study a little more, for really she knew hardly anything. The only one who did not seem quite happy was the doctor who had suggested the plan. Somehow he suddenly found the Baron's house most strangely lonesome—even more so than his own apartments, where he lived with his books and his housekeeper.'

II.

The Advent of the Prince.

The seclusion that the Baron had promised himself did not last very long. They were only on the estate a few days when he and his daughter out for one of their long walks, met two gentlemen, one of whom was greeted most deferentially by the Baron.

This gentleman was none less than the nephew and heir of the reigning Prince. He had just returned from a trip around the world, and had been expected in the capital for some time. But he preferred to come first to this little hunting-lodge, to arrange his rare collection, gathered from all parts of the globe.

The Baron, himself a great personage in the little principality, was treated most cordially by the Prince. When they met the next day the Prince joined him and they walked along in animated conversation. The Prince's companion and adjutant followed with the young girl. He was Count Walden, the long-time adorer of Elsie, waiting for the Prince's accession and an appointment which should enable them to

marry. In the meantime the Baron did not look very kindly upon his courtship, and Count Walden was quite delighted to be able to thus meet his sweetheart's father under the wing of the Prince. As for herself, Rottraut kept thinking how happy Elsie would be if she were in her place, and yet how little jealous she would be of her homely sister—and the humor of the thought caused her to laugh merrily at everything possible.

The first day the Prince had said to Count Walden: 'I thought you told me that the Baron's daughters are all very beautiful?'

'All but this one,' Walden had tented to affirm.

But the next day the girl's infectious laughter filled his ears, until at last the Prince turned and looked back to see what there was to laugh at.

The girl was not a bit embarrassed.

'What was it child?' asked the Baron.

'O papa,' she answered, 'the merriest tale, twice told, is stale.'

'You seem to have a lively fancy,' said the Prince, joining Rottraut as they started again, while Count Walden was left to walk with the Baron.

Rottraut was not displeased at the change. The Prince did not seem nearly as stiff and formal as she had thought princes to be, but laughed gaily at her witty sallies. To be sure, he had little to say himself, but the people said of him that he was a scientist, and studied a great deal, which was certainly not true of many princes. It was one of his delights to discover things out of the ordinary, and so he enjoyed the girl's piquancy and original manner.

'As things are,' he said to his adjutant on his way home, 'it will probably be rather pleasant for you to be able to become well acquainted with the Baron and make a good impression on him. This walk need not be our last. Try to win his good opinion; I shall help you as much as I can.'

When he returned to his antiquities he seemed to hear Rottraut's merry laugh, just as the doctor did among his books, and he began to wonder what she would say about his collection.

The next day they all met again. And so many other days. If his other daughters had been there, the Baron would have thought it noticeable that from that time on the Prince usually walked with Rottraut. But she—she was safe.

Count Walden in the meantime talked most seriously to the Baron about politics and affairs of State. He also mentioned the probable betrothal of the Prince to a certain Princess. He told how beautiful she was, how anxious the parents on both sides were for the union, what a blessing it would be for the country, and so on, not forgetting to put in that the Prince upon his marriage would have his own residence and would be liberal in his treatment of those appointed for his service. The Baron listened calmly to all these things, but, as many other papas do under similar circumstances, gave them little thought. Why should he discuss the matter with his daughter and have her write her sister Elsie about it? It would but disturb Elsie's peace of mind with useless hopes.

So each in his way found the solitude delightful, and it lasted until Count Walden fell to reminding the Prince every day that he was eagerly awaited in the city, while the Baroness and her daughters commiserated the Baron and Rottraut in each letter for their banishment. At last the announcement was made that the Princess who was spoken of as the prospective bride was coming to the city, and in the great festivities in her honor papa and Rottraut must take part. Even the doctor found the stay in the country had been sufficiently prolonged for the

Baron's health.

But for the first time in her life Rottraut did not seem to feel a great desire to see her old-time friend the doctor.

When the Baron and his daughter came back to the city the old sisters had much to tell, and they did not seem anxious to hear Rottraut's experiences. They did know that the Prince had talked a great deal to their father, and they felt that the time might come when this friendship would be very useful to the Baron—their father might be minister if the Prince became ruler. But Rottraut said nothing, not even to the doctor, for though the Prince had talked much to her, she did not seem to be able to tell what he really said. She noticed how pale the doctor was, and for the first time Rottraut was impressed with the fact that his figure was misshapen. But she did not have much time for reflection, for the Princess had arrived, and the ladies of the capital were to be presented to her. The Baroness somehow felt that four daughters were too many to present at once, and wanted to leave the youngest at home, but the Baron would not listen to that. At the very last moment the third, Lisa, had a toothache. That would have been bad enough, but when the toothache resulted in a swollen cheek she, of course, had to be left behind. The two older girls were very charming in their dainty spring gowns. But Rottraut! if she could but have worn her outing suit, as she did when tramping around the country! These same tramps had added freckles to her other defects, and Rottraut looked sadly at her reflection in the mirror. But what was to be done?

A little while later she was standing before the beautiful Princess. Beautiful as she was, Rottraut noticed that she said the same thing over and over again to everybody. Perhaps she was shy. But when she saw Rottraut she held out her hand most cordially, and told her that the Prince had talked of her a great deal. 'I knew you at once,' she added.

'I am afraid it is impossible for me to travel incognito,' Rottraut answered, as she bent over the Princess' hand for the customary kiss. For the first time in her life she did not like being reminded of her red hair and her variegated eyes, which undoubtedly the Prince had mentioned in describing her.

'We will see more of each other later,' said the Princess. 'At court most people are so stiff, and the Prince told me that you have such pleasant ideas.'

Stiff the Princess surely was, and of ideas, pleasant or otherwise, she did not seem to have very many, Rottraut soon discovered. So she was glad when the Prince approached. But everything was different and formal here, compared to their country meetings, and Rottraut was embarrassed. Perhaps it was that she was too glad to see him, for she had thought of him often in these days, and the old nurse's prediction about the prince who was sure to come for her some time kept running through her brain.

When Rottraut returned home that day she did what she had done very often lately—she looked in the glass. This time she found out that her nose really was not bad, and that her figure was graceful; she remembered that the Prince had often admired her hair, and told her that great painters all liked red hair. Why should people not like hers? And she thought so hard of all these things that when sat opposite the doctor the next time he called she really did not know what to say to him.

(To be concluded.)