

at the diggings of the friends he was on the way to look up, a half-squadron of Barnekow's Hussars who are quartered in a deserted château. They gave me some sandwiches and beer, and then I went on by myself to the Villa Laon, where Madame de Bayard"—he stopped and added in a low voice—"used to live."

Something in the tone attracted the attention of the Chancellor. He repeated:

"Used to. . . . Does she not, then, live there now? Has she gone with M. de Straz—the pair of love-birds flown together? . . ."

Said P. C. Breagh, seized with a shudder that knocked his knees together, and speaking in a low voice:

"I—I beg of Your Excellency to spare her your irony. Madame de Bayard is dead!"

"So! . . ."

The Minister's ejaculation was followed by the order:

"Now the details! . . . Has she died naturally, or by accident—or by a murderer's hand?"

P. C. Breagh said, lowering his voice apprehensively:

"She was killed by a shell. There was a bombardment from Mont Valérien. . . . It broke out at about a quarter past two this morning—just as I reached the Villa Laon. . . ."

"Ah! now I understand how you got that love-token on your forehead," said the Minister.

Breagh nodded, and wiped his wet forehead with a blood-stained handkerchief, and shuddered and went on:

"Nobody had gone to bed when I got to the villa. The blinds of what I could see was a dining-room were up, and the curtains all drawn back. . . . The room was brilliantly lighted, lots of mirrors and crystal girandoles. It was like a scene on the stage, looking at it from the snowy garden. Shin deep in snow, because the paths had not been cleared. . . . You could not tell where the paths were, in