

THE END OF THE TASK.

(Continued from page 2, Col. 6.)

were bitter, rebellious; the injustice of life's arrangements rankled deeply at that moment, his whole soul felt outraged, fate was cruel, life was wrong, all wrong, Lizschen, on the other hand, walked lightly, in a state of mild excitement, all her spirit elated over the picture she had seen. It had been but a brief communion with nature, but it had thrilled the hidden chords of her nature, chords of whose existence she had never dreamed before. Alas! the laws of this same beautiful nature are inexorable. For that brief moment of happiness Lizschen was to submit to swift, terrible punishment. Within a few steps of the dark tenement which Lizschen called home a sudden weakness came upon her, then a violent fit of coughing which racked her frail body as though it would rend it asunder. When she took her hands from her mouth Braun saw that they were red. A faintness seized him, but he must not yield to it. Without a word he gathered Lizschen in his arms and carried her through the hallway into the rear building and then up four flights of stairs to the apartment where she lived.

Then the doctor came—he was a young man with his own struggle for existence weighing upon him and yet ever ready for such cases as this where the only reward lay in the approbation of his own conscience—and Braun hung upon his face for the verdict.

"It is just another attack like the last," he was saying to himself. "She will have to lie in bed for a day, and then she will be just as well as before. Perhaps it may even help her! But it is nothing more serious. She has had many of them. I saw them myself. It is not so terribly serious. Not yet. Oh, it cannot be yet—maybe, after a long time—but not yet—it is too soon. Over and over again he argued thus, and in his heart did not believe it. Then the doctor shook his head and said: "It's near the end, my friend. A few days—perhaps a week. But she cannot leave her bed again."

Braun stood alone in the room, upright, motionless, with his fists clenched until the nails dug deep into the skin, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, feeling nothing. His eyes were dry, his lips parched. The old woman with whom Lizschen lived came out and motioned to him to enter the bedroom. Lizschen was whiter than the sheets, but her eyes were bright, and she was smiling and holding out her arms to him. "You must go now, Liebchen," she said faintly. "I will be all right tomorrow. Kiss me good-night, and I will dream about the beautiful picture." He kissed her and went out without a word. All that night he walked the streets.

When the day dawned he went to her again. She was awake and happy. "I dreamt about it all night, Liebchen," she said joyfully. "Do you think they would let me see it again?"

He went to his work, and all that day the roar of the machines set his brain a-whirring and a-roaring as if it, too, had become a machine. He worked with feverish activity, and when the machines stopped he found that he had earned a dollar and five cents. Then he went to Lizschen and gave her fifty cents, which he told her he had found in the street. Lizschen was much weaker, and could only speak in a whisper. She beckoned to him to hold his ear to her lips, and she whispered: "Liebchen, if I could only see the picture once more."

"I will go and ask them, darling," he said. "Perhaps they will let me bring it to you."

Braun went to his room and took from his trunk a dagger that he had brought with him from Russia. It was a rusty, old-fashioned affair which even the pawnbrokers had repeatedly refused to accept. Why he kept it or for what purpose he now concealed in his coat he could not tell. His mind had ceased to work coherently; his brain was now a machine, whirring and roaring like a thousand devils. Thought? Thought had ceased. Braun was a machine and machines do not think.

He walked to the picture gallery. He had forgotten its exact location, but some mysterious instinct guided him straight to the spot. The doors were already opened, but the nightly throng of spectators had hardly begun to arrive. And now a strange thing happened. Braun entered and walked straight to the painting of the woodland scene that hung near the door. There was no attendant to bar his progress. A small group of persons, gathered in front of a canvas that hung a few feet away, had their backs turned to him, and stood like a screen between him and the employees of the place. Without a moment's hesitation, without looking to right or left, walking with a determined stride and making no effort to conceal his purposes, and at the same time, oblivious of the fact that he was unobserved, Braun approached the painting, raised it from the hook, and, with the wire dangling loosely from it, took the painting under his arm and walked out of the place. If he had been observed, would he have brought his dagger into use? It is impossible to tell. He was a machine and his brain was roaring. Save for one picture that rose constantly before his vision, he was blind. All that he saw was Lizschen so white in her bed, waiting to see the woodland picture once more.

He brought it straight to her room. She was too weak to move, too worn out to express any emotion, but her eyes looked unutterable gratitude when she saw the painting.

"Did they let you have it?" she whispered.

"They were very kind," said Braun. "I told them you wanted to see it and they said I could have it as long as I liked. When you are better I will take it back." Lizschen looked at him wistfully. "I will never be better, Liebchen," she whispered.

Braun hung the picture at the foot of the bed where Lizschen could see it without raising her head and then went to the window and sat there looking out into the night. Lizschen was happy beyond all bounds. Her eyes drank in every detail of the wonderful scene until her whole being became filled with the delightful spirit that pervaded and animated the painting. A master's hand had imbued that deepening blue sky with the sadness of twilight, the soft, sweet pathos of departing day, and Lizschen's heart beat responsive to every shade and shadow. In the waning light every outline was softened, and Lizschen felt soothed. Yet in the distance, across the valley, the gloom of night had begun to gather. Once or twice Lizschen tried to penetrate this gloom, but the effort to see what the darkness was hiding tired her eyes.

The newspapers the next day were full of the amazing story of the stolen painting. They told how the attendants of the gallery had discovered the break in the line of paintings and had immediately notified the manager of the place, who at once asked the number of the picture.

"It's number thirty-eight," they told him. He seized a catalogue, turned to No. 38, and turned pale. "It's Corot's Spring Twilight!" he cried. "It cost the owner three thousand dollars, and we're responsible for it!"

The newspapers went on to tell how the police had been notified and how the best detectives had been set to work to trace the stolen painting, how all the thieves' dens in New York had been ransacked and all the thieves questioned and cross-questioned, all the pawnshops searched—and it all had resulted in nothing. But such excitement rarely leaks into the Ghetto, and Braun, at his machine, heard nothing of it, knew nothing of it, knew nothing of anything in the world save that the machines were roaring away in his brain and that Lizschen was dying. As soon as his work was done he went to her. She smiled at him, but was too weak to speak. He seated himself beside the bed and took her hand in his. All day long she had been looking at the picture; all day long she had been wandering along the road that ran over the hill, and now night had come and she was weary. But her eyes were glad, and when she turned them upon Braun he saw in them love unutterable and happiness beyond all description. His eyes were dry; he held her hand and stroked it mechanically; he knew not what to say. Then she fell asleep and he sat there hour after hour, heedless of the flight of time. Suddenly Lizschen sat upright, her eyes wide open and staring.

"I hear them," she cried. "I hear them plainly. 'Don't you, Liebchen? The sheep are coming! They're coming over the hill! Watch, Liebchen; watch, precious!'"

With all the force that remained in her she clutched his hand and pointed to the painting at the foot of the bed. Then she swayed from side to side, and he caught her in his arms. "Lizschen!" he cried. "Lizschen!" But her head fell upon his arm and lay motionless. The doctor came and saw at a glance that the patient was beyond his ministering. "It is over, my friend," he said to Braun. At the sound of a voice, Braun started, looked around him quite bewildered, and then drew a long breath which seemed to lift him out of the stupor into which he had fallen. "Yes, it is over," he said, and, according to the custom of the orthodox, he tore a rent in his coat at the neck to the extent of a hand's breadth. Then he took the painting under his arm and left the house.

It was now nearly two o'clock in the morning and the streets were deserted. A light rain had begun to fall, and Braun took off his coat to wrap it around his burden. He walked like one in a dream, seeing nothing, hearing nothing save a dull monotonous roar which seemed to come from all directions and to center in his brain.

The doors of the gallery were closed and all was dark. Braun looked in vain for a bell, and after several ineffectual taps on the door began to pound lustily with his fist and heel. Several night stragglers stopped in the rain, and presently a small group had gathered. Questions were put to Braun, but he did not hear them. He kicked and pounded on the door, and the noise resounded through the streets as if it would arouse the dead. Presently the group heard the rattling of bolts and the creaking of a rusty lock, and all became quiet. The door swung open, and a frightened watchman appeared.

"What's the matter? Is there a fire?" he asked. A policeman made his way through the group and looked inquiringly from Braun to the watchman. Without uttering a word Braun held out the painting, and at the sight of it the watchman uttered a cry of amazement and delight. "The stolen Corot!" he exclaimed. Then turning to Braun. "Where did you get it? Who had it? Who had it? Do you claim the reward?"

Braun's lips moved, but no sound came from them, and he turned on his heel and began to walk off, when the policeman laid a hand on his shoulder.

"Not so fast, young man. You'll have to give some account of how you got this," he said.

Braun looked at him stupidly, and the policeman became suspicious. "I guess you'd better come to the station house," he said, and without

more ado walked off with his prisoner. Braun made no resistance, felt no surprise, offered no explanation. At the station house they asked him many questions, but Braun only looked vacantly at the questioner and had nothing to say. They locked him in a cell over night, a gloomy cell that opened on a dimly lighted corridor, and there Braun sat until the day dawned, never moving, never speaking. Once, during the night, the watchman on duty in this corridor thought he heard a voice whispering, "Lizschen! Lizschen!" but it must have been the rain that now was pouring in torrents.

"There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest. "There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. "The small and the great are there; and the servant is free from his master."

It is written in Israel that the rabbi must give his services at the death-bed of even the lowliest. The coffin rested on two stools in the room in which she died; beside it the rabbi, clad in somber garments, reading in a listless, mechanical fashion from the Hebrew text of the Book of Job, interpolating here and there some time-worn, commonplace phrase of praise, of exhortation, of consolation. He had not known her; this was merely part of his daily work.

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It seems proper, in view of the sudden death of Mr. C. E. Robb, who for the past twenty-five years has devoted himself wholly to the interests of this institution, to make public acknowledgment of his services; to testify to his ability, to his absolute integrity, and to his strong sense of duty. Frequently, during the past few years, when it was apparent that he needed a prolonged rest, he could not be persuaded to relax his work, but continued it in the face of growing weakness. His accuracy and methodical habits were reflected in his work, and in his death the Bank has lost a valued assistant.

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WILL PAY BOUNTY FOR GOSHAWK BODIES

The \$5 bounty paid by the Game Commission for the body of each goshawk will again become effective on November 1 and continue until May 1. Last year bounties were paid on seventy-six goshawks.

In reminding hunters of the bounty officers of the Commission again called attention to the characteristics of the goshawk and urged that harmless hawks be spared. Goshawks are about two feet in length, have long tails and short wings. They are all gray in color, do not soar, but fly swiftly as close to the ground as conditions permit. Commission officers estimate that a goshawk which takes up quarters in a region where pheasants are plentiful, will kill at least one bird each day.

WOLF PACK FORECASTS A LONG, COLD WINTER.

Button up your overcoat! There's a long severe winter ahead, fur on the famous McCleery wolf pack, of fierce Lobo and Arctic wolves indicates. The fur at present is an almost infallible prognosticator, according to Dr. E. H. McCleery. This year their shaggy bodies are covered with a fur of unusual weight and coarseness and gives indications that deep snows will cover the present dried-up grass this coming winter.

Timely talks on farm and garden topics are given at noon Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. on WJSC, the Pennsylvania State College radio station. The station operates on a frequency of 1280 kilocycles.