

# Weird Tales

REGISTERED IN U.S. PATENT OFFICE

A MAGAZINE of the



BIZARRE and UNUSUAL

VOLUME VI

NUMBER 2

Published monthly by the Popular Fiction Publishing Company, 408 Holliday Building, Indianapolis, Ind. Entered as second-class matter March 20, 1923, at the postoffice at Indianapolis, Ind., under the act of March 3, 1879. Single copies, 25 cents. Subscription, \$2.50 a year in the United States; \$3.00 a year in Canada. The publishers are not responsible for the loss of unsolicited manuscripts, although every care will be taken of such material while in their possession. English office: G. M. Jeffries Literary Agency, Hopfield House, Hatwell, London, W. 7. The contents of this magazine are fully protected by copyright and must not be reproduced either wholly or in part without permission from the publishers. FARNSWORTH WRIGHT, Editor.

Copyright, 1925, by the Popular Fiction Publishing Company

## Contents for August, 1925

- Cover Design ..... Andrew Brosnatch
- Black Medicine ..... Arthur J. Burks 149  
*Complete Novelette of Haitian Voodoo*
- The Oldest Story in the World ..... Murray Leinster 167  
*Blood-red Rubies—an Oriental Raja—and a Torture Chamber*
- The Bearded Men ..... Adam Hull Shirk 177  
*A Whiskered Hypnotist Ruled Over a Club of Outcasts from Society*
- In the Forest of Villefere ..... Robert E. Howard 185  
*If the Werewolf is Slain as a Man, His Ghost Haunts the Slayer*
- Stallions of the Moon ..... Frank Belknap Long, Jr. 187  
*Verse*
- The Man Who Laughed ..... B. W. Sliney 188  
*Terrible Was the Laughter that Resounded Throughout the Prison*

(Continued on Next Page)

(Continued from Preceding Page)

<b>The Purple Cincture</b> .....	<b>H. Thompson Rich</b>	<b>193</b>
<i>The Bite of Plague-stricken Spiders Accomplished a Frightful Revenge</i>		
<b>The White Queen of the Carolans</b> .....	<b>Arthur Thatcher</b>	<b>200</b>
<i>Two-part Serial of Strange Adventures in Africa—Conclusion</i>		
<b>The Jonah</b> .....	<b>Guy Pain</b>	<b>210</b>
<i>A Cross-eyed Bosun—Maritime Superstition—and a Murder</i>		
<b>The Green Scarab</b> .....	<b>Willis Knapp Jones</b>	<b>213</b>
<i>Peculiar Experience of a Painter and an Egyptian Mummy</i>		
<b>The Lantern-maker</b> .....	<b>Frank Owen</b>	<b>219</b>
<i>Yin Wen's Mind Stopped Like a Clock That Has Run Down</i>		
<b>Servants of Satan</b> .....	<b>Seabury Quinn</b>	<b>223</b>
<b>No. 6. Maria Schweidler.</b> <i>True Tale of Witchcraft in Germany</i>		
<b>The Devil's Opera</b> .....	<b>Arthur S. Garbett</b>	<b>231</b>
<i>Infernal Was the Music Whose Inspiration Was Hate</i>		
<b>Weird Story Reprints: No. 2</b>		
<b>Dr. Heidegger's Experiment</b> .....	<b>Nathaniel Hawthorne</b>	<b>240</b>
<i>The Old Physician Let His Friends Quaff of the Fountain of Youth</i>		
<b>The Graveyard Skunk</b> .....	<b>Harry Harrison Kroll</b>	<b>247</b>
<i>A Mississippi Polecat Tracks Home a Murderer</i>		
<b>The Last Trip</b> .....	<b>Archie Binns</b>	<b>254</b>
<i>The Taxicab Driver Takes a Terrifying Ride to the Cemetery</i>		
<b>La Belle Dame Sans Merci</b> .....	<b>John Keats</b>	<b>258</b>
<i>Verse Reprint</i>		
<b>The Vulture of Pignon</b> .....	<b>W. J. Stamper</b>	<b>259</b>
<i>Tale of Voodoo and the Drunken Fury of a Caco Chief</i>		
<b>Wolfgang Fex, Criminal</b> .....	<b>Howard Elsmere Fuller</b>	<b>266</b>
<i>A Strange Pact Causes a Painter to Become a Murderer</i>		
<b>The Revenge of Philippe Auguste</b> .....		
<b>Hasan Volkin and Henri De Crouet</b> 270		
<i>A Story of Hatred and Death</i>		
<b>The Eyrie</b> .....		<b>273</b>
<i>A Chat With the Readers</i>		

---

For Advertising Rates in WEIRD TALES Apply Direct to

**WEIRD TALES**

408 Holliday Building

Indianapolis, Ind.

# SERVANTS of SATAN



## No. 6. *Maria Schweidler*

**T**HE village of Coserow drowzed indolently in the May sunshine. A breathing spell had come in the war which had racked all Germany for a generation; Wallenstein, the adventurer-general of the Emperor Ferdinand's armies, had failed to make good his blasphemous boast that he would take the town of Stralsund "though it were fastened by chains to God's own throne", and Gustavus Adolphus, the Lion of the North, had swept the imperial troops from Pomerania.

Suddenly the noonday calm was rent by such a clangor of bells as had not been heard since the alarm heralded the approach of Pappenheim's Walloons. Women rushed to their doors with infants clinging to their breasts and older children clutching their skirts, boys ceased their games in the streets, men looked fearfully about, uncertain whether to rush indoors and arm or take incontinently to the woods.

"Fish!" laughed a huntsman in a coat of green stuff decorated with

gold lace, "calm your fears, silly ones. 'Tis but the signal for a wolf hunt." He stuck his tongue in his cheek as he let fall the latest gossip from the castle.

Three weeks before, the Count Wittich, *graf* of the district, had followed a fisherman's daughter into a coppice of fir trees. Those who knew the count best could testify his favors never aided a maid to gain a husband, and it had gone hard for the pretty fisher's daughter if two great wolves, one of them with a single, glaring eye, had not burst from the underbrush and chased his noble worship up the nearest tree.

Returning good for evil, the little maid had hastened to the castle and raised the alarm, so the count was rescued from his undignified perch before nightfall. But though his skin was untouched; his vanity was riddled, and he had sworn by all the Catholic and Protestant saints and martyrs indiscriminately that he would exterminate every wolf in the district, though the devil himself took

them under his special protection. Wolf hunts had immediately been organized, and four of the beasts fell into the huntsmen's nets, but no one-eyed brute could be found, either in field or thicket or forest, and Graf Wittich had sworn to kill the wolf which cheated him of his flirtation with the fisherman's child.

This much the huntsman told with a loud guffaw at his master's discomfiture, then abruptly set spurs to his horse and galloped away, for Graf Wittich Applemann himself, accompanied by no less persons than the sheriff and high constable of the district, came thundering down the village street, bawling aloud for the village folk to arm themselves and join the hunt without delay.

As the cavalcade of gentry clattered past the village parsonage a young girl came to the door, looking with interest at their splendid raiment, their tossing plumes and their flashing gorgets and swords.

"Ach, Wittich," the sheriff exclaimed, nodding toward the parson's daughter, "'tis a pretty wench we have here; methinks there may be better sport than hunting wolves in Coserow!"

"Body o' Judas!" the *graf* answered testily. "Take her and be damned to you. If so be I can but kill me these pestilent wolves, you may have half the maidens—if, indeed, there be any such—in the countryside. I've come to hunt wolves, not women."

"So; so?" chuckled the sheriff, reining in his horse. "Do you hunt your wolves, *Mein Herr*. As for me, —we shall see what we shall see."

He removed his feathered hat and bowed to the girl. "Good morrow, pretty one," he greeted. "Would'st care to enter the service of the count? He did but now inform me there is a situation open at the castle."

"I thank you, sir," the maiden answered as she dropped a demure curt-

sy, "but I have no wish to leave my father's home. My mother is dead and I keep the house."

"Ah! So, so," the sheriff answered musingly. "A little *hausfrau*, eh? That is good; that is very good." He bowed again to the girl, as though she had been of the quality instead of only one step above the peasantry, smiled softly to himself and remounted his horse.

MARIA SCHWEIDLER stood in her father's door and watched the man who was to bring so much sorrow into her life gallop after his companions.

She was, in truth, a pretty thing, as the sheriff had remarked. Her hair was fair with the rich, burnished-metal sheen the ripened wheat stalks have at harvest time, and her skin was white with soft, creamy whiteness which many a fine lady might have envied. Eyes blue as the cornflowers that dot the fields when the grain is ripe for cutting looked out upon the world with a trusting frankness which told the beholder her spirit was as pure and virginal as her slim young body. For seven of her sixteen years she had ruled her widowed father's home, the Pastor Abraham Schweidler having lost his spouse in one of the periodical outbreaks of plague which afflicted the war-torn country, and though she could read the Scriptures in their original Greek and Hebrew, her knowledge of the world was as scant as that of a six-year-old child.

Such was Maria Schweidler, daughter of the pastor of Coserow, whose sweet young face had attracted the notice of the dissolute sheriff.

THE sheriff joined his friends, the hunt went merrily on, and in due time the one-eyed wolf was surrounded by the count's dogs and captured. Graf Wittich and his two friends had rare sport blinding the poor brute's remaining eye and torturing him to

death. They flayed him, and, with pieces of his pelt fixed to their spears like banners, rode back to the castle and went to bed as befitted gentlemen of their station—drunk.

On the following Sunday, after service, Johannes Kust, the count's chief huntsman, appeared at the parsonage door and made formal request for Maria's hand in marriage, seeming not too greatly downcast when the old pastor paremptorily refused his suit.

Perhaps the reverend gentleman would have regarded the count's servant more favorably as a prospective son-in-law had it not been for young Rüdiger von Neinkerken, son of the powerful Baron Hans von Neinkerken, whose castle stood near Gützkow, and who would one day be one of the country's greatest landed proprietors in his own right. This young man had met the Schweidlers while they were on their way to the Gützkow horse fair, and found it convenient to call frequently at the parsonage for discussions on theological doctrine with the pastor and on less abstruse matters with the pastor's pretty daughter.

At any rate, the huntsman's suit was rejected and young Rüdiger lingered at the parsonage till May matured into June, when he was called to the bedside of his father, promising to return as soon as circumstances permitted. But though Maria started up expectantly at the sound of every horseman riding before her father's door, the days grew into weeks and the weeks into months with no word from her absent lover, no message, even, that he remembered her or his promises of undying affection.

And now a new cause for gossip pushed the subject of the parson's forsaken daughter from the villagers' thoughts. The pigs and cattle of the neighborhood began to sicken and die in the most mysterious manner. Epidemics of cholera had visited the vi-

cinity before, and the peasants were familiar with the symptoms of that scourge of the livestock raiser, but these deaths were without explanation, seemingly without cause. Gradually, however, one circumstance began to be noticed, then whispered, finally openly talked of. The cattle shed and pig sty which had last been passed by Maria Schweidler was the scene of the latest outbreak of the strange malady. Old Frau Seden, wife of Heinrich Seden, a tenant farmer of the count's, was first to whisper the suspicion, and later to point out instance after instance of the girl's visits being followed by death among the stock.

On July 12, 1630, the high constable—bosom friend of the count and the sheriff—appeared at the parsonage door and commanded Maria Schweidler to accompany him.

"What for?" asked the startled girl.

"That you will learn soon enough," the constable answered with a grin. "Aforetime you were too high and mighty to go to the castle; we shall see whether you will refuse now. Come."

Accompanied by her aged father, the girl went to the castle, finding the sheriff in his insignia of office, and a court composed of three stern old clergymen, awaiting her.

"Why have your worships summoned my innocent child?" the father asked in a quavering voice as he and his daughter stood before the tribunal.

"To inquire into certain matters of witchcraft which have been plaguing the good people of this district," answered the court's president. "Maria Schweidler, stand forth and declare whether you be a witch or no."

"I? A witch?" the girl stammered in horrified surprize. "Surely your worship is pleased to jest! Never in all my life have I done aught that is

condemned by the laws of God or man."

"Say you so?" replied the president of the court. "Perhaps you will say otherwise when—" he motioned to the constable, who stood, grinning, at the fair prisoner's elbow.

**G**ERMANY of that day had a system of criminal administration which differed radically from that of other nations. In England and her colonies persons accused of crime were first presented to a justice of the peace or special magistrate's court, confronted with their accusers, and given a chance to refute the accusations against them, if they could. They might not lawfully be compelled to testify against themselves, nor could they be tortured into confessing their guilt.

German justice suffered from no such scruples for the defendant's protection. A preliminary hearing was held before an inferior court known as the *Untersuchungs Richter*, testimony of the accusers being taken at one session, that of the accused at another. The defendant did not know what testimony had been offered against him, or even who his accusers were, and if he were backward in acknowledging his guilt the courts possessed means of persuading him.

**L**ET her look upon the instruments," the justice ordered; "perhaps her sinful tongue will be loosened at their sight."

Beneath the floor of Pudgla castle was a vault reached by a stairway of a hundred and thirty steps. No window let the light of day into it, no openings communicated with the outside sunshine. In its dark recesses a tormented woman could shriek and shriek until her soul fled forth from her quivering flesh, yet no one in the upper castle knew what went on beneath. It was to this dungeon that the constable led the trembling girl.

By the light of torches fastened in wall-links he showed her the ladder on which stubborn persons were bound while the thumbscrews were fastened to their hands or the boots fitted to their legs, the rack by which a suspect's limbs were stretched until they dislocated at hip and shoulder, a table with an oblong opening in its top through which a spiked roller rose to rasp the flesh from the prisoner's bones as horseradish is grated from the root. Last of all he clapped his hands to summon two old women from an inner chamber, and when they appeared with a seething kettle between them, he dipped a feather into its contents. The quill shriveled and withered as he flung it upon the torture chamber's floor.

"There's brimstone—the very fuel of hell's own fire—in that caldron, girl," the constable told her. "Anon I'll pour it on that soft breast and those white limbs of yours. Your flesh will wither and burn, even as that feather. Say now whether you be a witch or no!"

"No!" cried the girl. "As God is my judge, I'm no more a witch than you are a wizard."

"Ah; so?" replied the constable. He turned to the hags who had brought in the kettle, and commanded, "Dress her for the bridal bed."

The crones seized the girl and hustled her into the farther room, stripped her stark naked, let down her hair, and clothed her in a neckless, sleeveless garment which reached barely to her knees, then, lashing her wrists together so tightly that her hands turned blue and puffed with congested blood, they led her back to the constable.

"Come, stubborn wretch," he exclaimed, winding his hand in her flowing golden hair, "show thyself to the court. Let them see what an impenitent sinner we have in our midst."

Unable to steady herself with her hands, forced to walk backward by

the bully who tugged at her hair, half fainting for shame at the scantiness of her single garment, Maria Schweidler was dragged up the winding stairs and led before the court.

"Alas!" the chief justice cried as he smote himself on the breast in token of his sorrow. "She hardens her heart against our mercy. Was not the sight of the implements enough to loosen thy stubborn tongue, wretched girl? Must we proceed to the ultimate question? Look,—" he pointed to several rust-colored stains on her black smock—"those be the blood of others whose wilful tongues were oiled by torment. Cannot you profit by their sufferings? Are you, in truth, not a witch?"

"No," the girl answered, though her lips trembled so she could scarcely form the words of her denial; "I am no witch at all, but a sinless maid who craves your worship's mercy; and though you torture me ten times over, I can only say the same."

"Enough!" answered the chief justice as he rose and bowed to his associate justices. "I hereby make known to this worshipful court that the question ordinary and the question extraordinary of the stubborn and blasphemous witch, Maria Schweidler, is about to begin in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

With this he took up an hourglass in one hand, and, gathering his ecclesiastical robes in the other, descended from the judges' dais. But he could not bear the steady, reproachful scrutiny of the prisoner's eyes. He lowered his own glance, and, so doing, missed his step and stumbled, letting the hourglass fall from his hand to the floor, where it shattered into a myriad fragments.

"See, see!" cried judges and court attendants together. "She calls upon her master, the devil, to keep her in her hour of need. 'Twas the devil who threw down the glass."

Preceded by the judges, the prisoner was dragged by the hair to the torture vault and bound securely on the ladder of torment.

"What first, your worship's?" asked the constable as he knotted the cords about her wrists and ankles.

"Thumbscrews," ordered the president.

Two clumsy iron instruments, somewhat similar in appearance to the braces with which cabinetmakers hold a joint of wood in place while the glue is setting, were brought by the old women and adjusted to Maria's hands in such a way that pressure from their threaded screws would crush her finger joints as the handles were gradually tightened.

As she felt the cold metal against her delicate flesh the poor child turned her eyes upward toward the smoke-blackened vault of the torture chamber and cried in agony of spirit, "*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani!*"

It may have been excitement and superstitious dread, perhaps it was abysmal ignorance which prevented the reverend president of the court from recognizing the piteous quotation from the Gospel of St. Matthew. In any event, he cried out, "She calls upon her hellish master in a heathen tongue! Apply the screws!"

As her bones bent beneath the pressure of the instruments of torture, Maria's spirit failed. "I confess; I confess!" she screamed wildly. "God forgive my weakness; I am a witch—a wicked witch! Do ye direct me what to say, worshipful judges, and I will say it, only, for gentle Mary her sake, torment me no more, I beseech you."

AND then the "humble and holy men of God" commenced their examination of this innocent sixteen-year-old child while the constable stood hard by, ready to turn the torturing thumbscrews if she faltered in her answers.

Had she abjured God and all His holy saints and bound herself by oath to Satan, to be his servant forever and ever?

"Yes."

Did she possess a familiar spirit which did her bidding and killed her Christian neighbors' pigs and cattle?

"Yes."

Had Satan set his mark upon her?

A pause—"Apply the screws, constable!"

"Yes; yes! Ah, mercy, mercy, your worships—see, here is the fiend's mark, on my bosom!"

The black torture shift was slit with a knife at its upper hem, and between her breasts was found a tiny mole, scarce larger than the eye of a fine needle.

"Proceed, the devil's mark is found."

Had she lived with the devil?

"No, your worships, I have never lived anywhere but in my father's house, save two nights we spent at the inn at Gützkow."

"Trifle not with us, woman; you know what we mean. Have you lived with the fiend as his mistress? Apply the screws, constable, the witch grows stubborn."

"Ah, ah, mercy; mercy! Yes, I have been Satan's mistress. Oh, release me, sirs, release me, forbear the torture. Oh. . ."

Water to bathe her brow was brought, and a cup of sour wine was forced between her lips. When she had revived, the court proceeded:

"Have you borne the fiend any imps?—Apply the screws!"

Yes, yes; she had borne a brood of half-breed imps to her hellish paramour.

"How many?"

"Three."

"What were their names?"

"They were nameless."

"Enough. The scarlet woman has confessed her abominations. Unbind her and put her clothes upon her."

THE court which took testimony did not consider the evidence. Depositions of witnesses, including the confessions of the accused, were reduced to writing and the whole record of the case referred to a central court for adjudication. The members of this tribunal read the testimony and applied the law to it, then certified their findings back to the court of original jurisdiction.

Along with the examining judges' record of the testimony was sent a written argument in defense of the accused, if he had money enough to employ an advocate, for, though the accused himself was not allowed to hear the testimony against him, his lawyer was permitted as much time as he desired to peruse and digest the transcripts and pick the prosecution's case to pieces in his brief.

Pastor Schweidler secured the services of a Latin-spouting, pedantic clergyman in his daughter's defense, and this learned old dotard prepared a lengthy screed, full of scriptural passages and highly moral precepts and quotations from the classics, but bearing not at all on the facts in Maria's case.

In the meantime, too, Pastor Schweidler wrote a frantic appeal to young Rüdiger von Neinkerken, imploring his intercession, and that of his august father, in his unhappy child's cause. Just before the testimony was certified to the central court a note came from Rüdiger saying that as Maria had seen fit to be untrue to her love vows, preferring to wanton with the devil rather than marry a Christian man, she might burn to death in earthly fire and thereafter burn forever in hell-fire, for all he cared.

As it was in Salem in 1692, so it was in Germany in 1630. The result of the witch's case was foregone. The last of August, 1630, Maria Schweidler was led into court to hear the chief justice pronounce:



"We do hereby direct that the self-confessed witch, Maria Schweidler, be duly torn four times across each breast with red hot pincers and after that burned to death by fire.

"Given at the castle of Pudgla, 30th August, 1630."

As he announced her doom, the president of the court picked up a light willow wand and snapped it in two pieces, flinging the halves at the prisoner's feet. This was to signify that, as the wood was broken in twain, so should her soul and body be separated from each other. Had the girl been found guilty of theft, murder or any other crime meriting death, the sentence would have concluded with the pious wish, "And may God have mercy on her soul," but she had confessed to witchcraft under torture, so there was no hope for her on earth or yet in heaven. The tearing pincers and the crackling flames with which her young life was shortly to be ended were but the momentary prelude of the everlasting torture reserved for her by the merciful God who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believed on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

There was no *locus poenitentiae*, or opportunity for repentance, permitted the condemned witch under the German code. "What thou hast to do, do quickly," were the executioner's standing orders, and Maria was led from the courtroom to the cart which waited to carry her to the stake.

The sheriff mounted his tall gray horse; the constable, with his sword drawn—lest the witch work Christian folk an injury!—took his station in the cart beside the prisoner; and, surrounded by a guard of the *graf's* varlets, the girl set out for the spot where the fagots were already piled high about the stake and the hideous old women heated the executioner's pincers white-hot in a charcoal furnace.

Led by the sheriff, the little procession trotted down the unpaved roadway, clattered across the plank bridge above the mill-stream and brought up at the spot of execution. A hundred yokels, gathered in hang-jawed amazement to see a young girl mutilated and burned, set up a cheer as the cart horse, frightened by the fumes from the charcoal stove, pranced and reared on its hind legs, all but over-setting the cart in which the constable and his prisoner stood.

The executioner seized the condemned and tore her bodice open, exposing her white breast to the gazing throng, then pulled on his heavy cow-hide gloves and took up his red-hot tongs.

"HALLOO, halloo! Stop!" The shout echoed faintly across the fields from the patch of forest land beneath the castle hill, and the notes of a hunter's horn sounding the "view" followed close upon it. Bent low above their horses' necks, riding like the good St. Hubert himself, came a party of twelve men in the maroon and silver liveries of the house of Neinkerken, the sunbeams playing bravely on the glistening tips of their boar spears.

"Do your duty, headsman!" cried the sheriff as the *graf's* justicer paused uncertainly at sight of the on-rushing riders. "Do your duty; carry out the sentence!"

And to the approaching huntsmen the sheriff announced, "We do but put an impious witch to death, my lords."

"Thou liest, dog and perjurer, and likewise thou diest with the lie in thy throat, or I am no son of Neinkerken," answered the foremost rider as he brought his spear to the charge and drove its razorsharp head through the sheriff's breast.

"Ho, some of you, hold these swine in play!" he shouted as he leaped from his jaded horse, tore off his hunt-

ing coat and threw it over the violated bosom of the trembling girl.

"Now God and all His saints be praised, my love, my only love, that we arrived in time!" he panted, for he was spent with three hours' break-neck riding.

And there, before the throng come forth to see Maria Schweidler die by fire, Rüdiger von Neinkerken put his arms about the condemned witch and kissed her on the lips.

"Ha, villain, would'st thou?" He evaded the thrust the constable aimed at him, drew his short sword and struck out with such berserk fury that his assailant went down upon the fagots with a gaping wound in his breast.

"Mercy, mercy!" the constable besought as Rüdiger would have slit his throat. "Have mercy, my lord, and I will tell all!"

It was a sorry tale the dying man sobbed out. Inflamed with passion, the sheriff had first conceived the scheme of luring Pastor Schweidler's daughter to the castle where he could seduce her at his leisure. Failing that, he had sent Johannes Kust, the count's chief huntsman, to seek her in marriage, for therein lay a chance to gratify his lust lawfully. By the ancient law, the *graf* might claim the privilege of occupying the bridal chamber of any of his vassals, or he might delegate the privilege to whom he chose. Had Maria consented to marriage with the huntsman she would have been his wife in name only, actually the plaything of the lecherous count and his bestial friends. Her marriage would have been but the mask to cover her shame.

But the hope of marriage to Rüdiger had saved her from this infamy, and the sheriff, balked in his villainous scheme, had sought revenge by bribing old Frau Seden to poison the peasants' pigs and cattle, then raise the cry of witchcraft against Maria.

Rüdiger's seeming forgetfulness was soon explained. Summoned to attend his father's supposed sickbed, he had been locked in the castle by the proud old baron and told he might stay there until he rotted if he would not agree to give up all thought of marriage with the humble village pastor's daughter. The heartless reply to the pastor's letter was written by the baron and signed with his son's name.

Only the day before, the old baron had died in his cups, and Rüdiger, now Baron von Neinkerken in his own right, was released from his prison. Hearing of his beloved's plight only that morning, he had deserted his father's bier, summoned eleven of his stoutest retainers, and ridden as though pursued by all the fiends of pandemonium to effect her rescue.

Maria's father performed the marriage ceremony in his own church, and Rüdiger, Baron von Neinkerken, whose influence with the mighty Gustavus Adolphus was great, had little difficulty in securing a full pardon for the beautiful baroness.

SUCH is the story of Maria Schweidler. Together with a great many other facts of much less interest—records of births, christenings, marriages and burials of unimportant folk—it is spread on the records of the parish of Coserow in the crabbed German script of her father, the Reverend Abraham Schweidler, who closes the romantic story of his daughter's trial and deliverance with these pious words: "Thus was my child delivered out of the hands of the oppressor by the Lord, yea, even by the most high God. Amen."

*Note.*—This series of true tales of witchcraft began in the March issue of WEIRD TALES. The first five tales described the horrors of the witchcraft craze in New England during the Colonial period. Copies of the magazine will be sent to any address, postpaid, by the publishers for 25 cents a copy.