

sible for the black mood that had superseded the phase of ultra-excitement. The Count's words meant so much, and the manner in which they were delivered implied so much more. He could not drink and he could not smoke—he tried to pray. And the words of his supplication, confusedly begotten, thickly breathed, were the words of the Count's toast—"The King's better health. God save the King!"

CHAPTER II.

The Meat Market.

FOR a considerable time the young Baron of Friedrichsheim sat in his arm-chair, gazing vacantly at the card-strewn table, the empty tumblers, and the debris of a convivial gathering which had already lost even the appearance of festivity.

Was the King of Grimland stricken by some secret malady which threatened his life with speedy and inevitable extinction?

It seemed so, to judge from Tortonform's grave manner and his projected visit of the morrow. And the mere thought evoked in Fritz's breast a feeling of grief, deep and true and genuine, despite the fumes of wine that robbed his brain of clear thought and his limbs of disciplined movement.

Lover of wine and cards and pleasure, reveller in the riotous joys of gilded youth, Fritz of Friedrichsheim was no mere empty-headed voluptuary with the barren creed of "after me the deluge." He loved his country and his country's king. Karl XXII. was the hero of one who was by nature something of a hero-worshipper. The big, good-natured, lazy-looking monarch had on more than one occasion displayed the iron hand within the velvet glove. The most genial and urbane of men, he had shown a bulldog tenacity when forces had been arrayed against him which would have swept an ordinary man headlong from his place. Easy-going and apparently careless, he had exhibited a prudence, a coolness, a cunning even, which no one but the shrewdest of character-readers could have suspected him of possessing. And he had triumphed over rebellion, over sedition, over unpopularity, and in the hour of victory had displayed magnanimity and statecraft of no mean order. The result was a stability of government rare in that turbulent land, an era of prosperity and content that opened up visions of a greater Grimland and a new factor for peace and justice in the councils of Europe. And Fritz loved his sovereign for his strength, for his wisdom, and his urbanity. He loved him for his broadmindedness and his democratic tendencies. He believed that with time and Karl's help those reforms would be introduced into the constitution which would put the monarchy on a firmer basis and raise the whole country to a higher plane of social and economic welfare. Fine ideals these for one whose life was "anything but ideal, whose views of sex relationship were, as Tortonform had truly said, somewhat heathenish. Yet history is full of such contradictions, and Fritz, arrogantly dissipating the boundless resources of his splendid youth, must be accorded the mitigated praise due to those who, if they do not act well, at least mean well.

At the present moment his most poignant regret (apart from the anxiety caused by Tortonform's words) was that he was not sober. His thoughts refused to marshal themselves clearly. He knew that Karl's early demise, leaving as it would a minor as heir to the throne, would throw the whole country into a welter of intrigue and confusion. There were ambitious and unscrupulous men in the State waiting eagerly for the chance of fishing in troubled waters. There was one in particular. . . . Confound it! Why had he steeped his senses and dulled his faculties with an unholy blending of strong wines and fiery punch. If the crash came there was so much that he could do—he, who was loyal to the House of Karl, who loved Karl's boy because he fancied he detected in him the fine qualities that made his father a man among kings and a king among men.

He, Fritz, was an aristocrat, of birth equal to the best in the kingdom, of wealth equal to the richest, and yet beloved by the people because he championed their rights and believed in the broad-basing of power. And now when he wished to think, thought refused to proceed clearly and cleanly, because the thought machine was clogged with the villainous poison miscalled "good cheer."

With an effort he rose from his chair. There was a syphon on the sideboard, and he filled half a tumbler with soda-water, and poured the pringling gassy fluid down his hot throat. The action was more heroic than effectual, and he was painfully conscious that offended Nature does not forgive readily or graciously. He opened the double window that looked out on the Gerade-strasse, and the damp, cold wind of a Weidenbruck night struck him freshly on his forehead. It did him good, much more good than the soda-water, and he resolved to go out. Fresh air and exercise would work off the cloying, drug-ging stupor that made a naturally acute brain a mere conglomeration of fuddled cells. He struggled into an overcoat, crammed a hat over his brows, and shambled down the stairs.

The air of the street met him with a friendly gust of ice-cold wind. Any one else would have felt cold, for the temperature was just on freezing point, and the wind was laden with moisture from the yet unfrozen Nieder-kessel; but Fritz was hot with the feverish heat of a vinous excess fermenting in young blood. He advanced with erratic footsteps down the old-fashioned Gerade-strasse, hiccuping a "good night" to the policeman at the corner who was almost the only denizen of the streets at that late hour. Down the broad Bahnhof-strasse he plunged, and here a buffet of nipping wind caused him to button his flapping overcoat over his dress-shirt front, albeit the buttons were fitted into buttonholes never intended by the excellent English tailor who made the garments of the Baron of Friedrichsheim.

ON he walked, without destination or purpose, save to cool his blood, clear his brain, and some Fate bade him bend his unsteady gait down a side street leading to the poverty and crime-ridden district of the Morast.

It was none too safe a quarter for a young man in his condition to penetrate, but among the many things that Fritz knew, fear was not one of them. There were a few figures visible here, ragged wanderers of both sexes, out for no good, muffled forms avoiding the rare street lamps, night-birds of ill-omen and sinister habits, objects clinging to the shadows and shunning scrutiny. Fritz had a genial "good night" for all, for his natural politeness was not dimmed either by his potations or his mental anxiety. Sometimes he got a surprised "good night" in reply, sometimes a curse, sometimes only silence. He did not in the least mind which.

Presently he came to a vast iron and glass building which stood in a considerable open space. It was the Central Meat Market, though Fritz took it for a railway station. He entered a small door between two steel columns and wandered aimlessly down an interminable alley between empty stalls. A few arc lamps burned in white globes from the curving roof, but the gloom and vastness of the building were only revealed thereby. Presently he was accosted by a policeman, suspicious, officious, minatory and inquisitorial in his black cloak and peaked shako. The officer demanded sternly where he was going. Fritz, who had no idea, but who felt that some answer was necessary, replied that he was looking for the book-office.

The official frown was relaxed, suspicion was banished, officiousness melted. The policeman saw with what kind of individual he had to deal, and, smiling at his own humour, directed the Baron to take the first turning to the right, and the second to the left.

Fritz raised his hat in a gesture of respectful politeness and reeled away in the direction indicated.

When he had reached a point almost

THE DEMAND

Is increasing enormously
Can we tell you the
Reason Why?

"A Trial Package will bring Enlightenment"

"SALADA"

CEYLON TEAS "ARE DELICIOUS TEAS"

BLACK, MIXED OR NATURAL GREEN
SEALED PACKAGES ONLY

REFUSE SUBSTITUTES 01



The Modern Shine!

Easier to Use
Better for the Shoes

CANADIAN PACIFIC

WHEN YOU TRAVEL, TRAVEL IN COMFORT

"The Canadian Pacific Railway offers to the travelling public, service and equipment second to none. They build, own and operate their Compartment Observation Cars. Standard Sleepers, Dining Cars, Coaches and Motive Power."

"The Canadian Pacific own and operate a line of palatial hotels along the Railway from Atlantic to Pacific, thus affording their patrons every possible comfort."

"The Canadian Pacific can ticket you around the world and enable you to travel over two-thirds of the world's journey on their own trains and steamers."

Those contemplating a trip will receive full details and literature on application to any C. P. R. agent, or write

M. G. MURPHY

District Passenger Agent, Toronto



The Secret of Beauty

is a clear velvety skin and a youthful complexion. If you value your good looks and desire a perfect complexion, you must use Beetham's La-rola. It possesses unequalled qualities for imparting a youthful appearance to the skin and complexion of its users. La-rola is delicate and fragrant, quite greaseless, and is very pleasant to use. Get a bottle to-day, and thus ensure a pleasing and attractive complexion.

**BEETHAM'S
La-rola**

Obtainable from all
Chemists and Stores
**M. BEETHAM & SON,
CHELTENHAM, ENG.**

