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à la Quina du Pérou

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WILSON'S INVALIDS' PORT
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with the damp-cold wind freezing the blood as soon as it wells from the gaping wound?"

"We must get help," said Saunders. She laughed mirthlessly.

"Help! We must get help! But how can we get help, when there are no sleighs to carry him to a hospital, no wayfarers to lend a hand. I have knocked at a dozen houses on either side of the street, but they are close shuttered, and as impenetrable as the gates of Heaven."

"Then we must carry him, ourselves."

"I have tried, but I am a woman and Paul Roeder is a big-framed lad. I achieved nothing but an addition to his suffering."

"Perhaps I might be more successful," suggested the Englishman.

"You—you have a wounded arm."

"Also an unwounded one," Saunders rejoined. "I am fairly strong, and I fancy I could get him as far as the Neptunburg, if you could help me get him into a good carrying position."

"You will hurt yourself."

"Possibly, but that is a minor detail. Come, my girl, let us make the attempt, anyhow."

SAUNDERS knelt down in the snow beside the stricken Roeder, and got his left arm under the sufferer's body.

"Now lift his legs, Red Virgin, while I am getting to my feet. So!"

Paul Roeder was, as the Red Virgin had said, a big-framed lad, and Saunders' strength, handicapped as he was by his wounded arm, was taxed to the uttermost. Nevertheless he strode bravely on, setting his lips, and putting a fair pace to his steps. But the farther he went the heavier grew his burden, the more imperious the desire to shift the weight on to his other arm. The sweat poured down his face, and the breath came in thick gasps from his lips. What had at first been discomfort became acute suffering, and the cramp in his arm grew almost unbearable.

The Red Virgin was not oblivious to his distress.

"Set the man down and let him die," she said suddenly.

The sentiment astounded Saunders, but he vouchsafed no reply, save a slight increase of his tottering gait.

"After all, what is a life?" pursued his companion.

"That is a question neither you nor I can answer," he replied in gasps, and struggled gamely on.

"At least rest a minute," she persisted.

"We must run no risks," he retorted.

At last the long battle was ended—and won. The gates of the Neptunburg were reached, and Saunders set his senseless burden in the porter's room.

He flung himself into a chair and remained for a few minutes silent and motionless.

"Schickert," he said presently to the amazed porter, "who is the officer on guard?"

"Major von Arheidt, Excellency."

"Then take him this note," said Saunders, rising and going to a desk that stood in the corner. He took a piece of paper and a pencil, and wrote with his left hand:

"Please dispatch a couple of men for the nearest doctor, and bring him back under escort to the porter's room, where there is a wounded man in whom I take a personal interest."

"Thanking you in anticipation,
"R. Saunders."

He gave the porter the note and sent him to find Major Arheidt.

"Now," said Saunders, opening a cupboard door, "I'm going to have a glass of wine—and so are you."

He took out a bottle of kurdesheim and filled a couple of glasses, one of which he offered to the Red Virgin. She shook her head.

"I never drink wine," she said, "and if I did, I would not drink it here."

"Here?" he repeated.

"We are in the Neptunburg—a royal palace."

"And a very good place too on a night like this. Come, drink to Roeder's better health."

For the first time in his life Saunders saw the Red Virgin smile; but



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