

Nolda. "The constitution is suspended, martial law is proclaimed throughout Weidenbruck, and Cyril of Wolfsnaden and others are outlawed. You will find notices to that effect posted on most of the street corners; only unfortunately there is no one about to read them."

"Is the President of the Rathsherren outlawed?"

"There are no Rathsherren. They were abolished by an Order-in-Council at five o'clock this evening."

"But these papers decree—"

"Are effective as far as the range of a dragoon's carbine—no further. That is why we have to be brutal. Cyril's boldness, hated though he is, has touched the popular imagination. For the moment he is almost beloved. Had he succeeded in getting Karl to Wolfsnaden, I believe he would have been all that he desired to be."

"You mean that we must touch the public imagination with a little brutality?"

"It is the only way," replied Nolda. "But let me offer you the protection of my troop. The city is being patrolled."

Saunders shook his head. "I can look after myself, thanks," he said. "Please continue your heroic charges against overwhelming odds."

Nolda laughed a farewell, and set his men in motion again down the empty thoroughfare.

Saunders resumed his progress and his broken train of thought. He approved the paper decrees. Such measures were necessary, and proved that Drechsler was no second-rate demagogue with a front of brass and a heart of wax. But young Karl was the master-card of the situation, and whoever held him held a vitally important trump when the turning point of the game was reached. Half a dozen wild schemes for regaining his person suggested themselves to him, but not one stood the test of analysis. A house-to-house search in the Morast was like trying to catch one particular rabbit in a peculiarly labyrinthine rabbit warren.

**F**RITZ, who for the moment was at least alive, would no longer remain so if the hunt became too pressing. And Fritz's life was invaluable from every point of view.

He turned down a side street to take a short cut back to the Neptunburg. So engrossed in thought was he that he almost stumbled over the prostrate form of a man lying across the snowy pavement. He halted abruptly and saw that the man's head, bleeding but bandaged, was in the lap of a thinly clad young woman. "Red Virgin!" he ejaculated.

A pair of grey-green eyes met his. "So, Herr Saunders, we meet again. And always in the presence of death."

"This poor fellow—?"

"Is breathing his last. A body of soldiers met him. Soldiers, did I say?" she echoed fiercely. "I should have said butchers. He was committing the crime of being in the public streets. He should have fled and hidden himself, but—" She hesitated.

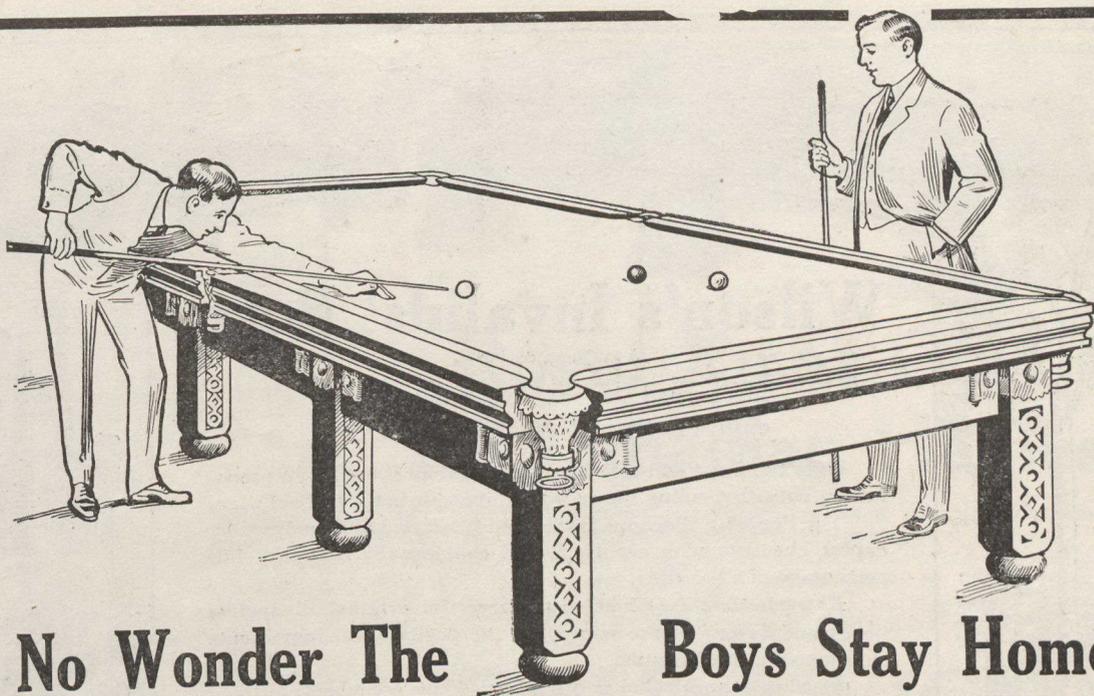
"But what?" insisted Saunders. "His girl had just promised to marry him. His brain was among the stars. You, an Englander, do not understand such things. But Grimlanders are creatures of warmer passions than you can comprehend, and when they are in love there is no room for fear in their breasts. A dirty hound in the King's uniform struck him, and he fell, never to rise again."

Saunders bent over the prostrate man—touched beyond his wont. Despite the bandage he was bleeding fast, and open wounds with the temperature below zero spell gangrene and a speedy decease.

"I have a handkerchief in my left-hand pocket," he said; "will you kindly extract it. My right arm, as you know, is not very serviceable at present."

The Red Virgin obeyed. "This will form another bandage," she said, applying it to the lacerated temple; "but to what effect?"

"While there is life there is hope." "Hope in Weidenbruck!" she repeated bitterly. "Hope on such a night as this! Do you suppose a wounded man can live in the streets



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