

provide the corps with comfortable, well-woven woollen garments for the coming winter, like a generous patron!"

"No, I had no such idea, but thought it not impossible that you might know the name of some substantial, wealthy banking-house in Basle or Berne!"

"In Basle or Berne," said Glauroth, thoughtfully. "Wait a moment—who is in Basle! Ah! the old house of M. Brothers; and in Berne—" "That is quite sufficient," I exclaimed, "the M. Brothers, their name is well-known, and perfectly satisfactory!"

"Do you want to enter into any monetary transaction?"

I did not reply, but spoke of other matters, and at last sent my companion away on pretense that I wished to sleep.

And I did sleep soundly all night long, as only a man who is thoroughly wearied in body and mind can do, after forming a firm resolution which has at last given rest to his soul, and awoke the next morning greatly refreshed and strengthened. I rose, and after Friedrich had dressed my wounded arm, and placed it carefully in a sling, went out to look after my twelve Paladins of the Arian Uhlan race, and inspect their horses. When I had given Glauroth my orders for the day, I returned to my own room and wrote two letters. The first was to Mlle. Kuhn, and it is needless to mention that I did not accomplish my task until three or four attempts had been successively destroyed. The note contained a document which cost me far less trouble, as I made use of very few words.

After the letter was sealed I called Friedrich and sent him to deliver it to Mlle. Kuhn. My heart beat violently during the few moments he was absent, and I anxiously wondered whether she would receive a letter from me. Friedrich returned, and a hasty glance showed me that his hands were empty; Blanche had accepted my note.

CHAPTER IX.

"LOVE'S LABOUR WON."

I now wrote a second letter, addressed to my man of business at home, intending to ask the physician, who had promised to call again the next day, to take charge of it and mail it at Noroy.

I had just finished when the abbé entered and informed me that Mlle. Blanche wished to speak to me, and, if I was too weak to go up stairs, would come down to my rooms.

"You see I am much stronger, almost well, in fact," I interrupted; "may I go to Mlle. Blanche at once?"

The abbé bowed—his whole manner was more formal and constrained than the day before—and led the way. I followed him in a state of mind by no means easy to be described.

We passed through the well-known drawing-room into the small boudoir, which I had supposed to be occupied by Mme. Kuhn, on the occasion of my first visit. The apartment into which I was ushered was a very handsome one. Blanche sat near the window; she was very pale, and her eyes bore traces of recent weeping, but at this moment the tears were dried and she looked up with a stern, cold glance as I stood before her waiting for her to speak. My letter lay on a small table beside her.

I had held out my hand, with a feeling of deep emotion, but she did not seem to notice the gesture, and I took the chair to which she motioned me.

The abbé had remained in the drawing-room. "I wished to speak to you," she said, with the singular huskiness that sometimes pervaded her clear, bell-like tones, "because I must ask you a question. Promise me beforehand to tell the exact truth."

"I promise. What is your question?"

"An indiscreet and yet a very natural one. Are you very wealthy?"

"I, wealthy?"

"Why did the question surprise you?"

"Because it greatly embarrasses me."

"Embarrasses; yes, I can understand that," replied Blanche, in a harsh, almost angry tone. "You must acknowledge that you are very, very rich, and also that the step you have taken is terribly wanting in tact and extremely painful to me. You send me a bill of exchange for a hundred and ninety-five thousand francs on a banking-house in Basle—you to me! And you thought I would accept such a gift from you?"

"I thought," said I, greatly perplexed, "that I had told you in my letter I did not intend it as a gift to you. I should never have dreamed of being so presumptuous. The abbé informed me that you must indemnify the Government for the sum I have taken, and that you will thereby lose your whole property; since I have been the unfortunate cause of this necessity I did not hesitate to reimburse you. You are entirely innocent of the whole affair, and ought not to suffer from it. Perhaps I have shown a want of tact; that is very possible. In my present state of mind I cannot see anything very clearly. I was in despair at the story the abbé told me, and did not know what else to do."

"But I will not accept your bill of exchange on any consideration."

"That would grieve me more than I can tell you. If you accepted it I might think you would forgive me for the unwelcome part I have been compelled to play here, and no longer harbour such painful suspicions of my motives. It would soothe my sorrow, and I should be deeply grateful if you would restore my peace of mind, even though it cost you a struggle; pray accept it, Mlle. Blanche, although it may be hard for

you to do so; have mercy upon me. I am wretched enough to be compelled to leave Chateau Giron, and shall be ten times more unhappy if you refuse the offer I have made in the hope of securing at least exemption from your hatred."

"Unhappy," she repeated, with a scornful curl of the lip. "When a man is young and a millionaire, like you, grief is generally of no long duration. Take back your bill of exchange."

"You are very cruel," said I, my lips quivering in spite of myself. "Consider, Blanche, can you not accept from me what I have taken from you?"

"No," she answered, in the same stern tones. "Even if you suffer from self-reproach, or rather, if it annoys you, because you have been forced to bring this misfortune upon me—it would still be a great piece of extravagance to attempt to remove so trifling a cause of regret from your conscience by such a gift. No sensible man would squander so much money to settle an affair, which, after all, is so trivial. Two hundred thousand francs is a large sum even for a millionaire, and I will not countenance such lavishness."

She uttered the words in a strangely bitter tone.

"Listen to me, Blanche," I replied. "You need this property. A young lady who has been reared amid surroundings like yours requires wealth; it is a necessity of life to her. With me the case is very different. If you accept this sum I shall still have enough to support me in comfort, nay even luxury, for one or two years; I need no more, I have no one to provide for, and in a year or two I shall have a place in the civil service, and the Government will support me!"

She looked at me in the greatest astonishment, and asked hastily: "Then you are not a millionaire?"

"No, I am a younger son; my elder brother inherited a large property from my father, while I received nearly fifty-six thousand thalers from my mother. This bill of exchange is for about fifty-two thousand—you see I can be called a millionaire."

She gazed at me with an expression of the most un concealed astonishment, then grew still paler than before, and taking the bill of exchange from the table, began to tear it into the tiniest fragments. Her hands trembled as she did so, her lips quivered; there was a singular expression upon her countenance whose meaning I totally failed to understand.

"Blanche," said I, in an imploring tone, overpowered by a sudden emotion, the cause of which it would have been very difficult for me to define, and rising from my chair I tried to take her hand.

She hastily withdrew, turned away, and covered her face with her both hands. I saw that she was weeping, the tears streamed through her slender fingers; at last she sobbed aloud, started up, and strove to leave the room.

I detained her, passed my arm around her waist, and tried to draw her towards me. But she disengaged herself, almost violently, from my embrace. "No, no, go, say no more!" she exclaimed; "go, go!"

And the next moment she had disappeared through the curtained doorway.

I was no longer master of my thoughts. My brain reeled, I could not exactly understand what had happened, or the meaning of the scene, and was almost weak enough to burst into tears.

I returned to my room almost in a rage, struggling passionately to repress the tears that sprang to my eyes. The wrath was directed against myself, whose duty as a soldier demanded that I should remain composed and cool, although in the midst of death and desolation, and surrounded by misery in a thousand forms; yet I allowed myself to be unmanned and crushed by the sight of the sorrow I had caused this French girl, who was, after all, a German, and sternly denied her country. What was the matter? I had been compelled to deprive her of a pile of wretched, miserable gold, and wished to indemnify her for it. Could she not accept the reparation from me? Why? And if not, what had that to do with our love? Why should the money sunder our hearts? Was it not bad enough that the concealed board had induced each to try to outwit the other? And if I had won the game and wrested the gold from her, had she not played the farce of detaining me at Colomier, and striven to render me harmless by means of the abbé's sleeping potion, whose effects upon Friedrich I had noticed? Had I not borne the sting and torture of the most painful suspicions during whole days, for the sake of this accursed pelf? Was it not base, contemptible, narrow-minded, to regard the loss as something which must separate us forever? What can such a pitiful occurrence have to do with human hearts and souls? If she did not see and feel this, if she could not realize how much I must have suffered in obeying the voice of duty—then, then all that remained for me to do was to renounce her utterly.

The reasoning was like that adopted by all lovers. Very logical, very convincing, and of undoubted accuracy in the results deduced. And yet there is not a drop of consolation, not an atom of comfort to be derived from it!

I destroyed the now useless letter I had written to my man of business, and threw myself on a sofa to decide whether I should remain here, or request to be relieved from my post on account of my wound. Surely the latter was the best, the only course for me to pursue. A

few moments after, the physician came in and almost deprived me of the pretext by assuring me that if I would keep my arm in a sling two days longer, and be perfectly quiet, I need have no further anxiety concerning the wound. Strange to say, I was glad to have him deprive me of the excuse; in the depths of my heart I preferred—to stay. The human heart is a very contradictory thing.

This Noroy doctor was really a very talkative, clever little man; the first time he came he performed his work rather silently, but on this occasion he was very confidential and communicative. He began to speak of the war; of the philosophical Germans, who, however, had been so unphilosophical as to seek to battle with so noble a nation as the French; of Bismarck, that "Monsieur Shylock" as he called him, who wished to cut a piece from the living body of France, just like the horrible Jew of Venice.

"Why," exclaimed the little doctor, "why did not the Germans make peace with France after the battle of Sedan, after they had captured and delivered us from the emperor, who declared war against them, *cette incapacité inconnue*! We should then have been forever bound to them by ties of the deepest gratitude, and the two great nations, hand in hand, would have marched on towards the common goal of humanity."

I was not very much inclined to enter into an argument upon the subject, but could not help answering earnestly:

"To be sure, doctor, Germany would then have played her old rôle of moderation, in return for which the sympathies of all surrounding nation are against her; Holland, Belgium, Sweden, Switzerland, all the petty rabble of countries, look down upon her, grudge her her victories, and deride her fame. Germany has at last learned from experience to be a little more prudent. She once before freed France from an Emperor, and left her territories inviolate, asking no restoration of her former boundaries, not even Strasbourg, the centre of German life. How grateful France has been for such consideration we have learned in the course of years; she has constantly longed to obtain possession of our Rhine, threatened us with war, more than forced us to prepare for conflict, and at last suddenly hurled the torch of battle into our faces. Do you call that gratitude?"

"The France of to-day is not the France of 1814 and 1840," replied the doctor.

"I will give you the satisfaction," I answered, "of calling France a lion, which we peaceful Germans unfortunately have as a neighbour. A hornet stung the lion, and so infuriated him that he roared at us, wished to devour us, and stretched out his claws towards us. We have surrounded him and removed the hornet. Shall we now play the part of the slave Androcles, and rely upon his gratitude? That would be very foolish. It is much safer for us to cut off his claws."

The doctor shrugged his shoulders.

"My idea of the only way in which a solid and lasting friendship and peace can be established between us, is very different from yours," I continued. "I believe we must prove with indelible strength that we have just as much haughty self-consciousness as the other nations. Then they will begin to respect us—and you must acknowledge, doctor, that without respect there can be neither love nor friendship! To induce France to love us we must show her we are her equals, no longer the servants of the glittering, haughty, aristocratic queen of nations! We have been the slaves of lordly nations long enough. We have made the inventions by which they have become great, yet, like servants who clothe themselves in their cast-off garments, we have adopted their fashions, imitated their customs, spoken their languages. Can any nation respect, be grateful to us, while we talk as if we were indebted to all? Why has France always longed to wrest the Rhine from us, and whenever opportunity offered, march to Berlin? Because she considers herself superior to us; if we show her that we stand on an equal footing, she will no longer consider it beneath her dignity to be on friendly terms with us. If we desire the friendship of France we must deprive her of Alsace and Lorraine. We have a right to them, and a man who is secure of his power does not allow his rights to be wrested from him. Only fools are moderate; only fools do not value their own rights, and know how to uphold them."

The doctor saw that he could not induce me to look at things from his point of view. But he took his leave very calmly, smiling in the proud assurance that the course of events would soon take a different turn, and the "Republic" would drive the "barbarian hordes" from the "sacred soil" of France.

After his departure, I relapsed into my former painful train of thought. This man had spoken of reconciliation between France and Germany! Was it possible that two young hearts, which really had no cause of separation except that war had broken out between their respective nations, should never find means of reconciliation also?

War! It was like an evil genius sent forth from hell to sprinkle its poisonous venom over everything that lived, bloomed, and prospered; on every blessing, every joy, every cheerful human hearthstone, every warmly throbbing heart!

I had never felt so before, never been seized with such an abhorrence of it; it was certainly very egotistical that I should realize its woes in my utmost soul; only when they touched my life,

These thoughts drove me out of doors, into the open air; I ordered my horse to be saddled, and accompanied by two of my men rode across the bridge over the Oignon to take a short excursion along the other shore of the river.

When I returned at the end of an hour I found a letter lying upon the table in my room. I did not know the hand, but it was evidently a lady's, and, greatly agitated, I broke the seal.

The paper was signed Blanche. She wrote as follows:

"I cannot understand my own feelings. I am angry with you and with myself, yet, when I strive to discover why I am angry with you, I could weep, because I cannot explain it. I must confess that I have wronged you, I feel that you have inflicted bitter mortifications upon me, yet neither consciousness gives me a pang, as would be but natural under such circumstances; and this weakness, this—what shall I term it?—this sensitiveness angers me against myself. Perhaps there may be also a feeling of helplessness, because I do not know what I want. At all events you have shown so strong a character that it is no disgrace to acknowledge I am vanquished. As the conquered party, I sue for peace. While I admit you have cured me of my foolish contempt for a man's power of self-government, I ask you to acknowledge that I have done nothing wrong, nothing unworthy, when I sought to deceive, and accepted the abbé's proposal to make your vigilance unavailing by means of the powder! If that was wrong I could not help it. If the matter had not concerned property intrusted to my care, which I wished to save for my native land, I could not have resisted my longing to put an end to the state of mutual suspicion which made me so unhappy. By the step you took this morning you have proved my distrust to be perfectly unfounded. I tell you so frankly; do you also acquit me of all reproach, and when you leave here, think kindly of

"BLANCHE K."

I need not say how happy these few hastily written lines made me; so happy that I took courage to go to her at once. I found her standing in the drawing-room. She looked up timidly, but did not move as I approached, and seemed to understand that this interview would have a decisive influence on her whole life.

Her manner, I must confess, somewhat damped my courage, and it was in a very confused tone that I began:

"Blanche—could you believe that I had any other feeling than admiration for your courage, your firmness, your presence of mind, your high-mindedness; any other thought than despair over the misfortune I was compelled to bring upon you? Oh, let us make peace? We can do so. You say that you have seen your suspicions were unfounded, that my love for you was no hypocrisy, but a true, deep, and heartfelt emotion. Prove that my distrust did you injustice, force me to request your forgiveness on my knees."

"What distrust?" said she in an undertone, her eyes fixed upon the ground.

"The suspicion that your kindness, your sympathy for me, only prompted by your patriotism, and designed to make me weak and submissive to your will."

"You can no longer remember that," she replied in a low, hurried tone. "Yet, you might have the same cause as I to harbour distrust of of you. Very well, I will give you the proof you desire. You requested my permission to return to us after peace was declared. You then told me all sorts of things, I don't exactly remember what they were," she added, with a slight smile, "but I grant you the permission to come back when peace is concluded."

Wild with delight, I caught her hand and kissed it passionately.

"Thanks! thanks!" I exclaimed; "and now it seems to me as if peace had already been concluded, a peace perfect, honourable, and blessed to both combatants! May I not therefore be permitted to repeat the words you have forgotten?"

She allowed her hand to rest in mine, but shook her head resolutely, and said earnestly:

"No, no, not yet, not yet! You must not ask me to forget everything so quickly. So long as war rages between our countries we must not be selfish, and think only of our own feelings. Ask nothing more of me! It would not be well, either for you or myself. The bridge you wish to build," she added, with a bright smile, "must not be the work of an hour, it is to be firm and lasting."

"It is only to bear us, our two selves, Blanche, and so far as I am concerned I feel light enough to walk on air!"

She shook her head with the same bright smile, and replied:

"Oh, no! the bridge must be able to bear very weighty objections, earnest resolution, and determined opposition which will be made by my relatives!"

I need not say that in spite of this prohibition I placed no curb on my powers of eloquence. How was it possible when my heart was overflowing with joy? In other respect I was compelled to yield to Blanche. Our engagement must remain a secret from her family; and the only consolation she gave me was the permission to come to her daily for several hours, in order to—explain "Faust."

"In the abbé's presence?" I asked.

"In the abbé's presence—unless your German heresies drive him away."

I explained "Faust" very faithfully, but, I am, was extremely heretical, and even far sur-