

THE HISTORY OF ZENDA

History of Three Months in the Life of an English Gentleman.

BY ANTHONY HOPE.

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XII.

I Receive a Visitor and Bail a Hawk.

About five miles from Zenda, on the opposite side from that on which the castle was situated, there lies a large tract of wood. It is rising ground and in the center of the demesne, on the top of the hill, stands a fine modern chateau, the property of a distant kinsman of Fritz's, the Count Stanislas von Tarlenheim. Count Stanislas himself was a student and a recluse. He seldom visited the house, and had, on Fritz's request, very readily and courteously offered me his hospitality for myself and my party. This, then, was our destination, chosen ostensibly for the sake of the boar hunting (for the wood was carefully preserved, and boars, once common all over Ruritania, were still to be found there in considerable numbers), really because it brought us within striking distance of the Duke of Streisau's more magnificent dwelling on the other side of the town. A large party of servants, with horses and luggage, started early in the morning; we followed at midday, traveling by train for 30 miles, and then mounting our horses to ride the remaining distance to the chateau. They were a gallant party. Besides 20 gentlemen, every one of them had been carefully chosen, and no less care-

fully sounded by my two friends, and all were devotedly attached to the person of the King. They were told a part of the truth. The attempt on my life in the Summerhouse was revealed to them as a spur to their loyalty and an indictment against Michael. They were also informed that a friend of the King's was suspected to be forcibly confined within the castle of Zenda. His rescue was one of the objects of the expedition; but, it was added, the King's main desire was to carry into effect certain steps against his treacherous brother, as to the precise nature of which they could not at present be further enlightened. Enough that the King commanded their services and would rely on their devotion when occasion arose to call for it. Young, well-bred, brave, and loyal, they asked no more. They were ready to prove their dutiful obedience, and prayed for light and the most exhilarating mode of showing it.



"THE FELLOWS STONY WAS RUDELY TOLD."

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For my part, if a man must needs be a knave, I liked Rupert Hentzau better than his long-faced, close-eyed companions. It makes your sin no worse, as I conceive, to do it in a mode and at a time when you are not alone. Now it was a curious thing that on this first night, instead of eating the excellent dinner my cooks had prepared for me, I must needs leave my gentlemen to eat it alone, under Sapt's presiding care, and ride myself with Fritz to the town of Zenda and a certain little inn that I knew of. There was little danger in the excursion; the evenings were long and light, and the road this side of Zenda well frequented. So off we rode, with a groom behind us. I nudged myself up in a big cloak. "Fritz," said I as we entered the town, "there's an uncommonly pretty girl at this inn."

The little girl was brimming over with gossip. "Well, there are no others," said she. "There's not a woman there—not as a servant, if you mean. They do say—but perhaps it's false, sir."

meanwhile I'll choose my own name." "Oh, so be it! Yet I spoke in love for you; for indeed you are a man fit to be loved."

the castle and have their enemies in a trap. That, sir, is the plan of his Highness for the disposal of the King in case of need. But it is not to be used till the last; for, as we all know, he is not minded to kill the King unless he can, before or soon after, kill you also, as God is my witness, and I pray you to shield me from the vengeance of Duke Michael; for if, after he knows what I have done, I fall into his hands, I shall pray for one thing out of all the world—a speedy death, and that I shall not obtain from him!"

play a game at cards; and my Lord Rupert would choose it sooner for a pastime than any other. He, sooner than he would ruin a woman, though that he loves also."

Colonel, Jas. R. Hall, killed at Cedar Creek, Va., Oct. 19, 1862, lies at Point Pleasant, W. Va., without even a board to mark his last resting place. Now, comrades, wake up. It is a shame and a disgrace to the living members of that grand old regiment to have their names on this list by calling a meeting of the regiment some time in the Summer or Fall of 1907 at Point Pleasant, W. Va., and make some kind of an arrangement to get a slab or monument of some kind to mark the last resting place of one who was one of the bravest of the brave; one who was always in the forefront of battle; one who never said "Go in, boys," but always said "Come on," an officer who never asked us to go where he would not go in front; an officer who was loved by all who knew him. Now, comrades, think this over, and let us do something to show our respect and loving admiration for our comrade, the best officer that ever drew a sword for this glorious Union—A. C. Waller, Co. B, 13th W. Va., Box 393, Logan, O.

Michael knew of my coming, sure enough. I had not been in the house an hour when an impostor in a black and red uniform, with a sword at his side, entered the room. He did not quite reach the impudence of sending my would-be assassins, but he sent the other three of his famous Six—the three Ruritanian gentlemen—Lauregram, Krafsteln, and Rupert Hentzau. A fine strapping trio they were, splendidly horsed and admirably equipped. Young Rupert, who looked a daredevil, and could not have been more than 22 or 23, took the lead, and made the nearest speech, wherein my devoted subject and loving brother, Michael of Streisau, prayed me to pardon him for not paying his addresses in person, and further for not putting his castle at my disposal; the reason for both of these apparent derelictions being that he and several of his servants lay sick of scarlet fever, and were in a very bad, and also a very infectious state. So declared young Rupert with an insolent smile on his curling upper

lip and a toss of his thick hair—he was a handsome villain, and the gossip ran that many a lady had troubled her heart for him already.

"You want to catch this fellow Johann?" asked Fritz.

"I suppose that I was put to bed, and lay unconscious or half-conscious for many a day; but when I awoke to my full mind, and found Fritz beside me. I was weak and weary, but he bade me be of good cheer, saying that my wound was not so soon healed, and that meanwhile all had gone well, for Johann, the keeper, had fallen into the snare we had laid for him, and was now in the house."

Michael could, at his leisure, dispose of the body of the King.

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