

looked from this to the owner, who played nervously with his small side-whiskers and stroked his smooth-shaven lips.

"Did you drink to gather courage, Herr Terbroich?"

"Courage? Oh, no. But in this carnival mood——"

"Seriously, has not this carnival mood been your usual mood during these last few years?"

"You jest. I am not a drinker, usually. I only wished to be in a jolly frame of mind when I started out to-night."

"You have something especial in view, then, to-night?"

"No, nothing especial. Just the usual big Kehrausball, the finishing ball of the carnival."

"Alone?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, whether you intended going there with my daughter?"

"With—your daughter?"

"Herr Terbroich, you act as if you were not aware of the existence of my daughter? That would really not displease me at all, if it were a fact. But let us stick to the truth, or—if you should not know the meaning of that word, upon real, solid ground."

"Herr Doktor, your insulting insinuation——"

"Oh, please. I am to be considered only in second or third instance. You feel that yourself, don't you? And here we will not battle with syllables. The situation is not suited to that, and time is too valuable. Well, then: You know Carmen very well, Herr Terbroich?"