

**MY OFFICIAL
WIFE, A NOVEL**

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My official wife, a novel by Richard Henry Savage

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RICHARD HENRY SAVAGE

**MY OFFICIAL
WIFE, A NOVEL**

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OF
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VOL. 2771.

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MY OFFICIAL WIFE

A NOVEL

BY

COL. RICHARD HENRY SAVAGE.

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MY OFFICIAL WIFE.

BOOK I.

THE OFFICIAL WEDDING.

CHAPTER I.

THE BRIDE.

WE all shivered in the chilly winter air as the clicking wheels sped along over the plains of Eastern Prussia. Our fast express was approaching grim old Königsberg. Farm and village, wood and brook, marsh and river, flew by in a sort of wild dance.

Wrapped in rugs, snugly ensconced in the well-padded little compartments, our polyglot passengers dozed, smoked, grumbled, or chatted freely, as the varying spirits of the motley assemblage dictated. I had seen few of my *camarades de voyage*, as the cross-divisions of the little cars prevent in Germany our American excursions of discovery through the train.

The unusual hour of midnight is selected for despatching the "Schnellzug" from Berlin for St. Petersburg. In this I had realized the haughty scorn of the German railroad bureaucracy for popular comfort.

Bustling to the Friedrichstrasse station, the half hour before departure had given me only time to telegraph my friends at the Russian capital of my leaving Berlin, and to secure a through billet *via* Eydtkuhnen to the new Paris on the banks of the Neva. However, a night in a luxurious first-class carriage was no hardship to an old campaigner.

My preparations for the invasion of Russia were a good rug, a bunch of the least atrocious of various nicotian horrors on sale, some Tauchnitz volumes, and a few French romances as a sauce piquante to the rest. A capacious "Sinners' Friend" was filled and carefully tucked in the pocket of my warm Irish frieze ulster. It was mid-October, and in the moonlight the thin, stony fields looked starved, dug, and frozen out of all life. My immediate travelling companions were two handsome, stalwart, white-handed, jewelled-fingered Russian officers, returning to their native land after visiting entrancing Paris, so beloved by the Russ on his vacation.

Making my semi-bivouac upon the wide, soft seat on my side of the compartment, I soon dropped into slumber, leaving my military neighbors dallying lazily