

ren. The day after to-morrow it will be the Butcher of Wolfsnaden."

"We contemplate the entire elimination of the unfit," said Meyer in his blandest tones.

"We inaugurate a revolution," said Drechsler. "The people cry out for liberty and good government. There is no liberty while the Rathsherren retain their powers; no good government while Cyril of Wolfsnaden is Regent-elect of Grimland."

"I am a Radical and the son of a Radical," said Saunders thoughtfully, "but I don't much believe in mob-rule, either in theory or practice. Also being the offspring of a successful business man, I have a sneaking respect for hereditary prerogatives. Nevertheless, whether our motives are vengeance, as in Fritz's case, or social progress, as in Drechsler's, I suspect the only chance of young Karl coming to the throne—which, frankly, is all I care about—is to let you wild men work your wicked way."

"And what do you propose to do?" asked Drechsler bluntly.

"I propose to escort two charming ladies round the slums of the Morast. It is possible, nay probable, that I may see my way to combining a little business with my pleasure."

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### The "Three Cats."

SAUNDERS waited for Fritz and his party to leave, and then descended to the street with his wife and the Perownes. His motor-sleigh was waiting for them outside the north entrance of the Palace, and Saunders, entrusting the driving to the chauffeur, took his seat with the three ladies in the body of the sleigh. The streets were even fuller of people than before, and the atmosphere of excitement which the Perownes noticed on arriving had increased, if anything, during the last half-hour.

A troop of Dragoons, heavily cloaked and with drawn swords "at the carry" trotted past them in the Konigsstrasse. Mr. and Mrs. Saunders exchanged glances.

"Nolda taking his men to guard the Neptunburg," said the former. "An unnecessary precaution, but Meyer never leaves anything to chance."

Some of the crowd cheered the soldiers, and some jeered at them. Cheers and jeers were alike meaningless, but the atmosphere was charged with electricity, and noise of some kind was necessary to relieve the surcharged feelings of the populace.

Presently, gathering speed, they overtook a rapidly driven sleigh, wherein sat an elderly man, whose imperious features were set in the grimest lines, and whose face was almost as white as his bleached hair and imperial.

"The Freiherr of Kraag," said Saunders. "His temper appears ruffled, but his control is admirable. He knows me well enough, but his blood is too blue to take cognizance of a tradesman's son."

"Where is he going?" asked Mrs. Perowne.

"I should say to his club," Saunders replied, "an exclusive affair in the Topaz-strasse, where the Rathsherren foregather and dream dreams of by-gone grandeur. He will want to find out who has given their secret decision away, and judging from his expression he will make himself thoroughly objectionable to his colleagues."

The Freiherr's progress was accompanied by hootings and cries of hostility, unmixed with any greetings of a favourable character.

The Rathsherren's choice of Regent was bitterly resented by all classes, and the sight of the President inflamed their wrath to an alarming pitch. The cries in fact became so powerful in volume and so threatening in character that Saunders rose from his seat and gazed back. A wedge of people had blocked the Freiherr's progress, and his handsome conveyance was surrounded by a swarm of dangerously angry citizens.

"Stop, Adolf," cried Saunders suddenly. The sleigh stopped and Saunders got out.

"Get inside," he said brusquely to the chauffeur, and as the man obeyed, he himself mounted the driver's seat. Turning the car he drove straight back

towards the Freiherr's blocked conveyance. The Freiherr himself was seated bolt upright in his sleigh, looking neither to right nor left. His pale face expressed anger and contempt, but not a shade of fear. His ears were assailed by a flood of insults, but his lips were compressed in a frozen silence that scorned retort. Fists and sticks were brandished before his face, but the expressionless eyes never blinked or faltered in their glassy fixity. By his side sat a gigantic wolfhound, a splendid animal for whom the Freiherr had a very genuine affection. The beast, comprehending dimly that danger threatened his beloved master, occasionally bared his teeth in a low growl, but the Freiherr's hand restrained him from overt action.

Saunders sounded his horn vigorously, and drove at his top speed into the press of humanity. By a miracle he hurt nobody and found himself alongside of the Freiherr conveyance.

The crowd held back. Someone raised a cry of "Saunders," and there was a brief-lived burst of cheering.

The President scarcely noticed the opportune arrival, but took off his hat to the ladies with a gesture of constrained politeness.

"Where do you wish to go to, sir?" asked Saunders.

"I am intending to visit my club," replied the Freiherr stiffly.

"Is it absolutely necessary for you to make this visit?" Saunders demanded.

"If it were not important I should scarcely have turned out on such a night," was the ungracious retort.

"So I supposed. Unfortunately one man's will is not much use against a hundred."

"A gentleman's will, sir, is more important than the squealing and grunting of a herd of swine."

"More important perhaps, but under the circumstances quite ineffectual. Do you wish for my assistance?"

The Freiherr's frown deepened in perplexity.

"I do not much care about accepting assistance," he said, "though I recognize that your offer is well meant. Are there no police about?"

"So far as I can observe," said Saunders dryly, "there are not."

"Then as these people appear to be friends of yours, you might suggest to them that their proximity is exceedingly offensive to me."

"If I put it as tactfully as that," said Saunders, "the Rathsherren would have to elect a new President at their next meeting."

"I am not afraid."

"SO I perceive. But you are, nevertheless, in danger." Saunders bent down and lowered his voice to a whisper. "At the moment the Freiherr of Kraag is one of the three most unpopular men in Weidenbruck," he said. "It is possible for him in a few seconds to become one of the most beloved."

"How?"

"By rising in his sleigh, and saying these words: 'We have provisionally elected Cyril of Wolfsnaden to the Regency. We see that our choice is unpopular, and we shall not confirm it.'"

For the first time the Freiherr smiled, and the smile transformed his face from a mask of impassivity to a mould of bitterness.

"I understand you are connected with the millinery business, Herr Saunders," he said. "If my ancestors had been tradesmen instead of soldiers the town from which I derive my title would have been a Turkish outpost, and Grimland would now be a province of the Ottoman Empire."

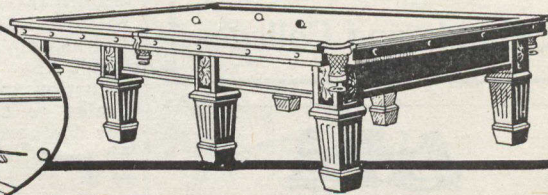
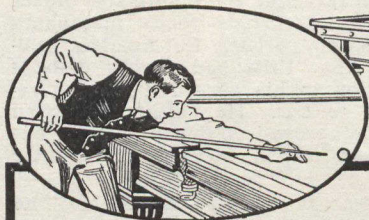
Any other man but Saunders would have flushed at these words. The Englishman laughed lightly.

"In my country," he said, "the millinery spirit and the military spirit are not mutually incompatible. I gather that you refuse to adopt my suggestion."

(To be continued.)

#### Why He Refused.

A YOUNG theologian named Fiddle Refused to accept his degree, "For," said he "tis enough to be Fiddle Without being Fiddle, D. D." —Philadelphia Public Ledger.



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