

Gotzkowsky looked over the list with dismay. "Did not your excellency say that only royal factories were to be destroyed?"

"Yes, so runs the order."

"But the factories that stand on this list are not royal institutions. The brass-works in Eberwalde, the gold and silver factories, and the warehouse in Berlin, do not belong to the king, and are they going to be so barbarous as to destroy them? That cannot be. I will hasten to General Tottleben, and entreat him to revoke this cruel order."

General Bachmann shook his head sadly. "I am afraid it will be in vain," said he. "Besides, you incur great risk in your undertaking. The general is in a very angry, excited mood, and your intercession will only increase his bitterness and anger."

"I fear not his anger," cried Gotzkowsky boldly. "If no one else dares to tell him the truth, I will do it; and with argument and entreaty compel him to be humane, and to respect the property of others. Come, sir, let us go to General Tottleben!"

"No, sir. I am not going with you," said Bachmann, laughing. "I am not a man to tremble on the eve of battle, and yet I fear to meet Tottleben's angry looks. In his wrath he is like a Jupiter Tonans, ready to launch his thunderbolts, and dash to pieces all who approach him."

"I am not afraid of his thunder!" cried Gotzkowsky, fervently. "The property and welfare of Berlin are in danger. I must go to the general!"

"Then go along," said Bachmann, "and may God give power to your words! I have warned you, and that is all I can do."

Gotzkowsky did not answer him. Trembling with

eagerness and impatience, he dressed himself, and throwing his cloak around him, he once more left his house, with the alacrity of a young man.

General Bachmann looked after him, smiling thoughtfully. "He is a noble fellow," said he, "and Berlin has good reason to be grateful to him, and to love him. But who knows? perhaps, for that very reason, she will one day hate him. Noble-mindedness is so soon forgotten! It is the solid weight that sinks to the bottom, while light deeds float on top. Mankind is not fond of being grateful. I would like to know whether Berlin will ever show a due appreciation of this noble man?"

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## CHAPTER VII.

### THE HORRORS OF WAR.

THE Russians had at last allowed themselves to be carried away by the example set them by the Austrians and Saxons. Like them, they roamed through Berlin, robbing and plundering, unmindful of discipline, and forgetting the severe punishments which Tottleben inflicted on those whose misdeeds reached his ear.

Like the Austrians, the Cossacks entered houses with wanton arrogance, and, under the pretext of being Russian safeguards, they stole, and robbed, and ill-treated in the rudest manner those who opposed their demands. They had even managed to reduce their robbery and extortion to a kind of system, and to value the human person after a new fashion. It was a sort of mercantile transaction, and the Cossacks were the brokers in this new-fashioned business. Stealthily and unheard, they



slipped into houses, fell upon the unsuspecting women and children, and dragged them out, not to capture them as the Romans did the Sabine women, but to hold them as so much merchandise, to be redeemed by their friends and relatives at high and often enormous ransoms.

But the Cossacks drew but small profit from this hunt after noble human game. They were only servants, acting under orders from their officers. These latter divided the booty, throwing to the Cossacks a small reward for their skill in robbing.

Thus, for some days, Berlin was not only subjugated by the enemy, but a prey to robbers and slave-dealers, and moans and lamentations were heard in every house. All the more merrily did the enemy's soldiers carouse and enjoy themselves, laugh and joke. For them Berlin was nothing more than an orange to be squeezed dry, whose life-blood was to be drawn out to add new zest to their own draught of life.

The young Russian officers were sitting together in the large room of their barracks. They were drinking and making merry, and striking their glasses noisily together; draining them to the health of the popular, handsome, and brilliant comrade who had just entered their circle, and who was no other than he whom Gotzkowsky's daughter, in the sorrow of her heart, was mourning as dead!—no one else than the Russian colonel, Count Feodor von Brenda.

He had been right, therefore, in trusting to Fortune. Fortune had favored him, as she always does those who boldly venture all to win all, and who sport with danger as with a toy. Indeed, it was an original and piquant adventure which the Russian colonel had experienced, the more piquant because it had threatened him with death, and at one moment his life had been in extreme

danger. It had delighted him for once to experience all the horrors of death, the palpitation, the despair of a condemned culprit; to acquire in his own person a knowledge of the great and overpowering feelings, which he had read so much about in books, and which he had not felt in reality even in the midst of battle. But yet this bold playing with death had, toward the last, lost a little of its charm, and a moment arrived when his courage failed him, and his daring spirit was overpowered by his awed physical nature. There was not, as there is in battle, the excitement which conquers the fear of death, and drunk with victory, mocks one to his face; there was not the wild delight which possesses the soldier in the midst of a shower of balls, and makes him, as it were, rush toward eternity with a shout. No, indeed! It was something quite different which Colonel von Brenda, otherwise so brave and valiant, now felt.

When the Austrian soldiers had pronounced his sentence of death, when they formed a ring around him at the Gens-d'Armes Market, and loaded their pieces for his execution, then the haughty Russian colonel felt a sudden change take place; his blood curdled in his veins, and he felt as if thousands of small worms were creeping through them, gliding slowly, horribly to his heart. At length, in the very despair which oppressed him, he found strength to cast his incubus from his breast, and with a voice loud and powerful as thunder to cry out for help and succor. His voice was heard; it reached the ear of General Bachmann, who came in person to set free the wild young officer, the favorite of his empress, from the hands of the Austrians.

This adventure, which had terminated so famously, Count Brenda now related to his friends and comrades. To be sure, the general had punished the mad freak



with an arrest of four-and-twenty hours. But after undergoing this punishment, he was more than ever the hero of the day, the idol of his comrades, who now celebrated his release from arrest with loud rejoicing and the cracking of champagne bottles. After they had laughed and joked to their satisfaction, they resorted to the dice.

"And what stake shall we play for?" asked Feodor, as he cast a look of ill-concealed contempt on his young companions, who so little understood the art of drinking the cup of pleasure with decency, and rolled about on their seats with lolling tongues and leering eyes.

Feodor alone had preserved the power of his mind; his brain alone was unclouded by the fumes of champagne, and that which had made the others mad had only served to make him sad and gloomy. The drunkenness of his comrades had sobered him, and, feeling satiated with all the so-called joys and delights of life, he asked himself, with a smile of contempt, whether the stammering, staggering fellows, who sat next to him, were fit and suitable companions and associates of a man who had made pleasure a study, and who considered enjoyment as a philosophical problem, difficult of solution.

"And for what stake shall we play?" he asked again, as with a powerful grip he woke his neighbor, Lieutenant von Matusch, out of the half sleep which had crept over him.

"For our share of the booty!" stammered the lieutenant.

Feodor looked at him with surprise. "What booty? Have we, then, become robbers and plunderers, that you speak of booty?"

His comrades burst into a wild laugh.

"Just listen to the sentimental dreamer, the cos-

mopolite," cried Major von Fritsch. "He looks upon it as dishonorable to take booty. I for my part maintain that there is no greater pleasure, and certainly none which is more profitable. Fill your glasses, friends, and let us drink to our hunting. 'Hurrah! hurrah for human game!'"

They struck their glasses together, and emptied them amidst an uproar of laughter.

"Colonel, you shall have your share of the booty!" said Lieutenant von Matusch, laying his heavy, shaky hand on Feodor's shoulder. "We never intended to cheat you out of your portion, but you were not here, and therefore up to this time you could have no share in it."

As Feodor pressed him with questions, he related how they had formed a compact, and pledged themselves to have their booty and captives in common.

"We have caught more than a dozen head, and they have ransomed themselves handsomely," cried Major von Fritsch. "We have just sent out ten of our men again on the chase."

"Oh! I hope they will bring in just such another handsome young girl as they did yesterday," cried Matusch, rubbing his hands with delight. "Ah, that was a pleasant evening! She offered us treasures, diamonds, and money; she promised us thousands if we would only release her at once! She wept like a Madonna, and wrung her snow-white hands, and all that only made her prettier still."

Colonel Feodor looked at him in anger. In contact with such coarse and debauched companions his more refined self rose powerful within him, and his originally noble nature turned with loathing from this barren waste of vulgarity and infamy.



"I hope," said he, warmly, "that you have behaved as becomes noble gentlemen."

Matusch shrugged his shoulders and laughed. "I do not know what you call so, colonel. She was very pretty, and she pleased me. I promised to set her free to-day, for the ransom agreed on, and I have kept my word."

As he spoke thus, he burst into a loud laugh, in which his friends joined with glee.

But Feodor von Brenda did not laugh. An inexplicable, prophetic dread overpowered him. What if this young girl, described to him with so much gusto, and who had been so shamefully ill-treated, should prove to be his Elise, his beloved!

At this thought, anger and distress took possession of him, and he never loved Elise more ardently and truly than he did at this moment when he trembled for her. "And was there no one," cried he, with flashing eyes, "no one knightly and manly enough to take her part? How! even you, Major von Fritsch, allowed this thing to happen?"

"I was obliged to do so," replied the major. "We have made a law among ourselves, which we have all sworn to obey. It is established that the dice shall determine to which of the officers the booty shall belong; and he who throws the highest number becomes the owner of the person. He has to negotiate about the ransom. This, however, of course is divided among his comrades."

"But if the person is poor?" asked Feodor, indignantly, "if she cannot pay?"

"Then she belongs to him who has won her; he must decide on her fate. He is—"

The major stopped suddenly. The other officers

raised themselves in their seats, and listened with breathless attention.

"I think I hear the signal," whispered the major. He had not deceived himself. A shrill, piercing whistle sounded a second time. The officers sprang from their seats, and broke into a loud cry of triumph:

"Our Cossacks are coming. They have caught something! Come, come, let us throw the dice."

With fierce eagerness, they all rushed to the table, and stretched out their hands for the bones. Immediately a deep, expectant silence ensued. Nothing was heard but the rattling of the dice, and the monotonous calling of the numbers thrown. Feodor alone remained at his place, lost in deep thought, and his tortured heart kept asking itself the question, "Could it be her whom the barbarians had captured and ill-used?" This question burnt in his brain like a red-hot dagger, upsetting his reason, and driving him almost mad with anger and grief. Still the rattling of the noisy dice went on—the calling of the numbers. No one took notice of the young man, who, in desperate distress, his clinched fist pressed against his breast, paced up and down the farther end of the room, uttering broken words of anger and grief. No one, as has been said, noticed him, nor did any one remark that at this moment the door in the background of the hall was opened, and six Cossacks entered, bearing a litter on their shoulders.

Feodor von Brenda saw them, and, with deep compassion, he regarded the veiled, inanimate figure lying on the litter, which was set down by the Cossacks.

"Colonel von Brenda," cried Major von Fritsch at this moment, "it is your turn."

"Oh, he is too sentimental!" laughed out Matusch. "Is not that the fact, colonel?"



Feodor remained musing and pensive. "It is a woman," said he to himself—"perhaps a young and handsome woman like Elise. How if I should try to save her? I have luck at the dice. Well, I will try." And with a firm step he approached the table. "Give me the bones," cried he. "I will throw with you for my share of the booty."

The dice rattled and tumbled merrily on the table.

"Eighteen spots!"

"The highest throw!"

"Colonel von Brenda has won!"

"The woman is mine!" cried Feodor, his countenance beaming with joy.

His comrades looked at him with astonishment. "A woman! How do you know beforehand that it is a woman?"

Feodor pointed silently to the back part of the room. There stood the Cossacks, next to the litter, waiting in solemn silence to be noticed.

"A woman! Yes, by Heavens! it is a woman," cried the officers. And, with boisterous laughter, they rushed toward the Cossacks.

"And where did you pick her up?" asked Major von Fritsch.

"Don't know," answered one of the Cossacks. "We crept along a wall, and when we had climbed to the top, we saw a garden. We got down slowly and carefully, and waited behind the trees, to see if any one would come down the long avenue. We did not have long to wait before this lady came by herself. We rushed on her, and all her struggles, of course, went for nothing. Luckily for her and us, she fainted, for if she had cried out, some one, perhaps, might have come, and then we would have been obliged to gag her."

The officers laughed. "Well," said the major, "Colonel Feodor can stop her mouth now with kisses." In the mean while, Lieutenant Matusch threw the Cossacks a few copper coins, and drove them out of the room, with scornful words of abuse.

"And now let us see what we have won," cried the officers, rushing to the litter. They were in the act of raising the cloth which concealed the figure, but Feodor stepped forward with determined countenance and flashing eyes.

"Let no one dare to raise this veil," said he haughtily. His comrades rushed, with easily aroused anger, on him, and attempted again to approach the veiled woman. "Be on your guard!" cried Feodor, and, drawing his sword from its scabbard, he placed himself before the litter, ready for the combat. The officers drew back. The determined, defiant countenance of the young warrior, his raised and ready sword, made them hesitate and yield.

"Feodor is right," said the major, after a pause; "he has fairly won the woman, and it is his business now to settle about the ransom."

The others cast their eyes down, perhaps ashamed of their own rudeness. "He is right, she belongs to him," murmured they, as they drew back and approached the door.

"Go, my friends, go," said Feodor. "I promise you that I will settle with her about her ransom, and give up beforehand all claim to my share!"

The countenances of the Russian officers brightened up. They nodded and smiled toward him as they left the room. Count Feodor von Brenda was now alone with the veiled and insensible woman.



## CHAPTER VIII.

BY CHANCE.

As soon as the officers had left the room, Feodor hastened to close the door after them carefully, to prevent any importunate intrusion. He then searched thoroughly all the corners of the room, and behind the window-curtains, to make sure that no one was concealed there. He wished to be entirely undisturbed with the poor woman whose face he had not yet beheld, but toward whom he felt himself attracted by a singular, inexplicable sensation. As soon as he was convinced that he was quite alone, he went to her with flushed cheeks and a beating heart, and unveiled her.

But scarcely had he cast his eyes on her, when he uttered a cry, and staggered back with horror. This woman who lay there before him, lifeless and motionless, pale and beautiful as a broken flower, was none other than Elise Gotzkowsky, his beloved! He stood and stared at her; he pressed his hands to his forehead as if to rouse himself from this spell which had hold of him, as if to open his eyes to truth and reality. But it was no dream, no illusion. It was herself, his own Elise. He approached her, seized her hand, passed his hands over her glossy hair, and looked at her long and anxiously. His blood rushed like a stream of fire to his heart, it seethed and burned in his head, in his veins; and, quite overcome, he sank down before her.

"It is she," murmured he softly, "it is Elise. Now she is mine, and no one can take her from me. She belongs to me, my wife, my beloved. Fate itself bears her to my arms, and I were a fool to let her escape again."

With passionate impetuosity he pressed her to his heart, and covered her lips and face with his kisses. But the violence of his affection aroused Elise. Slowly and stunned she raised herself in his arms, and looked around, as if awakened from a dream. "Where am I?" asked she, languidly.

Feodor, still kneeling before her, drew her more closely to his heart. "You are with me," said he, passionately, and as he felt her trembling in his arms, he continued still more warmly: "Fear nothing; my Elise, look not so timidly and anxiously about you. Look upon me, me, who am lying at your feet, and who ask nothing more from Fortune than that this moment should last an eternity."

Elise scarcely understood him. She was still stunned—still confused by the dreams of her swoon. She passed her hand over her forehead, and let it drop again listless and powerless. "My senses are confused," whispered she in a low voice, "I do not hear; what has happened to me?"

"Do not ask, do not inquire," cried Feodor, ardently. "Think only that love has sent an angel to you, on whose wings you have reposed on your passage hither to me. Why will you ask after the nature of the miracle, when the miracle itself brings delight to our eyes and hearts? Therefore, fear nothing, gentle, pure being. Like an angel do you come to me through the deluge of sin. You bear the olive-branch of peace, and love and happiness are before us."

But as he was about to press her still more closely to his heart, a shudder pervaded her whole frame. "Oh, now, I recollect," she cried, vehemently; "now I know all! I was alone in the garden. There came those terrible men. They seized me with their rude hands."



They wounded my heart with their horrible looks, which made me shudder. Whither have they brought me? where am I?"

"You are with me," said Feodor, carrying her hand to his lips.

For the first time, then, she looked at him—for the first time, she recognized him. A deep blush of joy suffused her cheeks, and an angelic smile beamed on her lips. She felt, she knew nothing further than that her lover was at her side, that he was not dead—that he was not lost to her. With an outcry of delight she threw herself into his arms, and greeted the lost, the found one, with warm and happy words of love. She raised her eyes and hands to heaven. "Oh, my God, he lives!" cried she, exultingly. "I thank Thee, God, I thank Thee. Thou hadst pity on my sufferings."

"Love protected me," said Feodor, gazing at her passionately. "Love saved me by a miracle. Still more miraculously, it brings you to my arms. Fear not, Elise. No other eye than mine has seen you. No one knows your name. That sweet secret is only known to Love and ourselves."

Elise trembled. This imprudent speech woke her out of the stupor which had so long had possession of her; it recalled her to the world, and dispelled the charm which his presence, his looks, and his words had thrown around her. She was now aroused, and hurried from a state of dreamy delight to one of cruel and dread reality. The ray of joy faded from her cheek, the smile died on her lips, and, extricating herself forcibly from his arms, she stood before him in her pride and anger. "Feodor," said she, terrified, "you sent those fearful men! You caused me to be kidnapped!" With

an angry, penetrating glance, she looked at Feodor, who sank his eyes in confusion to the ground.

As she saw this, she smiled contemptuously, and her injured maiden honor overcame her love and tenderness. "Ah! now I understand!" said she, with cutting scorn. "I have been told of the hunt after human beings which is carried on in the town. Colonel Feodor von Brenda plays a worthy part in this game!"

Feodor wished to approach her and take her hand, but she repulsed him sternly. "Do not touch me," cried she, haughtily; "do not seek to take my hand. You are no longer he whom I love. You are a kidnaper. But let me tell you, though you have compelled my body to suffer this dishonorable deed, yet my soul remains free, and that despises you!"

It was a splendid sight to see her in her noble wrath, which seemed to elevate her whole frame, and drive a deep glow to her cheeks.

Feodor looked at her with ardent gaze. Never had he seen her so fascinating, so charmingly beautiful. Even her wrath delighted him, for it was a token of her purity and innocence.

He wanted again to draw near to her, to take her to his heart, but she drew back in pride and anger. "Go," said she, "I have nothing to do with a man who violates the most sacred laws of human honor, and like a vile thief sneaks in to destroy innocence." Her voice failed her, her eyes filled with tears, but she shook them from her. "I weep," said she, "but not for grief, nor yet for love; anger it is alone which extorts tears from me, and they are bitter—far more bitter than death." And as she thus spoke, she pressed her hands to her face, and wept bitterly.

Feodor passed his arm gently around her trembling



form. In the excess of her grief she did not feel it. "No, Elise," said he, "you weep because you love me. You weep because you think me unworthy of your love. But before you condemn me, listen to me. I swear to you by the memory of my mother, the only woman in whom, besides yourself, I ever believed, that I had no part in this treachery which has been committed toward you. You must believe me, Elise! Look at me, beloved one—I can bear your looks. I dare raise my eyes to you. I am not guilty of this crime."

Her hands glided slowly from her face, and she looked at him. Their looks met, and rested for a long time on each other. She read in his eyes that he was innocent, for love is confiding, and she loved him. With a charming smile she extended both hands toward him, and he read in her looks the words of love and tenderness which her timid lips did not dare give expression to.

Feodor drew her warmly to his heart. "You believe me," cried he, passionately; and as he raised her with irresistible strength in his arms, he murmured low, "Now let us enjoy the sacred hour of happiness without inquiring what divinity we have to thank for it."

But the instinct of modesty prevailed over love. "No," cried she, as she struggled out of his arms, trembling with excitement—"no, Feodor, it is no hour of happiness in which my honor and good name are to be buried—no hour of happiness when scandal can tell from mouth to mouth how a German maiden let herself be carried into the Russian camp, and shamelessly rushed into the arms of dishonor; for so will they tell it, Feodor. No one will believe that you had no hand in this outrage. The world never believes in innocence. Whoever is accused is already condemned, even if the judge's sen-

tence should a thousand times pronounce him innocent. No, they will point at me with the finger of scorn, and with an exultant laugh will say to each other, 'Behold the barefaced woman who deserted to the Russians, and revelled with her lover, while her native town was groaning amidst blood and tears. Look at the rich man's child, who is so poor in honor!'"

Deeply moved by her own words, she drew herself up still more in the power of her dignity and innocence, and gazed at Feodor with flashing eyes. "Count Feodor von Brenda," cried she, firmly, "will you allow your bride to be suspected and defamed? that a stain should be allowed to rest upon the name of her who is to become your wife?"

In her proud excitement she did not perceive the rapid motion of his lips, nor the blush of shame which suffused his cheeks; she remarked not that he cast down his eyes and spoke to her with broken and trembling voice.

"Elise," said he, "you are beside yourself. Your excited fancy paints every thing to you in sombre colors. Who will dare to defame you? Who knows that you are here?"

"But the whole world will know it. Scandal has a thousand tongues to spread evil reports. Feodor, let me go. You say that no one knows that I am here; then no one will know that I go. Be merciful with me, let me go!"

"No," cried he, almost rudely. "I will not let you. You ask what is impossible. I were a fool if I were thus madly to cast the happiness away which I would fain purchase with my heart's blood. Twice have I risked my life to see you, to be able to kneel for one happy, undisturbed hour at your feet, and gaze on you, and in-



toxicate myself with that gaze. And now you ask that I shall voluntarily give up my happiness and you!"

"My happiness! my happiness! yes, even my life I ask you to preserve by letting me go hence, and return to my father's house," cried Elise, eagerly.

As she perceived that he shook his head in refusal, and met his wild, passionate looks, reading in them that she might expect no mercy from him, her anger flashed forth. Imploringly she raised her arms to heaven, and her voice sounded full and powerful: "Feodor, I swear to you by God in heaven, and the memory of my mother, that I will only become the wife of that man whom I follow of my free will out of the house of my father. I am capable of leaving my father's house; but it must be my own free choice, my free determination."

"No," said Feodor, wildly; "I will not let you go. You are mine, and you shall remain."

Elise drew nearer to him with bashful tenderness. "You must let me go now, in order one of these days to demand your pure wife from out her father's house," said she. There was something so touching, so confiding in her manner that Feodor, against his will, felt himself overcome by it; but even while submitting to this fascination he was almost ashamed of himself, and deep sadness filled his soul.

Silently they stood opposite to each other, Elise looking at him with tenderness, yet with fear—he his head bowed, wrestling with his own heart. Suddenly this silence was interrupted by a loud and violent knocking at the door. The voices of his wild companions and mad comrades were calling out loudly Feodor's name, and demanding, with vehement impetuosity, the opening of the closed door. Feodor turned pale. The thought that his Elise, this young, innocent, and modest girl,

should be exposed to the insolent gaze of his riotous companions, irritated him.

Casting his angry glances around the room to seek for a hiding-place in which to conceal Elise, he perceived that this was in vain, that no escape was possible. Sadly he sank his head upon his breast, and sighed. Elise understood him; she comprehended her disconsolate and desperate position.

"There is then no place where I can hide myself?" said she in despair. "Shame awaits me. The whole world will know that I am here!"

Outside the officers raged still louder, and demanded with more violent cries the opening of the door. Feodor still looked around him for a secret place. Nowhere was there a possibility of hiding her, or letting her escape unnoticed. His infuriated companions threatened to break the door in.

Feodor now with determination seized the large shawl which had previously enveloped Elise's form, and threw it over her face. "Well then," said he, "let them come; but woe to him who touches this cloth!"

He pressed the veiled maiden down in a chair, and, hastening to the door, drew back the bolt.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### MISTRESS OR MAID.

As Feodor opened the door, his comrades rushed screaming and laughing uproariously into the room, spying round eagerly for the poor woman, the noble game which they had hunted down.