

The Dance That Saved Her Noble Family and Won Forgiveness

How the "Madcap Princess" Esterhazy—Once Exiled for Her Extravagances—Won Fortune by a "Painted" Dance More Daring Even Than Her Private Pranks and Bought Back the Old Palace for Her Father Just as the Movie Heroine Does the

Does the "Mortgaged Farm"



The Beautiful Princess Alexa Marie Angelique of Esterhazy and Galantha, Who Has Gotten Back Into Noble Family Favor Through a Dance in Which Paint Was the Main Costume.

VIENNA, August 20. THE fate of the many princesses and royal duchesses of Europe who lost their high estate and their luxuries as the result of the war has not ceased to be of absorbing interest to all of Europe. In many cases, it must be said, this interest is not at all sympathetic, the new order of things abroad not being as it was in the days when the peasant looked upon the princess as someone of a higher kind of humanity, to be bowed before and honored whether worthy of the honor or not.

There is one little princess, however, upon whom the attention of Europe just now is focussed with not only a great, new feeling of kindness but of real wonder as well.

This is the pretty little Alexa Marie Angelique, Princess of Esterhazy and Galantha, who in the days just before the war was called "The Madcap Princess" and was looked upon as the wildest, most unconventional, autocratic and spendthrift offspring of the Hungarian nobility.

The house of Esterhazy and Galantha is one of the oldest of the feudal families of Hungary, its history dating back to the beginning of Hungarian history. For centuries the Esterhazys had been the lords of great principalities, owning the peasants body and soul. In the old days its princes exercised the disgraceful *lex primogenitus*, the "right of the first night," without mercy. This was the privilege, granted by custom to the lords of Hungary, to demand the attendance upon himself of every peasant bride in his countryside immediately after she stepped down from her nuptial altar.

The Princess Alexa, who was only eighteen years old when old Francis Joseph died and thus opened the way for the crumbling of the Austrian Empire, had been for three years before noted for her daring defiance of all the laws of conventionality. Beautiful, accomplished, vivacious and imperious, she had brought down upon herself the disfavor of her aristocratic parents and uncles and aunts by many indiscretions such as are not permitted the daughters of the nobility. For instance, she once attended a party given

on the stage of the Vienna Opera House without a chaperone. At this party, it was whispered, opera stars bathed in glass bowls of champagne for the amusement of their escorts—young men of great families, who regularly participated in such Lucullian debaucheries.

At another time Alexa shocked all Austria by announcing that she had fallen in love with a young non-commissioned officer in the army who had attracted her attention while parading before her father at an inspection.

For this prank the dignified, austere Prince Esterhazy, her father, turned her out of the ancestral palace. But he did not actually turn her out into the streets—he just banished her to Vienna, where she promptly moved into, with her maids and ladies in waiting, the town mansion of the Esterhazys at No. 4 Wainerstrasse, in Vienna.

Here, mistress of one of the largest palaces in the gay Austrian capital, the "Madcap Princess" started out to upset all the traditions of her noble station. Here in America some person would say, in the vernacular, that "she, painted the twon red." There were none who knew her who would say, plainly, that the little princess was really "bad"—just that she was foolish. It was said her household cost her something like five thousand gulden a month—\$25,000. She could well afford this stupendous sum for household expenses, since she was heiress to the fortunes of both the Galanthas and the Esterhazys, which of late years had become combined—and had, in her own right, the vast fortune of the mother who was dead.

She gave great balls, at which all the younger officers of the army were her guests—with their "sweethearts" from the stage world; the former non-commissioned officer soon wore her—or her experiment proved a failure, and she took on new proteges, whom she kept humble at her feet, much as did Cleopatra, and whom she dismissed with the same lack of ceremony and regret which characterized the same

"The daring impulses that once shocked Vienna now are turned to good account with a purpose in life to guide them."



The Princess—Standing—in Her Painted Costume.

ruptcy and the sad plight of the penniless Esterhazy and Galantha family, living in one suite of rooms in their great country castle, struggling each day to procure enough food for the next meal. But there were so many other nobles in a similar plight that Vienna did not ponder over the plight of the noble Esterhazys very long or give more than passing wonder as to what had become of the Princess Alexa, whose Wainerstrasse palace had been appropriated by the new government for a bureau headquarters.

It was only the other day that a once rich Viennese, now travelling in South America with his family, exiles from their native land, solved the mystery of the fate of the "Madcap Princess."

He found her in a theatre in Buenos Ayres—on the stage, premier danseuse of a company which has startled all South America by the daring poses of its principal dancer.

The dance being interpreted by the graceful princess was the story in Terpsichore of the flame that lures the moth—a startling fantasy that carries its simile to lengths which would not be tolerated upon the American stage, but which the audiences of South America proclaimed artistic as well as amazing—idealistic as well as a bit of sensational realism.

The "flame," in the person of the Princess, swathed in shimmering silks of brightest red hues, comes to life in front of a silken curtain, also of graduated shades of red.

From each corner of the stage there dances toward her, while she sways to the rhythm of maddening music, the "moths"—young dancers, each garbed in silks of varied hue.

Closer and closer the moths dance—soon they begin to dart in and out of the circle of red made by the swaying "flame." As each moth darts in she is seared a bit before she can draw away—a bit of her silken robe drops aside, caught by the "flame."

There can be but one climax; each moth is caught at last and falls, fluttering, at the feet of the "flame," her last bit of covering gone, her bare body quivering in the "death" that is punctuated by the weird strains from the violins in the orchestra.

Staged by the great South American ballet master, Sergastchenko, this dance of the "Moths and the Flame" has been seen in almost every South American capital. It has attracted great crowds and everywhere the "premier danseuse" has been the centre of attention. Her rare beauty and grace has won her hosts of admirers.

The dancers who cavort around the Princess wear no clothes—their bare



The Princess With a Few More Clothes On.

bodies are merely painted with weird designs that take the place of clothing.

None knew, until her identity was exposed by her former countryman, that the dancing girl—the "Flame"—was none other than the "Madcap Princess," Alexa of Esterhazy and Galantha. No one in Vienna knew what had become of her, and she bore her new fame as a dancing girl under one of the less known names that came down to her from her ancestors.

But that is not the most surprising part of it all.

Back in Vienna the Prince Esterhazy and the remainder of his family are living again in the great palace that stands in the centre of their estates. The servants have come back and the dignity of the family has been restored. The Esterhazy fortunes have long seemed to be remarkably improved since the cataclysm of the empire, and other nobles have wondered at their good fortune.

Those who now know the secret of the "Madcap Princess" can explain this of the Esterhazy fortune. The Princess earned by her dancing almost a fortune during her South American tour. Last week, the theatre managers declared, salary amounts to what in Vienna would be the ransom of a king, and weekly salary is just what has ransomed from poverty, from absolute want, proud father and uncles and aristocratic aunts who not so many years ago expelled her from their castles because she insisted in being the "Madcap Princess."

To-day the Prince of Esterhazy and Galantha would hurl quick vengeance upon anyone who would speak with criticism of the daughter whom he banished from his home. Those same old aunts and uncles would wax indignant at the least mention of her "Madcap" days. There are some who declare the Princess is just having her little revenge—the most piquant revenge of all; others, however, declare that she is a true princess and that those "artistic" impulses that made her the "shock" of all Vienna in the old imperial days now happily turn to good account when there is a purpose in life to mould and guide them.



A Striking Scene in the "Madcap Princess's" Dance That So Pleas'd South America. The Male Dancer Is the Famous Ballet Master, Sergastchenko.

Egyptian queen. Old Emperor Joseph sent for her and scolded her, but his frown turned to a smile before her pretty dimples and he sent her away with a warning—which she promptly disregarded by giving a masque ball to which she invited only army officers who were known to have had at least one duel in their careers over the favor of a woman. A great scandal ensued when the Viennese papers the next day printed the list of these guests as a "directory of duellists"—an "insolence" which the "Madcap Princess" punished by persuading a group of young officers to set their men upon the newspaper plant to wreck it.

This was too much for the old Emperor, and he summoned her father, Prince Esterhazy, who was then the Counsellor to the

Emperor, and demanded that the "Madcap Princess" be subjected to parental authority even to the extent, if necessary, of being shut up in a "retreat"—confined in some isolated cottage on the Esterhazy estates and kept under guard.

Discussion of the matter was still in progress when war was declared. Prince Esterhazy was appointed a minister and called to undertake more grave duties than the disciplining of his daughter and, for the moment, the escapades of the "Madcap Princess" were forgotten.