

character. Without any deep feeling she had the gift of surface emotion, and the actress's power of employing that gift artistically and effectively. She understood the science of garbing an excellent figure to its utmost advantage, and intuitively adopted the right colour scheme that goes best with a brilliant chestnut coiffure. In a word, she had all the feminine superficiality without the unexpected depths that usually lie concealed even in the most frivolous woman's soul; but her beauty, her birth, and, above all, her art, made her a definite factor of importance in the existing political situation.

Releasing the faded blind, she turned with a sigh and a tightening of the lips to the comfortless chamber which served her for a sitting-room; then seating herself in an arm-chair that had once been crimson, and was now a sickly terra-cotta, she picked up a big photograph-album that reposed on a small table of japanned bamboo-work. It was a fine album of green Morocco leather with a royal coat of arms stamped in gold upon it, a relic of bygone grandeur which accompanied her on all her travels. The first page was occupied by the presentment of her late husband, King Karl XXII. of Grimland, taken in the prime of his manhood. The features awoke no chord of tenderness in her bosom, no regrets for the brief period when Karl had wooed her with the devotion of an ardent, thoughtless boy for a lovely, thoughtless woman. But the photograph had some words of sentimental import written on it, and for that tribute to her charms, if for no other reason, the thing held a place in her pictorial shrine.

Next came a photograph of Saunders, breathing an atmosphere of self-satisfaction which would have been irritating in its complacency had not the keen, cool eyes and the masterful chin proclaimed reasons enough for the good opinion the Englishman possessed of himself. There were no words written on this photograph. The ex-Queen wished there were, but the picture had been purchased from an ordinary stationer's, and was not even signed. Saunders was a Northerner, a pulseless Englishman whose political movements were uninfluenced by the magnet of femininity, which counts for so much on the banks of the Nidderkessel. Next there was a likeness of Fritz, looking ridiculously like a beautiful girl, with an audacious superscription "to his devoted Charlotte." There were plenty of others, culminating in a fierce vignette of the Archduke Cyril. It was at this she was gazing when there came a knock at the door.

Her eyes lit up expectantly.

"Herein," she cooed.

The old woman who attended on her appeared in the doorway.

"A visitor to see Your Majesty."

"Show him in," she responded, without inquiring as to the visitor's sex.

She was right; the eagerly awaited one had arrived. Cyril of Wolfnsaden entered her humble apartment.

Now that his entire person, and not his head alone, could be seen, the Archduke appeared as a man of medium height, slightly bow-legged, and very broad of shoulder—so broad, that it was wonderful how he could have squeezed himself into a beer-cask. His habitually fierce countenance wore an air of palpable dejection, but brightened momentarily as he approached the ex-Queen.

Bending low over her hand and touching it with his lips, he murmured the endearing epithet, "Schatz." Charlotte smiled with obvious pleasure.

"I have supported your cause with the Rathsherren," she said. "I felt confident of success, but your face is gloomy, and tells of failure."

"I am Regent-elect, nevertheless."

"Then why this air of depression?"

"Blood of a dog! Charlotte, I was rolled in my beer-barrel down an inclined plane at the rate of sixty miles an hour."

"You are hurt?" she demanded, with a swift glance of anxiety.

Cyril laughed scornfully.

"Hurt! No, I am not hurt. I was born and bred among the mountains of Wolfnsaden. I spent my youth ski-

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