

## **BARON DE TRENCK**

*By Clemence Robert*

Baron de Trenck already had endured a year of arbitrary imprisonment in the fortress of Glatz, ignorant alike of the cause of his detention or the length of time which he was destined to spend in captivity.

During the early part of the month of September, Major Doo, aide to the governor of the prison of Glatz, entered the prisoner's apartment for a domiciliary visit, accompanied by an adjutant and the officer of the guard.

It was noon. The excessive heat of the dying summer had grown almost unupportable in the tower chamber where Baron de Trenck was confined. Half empty flagons were scattered among the books which littered his table, but the repeated draughts in which the prisoner had sought refreshment had only served to add to his ever-increasing exasperation.

The major ransacked every nook and corner of the prisoner's chamber and the interior of such pieces of furniture as might afford a possible hiding-place. Remarking the annoyance which this investigation caused the baron, Doo said arrogantly:

"The general has issued his orders, and it is a matter of little consequence to him whether or not they displease you. Your attempts to escape have greatly incensed him against you."

"And I," retorted Trenck, with like hauteur, "am equally indifferent to your general's displeasure. I shall continue to dispose of my time as may best please me."

"Good!" replied the major, "but in your own interests you would be wiser to philosophize with your books, and seek the key to the sciences, rather than that of the fortress."

"I do not need your advice, major," the baron observed, with sovereign disdain.

"You may perhaps repent later that you did not heed it. Your attempts to escape have angered even the king, and it is impossible to say just how far his severity toward you may go."

"But, great heavens! when I am deprived of my liberty without cause, have I not the right to endeavor to regain it?"

"They do not see the matter in that light in Berlin. As a matter of fact this spirit of revolt against your sovereign only serves to greatly aggravate your crime."

"My crime!" Trenck exclaimed, trembling with anger.

His glance fell upon the major's sword and the thought came to him to tear it from his side and pierce his throat with it. But in the same instant it occurred to him that he might rather profit by the situation. Pale and trembling as he was, he retained sufficient self-control to modify the expression of his countenance and the tone of his voice, though his glance remained fixed upon the sword.

"Major," he said, "no one can be called a criminal until he has been so adjudged by the courts. Happily a man's honor does not depend upon the inconsequent, malicious opinion of others. On the contrary blame should attach to him who condemns the accused without a hearing. No constituted power, whether that of king or judge, has yet convicted me of any culpable action. Apart from the courtesy which should be observed between officers of the same rank, you, out of simple justice, should refrain from such an accusation."

"Every one knows," retorted Boo, "that you entered into relations with the enemy."

"I? Great God!"

"Do you not consider the Pandours, then, as such?"

"I visited their chief solely as a relative. A glass of wine shared with him in his tent can hardly be construed into a dangerous alliance!"

"But you hoped to inherit great riches from this relative. That hope might well impel you to cross the frontier of Bohemia for all time."

"Why, what egregious folly! What more could I hope for than that which I already possessed in Berlin? Was I a poor adventurer seeking his fortune by his sword? Rich in my own right; enjoying to the full the king's favor; attached to the court by all that satisfied pride could demand, as well as by ties of the tenderest sentiments. What more was there for me to covet or to seek elsewhere?"

The major turned his head aside with an air of indifference.

"One single fact suffices to discount everything you have said, Baron," he replied dryly. "You have twice attempted to escape from the fortress. An innocent man awaits his trial with confidence, knowing that it cannot be other than favorable. The culprit alone flees."

Trenck, though quivering with blind rage, continued to maintain his former attitude, his features composed, his eyes fixed upon the major's sword.

"Sir," he said, "in three weeks, on the twenty-fifth of September, I shall have been a prisoner for one year. You in your position may not

have found the time long, but to me it has dragged interminably. And it has been still harder for me to bear because I have not been able to count the days or hours which still separate me from justice and liberty. If I knew the limit set to my captivity--no matter what it may be--I could surely find resignation and patience to await it."

"It is most unfortunate, then," said the major, "that no one could give you that information."

"Say rather, would not," replied Trenck. "Surely, something of the matter must be known here. You, for instance, major, might tell me frankly what you think to be the case."

"Ah!" said Doo, assuming the self-satisfied manner of a jailer; "it would not be proper for me to answer that."

"You would save me from despair and revolt," replied Trenck warmly. "For I give you my word of honor that from the moment I know when my captivity is to terminate--no matter when that may be, or what my subsequent fate--I will make no further attempts to evade it by flight."

"And you want me to tell you----"

"Yes," interrupted Trenck, with a shudder; "yes, once again I ask you."

Doo smiled maliciously as he answered:

"The end of your captivity? Why, a traitor can scarcely hope for release!"

The heat of the day, the wine he had drunk, overwhelming anger and his fiery blood, all mounted to Trenck's head. Incapable of further self-restraint, he flung himself upon the major, tore the coveted sword

from his side, dashed out of the chamber, flung the two sentinels at the door down the stairs, took their entire length himself at a single bound and sprang into the midst of the assembled guards.

Trenck fell upon them with his sword, showering blows right and left. The blade flashed snakelike in his powerful grasp, the soldiers falling back before the fierce onslaught. Having disabled four of the men, the prisoner succeeded in forcing his way past the remainder and raced for the first rampart.

There he mounted the rampart and, never stopping to gauge its height, sprang down into the moat, landing upon his feet in the bottom of the dry ditch. Faster still, he flew to the second rampart and scaled it as he had done the first, clambering up by means of projecting stones and interstices.

It was just past noon; the sun blazed full upon the scene and every one within the prison stood astounded at the miraculous flight in which Trenck seemed to fairly soar through the air. Those of the soldiers whom Trenck had not overthrown pursued, but with little hope of overtaking him. Their guns were unloaded so that they were unable to shoot after him. Not a soldier dared to risk trying to follow him by the road he had taken, over the ramparts and moats; for, without that passion for liberty which lent wings to the prisoner there was no hope of any of them scaling the walls without killing himself a dozen times over.

They were, therefore, compelled to make use of the regular passages to the outer posterns and these latter being located at a considerable distance from the prisoner's avenue of escape, he was certain, at the pace he was maintaining, to gain at least a half-hour's start over his pursuers.

Once beyond the walls of the prison, with the woods close by, it seemed as if Trenck's escape was assured beyond doubt.

He had now come to a narrow passageway leading to the last of the inner posterns which pierced the walls. Here he found a sentinel on guard and the soldier sprang up to confront him. But a soldier to overcome was not an obstacle to stop the desperate flight of the baron. He struck the man heavily in the face with his sword, stunning him and sending him rolling in the dust.

Once through the postern there now remained only a single palisade or stockade--a great fence constructed of iron bars and iron trellis-work, which constituted the outermost barrier between the fleeing prisoner and liberty. Once over that iron palisade he had only to dash into the woods and disappear.

But it was ordained that Trenck was not to overcome this last obstacle, simple as it appeared. At a fatal moment, his foot was caught between two bars of the palisade and he was unable to free himself.

While he was engaged in superhuman but futile efforts to release his foot, the sentinel of the passage, who had picked himself up, ran through the postern toward the palisade, followed by another soldier from the garrison. Together they fell upon Trenck, overwhelming him with blows with the butts of their muskets and secured him.

Bruised and bleeding he was borne back to his cell.

Major Doo informed Trenck, after this abortive attempt to escape, that he had been condemned to one year's imprisonment only. That year was within three weeks of expiring when the infamous major, who was an Italian, goaded the unfortunate young man into open defiance of his sovereign's mandate. His pardon was at once annulled and his confinement now became most rigorous.

Another plot, headed by three officers and several soldiers of the guard, who were friendly to Trenck, was discovered at the last

moment--in time for the conspirators themselves to escape to Bohemia, but under circumstances which prevented Baron de Trenck from accompanying them.

This also served to increase the hardships of the prisoner's lot, and he now found himself deprived of the former companionship of his friends and surrounded by strangers, the one familiar face remaining being that of Lieutenant Bach, a Danish officer, a braggart swordsman and ruffler, who had always been hostile to him.

But, despite his isolation, the energy and strength of Trenck's character were only augmented by his misfortunes, and he never ceased to plot for his deliverance. Weeks passed without any fruitful event occurring in the life of the prisoner, yet help was to come to him from a source from which he could never have expected it. But before that fortuitous result was destined to take place--in fact, as preliminary to its achievement--he was destined to be an actor in the most remarkable scene that ever has been recorded in the annals of prison life, and in one of the strangest duels of modern times.

One day Trenck had cast himself fully clothed upon his bed, in order to obtain a change of position in his cramped place of confinement. Lieutenant Bach was on duty as his guard.

The young baron had retained in prison the proud and haughty demeanor which had formerly brought upon him so much censure at court. Lieutenant Bach's countenance also bore the imprint of incarnate pride.

The two exchanged from time to time glances of insolence; for the rest, they remained silently smoking, side by side.

Trenck was the first to break the silence, for prisoners grasp every opportunity for conversation, and at any price.

"It appears to me your hand is wounded, lieutenant," Trenck said.  
"Have you found another opportunity to cross swords?"

"Lieutenant Schell, it seemed to me, looked somewhat obliquely at me," replied the Dane. "Therefore, I indulged him in a pass or two directed against his right arm."

"Such a delicate youth, and so mild-mannered! Are you not ashamed?"

"What could I do? There was no one else at hand."

"Nevertheless he seems to have wounded you?"

"Yes, accidentally though, without knowing what he did."

"The fact, then, of having been expelled from two regiments for your highhanded acts, and finally transferred to the garrison of the fortress of Glatz as punishment, has not cured you of your fire-eating propensities?"

"When a man has the reputation of being the best swordsman in Prussia he values that title somewhat more than your military rank, which any clumsy fool can obtain."

"You, the best swordsman!" exclaimed Trenck, concluding his remark with an ironical puff of smoke.

"I flatter myself that such is the case," retorted Bach, emitting in turn a great cloud of tobacco-smoke.

"If I were free," said Trenck, "I might, perhaps, prove to you in short order that such is not the case."

"Do you claim to be my master at that art?"



"I flatter myself that such is the case."

"That we shall soon see," cried Bach, flushing with rage.

"How can we? I am disarmed and a prisoner."

"Ah, yes, you make your claim out of sheer boastfulness, because you think we cannot put it to the test!"

"Truly, lieutenant, set me at liberty and I swear to you that on the other side of the frontier we will put our skill to the test as freely as you like!"

"Well, I am unwilling to wait for that. We will fight here, Baron Trenck."

"In this room?"

"After your assertion, I must either humble your arrogance or lose my reputation."

"I shall be glad to know how you propose to do so?"

"Ah, you talk of Bohemia because that country is far away. As for me, I prefer this one, because it affords an immediate opportunity to put the matter to the test."

"I should ask nothing better if it were not impossible."

"Impossible! You shall see if it be."

Bach sprang up. An old door, supported by a couple of benches, had been placed in the chamber for a table. He hammered at the worm-eaten wood and knocked off a strip which he split in half. One of

these substitutes for rapiers he gave to Trenck, retaining the other himself, and both placed themselves on guard.

After the first few passes, Trenck sent his adversary's make-shift sword flying through space, and with his own he met the lieutenant full in the chest.

"Touché!" he cried.

"Heavens! It is true!" growled Bach. "But I'll have my revenge!"

He went out hastily. Trenck watched him in utter amazement and he was even more astounded when, an instant later, he saw Bach return with a couple of swords, which he drew out from beneath his uniform.

"Now," he said to Trenck, "it is for you to show what you can do with good steel!"

"You risk," returned the baron, smiling calmly, "you risk, over and above the danger of being wounded, losing that absolute superiority in matters of the sword of which you are so proud."

"Defend yourself, braggart!" shouted Bach. "Show your skill instead of talking about it."

He flung himself furiously upon Trenck. The latter, seeming only to trifle lightly with his weapon at first, parried his thrusts, and then pressed the attack in turn, wounding Bach severely in the arm.

The lieutenant's weapon clattered upon the floor. For an instant he paused, immovable, overcome by amazement; then an irresistible admiration--a supreme tenderness, invaded his soul. He flung himself, weeping, in Trenck's arms, exclaiming:

"You are my master!"

Then, drawing away from the prisoner, he contemplated him with the same enthusiasm, but more reflectively, and observed:

"Yes, baron, you far exceed me in the use of the sword; you are the greatest duelist of the day, and a man of your caliber must not remain longer in prison."

The baron was somewhat taken by surprise at this, but, with his usual presence of mind, he immediately set himself to derive such profit as he might from his guardian's extravagant access of affection.

"Yes, my dear Bach," he replied, "yes, I should be free for the reason you mention, and by every right, but where is the man who will assist me to escape from these walls?"

"Here, baron!" said the lieutenant. "You shall regain your freedom as surely as my name is Bach."

"Oh, I believe in you, my worthy friend," cried Trenck; "you will keep your word."

"Wait," resumed Bach reflectively. "You cannot leave the citadel without the assistance of an officer. I should compromise you at every step. You have just seen what a hot-tempered scatterbrain I am. But I have in mind one who admires you profoundly. You shall know who he is tonight, and together we will set you at liberty."

Bach did, in fact, redeem his promise. He introduced Lieutenant Schell, who was to be Trenck's companion during their arduous flight into Bohemia, into the prisoner's cell, and himself obtained leave of absence for the purpose of securing funds for his fellow conspirators. The plot was discovered before his return and Schell, warned of this by one of the governor's adjutants, hastened the day of their flight.

In scaling the first rampart, Schell fell and sprained his ankle so severely that he could not use it. But Trenck was equal to all emergencies. He would not abandon his companion. He placed him across his shoulders, and, thus burdened, climbed the outer barriers and wandered all night in the bitter cold, fleeing through the snow to escape his pursuers. In the morning, by a clever ruse, he secured two horses and, thus mounted, he and his companion succeeded in reaching Bohemia.

Trenck directed his course toward Brandenburg where his sister dwelt, near the Prussian and Bohemian frontiers, in the Castle of Waldau, for he counted upon her assistance to enable him to settle in a foreign land where he would be safe.

The two friends, reduced shortly to the direst poverty, parted with their horses and all but the most necessary wearing apparel. Even now, though in Bohemia, they were not free from pursuit. Impelled one night, through hunger and cold, to throw themselves upon the bounty of an inn-keeper, they found in him a loyal and true friend. The worthy host revealed to them the true identity of four supposed traveling merchants, who had that day accosted them on the road and followed them to the inn. These men were, in fact, emissaries from the fortress of Glatz who had attempted to bribe him to betray the fugitives into their hands, for they were sworn to capture Trenck and his companion and return them dead or alive to the enraged governor of the fortress.

In the morning the four Prussians, the carriage, the driver, and the horses set forth and soon disappeared in the distance.

Two hours later the fugitives, fortified by a good breakfast, took their departure from the Ezenstochow inn, leaving behind them a man whom they, at least, esteemed as the greatest honor to mankind.

The travelers hastened toward Dankow. They chose the most direct route and tramped along in the open without a thought of the infamous spies who might already be on their track.

They arrived at nightfall at their destination, however, without further hindrance.

The next day they set out for Parsemachi, in Bohemia.

They started early, and a day in the open, together with a night's sleep, had almost obliterated the memory of their adventure at the inn.

The cold was intense. The day was gray with heavy clouds that no longer promised rain, but which shrouded the country with a pall of gloom. The wind swirled and howled, and though the two friends struggled to keep their few thin garments drawn closely about them, they still searched the horizon hopefully, thinking of the journey's end and the peaceful existence which awaited them. To their right, the aspect of the countryside had altered somewhat. Great wooded stretches spread away into the distance, while to the left all was yet free and open.

They had gone about half a mile past the first clump of trees when they noticed, through the swaying branches by the roadside, a motionless object around which several men busied themselves. With every step they gained a clearer impression of the nature of this obstacle until, at last, an expression of half-mockery, half-anger overspread their features.

"Now God forgive me!" exclaimed Schell finally, "but that is the infernal brown traveling carriage from the inn!"

"May the devil take me!" rejoined Trenck, "if I delay or flee a step from those miserable rascals."

And they strode sturdily onward.

As soon as they were within speaking distance, one of the Prussians, a big man in a furred cap, believing them to be wholly unsuspecting, called to them:

"My dear sirs, in heaven's name come help us! Our carriage has been overturned and it is impossible to get it out of this rut."

The friends had reached an angle of the road where a few withered tree branches alone separated them from the others. They perceived the brown body of the carriage, half open like a huge rat-trap, and beside it the forbidding faces of their would-be captors. Trenck launched these words through the intervening screen of branches:

"Go to the devil, miserable scoundrels that you are, and may you remain there!"

Then, swift as an arrow, he sped toward the open fields to the left of the highroad, feigning flight. The carriage, which had been overturned solely for the purpose of misleading them, was soon righted and the driver lashed his horses forward in pursuit of the fugitives, the four Prussians accompanying him with drawn pistols.

When they were almost within reaching distance of their prey they raised their pistols and shouted:

"Surrender, rascals, or you are dead men!"

This was what Trenck desired. He wheeled about and discharged his pistol, sending a bullet through the first Prussian's breast, stretching him dead upon the spot.

At the same moment Schell fired, but his assailants returned the shot and wounded him.

Trenck again discharged his pistol twice in succession. Then, as one of the Prussians, who was apparently still uninjured, took to flight across the plain he sped furiously after him. The pursuit continued some two or three hundred paces. The Prussian, as if impelled by some irresistible force, whirled around and Trenck caught sight of his blanched countenance and blood-stained linen. One of the shots had struck him!

Instantly Trenck put an end to the half-finished task with a sword thrust. But the time wasted on the Prussian had cost him dear. Returning hastily to the field of action, he perceived Schell struggling in the grasp of the two remaining Prussians. Wounded as he was, he had been unable to cope single-handed with them, and was rapidly being borne toward the carriage.

"Courage, Schell!" Trenck shouted. "I am coming!"

At the sound of his friend's voice Schell felt himself saved. By a supreme effort he succeeded in releasing himself from his captors.

Frantic with rage and disappointment, the Prussians again advanced to the attack upon the two wretched fugitives, but Trenck's blood was up. He made a furious onslaught upon them with his sword, driving them back step by step to their carriage, into which they finally tumbled, shouting to the driver in frantic haste to whip up his horses.

As the carriage dashed away the friends drew long breaths of relief and wiped away the blood and powder stains from their heated brows. Careless of their sufferings, these iron-hearted men merely congratulated each other upon their victory.

"Ah, it's well ended, Schell," exclaimed Trenck, "and I rejoice that we have had this opportunity to chastise the miserable traitors. But you are wounded, my poor Schell!"

"It is nothing," the lieutenant replied carelessly; "merely a wound in the throat, and, I think, another in the head."

This was the last attempt for a considerable time to regain possession of Trenck's person. But the two friends suffered greatly from hardships and were made to feel more than once the cruelty of Prussian oppression. Even Trenck's sister, instigated thereto by her husband, who feared to incur the displeasure of Frederick the Great, refused the poor fugitives shelter, money, or as much as a crust of bread, and this after Trenck had jeopardized his liberty by returning to Prussian soil in order to meet her.

It was at this period, when starvation stared the exiles in the face, that Trenck met the Russian General Liewen, a relative of Trenck's mother, who offered the baron a captaincy in the Tobolsk Dragoons, and furnished him with the money necessary for his equipment. Trenck and Schell were now compelled to part, the latter journeying to Italy to rejoin relatives there, the baron to go to Russia, where he was to attain the highest eminence of grandeur.

Baron de Trenck, on his journey to Russia, passed through Danzig, which was at that time neutral territory, bordering upon the confines of Prussia. Here he delayed for a time in the hope of meeting with his cousin the Pandour. During the interim he formed an intimacy with a young Prussian officer named Henry, whom he assisted lavishly with money. Almost daily they indulged in excursions in the environs, the Prussian acting as guide.

One morning, while at his toilet, Trenck's servant, Karl, who was devoted to him body and soul, observed:

"Lieutenant Henry will enjoy himself thoroughly on your excursion to-morrow."



"Why do you say that, Karl?" asked the baron.

"Because he has planned to take your honor to Langführ at ten o'clock."

"At ten or eleven--the hour is not of importance."

"No! You must be there on the stroke of ten by the village clock. Langführ is on the Prussian border and under Prussian rule."

"Prussia!" exclaimed Trenck, shaking his head, which Karl had not finished powdering. "Are you quite sure?"

"Perfectly. Eight Prussians--non-commissioned officers and soldiers--will be in the courtyard of the charming little inn that Lieutenant Henry described so well. As soon as your honor crosses the threshold they will fall upon you and bear you off to a carriage which will be in waiting."

"Finish dressing my hair, Karl," said Trenck, recovering his wonted impassibility.

"Oh, for that matter," continued the valet, "they will have neither muskets nor pistols. They will be armed with swords only. That will leave them free to fall bodily upon your honor and to prevent you using your weapon."

"Is that all, Karl?"

"No. There will be two soldiers detailed especially for my benefit, so that I can't get away to give the alarm."

"Well, is that all!"

"No. The carriage is to convey your honor to Lavenburg, in Pomerania, and you must cross a portion of the province of Danzig to get there. Besides the under officers at the inn who will travel with your honor, two others will accompany the carriage on horseback to prevent any outcry while you are on neutral ground."

"Famously planned!"

"M. Reimer, the Prussian resident here, outlined the plot, and appointed Lieutenant Henry to carry it out."

"Afterward, Karl?"

"That's all--this time--and it's enough!"

"Yes, but I regret that it should end thus, for your account has greatly interested me."

"Your honor may take it that all I have said is absolutely correct."

"But when did you obtain this information?"

"Oh, just now!"

"And from whom?"

"Franz, Lieutenant Henry's valet, when we were watching the horses beneath the big pines, while your honors waited in that roadside pavilion for the shower to pass over."

"Is his information reliable?"

"Of course! As no one suspected him, the whole matter was discussed freely before him."

"And he betrayed the secret?"

"Yes, because he greatly admires your honor and wasn't willing to see you treated so."

"Karl, give him ten ducats from my purse and tell him I will take him in my own service, for he has afforded me great pleasure. The outing to-morrow will be a hundred times more amusing than I had hoped--indeed more amusing than any I have ever undertaken in my life."

"Your honor will go to Langführ, then!"

"Certainly, Karl. We will go together, and you shall see if I misled you when I promised you a delightful morning."

As soon as Baron de Trenck had completed his toilet, he visited M. Scherer, the Russian resident, spent a few moments in private with him and then returned to his apartments for dinner.

Lieutenant Henry arrived soon afterward. Trenck found delight in the course of dissimulation to which he stood committed. He overwhelmed his guest with courteous attentions, pressing upon him the finest wines and his favorite fruits, meanwhile beaming upon him with an affection that overspread his whole countenance, and expatiating freely upon the delights of the morrow's ride.

Henry accepted his attentions with his accustomed dreamy manner.

The next morning, at half past nine, when the lieutenant arrived, he found Trenck awaiting him.

The two officers rode off, followed by their servants, and took the road to Langführ. Trenck's audacity was terrifying. Even Karl, who was well aware of his master's great ability and cleverness, was

nevertheless uneasy, and Franz, who was less familiar with the baron's character, was in a state of the greatest alarm.

The country, beautiful with its verdant grasslands, its budding bushes and flowers, its rich fields of wheat, dotted with spring blossoms, revealed itself to their delighted eyes. In the distance glistened the tavern of Langführ, with its broad red and blue stripes and its tempting signboard that displayed a well-appointed festive table.

The low door in the wall that enclosed the tavern courtyard was still closed. Inside, to the right of that door, was a little terrace, and against the wall was an arbor formed of running vines and ivy.

Lieutenant Henry, pausing near a clump of trees some two hundred paces from the tavern, said:

"Baron, our horses will be in the way in that little courtyard. I think it would be well to leave them here in the care of our servants until our return."

Trenck assented readily. He sprang from his horse and tossed his bridle to his valet and Henry did the same.

The path leading to the tavern was enchanting, with its carpet of flowers and moss, and the two young men advanced arm in arm in the most affectionate manner. Karl and Franz watched them, overwhelmed with anxiety.

The door in the wall had been partly opened as they approached and the young men saw, within the arbor on the terrace, the resident, Herr Reimer--his three-cornered hat on his powdered wig, his arms crossed on the top of the adjacent wall, as he awaited their coming.

As soon as the officers were within ear-shot, he called out:

"Come on, Baron de Trenck, breakfast is ready."

The two officers were almost at the threshold. Trenck slackened his pace somewhat; then he felt Henry grip his arm more closely and forcibly drag him toward the doorway.

Trenck energetically freed his arm, upon observing this movement that spoke so eloquently of betrayal, and twice struck the lieutenant, with such violence that Henry was thrown to the ground.

Reimer, the resident, realizing that Trenck knew of the plot, saw that the time had come to resort to armed intervention.

"Soldiers, in the name of Prussia, I command you to arrest Baron de Trenck!" he shouted to the men who were posted in the courtyard.

"Soldiers, in the name of Russia!" Trenck shouted, brandishing his sword, "kill these brigands who are violating the rights of the country."

At these words, six Russian dragoons emerged suddenly from a field of wheat and, running up, fell upon the Prussians who had rushed from the courtyard at the resident's command.

This unexpected attack took the Prussians by surprise. They defended themselves only half-heartedly and finally they fled in disorder, throwing away their weapons, and followed by the shots of the Russians.

Lieutenant Henry and four soldiers remained in the custody of the victors. Trenck dashed into the arbor to seize Resident Reimer, but the only evidence of that personage was his wig, which remained caught in the foliage at an opening in the rear of the arbor through which the resident had made his escape. Trenck then returned to the prisoners.

As a fitting punishment for the Prussian soldiers, he commanded his dragoons to give each of them fifty blows, to turn their uniforms wrongside out, to decorate their helmets with straw cockades, and to drive them thus attired across the frontier.

While his men proceeded to execute his orders, Trenck drew his sword and turned to Lieutenant Henry.

"And now, for our affair, lieutenant!" he exclaimed.

The unfortunate Henry, under the disgrace of his position, lost his presence of mind. Hardly knowing what he did, he drew his sword, but dropped it almost immediately, begging for mercy.

Trenck endeavored to force him to fight, without avail, then, disgusted with the lieutenant's cowardice, he caught up a stick and belabored him heartily, crying:

"Rogue, go tell your fellows how Trenck deals with traitors!"

The people of the inn, attracted by the noise of the conflict, had gathered around the spot, and, as the baron administered the punishment, they added to the shame of the disgraced lieutenant by applauding the baron heartily.

The punishment over and the sentence of the Prussians having been carried out, Trenck returned to the city with his six dragoons and the two servants.

In this affair, as throughout his entire career, Trenck was simply faithful to the rule which he had adopted to guide him through life:

"Always face danger rather than avoid it."