

The Death-Dice



WILLIAM of Germany strode quickly up and down his room in the Imperial Palace. His brow was dark and stern, and there was a cruel gleam in the grey eyes that boded ill for the one that was the cause of his anger. "Betrayed," he muttered, pausing in his walk, "betrayed, and by some one of my own soldiers: oh! my country, 'tis hard to defend thee, when those that are sworn to protect, turn against thee: but woe to the traitor, should he ever be known; and by all the Saints, he must be found." So saying, he strode to the table and rang the bell viciously. A page entered almost instantly. "Send the Count von Hammerstein to me immediately" commanded the Emperor. The page departed, leaving William to continue his moody promenade, until interrupted by the entrance of the Count von Hammerstein, the Minister of Justice. "Sire, you sent for me?" said the Count. "Yes, von Hammerstein, you know, of course, that our plans for the southern campaign were betrayed to the Austrians by some of our troops."

"I know, sire, and regret it exceedingly." "Regrets are useless now, but there yet remains vengeance, and, by all that's sacred, I'll have it. Count, set your men to work; spare no pains to find the traitor and let him be brought before me."

"It shall be done, sire, instantly." So saying the Minister bowed and withdrew, leaving the Emperor to continue his rapid walk and his bitter meditation.

The scene changes to the Court of Justice within the Imperial Palace of Germany. On a raised seat, surrounded by his ministers, sits Emperor William. The same stern look is yet upon his face and the same ominous light shines from his piercing grey eyes. But this time his gaze is not on the floor, but on two men who stand bound before him. They are both fine specimens of manhood, and as they stand there in the uniform of the German army, they are soldiers of whom any leader might well be proud. Yet