

SPORT ROYAL AND OTHER STORIES

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649710928

Sport Royal and Other Stories by Anthony Hope

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ANTHONY HOPE

**SPORT ROYAL AND
OTHER STORIES**



"The Princess rushed to the other door, and, on finding it locked, screamed again."—P. 88.

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SPORT ROYAL

AND OTHER STORIES

BY

ANTHONY HOPE

AUTHOR OF "THE PRISONER OF ZENDA," ETC.



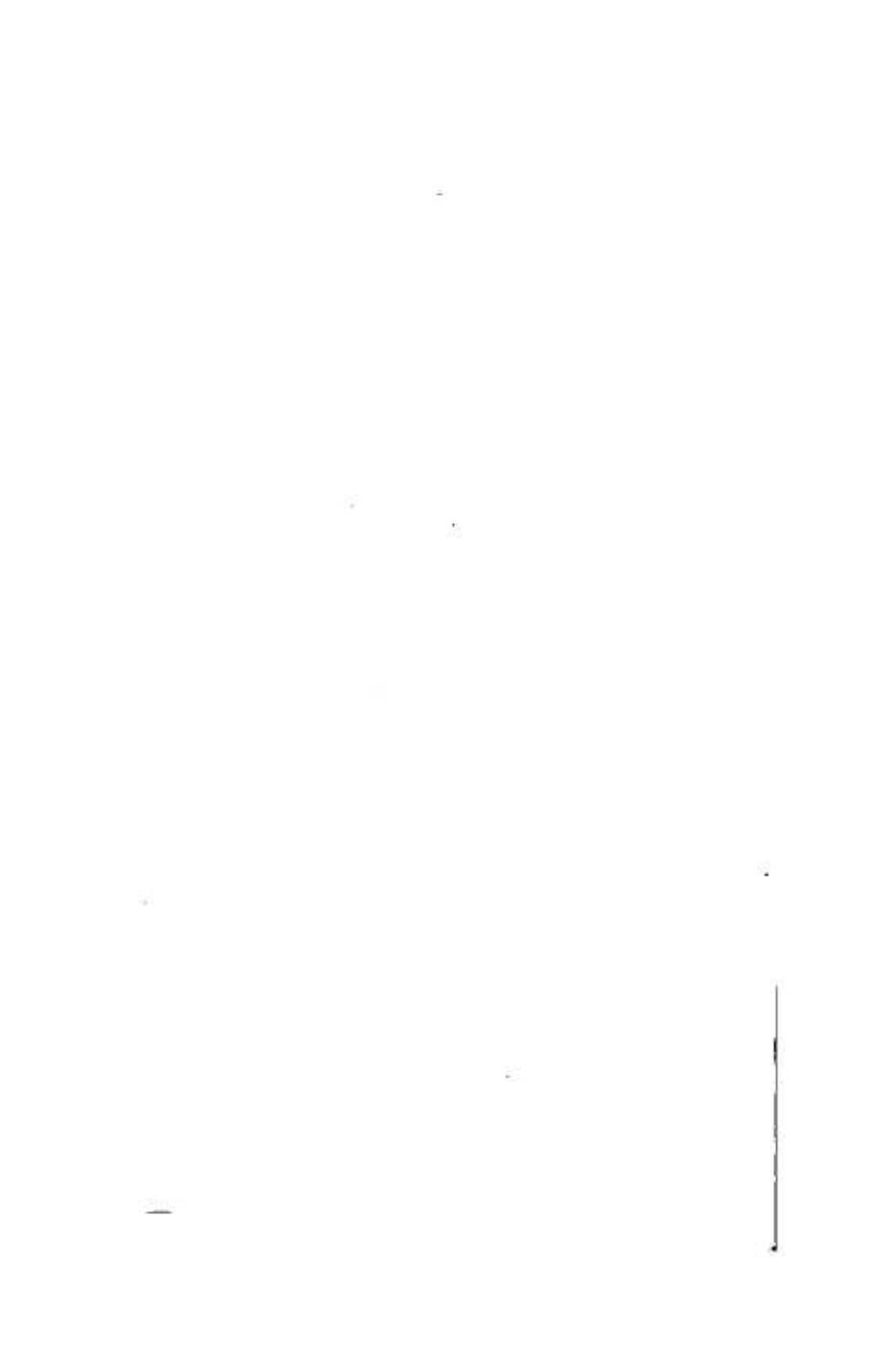
NEW YORK

HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

1895

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SPORT ROYAL.

*An Extract from the Journals
of Julius Jason, Esquire.*

CHAPTER I.

The Sequel to the Ball.

EIDELBERG seems rather a tourist-ridden, hackneyed sort of place to be the mother of adventures. Nevertheless, it is there that my story begins. I had been traveling on the Continent, and came to Heidelberg to pay my duty to the castle, and recruit in quiet after a spell of rather laborious idleness at Homburg and Baden. At first sight I made up my mind that the place would bore me, and

I came down to dinner at the hotel, looking forward only to a bad dinner and an early bed. The room was so full that I could not get a table to myself, and, seeing one occupied only by a couple of gentlemanly looking men, I made for it, and took the third seat, facing one of the strangers, a short, fair young man, with a little flaxen mustache and a soldierlike air, and having the other, who was older, dark, and clean-shaved, on my left. The fourth seat was empty.

The two gentlemen returned my bow with well-bred negligence, and I started on my soup. As I finished it, I looked up and saw my companions interchanging glances. Catching my eye, they both looked away in an absent fashion, each the while taking out of his pocket a red silk handker-

chief and laying it on the table by him. I turned away for a moment, then suddenly looked again and found their eyes on me, and I fancied that the next moment the eyes wandered from me to the handkerchiefs. I happened to be carrying a red handkerchief myself, and, thinking either that something was in the wind or perhaps that my friends were having a joke at my expense (though, as I said, they looked well-bred men), I took it out of my pocket and, laying it on the table, gazed calmly in front of me, my eyes naturally falling on the fair young man.

He nodded significantly to the older man, and held out his hand to me. I shook hands with him, and went through the same ceremony with the other.

"Ah!" said the young man,