

BESIEGED

"Yes—yes," she gasped, "and you?"

"Never better."

His arm burned like a live coal, but the madness of battle was in his blood and he did not care—so long as Marishka did not know of his injury. The firing had ceased for the moment, as he crawled up and peered through the loophole.

"We've beaten them, Marishka," he cried triumphantly. "They've gone back—I see no timbers. They're doing something. I can see quite plainly now—fastening a handkerchief to the muzzle of a rifle." And as she rose to look, "Don't expose yourself. It may be a trick. For God's sake, keep down."

He picked up the magazine rifle beside him and thrust it through the loophole, covering the two men who were advancing to the brink of the abyss. In the pale light he marked the figure of Windt quite clearly. The other man wore the uniform of an officer of Austrian infantry. And now he heard the voice of the officer raised in parley.

"Schloss Szolnok—a truce!"

For reply Renwick thrust the muzzle of his rifle further through the loophole.

"In the name of the Emperor of Austria, I command you to deliver Herr Hauptmann Leo Goritz."

Renwick laughed madly.

"I regret that that is impossible."

"I beg that you will listen to reason. Austrian troops are all about you. You cannot resist by daylight. If you will deliver the person of Herr Hauptmann Goritz and Countess Strahni, we will leave you in peace."

Renwick paused. Far below in the valley to his right,