

BLACK CLOUDS OF DESTINY HANG RELENTLESS OVER HOUSE OF HAPSBURG

"WHY HAVE THEY SPARED ME?" IS CRY WRUNG FROM GREAT MONARCH

"May Heaven and Hell Blast Your Happiness; May Your Family Be Exterminated; May You Be Smitten in the Persons of Those You Best Love; May Your Children Be Brought to Ruin and May Your Life Be Wrecked, and Yet May You Live on in Lonely, Unbroken and Horrible Grief to Tremble When You Recall the Name of Karolyi! Was the Curse of the Maddened Countess That Has Had Fulfillment for Seventy Years

"Why have they spared me?" This cry, wrung from one of Europe's greatest monarchs, in whose heart sorrow has left no room for pride, has given a vivid human appeal to the greatest royal tragedy of the past decade. The far reaching political ramifications of the murder of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife, the beautiful and romantic Countess Chotek, are almost lost sight of in the dramatic circumstances of this last terrible tragedy of the house of Hapsburg, and the strange fulfillment, now extend over nearly seventy years, of the blighting curse laid upon it by the grief-maddened Countess Karolyi.

In his 85th year, Francis Joseph, Emperor of Austria, has outlived everything but sorrow. Broken in body and in spirit, even the reflective joys of memory can bring no satisfaction to this lonely old man, living out his last sad years surrounded with empty pomp and splendor. Reflections on the past bring to Francis Joseph only memories of defeats, of battles lost, or diplomacy frustrated, of humiliations forced upon him and of family catastrophes such as no other ruler in modern history has been called on to endure. "The pride of the Hapsburgs," for generations a shield, has become a sorry thing; humiliation, scandal and tragedy have combined to crush it and have left only a poor ruin of a once noble structure.

The black clouds of destiny first appeared over the head of the young Francis Joseph when as a boy of 18 he was forced to ascend the throne of Austria, thereby deposing his uncle, the weakling Ferdinand, whose vagaries threatened to cost the family the crown. No monarch ever ascended a more turbulent throne. The crown was itself the creation of nothing more substantial than dynastic marriages and historical caprices. Torn as the country has always been by conflicting racial and religious interests, it was at that time lashed by revolutions and democratic uprisings that would have daunted the most courageous ruler. The revolution in Hungary was the most difficult and pressing of the young emperor's problems, and one which required the assistance of Russia to solve. It was finally put down, but only by the use of the most violent and severe measures. One of the victims of this severity was the only son of the house of Karolyi, a young man of brilliant personality and promise. He was executed under painful circumstances and his mother, in the abandon of her mad grief, forced herself into the presence of the emperor on the occasion of a grand ball, and in the presence of the horror-stricken court pronounced a terrible curse upon him and his house. With the last words she fell senseless, and later, died in retirement. But the strange scene and the distracted woman's words made a deep impression, an impression which the crowding tragedies of a long reign have made it impossible to forget.

estly for a reputation as a man of peace, that the warfare and bloodshed of the earlier part of his career are often forgotten. The war in Hungary and the means that were taken to quell the revolution and restore absolutism are one of the dark chapters of his long reign the memory of which has never ceased to be painful to him. Shortly after this came the campaign in Italy with the disasters of Magenta and Solferino and the attendant loss of the highly valued Italian provinces Lombardy and Venetia. A few years later came war with Prussia, and fresh humiliations in the defeat of Sadowa and the loss of still further territory.

In those days the "pride of the Hapsburgs" still meant something and the frequent lessons that the haughty lord of the Danube was required to submit to did not come easily. Bismarck and Von Moltke each took a hand in teaching the man who believed that he had been called to be a leader of Europe that in the orchestra of nations he was to play only a second fiddle. Francis Joseph never won a great battle or a great diplomatic victory; he never tasted the joy of returning to his capital with the acclaim of a victor.

Ambitious as he has always been for the aggrandizement and expansion of his country, the Emperor of Austria has during his entire reign found his carefully worked out and developed diplomatic policies checkmated, not more by rival Powers than by the forces of blind circumstance. In the beginning of his reign Francis Joseph looked to the westward for the field of his country's expansion. Prussia and Italy were to furnish the material for the glory of the house of Hapsburg. But the unification of Italy and the formation of the German Empire closed these doors for all time, and the Emperor was forced to evolve a new foreign policy which looked to the south, to the turbulent Balkan countries, for its development. The Berlin treaty of 1879 really crystallized this policy, and set forth Austria's ambition that her ambition lay toward the south with Salonica and the Aegean Sea as its aim.

For more than 30 years all the Emperor's efforts were directed to this end. Year by year he saw Turkey growing weaker, and year by year the goal seemed to be nearer. Then by a totally unexpected political convulsion, the war of the Balkan allies against Turkey, he saw all his hopes overturned, his carefully reared diplomatic and strategic policy thrown down like a card house, while he himself was helpless, held in check by Powers he did not dare defy. In all Francis Joseph's long reign he has accomplished but one brilliant piece of diplomacy, the success of which was measured by that final political yardstick, the aggrandizement of his country. That success was the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is a grim fact that this single piece of fortune has now been a boomerang to him, for from them has come this last crushing blow to his pride.

From the beginning of his reign Francis Joseph has seen his country racked by internal conflicts that he has been powerless to reconcile. A relaxation of absolutism was early forced upon him, but the measures adopted were futile in creating a spirit of union, while frequent military and diplomatic defeats served further to disintegrate her antagonistic elements. The dualistic compact with Hungary was made in the interest of homogeneity and much was expected of it. But the Emperor was disappointed in this as in everything else, for although it has served as a fairly successful stop gap Francis Joseph is too astute a politician not to recognize it for what it is, a political expedient and nothing more. So far as bringing about actual homogeneity in the empire is concerned it never had the faintest possibility of achieving such a result.

The execution of his brother was a deeper sorrow to Francis Joseph in that almost from the beginning of the Mexican affair he foresaw disaster



Above are shown victims of the "Curse of the Hapsburgs;" below at right, the aged monarch whose head is bowed in sorrow covering a period of seventy years. At left, Archduke Charles Francis, heir-apparent, and his wife, Archduchess Zita.

The constant strife between the different political and racial parties in his country has always been a source of great bitterness to Francis Joseph, and more than once, the last time no later than 1912, has driven him to threats of abdication.

Although history is more concerned with the political disasters of the long reign a more vital and dramatic interest is furnished by the shadow of personal tragedy which has practically from the beginning been laid across him. "May you be smitten in the person of those you best love," ran the curse, and before he had been many years on the throne the young Emperor felt the sting of its fulfillment. Any one of the tragedies of his house would be a dark chapter in any reign; the execution of his brother, Maximilian, in Mexico, the dreadful death of his only son and heir, the mysterious disappearance of his kinsman, Archduke John Salvador, the assassination of the Empress Elizabeth and the final terrible murder of his nephew and heir.

But these are only the principal events in the story of his life. Tragedy did not end there for Francis Joseph, indeed it has never ended, for in no ramifications of his family relationships have sorrow and humiliation been spared him. In no royal family of Europe have there been so many mesalliances, in no family have there been so many scandals that flaunted themselves and refused to be hushed, in no family has there been so much personal sorrow and public humiliation. The execution of his brother was a deeper sorrow to Francis Joseph in that almost from the beginning of the Mexican affair he foresaw disaster

but was powerless to prevent it. The civil war in Mexico just prior to our own civil war left that country in a condition that made intervention of some kind inevitable. France, with the backing of Spain and Great Britain, took up the matter and in 1863 occupied Mexico City, formed a provisional government and offered the crown to Archduke Ferdinand of Austria, who, contrary to the strong advice of his brother, accepted it, and after renouncing all his rights to the Austrian succession was crowned in May, 1864. His reign of three years was accompanied by increasing difficulties, disasters and civil warfare. He was constantly urged to abdicate but refused to do so, and after a long siege in Queretaro was captured, condemned and executed, while his own brother, one of the great monarchs in Europe, was powerless to save him. Distracted by the horrors she had undergone and obsessed by the idea that Francis Joseph might have intervened, Carlotta, the wife of Maximilian, went raving mad and for the remainder of her long life was confined in a remote castle in Belgium, a constant unhappy reminder of a great tragedy of the house of Hapsburg.

"May your children be brought to ruin," was the imprecation of the Hungarian Countess, but for twenty-five years Francis Joseph could safely believe that he had escaped its fulfillment. His son and heir had grown to manhood with a most brilliant promise. He was a writer and artist of no small attainment, with intellectual gifts that commanded admiration. At the age of 23 he was married to Princess Stephanie, the daughter of Leopold of Belgium. This was distinctly a political marriage, and brought no happiness to either. Dynastically, too, it was a fail-

ure for the children of Stephanie were all girls, and so disqualified for the succession. The jealous disposition of Stephanie and the Emperor's disappointment in the lack of an heir, all combined to create a family discord that could not be concealed and which subjected the members to the most scathing gossip. Finally after seven years it flared up in the most mysterious royal tragedy of the century, the death of Rudolf. For twenty-five years the actual circumstances of this tragedy have been the best kept secret in Europe. It is known that the prince and the beautiful Marie Vetsera, with whom he had long been desperately in love, were found dead together in a blood-bathed room in the hunting lodge at Meyerling. The actual condition of the bodies, and any actual facts as to the manner of the death of the unhappy lovers has never been known, though on no subject has there been more speculation. It is said that the secret was known but by three persons, Cardinal Rampolla, who was the representative of the Pope, and as such was entitled to know the facts; the Emperor himself and Count Hoyos, who rode in from Meyerling to tell the stricken father the terrible news. It is said that when the ghastly tale had been told the Emperor sent Hoyos from his presence and refused ever to see his face or hear his name again.



EMPEROR FRANCIS JOSEPH

Two general versions of the tragedy have been rife for all these years, though there have been hundreds of variations of the details. One is that Rudolf, involved in political intrigues and violently at odds with his father over his love affair, saw no way out but to kill himself and take Marie Vetsera with him. The other version has it that the prince was killed by the uncle of Vetsera, who sought to avenge the girl's honor, and that the girl was herself a party to the attack, fearing her lover's defection. On these two foundations, between which, so far as the known facts are concerned, there is little to choose, has been erected a hundred structures of mystery and romance, of unbridled passion, of death-dealing devotion, of scandal and misery and sorrow which neither power nor wealth nor even time has been able to suppress.

In all its dreadful details it was a blow such as few men in any walk of life have ever been called upon to endure, and, it is said, the Emperor of Austria has never been the same since it fell upon him. He has never been able to crush the memory of it or to suppress surmises, though every physical evidence of the tragedy was utterly wiped out. The body of the un-

fortunate Marie Vetsera was buried in secret at midnight in the Cistercian Abbey at Heiligenkreuz, her mother was compelled to leave Vienna ostensibly to go to Venice and send notices of the girl's death from there. The lodge at Meyerling was torn down, the entire topography of the entire park changed and every physical reminder of the dark incident destroyed.

The tragedy of Rudolf has always been a mystery of death in the Hapsburg family, but there is another tragedy more mysterious still that haunts it and this is a mystery life. Archduke John Salvador, the nephew of the Emperor, was a man quite as promising and brilliant as the young heir had been, but like him too the ruin of his life was due to his passion for a woman below him in rank, Ludmilla Stubel, an actress who directly responsible for the mystery of John Orth, the name the Archduke took, when maddened by the impossibility of a recognized marriage between them, he deliberately defied all the traditions of his royal birth, threw away all his rank and titles, and boldly eloped with the woman he loved.

He built a ship in England and with himself and Ludmilla as the sole passengers, set out for South America. In July, 1890, they put in at Montevideo for supplies. Shortly afterward a terrific hurricane lashed the whole coast, causing great loss of life and of shipping. The ship of the Archduke never came to port, nor has the slightest authentic trace of its passengers or crew ever been discovered. Naturally on such a soil of mystery a dozen growths of romance have sprung up. There have been "John Orths" in South America by the dozen, while in New York, Chicago and Denver have each produced a claimant of the royal honors and estates of the vanished Archduke. In spite of all the evidence Francis Joseph has never, it is said, accepted as final the proofs of his kinsman's death, and has lived for twenty-five years in a constant state of anxiety as to his ultimate reappearance, a complicating factor in the family. It is said that he has had every fresh applicant investigated, and that no rumor, however vague, reaches him without being definitely run down. The estates of John Salvador were not allowed to revert to the crown, and were held for years awaiting their owner's return. Unhappy royal marriages are not so unusual as to be cited as an evidence of dynastic tragedy, but the marriage of Francis Joseph and the young Elizabeth of Bavaria, which began as a delicate love romance and ended in open scandal and assassination, stands out above even the most unhappy.

Elizabeth was only 16 and a great beauty when the young Emperor saw her and broke off his proposed marriage to her older sister in order to wed her. Although for a few years they were happy together, yet immediately on the royal bride's arrival in Vienna the causes were evident that later led to disaster. The proud Austrians did not consider the Bavarian Duchess a proper match for their emperor, and she was snubbed as much as they dared. Her love for horses and athletic exercises endeared her to the Hungarians but still further alienated the members of the court at Vienna. Quarrels with the emperor soon became so frequent and violent that they could not be hidden. The charming capriciousness of the young girl became the disconcerting eccentricity of the woman. She was exacting and suspicious, and the life of the court, with which the high-spirited young emperor surrounded himself, gave her ample excuse for jealousy.

Shortly after the birth of an heir to the throne, the ill-fated Rudolf, Elizabeth defied all royal conventions and left her husband. She fled to Corfu, and thence, hearing that Francis Joseph was in pursuit, to Minorca and to Madeira. Here the emperor abandoned the pursuit. For eight years the royal couple were openly estranged, but at the end of that time powerful influences effected an ostensible reconciliation. In order that the empress might share the coronation festivities that were to make the royal couple king and queen of Hungary, from this time forward Elizabeth officially lived in Vienna, though she was never really there, spending much of her time in her splendid villa in Corfu, now the property of Emperor William of Germany, and wandering around the country, her eccentricities amounting almost to dementia, and everywhere regarded as the most unhappy lady in Europe.

In September of 1898, when the empire was preparing for great festivities in connection with Francis Joseph's golden jubilee, another sensational tragedy laid its blight on the house of Hapsburg. Elizabeth had consented to take a part in these festivities and was preparing to set out from Geneva for Vienna when, while walking on the quay, she was stabbed to death by an Italian anarchist who seemed to have had no other motive for his crime than that the Grand Duke, whom he had expected to kill, had failed to put in an appearance.

As has been said, these great tragedies have been the high lights in the Emperor's life, because they have been concerned with those members of his family who occupied the most exalted rank. But in every family relationship he has been stricken. Hardly a brother or a sister, a nephew, a niece or a grandchild, but has brought him sorrow or disgrace. Princess Stephanie, the widow of Rudolf, became notorious for her excesses which her father-in-law was powerless to control. Her daughter, who pleaded with the Emperor to restrain Stephanie from marrying Count Lonyay, herself brought grief to the family by shooting her husband's paramour and exposing an ugly scandal. The scandal of Princess Louise of Coburg, while not in Francis Joseph's immediate family, yet concerned him deeply on account of her relationship to Stephanie and on account of the relationships of the Coburgs and Hapsburgs.

In his brothers and grandchildren the aged Emperor has found only trouble. Maximilian was executed and Archduke Louis Victor, after a shocking scene in public in which he was thrashed by an angry father, was obliged to flee the country. He was later confined in an asylum, a hopeless paralytic. Of his grandchildren his favorite, Elizabeth, daughter of his daughter Gisela, eloped with a young Duke deposed by his father, twice before, while her sister, Louise of Tuscany, after shocking indiscretions, published a book which gloried in the humiliations she had brought to her family.

This is not the only book which has brought chagrin to the Emperor, for the recently published "My Past," by the Countess Larisch, a niece of the Empress Elizabeth, raked up the whole story of Rudolf and all the other scandals dead and alive of the Austrian court. Love affairs too have been a popular source of family troubles for the lesser Hapsburgs as well as the great ones of the name. The most recent disaster was that of the Archduchess Isabella Marie, who two days after her marriage to Prince George of Bavaria left her husband and enrolled herself as a nurse in a hospital in Vienna, a post from which no amount of argument or pressure could dislodge her. Although the hand of the assassin has often been directed toward Francis Joseph, yet the spell of the curse, "may you live on in lonely, unbroken and horrible grief," seems always to have protected him. The first attempt against his life was in 1852, when a Hungarian, Joseph Libenyi, tried to cut his throat before his troops. The emperor's injuries were slight and the would-be assassin was hanged the next day. In 1866, as he

Orthodox Greek faith, calling themselves of Serbian nationality. There are also 450,000 Croatian Catholics and 600,000 Moslems. Of the 750,000 Servians, I doubt if there is barely one-third that would like to belong to Serbia. As for the Croats and Moslems, I do not believe there is one who is favorable to Serbia. Another fact must also be taken into consideration: the Croats have certain rights over Bosnia and Herzegovina, which were once parts of the Croatian Kingdom, and Austria could not under the circumstances part with these two provinces without stirring up a revolution on the part of the Croats and Slovenians. The assassination at Sarajevo will probably teach the Austrian diplomats to hurry with their internal reorganization and change the present dual government into the triangular form, giving the Slavs in Austria the same rights as those now enjoyed by the Hungarians. This accomplished, the Balkan question will take care of itself.

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THE TORCH OF THE BALKANS THAT HAS SET FIRE THROUGHOUT ENTIRE EUROPE

(Stephen Stozovic, editor of the "Narodni List," in the Everybody's Magazine, gives some of the underlying causes for the present European war. It is interesting to note that this article was written shortly before the crisis in Europe.) Ever since the news of the recent tragedy in the House of Hapsburg came from the Balkans, hosts of my American friends have come to me with questions: What was the underlying reason for the assassination of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, and his morganatic wife Sophie, Duchess of Hohenberg? Was it the signal for another uprising, another war in southeastern Europe? Is there any connection between the things which brought about this tragedy and the renewed disturbances and difficulties in Albania, of which the American Minister, the Honorable George Fred Williams, has written in connection with his resignation from office? What are the actual conditions in your country and throughout that volcanic center, the

Balkans, where so many storm-clouds gather and so many thunderbolts are loosed? It would fill many chapters of a large book if I were to attempt to go into details. But the principal causes and facts I will relate in a few hundred words, so that a stranger may thoroughly understand the complicated conditions. First of all, it must be understood that this assassination on the 28th of June had nothing in common with the Balkan question in its larger aspects, nor with the Albanian question, and will not probably have anything to do with the eventual solution of them. This happened in Bosnia, the most southerly province of Austria-Hungary, hemmed in between Dalmatia on the Adriatic side and Serbia to the eastward. It is exclusively a Serbian question. The hatching of the plot may be traced back to that day in 1908 when Austria-Hungary annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was already ripe in 1913, when Austrian shrewd diplomacy in the European concert of nations

succeeded in forbidding Serbia to extend its boundaries westward to the Adriatic, thus compelling that circumscribed country to trade with the outside world through Austrian ports. The most active and successful factor in this move in Balkan politics was the assassinated Prince Francis Ferdinand, and his success in forbidding Serbia access to the sea was probably the initial cause of his death. The young prince was killed by a subject of his own government, not a Serbian from Serbia, but a Serbian from Bosnia, a country taken from the Turks by Austria in 1878 and annexed 30 years later. Even after the Austrian occupation of 1878, the Servians of Bosnia and Herzegovina were anxious to be united with the Serbian kingdom. Already in 1900 the Serbian papers were laying much stress on the fact that those two countries were once a part of Serbia, and were insisting that they would some day again be annexed. The same thought at this time was taking deep root among the Serbian residents under the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, and the fire

was steadily fanned by agitators coming over the border from Serbia. Here we must recall the assassination of the Serbian King Alexander and Queen Draga in their own palace in Belgrade, the capital of Serbia, in 1903—one of the most spectacular and bloody tragedies of royalty in recent centuries. This pair belonged to the Obrenovich dynasty, who were always on good terms with the Austrian reigning house. The cause of their assassination was really the fact that they were too much pro-Austrian. Alexander was succeeded by King Peter, a descendant of the Kara-Georgovich dynasty. From that day we note a constantly increasing agitation in Serbia proper and on the part of the Servians in Austria, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where they were so predominant. In 1908, with the annexation of these provinces to Austria finally consummated, all the work of the agitators was lost, and the two countries were brought to the brink of war. Diplomacy thereupon used its pressure on Serbia to avert conflict. The Servians could not un-

der the circumstances have relied on Russia, their natural ally, for help, since the latter country was just healing the wounds of the Russo-Japanese war. The Servians in Bosnia had been so far inspired by the agitators to the demand that Bosnia and Herzegovina should be a part of Serbia, that they were already prognosticating a larger Serbia, which, united with Bulgaria, should occupy the entire Balkan peninsula from the Aegean Sea to the Adriatic, with the exception of Greece. To this Serbian dream of wider nationality Crown Prince Francis Ferdinand was the visible stumbling-block. It was his ambition to unite all the Slavic provinces of Austria, the south-easterly region along the Adriatic, and reform Austria-Hungary from a dual into a triad government—that is, the third part of the monarchy should comprise Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Istria, and Krain, as an equal factor with Hungary and Austria under the same crown. Actuated by this dream of his own, the assassinated Crown Prince used all

his influence to form the new Kingdom of Albania, in order to close the doors of the Adriatic Sea to the Servians forever. Behind the young murderer, Gabor Princip, who is only 18 years old, and behind the bomb-thrower Gaborovich, who attempted the assassination an hour earlier, stood an entire organization, the aim of which was to destroy this Man of the Iron Hand, heir to the throne, and enemy of the popaganda of the Serbian Nationalists. The headquarters of this organization is in Serbia, but it works through its agitators chiefly in the Austro-Hungarian provinces. It is very doubtful whether the Servians will gain anything through this assassination; for in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as in Hungary today, there are several different elements who are not desirous of uniting with the Servians. Indeed, on the contrary, they are definitely against Serbia and prefer the Austro-Hungarian sovereignty. Bosnia and Herzegovina have about 1,800,000 inhabitants. Of these there are 50,000 members of the

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