

## Under the Rose

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"Was it not your intehtien to seek me, to beg an asylum, perhaps?" he went on, less sternly.

"Not to beg, your majesty; to ask, yes. But now-not that!"
"Vrai Dieu!" mutter

muttered Charles. "There is the father over again! It is strange this maiden, clothed almost in rage, should claim such illustrious parentage," he continued to himself as he walked restlessly to and fro. "It is more strange I ask no other proofs than herself-the evidence of my eyes! Where did you come from," he added aloud, pausing before her-"the court

"Why did you leave the king?"

"Why-because"- Her hands clinched. The gray eyes continued to probe "Because I hate him!"

The emperor's face relaxed. A gleam of humor shone in his glance. "Hate him whom so many of your sex love?" he replied.

Through her tresses he saw her face turn red. Passionately she arose. "With your majesty's permission I will go.'

"Go!" he said abruptly. "Where can you go? You are somewhat quick of temper, like- Have I refused you aught? I could not serve your father," he continued, taking her hand and not ungently detaining her, "but I may welcome his daughter, though neessity, the ruler of kings, made me Apless in his behalf."

As in a flash her resentment faded. Half paternally, half severely, he surveyed her.

'Sit down here," he went on, indicating a low stool. "You are weary and need refreshment."

Silently she obeyed, and the emperor, touching a bell, gave a low command to the servitor who appeared. In a few moments meat, fruits and wine were set before her, and Charles, with impassive face, listened to her story, or ar much as she cared to relate. When sle had finished, for some time he offeled no comment.

"A strange tale," he said finally. "But what will our nobles do when la dies take mere fools for knight er rants?"

"He is no more fool," she speke ul impulsively. The emperor shot a quick look at her

from beneath his lowering brows. "I mean-he is brave-and bas protected me many times," she explained in some confusion.

"And so you, knowing what you were, remained with a poor jester, a



"He is no mere fool!"

clown, rather than leave him to his fate?" continued Charles inexorably, recalling the words of the outsiders.

Her face became paler, but she held her head more proudly. The spirit of the jestress sprang to her lips. "It is only kings, sire, who fear to

cling to a forlorn cause." God alone knows the hearts of mon-

archs!" he said somberly. Moved by his unexpected leniency and the aspect of his cheerlessness, she immediately repented of her response.

"You need rest," he said, "and shall have a tent to yourself. Now go!" he continued, placing his hand for a moment, not unkindly, on her head, shall give orders for your entertainment. It will be rough hospitality, but you are used to that. I am not sorry, child, you hate our brother Francis if it has driven you to our court."

CHAPTER XXVI.

LTHOUGH the daughter of the constable received every attention commensurate with the cheer of the camp, the day passed but slowly. With more or less interest she viewed the diversified group of soldiers drawn by Charles from the various countries over which he ruled—the brawny troops from Flanders, the alert looking guards recruited from the mountains of Spain, the men of Friedwald, with muscles tough as the fibers of the fir in their native forcets. Even the orient-suggestive of many campaigns—had been drawn upon, and the bright garbed olive skinned attendants, moving among the tents of purple or crimson, blended picturesquely with the more solid masses of color.

For the Plemish soldiery who had brought the fool and herself into the eamp the young g'rl had a und and a word, but it was the men of Friedwald who especially attracted her attention, and unconsciously she found Lerself picturing the land that had fostered this stalwart and rough soldiery. A rocky, rugged region surely, with vast forests, unbroken brush! Youder armorer polishing a joint of steel seemed like a survivor of that primeval epoch when the trees were roofs and the ground the universal bed. Once or twice she passed him, curiously noting his great beard and giant-like limbs. But he minded her not, and this, perhaps, gave her courage to

"What sort of country is Friedwald?" she said abruptly.

"Wild." he answered.

"Is the duke liked?" she went on.

"Do you know his-jester?" "No."

For all the information he would volunteer the man might have been Dr. Rabelais' model for laconicism, and a moment she stood there with a slight frown. Then she gazed at him meditatively. Tap, tap, went the tiny hammer in the mighty hand, and, laughing softly, she turned. These men of Friedwald were not unpleasing in her

Twice had she approached the tent wherein lay the fool, only to learn that the emperor was with the duke's plaisant. "A slight relapse of fever," had said the Italian leech as he blocked the entrance and stared at her with wicked, twinkling eyes. She need be under no apprehension, he had added, but to her quick fancy his glance said, "A maid wandering with a fool!"

Apprehension? No. It could not be that she felt but a new sense of loneliness, of that isolation which contact with strange faces emphasized. What had come over her? she asked herself, she who had been so self sufficient, whose nature now seemed filled with sudden yearning and restlessness, impatience—she knew not what. She who thought she had partaken so abundant-newed sources for disquietude. With welling heart she watched the sun go down, the glory of the widely radiating hues give way to the pall of night. Upon her young shoulders the mantle of darkness seemed to rest so heavily she bowed her head in her hands, 'A maid and a fool! Ah foolish

maid!" whispered the wanton breeze. The pale light of the stars playupon her, and the dews fell upon, in-voluntarily shivering with the cold, she arose. As she walked by the emperor's quarters she noticed a figure silhouet ted on the canvas walls. To and fro the shadow moved, shapeless, grotesque, yet eloquent of life's vexation of spirit. Turning into her own tent, the jestress lighted the wick of a silver lamp. A faint aroma of perfume swept through the air. It seemed to soothe her-or was it but weariness?-and shortly she threw herself on the silken couch and sank to dreamless slumber. dome of the tent was agree in morning sun. The reflected radiance bathed her face and form. Her heaviness of heart had taken wings. The little lamp was still burning, but the fresh fragrance of dawn had replaced the subtle odor of the oriental essence. Upon the rug a single streak of sunshine was creeping toward her. In the brazier which had warmed her tent the

to cold, white ash. Through the girl's veins the blood coursed rapidly. A few moments she lay in the rosy effulgence, restfully conscious that danger had fled and that she was bulwarked by the emperor's favor, when a sudden thought broke upon this half wakeful mood and caused her to spring, all alert, from her couch. To dress with her had never been a matter of great duration. The hair of the joculatrix naturally rippled into such waves as were the envy of the court ladies. Her supple fingers adjusted garment after garment with swift precision, while her figure needed no device to lend grace to the investment.

glowing bark and cinnamon had turned

Soon, therefore, had she left her tent. making her way through the awakening camp. In the royal kitchen the cook was bending over his fires, while an assistant mixed a beve age of barley water, yolks of eggs and senna wine for Charles when he should become aroused. Those courtiers already astir cast many glances in the girl's direction as she moved toward

the tent of the fool. But if these gallants were sedulous she was correspondingly indifferent. Auxiety or loyalty-that stanchness of heart which braved even the ironical eyes of the black robed master of medicine-drove her again to the ailing jester's tent, and, remembering how she had ridden into camp and into the august emperor's favor, these fondlings of fortune looked significantly from

one to the other. "A jot less fever, solicitous maid," said the leach in answer to the inquiries of the jestress, and she endur-ed the glance for the news, although the former sent her away with her face

"An the leech let her in, he'd soon have to let the patient out," spoke up a gallant. "Her eyes are a sovereign remedy, where bolus, pills and all vile potions might fail."

"If this be a sample of Francis' damsels, I care not how long we are in reaching the Low Countries," answered

To this the first replied in kind, but soon had these gallants matters of more serious moment to divert them, for it began to be whispered about that Louis of Hochfels had determined to push forward. The unwonted activity in the camp ere long gave credence to the rumor. The troopers commenced looking to their weapons. Squires hurried here and there, while near the tents stood the horses, saddled and bridled, undergoing the scrutiny of the

Some time, however, elapsed before the emperor himself appeared. Nothing in the bend roll or devotional offering of the morning had he overlooked The divers dishes that followed had been scrupulously partaken of, and then only-as a man not to be hurried from the altar or the table-had be emerged from his tent. His glance mechanically swept the camp, noting the bustle and stir, the absence of disorder, and finally rested on the girl. For a moment from his look it seemed he might have forgotten her, and she, who had involuntarily turned to him so solicitously, on a sudden felt chilled as confronted by a mask. His voice when at length he spoke, was hard, dry, matter of fact, and it was Jacque line whom he addressed.

"You slept well?"

"Yes, sire," she answered. "And have already been to the fool's tent, I doubt not."

The mask became half quizzical, half friendly, as her cheeks mantled beneath his regard. Was it but quiet avengement against a jestress whose

tongue had been unsparing enough, even to him, the day before? Certes, here stood now only a rosy maid, robbed of her spirit, or a folle, struck witless, and Charles' face softened, but immediately grew stern as his mind abruptly passed from wandering jestress and fleeing fool to matters of more moment.

Under vow to the Virgin the emperor had announced he would not draw sword himself that day, but seated beneath a canopy of velvet overlooking the valley he so far compromised with conscience as personally to direct the preparations for the conflict. On his sable throne, surrounded by funereal hangings, how white and furrowed, how harassed with many cares, he appeared in the glare of the morn to the young girl! Was this he who held nearly all Europe in his palm? Who between martial commands talked of holy orders, the apostolic see and the seven sacraments to his price studied him, with

thoughts running fast, another side of her eyes to the hill on dition of mind, the valley. In her a crisis, it was a distinct when toward noon word distinct relie that the free baron was was broadening. Soon, not far distant, the appropries of Louis of Rochfels was seen;

at the front, flashing helmets and breastplates; behind, a cavalcade of ladies on horseback and litters, above which floated many flags and banners. Would he come on? Would he turn back? Many opinions were rife,

"Oh," cried a page with golden hair, "there will be no battle after all."

And truly, confronted by the aspect of the emperor's camp, the marauder had at first hesitated. But if the dangers before him were great those behind were greater. Accordingly, leaving the cavalcade of the princess, her maids and attendants, the free baron of Hochfels, surrounded by his own gantly into the valley, bent upon sweeping aside even the opposition of Charles himself.

"Yonder's a daring knave, your majesty," with some perturbation observed the prelate who stood near the emper-

"Certes, he tilts at fame or death with a bold lance," replied Charles. Would that Robert of Friedwald were there to cry him quits."

While thus he spoke, as calm as though secluded in one of his monas. tery retreats, weighing the affairs of state, nearer and nearer drew the soldiers of Louis of Pfalz-Urfeld-roughly calculating, a force numerically as strong as the emperor's own guard.

The young girl, her face now white and drawn, watched the approaching band. Would Charles never give the signal? Imperturbable sat the mounted troopers of the emperor, awaiting the word of command. At length, when her breath began to come fast and sharp, Charles raised his arm. In a solid, steady body his men swept onward. The girl strove to look away, but could not.

Both bands, gaining in momentum, met with a crash. That nice symmetry of form and orderliness of movement were succeeded by a tangle of men and horses, the bristling array of lances had vanished, and swords and weapons for hand to hand warfare threw a play of light amid the jumble of troops and steeds, flags and banners. With sword red from carnage Louis of Hochfels drew his men around him, hurling them against the firm front of Charles veterans. It was the crucial moment, the turning point in a struggle that could not be prolonged, but would be rather sharp, short and decisive. If his men failed at the onset all was lost. If they gained but a little ascendency now their mastery of the field became fairly assured. Great would be the reward for success; the fruits of victory-the emperor himself. And savagely the free baron cut down a stalwart trooper. His blade pierced the throat of another.

"Clear the way to Charles!" he cried exultantly, "He is our guerdon!"

So terrible that rush the guard of Spain on the right and the troops of Flanders on the left began to give way. Only the men of Friedwald stood, but with the breaking of the forces on each side it was inevitable they, too, must soon be overwhelmed. Involuntarily, as the quick eye of the emperor detected this sign of impending disaster, he half started from his chair. His hand sought his side. In his eyes shone a steely light. The prelate quickly crossed himself and raised his head as if in

"The penance, sire," he murmured, but his voice trembled.

Mechanically Charles replaced his blade. "Yea, better a kingdom lost," he muttered, "than a broken vow."

Yet after so many battles won in the field and diet, after titanic contests with kings in Christendom and Solyman in the east, to fall by the mockery of fate into the grasp of a thieving mountain rifler-

"Ambition, power, we sow but the sand!" whispered satiety.

"Vainglory is a sleeveless errand," murmured the spirit of the flagellant. Yet he gazed half flercely at his priestly adviser, when suddenly his gloomy eye brightenea; the inutility of ambition was forgotten; unconsciously he clasped the arm of the joculatrix, who had drawn near. His grip was like a gauntlet. Even in her tense, strained mood she winced.

"The fight is not yet lost!" he exclaimed.

As he spoke the figure of a knight, fully armed, who had made his way through the avenue of tents, was seen swiftly descending the hill. Upon his strong Arabian steed the rider's appearance and bearing signaled him as a soldier apart from the rank and file of the guard. His coat of arms, that of the house of Friedwald, was richly emblazoned upon the housings of his courser. Whence had he attendants and equerries had not seen him in the camp. Only the taciturn armorer of Friedwald looked complacently after him, stroking his great beard as one well satisfied. As this late comer approached the scene of strife the flanks of the guard were wavering yet more perilously.

"A miracle, sire!" cried the prelate. "But one that partakes more of earth, than heaven," retorted Charles, with ready irony.

"Who is ie, sire?" breathlessly asked the young firl. At her feet whimpered the blue ged page, holding to her skirt, all his courage gone.

But ere ie could answer-if he had seen fit to to s from below, out of the amorous shouts: vortex, cane "The duce!

Europe in his palm? Who between martial commands talked of holy orders, the apostolic see and the seven sacraments to his priority and incommands talked of holy orders, the apostolic see and the seven sudden thill of premonition. The angle of the mountain pass heard also in detail of premonition. The angle of the mountain pass heard also in the quittance—could it be posnew doubts and misgiving pent of fury fer all the end was not far? came redoubled; wherever his sword touched a trooper fell.

But, like a wave, recovering from the recoil, the soldlers of Friedwald broke upon his doomed band with a force manifold augmented-broke and carried the flanks with it, for the assaulting parties to the right and left were dismayed by the strength unexpectedly hurled against the center. The bulky Flemish, the lithe Spaniard, the lofty trooper of Friedwald, overflowed the shattered line of the marauders.

"Duke Robert!" and "Friedwald!" shouted the Austrian band.

"Cowards! Would you give way?" cried the free baron, striking among them. "Fools! Better the sword than the rope. Come!"

But in his frenzied efforts to rally his men the master of Hochfels found himself face to face with the leader of the already victorious troops. At the sight of him the pretender paused. His breast rose and fell with his labored breathing. His sword was dyed red. also his arms, his clothes. From his forehead the blood ran down over his beard. His eyes rolled like those of an animal. He seemed something inhuman, an incarnation of baffled purpose. "If it is reprisal you want, Sir Duke,

you shall have it!" he panted. "Reprisal!" exclaimed Robert of

Friedwald scornfully. "The best you can offer is your life."

And with that they closed, Evading the strokes of his more bulky antagonist, the younger man's sword repeatedly sought the vulnerable part of the other's armor. The free baron's strength became exhausted. His blows rang harmlessly or struck the empty

A sensation of pain admonished him of his own disability. About him his band had melted away. Doggedly had they given up their lives beneath sword, mace and ponjard. The ground was strewn with the slain. Riderless horses were galloping up the road. The free baron breathed yet harder. Before his eyes he seemed to see only blood.

Of what avail had been his efforts? He had won the princess, but how brief had been his triumphs! With a belief that was almost superstition he imagined his destiny lay throneward. But the curse of his birth had been a ban to his efforts; the bitterness of defeat smote him. He knew he was falling; his nerveless hand loosened his blade.

"I am sped," he cried-"sped!" and released his hold, while the tide of conflict appeared abruptly to sweep away. As he struck the earth an ornament that he had worn about his neck became unfastened and dropped to the ground. But once he moved, to raise himself on his elbow.

"The hazard of the die!" he muttered, striving to see with eyes that were growing blind. A rush of blood interrupted him, he fell back, straightened out and stirred no more,

Now had the din of strife ceased altogether when descending the slope appeared a cavalcade, at the head of which rode a lady on a white paifrey.

followed by several maids and guarded had not understood now appeared by an escort of soldiers who wore the king's own colors. A stricken procession it seemed as it drew near, the faces of the women white with fear, the gay attire and gorgeous trappings

-a mockery on that ensanguined arena. Proudly proceeded the lady on the white horse, although in her eyes shone a look of dread. It was an age when women were accustomed to scenes of bloodshed, inured to conflicts in the lists, yet she shuddered as her palfrey picked its way across that field. At the near side of the hollow her glance singled out a motionless figure among those lying where they had fallen, a thickset man, whose face was upturned to the sky. One look into those glassy eyes, so unresponsive to her own, and she quickly dismounted and fell on her knees beside the recumbent form. She took one of the cold hands in hers, but dropped it with a scream.

"Dead!" she cried. "Dead!" The lady stared at that terribly repulsive face. For some moments she seemed dazed; sat there dully, the onlookers forbearing to disturb her. Then her gaze encountered that of him who had slain the free baron, and she sprang to her feet. On her features an expression of bewilderment had been followed by one of recognition.

"The duke's fool!" she exclaimed "He is dead, and you have killed him! The fool has murdered his master!"

"It is true he is dead," answered the other, leaning heavily on his sword and surveying the inanimate form, 'but he was no master of mine."

"That, Madame la Princesse, we will also affirm," broke in an austere voice. Behind them rode the emperor, a dark figure among those bright gowns and golden trappings, the saddlecloth and adornments of his steed somber as



waved back the cavarcaue, and dience to the gesture the ladies, soldiers and attendants withdrew to a discreet distance. Bitterly the princess surveyed the monarch. Overwrought, a torrent of reproaches sprang from her lips.

"Why has your majesty made war on my lord? Why have you countenanced his enemies and harbored his murder-And then, drawing her figure to its full height, her tawny hair falling in a cloud about her shoulders, "Be sure, sire, my kinsman, the king, will know how to avenge my wrongs!" "He cannot, madam," answered

Charles coldly, "They are already avenged.

with her gaze upon the prostrate fig- no pain, only tranquillity. His eye was

jured you has paid the extreme pen- to her.

alty."

"He who was my husband has been foully murdered!" she retorted vehemently, "What had the Duke of Friedwald done to bring upon himself your majesty's displeasure?" "Nothing," answered the emperor

more gently. "Nothing! And yet he lies there-

dead!" "He who lies before you is not the duke, but Louis of Hochfels."

"Ah," she cried excitedly, "I see you have been listening to the false fool, his murderer!"

An expression of annoyance appeared on the emperor's face. He liked not to be crossed at any time by any one. "You have well called him the false fool, madam," said Charles curtly, "for he is no true fool.'

"And yet he rode with your troops." "To redeem his honor, madam." "His honor!"

With a scornful face she approached nearer to the monarch. "His honor! In God's name, what

mean you?" "That the false fool, madam, is himself the Duke of Friedwald."

> CHAPTER XXVII. HE Duke of Friedwald!"

It was not the princess who thus exclaimed, but Jacqueline. Charles had spoken loudly, and, drawn irresistibly to the scene, she had caught his significant words at the moment she recognized in his brave accouterments him whom she had known as the

duke's fool. When she had heard above the din of the fray the cries with which the newhis identity had crossed her mind. She had wondered, been puzzled at the unexpected appearance of Robert, duke of Friedwald, but that he and the ailwide from her field of speculation. In arm, the badge of her office. Much she atmosphere.

plain-his assurance in Fools' hall, his reckless daring, his skill with the sword. He was a soldier, not a jester; a lord, not a lord's servant.

Lost in no less wonder, the princess gazed from the free baron to Charles and back again to the lifeless form. Stooping, she looked steadfastly into the face as though she would read its secret. Perhaps, too, as she studied those features piece by piece she patched together the scenes of the past. Her own countenance began to harden, as though some part of that mask of death had fallen upon her. and when she glanced once more at the emperor they saw she no longer doubted. With forced self control she turned to the emperor.

"Doubtless it is some brave pastime." she said to Charles. "Will your majesty deign to explain?"

"Nay," answered the emperor dryly. "That thankless task I'll leave to him who played the fool."

Uncovering, the Duke of Friedwald approached. The excitement of the contest over, his pallid features marked the effects of his recent injuries, the physical strain under which he had labored. Her cold eyes swept over him haughtily, inquiringly.

"For the part I have played, madam," he said, "I ask your forbearance. If we both labored under a delusion I have only regret"-

"Regret!" Was it an outburst of grief or wounded pride? He flushed, but continued firmly:

"Madame la Princesse, when first a marriage was proposed between us I was younger in experience if not in years than I am now, more used to the bivouac or hunters' camps than courts. And woman"-he smiled-"well, she was a vague ideal. At times she came to me when sleeping before the huntsman's fire in the solitudes of the forest, again was reflected from the pages of classic lore. She seemed a part of the woods and the streams, for by ancient art had she not been turned into trees and running brooks? So she whispered in the boughs and murmured among the rushes. Mere Schwarmerel. Do you care to hear? 'Tis the only defense I can offer."

Her contemptuous blue eyes remained fastened on him. She disdained to answer.

"It was a dreamer from brake and copse who went in the disguise of a jester to be near her, to win her for himself-and then declare his indentity. Well may you look scornful. Love-it is not such a romantic quality-at court! A momentary pastime, perhaps, but-a deep passion-a passion stronger than rank, than death, than all"-

Above the face of her whom he addressed his glance rested upon Jacqueline, and he paused. The princess could but note, and a derisive expression crept about her mouth. "Once I would have told you all," he

source ffer 'the billy own acts. Did she remember that day, when she had been queen of the chaplet, when she had crowned him whom now death and dishonor had over-"The rest, madam, you know-save

this." And, stooping, he picked up the ornament that had dropped from Louis of Hochfels' neck. "Here, princess, is the miniature you sent me. He who

used you so ill stole it from me in prison; through it he recognized the fool for the duke; with an assassin's blow he struck me down."

A moment he looked at that fair "Already avenged!" she exclaimed, past too vividly? His face showed rather that of a connoisseur than a "Yes, madam, for he who hath in- lover. He smiled gently, then held it

Mechanically she let the portrait slip through her fingers, and it fell to the moistened grass near the form of him who had wedded her. Then she drew back her dress so that it might not touch the body at her feet.

"Have I your majesty's permission to withdraw?" she said coldly. "If you will not accept our poor es-

cort to the king," answered Charles. "My ladies and myself will dispense with so much honor, sire," she re-"Such service as we can command

is at your disposal, madam," he repeated. "It is not far distant to the chateau,

sire."

"As you will," said the emperor. With no further word she bowed deeply, turned and, slowly retracing her steps, mounted her horse and rode away, followed by her maids and the troopers of France.

## [TO BE CONTINUED.]

Then You Get It. A most unlucky mortal Is he who can't afford When spring is at the portal And nature is restored To have that tired feeling Implanted in his breast A week from work for rest.

With birds of spring returning And sunshine in a flood The fever begins burning Within your bones and blood; It makes you feel delightful, You thank the weather clerk. But, oh, the thing is frightful
If you're tied down to work!

## Care of Birds.

In an English treatise on the "Hycomer had been greeted, no suspicion of giene of Bird Keeping," by George Creswell, attention is called to the thoughtless practice of banging birds in cages just above the level of the sashes of windows and to the mistaking fool were one and the same was en kindness of hanging a cage in a corner of a sitting room or a kitchen near amazement she regarded the knight the ceiling. In the one case the bird is who had turned the tide of conflict, subjected to drafts and will in all proband then started, noticing the colors he ability develop catarrh and bronchitis, wore, a paltry yellow ribbon on his and in the other it lives in a vitiated