

He stood a moment, scowling viciously, and then with an ugly glance at me, said :

"Your nameless friend there—"

"I have already told you," I broke in angrily, "that I am the Count von Rudloff, and that the Emperor himself has addressed me in my name."

"I have known for some time all the facts as to this," added Minna, a swift flash from her eyes telling me her delight at the news. "And of the load of infinite obligation I owe to the Count von Rudloff, not the least part of it is for the defeat and exposure of your schemes against me. Be good enough to spare me the necessity of bidding my servants expel you from the house."

"You had better go, baron," I put in. "You will probably find at your house by this time a summons to the Emperor's presence, for he has heard from me the whole story of your acts."

This statement completed his disquiet, and without another word he hurried away.

"You will be troubled by him no more, Minna," I said. "I bring you the best of news. The Emperor has given a personal pledge to answer for your safety and to uphold your interests."

"The Emperor!" she cried, in a tone of surprise.

"More than that, I have told him all, and he has acknowledged my title," and I showed her the Imperial letter.

Her face shone with pride and delight.

"I can forgive everyone now, for it has all ended so splendidly for you," she said.

"For us," I corrected; and she acknowledged the correction with a blush and a smile of love which