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Ganong's Chocolates



IN ANSWERING ADVERTISEMENTS MENTION "THE CANADIAN COURIER."

cooning," said Hugo of the Artillery.

"I propose to," rejoined Cyril, "but not in the Krippel-Thor. The 'Three Cats,' I've heard, is famous for its serving-wench."

Hugo laughed hilariously. The vermuth and the warmth of the room were beginning to fuddle his not very massive brain.

"The girls of the 'Three Cats,'" he said, "are about as pretty as von Lacherberg with the bullet-hole through his cheeks. I'd as soon bill and coo with—"

"There's Kathie," interrupted von Lacherberg, who disliked these personal allusions, "the queen of the 'night-wolves,' the woman who stabbed Fritz."

"Thanks," laughed Cyril. "On the whole I prefer a woman with a sharp tongue to one with a sharp knife."

"Then there's the Red Virgin," said Hugo.

"Oh, she is no beauty," said von Lacherberg hastily. "She's as much of a tigress as Kathie. She wanted to have me hung at the 'Persian Vaults' last night, because I started the trouble."

"What's she like to look at?" asked the Arch-duke.

"Flat as a herring, green eyes and red hair," said Lacherberg.

"A bit weird," said Hugo, "but not without a certain fascination of her own."

"I'd like to see her," said Cyril.

"I wouldn't trouble, Highness," said Lacherberg. "The girl's plain, and that's a fact. Besides, she's not like the others—she does not go in for billing and cooing."

"All the more reason for my seeing her," said Cyril, helping himself to another glass of vermuth.

Von Lacherberg shook his head. He knew something of the Morast, and the peculiar sanctity of the Red Virgin. He was drinking as hard as the others, but unlike them he had a head of iron. He did not want his master to make a fool of himself and set the whole quarter against them.

"Leave the Red Virgin alone, Highness," he growled. "She happens to be a good girl, and the Morast, which does not know much of virtue, worships her."

"Blood of a hen!" cried Cyril obstinately. "I want to see her. Ring the bell, Hugo."

Hugo obeyed readily, though Lacherberg swore under his breath.

The proprietor appeared.

"Is the Red Virgin here?" asked Cyril.

"She has just come in, Your Highness," answered the man. "She appears ill. I think she must have tramped far and eaten little to-day. She was almost fainting. The men made her drink a little wine, and set her in the best chair near the fire. They love the Red Virgin, and—"

"I know," interrupted Cyril; "send her up here, please."

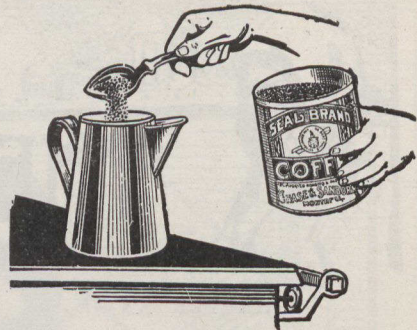
"But Your Highness," protested the proprietor, "the Red Virgin—"

"By all the foul sins of Beelzebub," cried Cyril, striking the table, "am I giving a command or am I not? Send the girl up here, or I'll come and fetch her myself."

THE proprietor quitted the room, shaking his head. Lacherberg whispered a caution in Cyril's ear. He might as well have addressed his remarks to a brazen statue. The Arch-duke's curiosity was roused, and he meant to gratify it. Opposition strengthened his resolve; the mysterious suggestions of danger inflamed his desires.

"When I'm King of Grimland," he said with a laugh, "I shall make von Lacherberg my Archbishop. He preaches mercy to the vanquished, and continence towards women. Such doctrines emanating from such a spotless lamb are especially convincing."

Everyone joined in the laugh against the old dragoon, and in the midst of it the door opened. It was the Red Virgin. The colour that had been in her cheeks when speaking to Saunders had fled, leaving her face pale, bloodless, spiritual. Her eyes, always her predominant feature, were burning like steam coal in a blast furnace. Tall, commanding, austere, she



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