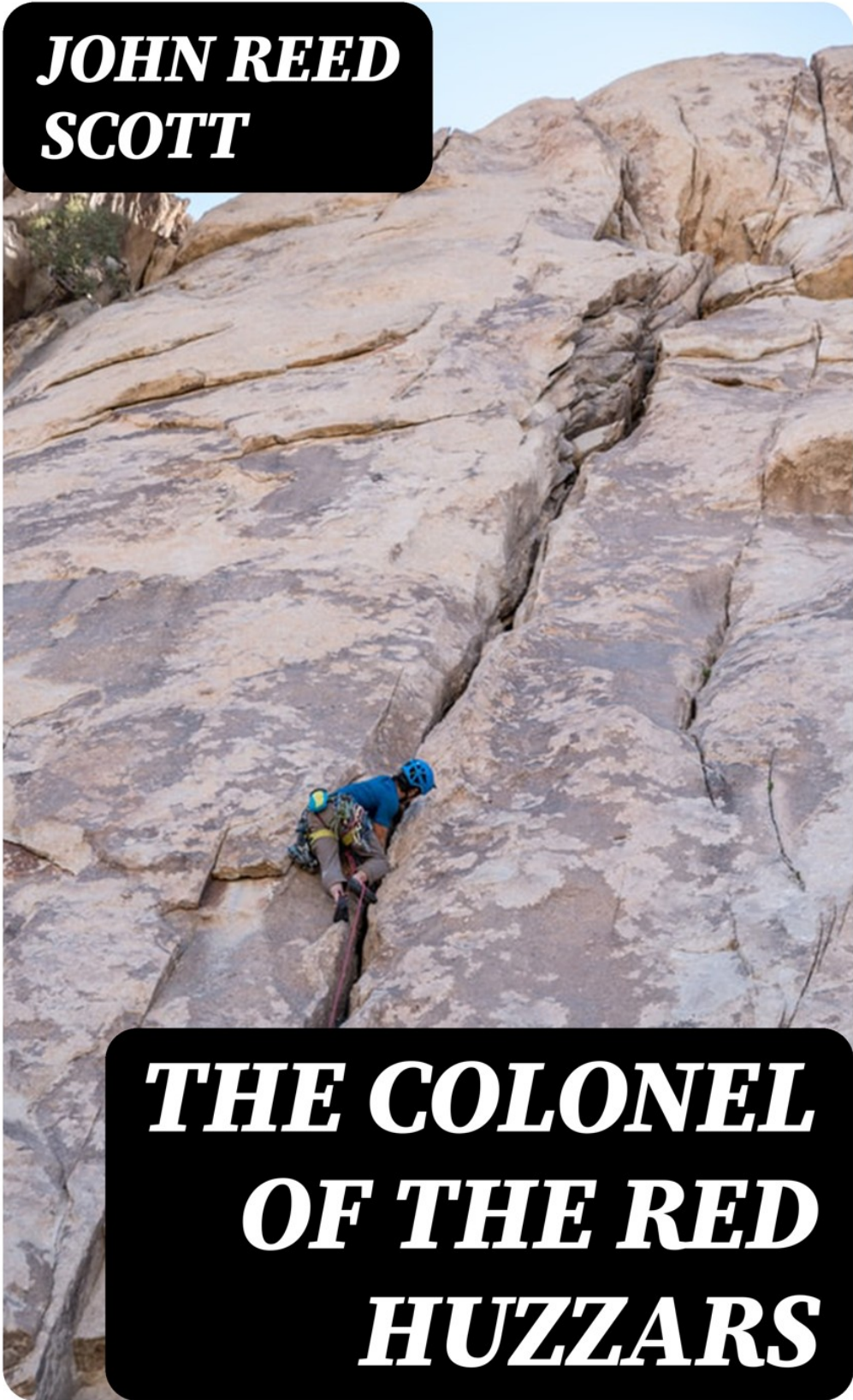


***JOHN REED  
SCOTT***

A photograph of a rock climber in a blue shirt and helmet climbing a large, light-colored rock face. The climber is positioned in the lower center of the frame, facing right. The rock face is composed of large, light-colored blocks with visible cracks and textures. The background shows a clear blue sky and more rock formations in the distance.

***THE COLONEL  
OF THE RED  
HUZZARS***

***JOHN REED  
SCOTT***



***THE COLONEL  
OF THE RED  
HUZZARS***

**John Reed Scott**

# **The Colonel of the Red Huzzars**

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# I

## A PICTURE AND A WAGER

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It was raining heavily and I fastened my overcoat to the neck as I came down the steps of the Government Building. Pushing through the crowds and clanging electric cars, at the Smithfield Street corner, I turned toward Penn Avenue and the Club, whose home is in a big, old-fashioned, grey-stone building—sole remnant of aristocracy in that section where, once, naught else had been.

For three years I had been the engineer officer in charge of the Pittsburgh Harbor, and "the navigable rivers thereunto belonging"—as my friend, the District Judge, across the hall, would say—and my relief was due next week. Nor was I sorry. I was tired of dams and bridges and jobs, of levels and blue prints and mathematics. I wanted my sword and pistols—a horse between my legs—the smell of gunpowder in the air. I craved action—something more stirring than dirty banks and filthy water and coal-barges bound for Southern markets.

Five years ago my detail would have been the envy of half the Corps. But times were changed. The Spanish War had done more than give straps to a lot of civilians with pulls; it had eradicated the dry-rot from the Army. The officer with the soft berth was no longer deemed lucky; promotion passed him by and seized upon his fellow in the field. I had missed the war in China and the fighting in the Philippines and, as a consequence, had seen juniors lifted

over me. Yet, possibly, I had small cause to grumble; for my own gold leaves had dropped upon me in Cuba, to the disadvantage of many who were my elders, and, doubtless, my betters as well. I had applied for active service, but evidently it had not met with approval, for my original orders to report to the Chief of Engineers were still unchanged.

The half dozen "regulars," lounging on the big leather chairs before the fireplace in the Club reception-room, waiting for the dinner hour, gave me the usual familiar yet half indifferent greeting, as I took my place among them and lit a cigar.

"Mighty sorry we're to lose you, Major," said Marmont. "Dinner won't seem quite right with your chair vacant."

"I'll come back occasionally to fill it," I answered. "Meanwhile there are cards awaiting all of you at the Metropolitan or the Army and Navy."

"Then you don't look for an early assignment to the White Elephant across the Pacific?" inquired Courtney.

"Good Lord!" exclaimed Hastings, "did you apply for the Philippines?"

"What ails them?" I asked.

"Everything—particularly Chaffee's notion that white uniforms don't suit the climate?"

I shrugged my shoulders.

"Is that a criticism of your superior officer?" Marmont demanded.

"That is never done in the Army," I answered.

"Which being the case let us take a drink," said Westlake, and led the way to the café.

"Looks rather squally in Europe," Courtney observed, as the dice were deciding the privilege of signing the check.

"It will blow over, I fancy," I answered.

"Have you seen the afternoon papers?"

"No."

"Then you don't know the Titian Ambassador has been recalled."

"Indeed! Well, I still doubt if it means fight."

Courtney stroked his grey imperial. "Getting rather near one, don't you think?" he said.

"No closer than France and Turkey were only a short while ago," I answered. "Moreover, in this case, the Powers would have a word to say."

"Yes, they are rather ready to speak out on such occasions; but, unless I'm much mistaken, if the Titians and the Valerians get their armies moving it will take more than talk from the Powers to stop them."

"And it's all over a woman," I observed carelessly.

Courtney gave me a sharp glance. "I thought that was rather a secret," he replied.

I laughed. "It's one, at least, that the newspapers have not discovered—yet. But, where did you get it?"

"From a friend; same as yourself," he said, with the suggestion of a smile.

"My dear fellow," I said. "I know more about the Kingdom of Valeria than—well, than your friend and all his assistants of the State Department."

"I don't recall mentioning the State Department," Courtney replied.



"You didn't. I was honoring your friend by rating him among the diplomats."

He ignored my thrust. "Ever been to Valeria?" he asked. I nodded.

"Recently?"

"About six years ago."

"Is that the last time?"

"What are you driving at?" I asked.

He answered with another question: "Seen the last number of the London Illustrated News?"

"No," I answered.

He struck the bell. "Bring me the London News," he said to the boy. Opening it at the frontispiece he pushed it across to me.

"Has she changed much since you saw her?" he asked, and smiled.

It was a woman's face that looked at me from the page; and, though it was six years since I had seen it last, I recognized it instantly. There was, however, a certain coldness in the eyes and a firm set of the lip and jaw that were new to me. But, as I looked, they seemed to soften, and I could have sworn that for an instant the Princess Dehra of Valeria smiled at me most sweetly—even as once she herself had done.

"You seem uncommonly well pleased with the lady," Courtney observed.

I handed back the News.

"You have not answered my question," he insisted.

"Look here, Courtney," I said, "it seems to me you are infernally inquisitive to-night."

"Maybe I am—only, I wanted to know something," and he laughed softly.

"Well?"

"I think I know it now," he said.

"Do you?" I retorted.

"Want to make a bet?" he asked.

"I never bet on a certainty," said I.

Courtney laughed. "Neither do I, so here's the wager:—a dinner for twenty that you and I are in Valeria thirty days from to-night and have dined with the King and danced with the Princess."

"Done!" said I.

"All I stipulate is that you do nothing to avoid King Frederick's invitation."

"And the Princess?" I asked.

"I'm counting on her to win me the bet," he laughed.

I picked up the picture and studied it again. The longer I looked the more willing I was to give Courtney a chance to eat my dinner.

"If the opportunity comes I'll dance with her," I said.

"Of course you will—but will you stop there, I wonder?"

I tapped my grey-besprinkled hair.

"They are no protection," he said. "I don't trust even my own to keep me steady against a handsome woman."

"They are playing us false even now," said I. "I'm not going to Valeria to decide a dinner bet."

"You're not. You're going as the representative of our Army to observe the Valerian-Titian War."

"You're as good as a gypsy or a medium. When do I start?"

"Don't be rude, my dear chap, and forget that, under the wager, I'm to be in the King's invitation—also the dance. We sail one week from to-day."

"A bit late to secure accommodations, isn't it?"

"They are booked—on the Wilhelm der Grosse."

"You are playing a long shot—several long shots," I laughed:—"War—Washington—me."

"Wrong," said Courtney. "I'm playing only War. I have the Secretary and the Princess has you."

"You have the Secretary!"

"Days ago."

"The Devil!" I exclaimed, lifting my glass abstractedly.

"The Princess! you mean," said Courtney quickly, lifting his own and clicking mine.

I looked at the picture again—and again it seemed to smile at me.

"The Princess!" I echoed; and we drank the toast. "We're a pair of old fools," said I, when the glasses were emptied.

Courtney picked up the News and held the picture before me.

"Say that to her," he challenged.

"I can't be rude to her very face," I answered lamely.

Just then one of the "buttons" handed me a telegram. I tore open the yellow envelope and read the sheet, still damp from the copy-press. It ran:—

"Titia declares war. Detail as attaché open. If desired report at headquarters immediately. Hennecker relieves you in morning. Answer."

"(signed) HENDERSON, A. A. G."

I tossed it over to Courtney. "You're that much nearer the dinner," I said.

"And the Princess also," he added.

"Then you're actually going?" I asked.

"My dear Major, did you ever doubt it?"

"Your vagaries are past doubting," I answered.

"And yours?"

"I am going under orders of the War Department."

"Of course," he answered, "of course. And, that being so, you won't mind my confessing that I'm going largely on account of—a woman."

"I won't mind anything that gives me your companionship."

"So, it's settled," he said. "Let us have some dinner, and then cut in for a farewell turn in the game of hearts upstairs."

"It will be another sort of game over the water," I observed.

"Yes—with a different sort of hearts," he said thoughtfully.

"Is it possible, Courtney, you are growing sentimental?" I demanded.

He shrugged his shoulders. "There's no fool like an old fool, you know," he answered.

"Unless it be one that is just old enough to be neither old nor young," said I.

Then we went in to dinner.

Courtney is a good fellow; one of the best friends a man can have; well born, rich, with powerful political connections in both Parties, and having no profession nor necessary occupation to tie him down. His tastes ran to diplomacy, and Secretaries of State—knowing this fact, and being further advised of it at various times by certain prominent Senators—had given him numerous secret missions to both Europe and South America. Legations had been offered to him but these he had always declined; for, as he told me, he preferred the quiet, independent work, that carried no responsible social duties with it.

It happened that General Russell, our representative at the Court of Valeria, was home on vacation. Naturally, he would now return in all haste. Here, I imagined, was an explanation of my sudden orders. He was an intimate of our family; had known me since childhood, and, doubtless, had asked for my detail to his household, and also for Courtney's. And Courtney, naturally, having been early consulted in the matter, knew all the facts and so was able to bluff at me with them. It would be just as well to call him.

"Is General Russell crossing with us?" I asked carelessly.

Courtney shook his head. "He is not going back to Valeria."

"Oh!" said I, realizing suddenly my mistake, "I didn't appreciate I was dining with an Ambassador."

"It's not yet announced. However, I'm glad it does not change me," he laughed.

"I can tell that better after we reach Valeria—and you have danced with the Princess."

He sipped his coffee meditatively. "Yes, there may be changes in Valeria in us both," he said presently.

"Don't do the heavy reproof if I chance to forget the difference in our rank," I answered. "But you must manage one turn for me with Her Royal Highness, if you're to eat my dinner, you know."

"How many times have you been to Valeria?" he asked suddenly.

"Some half dozen," I replied, surprised.

"Ever been in the private apartments of the Palace of Dornlitz?"

"No—I think not."

"I mean, particularly, the corridor where hang the portraits of the Kings?"

"I don't recall them."

He laughed shortly. "Believe me, you would recall them well," he said.

"What the devil are you driving at?" I asked.

"I'll show you the night you dance with the Princess."

"A poor army officer doesn't usually have such honors."

"No—not if he be only a poor army officer. But, if he chance to be——"

"Well," I said, "be what?"

"I'll tell you in the picture gallery," he answered.

And not another word would he say in the matter.

# CONCERNING ANCESTORS

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However, I did not need to wait so long for my answer. I knew it quite as well as Courtney—maybe a trifle better. Nevertheless, it is a bit jolting to realize, suddenly, that some one has been prying into your family history.

On the west wall of the Corridor of Kings, in the Palace of Dornlitz, hung the full-length portrait of Henry, third of the name and tenth of the Line. A hundred and more years had passed since he went to his uncertain reward; and now, in me, his great-great-grandson, were his face and figure come back to earth.

I had said, truly enough, that I had never been in the Gallery of Kings. But it was not necessary for me to go there to learn of this resemblance to my famous ancestor. For, handed down from eldest son to eldest son, since the first Dalberg came to American shores, and, so, in my possession now, was an ivory miniature of the very portrait which Courtney had in mind.

And the way of it, and how I chanced to be of the blood royal of Valeria, was thus:

Henry the Third—he of the portrait—had two sons, Frederick and Hugo, and one daughter, Adela. Frederick, the elder son, in due time came to the throne and, dying, passed the title to his only child, Henry; who, in turn, was succeeded by his only child, Frederick, the present monarch.

Adela, the daughter, married Casimir, King of Titia,—and of her descendants more anon.

Hugo, the younger son, was born some ten years after his brother,—to be accurate, in 1756,—and after the old

King had laid aside his sword and retired into the quiet of his later years. With an honestly inherited love of fighting, and the inborn hostility to England that, even then, had existed in the Valerians for a hundred years, Hugo watched with quickening interest the struggle between the North American Colonies and Great Britain which began in 1775. When the Marquis de Lafayette threw in his fortunes with the Americans, Hugo had begged permission to follow the same course. This the old King had sternly refused; pointing out its impropriety from both a political and a family aspect.

But Hugo was far from satisfied, and his desire to have a chance at England waxing in proportion as the Colonies' fortunes waned, he at last determined to brave his fierce old father and join the struggling American army whether his sire willed it or no. His mind once formed, he would have been no true son of Henry had he hesitated.

The King heard him quietly to the end,—too quietly, indeed, to presage well for Hugo. Then he answered:

"I take it sir, your decision is made beyond words of mine to change. Of course, I could clap you into prison and cool your hot blood with scant diet and chill stones, but, such would be scarce fitting for a Dalberg. Neither is it fitting that a Prince of Valeria should fight against a country with which I am at peace. Therefore, the day you leave for America will see your name stricken from the rolls of our House, your title revoked, and your return here prohibited by royal decree. Do I make myself understood?"

So far as I have been able to learn, no one ever accused my great-grandfather of an inability to understand plain speech, and old Henry's was not obscure. Indeed, Hugo



remembered it so well that he made it a sort of preface in the Journal which he began some months thereafter, and kept most carefully to the very last day of his life. The Journal says he made no answer to his father save a low bow.

Two days later, as plain Hugo Dalberg, he departed for America. For some time he was a volunteer Aide to General Washington. Later, Congress commissioned him colonel of a regiment of horse; and, as such, he served to the close of the war. When the Continental Army was disbanded, he purchased a place upon the eastern shore of Maryland; and, marrying into one of the aristocratic families of the neighborhood, settled down to the life of a simple country gentleman.

He never went back to the land of his birth, nor, indeed, even to Europe. And this, though, one day, there came to his mansion on the Chesapeake the Valerian Minister to America and, with many bows and genuflections, presented a letter from his brother Frederick, announcing the death of their royal father and his own accession, and offering to restore to Hugo his rank and estates if he would return to court.

And this letter, like his sword, his Order of the Cincinnati, his commissions and the miniature, has been the heritage of the eldest son. In his soldier days his nearest comrade had been Armand, Marquis de la Rouerie, and for him his first-born was christened; and hence my own queer name—for an American: Armand Dalberg.

There was one of the traditions of our House that had been scrupulously honored: there was always a Dalberg on

the rolls of the Army; though not always was it the head of the family, as in my case. For the rest, we buried our royal descent. And though it was, naturally, well known to my great-grandsire's friends and neighbors, yet, in the succeeding generations, it has been forgotten and never had I heard it referred to by a stranger.

Therefore, I was surprised and a trifle annoyed at Courtney's discovery. Of course, it was possible that he had been attracted only by my physical resemblance to the Third Henry and was not aware of the relationship; but this was absurdly unlikely, Courtney was not one to stop at half a truth and Dalberg was no common name. Doubtless the picture had first put him on the track and after that the rest was easy. What he did not know, however, but had been manoeuvring to discover, was how far I was known at the Court of Valeria. Well, he was welcome to what he had got.

Now, as a matter of fact, it was quite likely that the Dalbergs of Dornlitz had totally forgotten the Dalbergs of America. Since Frederick's minister had rumbled away from that mansion on the Chesapeake, a century and more ago, there had been no word passed between us. Why should there be? We had been disinherited and banished. They had had their offer of reinstatement courteously refused. We were quits.

I think I was the first of the family to set foot within Valeria since Hugo left it. Ten years ago, during a summer's idling in Europe, I had been seized with the desire to see the land of my people. It was a breaking of our most solemn canon, yet I broke it none the less. Nor was that the only time. However, I had the grace,—and, possibly, the

precaution,—to change my name on such occasions. In the Kingdom of Valeria I was that well-known American, Mr. John Smith.

I did the ordinary tourist; visited the places of interest, and put up at the regular hotels. Occasionally, I was stared at rather impertinently by some officer of the Guards and I knew he had noted my resemblance to the national hero. I never made any effort to be presented to His Majesty nor to establish my relationship. I should have been much annoyed had anything led to it being discovered.

Once, in the park of the palace, I had passed the King walking with a single aide-de-camp, and his surprise was such he clean forgot to return my salute; and a glance back showed him at a stand and gazing after me. I knew he was thinking of the portrait in the Corridor of Kings. That was the last time I had seen my royal cousin.

The next day, while riding along a secluded bridle path some miles from Dornlitz, I came upon a woman leading a badly-limping horse. She was alone,—no groom in sight,—and drawing rein I dismounted and asked if I could be of service. Then I saw her face, and stepped back in surprise. Her pictures were too plentiful in the capital for me to make mistake. It was the Princess Dehra.

I bowed low. "Your Royal Highness's pardon," I said. "I did not mean to presume."

She measured me in a glance. "Indeed, you are most opportune," she said, with a frank smile. "I have lost the groom,—his horse was too slow,—and I've been punished by Lotta picking a stone I cannot remove."

"By your leave," I said, and lifted the mare's hoof. Pressing back the frog I drew out the lump of sharp gravel.

"It looks so easy," she said.

"It was paining her exceedingly, but she is all right now."

"Then I may mount?"

I bowed.

"Without hurting Lotta?" she asked.

I turned the mare about and dropped my hand into position. For a moment she hesitated. Then there was the swish of a riding skirt, the glint of a patent-leather boot, an arched foot in my palm, and without an ounce of lift from me she was in the saddle.

I stepped back and raised my hat.

She gathered the reins slowly; then bent and patted the mare's neck.

I made no move.

"I am waiting," she said presently, with a quick glance my way.

"I do not see the groom," said I, looking back along the road.

She gave a little laugh. "You won't," she said. "He thinks I went another way."

"Then Your Highness means——"

"You do not look so stupid," she remarked.

"Sometimes men's looks are deceiving."

"Then, sir, Her Highness means she is waiting for you to mount," she said, very graciously.

"As her groom?" I asked.

"As anything you choose, so long as you ride beside me to the hill above the Park."

I took saddle at the vault and we trotted away.

"Why did you make me ask for your attendance?" she demanded.

"Because I dared not offer it."

"Another deception in your looks," she replied.

I laughed. She had evened up.

"You are a soldier—an American officer?" she said suddenly.

"Your Highness has guessed most shrewdly," I answered, in surprise.

"Are you staying at the Embassy?" she asked.

"No," said I. "I am not on the staff. I am only a bird of passage."

"Do you know General Russell?"

"My father knew him, I believe," I answered, evasively, and turned the talk into less personal matters.

When we reached the hill I drew rein. Down in the valley lay the Summer Palace and the gates of the Park were but a few hundred yards below us. I dismounted to say good-bye.

"I am very grateful for your courtesy," she said.

"It is for the stranger to be grateful for your trust," I answered.

She smiled,—that smile was getting into my poor brain—"A woman usually knows a gentleman," she said.

I bowed.

"And under certain circumstances she likes to know his name," she added.

For a moment I was undecided. Should I tell her and claim my cousinship? I was sorely tempted. Then I saw what

a mistake it would be,—she would not believe it,—and answered:

"John Smith, Your Royal Highness, and your most obedient servant."

She must have noticed my hesitation, for she studied my face an instant, then said, with a pause between each word and a peculiar stress on the name:

"General—Smith?"

"Simple Captain," I answered. "We do not climb so rapidly in our Army."

Just then, from the barracks three miles away, came the boom of the evening gun.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, "I am late. I must hasten. Good-bye, *mon Capitaine*; you have been very kind."

She drew off her gauntlet and extended her hand. I bent and kissed,—possibly too lingeringly,—the little fingers.

"Farewell, Princess," I said. And then, half under my breath, I added: "Till we meet again."

She heard, and again that smile. "'*Auf Wiedersehen*' be it," she answered.

Then she rode away.

I leaned against my horse's shoulder and watched her as she went slowly down the hill, the full glory of the sinking sun upon her, and the shadows of the great trees close on either side. Presently there came a bend in the road and, turning in the saddle, she waved her hand.

I answered with my hat. Then she was gone. That was how I met the Princess Royal of Valeria. And, unless she has told it (which, somehow, I doubt), none knows it but ourselves. I had never seen her since. Perhaps that is why I

was quite content for Courtney to win his bet. Truly, a man's heart does not age with his hair.

## II

# IN DORNLITZ AGAIN

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The declaration of war by Titia had come so suddenly that when Courtney and I sailed for Europe, the Powers were still in the air and watching one another. No battle had been fought; but the armies were frowning at each other on the frontier, and several skirmishes had occurred.

Ostensibly, the trouble was over a slice of territory which Henry the Third had taken from Titia as an indemnity for some real or fancied wrongs done him. Valeria, with its great general and powerful army, was too strong in those days for Titia to do more than protest—and, then, to take its punishment, which, for some reason that was doubtless sufficient to him. Henry had seen fit to make as easy as it might be, by giving his daughter, Adela, to Casimir for wife.

Whether the lady went voluntarily or not I cannot say. Yet it was, doubtless, the same with both Kings: The one got an unwilling province; the other, an unwilling bride. Only, Titia's trouble was soonest over.

This ravished Murdol had always been a standing menace to the peace of the two countries; Titia had never forgiven its seizure, and Valeria was afflicted with the plague

of disaffected subjects on its very border. Here, as I have said, was the real *casus belli*,—a constant irritation that had at length got past bearing.

But, in truth, the actual breach was due to a woman. The Crown Prince of Titia had come a wooing of the Princess Royal of Valeria, and had been twice refused by her. King Frederick had left the question entirely in her hands. Her choice was her own, to marry or to decline. As a matter of state policy the match was greatly desired by him and his Ministers. They were becoming very weary of Murdol and the turmoil it maintained on the border, and the great force of troops required there to preserve order. Then, too, Titia had grown vastly in wealth and population since old Henry's time, and, now, was likely more than a match for its ancient enemy. Frederick was aging and desired peace in his closing years. He had long wished for a diplomatic way to rid himself of the troublesome province, and the marriage of Casimir and Dehra would afford it. Murdol could be settled upon the Princess as her dower.

It was an admirable solution of the whole vexing question. Yet, unlike old Henry, Frederick was the father before he was the King; and, beyond telling the Princess frankly the policy which moved him in the matter, he did nothing to coerce her. But the Ministers had no scruples of affection nor of kinship to control them and they brought all sorts of persuasive pressure upon her to obtain her consent to the match. All this was known to the Kingdom, and the vast majority of the people were with the Princess. The Army was with her to a man.



The first proposal Dehra had declined promptly to the Prince in person. He had made it lover-like, and not through the diplomatic channels. After that the Titian Foreign Office took a hand, and the poor girl's troubles began.

For six months the matter pended,—and still Dehra held firm. Then Titia mobilized its army and demanded a decision within two days:—either the Princess or Murdol. It got a "No" in two hours. The declaration of war followed straight-way.

Most of these facts were already known to me. Those of latest happening came to Courtney from the State Department on the eve of our sailing.

"It looks like a one-battle war," he had observed.

"Add a letter to your sentence and you will be nearer right," I answered.

He laughed. "A none-battle war, you mean."

And so it proved. When we landed it was to find that Germany had offered to mediate, and that, while the two Kingdoms were thinking it over, a truce had been declared. Consequently, instead of hurrying straight to the Valerian army, I journeyed leisurely with Courtney to the capital. There the first news that met us was that Germany's mediation had been accepted and that the war was at an end—for the present, at least.

So, once again, had the Powers, in the interest of European peace, struck up the swords.

As we drove from the station to the Embassy we observed flags flying from almost every house, and that the public buildings were lavishly decorated.

"Peace seems to be well received," I remarked.

"It's the King's birthday," Courtney answered.

"And a very happy one, I fancy."

Courtney stared at me. "How so?" he said.

"He can now both keep his daughter and be rid of Murdol."

"The Princess is saved, of course, but in deference to the national self-respect, he dare give up Murdol only in one contingency:—if Titia can be persuaded to pay a money value for it. Which I doubt."

I said nothing. I, too, doubted.

"However, it's not important to us," said he. "Whatever the outcome the lady will be here long enough for you to lose the wager."

"Damn the wager," I exclaimed.

"Damn everything you have a mind to, my dear fellow," he encouraged.

"And you in particular," I said.

"Wherefore, my dear Major?" he laughed.

"For suggesting this fool thing."

"Poor boy! I should have regarded your youthful impetuosity."

I shrugged my shoulders.

"And grey hairs," he added.

"I've a mind to toss you out of the carriage," said I.

"Do it,—and save me the trouble of getting myself out," he answered; and then we drew under the *porte cochère* at the Embassy.

The matter of a residence had not bothered Courtney. He simply took General Russell's lease off his hands, and twenty thousand a year rent with it. I was to live at the Legation, there being no Ambassadorial women folks to

make the staff *de trop*. Naturally, I was quite satisfied. It was a bit preferable to hotel hospitality. And, then, the assistants were good fellows.

Cosgrove, who had been First Secretary for ten years, was from the estate next my own on the Eastern Shore. It was through him I had been able to preserve my incog. so securely during my former visits to Valeria. And if he had any curiosity as to my motives, he was courteous enough never to show it. "The best assistant in Europe," Courtney had once pronounced him.

Then there was Pryor, the Naval Attaché. He had been off "cruising with the Army," as Cosgrove put it, pending my arrival and was not yet returned to Dornlitz. The others of the office force were young fellows,—rich boys, either *in presente* or *futuro*,—who, likely, could only be depended upon to do the wrong thing. Being fit for nothing at home, therefore, they had been considered to be particularly well qualified for the American diplomatic service.

My room overlooked the Avenue, and the writing-desk was near the window. I was drawing the formal report to the War Department of my arrival at Dornlitz and the status political and military, when the clatter of hoofs on the driveway drew my attention. It was a tall officer in the green-and-gold of the Royal Guards, and pulling up sharply he tossed his rein to his orderly. I heard the door open and voices in the hall; and, then, in a few minutes, he came out and rode away, with the stiff, hard seat of the European cavalryman. I was still watching him when Courtney entered.

"What do you think of him?" he asked.

"I haven't seen enough of him to think," said I.

"Not even enough to wonder who he is?"

I yawned. "His uniform tells me he is a colonel of the Guard."

"But nothing else?"

"I can read a bit more."

"From the uniform?" he asked.

I nodded.

"You're a veritable Daniel," Courtney laughed. "What saith the writing—or rather, what saith the uniform?"

"It's very simple to those who read uniforms."

"So!" said he. "I await the interpretation."

"It's too easy," I retorted. "A Point Plebe could do it. Your visitor was one of His Majesty's Aides-de-Camp bearing an invitation to the ball at the Palace to-night."

For once I saw Courtney's face show surprise.

"How did you guess it?" he said, after a pause.

"A diplomat should watch the newspapers," said I, and pointed to this item in the Court News of that morning's issue:

"His Excellency the Honorable Richard Courtney, the newly accredited American Ambassador, is expected to arrive to-day. He is accompanied by Major Dalberg, the Military Attaché. His Majesty has ordered his Aide-de-Camp, Colonel Bernheim, to invite them to the Birthday Ball to-night; where they will be honored by a special presentation."

Courtney read it carefully. "At last I see the simple truth in a daily paper," he commented. "But, as for you, my friend, button your coat well over your heart for it's in for a hard thump tonight."

"So?" said I.

"There won't be so much indifference after you've met Her and—seen a certain picture in the Corridor of Kings," he retorted, with a superior smile.

"Think not?" said I, with another yawn. "What if I've done both years ago?"

He eyed me sharply. "It's foolish to bluff when a showdown is certain," he said.

"So one learns in the army."

"Of course not every hand needs to bluff," he said slowly.

"No—not every hand," I agreed.

He went over to the door. On the threshold he turned.

"I wonder if this is my laugh, or yours, to-night," he said.

"We will laugh together," I answered.

Then he went out.

## IV

# THE SALUTE OF A COUSIN

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I would have been rather a wooden sort of individual had I felt no stir in my heart as, for the first time, I entered the Castle of my ancestors and stood in the ante-chamber

waiting to be presented to the Head of my House. I believe I am as phlegmatic as most men, but I would give very little for one who, under like conditions, would not feel a press of emotion. I know it came to me with sharp intensity,—and I see no shame in the admission; nor will any one else whose heart is the heart of an honest man. I have no patience with those creatures who deride sentiment. They are either liars or idiots. Religion, itself, is sentimental; and so is every refined instinct of our lives. Destroy the sentimental in man and the brute alone remains.

We waited but a moment and then were ushered into the royal presence. The greeting was entirely informal. Courtney was no stranger to Valeria, and had met the King frequently during the last ten years. Frederick came forward and shook his hand most cordially and welcomed him to Court. It was like the meeting of two friends. During it I had time to observe the King.

He wore the green uniform of a General, with the Jewel of the Order of the Lion around his neck. His sixty odd years sat very lightly and left no mark save in the facial wrinkles and grey hair. He was a true Dalberg in height and general appearance, and with the strong, straight nose that was as distinctive to our family as was the beak to the Bourbons.

I had remained in the background during Courtney's greeting, but, when he turned and presented me, I advanced and bowed. As I straightened, the King extended his hand saying:

"We are glad to———"

Then he caught a full view of my face and stopped, staring. I dropped his hand and stepped back; and, for a