

Sophy of Kravonia.

By ANTHONY HOPE.
Author of "The Prisoner of Zenda".
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Hawthorne.

(Continued)

The plan was not perfect. There was wisdom as well as courage in question. Yet he had been, unaided, himself to be right in point of wisdom, too, had Marie pressed him on it. But her force was spent, her violence ended, and with it her expostulations. But not her terror and dismay. She threw herself into a chair and covered her face with her hands, sobbing bitterly. The prince gently caressed her shaking shoulder, but he raised his eyes to Sophy, who had stood quiet through the scene.

"Are you ready for what comes, Sophy?" he asked.

"Monsieur, I am ready," she said, with head erect and her face set, but the next instant she broke into a low, yet rich and low laugh. It mingled strangely with Marie's sobs, who were gradually dying away, yet sounded still, an undertone of discord with Sophy's mirth. She stretched out her hands toward him again, whispering in an earnest voice: "I thought that we should be afraid!"

Out of the dusk of the quiet evening came suddenly the blare of a trumpet, blown from Volens by a favoring breeze. It sounded every evening at nightfall to warn the herdsmen in the hills of the closing of the gates and had so sounded from time beyond man's memory.

The prince raised his hand to bid her listen.

"In good Volens there is watch and ward for us!"

The echoes of the blast rang for an instant around the hills.

"And there is watch and ward and the glad sound of a trumpet in my heart, monsieur," she said.

The sobs were still, laughter was hushed, the echoes died away. In utter silence their hands and their eyes met.

"They serve to the better of our hearts, monsieur," she said.

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References to the rising sun also may breed reflection in the satellites of a setting orb. Neither Countess Ellenburg nor General Stenovic had been as well advised as usual in this essentially trumpery matter.

In short, nervousness had been betrayed. Whence came it? What did it mean? If it meant anything, could it mean that thing to account? The king's favorite attendant was no favorite with Countess Ellenburg. For Lepege, too, the time might be very short! He would not injure the boy, the angry mother had believed, or at least suggested, but without question of that, there was no harm in a man's looking out for himself, or if there were Lepege was clear in thinking that the countess and the general were not at all preachers of such a highly exacting gospel.

Lepege concluded that he had some thing to sell. His wares were a suspicion and a fact. Selling the suspicion wronged nobody. He would give no warranty with it—except emptor. Selling the fact was disobedience to the king, his mind and wits were not "hairy," no, said Lepege, with a bit of causticity. Besides, the king, too, had scolded him.

Moreover, the Prince of Slavna had always treated M. Emile Lepege with distinction and consideration. The Bourbons, no doubt, stretched out hands to la belle France in M. Lepege's person.

Something to sell. Who was his buyer? Whose interest could be won by his suspicion, whose friendship bought with his fact? The ultimate buyer was plain enough. But Lepege could not go to Praskol, and he did not approve of correspondence, especially with Colonel Starfutz in private control of the Starfutz in private control of the Starfutz and a personal interview. At least he could take a walk. The servants must not prisoners. Even conspirators must stop somewhere on pain of doing their own cooking and the rest. At a quarter of six in the evening, having given the king his dinner and made him comfortable for the next two hours, Lepege laid forth and took the road to Slavna. He was very carefully dressed, wore a flower in his buttonhole and had dropped a discreet hint about a lady in conversation with his piers. If ladies often demand excuses they may furnish them too. Present seriousness invoked aid from bygone frivolity.

At 10 o'clock he returned, still more spruce and orderly and with a well-satisfied air about him. He had found a purchaser for his suspicion and his fact. His pocket was the better for it. The king had received flattering expressions of gratitude and assurances of favor. He felt that he had raised a buttress against future assaults of fortune. He entered the king's dressing room, in his usual careless and untrusting manner. He was not aware that General Stenovic had quitted it just a quarter of an hour before, bearing in his hand a document which he had submitted for his majesty's signature. The king had signed it and indorsed the cover "Urgent."

"Ah, Lepege, where have you been?" asked the king.

"Just to get a little air and drink a glass of the Golden Lion."

"The Golden Lion? That's that!" smiled the king. Evidently his anger had passed. Perhaps he wished to show as much to an old servant whom he liked and valued.

Conscience-stricken, or so appearing, Lepege drew the flower from his coat. "I beg your majesty's pardon. I ought to have removed it before entering your majesty's presence, but I forgot to do so."

The king gave a weary yawn. "Yes, I'll go to bed, once, Lepege, and let me sleep as long as I can. This flag end of life isn't very amusing."

He passed his hand over his forehead. "My head aches. Isn't the room very close, Lepege? Open the window."

"It has begun to rain, sir."

"Never mind. Let's have the rain too. At least it's fresh."

Lepege opened a window which looked over the Krath. The king rose. Lepege hastened to offer him his arm, which his majesty accepted. They went together to the window. A sudden storm had gathered. Rain was pelting down in big drops.

"It looks like being a rough night," remarked the king.

"I'm afraid it does, sir," Lepege agreed.

"We're lucky to be going to our beds."

"Very, sir," answered Lepege, wondering whose opposite fate his majesty was pitying.

"I shouldn't care, even if I were a young man and a sound one, to ride to Praskol tonight."

"To Praskol, sir?" There was surprise in Lepege's voice. He could not help it. Lepege's mind was not so far from the king. It was certainly not a night to ride five and twenty miles and into the hills unless your business was very urgent.

"Yes, to Praskol. I've had my breath of air. You can shut the window, Lepege."

The king returned to the fireplace and stood warming himself. Lepege closed the window, drew the curtains and came to the middle of the room, where he stood in respectful readiness, and underneath that a very lively curiosity.

"Yes," said the king slowly, "Captain Mark goes to Praskol tonight with a dispatch for his royal highness, your majesty. Business, Lepege, urgent business! Everything must yield to that."

The king enunciated this virtuous maxim as though it had been the rule of his life. "No time to lose, Lepege, so the captain goes tonight, but I'm afraid he'll have a rough ride—very rough."

"I'm afraid so, sir," said Lepege, and added silently in his thoughts, "And so will M. Zerkovitch!"

Finally Stenovic himself had a lecture for poor, much lectured Lepege. It was one of the miscalculations to which an overcautious cunning is prone. Stenovic was gentle and considerate, but he was no less urgent about it that nothing should be said about the episode, neither about it nor about the other reprehensions. Silence, silence, silence was his burden. Lepege thought more and more. It is better to put up with gossip than to give the idea that the least gossip would be a serious offense. People gossip without thinking. It's easy come and gone, easy speaking and easy forgetting, but stringent injunctions not to talk are apt to make men think

the bridge on the main road on the right bank an hour before midnight. Going was very heavy; so was the rain; so was the darkness. He and his horse made a blurred, indistinct shape on the murky face of night. But his orders were to hasten, and he pushed on at a sharp trot and soon covered his first stage, the five miles to the old wooden bridge, where the road leaves the course of the Krath, he carried over the river and strikes northeast toward the hills.

At this point he received the first intimation that his journey was not to be so solitary as he had supposed. When he was halfway across the bridge he heard what sounded like an echo of the beat of his horse's hoofs on the timbers behind him. The thing seemed odd. He halted a moment to listen. The sound of his horse's hoofs stopped, but the echo went on. It was no echo, then. It was not the only traveler that way! He pricked his horse with the spur, regaining the road, he heard the timbers of the bridge still sounding. He touched his horse again and went forward briskly. He had no reason to associate his fellow traveler's errand with his own, but he was sure that when General Stenovic ordered dispatch he would not be pleased to learn that his messenger had been tripped by another wayfarer on the road.

But the stranger, too, was in a hurry. It seemed. Mark could not shake him off. On the contrary, he drew nearer. The road was still dark and the stranger broke into a canter. "At any rate, it makes for good time," thought Mark, smiling uneasily. In fact, the two found themselves drawn into a sort of race. Clearly the stranger was the miles at a quick, sustained trot, exhilarating to the men, but rather a strain on their horses. Both were well mounted. Mark's horse was a good horse, but the stranger's was a better horse. He turned his head, but he saw only the same sort of blur as he himself made. Part of the blur, however, seemed to be a lighter color than the rest. The man with the lantern and dark overcoat, then, raised it in the air and horse and rider produced.

Mark's horse pecked at the rider, awoke to the fact that he was bounding his mount without doing much good to himself. He would see whether the unknown meant to pass him or was content to keep on equal terms.

At 10 o'clock he returned, still more spruce and orderly and with a well-satisfied air about him. He had found a purchaser for his suspicion and his fact. His pocket was the better for it. The king had received flattering expressions of gratitude and assurances of favor. He felt that he had raised a buttress against future assaults of fortune. He entered the king's dressing room, in his usual careless and untrusting manner. He was not aware that General Stenovic had quitted it just a quarter of an hour before, bearing in his hand a document which he had submitted for his majesty's signature. The king had signed it and indorsed the cover "Urgent."

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NERVOUS DISORDERS

Promptly Cured by the Use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills.

If your hand trembles or is unsteady, remember that there is a sure and easily sign of your nervous system being at fault. The mischief may be doing slowly to a worse stage. You feel unaccountably weak, for a couple of weeks, when you feel fresh; you turn against food and suffer palpitations and indigestion after eating. At times you are intensely irritable, greatly depressed and easily worried. Sometimes sharp pains shoot down your spine and legs and probably numb the toes of your feet at night. These are signs of the troubles that indicate the presence of nervous disorders. If these troubles are neglected, they result in complete nervous collapse and possibly paralysis. Dr. Williams' Pink Pills have won a great reputation by curing all forms of nervous disease. The nervous system depends entirely upon the blood supply for nourishment; when the blood is thin and weak the nerves are starved. Dr. Williams' Pink Pills actually increase the supply of good, red, blood, strengthen and tone the nervous system, and dispel all signs of a breakdown.

Mrs. J. A. Ward, Lord's Cove, N.B., says: "About two years ago I was badly afflicted with nervous prostration. I was little better than a helpless wreck. I suffered from headaches and a constant feeling of dizziness. I was unable to do any work, and could not do my housework. In every way I was in a deplorable condition. I had tried many other remedies, but they had no effect. I had only been taking Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for a few days when I began to feel better, and this encouraged me to continue the treatment. From that time on my strength gradually returned, and in the course of a few more weeks I was once more a well woman, able to do my own housework and feeling better than I have since. I have since remained well and feel that I owe my good health to the healing powers of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills."

Every other weak, sickly, worn-out, nervous person should follow the example of Mrs. Ward and give Dr. Williams' Pink Pills a fair trial. These Pills will send new blood coursing through the veins and bring brightness and energy to the system. Send for a bottle of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills by mail at 50 cents a box from the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

Hotelkeeper—Has the American gentleman made any remarks about his bill yet?

Waiter—Not yet. He is looking for it in his dictionary—Pele Mele.

Nan—How is poor dear Li this morning?

Fan—Looks dreadfully.

Fan—O, I know that; I'm asking you how she feels.—Chicago Tribune.