

thoughts of the three women were elsewhere. Mrs. Perowne voiced them.

"What a strange woman!" she said. "Strange!" echoed Phoebe. "She is magnificent."

"Strange, yes," said Saunders, "the Red Virgin is certainly strange. Magnificent, too, perhaps. She has the gifts of charity, chastity, and fearlessness. Had she lived in the Middle Ages she would have been a saint and a martyr. As a twentieth-century anarchist of the Morast she has less claims to canonisation. But she is a force, an influence, and I thought it wise to conciliate her."

"Then you spoke as you did, you gave her money, from purely political motives?" asked Phoebe, in some disillusionment.

Saunders made no reply, but his wife, who was walking beside the girl, pressed her hand. The action conveyed a hint. Saunders posed as a hard man of action, a cynic, a Machiavelli. He could be all these three things, but he was something more. But few men, especially men like Saunders, like to be thought sentimentalists, and Phoebe, comprehending that her massively complacent compatriot was a sound combination of sense and sensibility, relapsed into a silence of profound admiration.

"Where are you taking us now?" asked Mrs. Saunders, as they threaded their way down a network of mean alleys, almost more disreputable and dilapidated than the thoroughfares they had already explored.

"The Ghetto," Saunders answered. "We need a little comic relief, and the folk of the Jews' quarters are distinctly a quaint crew."

A cul-de-sac, bounded by high, gabled houses, brought them to a standstill. The end house, a stone structure with fine iron balconies and a handsomely carved escutcheon over the doorway, was the one Saunders attacked.

"THE Juden-haus," he said, lifting the quaint old knocker on the oak door. "The ancestor of a great banking family was born here. It is still used by people of his stock, but not the kind that consume half-crown cigars and the best brands of champagne."

The door was opened by a man who, as far as his outward appearance went, certainly fulfilled the promise of comic relief anticipated by Saunders. He was exceedingly tall and enormously fat, and his weight must have been prodigious. His nose was so grotesquely developed that it must be dignified with the title of proboscis. The fat hung in folds about the short neck. In fact, he closely resembled that extraordinary beast known to natural historians as the "sea-elephant."

Phoebe thought she had never seen anything so fantastic even in her absurdest dreams.

"Good evening, Jacob," said Saunders.

"Good evening, Herr Saunders," replied a suetty voice, while a pair of small eyes rapidly took stock of his visitors. "Do you wish to come inside?"

"If we may."

For answer the portentous Jacob admitted them to a stone-flagged hall, and waddling before them down a corridor halted before a pair of paintless doors.

"Do you wish to play, mein Herr?" "No; but I wish my lady friends to see the play." Saunders lowered his voice. "And I wish a word with you in private."

The mighty head was nodded in understanding.

"I will take the ladies to the gallery," said Jacob. "Wait here for a minute."

The proprietor conducted the ladies up an oak staircase that would have been magnificent had not at least half the banisters been missing. The treads creaked under his weight, but the oak was sound if old, and they arrived safely at the level of the first floor. Jacob opened a door giving on to a gallery overlooking a large room. Here were chairs and a small table,

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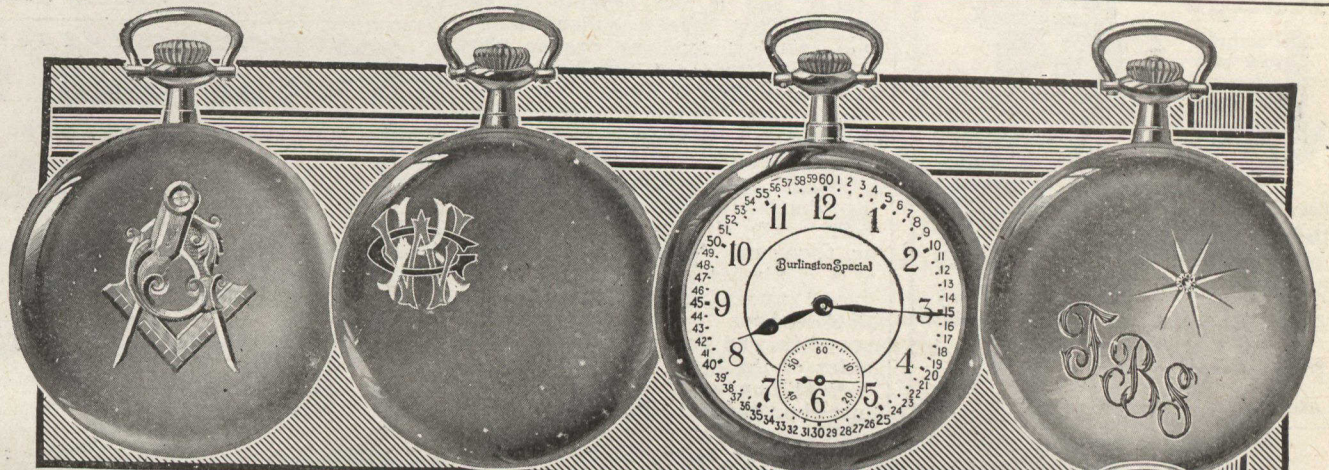
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