

OUR SOCIETY.

"Immer uel- niemals gut
Geröthet mit des Freundes Blut."

Which may be roughly translated :

"This weapon was used by Max von Erlichingen for the murder of Johanna Bodeck. Therefore do I, Johann Bodeck, accurse it by the power which has been bequeathed to me as one of the Council of the Rosy Cross. May it deal to others the grief it has dealt to me ! May every hand that grasps it be reddened in a friend's blood !

Ever evil, never good,
Reddened in a loved one's blood."

There was a dead silence in the room when Von Schlegel had finished spelling out this strange document.

"No such proof is needed, old friend," said Strauss. "At the very moment that you struck at me I forgave you. I well know that if the poor Professor were in the room he would say as much to Herr Schlessinger."

"Gentlemen," remarked the inspector, standing up and resuming his official tones, "this affair, strange as it is, must be treated according to rule and precedent. Sub-inspector Winkel, as your superior officer, I command you to arrest me upon a charge of murderously assulting you. You will commit me to prison for the night, together with Herr von Schlegel and Herr Wilhelm Schlessinger. We shall take our trial at the coming sitting of the judges. In the mean time take care of that piece of evidence"—pointing to the piece of parchment—"and, while I am away, devote your time and energy to utilizing the clue you have obtained in discovering who it was who slew Herr Schiffer, the Bohemian Jew."

The one missing link in the chain of evidence was soon supplied. On the 28th of December the wife of Reinmann, the janitor, coming into the bedroom after a short absence, found her husband hanging lifeless from a hook in the wall. On the table was a note in which he confessed to the murder of Schiffer the Jew, adding that the deceased had been his oldest friend, and that he had slain him without premeditation, in obedience to uncontrollable impulse. Remorse and grief had driven him to self-destruction; and he ended his confession by commending his soul to the mercy of Heaven.

The trial which ensued was one of the strangest which ever occurred in the whole history of jurisprudence. It was in vain that the prosecuting counsel urged the improbability of the explanation offered. The chain of facts was too strong, and the prisoners were unanimously acquitted. "This silver hatchet," remarked the judge in his summing up, "has hung untouched upon the wall in the mansion of the Graf von Schulling for nearly two hundred years. The shocking manner in which he met his death at the hands of his favorite house-steward is still fresh in your recollection. It has come out in evidence that, a few days before the murder, the steward had overhauled the old weapons and cleaned them. In doing this he must have touched the handle of this hatchet. Immediately afterward he slew his master, whom he had served faithfully for twenty years. I invite your most careful consideration, gentlemen of the jury, to this chain of facts, knowing that you will find a verdict according to your conscience, without fear or favor."

Perhaps the most interesting piece of evidence was this of Dr. Langemann, the eminent medico-jurist :

"I am not so sure, gentlemen, that there is need to fall back upon necromancy or the black art for an explanation of what has occurred. What I say is merely extraordinary: every suggestion may be of value. The Rosicrucians, to whom allusion is made in this paper, were the most profound chemists of the early Middle Ages, and included the principal alchemists, whose names have descended to us. Much as chemistry has advanced, there are some points in which the ancients were ahead of us, and in none more so than in the manufacture of poisons of subtle and deadly action. This man, Bopeck, as one of the elders of the Rosicrucians, possessed, no doubt, the recipe of many such mixtures, some of which, like the *aqua tofana* of the Medicis, would poison by penetrating through the pores of the skin. It is conceivable that the handle of this silver hatchet has been anointed by some preparation which is a diffusible poison, having the effect upon the human body of bringing on sudden and acute attacks of homicidal mania. In such attacks it is well known that the madman's rage is turned against those whom he loved best when sane. I have no proof to support me in my theory, and simply give it for what it is worth."

With this extract from the speech of the learned professor, we close the account of this famous trial.

Mrs. Bandbox: "You said the train I should take leaves at 10 30, didn't you?"

Booking Clerk: "Yes, madam; and I think I've told your that ten times already."

"Yes, I know you have, but my little boy says he likes to hear you talk."



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