

be declared against Germany, old Stoltz was stunned. "Mine Gott!" he cried. What trick is England put over on Uncle Sam? He fight the Fatherland? No, no! The big men in the east is money mad. But the people fight to make them all the more richer? No!"

Indeed the nation's warward sweep had come to everyone with the force of a shock. We were appalled when the Lusitania was sunk, but somehow we assumed that the kaiser would cease submarining, and that Uncle Sam would stay clear of the war. It took a lot to wake us up. We had some sympathy, then, for old Stoltz—all except Doc Fraser who had old country relatives in the war. Doc was short, sturdy and stubborn like old Stoltz, and it was a sight worth seeing when they locked horns in Pete's cigar store.

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Knowing Stoltz's attitude, we were dumfounded when the news flew around, shortly after war was declared, that his boy Fred had enlisted. I had rather lost sight of Fred during the later years. He had grown up into a stalwart, fine looking fellow, yet on the whole irresponsible. He played the cornet in the band and danced more industriously than he had ever worked. Old Stoltz had grieved over his shiftlessness, which came to be the burden of his talk with father.

And Fred had recently deepened the tragedy by eloping with Minnie Allen, a dark-eyed little miss, apparently as irresponsible as he himself. I can imagine their reception when they returned from their matrimonial escapade. Yet Stoltz amazed us all by providing them with a little cottage. But he kept aloof. For a while Fred did odd jobs of painting around town, then he dropped the brush and enlisted. No one could understand the workings of his mind. He went away with a prospect of getting to the front soon, but left Minnie, as far as he was concerned, to shift for herself.

His father was at the train to bid him goodbye, his face filled with mingled grief and reproach. "Mine son," he said, "be brave. And Gott bless you." Tears streamed into his beard, and his thick arms went around the boy and he kissed him and cried, his brow on his shoulder. Minnie sobbed piteously as the train drew away, and Stoltz stood looking after it, a little more stooped than usual.

We assumed that Minnie would go home to her folks. But here were miscalculated. The cottage was rented, and she went to keep house for Stoltz. No one envied her, but we were treated to another surprise. The shades were rolled up and white curtains appeared at the windows. The whole place seemed brightened. And when Stoltz came down town, Minnie was often by his side. We suspected that he blamed her for Fred's enlistment; but if so, not a soul knew it except himself. And Minnie grew more womanly. She seemed proud of being a soldier's wife. By the path of sacrifice she came into her own.

When letters came from Fred, their reading was reserved for the evening hour. Minnie would draw her chair close

to the parlor lamp, while Stoltz with many grunts and shiftings would compose himself in the rocker. She would read—very slowly, while he pondered every word. Sometimes he would grunt, and Minnie would flush and look determined.

"Ach! Read that again," he would say. She would do so.

"Ach! Well—go on!"

The whole town was shocked when word came that Fred had been killed in battle. The explanatory letter read: "He was a hero, and his country may well be proud of him."

Stoltz took it hard, unburdening his grief to father. "I knew mine boy would never come back!"

"He was a hero," father consoled.

"Yes," agreed Stoltz and lapsed into moody silence.

Our occasional glimpses of the old man showed he was bitter. He grew haggard and seldom acknowledged our greetings. Even his visits to father's office became more and more infrequent. Minnie grieved, too. She failed, was hollow-eyed, but Stoltz was as gentle and deferential to her as ever.

We knew that something was bound to happen, when we saw him plodding along the street, his head drooped, his hands clasped behind his back. And I myself caused the breaking of the storm. I wrote a scathing editorial about the kaiser and his crew. Rather it wrote itself. I did not foresee what I precipitated. Strolling into Pete's cigar store, I was surprised to find myself facing an excited group. Roaring, gesticulating, Stoltz was brandishing a copy of the paper.

"This is one dirty, lying rag!" he shouted, waving it aloft. Catching sight of me, he bellowed: "He lie! And if you believe him you all lie!"

A roar went up, and several men grabbed hold of him. He shook them off. His collar torn loose, he stood at bay, glaring at us with bloodshot eyes through streaks of dishevelled hair. "Liars!" he panted. You bully an old man just 'cause he tell the truth."

Just then father stepped in. He didn't say a word, yet everybody was silent. What a dignity he had! And he never showed it to better advantage. His new blue suit and carefully arranged white tie were the last word in exacting neatness. His tall, spare, erect figure; the tilt of his soft, dark hat, revealing his high forehead; his business look and warrior's gray mustache, all seemed a definition of commanding superiority.

He fixed his gaze on Stoltz and said: "Herman—you go home."

The old man stared, then raised protesting hands. "But, mine old friend, they lie about the German people. You tell them they lie!"

Gravely father shook his head and repeated: "You go home."

Stoltz staggered and went white. His faith in father was shattered. "Mine old friend," he grieved, "you turn against me, too!" He stumbled away, his arms limp, his head swaying—a crushed, broken-

hearted man. We all pitied him as much as our excited feelings would allow.

He came no more to father's office. But father made no comment. He became more reticent than usual and allowed no one to discuss Stoltz in his presence. The old German shunned the light of day, but people spoke of seeing him wandering around at night. But he spoke to no one. Beginning to hear how obdurate Germans were being dealt with elsewhere, more than once we thought of him.

There was a young lawyer in the town by the name of Mason, who was gaining notoriety by his fiery, patriotic speeches. "Show me a man," was his dramatic cry, "who is not heart and soul with Uncle Sam, and I will show you an enemy who is dangerous to the country."

"He hits from the shoulder," his admirers said. "And there's a jolt in every word."

Mason prided himself as a man of action, too. "There's a man in this town," he cried one evening at a patriotic meeting, "who sticks to the kaiser and slurs the good faith of Uncle Sam. He shuns the sunlight where every true American rejoices to walk, and prowls around after dark like our enemies who specialize in deeds of darkness. No one knows what he may be plotting. I say, don't take any chances! To make sure he won't do any damage, put him where he can't."

In common with others I was impressed by Mason's logic. What if old Stoltz went insane through his continual brooding? Who could tell what he might do? A council of war was called, to meet at father's office. Father was not pleased with the idea, but he voiced no open objections. Mason was the spokesman, working himself into oratorical frenzy.

"Are we doing our duty," he argued, "in letting this man roam at large? Who knows what's in his mind? Who knows what this old minion of German statecraft may be hatching up? It's in him; he can't help it! So I say the time for talking is past. It is up to us to act!"

He paused with fine dramatic effect, and there was a general chorus: "Have him taken up!"

But father sat silent. Mason was watching him, and noting that he did not join in the assent, levelled a finger at him and demanded: "What's your opinion, Judge?"

"You leave Stoltz alone," was father's pointed advice. "He's all right at heart and will come to himself."

Regaining his poise and realizing that the crowd was mainly with him, Mason proceeded insinuatingly: "Now Judge, we know you and Stoltz are old friends. But shouldn't you think of your country, first?"

"I fought for my country in the civil war," father countered, "and Stoltz's son died for her! And you have nothing but your suspicions on which to base a charge against him."

"Ah!" was Mason's significant exclamation. "Perhaps you think—well,

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