

PRETENDER DE LUXE FADES AWAY LEAVING ONLY MOURNING PRINCESSES AND RECORD AS SCULLION

Unromantic Detectives Show Prince Henri de Bourbon, etc., etc., was Plain Harold Schwarm of New Britain, Conn., the "Town Dude"

BUT HE CERTAINLY COULD MAKE LOVE ROYALLY AND TOSS A MEAN CUP OF TEA

Four Wives—at Least—and Long List of Dupes Who Heard His Story of Grandeur Attest to His "Nobility Complex"

THE remarkable—and, notwithstanding certain sordid details and some tragic consequences, the romantic—career of Harold Schwarm, New Britain factory hand and Trenton potwasher, who posed with indefinite success as a scion of the proud Bourbons and heir to the throne of France, is more than a momentary contribution to the gaudy of the public.

Even if the police manage to capture him and he is sent to jail for polygamy, his case will remain something more than a text for moralists. By right the case would seem to belong to the psychologists, particularly to those who are trying to determine what throws the balance between genius and madness. Its especial importance among the cases of the various nobility fakers exposed during the last five or six years lies in the fact that the story is now nearly complete from the beginning.

The pretensions of commoners to royal or noble birth have been known in almost every age, and are now ascribed by the new psychology mostly to a mental state called the Oedipus complex.

Sometimes such pretenders are able, as in the case of Oedipus himself, actually to get upon the throne and to found a dynasty, or, as in the instance of the Russian Dimitri, to get within the very shadow of the throne. More frequently they have been none too gently executed.

Democratic Genius Often Padded Family Tree

The nature of the complex varies and its influence on the men afflicted with it varies. Many great ones are accused of having developed it.

Shakespeare is charged by some of his commentators with pretending to nobility. Victor Hugo, though a democrat and revolutionist, made much of a spurious genealogy that connected him with the old noblesse. Swinburne, another revolutionist, boasted a descent from a medieval English King.

Sometimes the victim of the complex believes firmly in his exalted origins; sometimes the idea hangs on the borderline between delusion and desire. It is probable that "Prince Harold" belongs to the second class, and that there are moments when he is thoroughly frightened at the situations into which his day dreams have led him. On the other hand, there seems to be a hereditary element in the illusion.

"Prince Harold" was born to a poor family of German immigrants who had settled in New Britain, Conn. His mother is still living—in the second story of a small frame shack and supporting herself, as she has done most of her life, by sewing and housework for neighbors.

She was not able to give Harold much education. He went to the North End Grammar School, and that was all. Mrs. Schwarm's father had been a von something or other, but had lost the title, owing to drink and debt. Her husband, she says, once told a widow in Glastonbury, where they lived for a while, that he was a millionaire with vast estates, though he had not at that time even a job. Later he told his two sons, Harold and Herman, of their noble heritage, though he had not sufficient clothing to give them.

"Harold was a nervous boy," says his mother. "He was sharp and always associated with older people. He read every kind of book and could talk about anything. He always said he would be somebody, no matter how he had to go about it. "He was always a dressy boy," continued the mother a little proudly. "He has been very smart, I think, to make people believe he was a Prince."

When Harold was in his teens he married Miss Ethel Abetz, who was then twenty-one. Told that he should support her, he went to work in a machine shop. This appears to be more than he has ever done for the four or more other young women whom he suffered to become his "consort."

Fellow Workers Did Not Care Much for "Prince"

He was not popular in the machinery works. He already had breached the fact of his legal inheritance to some of his fellow workers. His habit of parading the main streets of New Britain in a dinner jacket, monocle, spats and walking stick made him known among the vulgar as "Dearie." One morning he reported in some such attire at the factory, which provoked his mates to hanging him to a beam on the seventeenth floor, stripping



Prince Louis Henri de Chateroux de Bussigny de Bourbon, otherwise plain Harold Schwarm, scullion de luxe



Catherine Lynn, of Dorchester, Mass., who had her marriage to "Prince Harold" annulled when she learned she was only one of several wives

Prince Harold bought most of his finery says: "That fellow might get away with it in New York, but not in New Britain. His nerve wasn't good for a dime here. He had been the town clown for years. We considered him harmless, but he had to pay cash."

Garbed Like the Lily He Began Scrubbing Pots

Some time after his disappearance from Hartford, which, except by his mother and the Abetz family, had scarcely been remarked, he floated into

Trenton and found work as a scrubber of pots in the kitchens of the Hotel Sterling. Undoubtedly there had been adventures in the interim, for Herman Scherer, the chef who employed him, observed that his clothes were of the finest cut and materials.

However, he was a good worker, and though the job was hard and unpleasant he never complained. On the testimony of both Scherer and Daniel Tonzoni, the hotel manager, his work was consistently better than any scullion's before his time or since. He spent most of his idle moments in a nearby barber shop. Every day

Martin Van Buren, a descendant of the President. He spoke of having abandoned for mysterious reasons a lucrative practice in Washington. But in Trenton, as in New Britain, he was regarded as the victim of an interesting but harmless aberration. No one took him seriously; no one, that is, except the women.

"How they did fall for his guile!" says Tonzoni. "They begged for it. And could you tell them to be careful, that this guy was just a poor nut? You could not."

How Many "Princesses" Did "Prince Harold" Make?

How many women became involved in Prince Harold's life in Trenton and

alone and penniless with a baby to support. The baby is now three years old and goes by the surname of his mother. The marriage has been annulled.

As for the abandoned girl, she says simply: "I have one consolation. The baby resembles me and not his father."

From here the career of "Prince Harold" becomes fragmentary again. He is seen on the New England roads in the company of those other Oedipus adventurers, "Lord and Lady Douglas Grey," burning along in a high-powered car of foreign make. The Oedipus complex has now apparently hit its stride. At Hartford the party wait while repairs are made to the car and the Prince de Bourbon converses with one of the mechanics of the garage, Herbert Riordan. Says Riordan: "He told me he had met Lord Grey in France. 'Lord Grey,' he says, 'was an English aviator and I was a French ace. Lord Grey has been assisting me in some very important negotiations with British and Japanese officials concerning the purchase of surplus airplanes. "We are going to buy these airplanes for \$200 apiece and sell them to Japan for \$5000 each."

Enter—Prince Henri, Garbed As Adviser to the Czar

This seems to have been the Prince's first appearance in the white Russian uniform blouse—now become famous. Lord Grey also was in uniform. He referred to the car jocularly as Abdul Azzid. As for the car, it was by no means a new one. "It looked to me," says Riordan, "like an old touring car fitted with a racing body."

The party, it seems, was on its way to Washington for a consultation with the Japanese Ambassador. They were to stop en route at the Hotel Taft in New Haven.

What reverses of fortune followed and how the destinies of Prince and Baronet became separated is still a matter for conjecture.

Anyway, the Prince next is discovered on Blackwells Island working more or less humbly as a cook and making

Old Doc Van der Vere Reports on a "Case"

FROM one of the papers found in the room of Prince Henri de Bourbon, alias Dr. Martin Van Buren, alias Dr. Reginald Van der Vere:

"Henry Porter Fynck—Born in Wayne County, 67 years of age—Suffered first shock in April 1918—Dr. Skinner of Brady, and 141st St. attended—Diagnosis—arterio-sclerosis with suicidal intentions. History—Born in Wayne County 1854—worked for N. Y. Central thirty-five years on their boats, suffered first shock April 1918, but recovered and went back to work, but suffered relapse after six months—Present address 363 Edgecomb Ave., where he has lived twelve years, is insured in Metropolitan and Prudential Life Insurance Co. and is member of Cattaraugus Tribe No. 95, Improved Order of Red Men. Member for three years. "Reginald M. Van der Vere, M. D."

when he should have been stirring the soup. I had to let him go.

"I would like to say one thing. He is no fool. He is a bright fellow."

We next find that "the Prince," wearing his white blouse and cordon, before Magistrate Simpson in the West Side Police Court in New York.

"Yes," he is saying, "I am the first Prince of France, the last of my line, and the first Bourbon to have ever been in a cell."

Showing here that Harold Schwarm's reading of history has doubtless been profound but erratic.

"I have been fourteen years in the Russian Army and later was chief of the bodyguard of the late Czar Nicholas. I have fifty-three decorations and orders, including one from Pope Benedict for having protected various Catholic churches in Russia.

"When I led the Russian Armies into Persia I was at the head of my troops. I have been five times wounded. The muscles of my left arm are paralyzed."

After this dignified statement of affairs the Magistrate "honorably discharged" him. The Prince had been accused of threatening to run a detective through with a rapier.

Frank J. McEwan had been engaged to defend him. McEwan's story of his acquaintance with the "Prince" is interesting.

Lost Russian Accent In an American Jail

"A friend, who, like many others, had been deceived by this remarkable impostor and poseur, introduced him to me, and I took his case," he says. "I had never seen him before and I have never seen him since."

"There is nothing whatever in his threat to have me bring an action for \$50,000 against the City of New York for false imprisonment. It is ridiculous, as far as I am concerned, at least, for I would have nothing to do with him."

"When I learned that he was being supported by his wife, that was enough for me. His wife, who seemed a very decent young Jewish woman, came to me the night before I defended Schwarm in Magistrate Simpson's court.

"I asked her if the Prince spoke English well enough for me to understand him or whether she would have to act as interpreter. She assured me that he spoke excellent English, but that he had an accent."

"I visited the man in jail and he poured at me a flood of New Yorkese, interspersed with East Side idioms that no man could have picked up in the two years he said he had been in this country. There was no Russian accent in his talk either."

"When I spoke to his wife about this later, she said that his accent only cropped out when he was much excited. I am frank to say that at first I had no idea he was a scullion. I could hardly believe that his wife was aware of the man's true character, but after living with him eighteen months I do not see how she could remain undeceived."

"From what I have learned of the man, I believe he is the victim of an aberration. To many minds he is a harmless nut, excepting for the poor girls he has deceived."

Oujia Board Left Behind In Deserted "Throne Room"

Next we learned that the Prince had fled New York. Too much publicity and the story of having made his escape from Russia in a barrel of potatoes proved fatal to whatever plan he may have had. Detectives found nothing in his apartment but some of the "Princess" clothing, extra-whisky flasks, a Oujia board, a bottle of ipsec and the little tin sword His Highness used to carry when he took the air on Riverside Drive.

Last night the "Princess" said defiantly that he was far, far away and that she would soon join him, if she could keep clear of the police.

Two strange details remain to be added. First, a man sought McEwan, declared himself to be a Persian gentleman of high family and said he had actually seen the Prince leading Russian troops into his country. Second, on the day of the Prince's flight a gentleman of military demeanor appeared at police headquarters to protest against the impostor and to announce himself as the only living descendant of Louis XVIII. He gave his name as "Napoleon de Hemout," showing here the same eccentricity in reading history as Harold himself. It is hardly necessary to mention that the name Napoleon has never been assumed by any member of any branch of the House of Capet.



Harold in his uniform as "advisor to the Czar"



"Prince Harold" strolling on Riverside Drive, New York, with his dog and pet monkey



Lillian Wilkomerson, who said "Yes" to Harold and who now wonders what her number as "Princess" is



The "royal chamber" in New York after the "pretender de luxe" decamped suddenly. Note the ouija board, and empty flasks and discarded slippers

how many of them he may have married is not yet known. Perhaps it will never be.

In connection with the name he had assumed at this time, it is interesting to recall that President Martin Van Buren had a son who was known as "Dandy Jack" Van Buren and that he rivaled in resplendency and fastidiousness any of the European beaux of the preceding generation. He was almost as active as his father in politics of the day, and was for a while Attorney General of New York.

Once More Haughty Noble Has Kitchen as Kingdom

Another time he is chef at the Brownsville Hospital in East New York, where some wife is working as a laboratory technician. Here he calls himself "Reginald Van der Vere."

"Yes I remember him well," says Dr. Harry J. Moss, formerly superintendent of the hospital. "He had recommendations from several good families, and let me tell you he was the goods as a chef. I'll hire him as my family cook any old time he needs a job."

Deserting From New England Deserving His Girl Bride

They lived a while at Bridgewater as Dr. and Mrs. Van Buren. Then suddenly the "doctor" deserted her. A child was born shortly afterward and christened John Van Buren.

When "Mrs. Van Buren's" husband had been identified with the dishwasher of Trenton her relatives refused to have more to do with her. She was left