

spite of his trouble, Dick became interested and he began, first with hesitation, then with increasing flow of words, to give an account of the societies to which he, in the role of Count Von Engel, belonged.

"I suppose the X— society still flourishes," said his host.

"Indeed, yes," answered Dick. "I am a 'Squire' in that society."

"And I," said Mr. Psamton, with some pride, "am a 'Ritter.'"

"That is the highest grade," said Dick, "and hard to get."

"Yes," replied Mr. Psamton, "I had to read a paper and afterwards to defend my views against all comers. It was a trying time for me, but I won my spurs."

"What times we had," continued the elder man, thoughtfully. "The finest meeting I recollect was one in which Bismarck spoke, a young man then, and silent Von Moltke made a speech."

"The best meeting I remember," said Dick, "was one in which the leading living poet in Germany delivered a poem. He was accompanied on the piano by a master, who suited the melody and chords to the varying feelings expressed in the poem."

"How lovely that must have been," said Gladys, involuntarily.

"Indeed it was," replied Dick, turning to her. "Your friend Dick Benton turned some of the verses into English afterwards. Some of the translations were very sad, far sadder than the original. We always thought Dick had left a sweetheart behind him, for he had none in Germany."

"Dick Benton," said Gladys, coldly, yet with a strange twinkle in her eyes, "was far too much in love with himself to have a surplus of affection for anyone else."

Dick started. Here was one result of his ruse for which he did not bargain. He had an idea that it would be pleasant to hear kind remarks about him, which, under his real name, he could never have heard; but to sit and listen to unfavorable criticism, and from her, was trying in the extreme.

"Gladys," said her mother, chidingly, "you wrong Dick. Besides, you have no right to speak thus of him," she continued, with a smile.

Again Dick was cut. It never entered his head to think that her mother was gently alluding to Dick's known partiality for Gladys. He thought the allusion was to Gladys' marriage.

Mr. Psamton, to divert the conversation, asked Dick if he remembered any of Dick's translations, and if he would repeat one.

"Certainly," said the Count. But pray remember that what I speak was meant to be sung. In the original it is called *Die Wahrheit*."

With considerable elocutionary skill, Dick delivered the following lines:

I have learned the truth,
And the day is dark and the sun cold,
And the roses are fallen to dust.

Dead in their youth

Lie my hopes, my love, and my trust,
And my heart is swept by an uncontrolled
Tide-rack of pain.

Never again

Shall love lead me onward over defeat,
Up, ever up, to the topmost sun-drenched peak
In the mountainous path of life.
Joy, hope and trust dead! what is there left to seek!
What need is there now left for strife!
Come to my arms, O Death! and our bridal be sweet!

Death! thou hast been malign'd
Angel fair thou art with thy Lethan kiss, dear sprite;
Soft thy caress, as a lover's,
Sweet thy wing music that lovers
Above me in sorrow and pain.
I hear thy low voice in the wind,
I feel the touch of thy night black robes unconfin'd.
Come to my arms, O Death!
Bring me forgetfulness, peace, hide her face from my sight;
Lull me to sleep, sound sleep, with thy tuberoso
breath.

I suppose Dick thought he had scored a point against Gladys with these lugubrious verses. If he did she never showed it; in racing parlance, "she never turned a hair."

By this time the guests were arriving and the little party was broken up. But, as Count von Engel, Dick secured the promise of two dances from Gladys before she was whirled away by some one else. The guests were not many, nor was dancing the feature of the evening. The gathering was a typical Christmas one, and many Christmas games were played.

The Count was the lion of the hour, and had any number of petticoats round him most of the evening. Heartbroken as he thought himself, he was man enough to relish the attentions paid him, and flirted outrageously, the ladies excusing any of his too tender remarks by the expression, "So German, you know."

But that night was to be one of surprises for him. The first surprise was to find Gladys called Mrs. Burton. The second was to find her early in the evening outdoing the others in her attentions to him. With him she carried on a really excessive flirtation, but every time she let him touch her hand, or every time she gave him a particularly languishing glance, she called him Count, and Dick lost all his pleasure in realizing that it was not Dick Benton, her lover, but Count von Engel, a stranger, whom she was so kindly treating.

Yet he was carried away by his feelings. If she was lost to him, he would, at least, even if unfairly, enjoy her kindnesses for that evening.

There was another surprise shortly, this time as unwelcome a one as the first. He was strolling about the room with Gladys on his arm, when she stopped him in front of an undersized, sharp-featured man, whom she introduced as Mr. Burton.

Poor Dick. He had need of all his self-control. So this was her husband. And, to make matters worse, he had not the poor consolation of thinking the man was unworthy of such a wife. There was something about Mr. Burton that commanded respect, in spite of his size, and something attractive as well.

Mr. Burton held out his hand, but Dick could not take it, and the other dropped it hastily to his side and faced Dick haughtily.

Dick bowed, and moved to pass on, but Gladys held him back.