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ATTEMPTED MURDER OF COLONEL ROOSEVELT.

THE attempt to assassinate Colonel Roosevelt once more brings up the question of moral and legal responsibility for these crazy attacks upon public men (especially in the United States) and of the best way for society to protect itself against notoriety-hunting cranks and other lunatics now left at large. The line of demarcation between sanity and insanity is impossible to be drawn because, like opposite colours in the hands of a clever chiaroscuroist, the one fades insensibly into the other. The frontier between criminal responsibility and irresponsibility seems doomed to be forever a matter for difference of opinions between "experts" (save the mark) and for lawyers to wrangle over. Under these circumstances, the question seems to be legitimately one chiefly for society's self-protection. Three presidents of the United States murdered, and the murder of a fourth attempted: a mayor of Chicago murdered and the murder of a mayor of New York attempted besides other murders to be numbered by thousands is an awful toll upon human life. The fact that Schrank followed Colonel Roosevelt and shot him in a state in which capital punishment has been abolished, suggests method at least in his madness.

The question of moral responsibility for murders of public men by "cranks" has also its difficulties. Schrank says that he deemed it his duty after much consideration of the situation to put Col. Roosevelt out of the way. He was living at his home address at that time, he said, but soon after he had a dream in which former President McKinley appeared to him. He was told by McKinley in this dream that it was not Czolgosz who murdered him but Roosevelt. He said McKinley, in this dream, told him that the blood was on Roosevelt's hands, and that Roosevelt had killed him so that he might become President. Schrank said he was a person more deeply impressed by what he read in the newspapers than others, and that, after having this dream, he was more convinced than ever that he should free the country from the menace of Roosevelt's ambition.

It is certainly strange how quickly one crime of this kind follows another and as the murderers have little in common but their peculiar form of madness, which seems to regard notoriety as equivalent to fame, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the sensational press reports of one crime suggest the idea of another to weak-minded criminals.

The stupid crime will certainly make friends and probably votes for the ex-president. It is impossible for his most strenuous political opponents to withhold sympathy for Colonel Roosevelt and his family.

GERMANY AND STANDARD OIL.

WHAT may be called the great powers of Europe to-day are Great Britain, Germany, France, Austria, the Standard Oil Company, and Italy. Just now only two of these great powers are actually at war with each other, Germany and the Standard Oil Company. The German people have little love for the Standard Oil Company, and the German Government seems to be totally destitute of natural affection for that benevolent despotic monopoly. The Government has declared war, but has yielded to the almost universally effective temptation to fight the devil with fire, or in other words to set up one monopoly to knock down another. The Kaiser's Government is forming the German National Oil Company to have a capital of from \$15,000,000 to \$20,000,000, with a small bond issue. The capital is to be used largely for the acquisition of three wholesale oil organizations in Germany, comprising the Deutsche Bank's German Petroleum Company, which handles Russian and Roumanian oils; the Olex Company, which is the selling agency for the Austrian producers, and the Standard Oil Company's German-American Petroleum Company. It is understood that the first two of these concerns will sell readily, as they are in a hopeless position against the operations of the Standard Oil Company.

The Dresdner Bank, the Disconto-Gesellschaft and the Bleichroeder Bank have declined to enter the banking syndicate which has been formed to father the proposed company. A possible explanation of the attitude of these banks is that they are connected with the German Oil Company, which recently came to terms with the Standard Oil Company, after a ruinous war. They profess grave doubts as to whether the scheme proposed by the government can be worked against the opposition of the Standard Oil Company. They say that Russia, Roumania and Galicia do not offer a supply of oil which can be depended upon, and they are doubtful whether producers in those countries would venture to make a contract running any length of time.

There may be more behind the German Government's scheme than mere zeal for cheap oil for the people. The German Imperial Navy, like all the other navies of the world, is destined to use oil fuel instead of coal and the Government may not like the idea of being dependent upon the Standard Oil Company or any foreign monopoly, however benevolent, for its oil. Whether Germany can depend upon Russia, Roumania and Galicia for oil, or whether it can depend upon making an ally of the Standard Oil Company also, in case of war with either of the non-oleaginous powers, is another question.