SECRETS OF DETHRONED ROYALTY

PRINCESS CATHERINE RADZIWILL

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EX-EMPEROR KARL OF AUSTRIA, AND FAMILY, IN EXILE

SECRETS
OF
DETHRONED ROYALTY

BY

PRINCESS CATHERINE RADZIWILL

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"THE DISILLUSIONS OF A CROWN PRINCESS,"
"RASPUTIN AND THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION,"
"BEHIND THE VEIL AT THE RUSSIAN COURT,"
ETC.

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FOREWORD

THE talented American woman writer, Rheta Childe Dorr, in her amusing book on Russia, relates a conversation which took place between her and the intimate friend of the unfortunate Czarina Alexandra, Anna Wyrubowa. The former asked what a Court was like, and the question drew forth the characteristic reply that the only word to describe it was "rotten." The expression was certainly not elegant and the person who uttered it was perhaps the last one who ought to have done so, considering that she, more than anyone else, was responsible for the corruption of the one Court at which she had been received, and which she had ruled, in fact if not in name, for many years. But the expression was, in a certain sense, justified, because there is no doubt that the haunts and abodes of royalty in Europe were the centres of so many intrigues that the only wonder is they existed as long as they did. Royalty, in the three great countries where it is now abolished, certainly did not set any good example to the world. All, or

nearly all, the scions of these royal houses, brought up as they were in the conviction that, thanks to their high position, everything was allowable for them, so abused their privileges that when the wave of revolution which overturned the Romanoffs, Hapsburgs and Hohenzollerns swept over Europe, hardly one soul could be found to defend them, or even to take their part and try to shield them from the indignation of the mobs clamouring for their downfall. Most of these princes and princesses had had a story, and in the majority of cases it was not one calculated to do them honour or to raise them in the opinion of their contemporaries.

Royal love affairs and, if the truth be told, royal financial affairs could fill a volume of greater bulk than I intend to write; but I think it may amuse the public to read certain little stories connected with Russian, Austrian and German royal personages and Court life, which up to now have been known only to a small and select number of people. They may open the eyes of those who have heard nothing about the conditions under which these exalted personages spent their lives, and do away with the halo which surrounded them—no one knows why. They

may also serve to ameliorate the pangs of future American travellers through Europe at missing the opportunity of being presented to the rulers of these different countries. All these kings and queens, emperors and empresses, whose favours were sought with such eagerness, and whose smiles made so many human creatures happy, have had their day—and a very good day it was for them while it lasted. Now the story is at an end and the curtain has fallen on the comedies and tragedies which gave rise to so much gossip and caused so many heartburnings in the select society circles of two continents. Let me give you a peep behind the scenes before the drama has quite faded from my memory and recall for you certain anecdotes and events—both amusing and serious—which appeared so supremely important to all who were connected, either directly or indirectly, with them. This may procure for my readers a few pleasant hours, and more than that I do not aspire or pretend to do in this present volume.

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PART I

RUSSIA

I

THE RUSSIAN IMPERIAL FAMILY IN OLDEN TIMES

The Court of Russia has always been famous for its immorality. Yet this reputation was only justified in so far as it concerned the Imperial family and the small number of people closely connected with it. Russian society itself was very moral in its views, manners and customs. The levity which existed in the fashionable circles of other countries was unknown in that of St. Petersburg, where an unspoken but very real indignation existed at the sayings and doings of those who occupied high places. At the same time it must be confessed that, as a general rule, the Grand Dukes and Grand Duchesses of Russia were anything but moderate in their tastes and fancies, though they never exhibited their peculiarities in public and abroad in olden times with the same unconcern as during the reign of Nicholas II when anarchy showed itself in the bosom of his family long before

it grasped the rest of his subjects. In former days the Czar was feared by his kindred more, perhaps, than by anyone else: no member of the Romanoff family would have dared to remain any length of time abroad without the express permission of the head of his house, and it behooved him to give the busy-bodies of St. Petersburg no opportunities of criticising his conduct, in so far as his public sayings and doings were concerned. His private life, no matter how irregular it may have been, was kept secret, and he would no more have tried to do what the younger generation of his race openly did during the last five and twenty years or so which preceded the Russian Revolution, than he would have attempted to fly. Sovereigns and Grand Dukes had their love affairs, but did not make them public property, and it was only during the reign of Alexander II that any scandal arose to shatter the Imperial prestige both at home and abroad.

His father, Nicholas I, had had a lady friend in the person of a maid-of-honour of his wife, the Empress Alexandra Feodorowna, but this friendship had been conducted in an extremely quiet and subdued manner, and though everyone in the capital knew about it, no one could have accused Mademoi-

Emperor Nicholas I.

Emperor Alexander II.

selle Nelidoff (this was the lady's name) of putting herself forward in any way. She did not go out into society, and no one, with the exception of a small circle of intimate friends, ever saw her except on official occasions when etiquette required of her to be in attendance on the Empress. The latter had a warm sympathy for this rival who, on her side, showed herself invariably submissive and respectful towards her Imperial mistress. The Emperor used to visit her in the apartments she occupied in the Winter Palace every afternoon when he was in town, and invariably consulted her on all important matters, and she often gave him very sound advice. She was a remarkably clever woman, extremely well read and well educated. But she had none of the ambitions of a Madame de Pompadour or de Maintenon, and after the death of the Emperor she withdrew into private life. Her death took place some forty odd years after that of Nicholas. She had really loved him, and he had truly loved her, but this had not prevented him from showing himself always an affectionate husband, and treating his wife with the utmost respect and the tenderest of care. The immorality of the situation was quite overlooked because of the

dignified manner in which the affair was conducted.

Alexander II was a very different man from his father. He had no delicacy of feeling, and he made no secret of the numerous *liaisons* and intrigues in which his life was spent. He married for love a Hessian princess who was considered unmarriageable on account of certain irregularities connected with her birth, which had been such a surprise to her father that he never wished to see her and had had her brought up away from him, in a solitary castle in Thuringia, where the then Czarewitsch had accidentally met her. He forthwith fell in love with her and insisted upon making her his wife, thus transforming her into so important a personage that the Grand Duke of Hesse was compelled to seek, in his turn, her favour and good graces. She was a very pretty woman, with lovely expressive eyes; and she was possessed of extreme dignity, which carried her through many an unpleasant and sad time, when her husband, having wearied of her, openly exhibited his admiration of other women. Alexander II was a great flirt, and might easily have rivalled Louis XIV by the multiplicity of his love affairs. When quite a young man he had entertained a real and sincere affection

for one of his mother's ladies-in-waiting, Mademoiselle Sophie Dachkoff, but had found himself confronted by high principles and a stout determination on her part to have nothing to do with him. The Grand Duke, as he was at the time, had tried his best to induce her to respond to his feelings in regard to her, but all his efforts had been in vain, and he had been forced to turn his attentions towards another quarter.

A Polish lady, Mademoiselle Kalinowska, endowed with remarkable beauty and all the propensity for intrigue which is one of the characteristics of the nation to which she belonged, was the next person to attract Alexander II. There he did not meet with the resistance which he had encountered in the case of Mademoiselle Dachkoff, but found his feelings fully reciprocated. The girl (she was nothing else at the time) was ultimately married, thanks to his help, to a Polish magnate, Prince Oginski, and endowed beyond the dreams of avarice by her Imperial admirer. She lived to a very old age, and became quite an important personage in St. Petersburg society, leaving, when she died, a fortune valued at several millions of roubles to the two sons she had borne to Prince Oginski.

Her career had been an entirely successful one.

After Mademoiselle Kalinowska's marriage the Emperor found himself again free to dispose of his affections, but for a long time the Imperial handkerchief was not thrown to anyone but remained in the pocket of its owner. Then one day St. Petersburg began to talk about its Sovereign, and when St. Petersburg talked it was as in the times of the Borgias when people used to say that the Pope had sent out invitations to supper.

The next romance of Alexander II was not quite what might have been expected even of so amorous a gentleman as he had always shown himself to be. It had this peculiarity: the heroine of it, Princess Mary Dolgorouky, was quite a young girl, almost a child, who, having been left at her father's death to the care of the Emperor, had been placed by him, with her sister Catherine, in the Institute of Smolna, where the daughters of poor scions of the nobility were educated. Alexander was accustomed to visit this Institute, knew all the pupils, and often petted and caressed those who specially appealed to him. The little Mary, even as a mere baby, was his particular favourite; she continued to be so when she grew up, until at last Alexander removed

her from the hospitable roof which had sheltered her and established her in a magnificent house on the English Quay, where he soon adopted the habit of visiting her daily.

Of course, St. Petersburg was indignant—and was not wrong in showing itself scandalized by proceedings which were so unusual, to say the least. But it was to be more scandalized as time went on, for very soon it was whispered that the young Princess was about to be married to a dashing young officer, Count Berg, and that her younger sister, Catherine, had taken her place in the affections of the Emperor. To all the old Dowagers (whose word was law in the Russian capital) this was "a hard nut to crack," and they raised their hands to heaven in mute protest at such doings.

Of course, they all said that they did not believe it, but for once gossip did neither lie nor exaggerate. Mary Dolgorouky married Count Berg and went to live in Paris and Nice, and her sister Catherine settled in her place in the house on the Quay, where nothing was changed except its mistress.

The Emperor seemed to become reckless. He carried his infatuation for the Princess Catherine

to such an extent that he insisted on her accompanying him whenever he travelled abroad, and once, when he passed through Berlin on his way to Ems, made her stay with him at the Russian Embassy, to the horror of the old Kaiser and, still more, the Empress Augusta of Germany, who immediately took to her bed, so that she should not have to receive her nephew the Czar, whom she hoped in this way to impress with her indignation. And later on, when nihilist attempts to murder him had made it difficult for Alexander II to walk freely and unattended in the streets of St. Petersburg as he had been in the habit of doing, he brought Catherine Dolgorouky to the Winter Palace, and lodged her in rooms which were situated immediately above those occupied by the Empress, who could hear all day long, above her head, the patter of little feet—the feet of her rival's children.

Six weeks after his wife had breathed her last the Emperor married Catherine Dolgorouky in the private chapel of the Imperial Palace of Tzarskoié Sélo, to the indignation of the entire Court and even of his best and most intimate friends, one of whom, Count Adlerberg, who occupied the important position of Minister of the Imperial Household, had

implored Alexander on his knees not to contract such a union. The Emperor, however, felt that it was his duty to make "an honest woman" of the lady who, he firmly believed, had sacrificed so much for him, and to legitimate the three children she had given him. She had so entirely fascinated him that he could refuse her nothing, and it is certain that but for the bomb which ended his life he would have had his new wife solemnly crowned in Moscow, and thus have made her an Empress. She ruled him with an iron hand, and at last he dared not move a step without her permission. She was a stupid woman, but she was very ably advised, and she contrived, moreover, to make for herself friends among some of the most intelligent men in Russia, who, eager for reform and a change of government, hoped to succeed in bringing about what they desired through the support and co-operation of the Emperor's young wife.

Alexander's children had looked with anything but favour on their father's love affair with the Princess Youriewsky—such was the name bestowed by the enamoured Czar on his morganatic consort on the day he married her. The heir to the throne and the Grand Duchess Cesarewna

particularly felt very deeply the insult to their mother's memory which this hasty marriage implied. In consequence of this the relations between the Winter Palace and the Anitchkoff, where the Emperor's eldest son and family were living, became very strained. The Princess Youriewsky, who felt deeply the ostracism to which she was subjected by the entire Imperial family, tried to avenge herself by repeating to her husband all kinds of tales concerning his children, and these stories were all of a nature calculated to arouse his anger against them. The last incident, which preceded by a few days the murder of Alexander, caused a great deal of talk in St. Petersburg and was the means of a cruel humiliation to the then Grand Duchess Marie Feodorowna, now the Dowager Empress of what was once Russia. She and the Grand Duke had gone on an expedition to a restaurant in the islands surrounding the capital to hear one of the Bohemian choruses which at that time was so famous. A few of their personal friends accompanied them; among others one who in after years was to become Alexander III's most trusted and devoted adviser. The Grand Duchess returned home in a sleigh with him, her husband following in another sleigh with

the Countess Worontzoff. They never supposed that the Emperor would hear of this expedition, but hear of it he did, through the Princess Youriewsky, who made it her particular business to keep herself well informed as to all that her enemies (so she considered them) were doing. The Emperor was quite furious at what he considered an unpardonable breach of etiquette. He sent for his daughter-in-law and treated her to such a scene that she returned to her own home in tears, while her escort, who had also called down upon his head the Sovereign's wrath, made up his mind that the best thing for him to do was to send in his resignation of the post he held of Assistant Minister of the Interior.

The day following this incident was a Sunday—March 13th. As usual, Mass was celebrated in the chapel of the Winter Palace, and all the Imperial family were present. When the service was over the Grand Duchess Cesarna approached the Emperor to take leave of him. He seized her by the shoulders and, pushing her towards the Princess Youriewsky, said roughly: *"Dites donc adieu à la Princess,"* "Say good-bye to the Princess." The heiress to the Throne made a deep curtsey, which

might have been intended for either the Sovereign or his wife, and then silently withdrew. But later, during a tête-à-tête luncheon, she and her husband discussed the situation, and almost made up their minds to ask the Czar to allow them to go and spend a few months abroad, during which time matters might adjust themselves and a more pleasant condition of affairs greet them on their return.

While they were talking the sound of an explosion startled them. A few moments later they saw an officer, bareheaded, drive posthaste through the Anitschkoff Palace gates, and they heard that the bomb thrown had put an end to their perplexities. A few hours later the Czar was dead, Alexander III was reigning, and Marie Feodorowna found herself Empress of all the Russias.

II

RELATIVES OF NICHOLAS II

Alexander II had three brothers who all made themselves notorious, though in different ways. The eldest, Grand Duke Constantine, was considered the clever man of the family, and with good cause. He was a liberal (if such a term can be used in regard to a Romanoff) and it was to his influence over the Czar that the greatest act of the latter's reign—the emancipation of the serfs—was attributed. Afterwards he was sent as Viceroy to Poland, but in that capacity did not prove a success. Perhaps no one could have achieved anything like a success in Warsaw, where the position was attended with so many difficulties that the most tactful person in the world could hardly have hoped to succeed in pleasing the Polish and Russian political parties. But perhaps matters might not have failed so uterly if someone less occupied in trying to please the fair sex had been sent to rule over the compatriots of Kosciuszko. The Grand Duke

flirted with the Polish ladies until one of them was foolish enough to think that he could be induced to divorce his wife in order to marry her. When she had to give up the idea the disappointment aroused her jealousy and vindictiveness, so she induced one of her relatives to aim his revolver at the Grand Duke one afternoon when he was driving with the Grand Duchess in the park of Lazienki near Warsaw. The result of this shot was disastrous, because it brought about the recall of Constantine Nicolaiewitsch from Poland and the adoption of repressive measures in regard to the Poles which culminated in the insurrection of 1863.

When the Grand Duke returned to St. Petersburg he was made very much of by the Emperor, who did not wish the public to think that he disapproved of anything his brother had done, and he resumed the happy-go-lucky existence which he preferred to any other. He was too clever not to care to surround himself with clever people, but at the same time he could not check the propensity for intrigue which was his most prominent trait. Soon people began to discuss his friendship for a lady belonging to the highest social circles who had recently been divorced. And gossip became even

Grand Duke
Constantine
Nicolaiewitch
(*Left*)

Grand Duke
Michael
Nicolaiewitch
(*Right*)

Brothers of Alexander II.

busier when it transpired that the lady in question was established in a lovely villa in the Crimea close to the Grand Duke's palace, where he spent the greater part of the year. This villa was surrounded by beautiful gardens in which her pretty children (none of whom bore the slightest resemblance to her divorced husband) used to play to their hearts' content.

Constantine Nicolaiewitsch remained for years —indeed, until his brother's assassination—the head of the Russian Navy, and during the long period of his administration the expenses of the fleet were stupendous, though there was nothing to show for this tremendous expenditure. But the Grand Duke's income seemed to increase every day, and he seemed as lavish with his money for personal requirements as for the welfare of his beloved navy. Of course, people talked, but in Russia at that time no one minded what the public said and the Great Admiral's actions were never questioned until the day when his nephew, Alexander III, ascended the throne. The latter had never liked his uncle and he hastened to put an end to his activities. The Grand Duke was told that the best thing he could do was to resign, which he hastened to do, retiring

this time definitely to the Crimea, never to return to St. Petersburg until he came in his coffin. And simultaneously with his departure the expenses connected with the fleet diminished in a remarkable manner, while it was discovered that new ships could be built with a facility no one had supposed possible.

Among the numerous children of Constantine Nicolaiewitsch, the eldest, Grand Duke Nicholas, achieved rather tragic notoriety through his intrigue with a famous demi-mondaine, Fanny Lear, who found herself suddenly (no one knows by what means) in possession of the diamonds of the Grand Duchess Alexandra, the mother of her admirer; as a consequence of which she had to leave St. Petersburg in a hurry, and the Grand Duke himself was sent to Taschkent, where he remained, if not exactly confined, at least under strict orders never to leave his place of banishment. His name was mentioned no more in the St. Petersburg drawing-rooms, where he had been a great favourite before this catastrophe, and people, including his family, tried to forget him, more especially when he married a person to whom they naturally objected—the daughter of a policeman. It seems, however, that

she made him very happy and that he never had occasion to regret having chosen her to enliven his exile.

Grand Duke Nicholas Constantinowitsch died during the war, before the downfall of his dynasty. He had of his own free will renounced the title of Grand Duke, and signed his letters Nicholas Romanoff, declaring, to all who wished to hear, that he was a Republican by sympathy and a Socialist by profession.

The ~~youngest~~ second brother of Alexander II, the Grand Duke Nicholas, father of the Grand Duke of that same name who commanded the Russian armies in the beginning of the war, was also a prominent personage in St. Petersburg society during his brother's reign. He, too, was fond of spending money, but in his case it was his own which he squandered right and left, until he became seriously financially embarrassed towards the end of his life. He was a very handsome man, but inexpressibly stupid, though he considered himself clever. An amusing anecdote is related of him. One afternoon he was presiding at one of the numerous committee meetings of which he was chairman. It was a business meeting connected

with the financial affairs of the army, and the Grand Duke had made some remarks not at all to the point which at last exasperated an old general who noticed that Nicholas Nicolaiewitsch was working his fingers under the table-cloth in the manner of a school-boy when confronted by some arithmetical problem. Unable to control his irritation, the General interrupted the Grand Duke with the brutal remark: "When a person can only count on his fingers, he would do better to hold his tongue."

The only practical member of that generation of the Romanoff family was the Grand Duke Michael, who, perhaps because he was married to a very clever woman, contrived to add considerably to his already large fortune, and to remain upon excellent terms with his brother, as well as with his nephew and great-nephew when they ascended the throne. He was much respected by Alexander III and slightly feared by Nicholas II, during whose reign he was not often seen in St. Petersburg, preferring to spend the greater part of the year in Cannes. He did not at all approve of the young Empress Alexandra, nor of her doings, but he forbore from saying anything about her, being of the opinion that "discretion is the better part of valour." His

was an easy-going, placid temperament, and he was far too much of an epicure to allow himself to be seriously disturbed by anything which did not concern his personal and immediate comfort. Even his son's escapades left him more or less indifferent.

He was for many years Viceroy of the Caucasus, and it was principally during his sojourn in that country that his fortune increased to the enormous amount it ultimately reached. He bought large estates, the value of which augmented fabulously, and which certain Caucasian chiefs were very glad to sell him because they knew that it would be impossible for them to retain their possession once they had attracted his attention. And he showed himself a prudent administrator of the land over which he ruled, and contrived to make himself popular with its population, so that when he retired he was generally regretted.

I have said that his wife, the Grand Duchess Olga, was a very clever woman. I may also add that she was also very charming and could, when she liked, make herself pleasant and amiable. She was ambitious and a perfect type of a *Grande Dame* of the old Régime, dignified and proud, and though condescending, never disagreeably so. She had

read a good deal and absorbed what she had read and she brought up her numerous children with extreme care. But she ruled her household with a rod of iron and her will was never disputed, either by her husband or children. She married her daughter, much against her will, to a German Prince, who never made her more happy than upon the day that he departed for a better world. The Grand Duchess Olga was such an autocrat in her family that she died from anger and disappointment when her second son clandestinely married the present Countess Torby. Young Grand Duke Michael had been for a long time in love with the Countess Catherine Ignatieff, the daughter of the famous General and diplomat who for so many years represented Russia in Constantinople. He had promised to marry her, no matter what opposition he should encounter, and had he only persevered in his good intention it is probable that Alexander III would have relented and allowed the marriage. In fact, the reason the Czar objected to this union was that the Grand Duchess Olga had declared she would never sanction it, and had begged her nephew to uphold her in this matter. It was she who had sent her son abroad, hoping

that travel would cause him to forget the lady to whom he had solemnly plighted his troth. He *did* forget her, but perhaps not in the way his mother had expected, for it was the sight of another pretty face that made him forsake the Countess Ignatieff. The blue eyes of the Countess Meremberg, the morganatic daughter of Duke Nicholas of Nassau, worked the change, and he became her husband without asking leave either of his parents or the Czar.

Grand Duchess Olga was stunned. Her grief was so poignant that the doctor, fearing her health would suffer seriously, ordered her to the Crimea, hoping that the mild climate would restore her nerves. She was quite ill and depressed when she set out and became so much worse during the journey that she had to stay over in Kieff, where she died, in the Imperial waiting-rooms in the railway station, whence there had been no time to remove her, so suddenly had the end come.

The Countess Ignatieff behaved with immense dignity. She returned to the Grand Duke the ring he had given her, also his letters, and retired from the world completely, entering subsequently the community of the Holy Trinity, a religious order

devoted to the nursing of the sick. She was a real heroine during the Manchurian campaign, and the Japanese treated her as one, after seeing her at work. When the great war broke out she again volunteered her services, but her health was so undermined by the privations she had had to undergo that she fell a victim to pneumonia in Warsaw, while on her way with a Red Cross detachment to the front. I have been told that when they dressed her body after her death they found in a gold locket attached to a chain which she wore round her neck a miniature of the Grand Duke Michael, the only remembrance of the one great love of her life—a love that had wrecked it.

The object of this infatuation did not seem to trouble about the girl whom he had forsaken so cruelly without one word of explanation, and he took life most easily during all the years which followed upon this episode of his early youth. He made his home in Cannes in France, and in England, where he became at once popular, as did his wife, who received from the Grand Duke of Luxemburg the title of Countess Torby. They were a hospitable couple and had plenty of money to spend, and they always showed themselves ad-

mirable hosts. The Countess was the man of the family—and a clever one she was. She became a social power and everyone pitied her when the Russian Revolution deprived her and her husband of their income and obliged them to retrench—the most uncomfortable of all uncomfortable situations! But they married their two daughters extremely well, especially the eldest, Countess Zina Torby, who became the wife of the heir of the millions of Julius Wernher of South African fame. If the Czar had reigned, such a marriage would have been considered a *mésalliance;* after his fall it became a matrimonial Derby for its lucky winner.

The brothers of the Grand Duke Michael were not so fortunate as he. Three of them, among them the most intelligent of the whole Romanoff family, Grand Duke Nicholas Michaylowitsch, were murdered by the Bolsheviks under particularly atrocious circumstances, whilst the fourth, Grand Duke Alexander, contrived to get into the black books of the Allies, in spite of the fact that he is married to the Grand Duchess Xenia, the eldest daughter of the Dowager Empress Marie of Russia and sister of the late Nicholas II. He succeeded in escaping from the Crimea before his wife and children

were able to do so, and proceeded to Paris, where it seems that the indifference he exhibited regarding the fate of his unfortunate brother-in-law and his family produced a bad impression on all. He had never been popular, except, perhaps, at Newport, when he paid a visit there before the war, where his handsome face and charming manners won him much admiration. In St. Petersburg his propensity for intrigue made him always more or less dreaded. People wondered how his wife contrived to get on so well with him, and stories of his continual escapades seemed innumerable. One of them amused the gossips of the Russian capital for months. It seems that he had allowed himself to become entangled in an intrigue with the wife of a small "tchinownik" or clerk in the Foreign Office, from whom he had hidden his identity. He used to visit her sometimes in the afternoon in her own apartment and one day was surprised there by her husband who returned home unexpectedly; enquiring the name of the unknown visitor he was told that he was the piano tuner. After this, one of the Grand Duke's friends who had heard the story sent him as a Christmas present a miniature piano to wear as a pendant on his watch chain. He had

had it made by Faberge, the Court jeweller, who, of course, produced a wonderful ornament which was universally admired, though few people guessed its significance.

III

THE WLADIMIR FAMILY

THERE is a Russian proverb to the effect that every family has its black sheep. As regards the Romanoffs this could be amplified, inasmuch as they possessed a whole flock of black sheep. Amongst them the Grand Duke Wladimir, elder brother of Alexander III, his wife and their three sons, hold a prominent place, because they were the heroes of more scandals than anyone can possibly remember.

To begin with the Grand Duke: his drunkenness, brutality and coarseness made him hated everywhere in Russia, though abroad he made for himself many friends, more perhaps on account of the high position he occupied than for any other reason. He was a clever man—that much must be conceded him—he was a wonderful reader, and a connoisseur in all that concerned artistic matters. In Paris he was extremely liked, and Paris was the place where he showed himself to the best ad-

vantage, probably because he could lead there the easy kind of existence that suited him. In St. Petersburg he tried to play the autocrat and this made him many enemies. It was believed at one time that he had considerable influence over his brother the Czar, but this was not so, as Alexander III always dreaded the Grand Duke's ambition and, moreover, suspected him always of being entirely under the sway of Germany and the Kaiser.

The Grand Duchess Wladimir, by birth a Mecklemburg Princess, was considered the head of the German party at Court, and had always been antagonistic to the Empress Marie Feodorowna, in spite of the invariable kindness with which the latter had treated her ever since her marriage. Marie Powlowna (such was the name of the Grand Duchess) is one of the persons who has had the most disastrous influence over Russian society. She demoralized it to an extent no one could have anticipated when she arrived in St. Petersburg a blushing bride, neither pretty nor elegant, looking like nothing but a dowdy little German girl. A few years of marriage and a few visits to Paris changed all that and transformed her into an ele-

gant and handsome woman, who dressed to perfection and was in every way most attractive. Though of a haughty disposition, she, nevertheless, was extremely gracious towards those who appreciated her charms, which of course made her much talked about and caused scandal to be extremely busy with her name. This happened especially on the numerous occasions when some friends whom she had made abroad came to St. Petersburg and were received by her and the Grand Duke as guests in their palace. Among them figured a prominent clubman of Paris, Mr. Ridgway, of American origin, who, it was said, was the character described by Paul Bourget in his novels under the name of Raymond Casal. He spent a winter in Russia, shooting with the Grand Duke and playing bridge with the Grand Duchess, who liked to sit up very late at night. He always spent his evenings with her when not otherwise engaged.

Of course this furnished talk for the busybodies, and it was whispered that the Czar did not approve of his sister-in-law's favourites, but, if such was the case, he kept his disapproval to himself, and it was only on two occasions that he made the Grand Duchess feel that he was displeased with her.

Emperor Alexander III.

Empress Marie Feodorwna

The first occasion was a few months after the murder of Alexander II. Marie Pawlowna aspired at that time to play a political rôle and to become the uniting link between her native Germany and the country in which she lived. She used to write long letters to Prince Bismarck, who was the all-important personage in Berlin at the time, and in these letters she described everything that was going on at Court, in a way that was anything but charitable. One day she accidentally left one of these letters on her writing table, where it was discovered by one of her husband's aide-de-camps, Count Paul Schouwaloff (known to all his friends by the nickname of Bobby), who forthwith carried it to the Emperor. A terrible scene ensued. Alexander III sent for his brother and gave him to understand that his wife must give up her political activities and that they had both better go abroad for a few months. This command they hastened to obey and repaired to the south of France where they remained for a long time, going thence to Paris, where the Duchess ordered a number of new dresses to wear during the forthcoming coronation, which—disgrace or no disgrace—she was bound to attend.

As for Count Schouwaloff, he had, of course, to leave the Grand Duke's service, but this did not trouble him much, for the Czar appointed him one of his personal attendants, which was more than he had ever hoped for. In society some people blamed him for having shown himself so ungentlemanly as to read a letter not intended for him, but others declared that he had only done his duty in warning his Sovereign of the conspiracy which was being hatched against him in his own family. The Grand Duchess Marie Pawlowna never would speak to him after this incident, and maintained, until after the Revolution, an attitude of enmity towards the Countess Schouwaloff, even after the Count died. This Mecklemburg Princess was not of a forgiving nature.

The other scandal, by which she incurred the wrath of the Czar, was not of a political nature at all. The Grand Duke Wladimir, his wife and a small number of their most intimate friends repaired one evening for supper after the opera to a fashionable restaurant of the capital. Of course they should not have gone there, as such a thing was not supposed to be done by Imperial Princesses—in fact, was hardly permissible to the male members

of the family. But they hoped that, for once, no one would be the wiser, and, excited perhaps by the novelty of the thing, they sat down to enjoy one of those wonderful meals which can be found nowhere so perfect as in St. Petersburg. Whilst they were eating and drinking the champagne, without which no entertainment could take place in the Russia of that time, they heard singing and laughing in the room adjoining their apartment. Marie Pawlowna asked the waiter who the occupants were and was told that it was the actor, Lucien Guitry, one of the favourites of the select public that used to attend, every Saturday, the performance of the French play in the Michel Theatre, and some of his friends, among others Mademoiselle Angèle, an actress with whom he was supposed to be on most intimate terms. Marie Pawlowna suggested that the Grand Duke should ask this merry company to join their own. This was done, and a scene of wild disorder was the result. Wladimir Alexandrowitsch, who had drunk too many glasses of wine, seized Mademoiselle Angèle by the waist and kissed her, which so enraged Guitry that he in turn caught hold of the Grand Duchess, whom he proceeded to embrace. She screamed, and her husband, enraged

by the audacity of the actor, seized him by the throat. Finally the servants, attracted by the noise, called the police, and all the actors in this disgraceful brawl were taken home in a condition best left to the imagination of the reader.

The next morning Alexander III was apprised of what had taken place. People who saw him constantly stated afterwards that his rage was so terrible that for three days no one—not even the Empress—dared to speak to him. At last he issued peremptory orders that Guitry be sent out of Russia by the next train and that it be intimated to his brother and sister-in-law that they had better follow as quickly as possible. They were not even allowed to come and take leave of the Sovereign or of the Czarina, and they were given to understand that if they did not hasten to put the frontier between them and the wrath of the Czar, they might be asked to repair to some place not quite so pleasant as Paris or the South of France.

This was the last of the social crimes of the Grand Duchess Marie Pawlowna. When she returned to St. Petersburg she was much quieter and tales of her extravagance and indifference to the opinion of Mrs. Grundy were not so numerous as formerly.

She assumed the attitude of the clever woman desirous of having a salon of her own, patterned after those of Madame Geoffrain or Madame du Deffand in Paris in the eighteenth century. She failed dismally, however, in the attempt, though she contrived to collect around her a most amusing circle of people who repeated to her every bit of gossip current in the town, and who were not looked upon with affection or indulgence by the numerous dowagers who at that time reigned supreme in the Russian capital.

Marie Pawlowna was very eclectic in her tastes and friendships and, provided people had money and were ill-natured, she did not require anything more of them. Soon she had a set of her own which called itself the "smart set," but which was by no means the best in St. Petersburg. After the accession of Nicholas II, owing to the aversion for society of the Empress Alexandra, and the retirement from it of the Dowager Empress, the Grand Duchess Wladimir became a social power and, as such, helped more than anyone to bring about the laxity in morals which prevailed in the Russian capital during the last few years that preceded the great war. She was the first member of

the Imperial family to number amongst her friends divorced people, and for this innovation she was bitterly reproached by the few remaining persons who had been born and bred under the old Régime. No member of the real old Russian aristocracy frequented the Grand Duchess Marie Pawlowna's salon, but one met there a number of *nouveaux riches,* or people who had never before succeeded in breaking down the very effective barriers which up to that time had protected the exclusive circle from those who hovered on the outer edge. Among those who composed her intimate set were to be found ladies like the Princess Cantacuzene, whose father, Mr. Sicard, had been a French hair-dresser of Odessa; Madame Serebriakoff, whose great wealth was derived from relatives who had been more prominent in the timber market than anywhere else; Mr. Benckendorff, whose career had been so adventurous that he had had to bid good-bye to the diplomatic service rather more quickly than he cared to do, and other men and women, who, though very pleasant, amiable and even clever, were not descended from people whose names were inscribed in the golden book of Russian aristocracy, and therefore, according to the old code of etiquette that had

ruled the Winter Palace, not worthy to be friends and companions of the Imperial family.

I must here explain that Russia—the old Russia which we are accustomed to associate with the Czars —was the most democratic country in the world. Peter the Great had divided the nation into twelve classes, comprising all the civil and military authorities and functionaries. Every Russian was supposed to serve the State, and after having done so faithfully for a number of years to rise in the hierarchy until he had obtained a rank which would entitle him to be presented to his Sovereign and receive invitations to the festivities of the Court. Birth was of no avail; therefore, it happened that on certain occasions—such as the annual ball in the Nicholas Hall of the Winter Palace, to which more than eight thousand people were invited—one would meet persons utterly unknown, whilst some of the bearers of the most illustrious names in Russia, such as a Prince Gagarine or a Count Scheremetieff, were conspicuous by their absence, as they were not of sufficiently high rank to be admitted to the monarch's presence on this particular occasion.

It should here be explained that usually the sons of people who by birth belonged to the high social

classes of the Empire were given Court appointments, which, of course, opened for them and their wives and daughters the golden gates of the Palace. Also, all the former maids of honour of the Empress, even if they married a man not eligible for the honour, conferred it upon him by reason of their former position. This rule compensated for the hardships of the regulations which no Czar had possessed sufficient courage to change, since they had been established by the great Peter; but they still gave rise to some ludicrous incidents connected with the appearance at Court of persons who had neither the manners nor the education to entitle them to this advantage.

I remember one episode which proves the truth of my assertion that some of the guests at the Winter Palace did not even know the Sovereign and his family by sight and failed to recognise them by their pictures. One January evening I was present at this great annual ball of which I have just spoken. The crowd was immense and the faces I knew few and far between. I was being escorted to supper by one of my cousins, Count Toll. In front of us was a very stout old lady, elbowing her way through the crowd that blocked the

passage to the supper-room. She was dragging with her an aged admiral of the fleet, a perfect stranger to us. Suddenly she exclaimed: "Wait a moment; I am going to get hold of the epaulettes of this little Colonel in front of us and he will pull us along with him." And she forthwith proceeded to do so, giving her victim a vigorous pull. My cousin touched my arm and we both with difficulty suppressed a smile. The "little Colonel" was the Grand Duke Cesarewitsch, Nicholas Alexandrowitsch, who, with his partner, the young Countess Worontzoff, was also trying to fight his way through the crowd that thronged the big rooms and halls of the Palace.

This ball and the annual levées that took place on New Year's Day and at Easter were the only occasions when the whole of administrative and military Russia was admitted to pay homage to its Sovereign. The other balls (during the reign of Alexander III two a week were given) which took place at Court, were most exclusive as regards the people invited to them. Those held in the Concert Hall, as it was called, were absolutely fairy-like, and I do not think a more magnificent sight could be witnessed than that of the supper-room as it ap-

peared on these occasions. In the centre of every table was a huge palm tree, and the rest of the table was entirely covered with the rarest flowers, whilst under the large portrait of the Emperor, Nicholas I, was a veritable garden of roses and other exquisite plants. No one who was present at any of these entertainments can ever forget them, and it seems incredible that all this pomp, this luxury, this magnificence, is at an end for evermore.

The Ambassadors were present at all these balls, but the diplomatic corps was invited only occasionally. Before the dancing began the ladies who had not previously attended these functions were presented to the Empress and she always had a pleasant word to say to them. Also, the newly-appointed diplomats and strangers of distinction were introduced to the Emperor by their respective Chiefs of Mission.

I remember an amusing incident which occurred on one of these occasions: an American millionaire, from the Far West, more renowned for his wealth than for his education and manners (for the convenience of the story I shall call him Mr. Carr), had contrived that he and his wife should be in-

vited to the ball. The United States Minister, Mr. Andrew White (there was no Ambassador at that time), presented him to the Emperor. Alexander III, always pleasant to foreigners, entered into conversation with him. Mrs. Carr, who was viewing the proceedings from the distance, felt that she ought to be included, and forthwith hastened to her husband and began pulling him by the arm, to the horror of the American Minister who did not know how to restrain her. Mr. Carr, however, understood at once what was the matter and with a sweep of the hand indicated the Sovereign to his smiling and panting wife. "Mrs. Carr," he solemnly said, "this is the Czar." Alexander rose to the occasion—his sense of humour never deserted him—and shook hands with the gratified lady, remarking as he did so: "And the Czar is very pleased to meet you, Mrs. Carr."

IV

THE YOUTHFUL ADVENTURES OF SOME GRAND DUKES

The younger generation of the Romanoffs, who had not been brought up in the ancient traditions of their house, but who were very conscious of the privileges which their position conferred upon them, almost as soon as they were out of school gave material for much talk to the gossips of St. Petersburg, whom they kept plentifully supplied with all manner of more or less scandalous stories concerning their various sayings and doings.

For a few years the sons of the Grand Duke Wladimir occupied, almost exclusively, the attention of the public, especially the Grand Duke Boris, who seemed to have been born for the express purpose of getting into scrapes—and disreputable ones at that. He was a handsome fellow, but absolutely unscrupulous, and soon became the terror of jealous husbands as well as of watchful mothers, who were always anxious when he invited one of their

daughters to dance. Thanks to him, the engagement of a young girl very prominent in society, Mademoiselle Demidoff, was broken off almost on the eve of her wedding day. Fortunately for her, this did not permanently destroy her happiness, because she ultimately married Prince Abamelek Lazareff, one of the richest men in Russia, and lived very happily with him. But this did not prevent people from discussing in most disapproving terms the conduct of the Grand Duke.

He did not mind, however, what the world thought of him and his doings, and the next thing heard of him was that he was courting a married lady. This new romance died a natural death, but not before it had occasioned much heart-burning and given rise to considerable comment, owing to the fact that it very nearly got its hero and heroine into very serious trouble. What happened was as follows: The Grand Duke used to meet the lady in question in the apartment of one of his friends. The janitor grew suspicious of these two persons who used to steal into the house, with their faces buried in their furs, and he thought it his duty to notify the police of these mysterious visits, with the result that one day a detective appeared upon the

scene and insisted upon being admitted to the apartment. The Grand Duke did not care to disclose his identity to this underling, so he telephoned to the Prefect of the town, General von Wahl. The latter was a terrible busy-body and most inquisitive. He betook himself to the house where, in the meanwhile, Boris Wladimirowitsch and his companion remained prisoners, the police refusing them permission to leave, and he insisted upon learning the lady's name, which the Grand Duke was obliged, at last, to reveal. Von Wahl was not discreet by any means, and a few days later the whole of St. Petersburg became aware of the adventure.

Speaking of this personage reminds me that he more than once came into collision with members of the Imperial family—even with the heir to the Throne, afterwards the unfortunate Nicholas II. The latter was supping one night at Cubat, a fashionable restaurant of the capital, with some ladies, amongst whom figured the famous Polish dancer, Mademoiselle Krzesinska, who was his mistress for many years, and a few officers of his regiment, the Hussars of the Guard. They were a very merry party, and when the time came for closing the establishment they refused to go.

International Film Service

THE LATE CZAR NICHOLAS II. OF RUSSIA

Regulations were very strict in the capital as regards the hour of closing the restaurants, and a police officer tried to force an entry into the room where the party was disporting itself merrily. When he was refused admittance he telephoned for instructions to the Prefect, who appeared again in person on the scene. The heir to the throne, seeing him enter, became enraged at what he considered unwarranted impertinence, and in his anger threw at the head of the unfortunate von Wahl the contents of a large jar of caviar which happened to be standing on the table.

I have just mentioned Mademoiselle Krzesinska. It is impossible to relate the secret history of the Russian Court during the last twenty-five years or so which preceded the downfall of the Romanoff dynasty without speaking of her and her extraordinary influence. She was a very clever, insinuating and intriguing woman, a real Pole, not only by birth but also in sympathy, with all the grace and charm for which Polish ladies have always been famous. She was not pretty by any means, but she had glorious eyes, and all her movements were so graceful that it was a delight to watch her. She was a dancer by profession and one of the best that

the Marinsky Theatre had ever produced. Men simply raved over her and Nicholas II was as much in love with her as it was possible for one of his shallow nature to be. Though his relations with her had come to an end when he married the Princess Alice of Hesse, he often visited her, and sometimes even consulted her on political matters, when she always advised him wisely. She had given him two sons who were very richly dowered. She always looked well after her own interests, and did it in so clever and unassuming a manner that she won for herself a reputation of complete disinterestedness, which did not prevent her from buying and furnishing a house that was a veritable palace, and from accumulating a considerable balance at her bank. All the young Grand Dukes used to visit her, and at least two of them, the Grand Duke Sergius Michaylowitsch and the Grand Duke Andrew Lichaylowitsch, became her ardent admirers. The former was supposed to have helped her considerably in her investments, whilst the latter did even better—he married her, immediately after the Revolution which drove his cousin from the throne; after which they both disappeared somewhere in Finland, where it is to be hoped that they have con-

trived to find a shelter from the fury of the Bolsheviks.

It was in the house of Mademoiselle Krzesinska that Bolshevism held its headquarters during the Kerensky régime, and it was there that Lenine established himself before he took up his quarters in the Winter Palace. All the costly furniture accumulated by the fair dancer, together with the wonderful works of art which the beautiful dwelling contained, was destroyed by the Red Guards whilst they occupied the Palace, but she herself contrived to escape their fury and to find a place of safety for her marvellous collection of diamonds and pearls, as well as a considerable part of her large fortune which, being a wise woman, she had invested abroad while it was still possible to do so. She is reported to have once said to someone who wondered at the persistence with which she used to dispatch funds to London and Paris: "Russia is a country in which people will not find it pleasant to live some day, and I am preparing against that day."

Mademoiselle Krzesinska had always very cleverly screened her actions from the public. She was wiser and more tactful than other actresses

who, before her time, had attracted the attention of members of the Imperial family and acquired a fatal notoriety on that account. Such was Mademoiselle Balleta, a star of the stage of the French Theatre and an intimate friend of the late Grand Duke Alexis, the brother of Czar Alexander III. She was accused of having exerted her influence over him to such an extent that he was suspected of having spent on her funds belonging to the navy, of which he was the commander-in-chief. It is of course difficult to know whether or not this was true, but the rumour became so general during the Japanese war that one evening the audience of the Michel Theatre hissed Mademoiselle Balleta when she appeared upon the stage and kept shouting at her words which were anything but diplomatic, until she fell into violent hysterics and was obliged to retire. The next day she left Russia, breaking her engagement, which, in any case, this scandal would probably have terminated and the Grand Duke followed her to Paris, where he lived henceforth and where he died in her arms several years later. With his death the glories of Mademoiselle Balleta came to an end, and she was compelled to sell the contents of the gorgeous house

Grand Duke
Vladimir
Alexandrowitch
(*Left*)

Grand Duke
Alexis
Alexandrowitch
(*Right*)

Brothers of Alexander III.

Alexis had furnished for her, and where he used to make himself so entirely at home that he often forgot to return to his own domicile!

The Romanoffs, in spite of all their eccentricities, were very faithful in their affections, though they certainly never were faithful husbands, with the one exception of the Czar Alexander III, whose family was a model one and who never looked kindly or indulgently on the various intrigues in which his brothers, cousins and nephews found so much pleasure. During his lifetime a certain amount of decorum was observed by his young relatives, but after he passed away the last atom of respect for the moralities disappeared from among the Imperial family, who at last disgraced the dynasty so utterly that when the hour struck for its fall not one single person could be found to try to avert the catastrophe or help the victims of it.

The only two respectable Grand Dukes among those of the younger generation were Cyril, the eldest son of the Grand Duchess Marie Pawlowna, and the brother of the Emperor, the Grand Duke Michael. They both contracted marriages which drew upon their heads the wrath of the Czar,

though for different reasons, and they both behaved very well under the ostracism which they had to endure for a considerable time. But the Grand Duke Cyril, unfortunately, did not understand all at once the real import of the Revolution, and with a hastiness for which he has since repented more than once, no doubt, he led his regiment to the Duma and placed it and himself at the disposal of the new government. This gave rise, later on, to all kinds of rumours associating him with an attempt to dethrone his cousin, so as to put himself in his place, and this discredited him both with the liberal and with the conservative parties.

Cyril Wladimirowitsch's wife was an English Princess, his own cousin, the daughter of the late Duke of Edinburgh and of the Grand Duchess Marie Alexandrowna of Russia. She had been married to the Grand Duke of Hesse, the brother of the Czarina Alexandra, and had been divorced from him, which had placed her in the bad books of the Empress. For some years the young couple lived abroad, and after the Grand Duke was pardoned and returned to Russia with his wife, relations never became cordial between them and the

Sovereigns; this perhaps explains the promptitude with which they accepted the new order of things. The fact was nevertheless discussed everywhere and did not produce a good impression. But then Cyril was the next heir to the Throne after the Grand Duke Michael Alexandrowitsch, and as such was likely to be accused unjustly of ambitious schemes. He is supposed to be also in Finland at present, and in such dire financial straits that the Grand Duchess has been obliged to dispose of some of her most valuable jewels in order to provide them with the means of existence.

I have been told that when she decided to take this step the wife of one of the Bolshevist leaders, happening to hear of her intention, dispatched a messenger to her with an offer to buy the ornaments and even to give an enormous price for them, provided the Grand Duchess would consent to write her a letter asking her to do so, which she could afterwards show to her friends. Needless to say, Victoria declined the offer; but the story has its place in history as showing that even a Bolshevist can show himself (or herself) a snob.

V

SOME RUSSIAN MORGANATIC MARRIAGES

In olden times no one in Russia would have admitted the possibility of any member of the Imperial family making what was called a morganatic marriage. Indeed, the idea prevalent in the country was that once a Romanoff had married any woman in the world, no matter who she was, the fact that he had considered her worthy of the honour was sufficient to secure for her the rank, status and title of an Imperial Grand Duchess. In olden times the Muscovite Czars had wedded the daughters of their subjects, and no one had thought that in so doing they were performing an extraordinary action. The first example of a foreign Princess marrying a Grand Duke was when the son of Peter the Great took for his consort the Princess Charlotte of Brunswick-Wolfenbuttel, but the grandson of the great reformer, Peter II, was

betrothed to a Princess Dolgorouky when death snatched him away. It was solely for reasons of policy that Catherine the Great insisted on her heir wedding a German Princess, and it was Paul who promulgated family laws forbidding any member of the Romanoff family to ally himself or herself with anyone not of royal birth. His sons, Alexander I and Nicholas I, were very strict in this matter, probably because their German wives had imbued them with all the prejudices prevalent in German courts, where it was considered impossible for a member of any reigning dynasty to seek a wife elsewhere than among the daughters of the highest nobility.

The first example in the Romanoff family of a morganatic marriage was that of the Grand Duke Constantine, brother of Alexander I, to a Polish lady, Mademoiselle Jeanne Gruzinska, after his divoree from the Coburg Princess, with whom he had quarrelled perpetually, until they both came to the conclusion that the best thing they could do was to part. Mademoiselle Gruzinska was an extremely clever woman, who made herself respected not only by her husband, but by all his family, including the stern Emperor Nicholas I, who always

showed her the greatest deference and conferred upon her the title of Princess Lowitsch. Perhaps one of the reasons for his partiality for this morganatic sister-in-law lay in the fact that it was her marriage that had paved for him the road to the succession to the Russian Throne, Constantine having renounced his rights to it after his wedding, an action incomprehensible at first to the nation, and one of the reasons for the famous insurrection called the Decembrist conspiracy.

An amusing incident is related in connection with this revolt. The leaders of it called upon the population of St. Petersburg to rally around them and, as they paraded the streets, shouted: "Long live the Constitution." The poor moujiks, who had never heard the word and had no idea of its meaning, repeated it, whispering to each other as they did so: "Constitution, Constitution, what is it? It must be the name of the Grand Duke Constantine's wife."

Though the marriage of the Princess Powitsch was thoroughly successful, a long time passed before another member of the Romanoff family followed the example of the Grand Duke Constantine by seeking a wife outside royal circles. The first

one to break away from tradition was the Grand Duke Alexis, the third son of Czar Alexander II, who fell in love with one of his mother's ladies-in-waiting and married her secretly. When the fact became known it caused an immense sensation, not to say scandal, and the Emperor, in particular, was so furious that he forthwith declared the marriage null and void, and had the heroine of it sent out of Russia by the first train. The unfortunate girl retired to Dresden, where she led for some years a miserable existence, shunned by everybody and abandoned by the Grand Duke, who did not possess sufficient courage and moral backbone to take her part and to stick to her in defiance of his father's will. She gave birth to a son who was taken away from her by the Grand Duke and brought up in Russia, receiving ultimately the title of Count Belewsky. Finally she was induced to marry a German, Herr von Woermann, with whom, I believe, she lived quite happily. She died a few years before the Grand Duke, to whom she professed herself attached to the last, notwithstanding the abominable way in which he had treated her.

After Alexis, it was the Grand Duke Paul, his

brother, who brought to the Russian Court as his bride the daughter of a simple Russian gentleman of rather inferior birth. This marriage crowned an affection that had lasted a good many years and had at last been accepted by the whole of St. Petersburg society, where the object of it, Madame Pistolkors, had always been popular on account of her beauty and the excellence of the dinners she was fond of giving. She was extremely clever and had all along played for high stakes, having had from the first the firm intention of becoming the consort of Paul Alexandrowitsch. The latter was a widower, and supposed to be devoted to his sister-in-law, the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, wife of his brother, the Grand Duke Sergius. This had not prevented him from worshipping at the shrine of Madame Pistolkors, and this worship had been carried so far that no one doubted but that in time he would marry her, provided her husband agreed to grant her the divorce she desired. This, however, he did not seem inclined to do until circumstances forced his hand, which ill-natured people said had been skilfully brought about by the lady herself. The way of it was as follows:

At one of the balls at the Winter Palace, Ma-

dame Pistolkors surprised the guests by wearing some diamond ornaments which had belonged to the late Empress Marie Alexandrowna, and had been bequeathed by her to her youngest son. Paul had been induced to give them to Madame Pistolkors, who had not hesitated to wear them in the least desirable place she could have chosen. They were at once recognised by the Dowager Czarina, who, in her indignation, went to seek her daughter-in-law, the young Empress Alexandra, and asked her to exert her authority to have the object of this unprecedented scandal expelled from the Palace. This was done, a chamberlain being given the disagreeable task of asking Madame Pistolkors to leave the ball. The next day the whole town was ringing with the story of her discomfiture, and her husband found himself in the predicament of choosing between divorcing her or sending in his papers and leaving the army, his brother officers having given him to understand that they would insist on his doing either one or the other.

The lady, upon whom society turned its back, after this public slight, fled abroad, where she was quickly followed by the Grand Duke, who considered himself obliged to stand by her in her mis-

fortune. He had never thought of marrying her, but now he felt that he could not do otherwise; so as soon as she was free he wedded her in Livourne in Italy and took her to Paris, where they settled, making it their permanent home, for Paul Alexandrowitsch was notified by the Czar that his presence was no longer required in St. Petersburg, and was deprived of his military rank in consequence of his marriage.

In Paris the couple made themselves popular, and the young wife of the Grand Duke who had at his instance been created a Countess in her own right by the King of Bavaria, enjoyed to the utmost the gay Parisian life. She was really a charming creature and she was wise enough to show herself always good-natured. It was not long before members of the Imperial family, visiting the French capital, consented to receive her, and little by little she won her way back into Russian society; even those she knew to have spoken unkindly of her received a warm welcome in her Paris home. She was of the opinion that forgetfulness of the injuries one has received is a great help in life, and this principle, coupled with exquisite tact, carried her triumphantly through many an un-

Photograph, Underwood & Underwood, N. Y.

GRAND DUKE DIMITRI PAVLOWITCH
SON OF GRAND DUKE PAUL

pleasantness. After some years she was allowed to return to Russia for a few weeks, on pretext of being present at the wedding of one of the two daughters of her first marriage, and after this visit much of the prejudice against her must have vanished, because she regularly came back to St. Petersburg during the winter season, until at last it was rumoured that the Paris establishment of the Grand Duke was to be broken up and that he had begun the building of a splendid summer palace in Tzarskoié Sélo, where he had decided to settle definitely, with only short absences abroad.

When the war broke out, the Countess Hohenfelsen (such was the name of the morganatic wife of Paul Alexandrowitsch) made herself very useful in Red Cross work, and played her cards so cleverly that at last she persuaded the Czar to give her permission to drop the Teutonic title circumstances had compelled her to bear and to adopt a Russian name. Nicholas II seemed convinced by the arguments she put forth and created her a Princess Paley in her own right, with the power to transmit her name and title to her three children by the Grand Duke Paul.

Unfortunately, the war, which had thus put the

crowning touch to her social triumph, was also to prove her undoing, for one of the first actions of the Bolshevik government, after it had overthrown the Kerensky ministry, was to imprison the Grand Duke and his wife. The former was shot in the fortress, but the Princess Paley escaped and made her way to Finland. Her only son was murdered by the Bolsheviks and she is now quite alone in the world, except for her two little girls, and very badly off, it seems, as regards money matters. Her triumph was a short one and the night which followed was far darker than the brightest hour of day had been.

I have related the incident which crowned the social career of the Princess Paley and which brought about its supreme success. At the time it took place it was perhaps more commented upon than anything had been for a long time in St. Petersburg, where the dismissal of a guest from the Winter Palace during an entertainment was an unheard-of event. The only time that anything of the kind had occurred previously was during the reign of Alexander II. The heroine of the story was a woman of exceptional beauty and equally exceptional reputation, who, having married (after

a divorce attended by much scandal) a Chamberlain of the Czar, by name Mr. B., made her appearance at a ball at the Nicholas Hall, which she had every right to attend, owing to her husband's position. Her unusual loveliness made her the cynosure of all eyes, and a young aide-de-camp of the Czar, just arrived in the capital and knowing nothing of its gossip, sought an introduction and asked her to dance a quadrille with him. He knew that his partner would excite general admiration wherever he chose to place her, so he went boldly to the end of the ball room where the then heiress to the throne was dancing and placed himself opposite her with Madame B. The Emperor saw them and, furious at this lack of respect for his daughter-in-law, went up to the unfortunate aide-de-camp and said to him in a loud voice: "No one wearing my aiguillettes has a right to dance with such a woman as you have brought here," and forthwith he commanded a Court official to lead the couple out of the room and eject them from the palace.

History does not tell what Madame B's feelings were after this adventure, but it did not disturb her equanimity for any length of time. She, also, went to live in Paris, where she bought a beautiful

house and contrived to gain admittance into the most select circles, owing to her charms, especially to her wonderful voice. She soon became one of the queens of Paris society and died a few months before the war. Her adventure in the Winter Palace had been in the meantime forgotten by everyone—including herself.

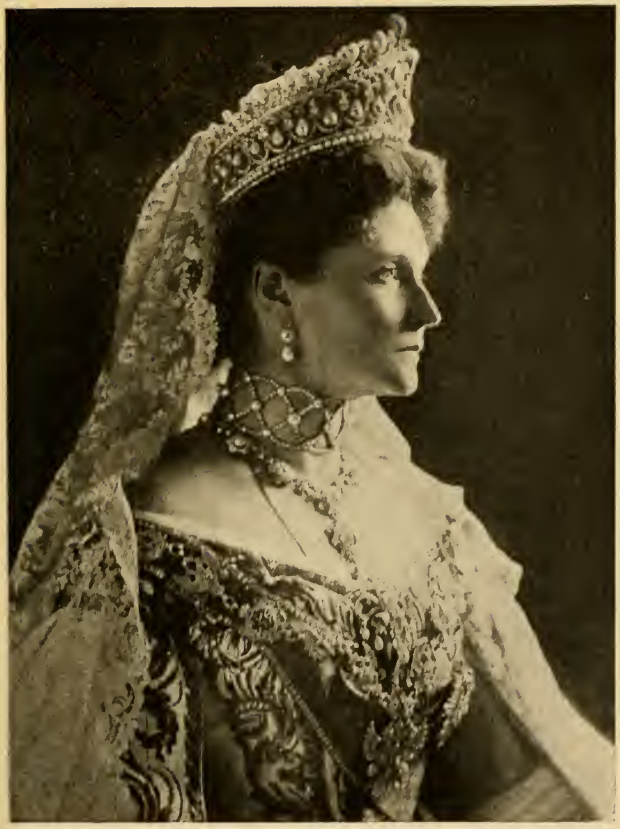
VI

THE EMPRESS ALEXANDRA AND HER SISTER

The unfortunate Czarina Alexandra of Russia will remain one of the enigmas of history. With the exception, perhaps, of Marie Antoinette no woman has been more slandered than she, and few have had to bear the burden of so atrocious a fate. Perhaps the real secret of her life will never be discovered or revealed, the Bolsheviks having taken good care to destroy all documents which could shed any light on the mystery that surrounded the last Empress who shared the throne of an autocratic Czar. From the first hour of her marriage, this victim of a cruel destiny succeeded in arousing the antagonism of almost all the people with whom her position brought her into contact. It must be confessed that she was not a sympathetic person, and she was very stupid, though, unfortunately for her, she had been led to believe that she was clever.

This explains, perhaps, how she contrived to make herself so unpopular. The Empress had high-flown ideas of reforming the world, and, alas, the world objects to being told that it is in urgent need of reform. The Russian world, represented by St. Petersburg society, objected very much to this part of Alexandra's programme, and it immediately gave her to understand that such was the case. She was a beautiful creature, one of the loveliest of her generation, but she was not an amiable woman, and she did not understand in the least how to appeal to the masses, who at last turned from her. People began almost at once to discuss her movements, her actions, her very words, though these were but few and far between. She did not possess the gift of small talk, and she had a habit of discouraging those who tried to please her. As an instance of the latter fact, I shall relate an incident which caused much mirth at the time it occurred.

Among the ladies who were presented to the young Empress immediately after her marriage was one who had known her mother, the late Grand Duchess of Hesse. She felt sure that she would please the youthful sovereign by mentioning the fact and adding a few words in praise of her



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THE LATE CZARINA ALEXANDRA OF RUSSIA

mother. Indeed, if the truth be told, she felt confident that in doing so she would win for herself a special place in Alexandra's esteem. On the day appointed for her presentation she repaired to the Palace of Tzarskoié Sélo, and was ushered into a room where the Empress was standing, surrounded by several ladies-in-waiting, with two pages holding her long train. This rather abashed her visitor, who had been used to the free and easy way in which the Empress Marie Feodorowna welcomed her guests, putting them at once at their ease; nevertheless, she made the speech she had prepared beforehand and the following dialogue took place:

Lady: "I feel so honoured at being presented to Your Majesty; the more so that I had the honour of knowing very well the late Grand Duchess of Hesse who was always so kind to me."

Empress, after a long silence, in a hesitating voice: "Really! Where did you meet Mamma?"

Lady: "In London and in Darmstadt, Your Majesty, where I was several times the Grand Duke's guest, and I had the honour of seeing Your Majesty when a baby."

Empress, after another long pause: "Ah, and how did you get to Darmstadt?"

Lady, by this time in a thoroughly bad temper: "In a railway train, Your Majesty, with a first class ticket."

A nod of the head dismissed her, but, of course, mutual irritation followed the interview. The Empress complained that the lady had been impertinent, whilst the latter declared that the sovereign was a fool, and a badly behaved one into the bargain. She related stories to show that the Dowager Empress was always delighted when she met anyone who had known her people or could talk about them, and Alexandra Feodorowna found herself saddled with one more enemy amongst the ranks of those who were at first disposed to be friendly.

Many incidents of the same kind occurred and they did not tend to make Alexandra popular. Later on she was reproached for having meddled in political matters and for upholding her husband in his determination not to grant any of the reforms of which the country stood in urgent need. If the Empress had been a frivolous woman, had cared for pretty gowns, dancing, and other things of the kind, she would have been far better liked and appreciated. As it was, she was considered a *trouble fête,* as they say in French, and it was re-

marked that her presence in a room was sufficient to produce an icy chill, and to prevent any kind of enjoyment, no matter how harmless. She could not unbend and, thanks to her, the Russian Court became as stiff as it had previously been informal. Of course, Alexandra felt that she was unpopular and this increased her irritation and her intense dislike of Russia and everything Russian. She retired more and more into the solitude of her palace of Tzarskoié Sélo, or of Livadia in the Crimea, and St. Petersburg society saw less and less of her with every year that passed. Of course, people resented this, and after having discussed the conduct of the Empress they began to criticise sharply and, finally, to attribute to motives which did not exist her love for solitude or, rather, for the society of two or three persons whom she would have done better to have excluded from her friendship.

I do not believe for one moment all the accusations of immorality which were launched against the last Czarina of Russia. She was a woman of high moral principles and, besides, so haughty and proud that it is quite out of the question that she could ever have lowered herself to the extent of forgetting her duties as a wife and mother. But

she was not absolutely sane, and the tendency to religious mysticism, which was one of the strange traits of her altogether curious character, certainly led her to do things which were bound to show her in an unfavourable light to the public, always eager for scandal everywhere.

One of the misfortunes of Alexandra was the great influence wielded over her by her sister, the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, whose conduct was quite notorious until (after the murder of her husband, the Grand Duke Sergius) she became a nun in a convent which she had herself founded, and where, in spite of her profession of humility, she continued to lead the luxurious existence of a Russian Grand Duchess.

This, however, was much later. She had been in Russia for something like ten years when her sister came to join her. She tried to direct her, to lead her, and through her to influence the Emperor. The Grand Duke Sergius was alive at the time—a very ambitious man who aspired to rule Russia in the name of his nephew. He and his wife tried to prejudice his young sister-in-law against all the people likely to thwart him in his schemes, or to open her eyes to the nefarious part he was

playing in her life. He tried to surround her with his own devotees, and the Grand Duchess Elizabeth helped him in his schemes. She was secretly jealous of the Empress, whom she did not consider fit for the position into which chance had thrust her, and she spoke of it openly among her friends who, of course, repeated it abroad, so that in a very short time it became known that Alexandra was a capricious, bad-tempered woman, who cared for nothing but her own pleasure and her native land. It was Elizabeth Feodorowna who was the first to speak of the Empress's German tendencies and to deplore them in public. And yet, in spite of this hypocrisy and of all the numerous charges against her, the Grand Duchess was more popular than her sister, perhaps because of the exaggerated affection which she pretended to have for everything that was Russian and orthodox. She wished to pose as a victim of circumstances brought about by a mistaken marriage; she aspired to acquire the reputation of a saint, which she was not; and the curious fact is that she succeeded in this enterprise.

The Empress was a far more honest woman than her sister; but she never got credit for this honesty.

Elizabeth Feodorowna reminds one, in a way, of the great Catherine, because, like this famous woman, she invariably showed kindness towards the numerous favourites of her stormy youth. Even when circumstances had parted her from them she remembered them; she was solicitous for their welfare, and tried to further them in their careers by recommending them to the Emperor for the various positions and appointments for which she considered them fitted. Towards women she was kind and affectionate, never noticing their frailties or peculiarities, and was rarely heard to utter an ill-natured word. It would have been well for the Empress Alexandra had she imitated her elder sister in this respect.

One of the Empress's ladies-in-waiting (who was obliged, shortly after her appointment, to resign her position, owing to a certain scandal) related to me the following incident, which throws a curious light on the general conduct of the Grand Duchess Elizabeth:

In spite of her constant affectations of French sympathies, she did not approve of the then French Ambassador at the Court of St. Petersburg, Count de Montebello, still less of his wife, whom she con-

Photograph, Underwood & Underwood, N. Y.

GRAND DUKE SERGIUS AND GRAND DUCHESS ELIZABETH

sidered vulgar and ill-bred. One afternoon when she was drinking tea with the Empress and Emperor she contrived to lead the conversation to this subject, and told her brother-in-law that he ought not to become too familiar with the representative of the French Republic, and that he would do well to forbid the younger Grand Dukes from frequenting his house, which, she declared, was far too much of a "Liberty Hall."

Nicholas liked the de Montebellos, and with reason, for they were both very charming and amiable; besides he felt indignant that his sister-in-law should try to control his actions and treat him like a child. But, irritated though he was at her interference, he was too timid to protest; so, in his efforts to maintain his dignity, he found nothing better to say than that it was impossible for him to prevent even a member of his own family from visiting a man who was the official representative of the French Republic. This remark so angered Elizabeth Feodorowna that for once she forgot herself and exclaimed: 'He may represent the French Republic, but his wife represents the French Commune."

If all we hear be true, it was the Grand Duchess

who introduced Raspoutine to the Empress, though subsequently she joined the ranks of the famous peasant's enemies, quarrelling with her sister in consequence of the latter's infatuation for this mysterious personage, an infatuation for which she was herself partly responsible.

All this has now passed into history, if history can be associated with the miserable Palace intrigues which, more than anything else, brought about the sudden downfall of the Romanoffs. Most of those who participated in them have paid with their lives for their folly, ambition and cupidity. The unfortunate Empress Alexandra, her children, innocent though they were, the Czar, whose weakness of character hastened the catastrophe, the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, Raspoutine, the so-called prophet—they have all disappeared, slain either by noble or by vile hands. They were as helpless as leaves that flutter from the tree, and when the storm broke over poor, unfortunate, betrayed Russia, like leaves they were swept away.

VII

LOVE AFFAIRS OF THE GRAND DUKE MICHAEL

When Nicholas II ascended the throne of Russia he had two brothers, the eldest of whom, the Grand Duke George, was proclaimed heir presumptive to the crown, and awarded the title of Césarewitsch. In the Imperial Manifest granting him this title it was expressly stated that he was to enjoy it only until the birth of a son to the Czar, but as the young Empress gave birth to four girls in succession it seemed as if the Grand Duke George would really be the future Emperor. As things turned out, he did actually enjoy his position until his death, which occurred rather unexpectedly in the Caucasus where he had settled permanently, giving his health as an excuse, but in reality because he had secretly married a lady whose entry into the Imperial family would have been seriously objected to by both the Czar and the Empress Dowager. The Grand Duke had

suffered from tuberculosis from childhood, and for a long time the doctors had entertained no hopes of his recovering sufficiently to be able to lead a normal life. Nevertheless, his death was a great surprise and took place under mysterious circumstances which were never entirely explained. He was found dead beside his bicycle on the high road that led to the village of Abbas Touman where he resided. It was afterwards said that he had broken a blood vessel, but this was never proven, and the case remained open for any amount of suppositions.

The Grand Duke had been a clever, serious man, far more intelligent than his brother, the Czar, and gifted with a charming disposition which had endeared him to all those who had ever had anything to do with him. He was exceedingly regretted, the more so that at the time he passed away his younger brother, who took his place as heir presumptive to the throne, Michael Alexandrowitsch, was a mere boy, about whom very little was known by the general public. He had been his father's favourite, and was said to resemble him more than did any of his other children, a circumstance that had greatly contributed to his

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GRAND DUKE MICHAEL

popularity, the late Czar having been more beloved by his subjects than any previous Russian Emperor.

The young Grand Duke remained with his mother after his father's death, and owing to this his attitude towards his elder brother became rather strained, as relations were not very close between the Palace of Tzarskoié Sélo and that of Gatchina where the Dowager Empress spent a great deal of her time. Existence was rather austere in that grimy old castle and did not offer many amusements to a young man of Michael Alexandrowitsch's age. Not having anything to do, or at least, not being sufficiently occupied, the Grand Duke formed the habit of spending a great deal of his time with his sister, the Grand Duchess Olga, who also lived part of the year at Gatschina with her mother.

Now the Grand Duchess had among her ladies-in-waiting a charming young girl called Mademoiselle Kossikowsky, highly connected and exceedingly popular among the younger generation of St. Petersburg society. She was not, strictly speaking, beautiful, but possessed great charm and was a wonderfully bright conversationalist. Michael,

who was of a more serious frame of mind than the other members of his family, found great pleasure in talking with her and discussing many subjects which did not interest those around them. They soon became friends and at last the day came when the Grand Duke discovered that he was very much in love with his sister's lady-in-waiting.

This young man, in spite of the fact that he had been born a Romanoff and bred in the traditions of this race, was the soul of honour. He had inherited his father's inflexible honesty, with his mother's high moral principles, and he never for a moment thought of doing otherwise than marrying Mademoiselle Kossikowsky. It seems that some of his friends suggested to him that he ought rather to try to persuade her to become his mistress, but Michael scorned such an idea, and immediately went to seek the Dowager Empress to ask her to intercede with the Czar on his behalf.

But his confession did not meet with the hoped-for response from the Empress. She dearly loved this son of hers who in so many ways reminded her of the husband she had been so devoted to, and she was, besides, ambitious for him. He stood in the position of heir to his brother's throne, and it would

never do for a future Emperor of Russia to wed a potential subject. There were traditions that ought to be observed, and Marie Feodorowna had been all her life a great stickler for etiquette. She, therefore, kindly but firmly told the Grand Duke that she did not see how he could carry out his wishes and that the best thing he could do would be to abandon the idea of marrying Mademoiselle Kossikowsky.

The Empress had at that time plans for an alliance between Michael and the youngest daughter of the late Duke of Edinburgh and the Grand Duchess Marie Alexandrowna of Russia, with whom she had always been on most intimate and affectionate terms, and she grew very angry at the thought of any interference with these plans. Her anger caused her, perhaps, to reply to her son more severely than she would have otherwise done. She had always been very authoritative with her children, far more so than Alexander III, and she had been feared by them to an extent that seemed almost incredible, considering her gentle kindly appearance; she hated the idea that anything she had decided upon should be questioned by her family.

I remember one amusing incident which illus-

trates this point. When her eldest daughter, the Grand Duchess Xenia, was about to be married to her cousin, the Grand Duke Alexander Michaylowitsch, it was decided that the young couple should spend their honeymoon at a little shooting box called Repscha, which was fitted up for them with great luxury and taste. There were some interior arrangements connected with the sleeping quarters of the newly-wedded pair which the Empress had decided upon and which did not meet with the approval of the Grand Duke, who asked that some alterations be made in the original plan. But he had not reckoned with Marie Feodorowna, who did not intend any of her arrangements to be questioned, and she expressed herself in most vehement terms concerning what she called the "unheard-of interference of the Grand Duke."

"Can you imagine?" she exclaimed, when discussing the matter with one of her personal friends, "can you imagine? He wanted things changed that I had decided upon! But I told him my opinion of him, and advised him to remember that Repscha was *my* house, not his. *My* house," she added, with emphasis on the pronoun.

The Empress, as I have just said, disapproved

entirely of her son's affection for Mademoiselle Kossikowsky, and she immediately wrote to the girl's parents asking them to remove their daughter from the household of the Grand Duchess Olga and to take her abroad. She also insisted on the Grand Duke Michael being refused permission to leave Russia to join her, as he had expressed his intention of doing.

In presence of such strenuous opposition to his most cherished desires the young man had to yield and, though he refused to entertain the matrimonial plans made by his mother and brother on his behalf, he gave up the idea of wedding Mademoiselle Kossikowsky, who must have congratulated herself more than once during the last two years or so on having escaped the fate of becoming the wife of a Romanoff.

The Grand Duke was at that time a captain in the Regiment of the Yellow Cuirassiers, stationed at Gatschina. Among the officers of that corps was a certain Captain Wulffert who had married a very pretty and exceedingly intelligent divorcée. She was most attractive and her house was a meeting place for all her husband's comrades, who always found there a pleasant welcome and an ex-

cellent dinner. Grand Duke Michael took to frequenting her house and pouring into her ear the sad tale of his love story and the opposition he had encountered.

Madame Wulffert did not mean to lose the opportunity thus presented of improving her social position. She played her cards exceedingly well and not only refrained from mentioning that alarming and obnoxious word "marriage" to the Grand Duke, but made him feel, on the contrary, that for love of him she was sacrificing all that a woman holds dear, without asking anything of him in return.

This clever conduct on her part had the desired effect, for, though everyone in St. Petersburg became aware in a short time of Michael's romance with pretty Madame Wulffert, no one connected it with the possibility of her ever becoming his morganatic wife. Captain Wulffert showed himself a man wise in his generation, because he furnished his wife with all the reasons necessary to allow her to obtain a divorce, and when this had become an accomplished fact she returned to the capital and settled there in a magnificent apartment, which she furnished with exquisite taste.

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GRAND DUCHESS OLGA OF RUSSIA
SISTER OF THE FORMER CZAR

The rent, it was whispered, was paid by the Grand Duke.

This kind of thing went on for some time, and though the Dowager Empress and all the Imperial family were very sorry for this infatuation, as they called it, of their young relative, they all felt that it would be very unwise on their part to interfere, because it was—so they imagined—bound to die a natural death in time, if no opposition were brought to bear upon it.

Madame Wulffert, however, did not mean it to die at all, the more so when she gave birth to a son whom it was her firm intention his father should acknowledge. She never mentioned this possibility to him, never complained, never suggested to him what he ought to do, but played on his affections and on his feeling of chivalry to such an extent that one day the world was startled by the news that Michael Alexandrowitsch, who stood next but one in the immediate succession to the throne, had married, in Vienna, Madame Natalie Wulffert, without asking permission of anyone—not even the Czar.

The latter was furious, and for once found himself in accord with the Dowager Empress as to the

necessity of punishing his brother for this act of independence. But the manner in which he did so was as unfortunate as it was unwarrantable. The Grand Duke was declared by the Emperor to be incompetent to manage his own property and fortune, which was sequestered and put under the control of the Minister of the Imperial Household. He had, however, foreseen that something of the kind might take place, though he had never suspected that the Emperor's displeasure would go further than to deprive him of his rank in the army; so, as a resource for evil days, he had transferred large sums of money abroad, which of course could not be touched or interfered with, and he settled quietly in England with his newly-wedded wife, having rented the beautiful domain of Knebworth from Lord Lytton.

Michael's wife showed herself extremely tactful in all her actions. She encouraged him in paying every attention to his aunt, Queen Alexandra of England, and trying to obtain her protection, but she never asked to be introduced to her, and kept discreetly in the background, even going to the length of absenting herself from Knebworth on one occasion when some male relatives of the Grand

Duke came to see him. She won golden opinions everywhere, and at last it was said that the Queen had expressed a desire to see her nephew's wife, who was duly introduced and who pleased her so much that she wrote to her sister, the Dowager Empress of Russia, suggesting that she should receive her as her daughter-in-law, saying that her conduct was beyond all praise and that she was proving herself an excellent wife.

This kind interference on the part of his aunt had its effect, and it was whispered in St. Petersburg that the Grand Duke was to be forgiven and allowed to return to Russia to resume his former position at the Imperial Court. Then the great war broke out and settled the question, though in a way quite different from that Michael Alexandrowitsch would have chosen had he been consulted.

The Grand Duke, as soon as hostilities broke out, telegraphed to the Czar, asking his permission to go to the front. This was granted, of course, and he was put in command of the "wild division," as it was called, which consisted exclusively of Siberian troops. He soon became the idol of his men and the most popular of Russian leaders. During the whole Carpathian campaign he shared

the dangers of his soldiers, and never allowed himself any luxury which they did not have, sleeping in the open with them, and living the same life they did, without the least indulgence as regards meals or anything else. He soon became a power. The army would have been glad had he stood in the position of the Czar, and made no secret of this wish.

At the time I was in Petrograd—immediately after the first March Revolution—gossip said that it was through his wife's influence Grand Duke Michael had refused the throne which his brother had abdicated in his favour. It was said she was afraid that if he became Czar he would think himself obliged to divorce her and marry some royal princess. Personally, I do not believe this tale at all. For one thing, the former Madame Wulffert (who after her marriage had obtained the title of Countess Brassow) was too sure of her husband's affection ever to have felt anxious about the possibility of his forsaking her. Then, Michael himself was far too much attached to her, and to the two sons she had borne him, to have any idea of separation from her. It is far more likely that husband and wife understood that they would be

unable to make a stand against the growing forces of anarchy about to sweep the country, and that they hoped, by waiting a while and seeing how things turned out, they would be better able to come to a decision as to what they could best do for their own welfare as well as that of Russia.

The fate of the Grand Duke Michael and his family is one of the secrets of the Bolshevik Revolution. All that is known about them is that they were arrested and conveyed to Perm, after which nothing definite was given out as to what had befallen them. Various rumours have reached us that the only brother of Nicholas II has shared his fate, but no facts are known and probably never will be until some kind of order shall have replaced the present confusion and anarchy in what, a few years ago, was the great and mighty Russian Empire.

PART II

AUSTRIA

I

THE LOVE AFFAIRS OF FRANCIS JOSEPH

Few royal houses have had more scandals attached to them than the house of Hapsburg. With all their bigotry, their devotion to the Roman Catholic Church, and their religious fanaticism, the several members of this house were absolutely unscrupulous in private life and seemed to do their utmost to justify the remark of old Prince Kaunitz after the death of the great Maria Theresa: "With her has disappeared the last honest Hapsburg." In fact, she will live in Austrian history as the last of the rulers belonging to this dynasty whose morals remained unquestioned all through her life and who deserved to end her days respected by everybody (even by her foes) as a woman, regardless of how her integrity may have been questioned as a monarch. After she passed away the race to which she belonged dwindled into a state of moral

anarchy, which at last brought about the cataclysm in which most of the European royal houses perished.

In the long list of Austrian Sovereigns the late Francis Joseph will hold no mean place; not on account of his good qualities, but because of the fact that in his person the worthlessness and the want of moral backbone characteristic of the Hapsburgs were evident in an unprecedented degree. In a certain sense he was the last Austrian Emperor of that line, because his nephew and successor reigned far too short a time to be considered as anything but a figurehead. Besides, Francis Joseph had for so long occupied his throne, and had seen such political storms transform his Empire that he had come to be considered as the very emblem of the nation at whose head he stood and over which he was destined to rule for sixty-nine long years. During all that length of time his almost sole object was the gratification of his own personal desires. It would be difficult to count the number of intrigues in which Francis Joseph was engaged. But in none of them did he ever forget his rank and status in the world; even in his most amorous transports he was condescending, and

Photograph, Paul Thompson

FRANCIS JOSEPH IN TYROLEAN COSTUME

gave the lady of his choice to understand that he was conferring upon her an immense favour by deigning to look at her.

An amusing story is told relative to this peculiarity of his. He once fell in love with a Polish countess who, though not considered an aristocrat in her native land, was very well known in Vienna, where she was received even in the exclusive circles which boasted of the thirty-two quarterings considered indispensable to existence. She was extraordinarily beautiful, and the Emperor had always been partial to beauty, which explains the fact that from the very first day that he set eyes on her he was fascinated by her charms. Of course, he never doubted but that she would feel extremely honoured by the attentions he paid her. Great, therefore, was his surprise to find that she remained absolutely indifferent to them, and even tried to avoid him. This angered him, the more so that at the time he was still comparatively a young man and considered very good looking. So one day he sufficiently relaxed his severe code of etiquette to call upon the object of his fancy, and explained to her with great *empressement* that she should be duly grateful to him for having selected her from

among so many other women in Vienna as the most worthy to receive his affections. The Countess listened to him in silence, then gravely asked him to tell her how he could reconcile his conviction that he was conferring upon her an unprecedented honour by choosing her for his mistress with his religious principles which ought to have forbidden his looking at another man's wife. The Emperor was taken aback for a moment, then quickly collected his scattered wits and informed her that in his position he was not bound by the same rules which governed common mortals; therefore she need not fear the wrath of God if she gratified his wishes and consented to add to his happiness. History does not relate whether or not the lady was convinced by this argument.

There is another tale connected with the love affairs of the Emperor which, if true, proves that he was an eminently practical man. One of his numerous mistresses bore him a son and he hastened, as soon as he became aware of the fact, to have her locked up in a private lunatic asylum, for fear she might bother him later on; then he had the boy given up to the care of a shoemaker in Innspruck in the Tyrol, where he was educated as a

child of the latter, who was handsomely paid for taking care of him, but remained in ignorance of his real parentage.

Francis Joseph, almost to the end of his life, continued to be very easily impressed by feminine beauty. At all the balls given in the Hofburg he was seen to scrutinise intently the ladies assembled in the apartments of the Imperial residence, and afterwards would make remarks on their good looks. Dress also interested him and he was particular as to the style of costume he considered suitable to be worn on such occasions. When fashion decreed that suède gloves were the proper thing to wear in the evening, the Emperor put his veto upon them, and one day when a lady belonging to the diplomatic corps, just arrived from Paris, appeared in his presence wearing these objectionable gloves, he sent a chamberlain to fetch a pair of white kid ones, which he presented to her himself, with the playful remark that they would match her frock far better than the ugly fawn-coloured things she had chosen.

This man, who was considered the most fickle in creation, was at last conquered and subdued by one woman who, for something like forty years, re-

mained his friend after having been something more, and who influenced him not only in small but also in important matters. She was an actress, by name Catherine Schratt, a clever, fascinating creature, who had the good sense to avoid intrigues and not lend herself to the many people who would have liked to make use of her for their own aims or ambitions. She had begun by playing the comedy of disinterestedness, refusing five out of every six presents which the Emperor wished to make her. Her influence over him dated from the day when he first saw her on the stage of the Hof Theatre of Vienna, and made overtures which she repulsed, saying that her home was not one in which she could receive her Sovereign, whilst she was far too honest a woman to allow herself to be calumniated, as would inevitably be the case should she consent to come to the Hofburg to meet him.

Francis Joseph was so delighted with this reply that, setting aside the etiquette he generally observed, he appeared one afternoon in the modest apartment occupied by Frau Schratt, where he had himself announced as Count von Hohenembs, a name he generally adopted when he was travelling incognito.

The actress was too intelligent to show any astonishment, so she accepted as a matter of course this extraordinary action on the part of Francis Joseph and proceeded to put him at his ease, without, however, allowing him to indulge in any of his customary familiarities. He left her with a faint, though unacknowledged wish to see her again, and with a desire to overcome the unexpected resistance he had met. Catherine Schratt was shrewd enough to make this resistance last long enough to establish herself firmly in the heart of the selfish old Emperor, before he got weary of his efforts to subdue it. She persuaded him that she really loved him with a tenderness such as he had not inspired in any other woman, and she was sharp enough to win the respect of the Empress Elizabeth, towards whom she showed herself most respectful and whose part she invariably took in the numerous quarrels with the Emperor that embittered the Empress's life and drove her to seek refuge in solitude and foreign travel. It was said in Vienna's court circles that sometimes when Elizabeth wanted to obtain her husband's consent to something which she knew he was not likely to approve of, she sought the help of Catherine

Schratt, who always contrived to get her what she wanted, a circumstance which finally brought about a strong and lasting friendship between the two ladies, who, according to all precedent, should have hated each other, but who, on the contrary, grew to rely on each other more and more, thus making life more comfortable and pleasant for them both.

After the assassination of the Empress at Geneva the influence of Catherine Schratt increased considerably, until at last the Archduchess Valeria, the Emperor's youngest daughter, became seriously alarmed and proceeded to remonstrate with him on his ever-growing affection for the actress whom she feared he would be persuaded to marry. She need not have had any fear on that point, because Francis Joseph was far too much of a Hapsburg to dream of lowering his Imperial prestige and dignity by allying himself with any woman not of noble birth, whilst, on the other hand, Frau Schratt was much too clever to consent to an act for which, she knew but too well, she would be reproached most bitterly, later on, by the very person least justified in doing so.

The Archduchess, however, was not intelligent enough to be a good judge of character, so she

tried to use her influence against the actress, and she succeeded in doing so to the extent that the Emperor at last promised her to give up the connection, provided she, on her part, would, with her children, take up her residence with him and bear him company.

Valerie was enthusiastic at the proposal and hastened to remove to Schonbrunn. But alas, her joy did not last long, for she very quickly discovered that her father's temper was such that existence with him was unendurable. So she repented of her former prejudice against the actress and implored her to resume her previous relations with the Emperor, after which she hastened to return to her own castle of Wallsee, in Lower Austria, and it became an acknowledged fact in the Imperial Family that Catherine Schratt was the only person capable of bearing with the cantankerous character and unsurpassed selfishness of old Francis Joseph.

She never left him again and did not survive him for any length of time. The aged friends died within a few months of each other and, fortunately for Catherine Schratt, she did not see the catastrophe which brought about the fall of the Haps-

burg dynasty. In a certain sense, she deserved to be spared it, but as for Francis Joseph, it is difficult not to feel that it was almost unjust of Providence that he was not allowed to see the consequences of the many political and moral crimes he had committed during his long reign.

II

THE IDIOSYNCRASIES OF THE HAPSBURGS

The Hapsburgs were not mentally well balanced, which is rather a curious fact considering the small amount of brains which they as a general rule possessed. The brothers of Francis Joseph, with the exception of the unfortunate Maximilian, who was to meet with such a sad end in Mexico, could not have invented gunpowder, had they tried ever so hard. The eldest one, Charles Ludwig, did absolutely nothing remarkable in his life beyond marrying three wives; the first two he worried into their graves, while the third and last had anything but a pleasant time during the twenty odd years that she was condemned to live with him.

She was a clever woman, this dark-eyed Portuguese princess who, for family reasons, had wedded this very poor specimen of humanity who did nothing but bully her and make her generally uncom-

fortable; but she contrived somehow to get on with him and to live through the term of penal servitude which union with him implied. And she did something more: she succeeded in making friends with her step-children. Having at first looked with disapproval upon their father's third venture into matrimony, they became entirely devoted to their stepmother, and she proved their best protector in after life, not only from the Archduke Charles Ludwig, but also the Emperor, who had a great respect for her and, strange to say, stood slightly in awe of his bright sister-in-law, the only member of the Hapsburg family who had the courage to discuss and argue with him, and even at times to tell him some hard truths.

The Archduchess Maria Theresa (such was her name) had the tact to respect the old traditions of the Imperial family, whilst continually setting them in defiance, but she contrived to do this in such an unobtrusive way that no one noticed it, and she managed to win for herself far greater liberty of action than the Empress Elizabeth had ever done. Her serene indifference to criticism was just as lofty as her disdain for the people who dared indulge in it at her expense.

Photograph, Underwood & Underwood, N. Y.

ARCHDUKE FRANCIS FERDINAND AND HIS WIFE, THE COUNTESS SOPHIA CHOTEK

The youngest brother of the Emperor, the Archduke Louis Victor, had at one time been a very popular personage in Viennese society. He went about a good deal and did not display the same affection for exclusive circles as did the other Hapsburgs of his generation. He was in perpetual money difficulties, a fact which had very much to do with the partiality he displayed for rich people, even when they belonged to the Jewish race. With the help of the Princess Pauline Metternich, whose intimate friend he remained for a good many years, he launched in Viennese society the famous Baron Hirsch, without, however, entirely succeeding in imposing upon the haughty Serene Highnesses who constituted the cream of this agglomeration of human beings.

There was one story concerning this affection of Francis Joseph's brother for the wealthy capitalist, which was being bandied about in the Austrian capital with an evident relish, that is sufficiently characteristic to be related here. The Archduke had accepted an invitation to shoot on the estate of a very rich Hungarian magnate who had always shown himself unfriendly to the Hebrews. A few days before that fixed upon for the entertainment

Count F—— received the following telegram: "Archduke Louis Victor will have the honour to arrive at the station of D—— for the shooting to which Count F—— has been kind enough to invite him, on the —— at three o'clock in the afternoon. He will be accompanied by Count So-and-So, Baron So-and-So, Prince So-and-So, AND by Baron de Hirsch."

To this message a reply was immediately dispatched which ran thus: "Count F—— will have the honour to await His Imperial Highness, the Archduke Louis Victor, at the station of D—— on the —— at three o'clock in the afternoon. He understands that His Imperial Highness will be accompanied by Count So-and-So, Baron So-and-So and Prince So-and-So. He requests him not to bring Baron de Hirsch." A third message, addressed to Count F——, closed this correspondence. It was, briefly, "Archduke Louis Victor will not have the honour to shoot with Count F——."

Francis Joseph was supposed to be extremely attached to his younger brother. This did not prevent his having the Archduke confined in one of his castles near Salzburg, under pretext that he was not quite right in his mind, which may have

been true to a certain extent, though the reason for this harsh measure was suspected of being an entirely different one, and to be connected with personal matters about which it is best perhaps not to speak, because they are not of a very savoury character. It is a curious thing, though, that the old Emperor invariably resorted to the device of declaring mad the people who incurred his displeasure. This was the case with Archduke John Salvador, who, under the name of John Orth, made himself so conspicuous some five and twenty years ago, and also with the unfortunate Crown Princess Louise of Saxony, who would never have come to grief in the disastrous way she did if she had found the protection to which she was entitled in her own family. And there were rumours going about in Vienna, before the tragic end of the Archduke Rudolph, that his father was meditating having him put, temporarily at least, under restraint, so as to prevent his attempting to divorce the Crown Princess Stephanie. That the Archduke Francis Ferdinand (who was later to fall at Sarajevo under an assassin's hand) and his younger brother, Ferdinand Charles, escaped the same fate was due entirely to their stepmother, the Archduchess

Maria Theresa, who boldly declared that she would stand up for them, and never allow them to be treated in that abominable way. Though a bully, the aged Francis Joseph was at heart a coward, and he did not dare to hold his own against his sister-in-law, who, he knew, would not hesitate to assert her authority and declare publicly that she considered her stepsons just as sane as their Imperial uncle.

These stepsons, as I have already said, were warmly attached to her, and she well deserved their tenderness and their respect, for she had invariably tried to make life easy for them. When the eldest of these young men married the Countess Chotek the ceremony was celebrated in the private chapel of the Bohemian castle of Reichstadt, the summer residence of Maria Theresa, who helped to dress the bride and herself adjusted the magnificent lace veil which she had presented to her that same morning. She was of an accommodating and liberal frame of mind, this Portuguese Archduchess, who understood so well how to fight for her own.

Her youngest stepchild, Archduke Ferdinand Charles, had always been her favourite. He was the best looking of the family, and was very much

liked, not only on account of his handsome face, but for his great affability, his utter absence of affectation, his generosity and kindness that always made him seek occasions of usefulness to others. He was devoted to literature and had a large collection of well-selected books treating mostly of historical and scientific matters. He was the first Archduke to be met in the houses of men who had made for themselves a name among the learned ones of their country, and was more often to be found in their company than in that of the golden youth of Vienna. Being the youngest son, his tastes were not taken into account at Court, and no one troubled sufficiently about him to make any ill-natured reports concerning him to the Emperor. The latter, too, was supremely indifferent to this nephew, reserving all his attention for the sons of the Archduke Otto, in whom he saw his future successors, and whom, as such, he was having carefully watched by those among his personal attendants and friends who cared for that sort of occupation.

Meanwhile Ferdinand Charles had met at the home of one of the professors at the Vienna University where he was a frequent guest, a girl who

captivated him by the charm of her manners as well as by her rare beauty. Her name was Bertha Tschuber, and she was the daughter of a famous mathematician whose fame had spread far beyond the limits of his native land. For about three years the Archduke paid his addresses to her and tried to persuade her to marry him in secret, as he could hardly hope to obtain the Emperor's sanction to their union. She absolutely refused to lower herself to what she justly thought would be considered as mercenary, and besides, she did not care to run the risk of having her marriage declared illegal, as would surely be the case if she should fail to receive the Imperial consent.

It was then that the Archduchess Maria Theresa interfered in favour of the young people. She took upon herself the task of smoothing away the obstacles that stood in the way of their union; she pleaded with Francis Joseph to permit a morganatic marriage, and obtained his permission only on condition that the Archduke should renounce his name, titles and rank, and consent to call himself in future plain Ferdinand Burg, promising at the same time never again to live in Austria or to show himself in Vienna.

In return for all this, the Emperor promised to allow Ferdinand Charles an income, which, though moderate, was quite sufficient for his requirements. The Archduke was but too glad to obtain his liberty at this price, and he settled in Munich where he soon made himself liked and respected on account of the dignity of his conduct, manners and general demeanour. It is needless to say that the Prince Regent Luitpold of Bavaria refused to open to him the doors of the Munich Residenz.

His marriage proved to be an extremely happy one, and the daughter of Professor Tschuber showed himself quite worthy of his choice. Unfortunately for both of them, the health of Ferdinand Charles, which had never been good, began to fail, and it soon became evident that he had inherited from his mother the seeds of consumption. The best cure could not stop the insidious advance of the disease, and poor Ferdinand Charles died in 1914, a few weeks before the outbreak of the great war, after a brief period of great happiness which would probably have continued, as he and his wife had the same tastes and were quite suited to one another. The Archduchess Maria Theresa came from Vienna to attend the death-bed of her

stepson and helped to nurse him. After he had passed away she took his young widow home with her to the castle of Reichstadt, where she kept her for several months.

Ferdinand Charles left two sons, and after the fall of the Emperor Charles there were some people in Austria who expressed a regret that they were such babies, because otherwise they might have been put forward as candidates for the Throne. They were Hapsburgs, after all, and it would have meant the continuation of the old dynasty, and there was a chance that these young members might be free from the prejudices that had made this house so obnoxious to the people over whom it had ruled. But, of course, this was mere hearsay, and nothing at present warrants the assumption that the children of Ferdinand Burg and Bertha Tschuber will or may come to wear the diadem which their cousin forfeited a short time ago.

III

IMPERIAL MORGANATIC MARRIAGES

One hundred years ago it would have been considered quite impossible for an Archduke or Archduchess to marry anyone not belonging to a Royal or Imperial House, and the necessity for them to ally themselves only with Roman Catholics restricted them immensely in their choice. It was an understood thing that outside of the Bourbons, Bavarian Wittelsbachs and Hapsburgs, no member of the Imperial House of Austria could look for a wife or husband. There were, it is true, several families belonging to the highest German aristocracy, called Reichs Unmittelbar, who might aspire to the honour of mating with the descendants of Maria Theresa, but somehow this had not taken place, at least not in recent times, and it became a nine days' wonder in Vienna when the Archduke Frederick, nephew and heir of the immensely wealthy Archduke Albert, announced his intention

of marrying the Princess Isabelle of Croy, second daughter of the Duke of that name. Of course, her quarterings were unimpeachable and, as the Imperial traditions of the old German Empire were no longer given consideration, she was at liberty to ally herself with any Royal house. All the same, Vienna did not care for the idea, especially as the Princess Isabella's sister, Eugénie, was married to Prince Esterhazy, and it was felt that this circumstance might prove embarrassing for both these ladies. The Emperor, Francis Joseph, began by refusing his consent and when at last he was induced to grant it, he tried to stipulate that it should be a morganatic marriage only. But this was more than the haughty Duke of Croy could tolerate; so he repaired to Vienna, asked for an audience of the Emperor, and plainly told him that he would never allow his daughter to wed the Archduke unless she were awarded the rank that was due his wife and could take her place among the recognized members of the Imperial family. Francis Joseph was far too great a stickler for etiquette and the old traditions which for years immemorial had ruled the daily life of the inhabitants of the Vienna Hofburg not to recognize the

Photograph, Underwood & Underwood, N. Y.

ARCHDUKE FREDERICK

fact that the Duke was right and that it would be impossible for him to find any reasonable pretext for opposing his nephew's wishes. So, after all, in spite of the busybodies who kept repeating that it was a great shame, the Princess Isabella became a full-fledged Archduchess, with all the honours attached to this exalted rank and position. She did not have a pleasant time in the beginning. The Viennese aristocracy did not treat her kindly, but she had wonderful powers of endurance and she contrived somehow to disarm the prejudice against her. This she did by becoming "more royalist than the King," to use a popular French saying, and by observing most rigidly all the rules of etiquette —more rigidly, in fact, than any other Austrian Princess.

She was an ambitious woman and her one great grief during the first nineteen years of her married life was that Heaven refused to bless her with a son, whose birth would have made her position even more stable, by providing an heir to the immense estates of her husband's uncle, old Archduke Albert. She had six daughters before this much-longed-for boy made his appearance; in fact, she had almost given up hoping for him, and had set

all her ambitions on her girls, whom she tried to establish as brilliantly as possible. The eldest one, Marie Cristine (called after her paternal aunt, the Dowager of Spain) was an extremely pretty girl, and Isabella hoped to marry her to Archduke Francis Ferdinand, and to see her become some day Empress of Austria. It seemed at one time as though this wish would be gratified, because the Archduke took to visiting his cousins in their splendid Palace of Presburg in Hungary, and she thought that the lovely face of her daughter was the attraction. It may be imagined therefore with what dismay she discovered that the only reason for his frequent appearances at Presburg was his affection for her lady-in-waiting, the Countess Sophy Chotek.

Isabella, for the first time in her life, was guilty of ill manners. Her rage and disappointment drove her to actions as brutal as they were inhuman. The Countess Chotek was turned out of the Palace in Presburg at a minute's notice, no time being given her even to pack her clothes or change her dress. She was literally turned into the street by the infuriated Archduchess, who did not hesitate to spread the most wicked calumnies against

an innocent girl who had done her no harm. Of course, the result of her conduct was very different from what she had anticipated, because it furnished the Archduke with the pretext he required in order to marry the lady who had conquered his heart, and, to Isabella's disgust, the ceremony took place a few months later, the Emperor conferring at the same time the title of Princess of Hohenberg on his nephew's morganatic wife.

There was, however, one grain of consolation in this misfortune—for such the mortified Archduchess considered it to be. The children who might eventually be born to Francis Ferdinand could never inherit the Throne, and he himself became, thanks to his marriage, almost an outcast from the Imperial family.

She looked about for another suitor for her daughter, but could not find one for the moment, the King of Spain being too young to be taken into account; her ambition was to reserve him for one of her younger girls. At last she hit upon the idea of seeking a suitor in one of those high-born German families to which she herself belonged. This proved an easy task and very soon the official gazette of Vienna announced that, with the consent

of the Emperor, the Archduchess Marie Cristine had become engaged to the hereditary Prince of Salm-Salm.

This was a brilliant match from a worldly point of view and, in a sense, it opened a new era to the Hapsburg family. It also opened the eyes of the Viennese public to the fact that Archduchesses might be wooed and won like other young ladies in society, and that they were not destined to enter a convent if they did not find a husband of equal rank. Besides, it encouraged these girls to break away from the traditions in which they had been brought up. It emancipated them in a certain sense; for, not long after the marriage of Marie Cristine, the youngest daughter of the late Archduke Charles Ludwig and of the Archduchess Maria Theresa surprised her mother by declaring that she was in love with a young Prince of Liechtenstein, and it was not many years before the third daughter of that same Archduchess Isabella announced her intention of becoming the wife of Prince Godfrey von Hohenlohe, one of the least attractive but most intelligent men in Vienna.

Of course, all these marriages brought the Hapsburgs nearer to common mortals than they had

ever been before; but the culmination of these "mésalliances," as the old Emperor persisted in calling them, was when the daughters of the Archduke Charles Stephen selected their husbands.

The Archduke Charles Stephen was a younger brother of the Archduke Frederick, who, not being as rich as he, was much more ambitious. He was the owner of a large estate in Galicia, where he used to spend a great part of the year, and where he had made himself popular, owing to his knowledge of the Polish language and his affectation of Polish sympathies. Those who knew him well declared that he was working all the time with a view to becoming one day King of Poland, in the event of a war between Austria and Russia, which, perhaps he was aware, could not be long delayed, and which was bound to bring about the independence of Poland. People in Vienna laughed at him in a mild sort of way and shrugged their shoulders when speaking about him; but they were not prepared for a thunder-bolt, and such was to them his announcement of the engagement of two of his daughters to two Polish noblemen, Prince Jerome Radziwill and Prince Olgerd Czartorysky. They were both nice young men, quite rich and prouder,

perhaps, of their aristocratic birth than any Archduke had ever been. All kinds of rumours flew about regarding these two marriages, some of which need not be repeated here, and wise dowagers shook their heads and declared that all this had come about on account of the far too great liberty the youthful Archduchesses had been allowed.

Their consternation increased considerably when another thunder-bolt from the blue came to disturb their equanimity—the news that the eldest daughter of Charles Stephen, Archduchess Eleanora, had been wedded quietly, but with her parents' full consent, to a simple naval officer, without any "handle" to his name, Herr von Kloss.

Both the Archduke and Archduchess declared themselves delighted with their daughter's choice; but some of those busybodies who are found in every royal household and who know everything that takes place there, whispered in the ears of their friends that they had been compelled to give their consent to this unequal and scandalous marriage, because the bride had forestalled it by running away with her future husband. She had been followed and caught, and the matter had been

hushed up, so that no one could positively affirm that it had really occurred; but to those high-minded aristocrats who ruled in the Viennese drawing-rooms it was the only explanation of what would otherwise have been, in their eyes, a most heinous crime. As a matter of fact, nothing of the kind had ever taken place, but it suited certain people to set the rumour in circulation.

The "family misfortunes" (for such they were called) of the Archduke Charles Stephen and of his wife were discussed for a long time by the gossips of Vienna, and most probably would have been remembered longer than they actually were if the adventures of the fifth daughter of Archduke Frederick, the Archduchess Isabella, had not given the world another and far more interesting subject of conversation. This youthful princess had been married by her energetic mother, when scarcely out of the schoolroom, to a Prince of the Royal House of Bavaria, a son of the Princess Gisela, the eldest daughter of Emperor Francis Joseph. He had always borne a doubtful reputation, and not many parents would have liked to confide a daughter to his care; but from a worldly point of view he was one of the best matches in

Europe—rich, young and handsome. Moreover, he seemed to be genuinely in love with his fiancée. He had always been a favourite with his grandfather, Francis Joseph, who was delighted at the engagement, presented the future bride with magnificent gifts, settled quite a handsome sum of money on her, and insisted on the wedding taking place at Schonbrunn, where it was solemnized with that exceeding pomp so characteristic of the Austrian court. The Archduchess looked quite lovely under the magnificent lace veil that had formerly been the property of the Empress Elizabeth, and had been given by her daughter Gisela as a wedding present to her son's future wife. After the wedding breakfast, at which the old Emperor himself presided, the newly married pair started for the castle of Laxenburg, which had been put at their disposal for the honeymoon.

What happened there is difficult to relate, but at about four o'clock in the morning a dishevelled female knocked at the gates of the Vienna palace of the Archduke Frederick and insisted on being admitted. It was the Archduchess Isabella, who, throwing herself at her father's and mother's knees, implored them to take her back under their roof,

declaring that no human persuasion would induce her to return to her husband and live with him again after the short experience she had had and the knowledge of what existence by his side would mean for her.

The consternation caused by this catastrophe was indescribable. Of course, the Emperor had to be advised of it and, for once, he showed genuine distress, preached resignation to his niece and soundly rated his grandson. But all his efforts and those of the Archduchess Isabella (who did not care to have her daughter returned to her like a bad penny) proved unavailing, because the young bride absolutely refused to listen to them, and declared that if her parents persisted in their refusal to take her back she would enter a convent. Nevertheless, after some time, a kind of reconciliation was effected, thanks to the intervention of the Princess's father confessor, and she consented to accompany her husband to Munich. The experiment of living with him did not last long, however. At the end of a fortnight the Archduchess fled from her palace one morning by a back door and, quite alone and unattended, made her way to Vienna, where she immediately sought her aunt,

the Archduchess Maria Theresa, to whom she related the whole sad story of her married life.

This step proved her salvation, for Maria Theresa was the strong member of the Hapsburg family. She took her niece's affairs into her own hands, went to see the Emperor, and induced him to consent to a demand addressed by the Archduchess Isabella to the Pope to have her marriage annulled. In view of the facts which were revealed to him, Francis Joseph could not do otherwise than communicate with the Bavarian Court, and the Regent Prince Luitpold finally gave his permission to a suit for divorce being started simultaneously at the Vatican and before the civil courts of Bavaria. This ended in the annulment of this ill-fated marriage, and the young Archduchess was freed from the fetters that had bound her to a man who had never deserved her. But she was soon to find out that life at home was going to be anything but pleasant. Her position was abnormal and she felt it acutely—neither maid, wife nor widow, a sort of stray being whom no one wanted and for whom no one cared, alone with her half-broken heart, and deprived even of the possibility of seeking outside amusements that might have made her

forget, if only temporarily, the sad experience by which her young life had been blighted.

At last she formed a great resolution: she entered a sisterhood of nurses where she went through the regular course of studies the institution demanded and, at her own request, was known only by the name of Sister Irmgard. When the great war broke out she was one of the first who volunteered to go to the front to attend the wounded and sick soldiers, with whom she at once became a general favourite. She made herself beloved by the whole army, and all wondered at the courage which led her to expose herself to all kinds of danger, going so far as to bring in wounded men from the very firing line. She did not spare herself, and whilst toiling for the relief of the terrible suffering that confronted her at every step and turn she took, she met a man who was destined to play an important part in her life—indeed, to transform it entirely. This was a doctor, Professor Albrecht, one of the most famous surgeons in Austria, who was so struck by the fortitude shown by the youthful Archduchess that, for once, he forgot all his prejudices against the Hapsburgs, whom he had thoroughly despised until he met Isabella. They soon

became friends and at last the day came when this daughter of an Imperial House asked herself whether she would not feel happier with this grey-haired man, whose moral worth she had learned to appreciate, than amidst the splendours of the Vienna Hofburg, and when once she had made up her mind on that point she did not hesitate to let the Professor know.

They became privately engaged; but the great difficulty was how to acquaint the Archduchess's family of her decision to give up all the privileges of her exalted rank and marry a man who had nothing to recommend him beyond his spotless reputation and the great name he had made for himself in the world of science.

Nevertheless, she summoned courage to broach the subject to her father, and, to her surprise, the Archduke Frederick did not object to her trying to seek happiness where she thought it was to be found. Perhaps at heart he was sorry for having insisted on her sacrificing herself, as she had previously done, for ambitious aims and the satisfaction of her family. But when he submitted the matter to the Emperor he found that the latter would not hear of such a thing as his niece "dis-

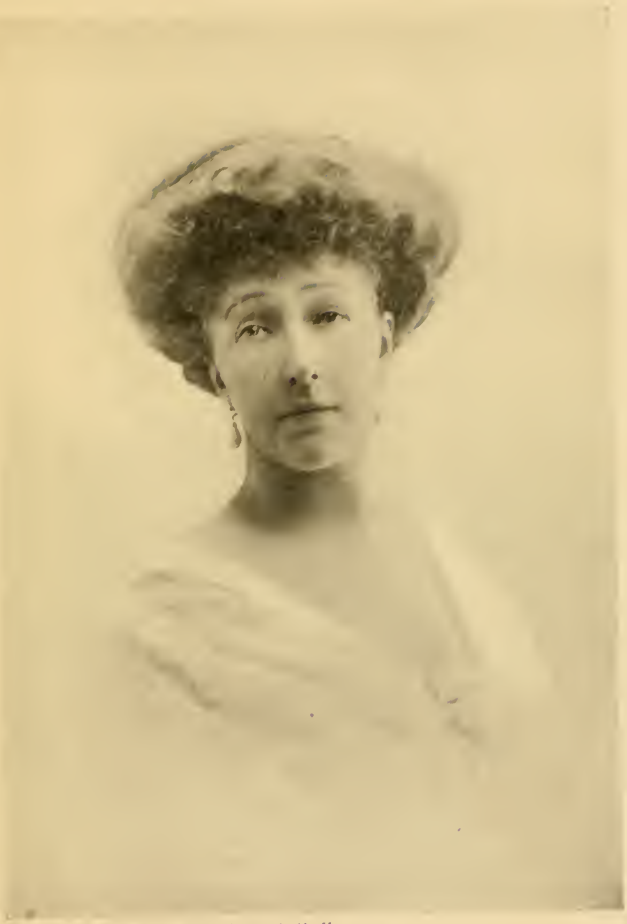
gracing herself forever," as he expressed it, by allying herself with a man who could not even boast of a "von" to his name.

The Archduchess had to relinquish hope. Happily it was not for long. The selfish old man who stood in the way of her happiness passed away, and a few months later his Empire collapsed like a house of cards. Isabella ceased to be an Austrian Archduchess, and was able to do what she liked with her future life. It is to be hoped, for her sake, that it will be a happy one, by the side of the honest man to whom rumour says that she has plighted her troth—happier at least than the existence she had to endure when she was Her Imperial and Royal Highness, the Princess George of Bavaria, Archduchess of Austria, and the most miserable creature on this earth.

IV

THE CROWN PRINCESS STEPHANIE AND HER DAUGHTER

Vienna had never cared for the Archduchess Stephanie, the unfortunate consort of the Crown Prince Rudolph of Austria. The latter had always been a favourite of the public, and his wife was accused of having been indirectly the cause of his death by having failed to make him happy in his home life. The accusation was not entirely fair, for it is doubtful whether any woman in the world could have brought contentment to the restless soul of Rudolph or ameliorated the boredom of the dull existence his position compelled him to lead. He was an exceedingly clever man, and he had, since his boyhood, suffered more or less from that "*weltweh*" of which Heine wrote so eloquently. He was meant for something better than a Royal Prince of the House of Austria, and the sad part was that he was quite aware of it. His mysterious and awful end, the real circumstances of which have never



Photograph, Underwood & Underwood, N. Y.

PRINCESS STEPHANIE OF BELGIUM

been entirely explained, was but the outcome of years of restraint which he had exercised over his passions, until at last they broke loose and brought him to destruction, though whether it was self-inflicted or the deed of another has remained a secret for most people.

The Crown Prince's marriage was entirely arranged by Emperor Francis Joseph and old King Leopold of the Belgians. He was hardly consulted about it, and he agreed to it out of indolence and weariness. He was deeply in love at the time with a lady gifted with great beauty and uncommon intelligence, whom circumstances would never have allowed him to marry, even if she had not already possessed a husband, and this fact weighed heavily upon his mind and made him acquiesce in silence to his father's wishes. He knew that his position as heir to the Austrian Throne made it incumbent upon him to marry so as to provide a future heir, and he did not look further than that. The thought that marriage might mean for him the companionship and sympathy of a woman capable of entering into his pursuits, and helping him in the difficulties of his path through life, never entered his mind, and perhaps at heart he was rather

pleased than otherwise with the futility and narrow-mindedness of the girl he was to raise to the position of Crown Princess of Austria. He hoped that at least she would not interfere with him but would allow him to live his own independent life.

In this, however, the Archduke was mistaken. Stephanie certainly was not clever, but this was precisely what made her dangerous to her husband as well as to others. She developed a spirit of jealousy which brought about very shortly an estrangement, and she wearied him with perpetual scenes, as useless as they were ill-timed and ill-placed.

I shall not enter here into the details of the Crown Prince's romance with Mary Vetsera. So much has been written about it that anything I might say would be only tedious repetition. It seems pretty certain to me, however, judging from the numerous versions of the tragic adventure which have been allowed to reach us, that Rudolph fell a victim to an intrigue in which politics undoubtedly played a part. Mary Vetsera, before she became the Archduke's mistress, had been upon terms of great intimacy with one of the leading Hungarian statesmen of the time, and it is quite

possible that he had, in a certain sense, forced her, so to say, into the arms of the Crown Prince, in the hope that through her influence the latter might be induced to entertain certain views as to the entire independence of Hungary from Austrian control. On the other hand, the girl was not clever or bright enough to be able to play this dangerous game without betraying herself in some way. This may have aroused Rudolph's suspicions, and it is quite possible that some people, afraid of being compromised, decided to remove him from the political scene. But, as I said before, all this is mere supposition, and the facts may have been entirely different.

It has been insinuated that his own wife Stephanie was fully aware of the conspiracy that was being hatched against the life of the Crown Prince. There is, however, no proof at all that such was the case. Stephanie had certainly no reason for wishing her husband's death. She was an ambitious creature in her way, and though she may not have cared for him, she was extremely attached to her position as future Empress, and inordinately proud of it. She had been heard to say that she did not mind whether the Archduke was in love

with her or not, but that she would never do anything that would bring her into trouble or interfere with her one day wearing the Crown diamonds. Therefore, Rudolph's end must have been a terrible shock to her.

Stephanie could make herself eminently disagreeable to people whom she did not like, and many ladies in Vienna society were made to feel this. They were, of course, the first to rejoice at her downfall, and the Princess discovered very shortly after she became a widow that her position was going to be anything but pleasant. According to the strict etiquette prevailing at the Hofburg, she was debarred as a widow from taking any part in Court festivities and she lost precedence as second lady in the land. This was gall and wormwood to her, and very soon she left Vienna, under pretext that the climate did not agree with her health, and she took to spending her time in some southern resort such as Miramar or Abbazia on the Gulf of Quarnero, where at that time a colony of gay people assembled for the winter months. She did not wear her widow's weeds one day longer than the time prescribed by etiquette, and she developed a wonderful taste in dress, with which she had never

been credited in the past. With the assistance of a clever hairdresser and corset-maker many physical defects were concealed, and no one who had seen her on her wedding day—a plump, shapeless, clumsy girl with a red nose and freckled face, standing before the altar beside her tall and handsome bridegroom—could possibly recognise as the same being this elegant, slender, lovely woman, with a faultless figure and complexion and a mass of fair hair most artistically arranged on the top of her head. She liked society and her manner became far more gracious than when she lived in Vienna. In the early years of her widowhood she made for herself friends, and became the life and soul of a small group of ultra-smart people whose companionship was far more pleasant to her than that of the sedate dowagers whose word was law in Vienna.

The Empress Elizabeth had never been partial to her daughter-in-law, and this hostility furnished the latter with the pretext she required for absenting herself from the Austrian capital. It is true, the Empress herself seldom lived there except in spirit, but her Mistress of the Robes was there to enforce any irksome etiquette upon Stephanie.

The one thing that might have drawn the latter back to her old apartments in the Hofburg was her only child, the baby Archduchess Elizabeth, whom she was not permitted at first to take out of Austria, which she would have liked very much to do.

A compromise was at last effected in regard to the little girl. The fact that no one wanted the child rendered this quite easy. The Empress had never shown her any affection, and Francis Joseph was so absorbed in his own pursuits that he did not wish to be saddled with the care of his son's orphan. After some negotiations Stephanie was allowed to take her to Abbazia and to keep her under her control, except when she elected to go abroad; then the child was to be sent back to Vienna to remain under her grandfather's roof until her mother's return.

This arrangement lasted for some time, and then rumours reached Francis Joseph's ears that his daughter-in-law was enjoying herself rather too much when away from his supervision. The name of a young man belonging to the Hungarian aristocracy was mentioned in connection with her own and people began to say that the Emperor should

not tolerate such a thing, nor allow his son's widow to visit all the fashionable watering places in Austria accompanied by a cortege of friends, some of whom were not of sufficient rank to be presented at Court. Stephanie was fast becoming an embarrassing person in the Hapsburg family, and none felt this more than her father-in-law.

The Empress had died before this, else she might have found some solution of the difficulty, but there was another person whose opinion the Emperor greatly valued, namely, Catherine Schratt, and she it was who finally suggested a way out of the predicament. Francis Joseph would never have thought of the plan, but when Catherine explained to him her reasons for advising him to adopt it, he was fain to own that it offered the best means of putting an end to gossip concerning the Princess and her partiality for the Hungarian nobleman who had constituted himself her *cavaliere servante,* as they say in Italy. What Catherine Schratt proposed was that Stephanie should be married to the young man whose attentions had given rise to the scandal. Such a union would have the advantage of putting Stephanie out of the Imperial family in a way which she could

not resent, and at the same time would do away with any insistence on her part to retain possession of her daughter, whose position as an Archduchess and the grand-daughter of the reigning Sovereign would not permit of her being brought up in the home of one of the latter's subjects.

Francis Joseph, when he so desired, could assume quite a charming and paternal manner; he frequently did so when talking with people whom it was to his interest to conciliate. He sent for Count Elemer Lonyay (such was the name of the gentleman to whom he wished to offer the hand of his daughter-in-law) and told him that rumours had reached him that he was in love with the widowed Crown Princess, also that his affection was reciprocated. He said that far from offering any opposition he would be glad to do all he could to further the happiness of one who was dear to him and who had suffered much during her married life. He therefore wished the Count to convey to the Archduchess his full consent to her becoming his wife, as well as his best wishes.

Lonyay was staggered and could not guess to what kind fairy he owed this unexpected piece of good luck; but he could only thank the Sovereign

and start immediately for Abbazia, where Stephanie was stopping at the time, to acquaint her with the sudden happiness that had befallen them both. There were those who were wicked enough to say that the Archduchess was not quite so grateful to the Emperor as she ought to have been, but, grateful or not, she had to submit to this second marriage arranged for her, and Francis Joseph, who among his many faults did not include that of meanness, went so far in his generosity as to present Stephanie with superb jewels and a magnificent trousseau, quite equal in splendour to that which the Archduchesses of the Imperial House of Hapsburg generally received from him on their marriages. He even interposed between his daughter-in-law and her father, who was quite incensed at her audacity in wishing to wed a simple Count and so renounce her position as the widow of an heir apparent to one of the greatest monarchies in Europe. His interference smoothed matters to a considerable extent and at least prevented old Leopold from publicly denouncing the Princess. Lastly, as a crowning proof of his regard for Stephanie, the Emperor allowed the marriage to take place in the chapel of the Palace of

Mirabar, which he put at her disposal for the occasion. After the rings had been exchanged and the words spoken which transformed the former widowed Crown Princess into the Countess Lonyay, the Imperial standard that had been flying from the towers of Miramar was lowered, in token that she was no longer a Hapsburg. Catherine Schratt had advised wisely and Stephanie's exit from her first husband's family was at last a *fait accompli.*

V

THE STORY OF THE ARCHDUCHESS ELIZABETH

After the Crown Princess Stephanie's marriage, her daughter, who had already reached the age of seventeen years, was given a separate establishment and the lady-in-waiting who was put in charge of it had to report every week to the Emperor the sayings and doings of her young charge. The girl was devoted to her mother and would dearly have liked to remain with her instead of living in the Vienna Hofburg. But of course she had no choice in the matter, but was given to understand that the less she had to do in future with the Countess Lonyay the better it would be for her and for her prospects of prosperity in the world. The old Emperor, who up to this time had regarded this grand-daughter with complete indifference, suddenly developed a great affection for her and had her with him in Schonbrunn a good deal. She was an extremely pretty creature, suffi-

ciently intelligent to succeed in hiding from the eyes of the general public the defects of an education which had been extremely neglected, if we are to believe what we are told in a volume of reminiscences written three or four years ago by the girl's English governess. This governess must have been a singularly modest person, for anyone possessed of the least degree of vanity would never had reproduced in a book the letters of the Archduchess, with their numerous grammatical errors, or at least would have corrected them before doing so.

Spelling apart, however, Elizabeth at eighteen years old was an attractive little person, and it is not surprising that her grandfather grew fond of her. She had not been allowed to go anywhere before her mother's marriage, as it had been thought that the chaperonage of Princess Stephanie was not altogether what was required in introducing her daughter to Austrian society. But after the Countess Lonyay had taken up her residence in Budapest, the Emperor bethought himself that his granddaughter had reached an age when she ought to see something of the world, and he accordingly gave a number of dances for her in

the private apartments of the Vienna Hofburg. Elizabeth created a great sensation at the first of these festivities. Her whole appearance was extremely pleasing and her graceful dancing was much admired, whilst the perfection of her manners disposed in her favour even the uncharitable dowagers whose word was law in Vienna. Francis Joseph was delighted with her success and quite satisfied with the modest way in which she accepted it. It was noticed everywhere that the aged Sovereign had not for a long time appeared so pleased with anyone as he seemed to be with pretty Elizabeth.

Of course, there were many speculations as to whom she would marry. The King of Spain was mentioned as a possible suitor, but he was much younger than she, so it was evident that this idea had been started by people who knew nothing about these young people whom they wished to see united in matrimony. Busybodies, therefore, had to turn their attention to all the marriageable Bourbon and Bavarian Princes still in existence, as well as those amongst the Archdukes who were not too nearly related to the young lady whose future fate seemed to interest them so much.

During that whole winter of 1900-1901, the Archduchess Elizabeth was present at the balls which were given in the Hofburg, and was also allowed to attend the several festivities held in her honour at the houses of a few members of the Austrian aristocracy, such as Prince and Princess Schwarzenberg, Prince and Princess Montenuovo, etc. She was very fond of dancing; indeed it was almost the only thing of which she was fond, and being an Archduchess she was allowed to choose the young men whom she wished for her partners. Among these was Prince Otto Windisch Graetz, a captain in the Imperial Guard, and a younger son of the illustrious family of that name.

There was a saying in Vienna that the Almighty, when he decided to populate the earth, created men, women and Windisch Graetzes; which meant that the members of that noble race were absolutely different from the rest of mankind. This was literally true, for it would have been hard to find in anyone else such a complete lack of brains as every Windisch Graetz, man or woman, exhibited. They were not only stupid, but, what was worse, they believed themselves far above the rest of the world in the matter of intelligence and, conse-

quently, they had a moral code of their own, the principal article of which was that everyone should bow down before their perfection and worship at their shrine. Even among the Austrian aristocracy, where clever people are few and far between, they were considered as being possessed of a most limited intellect, which explains the proverb I have just quoted, but, on the other hand, they were so very well connected, they held so high a social position that people simply shrugged their shoulders and smiled when some startling piece of imbecility on their part justified the truth of the saying that God had made them entirely different from other mortals. They were bigoted, too, and quite under the domination of their father confessors.

I remember an amusing story in regard to this, of which the heroine was one of the Windisch Graetz Princesses, now an aged and most respectable dowager. In her youth, some fifty years ago, she was a great beauty and immensely admired, but at the same time she was considered so dull that hardly any man cared to run the risk of dancing with her and being bored by her lack of conversation. One day a young University graduate made a bet that he would succeed in making her talk, a

feat which was considered impossible. On the appointed evening he and his comrades attended a ball at which the young Princess was also present. Our hero immediately engaged her for a quadrille and, to the surprise of those who were watching them both, she talked with the greatest liveliness to her partner, and indeed became quite excited during her conversation with him, which continued long after their dance had come to an end. When at last he left her he was at once surrounded by his friends and asked to explain how he had managed to animate that statue.

"It was a simple matter," he replied. "I told her all manner of horrible stories concerning the Pope. She will never look at me again; but in the meantime she talked more than she ever did before or will probably ever do in future." It may be imagined what a burst of laughter greeted this frank avowal on the part of the young man.

At the time I am writing about the most important personage of the Windisch Graetz family was the Princess Alexandrine, an old maid, who, on account of her caustic tongue and complete lack of charity, had won for herself a unique place in Viennese society. With her absence of brain was

combined great malice, and many a couple who, thanks to her machinations came to grief in their conjugal life, can testify to her activity in meddling with what did not concern her. At the same time, she was ambitious; so when she was told that the Archduchess Elizabeth had been dancing more than she was supposed to do with Prince Otto Windisch Graetz, she immediately conceived the idea of trying to add to the glory of her race by doing her best to arrange a marriage between this cousin and the granddaughter of the Emperor.

For a wonder she was wise enough not to speak about it abroad, but began to instil into the mind of her relative that it was worth his while to try to win this prize in the matrimonial market of Europe. Otto, to tell the truth, was not in the least attracted by the young Archduchess. But he was the younger son of a younger son, and he had accumulated a considerable amount of debt which would have to be paid in some way, for the revelation of these debts would probably mean for him resignation from his regiment and he would end his days in one of his father's castles in Styria—a prospect far from pleasant. Elizabeth would receive an enormous dowry; besides, the idea of being

the grandson of the reigning Sovereign was one to appeal to a Windisch Graetz even more than to any other young aristocrat in Austria. Otto felt thankful to his cousin for having opened his eyes to the possibility of improving his social and financial prospects, and, forgetting the young girl with whom he had believed himself to be in love, he set himself to win the heart of the youthful Archduchess, whose sympathy for him had not escaped the eyes of the most watchful member of his own family. Elizabeth had already fallen in love with Otto's handsome face. She knew, however, that he would never have sufficient courage to present himself as a suitor for her hand. She, therefore, took the bull by the horns and boldly appealed to her grandfather, asking him to come to her help and to permit her to become the wife of the ne'er-do-well guardsman whose good looks and well-groomed appearance had captured her youthful imagination.

For a wonder, the Emperor did not raise any objection. He had grown to love very dearly this grandchild of his, who was all that was left to him by a son whose tragic death had smitten his selfish old soul with a vague feeling of remorse. So he

took her in his arms and promised her that she should not be thwarted in her affection, and that he would see what he could do for her.

The next day the Sovereign sent for Prince Ernest Windisch Graetz, Otto's father, and, to the latter's intense surprise, informed him of Elizabeth's choice, adding that he wished her marriage to take place as soon as possible. Otto was to leave the army and establish himself in some country estate which would be bought for him with the Princess's dowry. Otto's debts, if he should have any (a fact about which the Emperor did not seem to have much doubt), were to be paid by Francis Joseph, so that the young people could begin life with a "clean slate," and the Windisch Graetz family were to receive the title of Serene Highness which, up to that time, had been granted them only out of courtesy.

Prince Ernest felt almost faint with joy whilst listening to this speech, and he could hardly find words in which to express his gratitude to the Monarch. His only regret was the necessity of keeping silence about this wonderful piece of luck that had befallen him and his family, until all the necessary arrangements connected with financial and other

questions had been settled to everybody's satisfaction; so his excitement was intense during the weeks that elapsed until things had been arranged and the Emperor had officially announced his granddaughter's engagement to the brilliant but simple-minded officer who had won her with such facility.

The marriage took place on the 23rd of January, in Vienna, and was solemnized with great pomp in the private chapel of the Hofburg. The Archduchess received an immense dowry and some of the jewels of the late Empress Elizabeth, to which her grandfather added gifts of considerable value, also a trousseau, the magnificence of which had never yet been seen in Vienna. For a time everything seemed to go smoothly with the newly married couple, and then trouble began; trouble for which the Windisch Graetz family was as much to blame as Prince Otto himself.

The latter had never understood his young wife, nor had he taken the trouble to try to do so. He had seen nothing in her beyond her exalted rank and her great fortune. The latter he proceeded at once to annex, and during the first month following his marriage he persuaded his wife to give

power of attorney for the management of her estates and money to the steward and financial adviser of the Windisch Graetz family, who, he knew very well, would always consider his interests before those of the Archduchess. The latter was of an impetuous character, and it was not long before she realised that in marrying the young man with whom she had fancied herself so much in love she had been most foolish. A beautiful estate with a splendid mediæval castle had been bought for her, but Otto did not care for the country and was most of the time away, leaving his young wife and children alone.

The Archduchess was not one to brook neglect and she retaliated by trying in her turn to seek distraction in travelling and other pleasures. But what was her surprise when she was informed that there was no money to indulge in even simple amusements. Prince Otto had gambled and lost most of her fortune which he had squandered right and left with princely disregard as to whom it belonged, and the day came when even the personal bills of the Archduchess could not be settled because her husband had appropriated so much of her money.

Elizabeth complained to the Emperor and he intervened. He began by taking into his own hands the administration of what was left of his granddaughter's fortune, and he arranged matters so that she could spend part of each year in Vienna, where she lived more or less under his care. Of course, all the Windisch Graetz family rose up in arms and, instead of disassociating themselves from Otto, declared that it was entirely his wife's fault that things had gone wrong with them both and that Elizabeth's dressmaker's bills had had more to do with the financial troubles of the young couple than the vast sums which the husband had gambled away or distributed to ladies who controlled his affections more than his wife had ever done.

So long as old Francis Joseph lived, the position of his granddaughter was more or less tolerable, because, although Otto secretly annoyed her and attempted to deprive her of the guardianship of her children, he did not dare to attack her openly; the more so that he was hoping that after the Emperor's death he would be able to get possession of at least a portion of the money it was known would be left to the Archduchess. But the latter had

grown wiser and when her grandfather passed away she took care to seek the protection of his successor and of the Empress Zita; also to get her inheritance settled strictly upon herself and put under the control of trustees over whom the Windisch Graetz family could not exert any influence.

Then came the fall of the Hapsburg dynasty. With a meanness worthy of the shallow, ungrateful character of his whole family, Prince Otto immediately made an effort to become master of at least a considerable portion of his wife's fortune, under pretext of managing it in the interests of his children. In order to do so he did not hesitate (now that he had as adversary only a lonely woman deprived of defenders) to accuse her of immorality, so as to obtain from the civil courts an order transferring to him the custody of his sons and little daughter, whilst compelling Elizabeth to pay a considerable sum for their maintenance. It did not matter to him that by so doing he was giving rise to an unprecedented scandal, the consequences of which might harm those very children whose welfare he pretended to have at heart. All he wanted was money, and he set himself to obtain it with the imbecility which was the only thing

he had inherited from those ancestors of whom he professed to be so proud. It is to be hoped that the former Archduchess will succeed in proving her entire innocence of the atrocious and lying charges her miserable husband has launched against her, and that she will win the independence and liberty which, from the very first day of their marriage, he always denied her. She made a sad and terrible mistake in choosing the companion of her life, but perhaps there are still judges in Vienna who will forget that she was a Hapsburg and remember that he is a Windisch Graetz.

VI

THE STORY OF THE EMPRESS ZITA

It is a curious fact that almost none of the wives of the Austrian Sovereigns led a happy life, in spite of the exalted positions they occupied. The young Empress Zita was no exception to this rule; in fact, on her seems to have descended all the ill luck of the Hapsburgs as well as of the Bourbons, to whom she was related on her father's side—the late Duke Robert of Parma. When she became engaged everyone envied her because she was supposed to be making the best match in Europe, in spite of the fact that her future husband was still a long way from the Throne. But the heir presumptive had married beneath his rank and his children could not inherit his Crown. Charles of Hapsburg was a good-looking man and was honest and true, which was more than could be said of most of the men of his family. He was very much in love with the young girl whom he was to lead to

the altar, and she, when she accepted his offer of marriage, could not foresee all the misfortunes which were to befall her, nor the catastrophe which was to snatch away from her the Imperial diadem after she had worn it for so short a time.

Zita of Bourbon was a charming creature and she had been carefully brought up by a fond mother, who had trained her with love and gentleness, but at the same time firmness. She was very proud of the French blood which ran in her veins and of her close relationship to the late Count of Chambord, the last male descendant of Louis XIV. When she became engaged to the Archduke Charles she sent photographs to her friends signed "Zita de Bourbon, Princess de Parme," which action met with the disapproval of the Emperor Francis Joseph and caused him to write to the Princess's mother reproving her for her daughter's indiscretion. Zita, as he told her, was going to become an Austrian Archduchess and, in his opinion, she ought to have used the German language in signing her name. The widowed Duchess of Parma, who, like everybody else in Austria, stood in awe of the Emperor, showed his letter to Zita, but the latter, instead of accepting the re-

Photograph, Underwood & Underwood, N. Y.

EX-EMPEROR CHARLES FRANCIS JOSEPH AND EX-EMPRESS ZITA OF AUSTRIA

proof, added to her iniquity by writing herself to the Emperor to explain her conduct, and to tell him that so long as she was unmarried she would consider herself a Bourbon Princess, and the Bourbons did not use any other language than their mother tongue in their communications with their friends.

This independence of character was of course not calculated to win for Zita of Parma the affection of her new family. The old Emperor, nevertheless, made much of her, because he wanted to show by the attentions he pressed upon her and the presents with which he loaded her, the difference that existed in his mind between her and the Countess Chotek, whom his heir, Francis Ferdinand, had insisted upon marrying. But his partiality for this new niece did not last long, and in spite of the reserve which she showed and the modesty with which she continually effaced herself in the presence of the other Archduchesses, he criticised her severely, especially after the war broke out, because she had the courage to proclaim her French sympathies and to express her indignation at the unwarranted attack against Serbia with which Austria inaugurated the long struggle of

which (though she knew it not at the time) she was to become one of the principal victims.

This war broke Zita's heart the first day it began. She could not forget that she had French blood in her veins, that her great-grandfather had been the last legitimate King of France. The Queen of the Belgians was also her first cousin and her affections and thoughts were with those against whom her husband was fighting. The young girl (she was hardly more than that) was obliged to witness in silence the most outrageous violation of the laws of right and wrong, and to smile through it all. Can one wonder if an immense feeling of revolt swept over her when she realised her own helplessness to put an end to this tempest into which Austria had been drawn, through her blind submission to the yoke of Prussia and to the leadership of William II?

Whilst she was suffering so intensely, intrigues without number surrounded her. The German party in Vienna—and particularly in the Hofburg—knew very well that if by any chance old Francis Joseph should die before peace had been signed, the first act of his successor would be an attempt to put an end to the conflict that had already

brought about so much misery and caused the death of so many brave men. And it knew also that the moving spirit in this appeal for peace would be the new Empress.

It was at this juncture that an attempt was made to discredit her as a wife and as a mother. The name of one of her mother's chamberlains, a Frenchman by birth, was mentioned in connection with her own; and it was whispered in the old Emperor's ear that the Archduchess was disgracing herself by the affection she exhibited for this young man who was, perhaps, her only intimate friend and allowed to see her wherever he liked.

It is likely that if Francis Joseph had been in full possession of his faculties, the Princess would have had to pay dearly for these so-called indiscretions, but he was already tottering towards the grave and his mind could no longer grasp things in the old way. He died at last and, to the discomfiture of her numerous enemies, Zita of Bourbon became Empress of Austria and Queen of Hungary.

The Kaiser, who was well aware that she had no friendly feeling for him, imagined that his personal influence could win her back to his side. He, ac-

cordingly, repaired to Vienna, contrary to the traditional etiquette which required a sovereign to await the first visit of a new monarch, and he appeared at the Hofburg one winter morning. He was, of course, received with all the honours to which he was entitled, and found the young Empress awaiting him at the top of the grand staircase.

He remained only one day in the Austrian capital, during which he tried to make himself agreeable to Zita and, at the same time, to convey to her his determination to insist upon Emperor Charles continuing the policy inaugurated by his late uncle. The new Empress did not reply at first, but when pressed to say what she thought about it, she coolly answered that after all Austria was not a Prussian province and ought to be allowed the liberty to decide a matter which concerned her own fate. William understood, and determined to make Zita pay dearly for this proud answer.

A campaign of calumny was started against the Empress and the vilest untruths put into circulation about her. She did not seem to care, but set herself to try with all her might to withdraw the

country over which she reigned from this German alliance that was fast leading it to its ruin.

The famous letter addressed by Charles I to his brother-in-law, Sixtus of Parma, was written entirely at the suggestion of his wife. She put forth all her efforts, used all her influence, to persuade the Allies to accept the olive branch which she had induced her husband to extend to them, and during the time she spent in Budapest, on the occasion of her Coronation as Queen of Hungary, she managed to win over to her side some of the most influential Hungarian statesmen, to whom she explained her desire not only to bring about this peace for which the whole world was sighing, but also to withdraw the Austrian Empire from this close union with Germany whose pawn it had been all through the tragedy that had transformed Europe into one vast charnel house.

But at this time Berlin had still much to say, and the fact that the Austrian army was commanded almost entirely by German officers rendered it extremely difficult for the young Emperor to do anything independently of his formidable ally. He went several times to the German headquarters, and there discussed matters with the heads of the

German staff as well as with the Kaiser himself. It proved of no use, however; he was told that certain compromising letters of the Empress had been intercepted and had fallen into the hands of the Wilhelmstrasse, that he would not hesitate to make use of them should he resist the orders given him by William II.

Charles was neither a coward nor a diplomat. Yet he acted with a diplomacy no one would have credited him with. He asked to see these incriminating epistles of his wife, and when they were put into his hands he quietly transferred them to his pocket. He thus saved her reputation, because, as matters then stood, it was certainly imprudent of her, to say the least, to have carried on a political correspondence independently of her husband or of his government; but this unexpected move of the Austrian monarch was not forgiven him by his enemies, and though he consented afterwards to have his mother-in-law, the widowed Duchess of Parma, and her sons exiled from Austria and, further, to dismiss Count Czernin, his own personal friend, from his post as Minister of Foreign Affairs, these concessions did not smooth matters. It is likely that if the advance of Marshal Foch had not com-

pelled the Germans unexpectedly to seek an armistice, Charles of Hapsburg might have been dethroned by German military intervention in Austria.

When the news reached Vienna that the Allies were decidedly getting the upper hand, the first move in the direction of peace had already been made by the Austrian government, and later on the Kaiser declared that it was this defection of his allies that had made any further resistance impossible for his armies. The facts were very different, but this served as a pretext for German diplomacy to sow the seeds of dissension in the Dual Monarchy and to bring about finally a revolution in Vienna, the result of which was the fall of the ancient Hapsburg Lorraine dynasty.

The proverbial ill-luck of the Bourbons had pursued the Empress Zita, now an Empress no longer. She accepted this last misfortune with the same haughty pride that had carried her through the difficulties of the few months during which she had reigned. It was not in her nature to murmur, far less to recriminate. She could look back with a certain satisfaction on her conduct during that trying time when she had been fighting against the

most terrible odds a woman ever had to encounter. But in her consciousness that she had not lent a deaf ear to the lamentations of her people was mingled an intense bitterness at the ingratitude she had met with, and the cruel and systematic way in which all her actions, even the most innocent, had been criticised and misrepresented. Her relations with her husband had also suffered in consequence of this campaign that had been inaugurated against her, and in the loneliness of their exile they did not even find consolation in each other's affection and love. He cared too much for what she had not cared for at all, and therein lay the tragedy of their fate. Among the pathetic figures of the war Zita of Bourbon is one of the most touching. Unlike her French ancestors, of whom it had been said that they had learned nothing and had forgotten nothing, she had learned much and forgiven a great deal. As for forgetting a past now forever dead, this is hardly to be expected of her after all the sufferings that had been crowded into that past.

VII

TWO ROYAL MADWOMEN

One of the invariable customs of the Hapsburgs, whenever any member of their family did something which was not in accord with the traditions of their House, or which transgressed its severe laws of etiquette, was to declare them insane and to lock them up in some provincial castle, or in a private lunatic asylum, whence they were never allowed to emerge after the gates had closed upon them. This example had been followed even by the high Austrian aristocracy, who also resorted to this method of getting rid of people of whom it did not approve, and, for those who could afford it, there was no country in Europe where it was easier to confine perfectly normal people to the horrors of a madhouse than in the Dual Monarchy, where it was a simple matter to find doctors who, for a consideration of a not too modest nature, were ready to sign any certificate which was required of them. The victim was then conveyed to a sana-

torium, as it was called, on the doors of which might have been written with truth the famous words of Dante: "Lasciate omni speranza." The place was a kind of living grave, the stone slab of which never could be raised any more. Of these establishments there existed abroad more than was ever known, and the abuse which certain high and mighty people made of their influence and wealth in order to eliminate from their path relatives or friends likely to prove an obstacle to their plans by having them declared mad was one of the most crying injustices in Austrian select society.

In the Imperial family several instances of this took place. Among others was the case of Archduke Ludwig Victor, Francis Joseph's younger brother, who was kept a prisoner in a castle in Salzburg under the pretext that he had lost his reason, and that the ex-Crown Princess of Saxony, Louise of Hapsburg Toscana, did not share the same fate was because, warned in time, she was able to effect her escape into Switzerland, before she was arrested by order of the Emperor of Austria and conveyed to the asylum where everything had already been prepared for her reception.

This unfortunate woman, whose actions have

been discussed with so much animosity, was more sinned against than sinning. She was a very foolish creature; this no one has ever denied; but she was not the dissolute person her enemies have represented her. Her education had been conducted on such false lines the only wonder is she did not commit sooner some far more startling and eccentric deed than those of which she was accused. Her father, Grand Duke Ferdinand of Toscana, was one of the most bigoted and narrow-minded persons in existence. His second wife, the Princess Alice of Parma, was a timid girl of about eighteen years of age when he married her and brought her to his palace of Salzberg, where he had retired after his expulsion from Toscana. She was told that it was her duty to obey in everything the man to whom she was wedded. But she had not reckoned with his manias, nor with the turn which his bigotry would take. What was her stupefaction when, on the morning following her wedding, the Grand Duke appeared in her dressing-room carrying on his arm a long garment of black serge, such as she had never seen anywhere before. He handed it to her with the request that she should put it on before getting into her bath, as it was a mortal sin to

look upon one's body, even for the purposes of ablution. It must here be added that he considered it such a sin that in order to escape it he seldom if ever performed such ablutions as are generally considered indispensable in civilized society.

It may be imagined that a man with such strange notions could not sympathise with a bright impetuous girl like his eldest daughter. Louise had been very miserable at home, so that when she saw a chance of escaping the dull existence which she had feared she would be condemned to lead forever she jumped at it with joy. The Crown Prince of Saxony was a suitor hardly likely to be refused by any woman and Louise never supposed that in wedding him she was as it were "jumping out of the frying pan into the fire."

In Dresden she found herself thrown among people just as bigoted as her own and much less accommodating. Old King George of Saxony belonged to that order of devout Catholics who consider that the most heinous crime any woman can commit is to try to live her own life regardless of the conventions; who insist on daily attendance at mass and abstinence from meat on Fridays. For him religion meant nothing else, and when he saw

that his daughter-in-law did not observe this routine as strictly as he himself did, he was ready to believe her guilty of the worst of crimes.

His dignity, however, forbade him to make any open demonstration against Louise, but he consulted certain Austrian relatives of his, and they it was who suggested incarcerating the Crown Princess in an asylum under pretext that she had gone out of her mind.

Louise had friends who warned her in time of the conspiracy hatched against her. She managed to escape from Dresden and repaired to Salzburg, where she implored her father's protection. But the intelligence of the Grand Duke of Toscana never could grasp his daughter's helpless condition; so he told her he could not admit as an inmate of his house a woman who had abandoned her husband's home and that he would have nothing more to do with her unless she immediately returned to Dresden.

The Crown Princess knew what this would mean to her; so with the help of one of her brothers and her children's tutor she made her way first to Switzerland and then to Italy. The result of this determination was an order issued by Emperor

Francis Joseph declaring that as she had forfeited her rank of an Austrian Archduchess she was no longer to use that title or the quarterings of the Hapsburgs.

What followed is well known; but in view of these facts is it possible entirely to condemn the unfortunate and foolish woman who, being in need of friends, sought and found them amongst the last people to whom she ought to have given her confidence?

The last act of the tragedy of her life is not known in America. The Crown Princess after her divorce from her second husband, the miserable Italian artist whom, to her sorrow, she had married, settled first in Brussels and then in Bologna. When the war broke out she retired to Switzerland again and there received a message from her former husband (who had in the meantime become King of Saxony) offering her one of his castles to reside in. Very foolishly she accepted this proposal, and as soon as she had crossed the German frontier she was arrested by order of the Kaiser and immediately transferred to a private lunatic asylum. This act was explained as a precautionary measure, it being necessary to put her under

restraint for fear that her Italian sympathies might lead her to communicate important information to the enemy. This took place four years ago, and what happened to Louise of Tuscana after this crowning misfortune no one knows, and no one has had the charity to enquire.

There was another Louise whose name also filled the columns of the newspapers of the entire world at one time, and whose fate was just as tragic as that of the Crown Princess of Saxony. I refer to Princess Louise of Belgium, the now divorced wife of King Ferdinand of Bulgaria. Here we have another example of the facility with which Austrians, under the old régime, could incarcerate people in a lunatic asylum. The unfortunate daughter of King Leopold II was never for one moment deprived of her reason, but she was heiress to many millions and she was the wife of one of the most unscrupulous men in existence, who not only did not hesitate to dishonour her by spreading all kinds of false rumours concerning her, but who even accused her of crimes which he had himself committed.

I shall not enter here into the details of the famous so-called false bills of exchange which

Princess Louise had given to a friend of hers, Count Mattatshich, to be discounted, but I will say one thing which, so far, I know has never been given publicity and which, out of respect for the children from whom she had been separated, the Princess did not reveal. Finding herself one day in want of money, she applied to her husband, and he, seeing a chance to execute at last his nefarious designs against his wife, gave her the famous notes, the discounting of which landed Count Mattatschich in prison and Louise of Belgium in a madhouse, where she was kept a prisoner for seven years.

Her escape had something of the miraculous about it. Nothing could have brought it about short of the passionate devotion which she had inspired in the few friends who determined to rescue her from the living grave into which she had been thrown. But this woman, who had been represented as having lost control of her reason, displayed on this memorable occasion a wonderful coolness and presence of mind.

A message was conveyed to her that a motor car would await her on the other side of the high wall that surrounded the asylum, and a key was sent to her, hidden in a cake, with which she was

told she could open the door of a long corridor leading into the garden, and so reach a small postern door, the bars of which had been withdrawn, through which she could gain the open field. But she was to proceed alone and to rely only on her own resources. At midnight the Princess quietly left her room. In the adjoining apartment the nurse who had charge of her slept profoundly, her evening coffee having been heavily drugged. Louise made her way along the corridor and down stairs with a beating heart. She held the precious key that was to open to her the road to freedom; but when she had inserted it in the lock of the door leading into the garden, she could not turn it, try as she might.

As she afterwards told a friend, this was the one moment of her life when she thought she was really going to lose her reason. It seemed too terrible to be so near to this liberty of which she had been deprived for so many years, and not to be able to reach it. At last, a desperate twist of the lock and the door sprang open. There remained the garden to cross. The Princess, proceeding cautiously on her way, thought she heard footsteps behind her. In an agony of fear she crouched under some

bushes, in the hope that she might not be seen. The steps came nearer and nearer till her very heart stood still, but she did not move. Soon a shadow crossed the path before her, that of one of the guards of the asylum who was making his usual nightly round. He was looking straight ahead and never noticed Louise, who remained for minutes (that seemed like hours) without stirring from her place of refuge. At last, when she thought that all danger was passed, she resumed her progress slowly and carefully, stopping now and then to listen to every sound; but no one intercepted her, and she reached the postern door in safety. It stood wide open, and two of her friends, who had been awaiting her with indescribable anxiety, seized her by the hand and, throwing a long cloak over her shoulders, conducted her hastily to a motor car that was standing near-by. The chauffeur started the car and, after a night's mad drive, the Austrian frontier was crossed, and Louise of Coburg was free at last.

PART III

GERMANY

I

AN OLD FAMILY SCANDAL OF THE HOHENZOLLERNS

THERE is nothing new in the saying that the Hohenzollerns have never been what could be called scrupulous. It is not generally known, however, that they have carried their unscrupulous methods even into their business dealings with each other, and, as an illustration of this fact, the following little tale may prove of interest to the American public, who, so far as I know, has never yet heard it.

In the year 1756 it seemed as if the reigning branch of the Hohenzollerns was about to become extinct. Frederick the Great, while still a mere youth, had been compelled by his father, Frederick William I, to marry the Princess Elizabeth Christine of Brunswick Wolfenbuttel. He had always refused to live with her and even to speak to her, though he had invariably treated her with great respect. They used to meet ceremoniously on state

occasions, and dined together with the other members of the Royal family on Sundays, but whenever the King desired to convey some message to his consort he either did so in writing or through her Mistress of the Robes; he never addressed her directly. They were filled with mutual admiration but never spoke to one another, and this abnormal situation continued until Frederick's death, the Queen surviving him for about eight or nine years. The heir to the throne was Frederick's nephew, afterwards King Frederick William II. He had been left an orphan when a mere child. He had one daughter by his first wife (also a Princess of Brunswick) whom he had divorced, and his second marriage had, so far, not been blessed with any offspring. The King's eldest brother, Prince Henry of Prussia, was childless, and the youngest, Prince Ferdinand, wedded to a Princess of Brandenburg Schwedt, was supposed to be debarred from the chance of having any posterity on account of the state of his health.

It then appeared likely, at the time I am writing about, that the Crown would pass to some distant cousins of the reigning branch of the Hohenzollerns, whom Frederick the Great hated as a Prus-

sian only can hate, and to whom he had even denied permission to come to Berlin for a brief visit. For years the King had hoped that one of his sisters-in-law would present him with an heir and that neither of them had done so had been a source of great grief and anxiety to him. Then a curious idea occurred to him and he started to perpetrate one of those gigantic frauds so characteristic of him. This time, however, it was not directed against any of his foreign enemies, but against members of his own race and blood, whom he wished to deprive of their birthright.

The Princess Ferdinand was a very pretty woman and had many admirers. She encouraged none of them, however, but remained cold to them all, because, though she did not care for her husband, who was almost idiotic, she was a woman of high principles. At the same time, she was ambitious, and she relished no more than did her brother-in-law the idea of the Crown of Prussia passing to a collateral branch of the family. Frederick II tried to work upon her feelings and to break down her high moral standing, but finding that all his efforts in that direction failed he bethought himself of a plan which, incredible though

it may appear, he contrived to put into execution.

He persuaded the Princess Ferdinand to announce that she had hopes of becoming a mother and to simulate an accouchement. The child of one of the gardeners of Sans Souci was secretly brought to her apartments by the King himself, and the official Gazette announced that Her Royal Highness had given birth to a son and heir.

This little stranger was brought up most carefully and became quite a favourite with his supposed uncle, whose cynicism caused him to enjoy secretly the trick he had succeeded in playing on his detested relatives, who no doubt had given up all hopes of mounting the Prussian Throne. No one in Berlin or at Court suspected the fraud that had been perpetrated, and the Princess Ferdinand herself appeared quite interested in this little boy whom she had been told to accept as her son, and grew to love him very much.

Then one day, about six or seven years after the events I have related, the unexpected happened. Prince Frederick William of Prussia, the King's nephew and presumptive successor, divorced his wife and married for the third time, with the result that a son was born to him, who was one day to be-

come Frederick William III, and the father of the first German Emperor, William I. And (as if this were not sufficient) the Princess Ferdinand in her turn became a mother, her eldest-born being a daughter, the Princess Louise, afterwards the wife of Prince Anthony Radziwill. Her second child was a boy, the famous Prince Louis Ferdinand, who was to fall on the battlefield of Jena.

The Royal Family thus found itself saddled with a child that was an utter stranger; that had been thrown into its midst by an abominable fraud. No one knew what to do about it. The inventive genius of Frederick II was called upon to interfere for the second time and to find a solution of the difficulty.

Of course it was impossible to reveal the trick which had been played by him, with the connivance of his brother and sister-in-law, on his cousins. At the same time he refused to acknowledge as a member of his house the stranger he had introduced into it, once the necessity for such a step had passed away. The child had, therefore, to be got rid of in some way or other.

The official Gazette announced one morning that the son of their Royal Highnesses Prince and

Princess Ferdinand of Prussia had been taken suddenly ill and had passed away, to the intense grief of his august parents as well as of His Majesty the King. A coffin filled with stones was then buried with great pomp and ceremony in the Dom Cathedral of Berlin, and the Court put on mourning for the prescribed period, while the unfortunate boy who for about seven years had been brought up as a Royal Prince was secretly taken away and put in a place of safety, the whereabouts of which was known only to Frederick the Great, who did not even reveal the secret to his brother or sister-in-law, whom he had compelled for the second time to lend themselves to his unscrupulous schemes.

The King fondly imagined that no one would ever know the story of this gigantic fraud, but a record of it was kept by the Princess Ferdinand—no one knows why, for the part she played in this sordid intrigue was certainly not to her credit—and her daughter, the Princess Louise, wrote an account of it in a private volume of Reminiscences which she left in her will to her eldest son, Prince William Radziwill, who became the head of that branch of the Radziwill family that settled in Prussia, where they remained until the death of the old

Emperor William, when they returned to Russia to live on their estates in that country.

This Princess Louise promised King Frederick William III (of whose consort, the famous Queen Louise, she was a great friend) never to let anyone know the details of this family scandal, and after her death her son did not reveal it to anyone, not even to his own wife or children.

After he had in his turn passed away, the Radziwill family suddenly decided that it would be interesting to publish the memoirs of their grandmother, though none of them had been curious enough hitherto to read them. But when they came upon the tale which I have just related, some scruples seized them and they decided to ask Kaiser William II's permission to allow it to become public property. This permission was, of course, refused, and the Emperor even asked that the pages containing the story be either returned to him or destroyed. The Radziwills, however, did nothing of the kind, and though the episode was suppressed when their ancestress's Reminiscences appeared in Paris a year or two before the great war, the manuscript itself remained in their possession, and was taken by them to their family estate in

Lithuania, where it must still be, unless the house has been sacked by the Bolsheviks who were at one time reported to have taken it.

It has appeared to me that this sordid tale illustrates too well the Hohenzollern character to remain buried in the family archives. It proves that in peace or in war, in their public careers as well as in their family life, they have always been the same—determined to force their will whenever and wherever they thought to gain advantage for themselves or furtherance of their schemes; always ready to practise fraud on those whom they disliked and to despoil them of their property if they had conceived a desire for it. Can one wonder that they tried to seize Belgium, when one sees that they carried their want of moral principles so far as to try to despoil their own relatives? There is not so great a difference after all between robbing a throne and stealing a country.

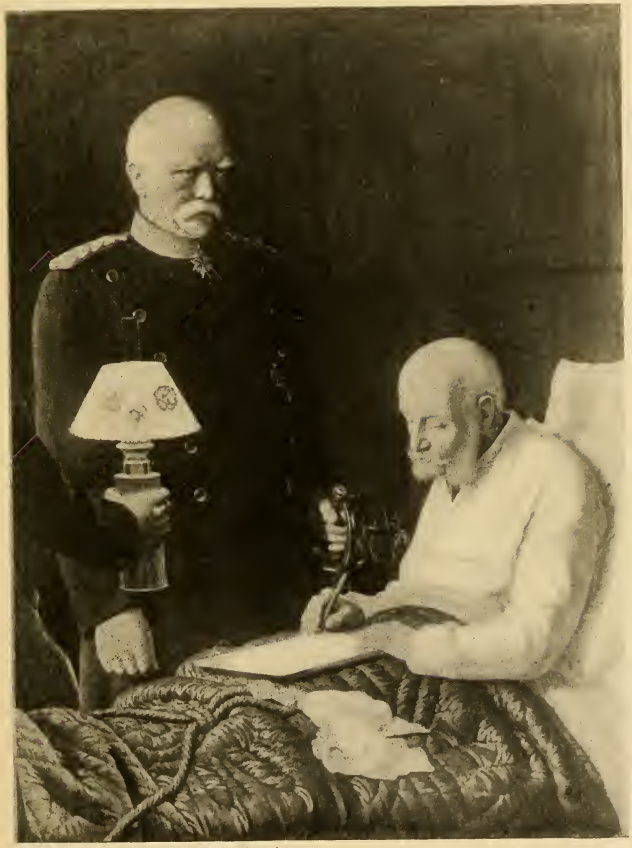
II

THE BERLIN COURT UNDER WILLIAM I

The Prussian Court under the grandfather of the ex-Kaiser was quite different from what it became during his grandson's reign. For one thing it was not so stiff, though perhaps far less dull. The evening parties given in the Royal Palace (of which there was a multitude during the winter season) were more like family gatherings than state receptions. Everybody knew everybody else, and of course gossip flourished, especially with regard to newcomers. The old Empress Augusta was a martinet and did not permit the least infraction of those laws of etiquette she had herself laid down, and she could be extremely disagreeable to the unfortunate people who either through ignorance or forgetfulness transgressed them.

I remember one evening, when suffering from a severe cold, I could not find my handkerchief or reach my pocket (one still had pockets in those

days) and was struggling so painfully in my efforts to do so that it attracted the attention of Prince Henry VII of Reuss, at that time German Ambassador in St. Petersburg (and a personal friend of mine) who happened to be on leave in Berlin. He was sitting behind me and some very dull music was being performed which had sent nearly everyone to sleep. The Prince guessed what had happened and politely offered to help me to extract from its retreat in the back of my dress the square of muslin I was frantically seeking, a proposal which I accepted with deep gratitude. No sooner said than done, and my saviour —for such he appeared to me in my predicament, sneezing being strictly prohibited at Court—very quickly dived into my pocket and produced the much-longed-for handkerchief, to my silent joy and relief. We never for a moment thought that anyone could see our little pantomime, far less suspected that the Empress would notice it, though she was seated directly opposite. But nothing escaped the vigilant eye of Augusta, and next day she wrote to my mother-in-law requesting her to open my eyes to the iniquity of my conduct. It was no use trying to excuse myself. I was told



EMPEROR WILLIAM I. OF GERMANY
SIGNING AN OFFICIAL DOCUMENT ON HIS DEATHBED

that one should not sneeze in the presence of royalty, even if one had a cold, and that if such a misfortune must happen it was better to conceal it with one's fan than to accept the help of a man in finding one's handkerchief.

In spite of this severity which pervaded her Court, Augusta had to smile and condone many misdeeds committed by her own family. Some members of it were continually in her bad books, but she could never punish them as she would have liked to do. Among them was her own brother-in-law, old Prince Charles of Prussia, who, in spite of his advanced age, was very fond of fair ladies, and who was supposed to find particular pastime in flirting with all his wife's ladies-in-waiting, most of whom were pretty women—he took care this should be so.

The Princess Charles was the Empress's eldest sister, and, though far more amiable than the latter, was sometimes inclined, even after she had passed her seventieth year, to fits of jealousy. One afternoon, on entering the apartment of a particularly handsome Mistress of the Robes, she found, to her profound indignation, her aged husband comfortably stretched upon a sofa smoking the cigarettes

which she would never allow him to produce in her own rooms.

A terrible scene ensued and the Princess carried her grievances to the Empress, who, in her turn, related the story to the King. The latter, who knew both his brother and sister-in-law and was always ready to find excuses for sins of the kind, tried to appease his wife, but could think of no better method than to keep on repeating that she must not get excited: "Because, after all, Marie (such was the name of the Princess Charles) is so ugly that it is not surprising if the Prince tries to console himself by looking at a pretty woman."

Augusta was so furious that she forthwith had her things packed and started for Baden Baden, on pretext of going to see her daughter who was living there at the time, and to the relief of the Emperor, who was never happier than during the few weeks in the year when he was able to lead a bachelor's existence, undisturbed by the complaints of his wife.

As for Prince Charles, he had never been the Empress's favourite, and after the death of the Princess they seldom saw one another except upon official occasions. On one of these occasions

Augusta approached him, and in a biting tone observed that she supposed he was now enjoying his liberty and amusing himself all the time in the company of the pretty ladies who had always been his favourites. To understand the irony of this remark one must remember that the object of it was close to his eightieth birthday!

Another pet aversion of the Empress was the famous Red Prince, Frederick Charles; but as regards him she had reasonable grounds for her antipathy. The Prince was one of the most brutal men in existence. The world never saw much of him because society bored him and he preferred to spend his time in his shooting box of Klein Glienicke near Potsdam, with some personal friends who were just as hard drinkers and as excellent shots as himself. And it was popularly believed that it was better for one's safety to avoid him, because there was no knowing what he might or might not do. He had a wife who had been in her youth one of the loveliest women of her time, and whom he ill-treated to such an extent that the deafness from which she suffered during the last years of her existence was attributed to the nervous shock she had sustained after the birth of her third daughter,

who became later on the Duchess of Connaught, when her husband in his rage at not obtaining the male heir for whom he had been longing, boxed the ears of his miserable wife, who nearly died of fright.

She was a charming woman, this unfortunate Princess, full of wit and talent and always ready to enjoy life, though pleasure seldom came her way. She used to draw most clever caricatures, but the fact that she could do so had never reached the ears of the old Empress Augusta, until one unhappy day when the latter, having taken it into her head to pay a visit to her niece by marriage, found her looking over an album in which she had made humorous sketches of some of the Court officials. The Empress asked to see the book and was highly offended when the Princess refused to show it to her, pretending that it contained nothing but rough drawings which she would be ashamed to exhibit.

"Are you afraid of my criticisms?" enquired Augusta.

"Yes," answered the Princess, "because I have seen some sketches which you made a few years ago, dear Aunt, and I have been trying to copy

them, but until I can show you that I have done so to my satisfaction I do not wish you to see my efforts. You would think that my attempts to imitate your beautiful drawings border on sacrilege. Please give me more time. I hope to be able yet to show you something which will meet with your approval."

The story does not say whether or not the Empress was convinced by this excuse. She was as a rule accessible to flattery, but, on the other hand, she may have had her suspicions, for a few days later, in relating the story to one of her friends, she remarked that the Princess Frederick Charles had a very ready tongue, and that it was difficult to take her unawares.

She was neither kind nor indulgent, this old Empress, and though she had the best intentions in the world, she did not possess the gift of creating sympathy or affection in those who surrounded her. She was affected to the last degree and the ridiculous manner in which she dressed had much to do with the unpleasant impression she produced at first sight. Always attired like a girl of eighteen or twenty, she liked to appear in sky-blue or pale green gowns, and these delicate shades were not

becoming to her, nor was the voluminous wig which covered her head.

It was a marvellous wig, all curls and plaits, and on state occasions an immense and high diamond tiara towered on top of it all. This wig was brown, whilst that of her sister, Princess Charles, was of a lighter colour. It seems that one day when the two sisters were staying together in their native castle of Weimar, on a visit to their brother, the Grand Duke of that name, their maids, being hurried, got the two perukes mixed; so, to the general surprise, the Empress appeared at dinner with blonde hair, whilst the Princess Charles's had suddenly grown quite dark. Courtiers have a wonderful gift of self-control, for no one even smiled when the two old ladies entered the room.

Princess Charles was unfortunate when it came to questions of self-adornment. One day when walking in the grounds of the Palace of Babelsberg in Potsdam she lost her lower teeth. They were very expensive teeth, and quite new into the bargain, which was probably the reason they did not fit and managed to drop from her mouth. The Princess was very near-sighted, so, though she searched carefully, she could not find the plate and

had to return home in despair. She sent her maids to seek for the lost teeth, but in the meantime the gardener had found them and, never suspecting to whom they belonged, carried them to the Empress's maid, with the remark that he supposed they were the property of Her Majesty.

The story was told to Augusta, who flew into one of the worst passions she had ever displayed. She sent for the unfortunate man and read him a lecture, telling him that he should have thrown the things into the garbage pail and have said nothing about them. She ended with the remark:

"It is the Princess Charles who has false teeth. If I had them they would be better made and not fall out of my mouth."

At seventy-nine years of age (which she was at the time) Augusta had not forgotten what coquetry meant, and she would have been in despair if anyone, even a gardener, had thought that she could not crack nuts with the facility of a boy of twelve.

III

A SISTER-IN-LAW OF THE KAISER

The brutal Red Prince, whose ill treatment of his wife, the charming Anhalt Princess, I have already related, was an exceedingly rich man. His father, old Prince Charles, had inherited an immense fortune from a distant relative, Prince August Wilhelm of Prussia, who had died a bachelor, in Rome, and Prince Charles added considerably to it by successful speculations.

During his lifetime his large establishments in Berlin and Potsdam were splendidly kept up and his dinners were renowned. He had two daughters, both married to Hessian Princes of small importance, and one son, whose nickname of "Red Prince" was far better known abroad than his real name, Frederick Charles. This son inherited the wealth of his father, also his numerous estates, and this partly explains his desire to have a son and his disappointment when three girls in succession made

their appearance. He took, as we have seen, a radical way of expressing his anger with his wife, and this seems to have moved her to a better fulfilment of her duties, because some five years after the birth of her daughter, the future Duchess of Connaught, she presented her husband with the much-wished-for heir.

The child was called Frederick Leopold, and his arrival brought about a temporary reconciliation between his parents who both became devoted to him. The Red Prince made great plans for him and declared that though he had never been ambitious for himself he felt sure that he would be so for his son. He did not, however, live long enough to accomplish much; when he passed away Prince Frederick Leopold was not quite twenty years old. The old Emperor William I constituted himself his guardian at once and administered his vast inheritance so wisely that it considerably improved and increased in value before its owner came of age. For one of his tender years he showed great wisdom by allowing the property to remain under the care of the Ministry of the Imperial Household; in this way he was relieved of considerable responsibility and of the expense which would

otherwise have been incurred by employing stewards.

Prince Frederick Leopold was very different from his father. He had inherited some of his mother's artistic tastes, together with her shyness, and at the time of the accession to the Throne of the ex-Kaiser he was looked upon as a meek young man, entirely lacking in the spirit of independence, and easily led, especially by the Empress Augusta Victoria, the consort of William II, who, being very fond of her own family, and having sisters to establish in the world, bethought herself that the youthful Prince would make an excellent husband for one of them. The eldest, Caroline Mathilde, was already married to her cousin, Duke Frederick of Schleswig Holstein, and there still remained two unmarried.

The sorry part of the affair lay in the fact that neither Frederick Leopold nor the Princess Louise of Schleswig wished to marry, and especially were they averse to marrying each other. The hearts of both of them were engaged elsewhere and they had never evinced the slightest sympathy for one another. But the Kaiserin, in spite of her gentleness, could exhibit considerable firmness on certain

occasions, and she began to exercise strong pressure on her sister as well as on the Prince. She represented to Louise that Frederick Leopold was one of the best matches in Germany, whom it would be folly to refuse and, besides, the mildness of his disposition would ensure for his future wife the certainty that she would be allowed to do what she liked and this was as much as any woman could hope for.

This last argument appealed to the Princess who had always felt more or less crushed in her home where the rather trying temper of her mother and the struggle, through lack of means, to live up to their position, had not created a harmonious atmosphere. She finally yielded to her sister's pleadings and the latter set herself to the task of persuading the unwilling bridegroom-elect to take the plunge into matrimony.

This did not prove quite as easy as she had expected, for Frederick Leopold had become suspicious and was careful not to take any step that might be interpreted as a desire on his part to renounce the joys of bachelorhood. At last the Empress made up her mind to resort to desperate means to convince him that the happiness of his life

depended on his marriage to Louise of Schleswig. She accordingly invited him to dinner at the new Palace of Potsdam on a day when she knew that the Emperor would not be there and, therefore, she would have the field free for the carrying out of her conspiracy. Frederick, not knowing what was in store for him, duly appeared at the appointed hour and found Augusta Victoria reclining on a couch and complaining of an awful headache. He wished to take his leave, but she refused to allow him to do so, saying that she felt sure she would be better after dinner, and that in the meantime he could be entertained by the Princess Louise who happened to be her guest at the time. Poor Frederick Leopold could only acquiesce, and after the meal was over the Empress declared that she felt much better but that she would go and take a headache powder which she thought she needed to restore her entirely to her usual condition of health. She asked her cousin to await for her return, which would be in a few minutes, and advised her sister to play for him in the meanwhile some of the Chopin waltzes of which she knew that he was very fond.

Louise was an excellent musician and as her

fingers wandered over the keys of the piano, Frederick Leopold, a passionate lover of music, became quite enthralled. He turned the pages for her, and, being short-sighted, was leaning over her shoulder with his head very close to hers when the Kaiserin returned, so noiselessly that neither of the occupants of the room heard her enter.

She said nothing, but dismissed her sister, and then set about reading her unfortunate cousin a lecture, saying that she had distinctly seen him kiss the Princess. Such a thing, she said, could not be tolerated by her for one moment; she would complain to the Kaiser and have him exiled from Berlin, unless he made the only reparation in his power by marrying Louise. The miserable Frederick Leopold was so utterly taken aback that he could do nothing but declare that such a marriage was precisely what he had been wishing for; and Augusta Victoria, knowing better than to let the grass grow under her feet after this successful ruse, called the Princess back and gave them her blessing. She hastened to telegraph the good news to the Kaiser, her own mother, and the Dowager Frederick Charles of Prussia in Rome where the latter was spending the winter.

Of course, everybody expressed delight, and when the marriage actually took place in the following June it was described as one of pure affection, inspired by the most disinterested motives. This did not prevent the Kaiser from insisting upon the most liberal settlements and squeezing out of Frederick Leopold wedding presents for his bride such as had never before been seen in Berlin.

If the Emperor had expected the Princess Louise to show herself grateful to him for his display of interest on her behalf he was to be disappointed. The girl intended that her marriage should emancipate her from all thraldom and, feeling secure in her position as well as in her influence over her weak-minded husband, she evinced a spirit of independence which offended not only Berlin society but also her Imperial sister. Louise wore the most extraordinary costumes, which she took care to order in Paris and Vienna; she rode to hounds, cross saddle, to the scandal of the Royal family; she made intimate friends of people who were not at all "hoffähig" (to use the expression dear to German hearts, meaning not worthy by reason of their birth to be received at Court); and one fine day she so far forgot what was due to her

rank as to show herself on the public skating rink of Potsdam, instead of keeping to the reserved inclosure where Royalty was allowed to disport itself in solitary grandeur.

This last venture proved disastrous, because the ice was very thin, and Louise (who was not exactly what could be called a light weight) suddenly disappeared into a hole. She was dragged out with great difficulty, in a condition which bordered upon collapse, and taken home in her wet clothes in a dilapidated hansom, which happened to be the only conveyance at hand. Five minutes later the whole of Potsdam was ringing with the news, and when it reached the ears of the Kaiser it proved too much for his equanimity: he rushed to the castle of Glienicke, the residence of Prince and Princess Frederick Leopold, and forthwith proceeded to place his sister-in-law under arrest, forbidding her to leave her room for three weeks. It was useless for the Kaiserin to plead for the delinquent, Wilhelm would not be pacified and people wondered what would be the outcome of the adventure, because no one who knew Louise, even slightly, imagined for one moment that she would obey the commands of the angry monarch.

Providence, however, interfered and settled the question, for her immersion brought about pneumonia and for several weeks she lay at death's door. When she could leave her bed, Wilhelm had betaken himself on one of his numerous journeys across Europe, and the question of her accepting his decision or rebelling against it was not raised.

But the independent habits of the Princess Louise did not undergo any transformation after this mishap. On the contrary, she seemed to take a particular pleasure in thwarting all the notions of propriety of both the Emperor and the Empress, so that the latter often regretted that she had been so foolish as to exert herself to secure for this sister, who was continually getting into trouble, the brilliant establishment which had brought her to Berlin and placed her in such close proximity to herself.

At last, a few weeks before the war, the climax was reached. Louise, who had sent out invitations to a large party to be held in the park of her castle of Glienicke, refused to cancel it after the murder of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, saying she did not see why she should affect sorrow for an event which had given the Kaiser the pretext he re-

quired for putting certain plans of his (of which she did not approve) into execution. This remark was enough to set busy tongues wagging, and it was remembered later on, when the great war came.

Her brother-in-law took his revenge upon her later, and did so in the brutal, cynical way which is typical of the Hohenzollerns. Louise's third son was mortally wounded in one of the engagements on the Yser line and taken prisoner by the British. The mother applied to the King of Spain to obtain authorisation for her to cross over to London and thence to the hospital where he had been taken. Chivalrous, as usual, the British Government granted her request, but as she was about to start the Kaiser interfered and ordered her to remain where she was. The supplications of the unfortunate mother proved of no avail; the military authorities received orders not to let her pass, and when she pleaded with her sister for mercy the only reply she received was that the Emperor had reason to fear that the Princess might impart some news of military interest to the enemy, and that under such conditions he could not allow her to leave Berlin.

Young Prince Frederick Charles, in the mean-

while, was slowly dying, after a severe operation which had been performed in the hope of saving his life. He constantly asked for his mother, and when he realized what it was that was holding her back the unfortunate boy lost all power of self-control and cursed the author of his misery and that of so many other human beings. It was the first time in their family history that a Hohenzollern had died invoking the powers of heaven against the head of his dynasty.

IV

THE GRAND DUCAL FAMILY OF WEIMAR

During the reign of the old Emperor William I the Weimar Grand Ducal family was often seen in Berlin, and its head, old Duke Charles Alexander, was considered a most important personage in Court circles owing to his being the brother of the Empress Augusta, her favourite brother, in fact, though no one knew why, for the Empress, in spite of her peculiarities and small innocent vanities, was a clever woman, whilst Charles Alexander could not be called, even by his best friends, a clever or an intelligent man. But he had a high opinion of his own importance and of the insignificance of his neighbour, which conviction helped him to get on most comfortably in life. He used to appear at regular intervals in the German capital, where he bored the old Emperor to distraction, but where he was always welcomed with effusion by the Empress.

The old man had such a firm belief in his own attractive qualities that he once expressed himself as being much surprised that he had happened to meet persons just as clever if not cleverer than himself. This knowledge made him at times uncomfortable and ruffled the equanimity with which he considered existence in general and his own in particular; but it did not prevent him from digesting his dinner or enjoying the cup of coffee with which he finished this (to him) important meal. He believed that he had great political intuition and that he was an expert in diplomatic matters. Bismarck, who abominated him, used to relate how one day in Versailles, just before the conclusion of the armistice with France, the Grand Duke of Weimar had called upon him and suggested the advisability of raising his small Dukedom into a Monarchy, under the pretext that in the new Germany which had come into existence with the proclamation of the Empire one of the first places ought to belong to the brother-in-law of the first Hohenzollern Emperor.

The Chancellor, in spite of the contempt in which he held the Grand Duke, did not wish to quarrel with him, because he knew that he possessed the

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GRAND DUCHESS THEODORA OF SAXE-WEIMAR

entire confidence of the Empress Augusta, who was weak enough to entrust him with all her plans, a knowledge of which was a source of continual satisfaction to Charles Alexander, from whom it was most easy afterwards to extract full information. And Bismarck liked to pump him dry, as it was of the utmost importance to him to be aware of the "machinations," as he called them, of the Empress. Therefore, when the Duke came to him with the remarkable proposal of being transformed into a King the Prince did not discourage him, but told him that this would depend solely on the Emperor, who alone could bring it about; therefore, he advised him to apply to the latter. Charles Alexander never hesitated to "rush in where angels fear to tread," and he instantly repaired to the Versailles Prefecture, where the Headquarters of the German army were located, and presented his case to the Emperor, with the result that the latter told him to go to a very warm place and not to come and bother him any more with demands so entirely devoid of common sense.

A very witty woman once said, when speaking of the Weimar family, that they were a race of apes who had learned to speak. The remark was an in-

sult—to the apes, whose mental faculties most certainly surpassed those of the Grand Duke of Weimar and of his son and heir, the latter being a degenerate caricature of himself. This was rather wonderful, because the Grand Duchess, whilst one of the ugliest women in creation, was also one of the most intelligent. She was a Princess of the Netherlands by birth and a representative of the old type, who could never under any circumstances whatsoever behave otherwise than with dignity. How she had been able to get on with a man of such low mental calibre as her husband remained a nine days' wonder for all who knew them both. As for their only son, he went through life without accomplishing anything worth speaking of and died before his father, leaving one boy to inherit the throne of Weimar, to which he duly succeeded after Charles Alexander had been removed to a better world.

The new Sovereign was only five and twenty at the time of his accession, but had already had time to demonstrate the fact that he would never under any circumstances succeed in becoming a popular monarch. For one thing, he was, in spite of his enormous fortune, excessively parsimonious, so

much so that once when making preparations for a visit to London, knowing he would be compelled whilst there to wear civilian clothes instead of the uniform he wore at home, he took with him a tall silk hat that had belonged to his father about twenty years before, and thus saved himself the necessity of buying a new hat which would be absolutely useless to him after his return to Germany. The hat, of course, was old-fashioned, so old-fashioned indeed that the Grand Duke had to acknowledge reluctantly that he could not be seen in it in Bond Street or Piccadilly. He consented, therefore, to buy a new one, but having done so he started at once for Whitechapel to visit the old clothes dealers in that aristocratic (?) part of London, to whom he offered his father's hat "for a song," as he expressed it, much to his sorrow and regret, as he realised that it was impossible to exact a high price for the family relic. A patriarch whose customers hailed from the lowest ghettos in the United Kingdom at last came forward and paid one shilling and sixpence for it, and the Grand Duke pocketed the sum with a satisfaction that was worthy of a better cause.

About two years or so after his accession to the

throne this economical young man married the Princess Caroline of Reuss, a pretty girl and extremely rich. He bullied her to his heart's content and made things so uncomfortable for her that one day she ran away from him and sought refuge with one of her aunts, who, after long persuasion, at last prevailed upon her to return to the splendours of the Weimar Court, on condition of her husband's promise not to interfere, as formerly, with her domestic arrangements.

The young Grand Duke promised everything. He had had a fright, not at the thought of losing his wife, but of having to give her back her immense dowry, in case of a divorce or separation. An unforeseen event occurred, however: the Grand Duchess caught typhoid fever shortly after her return to her husband's house and died in a few days. We are told that with her last breath she thanked God that she was going to a place where there would be no Weimars to make her unhappy. The Grand Duke, to all appearances, mourned her deeply, but at the same time did something which gave rise to one of the greatest scandals that had ever been known in Germany, at least in a Royal house. He caused all his wife's wardrobe and linen

to be sold at auction in the castle of Weimar, giving as an excuse for this exhibition of parsimony the necessity for raising money for her funeral expenses. Considering that he was generally looked upon as one of the richest men in Europe, the reader may easily imagine what impression was made by this unceremonious way of handling the property of the dead woman who had been a reigning Grand Duchess of Saxe-Weimar.

This family has had more than this one scandal to enliven its history during the last fifteen years or so. A cousin of the Grand Duke, the Princess Sophy, was the heroine of a terrible drama a few months before the outbreak of the great war. She was the daughter of Prince William of Weimar and, owing to the embarrassed financial condition of her parents, had been brought up in Heidelberg where they had settled for economy's sake. There she led, more or less, the existence of a private lady of rank, going about with far more freedom than she would have been able to enjoy in Weimar. She used to frequent the houses of the notable people of the quiet University town, and there she met a young man with whom she fell deeply in love. He was of excellent family, but poor, and would never

have been considered by her parents in the light of a possible husband for her. The young people made up their minds to elope, but in order that no one should suspect their intention the Princess started a flirtation with one of her lover's friends, the son of the wealthy banker, Baron von Bleichroder of Berlin, who consented with alacrity to play the part of screen in this intrigue; for he was flattered by the request to appear before the world as a suitor for the hand of a Princess of Weimar.

For some time this comedy continued, Sophy always hoping against hope that her parents would relent and allow her to be happy by becoming the wife of the only man she had ever loved. But the Prince and Princess William would not be persuaded. They had other plans for their daughter; so they intimated at last to Count T—— that he was no longer welcome in their home and they put him on his honour not to meet Sophy elsewhere.

The young man had no alternative but to comply. Before leaving Heidelberg, however, he arranged to correspond with the Princess through the intermediary of Baron von Bleichroder, who undertook to deliver his letters to her and to forward to him her replies. This continued for some

time, until at last the Count, wearied by all the obstacles which were being put in his way, and finding an heiress willing to marry him, led her to the altar and forgot Sophy of Weimar.

The unfortunate girl, who never suspected that her lover's sentiments towards her had undergone a change, was staggered by the blow when she read by chance in a newspaper the details of the wedding of the man who had sworn to love her forever. She said nothing, but that night when alone in her room, she shot herself with a revolver. She left only one letter, addressed to her mother, in which she told her why she had been driven to this act of despair. The poor child, who in her inexperience of the world had believed the first man who had awakened her heart by his soft words, could not survive the disillusion, and preferred to leave a world that had shown itself always cruel and hard during her short existence.

The suicide of Sophy of Weimar was widely commented upon all over Germany. It was generally attributed to the opposition she had encountered from her family in her love for Baron von Bleichroder. The latter never denied the affair, but, on the contrary, accepted with evident

satisfaction the prestige he derived from his position as the man for whose sake a Royal Princess had shot herself. This awful catastrophe by which a young and promising life perished so miserably was for the Hebrew banker's son, merely a triumph of vanity, and he was glad to allow the world to think she had died for him.

V

THE STORY OF TWO LITTLE MECKLENBURG PRINCESSES

They were two little sisters, daughters of the reigning Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz and of his lovely wife, the Princess Elizabeth of Anhalt. In their babyhood everybody admired and petted them when they walked with their nurse in the park of Neu Strelitz, and as they grew up the good inhabitants of this mediæval corner of the world took great pride in these two golden-haired Princesses. They were favourites not only of their father and mother but also of their venerable grandmother, the British Princess who had married into this quiet German House, and who had tried to introduce some of the customs and habits of her beloved England into the little country whose Sovereign she had become. When one met the young Princesses, dimpled and smiling, and heard their happy laughter, one never imagined that instead of the bright future that seemed to

open out before them they were to taste of the bitterness of life and become victims of the saddest fate that can befall a woman.

The Grand Duchess Elizabeth of Strelitz had never enjoyed good health. She suffered sometimes from melancholy and she used to retire to the solitude of one of her castles where she liked to spend weeks and even months at a time, refusing to see anyone and absorbed in deep thoughts which she never confided to anybody, not even to her nearest and dearest. Doctors said that this condition of nerves was the result of a great shock and sorrow occasioned by the death of her eldest son from an accident which occurred in her presence. Whether this verdict was correct or not it is difficult to say, but the fact remains that the Duchess, as her daughters grew up, began to neglect them and left them most of the time to the care of a governess who, as events proved later on, was not worthy of the trust reposed in her.

Mary and Jutta of Mecklenburg grew up under the care of this woman who travelled with them, superintended their studies and occupations and combined the functions of teacher and lady-in-waiting. When they had reached the ages of seventeen

and eighteen, respectively, the two girls were sent to Switzerland for a short vacation with this attendant, two maids and a footman. They were to spend a few weeks in Ragatz and then proceed to the Italian Lakes, where their father was to join them.

What happened during this journey it is difficult to explain, and, indeed, no one knows exactly. The one indubitable fact is that the footman, whose duties consisted in carrying the bags and wraps of the young Princesses, started a campaign of blackmailing against them and their parents which assumed the most formidable proportions and completely wrecked their fair fame.

The Grand Duke wanted to have the man tried and sentenced to the punishment which he deserved, but he fled to Berlin, where the Kaiser absolutely refused to consent to his extradition.

William II was at that time on very bad terms with the whole Strelitz family, whom he accused of being far too English in their sympathies, and he probably rather enjoyed the idea of their humiliation; so when a book was published in Breslau which purported to relate the true story of the Strelitz Princesses, he not only failed to

have it suppressed, but bought it himself and presented copies to several of his friends.

The miserable girls, who had thus become the victims of a scoundrel's vile machinations, found themselves social outcasts from all the Royal and Princely houses of Germany. No one would speak to them; much less would any of the marriageable young men of their own rank entertain the idea of marrying them. They had done nothing wrong; they had only suffered unjustly and in silence; yet their persecutor had escaped scot free whilst their lives had been wrecked, owing to the lack of vigilance and the stupidity of the woman to whose care they had been entrusted, who had not known how to shield them from a peril it should have been easy to avoid.

Their father refused to comply with the extortionate demands of his whilom servant and purchase his silence; therefore for two years this tragic state of things continued—the girls being shunned by all those who had heard the scandal. By taking their children to Berlin during the social winter season their parents hoped to save the situation, but they had not been twenty-four hours in the German capital when a message from the Kaiser

obliged them to return home. The substance of his communication was that though the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess of Strelitz would always be welcome at the Prussian Court, their daughters could not be invited to any of its festivities. It goes without saying that after this insult the unhappy parents shook the dust of Berlin from their feet and determined never to return there again.

In the meantime the question remained unanswered: what to do with these two pretty little Princesses, since for them marriage seemed to be entirely out of the question. Many bitter tears were shed in the Palace of Neu Strelitz as this painful situation was discussed, but no solution of the difficulty could be found until there came to the rescue two very kind persons who, each in her own way, put an end to a situation that had become well-nigh intolerable.

One of these was Queen Victoria of England, whose clear common sense at once gauged the position and whose warm heart was touched with pity for the misfortunes of these far-removed nieces of hers. The Queen had friends everywhere, and it was a relatively easy thing for her to look out for

and at last discover a man willing to marry (for the sake of a large dowry) the Princess Mary, the elder of the two Mecklenburg sisters. This man was a Frenchman, Monsieur de Jametel, of an honest bourgeois family, to whom it seemed an honour without precedent to become the husband of a real Royal Princess. This honour was amplified when, through the efforts of an unknown friend, the Pope conferred (no one ever knew for what reason) the title of a Roman Count upon Jules de Jametel.

This marriage was very quickly decided upon, and the Princess was told that she had to accept this husband who had dropped, so to speak, from the skies, for the purpose of rehabilitating her after sins which she had never committed. Queen Victoria, motherly as she was to all who were in trouble, proposed that the wedding should be celebrated in England, in the little village of Richmond, near which the Duchess of Teck, sister of the Dowager Grand Duchess of Strelitz, had her residence. The offer was eagerly accepted and after a few difficulties connected with the difference of religion of the pair, the ceremony took place there, and was performed by the Dean of the

Chapel Royal, Rev. Edgar Sheppard, at the special request of the Queen.

Count and Countess de Jametel settled in Paris, but their union, which had been so entirely a matter of convenience, did not turn out well, and a divorce put an end to it a few years later, the Countess returning to the protection of her parents in Germany. There much later she met and married a Prince Lipps, who had fallen deeply in love with her and who did not consider the sad story of her youth an impediment to their union.

As for the second little Mecklenburg Princess, Jutta, she also found a good Samaritan, willing to come to her help, in the person of one of her aunts, the Princess Helene of Altenburg, daughter of the Grand Duchess Catherine of Russia, who was settled in St. Petersburg where she had inherited a beautiful home from her mother, as well as an immense fortune.

The Princess Helene was the best and kindest woman in the world, and she invited her niece to come and pay her a long visit in Russia during the winter season, when she took her about everywhere, gave balls in her honour, and finally succeeded in arranging a marriage between her and the Crown

Prince of Montenegro, who had fallen in love with her pretty face.

This was a wonderful stroke of luck, in the opinion of all the relatives of the Princess Jutta, who, overlooking entirely the character of the man who was pleading for her hand, saw in him only a future King. A marriage with him would, in any case, be a great social triumph for the daughter of a comparatively insignificant Sovereign like the Grand Duke of Strelitz, and certainly no one could have foreseen, after all what had taken place, that little Jutta would ever have a chance to become one day a Queen, even of so miniscule a kingdom as that of the Black Mountain.

But this marriage also proved a failure.

Danile of Montenegro was anything but a kind or pleasant husband. He combined the despotism of an Oriental with the hypocrisy of a German (which he partly was, having been brought up in a Prussian town). He soon neglected his wife and sometimes even ill-treated her, and though they did not officially separate, they always seized every opportunity to live apart. In spite of this, the Crown Princess of Montenegro contrived to make herself popular with the half-savage mountaineers

amongst whom she was thrown. She was serious, cold and dignified, but she always had a kind word for them. She was the only member of the Niegesch family whose departure from Cetinje was bitterly regretted by the inhabitants.

At present Jutta is in exile in France with her husband's parents. She has kept her calm serenity in spite of the trials that have befallen her during the last four years or more, and, with a firm faith in the way in which things generally contrive to right themselves, she is content to wait for what the future has in store for her, fortified by the knowledge that it can never be as painful for her as the past.

VI

THE KAISER'S ROMANCE

A VERY interesting document might be written concerning the Kaiser and his ideas about women. Those who knew him in his youth are aware that there was a time when feminine charms were supposed to be appreciated by him to an uncommon degree. During the first years of his married life his name was associated with that of several ladies in Berlin society, by whom he was suspected of being much attracted. Then, whilst he was a student at Bonn University, it was common talk that he liked the society of girls belonging to a fast set. No one minded this in the least because the Hohenzollerns, it was well known, had always been inclined to serious as well as non-serious flirtations. It is probable that the Princess Augusta Victoria of Schleswig-Holstein when she became his wife, was prepared for more than one flaw in their marriage contract; but she was an exceedingly tactful

THE KAISERIN IN 1881

THE KAISER IN 1883

person, so she made up her mind never to see what was not intended for her eyes, and this enabled her to go through life smiling serenely on whatever it pleased her husband to do and to preserve her equanimity with those supposed rivals of hers with whom Prince William (as he still was at the time) liked to spend an hour or two in the afternoon, chatting upon subjects with which she was not conversant or did not understand.

This placidity, a strong contrast to the exuberant vitality of the future Wilhelm II, enabled her to get on with him wonderfully well. People who judged superficially accused her of being stupid and in so doing made a great mistake. Augusta was not at all stupid. She looked upon existence as an extremely serious undertaking, which must be arranged in the most comfortable manner possible for those who had to go through with it. So she did not mind in the least when the old gossips of Berlin whispered in her ear that her husband was very much inclined to admire the Princess of So-and-So and the Countess of So-and-So. She felt that her own position was so entirely safe that she need not trouble about the feelings of these ladies whom she secretly pitied instead of envying.

She had taken a thoroughly good survey of Prince William's character and she understood admirably well that for him flirtation, even if it overstepped the bounds of ordinary prudence, would never be allowed to interfere with his ambition or his desire to become the ruler of the whole of the earth, as soon as circumstances would allow him to assume that part. Therefore, when the Polish Princess R., a fair, fat and comfortable sort of woman who could boast of more millions than good looks, confided under the seal of secrecy to her best friend that Prince William . . . you know . . . you know . . . and what would my husband say . . . and so on, with the secret hope that if once the notion that the future Kaiser was in love with her should become public property, she might acquire that notoriety after which her silly little soul thirsted, and when the harmless and deliciously naïve little English Princess P. giggled and blushed and became embarrassed whenever anyone mentioned the Emperor in her presence, the Empress simply shrugged her shoulders and passed on, condescending even to shake hands and talk for five minutes or so with the supposed object of her husband's love, who, by-the-way, was the only person who

seriously believed that he was ready to commit any folly for her sake.

The truth of the matter was that the Emperor, in questions where women were concerned, had just as settled ideas and opinions as in everything else, and he had made up his mind, from the hour of his accession to the German throne, that he would never allow feminine influence to control his movements or to play any part in his life. He was determined to break the family tradition of the Hohenzollerns which would have it that they were always willing to forget everything for the sake of a woman's smile. Even the old Emperor, William I, had remained faithful to them in his youth, and had, down to the day of his death, enjoyed nothing so much as looking into a pair of pretty eyes. His son Frederick, the husband of the English Princess Royal, was the first Prussian sovereign who remained true to his marriage vows; but his reason for doing so was his deep affection for his remarkable and wonderful wife. His son, the present recluse of Amerongen, followed his example after he came to the throne, but from quite different motives, one of which was his inordinate ambition. He was clever enough to realise that a

man determined to do the terrible things he had in mind must put himself beyond the pale of temptation, and he did not feel sufficiently sure that if he ever allowed feminine influence to play a part in his life it might not lead him to talk too much, a fault characteristic of him, which had landed him in trouble more than once. With all his faults, the greatest criminal the world has ever seen knew how to hold his tongue in matters which he considered of supreme importance for the realisation of the wonderful schemes at which he had continually worked ever since he had attained the age of manhood. But . . . there happen in every man's life accidents over which he has no control, and, Kaiser though he was, William the Small had to submit to this almost inevitable human law. There came a day when he could not keep his feelings under restraint, and when he also felt that he would willingly sacrifice throne, crown, fleet and army—in fact, all that he held dear—for the sake of a pair of dark eyes.

Those eyes belonged to a lady called the Countess Goertz, the wife of one of the greatest, most powerful and wealthy German nobles, whose family had enjoyed regal privileges in the days of

the Holy Roman Empire, and whose sons and daughters were considered worthy to unite with royalty. The Countess herself was a Brazilian by birth, the daughter of Count de Villeneuve, who had for many years represented his country as diplomatic agent in Paris and Brussels, and of that lovely Countess de Villeneuve who was considered the most beautiful woman in Europe for some five and twenty years. Sophie Goertz had inherited her mother's beautiful features and her father's intelligence, and she was certainly one of the most fascinating creatures a man could wish for his wife, or . . . She had not escaped calumny, of course; what really pretty woman ever does? But no open scandal had ever been connected with her name; perhaps because she had led a very quiet and retired life, spending most of her time in her castle of Schlitz, which was one of the most magnificent residences in Germany. It was accident that brought her to Berlin, where her husband had some business matters that claimed his presence; and once in Berlin, it was quite natural for her to ask to be presented to the Emperor and Empress.

The moment the Kaiser saw her he knew that

at last he had met his fate. The first thing he did was to give Count von Goertz one of those Court appointments which were considered so important that it would have been considered nothing short of crime to have refused it. Then he insisted on the couple coming regularly to Berlin for the winter months, and he visited them several times at their country-seat. It was noticed that he tried whenever possible to get the Countess Goertz to sit next to him at State dinners and other festivities, and at last it became known that he had adopted the habit of dropping in upon her at tea time for an hour's chat, a custom totally foreign to his daily programme heretofore. Of course people began to talk, and for the first time it seemed as though they had good reasons to do so.

In the meantime, what was Sophy Goertz herself thinking? If the truth be told, she was thinking a great deal. She had always been an ambitious woman and she would have had no objection to playing the part of one of those *maitresses de roi,* who were such a power in the State during the old days when the French monarchy was considered the first in Europe. She wanted to rule the Kaiser, to direct his politics, and to be consulted

by him in grave matters of international importance. And for a few months it really seemed as if such a thing might come to pass, and grave statesmen, like Prince von Bülow, took to courting the beautiful Countess and treating her like the important personage she was fast becoming. She saw very well how matters stood, and felt so elated at her success that she tried to persuade William II to make some concessions to the French and thereby establish pleasant relations between Germany and the country she had beaten nearly half a century before. Sophy had French sympathies which were very real and very sincere, being French on her mother's side and having been brought up in Paris. It was, therefore, natural that she should attempt to use the influence she had acquired over the Kaiser in order to benefit the country and the people she loved so well.

And, curious as this may seem, there was a moment when she very nearly succeeded in her designs. She might have done so indeed if the Empress, aroused to jealousy for the first time, had not interfered in an unexpected manner.

It took a great deal to incite Victoria Augusta to anger, but once this had been effected she could

be very disagreeable indeed. The rare loveliness of the Countess Goertz, with whom she knew very well she could not compete as regards looks, had incited her jealousy. Happening to meet the Countess at some social function, she noticed with much satisfaction that her complexion was not quite as beautiful as usual; a few red pimples spoiled the smoothness and delicate tint of her cheeks. The Empress, after the manner of all jealous women, could not help making a remark that was destined to rankle in the heart of her hearer.

"What has happened to you, Countess?" she asked. "Where have you been to get so dreadfully bitten by mosquitoes? May I send you an ointment which is excellent in such cases for removing the red spots which are so disfiguring?"

The Countess started, but preserved her self-control and murmured words of thanks. When she reached home, however, the first thing she did was to run to the mirror, where, upon close examination, she had to confess that the soft bloom which had been one of her greatest attractions had really suffered at the hands of time, and that she was no

longer, at forty-two years old, the radiant creature she had been at twenty.

There are some women who refuse to acknowledge the laws of nature and to resign themselves to growing old. Sophy Goertz was one of them, and in her despair at losing the loveliness for which she had been so famous she had recourse to the help of one of those quack doctors whose advertisements appear in the pages of the daily newspapers, in the hope that he would give her a tonic that would keep her everlastingly young.

Alas, alas! Quack doctors are dangerous people to turn to. After undergoing a course of treatment which lasted for several weeks, the Countess was taken home in an almost dying condition. The various pomades and lotions that had been applied to her face had occasioned blood poisoning and made her hopelessly ill.

She was brought to Berlin, to a private sanitarium, where the question of an operation was discussed; but she was already so weak that the doctors did not dare to risk it, and her husband was told that her condition was such that the end might come at any moment. The Kaiser went to see her, and people said afterwards that his last meeting

with the only woman he had truly loved was a most affecting one. Moved to pity, the Kaiserin also visited her former rival, returning from this interview in a state of genuine distress which induced her to advise her husband to try to have an interview with the dying Countess. Augusta could be magnanimous, and the sight of the once beautiful Sophy reduced to a mere skeleton, robbed of all traces of her former loveliness, impressed her profoundly. It was easy for her then to forgive, even if she felt that she could never forget.

The body of the Countess Goertz was taken back to Schlitz and buried there in the family lot. Her funeral was attended by the Kaiser, who, just before the earth was shovelled upon the coffin, stepped beside the open grave and, after gazing for some minutes at the bier, dropped some roses upon it before he turned away. It was noticed that some of them were faded, probably in remembrance of some incident in a love-story in which he had shown himself human for the first and only time in his life.

VII

THE PRINCESS CHARLOTTE OF MEININGEN AND HER ADVENTURES

She was a very pretty woman, this Princess who at one time was a notable figure in Berlin society. This was some thirty years ago, when she was first emancipated from the trammels of etiquette which she had always hated. Princess Victoria Elizabeth Augusta Charlotte was the second child and eldest daughter of the then Crown Prince of Prussia and of his wife, the Princess Royal of Great Britain and Ireland. She had not had a pleasant life at home; it is certain that, for some unexplainable reason, she had not been able to get on with her mother. The Crown Princess was an autocratic person and Charlotte had not a yielding disposition. It was prognosticated by those who knew her intimately that she would marry young, in order to escape the maternal supervision under which she fretted.

She could have made a far more brilliant match than the one she did. Prince Bernard of Saxe-Meiningen, to whom she was united when scarcely seventeen years old, was neither handsome nor attractive. The Duchy to which he was the heir was one of the smallest in Germany, and his father had married again, an actress whom he had created Baroness von Heldburg, and who ruled his Court. The young Prussian Princess could not be expected to take a subordinate place under such a person. It was decided, therefore, that she and her husband should occupy a small villa in Potsdam, which, though modest in the extreme, was nevertheless considered sufficient for her requirements.

Charlotte was given no opportunity to say whether this arrangement pleased her or not. She had simply to do what she was told, and for the two years that followed upon her marriage she led a most retired life, which, if the truth be told, bored her extremely.

She was a clever woman and perfectly well aware of the advantages which her lovely face might eventually procure for her. She was cunning, too, and very quickly realised that so long as she remained in Potsdam close to her parents,

Empress Frederick (*Right*)
with Her Daughter, Princess Charlotte of Meiningen

and always more or less under her mother's control, she would never be able to lead her own life. She therefore insinuated herself into the good graces of one of the most important personages in Berlin, General von Albedyll, who, being the head of the Emperor's military cabinet, was the only man upon whom depended military promotions. He was married to an amiable woman, Hanoverian by birth, and sister of the late Duchess Louise of Devonshire. Princess Charlotte began to cultivate this lady and the result was that Prince Bernard von Meiningen was appointed to the command of an infantry regiment quartered in Berlin, and had to bid good-bye to the delights of his former garrison of Potsdam.

When the news became official Charlotte repaired to her grandfather, the old Kaiser, and having wept before him and lamented her poverty, which prevented her from keeping up an establishment in accordance with her rank, she obtained from him the loan of a large suite of rooms in the Royal Castle of Charlottenburg, which, being so close to Berlin, was almost a suburb of the capital.

In Charlottenburg the Princess held quite a Court. She knew very well that her mother could

not now drop on her unawares, and she started to gather around her a set of people who, though considered the fastest in Berlin, were perhaps for this very reason the most agreeable. She gave small dinners and select supper parties and, if the truth be told, her salon was the source of all kinds of gossip which was anything but charitable.

Of course, this became known very soon, and the sarcastic spirit of the Princess, her love of criticism, her ever-ready eagerness to think and speak ill of her neighbour, procured for her many enemies. But she was her elder brother's favourite, and it was even rumoured that during the Emperor Frederick's last illness she had, with him, plotted against their mother. When William II ascended the throne his sister Charlotte became a social power and began to be dreaded as one of the most dangerous elements at Court, especially dangerous because she was never upon good terms with the Goddess Truth, and this circumstance sometimes put her, as well as others, into rather a tight corner.

But she was a pretty woman, and might have been even prettier, had she not always been drugging herself with all kinds of pills and powders in her desire to get thin. She was amusing also,

though merciless at times, and she never rebuked the infatuated men who so far forgot etiquette as to tell her that they admired her. As for her husband, she treated him like the negligible quantity he was, and if she did not call him in public *"le pauvre homme,"* as Marie Antoinette called Louis XVI, it was not because she did not think that he deserved the appellation.

Princess Charlotte was very fond of pretty gowns, and she was of the opinion that nowhere are prettier ones to be found than in Paris. She used to visit the French capital every spring and autumn, incognito, and there hold long conferences with her numerous dressmakers. From Paris she wandered sometimes to the French Riviera, and at last bought a villa at Cannes, a retreat for her old age, as she laughingly remarked to some of her friends.

Among the most fashionable people in Berlin at that time were the two Counts Hehenau, the morganatic sons of Prince Albert of Prussia, the youngest brother of the old Kaiser. They were both married, and both were to become in time the heroes of rather sensational scandals. The younger, Count Fritz, was one of the favourites of the Prin-

cess Charlotte, and used to spend most of his afternoons with her, to the great sorrow of his pretty and attractive wife. The latter grew at last impatient and one day complained to the Kaiserin, who, in her turn, remonstrated with the Princess Charlotte. The Princess did not reply to her sister-in-law's reproaches, but went home in a towering rage, vowing vengeance on the Countess Hehenau, as well as on Augusta Victoria, for her interference in a matter which did not concern her—at least, in Charlotte's estimation. A month or two passed and then Berlin was startled by the famous anonymous letters which created one of the greatest scandals the Prussian capital had ever known.

They were very curious letters, addressed to most of the leaders of Berlin society, slandering, with more or less semblance of truth, nearly all the pretty women in the town. The Kaiserin herself received some, calling her attention to the influence which the Countess Hehenau was acquiring over the mind of the Emperor and denouncing her as trying to sow dissension between the Sovereign and his consort. Letters sent to other people repeated the same story, and as these missives seemed to arrive at all hours, to be found everywhere and

to be received by everybody, they created a disturbance in social circles such as had never been known before. All kinds of complications followed in their wake, even several duels, one of which ended fatally, until at last people became so suspicious of each other that social life came almost to an end in Berlin.

Then, one day someone discovered that a few of these abominable letters had been written on a paper which bore the name and address of a shop in Cannes. This was sufficient to turn the thoughts of the public towards the Princess Charlotte of Meiningen, whose reputation for unkindness was by that time so thoroughly established that it certainly was not wonderful that suspicion should attach itself to her.

Her position became most difficult and she had to do something to improve it. Somehow she had contrived to remain upon excellent terms with her brother and easily obtained from him the transfer of her husband, Prince Bernard, to Breslau, as commander of one of the army corps stationed in that town.

But in Breslau the Princess also managed to get talked about, this time on account of an outrageous

flirtation with a Silesian nobleman, and she carried it so far that at last the Emperor lost all patience and he spoke in energetic terms to his brother-in-law, counselling him to pay more attention to his wife's conduct.

Prince Bernard, however, would not admit that anyone, even the Emperor, should interfere with his family affairs, and the result was that angry words were exchanged between the two men. The Prince resigned his command and declared to Princess Charlotte that he would not consent to live any longer in Breslau if they offered to pay him his weight in gold to do so. Perhaps she also shared this opinion, because the couple retired to one of their country-seats in Meiningen and divided their time between this rural residence and Cannes in France, where they made for themselves a number of friends and where they both hoped to end their days should Providence ordain that they should die during the winter season.

Then came the war. The villa in Cannes was confiscated by the French Government. Berlin became the seat of a republic. The little Duchy of Meiningen decided that it would do much better without its Duke and his lively wife. Princess

Charlotte became a wanderer on the face of the earth. Everything she had known and enjoyed disappeared in the tempest which swept away royalties with all their frailties and weaknesses. The whole world was transformed—let us hope for the better—and in the new world in which our children are to live may the dissolute Monarch and his Court, with its secrets and intrigues, be a legend of the past.

THE END