

O. Henry Stories

IV. The Halberdier of the Little Rheinschloss.

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GO sometimes into the Bierhalle and restaurant called Old Munich. Not long ago it was a resort of interesting Bohemians, but now only artists and literary folk frequent it.

But the Pfister is yet good, and I take some diversion from the conversation of waiter No. 18.

For many years the customers of Old Munich have accepted the place as a faithful copy from the ancient German town. The big hall with its smoky rafters, rows of lappeted staves, portrait of Goethe and verses painted on the walls—translated into German from the original of the Cincinnati poets—seems atmospherically correct when viewed through the bottom of a glass.

But not long ago the proprietors added to the room above, called it the Little Rheinschloss and built in a stairway. Up there was an imitation stone parapet, ivy covered, and the walls were painted to represent depth and distance, with the Rhine winding at the base of the vineyard slopes and the castle of Ehrenbreitstein, looming directly opposite the entrance. Of course there were tables and chairs, and you could have beer and food brought you.

I went into Old Munich one afternoon when there were few customers and sat at my usual table near the stairway. I was shocked and almost displeased to perceive that the glass cigar case by the orchestra stand had been smashed to smithereens. I did not like things to happen in Old Munich. Nothing had ever happened there before.

Waiter No. 18 came and breathed on my neck. I was his by right of discovery. Eighteen's brain was built like a corral. It was full of ideas which, when he opened the gate, came tumbling out like a flock of sheep that might get together afterward or might not. I did not sibilate as a shepherd. As a type Eighteen fitted nowhere. I did not find out if he had a nationality. Family, creed, grievance, hobby, soul, preference, home or vote. He only came always to my table and, as long as his leisure would permit, let words flutter from him like swallows leaving a barn at daylight.

"How did the cigar case come to be broken, Eighteen?" I asked with a certain feeling of personal grievance.

"I can tell you about that, sir," said he, resting his foot on the chair next to mine. "Did you ever have anybody land you a double handful of good luck while both your hands was full of bad luck, and stop to notice how your fingers behaved?"

"No riddles, Eighteen," said I. "Leave out palmistry and palmistry."

"You remember," said Eighteen, "the guy in the hammered brass Prince Albert and the crooked gold pants and the amalgamated copper hat, that carried the combination meat ax, ice pick and liberty pole, and used to stand on the first landing as you go up to the Little Rheinschloss?"

"Why, yes," said I. "The halberdier. I never noticed him particularly. I remember I thought he was only a suit of armor. He had a perfect pose."

"He had more than that," said Eighteen. "He was my friend. He was an advertisement. The boss hired him to stand on the stairs for a kind of scenery to show there was something doing in the has-been line upstairs. What did you call him—a what kind of a beer?"

"A halberdier," said I. "That was an ancient man-at-arms of many hundred years ago."

"Some mistake," said Eighteen. "This one wasn't that old. He wasn't over twenty-three or four."

"It was the boss' idea, rigging a man up in an antiquarian suit of tinware and standing him on the landing of the sash. He bought the goods at a Fourth avenue antique store and hung a sign out: 'Able-bodied halberdier wanted. Costume furnished.'"

"The same morning a young man with wrecked good clothes and a hungry look comes in, bringing the sign with him. I was filling the mustard pots at my station."

"I'm it," says he, "whatever it is. But I never halberdiered in a restaurant. Put me on. Is it a masquerade?"

"I hear talk in the kitchen of a fish-bait," says I.

"Bully for you, Eighteen," says he. "You and I'll get on. Show me the boss' desk."

"Well, the boss tries the Harvey-bed pajamas on him, and they fitted him like the scales on a baked red snapper, and he gets the job. You've seen what it is. He stood straight up to the corner of the first landing with his halberd to his shoulder, looking right ahead and guarding the Portals of the castle. The boss is nutty about having the true old world flavor to his joint. Halberdiers goes with Rindslösh, says he, 'Just as rats goes with rathskellers and white cotton stockings with Tyrolean villanes.' The boss is a kind of an antiquologist and is all posted up on data and such information."

"From 8 p. m. to 2 in the morning"

was the halberdier's hours. He got two men with us help and \$1 a night. I eat with him at the table. He liked me. He never told his name. He was traveling impromptu, like kings, I guess. The first time at supper I says to him, 'Have some more of the spuds, Mr. Freelinghuysen.' 'Oh, don't be so formal and oddish. Eighteen,' says he. 'Call me Hal—that's short for halberdier.' 'Oh, don't think I wanted to pry for names,' says I. 'I know all about the daisy fall from wealth and greatness. We've got a count washing dishes in the kitchen, and the third bartender used to be a fullman conductor. And they work, Sir Percival,' says I, sarcastic.

"Eighteen," says he, 'as a friendly devil in a cabbage scented hell, would you mind cutting up this piece of steak for me? I don't say that it's got more muscle than I have, but—' And then he shows me the insides of his hands. They was blistered and cut and corned and swelled up till they looked like a couple of flank steaks crisscrossed with a knife—the kind the butchers hide and take home, knowing what is the best.

"Shoveling coal," says he, 'and piling bricks and loading drays. But they came out, and I had to resign. I was born for a halberdier, and I've been educated for twenty-four years to fill the position. Now quit knocking my profession and pass along a lot more of that ham. I'm holding the closing exercises,' says he, 'of a forty-eight hour fast.'

"The second night he was on the job he walks down from his corner to the cigar case and calls for cigarettes. The customers at the tables all snicker out loud to show their acquaintance with history. The boss is on.

"An," let's see—oh, yes, 'An anarchy,' says the boss. 'Cigarettes was not made at the time when halberdiers was invented.'

"The ones you sell was," says Sir Percival. 'Caporal wins from chronology by the length of a cork tip.' So he gets 'em and lights one and puts the box in his brass helmet and goes back to patrolling the Rindslösh.

"He made a big hit, 'specially with the ladies. Some of 'em would poke him with their fingers to see if he was real or only a kind of a stuffed figure like they burn in eiegy. And when he'd move they'd squeak and make eyes at him as they went up to the sash. He looked fine in his halberdier's livery. He slept at \$2 a week in a hall room on Third avenue. He invited me up there one night. He had a little book on the washstand that he read instead of shopping in the saloons after hours. 'I'm on to that,' says I, from reading about it in novels. All the heroes on the bum carry the little book. It's either Tantalus or Liver or Horace and is printed in Latin, and you're a college man. And I wouldn't be surprised," says I, 'if you wasn't educated too.' But it was only the batting averages of the league for the last ten years.

"One night about half past 11 there comes in a party of these high rollers that are always hunting up new places to eat in and poke fun at. There was a swell girl in a forty H-P. auto tan coat and veil, and a fat old man with white side whiskers, and a young chap that couldn't keep his feet off the tail of the girl's coat, and an oldish lady that looked upon life as immoral and

"I never saw more devil, if I may say it, stirred up in a lady. There was two bright red spots on her cheeks, and her eyes looked exactly like a wildcat's I'd seen in the zoo. Her foot kept slapping the floor all the time.

"Walter," she orders, 'bring me filtered water without ice. Bring me a footstool. Take away this empty salt-cellar.' She kept him on the jump. She was sure giving the halberdier his. There wasn't but a few customers up in the sash at that time, so I hung out near the door so I could help Sir Percival serve.

"He got along fine with the olives and celery and the blue points. They was easy. And then the consummation came up the dumb waiter all in one big silver tureen. Instead of serving it from the side table he picks it up between his hands and starts to the dining table with it. When nearly there he drops the tureen smash on the floor, and the soup soaks all the lower part of that girl's swell silk dress.

"Stupid—ineompetent," says she, giving him a look. 'Standing in a corner with a halberd seems to be your mission in life.'

"Pardon me, lady," says he. "It was just a little bit hotter than binzes. I couldn't help it."

"The old man pulls out a memorandum book and dunts in it. 'The 25th of April, Deering,' says he. 'I know it,' says Sir Percival. 'And few minutes to 12 o'clock,' says the old man. 'By Jupiter, you haven't won yet! And he pounds the table with his fist and yells to me: 'Walter, call the manager at once. Tell him to hurry here as fast as he can.' I go after the boss, and old Brockmann hikes up to the sash on the jump.

"I want this man discharged at once!" roars the old guy. 'Look what he's done. Ruined my daughter's dress. It'll cost at least \$800. Discharge this awkward lout at once or I'll sue you for the price of it.'

"Dis is bad phines," says the boss. Six hundred dollars is much. I reckon I'll haf to."

"Wait a minute, Herr Brockmann," says Sir Percival, easy and smiling. "He was worked up under his tin snuffings; I could see that. And then

"Have you—have you lost your money?" she asks.

"Sir Percival studies a minute.

"I am poorer," says he, 'than the poorest sandwich man on the street—if I don't earn my living.'

"You call this work?" says she. 'I thought a man worked with his hands or his head instead of becoming a mountebank.'

"The calling of a halberdier," says he, 'is an ancient and honorable one. Sometimes,' says he, 'the man-at-arms if the door has saved the castle while the plumed knights were cake walking in the banquet halls above.'

"I see you're not ashamed," says she, 'of your peculiar tastes. I wonder, though, that the manhood I used to think I saw in you didn't prompt you to draw water or hew wood instead of publicly flouting your ignominy in this disgraceful masquerade.'

"Sir Percival kind of rattles his armor and says: 'Helen, will you suspend sentence in this matter for just a little while? You don't understand,' says he. 'I've got to hold this job down a bit longer.'

"You like being a harlequin—or halberdier, as you call it?" says she.

"I wouldn't get thrown out of the job just now," says he, with a grin, 'to be appointed minister to the court of St. James.'

"And then the forty H-P. girl's eyes sparkled as hard as diamonds.

"Very well," says she. 'You shall have full run of your serving man's tastes this night.' And she swans over to the boss' desk and gives him a smile that knocks the specks off his nose.

"I think your Rindslösh," says she, 'is as beautiful as a dream. It is a little slice of the old world set down in New York. We shall have a nice supper up there, but if you will grant us one favor the illusion will be perfect—give us your halberdier to wait on our table.'

"That hit the boss' antology hobby just right. 'Sure,' says he, 'dot will be fine. Und der orchestra shall play "Die Wacht am Rhein" all der time.' And he goes over and tells the halberdier to go upstairs and hustle the grub at the swells' table.

"I'm on the job," says Sir Percival, taking off his helmet and hanging it on his halberd and leaning 'em in the corner. The girl goes up and takes her seat, and I see her jaw squared right under her smile. 'We're going to be waited on by a real halberdier,' says she, 'one who is proud of his profession. Isn't it sweet?'

"Ripping," says the swell young man. 'Much prefer a waiter, says the fat old gent. 'I hope he doesn't come from a cheap museum,' says the old lady; 'he might have microbes in his costume.'

"Before he goes to the table Sir Percival takes me by the arm. 'Eighteen,' says he, 'I've got to pull off this job without a blunder. You coach me straight or I'll take that halberd and make hash out of you.' And then he goes up to the table with his coat of mail on and a napkin over his arm and waits for the order.

"Why, it's Deering!" says the young swell. 'Hello, old man. What the—'

"Beg pardon, sir," interrupts the halberdier, 'I'm waiting on the table.'

"The old man looks at him grim, like a Boston bull. 'So, Deering,' he says, 'you're at work yet.'

"Yes, sir," says Sir Percival, quiet and gentlemanly as I could have been myself, 'for almost three months now.'

"You haven't been discharged during the time?" asks the old man.

"Not once, sir," says he, 'though I've had to change my work several times.'

"Walter," orders the girl, short and sharp, 'another napkin.' He brings her one, respectful.

"I never saw more devil, if I may say it, stirred up in a lady. There was two bright red spots on her cheeks, and her eyes looked exactly like a wildcat's I'd seen in the zoo. Her foot kept slapping the floor all the time.

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he made the finest, neatest little speech I ever listened to. I can't give you the words, of course. He gave the millionaires a lovely roast in a sarcastic way, describing their automobiles and opera boxes and diamonds. And then he got around to the working classes and the kind of grub they eat and the long hours they work and all that kind of stuff—bunkum, of course. The restless rich," says he, 'never content with their luxuries, always prowling among the haunts of the poor and jumble, amusing themselves with the imperfections and misfortunes of their fellow men and women. And even here, Herr Brockmann,' he says, 'in this beautiful Rindslösh, a grand and enlightening reproduction of old world history and architecture, they come to disturb its symmetry and picturesqueness by demanding in their arrogance that the halberdier of the castle wait upon their table! I have faithfully and conscientiously,' says he, 'performed my duties as a halberdier. I know nothing of a waiter's duties. It was the insolent whim of these transient, pampered aristocrats that I should be detailed to serve them food. Most I be blamed—must I be deprived of the means of a livelihood,' he goes on, 'on account of an accident that was the

result of their own presumption and haughtiness? But what hurts me more than all," says Sir Percival, 'is the desertion that has been done to this splendid Rindslösh—the confiscation of its halberdier to serve mentality at the banquet board.'

"Even I could see that this stuff was piffle, but it caught the boss.

"Meln Gott," says he, 'you was right, Sir Percival. Halberdier have not got der right to dish up soup. Him I will discharge. Have another waiter if you like and let meln halberdier go back und stand mit his halberd. But, gentlemen,' he says, 'pointing to the old man, 'you go ahead and sue mit der dress. Sue me for \$800 or \$6,000. I stand der suit.' And the boss puffs off downstairs. Old Brockmann was an all right Dutchman.

"Just then the clock strikes 12, and the old guy laughs loud. 'You win, Deering,' says he. 'Let me explain to all; he goes on. 'Some time ago Mr. Deering asked me for something that I did not want to give him. (I looks at the girl, and she turns as red as a pickled beet.) 'I told him,' says the old guy, 'if he would earn his own living for three months without once being discharged for incompetence I would give him what he wanted. It seems that the time was up at 12 o'clock tonight. I came near fetching you, though, Deering, on that soup question,' says the old boy, standing up and grabbing Sir Percival's hand.

"The halberdier lets out a yell and jumps three feet high.

"Look out for those hands," says he, and he holds 'em up. You never saw such hands except on a laborer in a limestone quarry.

"Heavens, boy," says old side whiskers, 'what have you been doing to 'em?'

"Oh," says Sir Percival, 'little chores like hauling coal and excavating rock till they went back on me. And when I couldn't hold a pick or a whip I took up halberdiering to give 'em a rest. Tureenful of hot soup don't seem to be a particularly soothing treatment.'

"I would have bet on that girl. That high tempered kind always go as far the other way, according to my experience. She whizzes round the table like a cyclone and catches both his hands in hers. 'Poor hands! Dear hands!' she sings out and sheds tears on 'em and holds 'em close to her bosom. Well, sir, with all the Rindslösh scenery it was just like a play. And the halberdier sits down at the table at the girl's side, and I served the rest of the supper. And that was about all, except that she shed his hard ware store and went with 'em."

"But you haven't told me, Eighteen," said I, 'how the cigar case came to be broken.'

"Oh, that was last night!" said Eighteen. 'Sir Percival and the girl drove up in a cream colored motorcar and had dinner in the Rindslösh. The same table, Billy, I heard her say as they went up. I waited on 'em. We've got a new halberdier, a bowlegged guy with a face like a sheep. As they came downstairs Sir Percival passes him a ten case note. The new halberdier drops his halberd, and it falls on the cigar case. That's how that happened."

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I WILL GIVE \$1000 IF I FAIL TO CURE ANY CANCER OR TUMOR... CURED AT HOME... Any LUMP in WOMAN'S BREAST is CANCER in every 7 cases out of 10.

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Pancho Villa. This is a recent picture of the bandit Villa, who is now being pursued by American soldiers in the wilds of northern Mexico. Villa is shown with his gun and army uniform.

Silk Hose as a Cure for the Divorce Evil; Fewer Affinities If Wives Would Spruce Up

South Bend, Ind., Mar. 18.—If there were more silk stockings worn and women wore more time to better grooming, there would be fewer divorces, and, I am sure, fewer affinities, was the statement of George Burns LaCour, who is delivering a series of lectures.

The speaker stated that so-called reformers had attacked the modern manner of dress—the short sleeves, the beautiful low neck, the sensible sanitary short skirt, and silk stockings—as the cause of divorce and the social evil generally, when it is, in reality, but the awakening of woman to demand comfort, fashion and health.

One union suit, a well fitted corset, a brassiere, silk stockings and one silk petticoat are the only essentials for a well groomed woman, said the speaker.

And added garments detract from the lines of the gown and keep the air from circulating next the skin.

man scientists are concentrating their minds on methods of exterminating field mice. As a result of the mild winter the mice have multiplied enormously and expert agriculturists say they threaten to damage the next crop seriously in view of the enormous importance of a full yield, the government took the alarm immediately.

PECULIAR FACTS ABOUT WELL KNOWN PEOPLE... St. Paul, Minn., March 18.—Hans Grunow, German consul for the Northwest, absolutely refuses to smoke so-called Russian cigarettes made in America. Formerly they were favorites of his. He destroyed several gross when hostilities commenced.

Dr. Newo New New Is Broke and Discredited

San Francisco, Mar. 17.—"Dr." Newo New New, founder of the New Thought movement, guaranteeing riches and life eternal on this earth for all its members, is broke.

With the crashing of his organization about his ears and the desertion of its members the man who always wore white now wears black, while he waits a summons into the federal court to answer to charges of fraudulent use of the mails.

All he has left out of the thousands reaped from the conduct of his "churches" are a few books and a bronze plaque given him by the exposition when he held a congress of New Thought there.

Today Attorney John C. Caslin is fighting in the federal court for an immediate hearing of his case because Dr. New and Mrs. Marie T. Graham are penniless.

Mrs. Graham was one of the cult's heads. Newo New New was arrested when literature claiming he was 90 whereas he looks 30 was sent through the mails.

Four of Kaiser's Six Sons Injured in War Thus Far

Amsterdam, Mar. 18.—The wounding of Prince Oscar of Germany on the Russian front makes four of the Kaiser's sons who have suffered bodily injury in the war, according to accurate journalistic records here. Only the crown prince and Prince Adalbert have escaped thus far. August Wilhelm, the Kaiser's fourth son, was wounded during the battle of the Marne by a bullet in his left arm. The second son, Eitel Frederick, was thrown from his horse in October, 1914, and suffered a damaged knee. Joachim, the sixth son, was wounded by shrapnel in the right thigh in September, 1914. Joachim was also nearly captured by the Russians in the following December. He was rescued by a German aeroplane, Oscar, recently wounded, suffers from palpitation of the heart and collapsed from this complaint after a battle in 1914.

SHE'S SOME SPELLER... Denton, Texas, March 18.—Missie Pass, aged 8, is the spell-binding girl in school. Although only a member of the first grade, she spelled all the way through the fifth grade book without missing a word, then went half way through the book again, spelling all the words backward.

EXTERMINATE FIELD MICE... Bern, Switzerland, March 18.—Ger-

State of Ohio, City of Toledo, Lucas County. Frank J. Cheney makes oath that he is senior partner of the firm of F. J. Cheney & Co., doing business in the City of Toledo, County and State aforesaid, and that said firm will pay the sum of ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS for each and every case of Catarrh that cannot be cured by the use of HALL'S CATARRH CURE.

Sworn to before me and subscribed in my presence, this 9th day of December, A. D. 1915. (Seal) A. W. GLEASON, Notary Public.

Hall's Catarrh Cure is taken internally and acts directly upon the blood and mucous surfaces of the system. Send for testimonials, free. F. J. CHENEY & CO., Toledo, O. Sold by all Druggists, etc. Take Hall's Family Pills for constipation.

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