

# \_\_\_\_ THE == Princess Virginia

By C. N. and A. M. WILLIAMSON. Authors of "64 Lightning Conductor," "Rose mary In Search of a Father." Etc. 30 30

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## CHAPTER FOUR



O she had gone on her knees to him after allor almost. She was glad her mother did not know, and she hoped that he did not feel the

pulsing of the blood in her fingers as he took her hand and lifted her to her feet. There was shame in this tempest that swept through her veins because he dld not share it, for to her, though this meeting was an epoch, to him it was no more than a trivial incident. She would have keyed his emotions to hers if she could, but since she had had years of preparation, he a single moment, perhaps she might have been consoled for the disparity could she have read his eyes. They said, if she had known, "Is the sky raining goddesses today?"

Now, what were to be her first words to him? Dimly she felt that if she were to profit by this wonderful chance to know the man and not the emperor -this chance which might be lost in a few moments unless her wit befriended her-those words should be beyond the common. She should be able to marshal her sentences as a general marshals his battalions, with a plan of campaign for each.

A spirit monitor - a matchmaking monitor-whispered these wise advices in her car, yet she was powerless to profit by them. Like a schoolgirl about to be examined for a scholarship, knowing that all the future might depend upon an hour of the present, the dire need to be resourceful, to be brilliant, left her dumb.

How many times had she not thought of her first conversation with Leopold of Rhaetia, planning the first words, the first looks, which must make him know that she was different from any other girl he had ever met! Yet here she stood, speechless, epigrams turning tall and racing away from her like a troop of playful colts refusing to be caught.

And so it was the emperor who spoke before Virginia's savoir faire came

"I hope you're not hurt?" asked the chamois hunter in the patois dear to the heart of Rhaetian mountain folk.

She had been glad before, now she was thankful, that she had spent many weeks and mouths in loving study of the tongue which was Leopold's. It was not the metier of a chamois huntperor was said to know the language well, and she rejoiced in her ability to answer the chamols hunter as he would be answered, keeping up the

"I am hurt only in the pride that , paths and safety." comes before a fall," she replied, forcing a laugh. "Thank you many times

"I feared that I frightened you and I've heard your emperor holds it." made you lose your footing," the chamols hunter answered.

"I think, on the contrary, if it hadn't been for you I should have lost my life," said Virginia. "There should be a sign put up on that tempting plateau, 'All Except Suicides Beware.'

"The necessity never occurred to us, my mates and me," returned the man in the gray coat passemolled with green. "Until you came, gna' fraulein, no tourist that I know of has found it tempting."

spark. The spirit monitor-that matchmaking monitor-came back and dared her to a frolic, such a frolic, she thought, as no girl on earth had ever had or would have after her. And she hers something new in life-something quite new-which it would not harm him to know. Then, let come what would out of this adventure, at worst she should always have an Olympian episode to remember. "Until I came?" she caught up his

words, standing carefully on the spot where he had placed her. "But I am no tourist. I am an explorer."

He lifted level, dark eyebrows, smiling faintly, and when he smiled half

his austerity was gone. So beautiful a girl as this need not rise beyond agreeable commonplaces of mind and speech to please a man. Indeed, this particular chamois hunter expected no more than good looks, a

good heart and a nice manner from

women. Yet this beauty bade fair, It

seemed, to hold surprises in reserve. "I have brought down noble game today," he said to himself, and aloud: "I know the Schneehorn well and love it well. Still I can't see what rewards It has for the explorer-unless, gna' fraulein, you are a climber or a geolo-

"I'm neither, yet I think I have seen something, a most rare thing, I've wanted all my life to see."

The young man's face confessed curi-"Indeed! A rare thing that to boast of. We chamois hunters are lives here on the mountain?"

"I am not sure if it lives here. I should like to find out," replied the girl each new thought of mischief which

going. Here your head might still grow a little giddy, and it's not well to keep you standing, gna' fraulein, on such a spot. You've passed all the worst now. The rest is easy."

She gave him her hand, pleasing herself by fancying the act a kind of allegory, as she let him lead her to safe and pleasant places on a higher, sunnier level.

"Perhaps the rare thing grows here," about the green plateau with a new interest.

"I think not," Virginia answered. shaking her head. "It would thrive we should all do well to learn. But better nearer the mountain top in a have you never lived in a town?" more hidden place than this. It does not love tourists."

chamois hunter.

"You took me for one."

"Pardon, gna' fraulein-not the kind of tourist we both mean."

"Thank you." "But you have not said if I might exploring in alone."

"I feel sure," responded the princess graciously, "that if you really would you could help me as well as any one In Rhaetia."

"You are kind indeed to say so, though I don't know how I have deserved the compliment."

"Did it sound like a compliment? you are at home in these high alti-cold. tudes, and the rare thing I speak of is a plant that grows in high places. It mountains, though I have never heard of any one who has been able to track it down.

"Is it our pink Rhaetian edelweiss, of is and you will trust me I know exfrom here in a few moments."

She shook her head again, smiling inscrutably. "Thank you, it's not the pink edelweiss. The scientific, the esoto no one, but the common people in my native country who have heard of it would call the plant edelmann."

"You have already seen it on the mountain, but not growing?"

had dropped it perhaps, not knowing what its value was. It's a great deal to have had one glimpse-worth running into danger for."

"Perhaps, gna' fraulein, you don't er to speak English, though the em- | realize to the full the danger you did run. No chance was worth it, believe me.

"You, a chamois hunter, say that?" "But I'm a man. You are a woman,

The princess laughed. "I shouldn't wonder," said she. "If that's a Rhaetian theory, a Rhaetian man's theory.

"Who told you that, gna' fraulein?" gray eyes looked innocent of guile and were therefore at their most danger-

Cats may look at kings, and the most bers. insignificant persons may talk of emperors. I've heard many things of yours.

"Good things or bad?"

"No doubt such things as he truly deserves. Now, can you guess which? Virginia's eyes lit with a sudden But perhaps I would tell you without shelves. your guessing if I were not so very. very hungry." She glanced at the pocket of his coat, from which pro his shoulder. truded a generous hunch of black help. "I can't help seeing that you have your luncheon with you. Do you want it all"-she carefully ignored the contents of her rucksuck, which she could not well have forgotten-"or would you share it?"

The chamois hunter looked surprised. though not displeased; but, then, this was his first experience of a feminine explorer, and he quickly rose to the occasion.

"There is more, much more bread and bacon, where this came from," he replied. "Will you be graciously

best? "If you please, then I, too, shall be pleased," she said. Guiltily she remembered Miss Portman, but the dear Letitia could not be considered now. If she were alarmed, she should be

well consoled later.

"I and some friends of mine have a -a sort of hut round the corner from this plateau and a short distance on," announced the chamois hunter, with a gesture that gave the direction. "No roman has ever been our guest, but I invite you to visit it and lunch there, or, if you prefer, remain here and in a few minutes I will bring such food as we can offer. At best it's not much

poor men, living roughly." The princess smiled, imprisoning "Might one inquire the name of this flew into her mind like a trapped bird. rare thing?" asked the chamois hunter. "I've heard you're rich in hospitality," "Perhaps if I knew it might turn out she said. "I'll go with you to your that I could help you in the search. but, for it will be a chance to prove But, first, if you'd let me lead you to the saying."

ane eyes of the hunter-dark, bru-Hant and keen as the eagle's to which she compared him-pierced hers. "You have no fear?" he asked. "You are a desolate place. For all you know, my mates and I may be a band of brigands."

"Baedeker doesn't mention the existence of brigands in these days among the Rhaetian Alps," replied Virginia, with quaint dryness. "I've always found him trustworthy. Besides, I've great faith in the chivalry of Rhaetlan men, and if you knew how hungry I am you wouldn't keep me waiting for talk of brigands. Bread and butter are far more to the point." "Even search for the rare edelmann

"Yes; the edelmann may wait-on me." The last two words she dared but to whisper.

"You must pardon my going first," said the man with the bare brown knees. "The way is too narrow for

Ave a mine that the personne to home had such courteous manners as yours," Virginia patronized him pret-"You Rhaetlans need not go to the chamois hunter went on, looking court, I see, for lessons in behavior." "The mountains teach us something.

maybe." "Something of their greatness, which

"A man of my sort exists in a town; he lives in the mountains." With this "Nor do I, in truth," smiled the diplomatic response the tall figure swung round a corner formed by a bowlder of rock, and Virginia gave a little cry of surprise. The hut of which the chamois hunter had spoken was revealed by the turn, and it was help you in your search. This is a tion. Instead of the humble erection of an unexpected and striking descripwild region for a young lady to be of stones and wood which she had counted on, the rocky side of the mountain itself had been coaxed to give her sons a shelter.

A doorway and large square openings for windows had been cut in the red veined, purplish brown porphyry, while a heavy slab of oak and wooden frames filled full of glittering bottle glass protected such rooms as might have been Well, leave it so. I meant because hollowed out within from storm or

Even had Virginia been ignorant of her host's identity she would have is said to be found only in Rhaetian been wise enough to guess that here was no semmbutte, or ordinary abode of common peasants who hunt the chamols for a precarlous livelihood. The work of hewing out in the solid rock which we are so proud? Because if it a habitation such as this must have cost more than most Rhaetlan chamois actly where to take you to find it. hunters would save in many a year. With my help you could climb there But her wisdom also counseled her to express no further surprise after her first exclamation.

"My mates are away for the time, though they may come back by and teric name I've promised that I'll tell by," the man explained, holding the heavy oaken door that she might pass into the room within, and, though she was not invited to further exploration, she was able to see by the several doorways cut in the rock walls that "Some chamols hunter, like yourself, this was not the sole accommodation the strange house could boast.

On the rock floor rugs of deer and chamots skin were spread. In a rack of oak ornamented with splendid antlers and studded with the sharp pointed horns of the chamois were suspended guns of modern make and brightly polished, formidable hunting knives. The table in the center of the room had been carved with admirable skill, and and women should keep to beaten the half dozen chairs were oddly fashfoned of stags' antiers shaped to hold fur cushioned wooden seats. A carved dresser of black oak held a store of the coarse blue, red and green china made by peasants in the valley below, through which Virginia had driven ves-He gave her a sharp glance, but her terday, and these bright colored dishes were eked out with platters and great tankards of old pewter, while in the deep fireplace a gypsy kettle swung "Oh, many people have told me, over a bed of fragrant pine wood em-

"This is a delightful place-fit for king or even for an emperor," said Virginia when the bare kneed chamois bunter had offered her a chair near the fire and crossed the room to open the

He was stooping as she spoke, but perors and their love affairs." at her last words looked around over

"We mountain men aren't afraid of a bread and ham, thrust in probably at little work-when it's for our own com- had ever seen those dark eyes so could show this grave soldier-hero of the instant when she had called for fort," he replied, "and most of the bright things you see here are homemade during the long winters."

Then you are all very clever indeed. But this place is interesting. Tell me. has the emperor ever been your guest here? I've read-let me see, could it have been in the guidebook or in some paper?-that he comes occasionally to this northern range of mountains.'

"Oh, yes: the emperor has been at our hut several times. He's good enough to approve it." the host answered calmly, laying a loaf of black bread, a fine seeded cheese and a knuckle of ham on pleased to accept something of our the table. He then glanced at his guest, expecting her to come forward, but she sat still on her throne of antlers, her small feet in their sensible mountain boots daintily crossed under the short tweed skirt.

"I hear he also is a good chamois hunter," she carelessly went on. "But that perhaps is only the flattery which makes the atmosphere of royalty. No he explained. "To us that's no great doubt you, for instance, could really give him many points in chamois hunting.

The young man smiled. "The em peror's not a bad shot."

"For an amateur. But you're a professional. I wager now that you would not for the world change places with the emperor."

How the chamois hunter laughed at this and showed his white teeth! There were those in the towns he scorned who would have been astonished at his light hearted mirth.

"Change places with the emperor! Not unless I were obliged, gna' fraulein not now, at all events," with a

complicientary how and glance

"Thank you. You're quite a courtier. And that reminds me of another thing they say of him in my country. The young girl, alone, save for me, in a story is that he dislikes the society of women. But perhaps it is that he

doesn't understand them." "It is possible, lady. But I never heard that they were so difficult of for nothing. Here's something just to comprehension.

"Ah, that shows how little you chamols hunters have had time to 'earn. Why, we can't even understand ourselves or know what we're most likely to do next, and yet-a very odd upon her hand, from which she slowly thing-we have no difficulty in reading one another and knowing all each other's weaknesses."

"That would seem to say that a man for him."

"I'm not so sure it would be wise yet your emperor, we hear, will let the chancellor choose his."

"Ah, were you told this also in your ountry?

"Yes, for the gossip is that she's an English princess. Now, what's the good of being a powerful emperor if he can't even pick out a wife to please his own taste?"

"I know nothing about such high matters, gna' fraulein, but I fancled ever entered this door." that royal folk took wives to please their people rather than themselves. It's their duty to marry, you know. And if the lady be of royal blood, virtuous, of the right religion, not too sharp tempered and pleasant to look at, why, those are the principal things to consider, I should suppose."

"So should I not suppose if I were a man and emperor. I should want the pleasure of falling in love."

'Safer not, gna' fraulein. He might fall in love with the wrong woman." And the chamois hunter looked with half shamed intentness into his guest's sweet eyes.

She blushed under his gaze and was so conscious of the hot color that she retorted at random. "I doubt if he could fall in love. A man who would let his chancellor choose for him-he can have no warm blood in his veins."

"There I think you wrong him, lady," the answer came quickly. "The emperor is-a man. But it may be he has found other interests in his life more Important than woman."

"Bringing down chamois, for instance. You would sympathize there.' "Chamois give good sport. They're hard to find-harder still to hit when you have found them."

"So are the best types of womenthose who, like the chamois and the plant I spoke of, live only in high places. Oh, for the sake of my sex I do hope that some day your emperor will change his mind-that a woman will make him change it!"

'Perhaps a woman has already." Virginia grew pale. Was she too late, or was this a concealed compliment which the chamois hunter did not guess she had the clew to find? She could not answer. The silence between the two became electrical, and the young man broke it at last with

some slight signs of confusion. "It's a pity," said he, "that our emperor can't hear you. He might be converted to your views."

"Or he might clap me into prison for leze majesty. "He wouldn't do that, gna' fraulein,

if he's anything like me. 'Anything you like! Why, now you put me in mind of it, he's not unlike you-in appearance, I mean, judging

by his portraits." You have seen his portraits?" "Yes, I've seen some. I really think von must be a little like him, only browner and taller perhaps. Yet I'm glad that you're a chamois hunter and not an emperor-almost as glad as you

"Will you tell me why, lady?" "Oh, for one reason, because I couldn't possibly ask him, if he were here in your place, what I'm going to ask of you. You've very kindly laid the bread and ham ready, but you for-

got to cut them." "A thousand pardons. Our talk has set my wits woolgathering. My mind closed cupboard under the dresser should have been on my manners instead of on such faroff things as em-

He began hewing at the big loaf as if it were an enemy to be conquered. And there were few in Rhaetia who

"I like ham and bread cut thin. please," said the princess. "There;

that's better I'll sit here if you'll bring the things to me, for I find that I'm tired, and you are very kind." "A draft of our Rhaetlan beer will do you more good than anything." suggested the hunter, taking up the plate

of bread and ham be had tried hard to

cut according to her taste, placing it in her lap and going back to draw a tankard of foaming amber liquid from a quaint hogshead in a corner. But Virginia waved the froth crown ed pewter away with a smile and a pretty gesture. "My head has already proved not strong enough for your

enough for your beer. Have you some pice cold water?" The young man laughed and shrug ged his shoulders. "Our water here is fit only for the outside of the body.'

mountains. I'm sure it isn't strong

deprivation, as we're all true Rhaetians for our beer. But now on your account I'm sorry.

"Perhaps you have some milk?" suggested Virginia. "I love milk. And I could scarcely count the cows, they were so many, as I came up the mountain from Allehelligen."

"It's true there are plenty of cows about," replied her host, "and I could easily catch one. But if I fetch the sured him. "It's always instructive to beast here can you milk it?"

"Dear me, no! Surely you, a great wish I hadn't thought of the milk if taste better. New, you must bare,

much!"

"You shall have the milk, lady." returned the chamois hunter. "I"-

"How good you are!" exclaimed the princess. "It will be more than nice of you. But-I don't want you to think that I'm giving you all this trouble show that I appreciate it and to re-

member me by She would not look up, though she longed to see what expression the dark face wore, but kept her eyes withdrew a ring. It fitted tightly, for she had had it made years ago, before ber slender fingers had finished growing. When at last she had pulled off should get a woman to choose his wife the jeweled circlet of gold she held it up temptingly.

"What I have done and anything I may yet do is a pleasure," said the hunter. "But, after all, you have learned little of Rhaetia if you think that we mountain men ever take payment from those to whom we've been able to show hospitality."

"Ah, but I'm not talking of payment," pleaded the princess. "I wish only to be sure that you mayn't forget the first woman who, you tell me, has

The young man looked at the door, not at the girl. "It is impossible that I should forget," said he, almost stiffly. "Still, it will hurt me if you refuse my ring," went on Virginia, "Please

at least come and see what it's like." He obeyed, and as she still held up the ring he took it from her that he might examine it more closely.

"The crest of Rhaetia!" he exclaimed as his eyes fell upon a shield of black and green enamel set with small but exceedingly brilliant white diamonds. "How curious! I've been wondering that you should speak our language so well"-

"It's not curious at all really, but very simple," said Virginia. "Now," with a faint tremor in her voice "press the spring on the left side of the shield, and when you've seen what's underneath I think you'll feel that you can't loyally refuse to accept my little offering."

The bronze forefinger found a pin's point protuberance of gold, and, pressing sharply, the shield flew up to revent a tiny but exquisitely painted

miniature of Leopold I. of Rhaetia. The chamois hunter stared at it and did not speak, but the blood came up to his brown forehead.

"You're surprised?" asked Virginia. "I am surprised, because I'd bee: led to suppose that you thought poorly of our emperor."

"Poorly! Now, what could have given you that impression?" "Why, you made fun of his opinion

"Who am I, pray, to 'make fun' of an emperor's opinion, even in a matter he would consider so unimportant? On the contrary, I confess that I, like most other girls I know, am deeply Interested in your great Leopold if only because I-we-would be charitably minded and teach him better. As for the ring, they sell things more or less of this sort in several of the Rhaetian cities I've passed through on my way here. Didn't you know that?" "No, lady, I have never seen one

like it." "And, as for my knowledge of Rhaetian. I've always been interested in the study of languages. Languages are fascinating to conquer, and then the literature of your country is so splendid one must be able to read it at first hand. Now, you'll have to say 'Yes' to the ring, won't you, and keep it for your emperor's sake, if not for mine?"

"May I not keep it for yours as

"Yes, if you please. And-about the

The chamois hunter caught up a gaudy jug and without further words went out. When he had gone the princess rose, and, taking the knife he had used to cut the bread and ham. she kissed the handle on the place where his fingers had grasped It. "You're a very silly girl, Virginia, my dear," she said. "But, oh, how you do love him! How he is worth loving. and-what a glorious hour you're hav-

For ten minutes she sat alone, perhaps more. Then the door was flung open and her host flung himself in, no longer with the gay air which had sat like a cloak upon him, but hot and sulky, the jug in his hand as empty as when he had gone out.

"I have failed" he said gloomily-"! have failed, though I promised you the milk."

"Couldn't you find a cow?" asked Virginia.

"Oh, yes, I found one, more than one, and caught them too. I even forced them to stand still and grasped them by their udders, but not a drop of milk would come down. Abominable brutes! I would gladly have killed them, but that would have given you

no milk." For her life the princess could not help laughing, his air was so desperate If only those cows could have known who he was and appreciated the honor!

strong man, would never stand by and you were gone I ate the slice of bread let a weak girl do that? Oh, I almost and ham you cut, and never did a meal

meny things to go waich i've made you leave undone. I've trespassed on you too long."

"Indeed, lady, it seems scarcely a moment since you came, and I have no work to do." the chamois hunter insisted.

"But I've a friend waiting for me on the mountain," the princess confessed. "Luckily she had her lunch and will have eaten it, and her guidebook must have kept her happy for awhile, but by this time I'm afraid she's anxious and would be coming in search of me if she dared to stir. I must go. Will you tell me by what name I shall remember my rescuer when I recall this day?"

"They named me for the emperor." "They were wise. It suits you. Then I shall think of you as Leopold. Leopold what? But, no; don't tell me the other name. It can't be good enough to match the first, for, do you know, I admire the name of Leopold more than any other I've ever heard? So, Leopold, will you shake hands for goodby?

The strong hand came out eagerly and pressed hers. "Thank you, gna' fraulein, but it's not goodby yet. You must let me help you back by the way you came and down the mountain."

"Will you really? I dared not ask as much for fear, in spite of your kind hospitality, you were, like your noble namesake, a hater of women."

"That's too hard a word even for an emperor, lady, while, as for me, if I ever said to myself 'No woman can be of much good to a man as a real companion' I'm ready to unsay it."

"I'm glad. Then you shall come with me and help me, and you shall help my friend, who is so good and so strongminded that perhaps she may make you think even better of our sex. If you will you shall be our guide down to Alleheiligen, where we've been staying at the inn since last night. Besides all that, if you wish to be very good you may carry our cloaks and rucksacks, which seem so heavy to us, but will be nothing for your strong shoulders."

#### [TO BE CONTINUED.]

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### NOTICE.

rth Carolina, fin the Superior Johnston County Court. North Carolina. B. B. Lee, et als

E. O. Lee The defendant above named will take notice that an action entitled as above has been commenced in the Superior Court of Johnston county to sell for partition 35 acres of land situated and located in Mesdow Township and being a tract in which said defendant is interested, said defendant will further take notice that he is required to appear at the office of the Clerk of the Superior Court of Johnston county on Saturday, 18th, 1968 at the Court House in said county and answer or demur to the Complaint in said action, or the plaintiff will apply to the court for the relief demanded in said complaint.

W. S. STEVENS, Clerk Superior Court. Wellons & Morgan, Attorneys for Plaintiff.

COMMISSIONERS SALE.

NORTH CAROLINA! In the Superior JOHNSTON COUNTY COURT. March Term

### L. B. Richardson

M. B. Saunders & Anna N. Saunders. By virtue of an order of the Superior Court of Johnston County made in this cause at the March term of said Court, we, the undersigned Commissioners, will sell, on the 25th day of April, 1908 at 12 o'clock M. at the court-house door in the Town of Smithfield, by public auction for eash, the following described lots

and ands:--The first lot or parcel of land being a town lot in the Town of Jerome, in Beulan Township, in the County of Johnston and State of North Carolina, and being lot No. 2 in block "G," in the Polly Pearce division of lands, containing 140 'X 50,' together with the buildings situated thereon.

The second tract or parcel of land is also in Beulah Township, in the said County and State, adjoining the Gerald and Godwin lands, and begins at a pine formerly known as the Henry Gerald corner, now Lillie Godwin's corner, and runs w th this line S. 44-1/4 E. 38 poies to a stake near a spring; thence N. 45 E. 12 poles to a stake; thence N. 35 E. 37 1-5 poles to a dead pine; thence N. 1212 E. 36 poles to a stake; thence N 7 1-2 W poles to a stake; thence N. 13 W. 16 poles to a poplar in the head of a branch; thence S. 61 1-2 W. 47 1 2 poles to a stake; thence S. 11 1-2 W. 40 poles to the beginning, containing twenty-seven

(27) acres more or less.

This land is sold by order of the Court to make assets to satisfy a judgment rendered in this cause. The title is per-The salewill be absolute, and no by bidding. This the 21st day of March, 1908.

E. S. ABELL. J. A. WELLONS. Commissioners.

who he was and appreciated the honor!

"Pray, pray don't mind," she begged.

"You have done more than most men could have done. After all, I'll have a glass of Rhaetian beer with you to drink your health and that of your emperor. I wonder, by the bye, if he, who prides himself on doing all things well, can milk a cow."

"If not, he should learn," said the chamois hunter viciously. "There's no knowing, it seems, when one may need the strangest accomplishments and be humillated for lack of them."

"No, not humillated." Virginia assured him. "It's always instructive to find out one's limitations. And you have been most good to me. See, while you were gone I ate the slice of bread and ham you cut, and never did a meal

By- Ed. S. Abell, Att'y.