

# TWIXT LIFE AND DEATH

## UNDER MEDICAL ADVICE.

A Story of the Franco-Prussian War.

BY ROBERT BUCHANAN.

CHAPTER II.

WARTIME INGREDIENTS.

The fact that so long a time had passed since Blanche had received news from her father was beginning to cause her very grave anxiety. True, he had warned her that this might occur; and had begged that she not be troubled by useless fears of any time all communication between them should cease. Nevertheless, try as she would, she could not keep off the terrible fears which oppressed her, and which depauperated day by day.

At the chateau there was nothing now to distract her from her patriotic and passed out of her hands. Battered with a good constitution, he had rapidly gained strength, and, according to the gossip of the servants, it was more the bright eyes of Blanche de Gardeille than his maimed arm which had caused his recovery.

But as late as he stood by his window watching the slim figure of the young girl, as she moved up and down the terrace, the truth came to him with startling vividness. It was a terrible discovery, and in those few moments brought him almost to a standstill with despair. Nevertheless, the truth must be acknowledged, and in acknowledging it, he knew that Blanche de Gardeille was likely to become more to him than his country or his life.

What was to be done? Should he repay good with ill—should he sacrifice his sweet charity and gentle goodness to his country, trying to make her love him, and so bring upon her all the horror and misery which such a love must cause? Whereas, if he left her now, he could do so, he believed, without causing her one single pang.

And yet how could he go? He was a prisoner. True, he was not strictly bound, for he had given his word. Must he break his parole, quietly effect his escape, and leave behind him a tainted name for Blanche to think of? No; he could not do that. It was his own, but he had risked the courage to make so great a sacrifice.

"If I must not win her love, at least let me be worthy of her esteem," he said. "As well have a bullet through my heart as a look of reproach from her eyes; for, standing here, I am, in truth, half dead."

He quickly donned his riding-clothes, and, as far as possible, made his way to the terrace, but it was empty. He inquired for Blanche, and found that she had left the chateau, and had taken the path which led to the top of the cliff.

Quickly following the path, he glanced over every part of the chateau, but was nowhere to be seen. After searching around the woods in every direction, he was about to return, thinking she might even then be in one of the rooms at the chateau, when suddenly he gazed toward the open door of the little Chapel of Our Lord, and saw Blanche quietly leaning from the porch.

As she had not noticed him, he drew back; for she was closely followed by and seemed in deep conversation with an elderly woman. They stood close to Hartmann, who was silent, but was evidently listening to every word of their conversation.

"Where the thunder have you been?" growled Vogel, wiping his brow. "We've got you up for dead."

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