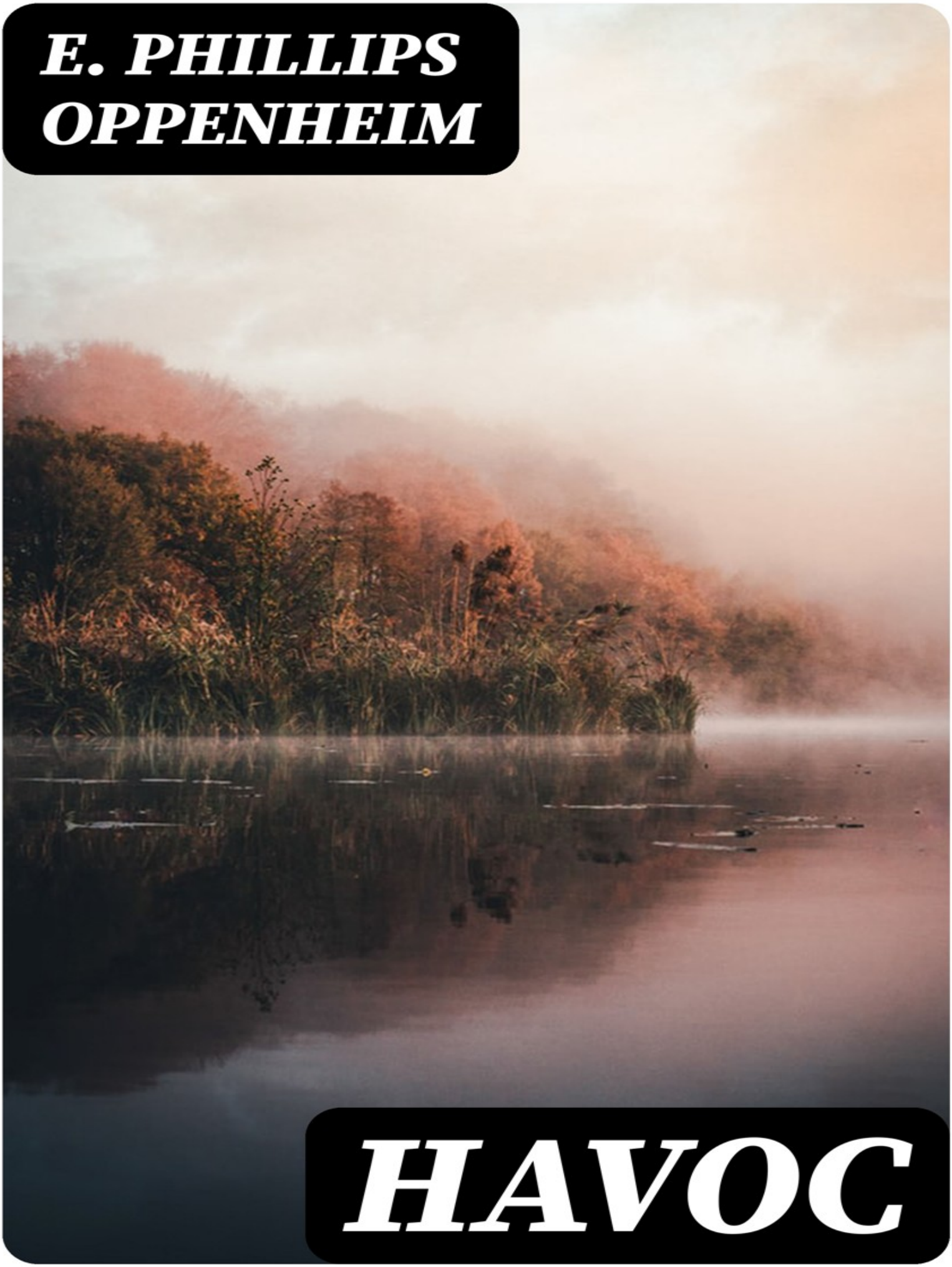
E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM
HAVOC


E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM
HAVOC

E. Phillips Oppenheim

Havoc

EAN 8596547119104

DigiCat, 2022
Contact: DigiCat@okpublishing.info

Table of Contents

CHAPTER I

CROWNED HEADS MEET

Table of Contents

Bellamy, King's Spy, and Dorward, journalist, known to fame in every English-speaking country, stood before the double window of their spacious sitting-room, looking down upon the thoroughfare beneath. Both men were laboring under a bitter sense of failure. Bellamy's face was dark with forebodings; Dorward was irritated and nervous. Failure was a new thing to him—a thing which those behind the great journals which he represented understood less, even, than he. Bellamy loved his country, and fear was gnawing at his heart.

Below, the crowds which had been waiting patiently for many hours broke into a tumult of welcoming voices. Down their thickly-packed lines the volume of sound arose and grew, a faint murmur at first, swelling and growing to a thunderous roar. Myriads of hats were suddenly torn from the heads of the excited multitude, handkerchiefs waved from every window. It was a wonderful greeting, this.

"The Czar on his way to the railway station," Bellamy remarked.

The broad avenue was suddenly thronged with a mass of soldiery—guardsmen of the most famous of Austrian regiments, brilliant in their white uniforms, their flashing helmets. The small brougham with its great black horses was almost hidden within a ring of naked steel. Dorward, an

American to the backbone and a bitter democrat, thrust out his under-lip.

"The Anointed of the Lord!" he muttered.

Far away from some other quarter came the same roar of voices, muffled yet insistent, charged with that faint, exciting timbre which seems always to live in the cry of the multitude.

"The Emperor," declared Bellamy. "He goes to the West station."

The commotion had passed. The crowds in the street below were on the move, melting away now with a muffled trampling of feet and a murmur of voices. The two men turned from their window back into the room. Dorward commenced to roll a cigarette with yellow-stained, nervous fingers, while Bellamy threw himself into an easy-chair with a gesture of depression.

"So it is over, this long-talked-of meeting," he said, half to himself, half to Dorward. "It is over, and Europe is left to wonder."

"They were together for scarcely more than an hour," Dorward murmured.

"Long enough," Bellamy answered. "That little room in the Palace, my friend, may yet become famous."

"If you and I could buy its secrets," Dorward remarked, finally shaping a cigarette and lighting it, "we should be big bidders, I think. I'd give fifty thousand dollars myself to be able to cable even a hundred words of their conversation."

"For the truth," Bellamy said, "the whole truth, there could be no price sufficient. We made our effort in different directions, both of us. With infinite pains I planted—I may

tell you this now that the thing is over—seven spies in the Palace. They have been of as much use as rabbits. I don't believe that a single one of them got any further than the kitchens."

Dorward nodded gloomily.

"I guess they weren't taking any chances up there," he remarked. "There wasn't a secretary in the room. Carstairs was nearly thrown out, and he had a permit to enter the Palace. The great staircase was held with soldiers, and Dick swore that there were Maxims in the corridors."

Bellamy sighed.

"We shall hear the roar of bigger guns before we are many months older, Dorward," he declared.

The journalist glanced at his friend keenly. "You believe that?"

Bellamy shrugged his shoulders.

"Do you suppose that this meeting is for nothing?" he asked. "When Austria, Germany and Russia stand whispering in a corner, can't you believe it is across the North Sea that they point? Things have been shaping that way for years, and the time is almost ripe."

"You English are too nervous to live, nowadays," Dorward declared impatiently. "I'd just like to know what they said about America."

Bellamy smiled with faint but delicate irony.

"Without a doubt, the Prince will tell you," he said. "He can scarcely do more to show his regard for your country. He is giving you a special interview—you alone out of about two hundred journalists. Very likely he will give you an exact account of everything that transpired. First of all, he will

assure you that this meeting has been brought about in the interests of peace. He will tell you that the welfare of your dear country is foremost in the thoughts of his master. He will assure you—"

"Say, you're jealous, my friend," Dorward interrupted calmly. "I wonder what you'd give me for my ten minutes alone with the Chancellor, eh?"

"If he told me the truth," Bellamy asserted, "I'd give my life for it. For the sort of stuff you're going to hear, I'd give nothing. Can't you realize that for yourself, Dorward? You know the man—false as Hell but with the tongue of a serpent. He will grasp your hand; he will declare himself glad to speak through you to the great Anglo-Saxon races—to England and to his dear friends the Americans. He is only too pleased to have the opportunity of expressing himself candidly and openly. Peace is to be the watchword of the future. The white doves have hovered over the Palace. The rulers of the earth have met that the crash of arms may be stilled and that this terrible unrest which broods over Europe shall finally be broken up. They have pledged themselves hand in hand to work together for this object,—Russia, broken and humiliated, but with an immense army still available, whose only chance of holding her place among the nations is another and a successful war; Austria, on fire for the seaboard—Austria, to whom war would give the desire of her existence; Germany, with Bismarck's last but secret words written in letters of fire on the walls of her palaces, in the hearts of her rulers, in the brain of her great Emperor. Colonies! Expansion! Empire! Whose colonies, I

wonder? Whose empire? Will he tell you that, my friend Dorward?"

The journalist shrugged his shoulders and glanced at the clock.

"I guess he'll tell me what he chooses and I shall print it," he answered indifferently. "It's all part of the game, of course. I am not exactly chicken enough to expect the truth. All the same, my message will come from the lips of the Chancellor immediately after this wonderful meeting."

"He makes use of you," Bellamy declared, "to throw dust into our eyes and yours."

"Even so," Dorward admitted, "I don't care so long as I get the copy. It's good-bye, I suppose?"

Bellamy nodded.

"I shall go on to Berlin, perhaps, to-morrow," he said. "I can do no more good here. And you?"

"After I've sent my cable I'm off to Belgrade for a week, at any rate," Dorward answered. "I hear the women are forming rifle clubs all through Servia."

Bellamy smiled thoughtfully.

"I know one who'll want a place among the leaders," he murmured.

"Mademoiselle Idiale, I suppose?"

Bellamy assented.

"It's a queer position hers, if you like," he said. "All Vienna raves about her. They throng the Opera House every night to hear her sing, and they pay her the biggest salary which has ever been known here. Three parts of it she sends to Belgrade to the Chief of the Committee for National Defence. The jewels that are sent her anonymously go to

the same place, all to buy arms to fight these people who worship her. I tell you, Dorward," he added, rising to his feet and walking to the window, "the patriotism of these people is something we colder races scarcely understand. Perhaps it is because we have never dwelt under the shadow of a conqueror. If ever Austria is given a free hand, it will be no mere war upon which she enters,—it will be a carnage, an extermination!"

Dorward looked once more at the clock and rose slowly to his feet.

"Well," he said, "I mustn't keep His Excellency waiting. Good-bye, and cheer up, Bellamy! Your old country isn't going to turn up her heels yet."

Out he went—long, lank, uncouth, with yellow-stained fingers and hatchet-shaped, gray face—a strange figure but yet a power. Bellamy remained. For a while he seemed doubtful how to pass the time. He stood in front of the window, watching the dispersal of the crowds and the marching by of a regiment of soldiers, whose movements he followed with critical interest, for he, too, had been in the service. He had still a military bearing,—tall, and with complexion inclined to be dusky, a small black moustache, dark eyes, a silent mouth,—a man of many reserves. Even his intimates knew little of him. Nevertheless, his was the reticence which befitted well his profession.

After a time he sat down and wrote some letters. He had just finished when there came a sharp tap at the door. Before he could open his lips some one had entered. He heard the soft swirl of draperies and turned sharply round, then sprang to his feet and held out both his hands. There

was expression in his face now—as much as he ever suffered to appear there.

"Louise!" he exclaimed. "What good fortune!"

She held his fingers for a moment in a manner which betokened a more than common intimacy. Then she threw herself into an easy-chair and raised her thick veil. Bellamy looked at her for a moment in sorrowful silence. There were violet lines underneath her beautiful eyes, her cheeks were destitute of any color. There was an abandonment of grief about her attitude which moved him. She sat as one broken-spirited, in whom the power of resistance was dead.

"It is over, then," she said softly, "this meeting. The word has been spoken."

He came and stood by her side.

"As yet," he reminded her, "we do not know what that word may be."

She shook her head mournfully.

"Who can doubt?" she exclaimed. "For myself, I feel it in the air! I can see it in the faces of the people who throng the city! I can hear it in the peals of those awful bells! You know nothing? You have heard nothing?"

Bellamy shook his head.

"I did all that was humanly possible," he said, dropping his voice. "An Englishman in Vienna to-day has very little opportunity. I filled the Palace with spies, but they hadn't a dog's chance. There wasn't even a secretary present. The Czar, the two Emperors and the Chancellor,—not another soul was in the room."

"If only Von Behrling had been taken!" she exclaimed. "He was there in reserve, I know, as stenographer. I have

but to lift my hand and it is enough. I would have had the truth from him, whatever it cost me."

Bellamy looked at her thoughtfully. It was not for nothing that the Press of every European nation had called her the most beautiful woman in the world. He frowned slightly at her last words, for he loved her.

"Von Behrling was not even allowed to cross the threshold," he said sharply.

She moved her head and looked up at him. She was leaning a little forward now, her chin resting upon her hands. Something about the lines of her long, supple body suggested to him the savage animal crouching for a spring. She was quiet, but her bosom was heaving, and he could guess at the passion within. With purpose he spoke to set it loose.

"You sing to-night?" he asked.

"Before God, no!" she answered, the anger blazing out of her eyes, shaking in her voice. "I sing no more in this accursed city!"

"There will be a revolution," Bellamy remarked. "I see that the whole city is placarded with notices. It is to be a gala night at the Opera. The royal party is to be present."

Her body seemed to quiver like a tree shaken by the wind.

"What do I care—I—I—for their gala night! If I were like Samson, if I could pull down the pillars of their Opera House and bury them all in its ruins, I would do it!"

He took her hand and smoothed it in his.

"Dear Louise, it is useless, this. You do everything that can be done for your country."

Her eyes were streaming and her fingers sought his.

"My friend David," she said, "you do not understand. None of you English yet can understand what it is to crouch in the shadow of this black fear, to feel a tyrant's hand come creeping out, to know that your life-blood and the life-blood of all your people must be shed, and shed in vain. To rob a nation of their liberty, ah! it is worse, this, than murder,—a worse crime than his who stains the soul of a poor innocent girl! It is a sin against nature herself!"

She was sobbing now, and she clutched his hands passionately.

"Forgive me," she murmured, "I am overwrought. I have borne up against this thing so long. I can do no more good here. I come to tell you that I go away till the time comes. I go to your London. They want me to sing for them there. I shall do it."

"You will break your engagement?"

She laughed at him scornfully.

"I am Idiale," she declared. "I keep no engagement if I do not choose. I will sing no more to this people whom I hate. My friend David, I have suffered enough. Their applause I loathe—their covetous eyes as they watch me move about the stage—oh, I could strike them all dead! They come to me, these young Austrian noblemen, as though I were already one of a conquered race. I keep their diamonds but I destroy their messages. Their jewels go to my chorus girls or to arm my people. But no one of them has had a kind word from me save where there has been something to be gained. Even Von Behrling I have fooled with promises. No Austrian shall ever touch my lips—I have sworn it!"

Bellamy nodded.

"Yes," he assented, "they call you cold here in the capital! Even in the Palace—"

She held out her hand.

"It is finished!" she declared. "I sing no more. I have sent word to the Opera House. I came here to be in hiding for a while. They will search for me everywhere. To-night or to-morrow I leave for England."

Bellamy stood thoughtfully silent.

"I am not sure that you are wise," he said. "You take it too much for granted that the end has come."

"And do you not yourself believe it?" she demanded. He hesitated.

"As yet there is no proof," he reminded her.

"Proof!"

She sat upright in her chair. Her hands thrust him from her, her bosom heaved, a spot of color flared in her cheeks.

"Proof!" she cried. "What do you suppose, then, that these wolves have plotted for? What else do you suppose could be Austria's share of the feast? Couldn't you hear our fate in the thunder of their voices when that miserable monarch rode back to his captivity? We are doomed—betrayed! You remember the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, a blood-stained page of history for all time. The world would tell you that we have outlived the age of such barbarous doings. It is not true. My friend David, it is not true. It is a more terrible thing, this which is coming. Body and soul we are to perish."

He came over to her side once more and laid his hand soothingly on hers. It was heart-rending to witness the

agony of the woman he loved.

"Dear Louise," he said, "after all, this is profitless. There may yet be compromises."

She suffered her hand to remain in his, but the bitterness did not pass out of her face or tone.

"Compromises!" she repeated. "Do you believe, then, that we are like those ancient races who felt the presence of a conqueror because their hosts were scattered in battle, and who suffered themselves passively to be led into captivity? My country can be conquered in one way, and one way only,—not until her sons, ay, and her daughters too, have perished, can these people rule. They will come to an empty and a stricken country—a country red with blood, desolate, with blackened houses and empty cities. The horror of it! Think, my friend David, the horror of it!"

Bellamy threw his head back with a sudden gesture of impatience.

"You take too much for granted," he declared. "England, at any rate, is not yet a conquered race. And there is France—Italy, too, if she is wise, will never suffer this thing from her ancient enemy."

"It is the might of the world which threatens," she murmured. "Your country may defend herself, but here she is powerless. Already it has been proved. Last year you declared yourself our friend—you and even Russia. Of what avail was it? Word came from Berlin and you were powerless."

Then tragedy broke into the room, tragedy in the shape of a man demented. For fifteen years Bellamy had known Arthur Dorward, but this man was surely a stranger! He was

hatless, dishevelled, wild. A dull streak of color had mounted almost to his forehead, his eyes were on fire.

"Bellamy!" he cried. "Bellamy!"

Words failed him suddenly. He leaned against the table, breathless, panting heavily.

"For God's sake, man," Bellamy began,—

"Alone!" Dorward interrupted. "I must see you alone! I have news!"

Mademoiselle Idiale rose. She touched Bellamy on the shoulder.

"You will come to me, or telephone," she whispered. "So?"

Bellamy opened the door and she passed out, with a farewell pressure of his fingers. Then he closed it firmly and came back.

CHAPTER II

ARTHUR DORWARD'S "SCOOP"

Table of Contents

"What's wrong, old man?" Bellamy asked quickly.

Dorward from a side table had seized the bottle of whiskey and a siphon, and was mixing himself a drink with trembling fingers. He tossed it off before he spoke a word. Then he turned around and faced his companion. "Bellamy," he ordered, "lock the door."

Bellamy obeyed. He had no doubt now but that Dorward had lost his head in the Chancellor's presence—had made some absurd attempt to gain the knowledge which they both craved, and had failed.

"Bellamy," Dorward exclaimed, speaking hoarsely and still a little out of breath, "I guess I've had the biggest slice of luck that was ever dealt out to a human being. If only I can get safe out of this city, I tell you I've got the greatest scoop that living man ever handled."

"You don't mean that—"

Dorward wiped his forehead and interrupted.

"It's the most amazing thing that ever happened," he declared, "but I've got it here in my pocket, got it in black and white, in the Chancellor's own handwriting."

"Got what?"

"Why, what you and I, an hour ago, would have given a million for," Dorward replied.

Bellamy's expression was one of blank but wondering incredulity.

"You can't mean this, Dorward!" he exclaimed. "You may have something—just what the Chancellor wants you to print. You're not supposing for an instant that you've got the whole truth?"

Dorward's smile was the smile of certainty, his face that of a conqueror.

"Here in my pocket," he declared, striking his chest, "in the Chancellor's own handwriting. I tell you I've got the original verbatim copy of everything that passed and was resolved upon this afternoon between the Czar of Russia, the Emperor of Austria and the Emperor of Germany. I've got it word for word as the Chancellor took it down. I've got their decision. I've got their several undertakings."

Bellamy for a moment was stricken dumb. He looked toward the door and back into his friend's face aglow with triumph. Then his power of speech returned.

"Do you mean to say that you stole it?"

Dorward struck the table with his fist.

"Not I! I tell you that the Chancellor gave it to me, gave it to me with his own hands, willingly,—pressed it upon me. No, don't scoff!" he went on quickly. "Listen! This is a genuine thing. The Chancellor's mad. He was lying in a fit when I left the Palace. It will be in all the evening papers. You will hear the boys shouting it in the streets within a few minutes. Don't interrupt and I'll tell you the whole truth. You can believe me or not, as you like. It makes no odds. I arrived punctually and was shown up into the anteroom. Even from there I could hear loud voices in the inner chamber and I knew that something was up. Presently a little fellow came out to me—a dark-bearded chap with gold-

rimmed glasses. He was very polite, introduced himself as the Chancellor's physician, regretted exceedingly that the Chancellor was unwell and could see no one,—the excitement and hard work of the last few days had knocked him out. Well, I stood there arguing as pleasantly as I could about it, and then all of a sudden the door of the inner room was thrown open. The Chancellor himself stood on the threshold. There was no doubt about his being ill; his face was as pale as parchment, his eyes were simply wild, and his hair was all ruffled as though he had been standing upon his head. He began to talk to the physician in German. I didn't understand him until he began to swear,—then it was wonderful! In the end he brushed them all away and, taking me by the arm, led me right into the inner room. For a long time he went on jabbering away half to himself, and I was wondering how on earth to bring the conversation round to the things I wanted to know about. Then, all of a sudden, he turned to me and seemed to remember who I was and what I wanted. 'Ah!' he said, 'you are Dorward, the American journalist. I remember you now. Lock the door.' I obeyed him pretty quick, for I had noticed they were mighty uneasy outside, and I was afraid they'd be disturbing us every moment. 'Come and sit down,' he ordered. I did so at once. 'You're a sensible fellow,' he declared. 'To-day every one is worrying me. They think that I am not well. It is foolish. I am quite well. Who would not be well on such a day as this?' I told him that I had never seen him looking better in my life, and he nodded and seemed pleased. 'You have come to hear the truth about the meeting of my master with the Czar and the Emperor of Germany?' he asked. 'That's so,' I

told him. 'America's more than a little interested in these things, and I want to know what to tell her.' Then he leaned across the table. 'My young friend,' he said, 'I like you. You are straightforward. You speak plainly and you do not worry me. It is good. You shall tell your country what it is that we have planned, what the things are that are coming. Yours is a great and wise country. When they know the truth, they will remember that Europe is a long way off and that the things which happen there are really no concern of theirs.' 'You are right,' I assured him,—'dead right. Treat us openly, that's all we ask.' 'Shall I not do that, my young friend?' he answered. 'Now look, I give you this.' He fumbled through all his pockets and at last he drew out a long envelope, sealed at both ends with black sealing wax on which was printed a coat of arms with two tigers facing each other. He looked toward the door cautiously, and there was just that gleam in his eyes which madmen always have. 'Here it is,' he whispered, 'written with my own hand. This will tell you exactly what passed this afternoon. It will tell you our plans. It will tell you of the share which my master and the other two are taking. Button it up safely,' he said, 'and, whatever you do, do not let them know outside that you have got it. Between you and me,' he went on, leaning across the table, 'something seems to have happened to them all to-day. There's my old doctor there. He is worrying all the time, but he himself is not well. I can see it whenever he comes near me.' I nodded as though I understood and the Chancellor tapped his forehead and grinned. Then I got up as casually as I could, for I was terribly afraid that he wouldn't let me go. We shook hands, and I tell you his fingers were like

pieces of burning coal. Just as I was moving, some one knocked at the door. Then he began to storm again, kicked his chair over, threw a paperweight at the window, and talked such nonsense that I couldn't follow him. I unlocked the door myself and found the doctor there. I contrived to look as frightened as possible. 'His Highness is not well enough to talk to me,' I whispered. 'You had better look after him.' I heard a shout behind and a heavy fall. Then I closed the door and slipped away as quietly as I could—and here I am."

Bellamy drew a long breath.

"My God, but this is wonderful!" he muttered. "How long is it since you left the Palace?"

"About ten minutes or a quarter of an hour," Dorward answered.

"They'll find it out at once," declared the other. "They'll miss the paper. Perhaps he'll tell them himself that he has given it to you. Don't let us run any risks, Dorward. Tear it open. Let us know the truth, at any rate. If you have to part with the document, we can remember its contents. Out with it, man, quick! They may be here at any moment."

Dorward drew a few steps back. Then he shook his head.

"I guess not," he said firmly.

Bellamy regarded his friend in blank and uncomprehending amazement.

"What do you mean?" he exclaimed. "You're not going to keep it to yourself? You know what it means to me—to England?"

"Your old country can look after herself pretty well," Dorward declared. "Anyhow, she'll have to take her chance.

I am not here as a philanthropist. I am an American journalist, and I'll part to nobody with the biggest thing that's ever come into any man's bands."

Bellamy, with a tremendous effort, maintained his self-control.

"What are you going to do with it?" he asked quickly. "I tell you I'm off out of the country to-night," Dorward declared. "I shall head for England. Pearce is there himself, and I tell you it will be just the greatest day of my life when I put this packet in his hand. We'll make New York hum, I can promise you, and Europe too."

Bellamy's manner was perfectly quiet—too quiet to be altogether natural. His hand was straying towards his pocket.

"Dorward," he said, speaking rapidly, and keeping his back to the door, "you don't realize what you're up against. This sort of thing is new to you. You haven't a dog's chance of leaving Vienna alive with that in your pocket. If you trust yourself in the Orient Express to-night, you'll never be allowed to cross the frontier. By this time they know that the packet is missing; they know, too, that you are the only man who could have it, whether the Chancellor has told them the truth or not. Open it at once so that we get some good out of it. Then we'll go round to the Embassy. We can slip out by the back way, perhaps. Remember I have spent my life in the service, and I tell you that there's no other place in the city where your life is worth a snap of the fingers but at your Embassy or mine. Open the packet, man."

"I think not," Dorward answered firmly. "I am an American citizen. I have broken no laws and done no one any harm. If

there's any slaughtering about, I guess they'll hesitate before they begin with Arthur Dorward.... Don't be a fool, man!"

He took a quick step backward,—he was looking into the muzzle of Bellamy's revolver.

"Dorward," the latter exclaimed, "I can't help it! Yours is only a personal ambition—I stand for my country. Share the knowledge of that packet with me or I shall shoot."

"Then shoot and be d—d to you!" Dorward declared fiercely. "This is my show, not yours. You and your country can go to—"

He broke off without finishing his sentence. There was a thunderous knocking at the door. The two men looked at one another for a moment, speechless. Then Bellamy, with a smothered oath, replaced the revolver in his pocket.

"You've thrown away our chance," he said bitterly.

The knocking was repeated. When Bellamy with a shrug of the shoulders answered the summons, three men in plain clothes entered. They saluted Bellamy, but their eyes were traveling around the room.

"We are seeking Herr Dorward, the American journalist!" one exclaimed. "He was here but a moment ago."

Bellamy pointed to the inner door. He had had too much experience in such matters to attempt any prevarication. The three men crossed the room quickly and Bellamy followed in the rear. He heard a cry of disappointment from the foremost as he opened the door. The inner room was empty!

CHAPTER III

"OURS IS A STRANGE COURTSHIP"

Table of Contents

Louise looked up eagerly as he entered.

"There is news!" she exclaimed. "I can see it in your face."

"Yes," Bellamy answered, "there is news! That is why I have come. Where can we talk?"

She rose to her feet. Before them the open French windows led on to a smooth green lawn. She took his arm.

"Come outside with me," she said. "I am shut up here because I will not see the doctors whom they send, or any one from the Opera House. An envoy from the Palace has been and I have sent him away."

"You mean to keep your word, then?"

"Have I ever broken it? Never again will I sing in this City. It is so."

Bellamy looked around. The garden of the villa was enclosed by high gray stone walls. They were secure here, at least, from eavesdroppers. She rested her fingers lightly upon his arm, holding up the skirts of her loose gown with her other hand.

"I have spoken to you," he said, "of Dorward, the American journalist."

She nodded.

"Of course," she assented. "You told me that the Chancellor had promised him an interview for to-day."

"Well, he went to the Palace and the Chancellor saw him.".

She looked at him with upraised eyebrows.

"The newspapers are full of lies as usual, then, I suppose. The latest telegrams say that the Chancellor is dangerously ill."

"It is quite true," Bellamy declared. "What I am going to tell you is surprising, but I had it from Dorward himself. When he reached the Palace, the Chancellor was practically insane. His doctors were trying to persuade him to go to his room and lie down, but he heard Dorward's voice and insisted upon seeing him. The man was mad—on the verge of a collapse—and he handed over to Dorward his notes, and a verbatim report of all that passed at the Palace this morning."

She looked at him incredulously.

"My dear David!" she exclaimed.

"It is amazing," he admitted, "but it is the truth. I know it for a fact. The man was absolutely beside himself, he had no idea what he was doing."

"Where is it?" she asked quickly. "You have seen it?"

"Dorward would not give it up," he said bitterly. "While we argued in our sitting-room at the hotel the police arrived. Dorward escaped through the bedroom and down the service stairs. He spoke of trying to catch the Orient Express to-night, but I doubt if they will ever let him leave the city."

"It is wonderful, this," she murmured softly. "What are you going to do?"

"Louise, you and I have few secrets from each other. I would have killed Dorward to obtain that sealed envelope,

because I believe that the knowledge of its contents in London to-day would save us from disaster. To know how far each is pledged, and from which direction the first blow is to come, would be our salvation."

"I cannot understand," she said, "why he should have refused to share his knowledge with you. He is an American—it is almost the same thing as being an Englishman. And you are friends,—I am sure that you have helped him often."

"It was a matter of vanity—simply cursed vanity," Bellamy answered. "It would have been the greatest journalistic success of modern times for him to have printed that document, word for word, in his paper. He fights for his own hand alone."

"And you?" she whispered.

"He will have to reckon with me," Bellamy declared. "I know that he is going to try and leave Vienna to-night, and if he does I shall be at his heels."

She nodded her head thoughtfully.

"I, too," she announced. "I come with you, my friend. I do no more good here, and they worry my life out all the time. I come to sing in London at Covent Garden. I have agreements there which only await my signature. We will go together; is it not so?"

"Very well," he answered, "only remember that my movements must depend very largely upon Dorward's. The train leaves at eight o'clock, station time. I have already a coupe reserved."

"I come with you," she murmured. "I am very weary of this city."

They walked on for a few paces in silence. Bellamy looked around the gardens, brilliant with flowering shrubs and rose trees, with here and there some delicate piece of statuary half-hidden amongst the wealth of foliage. The villa had once belonged to a royal favorite, and the grounds had been its chief glory. They reached a sheltered seat and sat down. A few yards away a tiny waterfall came tumbling over the rocks into a deep pool. They were hidden from the windows of the villa by the boughs of a drooping chestnut tree. Bellamy stooped and kissed her upon the lips.

"Ours is a strange courtship, Louise," he whispered softly.

She took his hand in hers and smoothed it. She had returned his kiss, but she drew a little further away from him.

"Ah! my dear friend," looking at him with sorrow in her eyes, "courtship is scarcely the word, is it? For you and me there is nothing to hope for, nothing beyond."

He leaned towards her.

"Never believe that," he begged. "These days are dark enough, Heaven knows, yet the work of every one has its goal. Even our turn may come."

Something flickered for a moment in her face, something which seemed to make a different woman of her. Bellamy saw it, and hardened though he was he felt the slow stirring of his own pulses. He kissed her hand passionately and she shivered.

"We must not talk of these things," she said. "We must not think of them. At least our friendship has been wonderful. Now I must go in. I must tell my maid and arrange to steal away to-night."