

## A PRINCESS OF ROMANCE.

Of the strange life-stories that may be gleaned from that portion of the "Almanach de Gotha" dealing with dynastic and personal facts, few are more romantic than that which has just been concluded by the demise of Gertrude von Hanau, the widow of the last Elector of Hesse. Her titular description, taken from the German Civilstands-register, or official obituary record, is in itself the skeleton of a three-volume novel. It runs as follows:—"Gertrude, Princess of Hanau, Countess of Schaumburg, nee Faulkenstein, divorcee Lehmann."

This interesting personage, who died a few days ago at Prague, in her seventy-seventh year, was the daughter of a well-to-do wine-merchant established at Bunn about the commencement of the present century. Endowed by nature with extraordinary personal attractions, she had several offers of marriage whilst yet in her teens, and bestowed her hand, some fifty-eight years ago, upon a Prussian Paymaster called Lehmann, then serving in the 7th Lancers, a regiment quartered at Marienwerder, in West Prussia. Shortly after her union to this person, she paid a visit to her parents in her native town, and during her stay with them made the acquaintance of Frederick William, Electoral Prince of Hesse and a captain of Prussian Cavalry at Bonn. The young officer, who had quitted his father's Court in consequence of a quarrel with the reigning Elector's mistress, Countess Reichenbach, and was, oddly enough, notorious for his disapproval of princely peccadilloes, fell desperately in love with "Mrs. Captain Lehmann," and soon proposed to make practical recantation of his high principles in her favour by carrying her off from her husband. The fair Gertrude, however, promptly gave him to understand that her views were exclusively matrimonial. She was, indeed, already a wife, but well aware that, when the happiness of a German Heir Apparent is at stake, "il y a des accommodements avec le ciel," she suggested to his Serene Highness that her husband, Lehmann, was a sensible and manageable fellow, open to reasons of a certain sort, and that in all probability a little judicious persuasion would convince him of the expediency of parting with his handsome spouse—for a consideration. Negotiations were opened between the husbands *in esse and in posse*, resulting in a hard cash transaction whereby Lehmann became the happy possessor of £15,000 sterling. Having pocketed this comfortable little competence he proceeded to institute a divorce suit against his wife upon the plea of "incompatibility of temperament," and as soon as the decree of "Scheidung" had been pronounced, Gertrude Faulkenstein, ex-Lehmann, was led to the altar by her "All-Serenist" suitor, who a few months later conferred upon her the title of Countess von Schaumburg. The wedding took place in the autumn of 1831, the year in which popular discontent with the Elector William's regime in Hesse compelled that singularly dissolute potentate to nominate his son co-Regent—a step which practically amounted to his abdication in favour of Frederick William. Frau von Schaumburg, therefore—at that time in the zenith of her beauty—had not long to wait for the position and power to which she had aspired when she resolved to part from the husband of her girlhood's choice, who, by the way, had been compelled to throw up his commission in the Prussian service by his brother officers, and vanished into dishonourable obscurity with the price of his infamy. When she took up her abode, however, in the Hessian capital, her new mother-in-law, the Electress—an aunt of the present German Emperor—refused to sit in the same box with her at the Court theatre, whereupon Frederick William gave orders that his mother should thenceforth not be admitted to that place of entertainment. Towards the end of the year the aged Electress, ignoring her son's prohibition, paid a visit to the theatre one evening, and was enthusiastically cheered by the audience upon her appearance in a private box. This demonstration was continued in the streets when she left the house, and led to the populace being charged by the Elector's Body Guard, with drawn sabres, at his Serene Highness' express command. The Hessians never forgave their Elector for giving this barbarous order. By causing his subjects to be ridden and cut down for cheering his own mother—a venerable and deeply respected Princess—Frederick William utterly destroyed his popularity in the realm of his ancestors.

Between 1831 and 1850 Countess Schaumburg bore her husband seven sons and two daughters. Early in the latter year she was created Princess of Hanau by the Emperor of Austria. On the Elector's death in 1875 she inherited the whole of his enormous fortune, invested in State securities and railway stock, which will now be divided amongst her eight surviving children, the youngest of whom is a lieutenant in the 4th Regiment of Austrian Lancers.

## A SINGULAR SUIT.

AN ACTION IN WHICH THE KING OF THE BELGIANS IS PLAINTIFF.

Boston, July 30.—There is a suit now pending in the Supreme Court of Massachusetts in which Leopold the Second, King of the Belgians, is plaintiff, involving about \$340,000. There is a bill in equity brought by the King in his sovereign capacity against Leon Barnard, a Belgian subject, Henry Lee, Charles Fairchild, Charles A. Whittier & al. At Boston, the three latter being well-known bankers and proprietors of the Union safe deposit concern. The defendant Leon Barnard was a subject officer and servant of the plaintiff and the custodian of money and securities belonging to the plaintiff derived from revenues of the church and other sources, and was obliged to account and deliver such money and securities received by him in March, 1881. Barnard, as custodian, had in his possession money and property amounting to \$1,700,000, and is alleged to have converted some to his own use and

fled from the kingdom, being since a fugitive from justice. About a year ago Barnard made his appearance in Canada, and it is claimed that from there he came to Boston and leased a vault of the remaining defendants, in which it is believed and alleged that he deposited a large amount of the stolen property. The bill requires the defendants to make a disclosure of the fact if a vault was leased by the defendants to Barnard, and upon what terms and conditions it was so leased. An injunction has been obtained against the defendants, restraining them from allowing the said Barnard, or any one in his behalf, admittance to said vault, or from removing or interfering in any way with its contents. Barnard is the man recently arrested in Havannah at the instance of the Belgian Government on the above charge.

## PERPETUAL INSURANCE.

A peculiarity in fire insurance prevails in Philadelphia which I believe is not followed by the companies of other cities. I mean the perpetual insurance of public buildings and dwelling houses. On the former, the rate varies according to exposure, dangerous business followed, or dangerous surroundings. But on dwelling houses not in risky neighborhoods two per cent. is the invariable rate. Some old houses in our city have in this way been insured for a century. If, however, said buildings are turned into stores or manufactories of a hazardous kind the company cancels the risk or increases the premium. The Lycoming, a mutual company, with an agency in Philadelphia, sought to improve on this system and limited their perpetual cycle of time, to one hundred years. I saw one of their policies issued January, 1878, to run till January, 1978. It was on a store at 3 per cent. and an addition of three dollars for survey and policy, no addition being required till the expiration of the century. Alas! for the vanity of human calculations, in three years afterwards the Lycoming was forced to suspend business and cease to be an underwriter. All the substantial Philadelphia companies issue perpetual policies on dwelling houses. On some old houses you see the Badges of the Philadelphia Contributionship, the Hand-in-Hand and the Green Tree badge of the Mutual. It should be noted that these two companies insure buildings only. The Fire Association and the United Firemen are the companies who now put badges on the houses insured.—*Chicago Argus*.

## WHAT DOES ENGLAND FIGHT FOR?

The London correspondent of the New York Times says:—"The chief trouble in Egypt arises out of the Suez Canal, the freedom of which to England is a matter of such importance that no British Government would hesitate about undertaking a great war for its defence. Sir Wilfrid Lawson the other night in the Commons, charged the Government with fighting Egypt on commercial grounds and then sneered at them for their mercenary motives. But what does England generally fight for? And what would she be with her sea-paths blocked? It is worth while at the moment to examine the immediate 'British interests' in Egypt apart from all other considerations. The English capital expended and sunk in public works at Alexandria and Cairo amounts to £25,000,000 (not dollars), and the interest of English commerce 'staked in Egypt' is estimated at £100,000,000. England's investment in the Suez Canal apart from the question of right of way is a great source of revenue. English capital has made the East flourish, and English life throughout many a distant village and city is dependent upon the prestige of English power. The moment evidence of its waning travels through the barbaric States, there are not wanting millions ready to test the report of fallen greatness. Such were the reputations of Ministers like Palmerston and Beaconsfield, that had Arabi been dealing with those Ministers he would never have pushed his revolt against Khedive, Sultan, and the Anglo-French control to the point of the sword. Orientals do not understand the 'moral force' which Mr. Gladstone has so long upheld. They worship power; they obey physical strength; they interpret generous actions unbacked by guns as weakness; they see in a Minister who issues an ultimatum without following it up a chief who cannot or dare not fulfil his threats."

BRITISH TRADE RETURNS.—The British Board of Trade Returns for the month of June shows a fair improvement both in the exports and imports. The total value of British and Irish exports during the past month was 20,118,000*l.* against 18,804,000*l.* in the corresponding period of 1881, being an increase of 1,313,600*l.*, or 7 per cent. In the imports the aggregate last month was 31,572,000*l.* compared with 30,865,000*l.* in June last year, or an increase of 2 per cent. The details both on the import and export side show less fluctuation than might have been expected from the political disturbances in the East. Thus the exports of cotton piece goods have fallen only 1 to 1 per cent. in both quantity and value, and the only important destination for which there is a decrease in Egypt. The exports of worsted stuffs are about 15 per cent. less in both quantity and value, and there is a considerable falling off in linen and jute yarn, but linen piece goods, woollen and worsted yarns, and woollen cloths show a substantial improvement. Coal and coke have increased about 10 per cent. in both bulk and price, while iron and steel show an addition of 5 per cent. in quantity and 14 per cent. in value. Among the imports, raw cotton has increased about 10 per cent. in both quantity and value, there being a large addition in the arrivals from India, and a comparatively small reduction in those from Egypt. The tea imports have increased nearly 100 per cent., the shipments being chiefly from China. There is also a considerable addition in raw silk, flax, coffee and tobacco. The imports of corn have fallen off about 7 per cent., a result due, of course, to the better harvest prospects.

## WOMEN CLERKS.

The London *Daily Telegraph* says:—"There are many advantages in women clerks. They are found to be punctual and docile. Their good conduct and decorum after office hours insure a steady attendance not broken in upon by 'Derby headaches' or the drowsiness that follows nocturnal dissipation. They have not that genius for getting into debt which is an indication of superiority displayed by their male colleagues. It is also worthy of note that the sluggishness of promotion, which is one of the difficulties of all official careers where men are concerned, is got rid of in the case of women. No matter how closely they may restrict themselves to their work from ten to four, the clever, clear-headed, vigorous young girls who are Government clerks are ready enough for society in the evening. They enter it with freshness of feeling, because they have honestly earned relaxation, and the fact that they are pecuniarily independent enables them to meet men frankly and on equal terms. Their very success in examination and in office life implies their quickness, brightness, and good health, and there are the qualifications that tell in a sweetheart and wife as well as in a post office clerk. The result is that they get married off with reasonable celerity, and thus the official field is kept clear by the weeding out of brides, who relinquish red-tape for orange blossoms, new girls coming in to take their place. For those, however, who cannot or will not marry, the office duties provide a quiet, steady, and decorous career. Most live at home; many help to support a relative; all have shown by their docility and steadiness that a young woman is ready to work hard for half the pay that will content a young man."

THE EGYPTIAN ARMY.—An Egyptian correspondent of *The Paris Bourse* gives a gloomy description of the Egyptian army: "It is," he says, "a most pitiful sight, the soldiers have a most awkward appearance, and could certainly not stand their ground with civilized troops. When out for a walk, as soon as they reach the outskirts of the city, they take off their boots, throw them across their backs and start knitting stockings, which they afterwards sell for a few coppers. Half of the officers cannot read, and the mystery is how they teach their soldiers. Out in the country the natives are greatly excited, and Europeans are compelled to keep themselves constantly on guard. All the wealthy bankers and families are emigrating from Cairo."

INCENDIARY PREVENTIVE.—The Report of the committee on Incendiarism and Arson shows that there are now 115 subscribing companies whose united subscriptions amount to \$145,200. During the past year 141 rewards were offered by the Provisional Committee, amounting to \$46,950. Since the fund was subscribed in 1873, the total number offered is 1,245, aggregating the large sum of \$475,950. Thirteen rewards amounting to \$3,700 were paid during the year, convicting fifteen incendiaries. The total amount paid since the fund was raised is 78 at a cost of \$23,425; convicting 123 incendiaries, ten of whose sentences were for life; the average sentences of the remainder being over 5½ years. If we exclude the life sentences it would take a single prisoner 636 years and 3 months to satisfy the demands of the law in reference to the others.

SCENE.—A French court of law; case—an interesting family quarrel. The other heirs are bringing suit to restrain a young prodigal who is making "ducks and drakes" of his fortune. Counsel for plaintiffs: "Your honor, this dissipated youth is emptying his patrimony into the abyss of the race-course. He has wagered hundreds of thousands of francs on his horses, and, what is worse, infinitely worse, your honor, is the fact that they invariably lose." Counsel for defendant: "Your honor, we deny the allegations of the opposing counsel *in toto*. We intend to prove that we have invariably bet against our own horses. We have receipts from jockeys whom we have employed to throw sundry and divers races. We have documents here showing in the most conclusive manner that we have been disgracefully expelled from many sporting clubs for tricky management of races." Pulls his client through triumphantly.

BAPTIZED UNDER FIRE.—Candidates for baptism are not generally escorted to the water by an armed guard, in order to keep them from running away. An exception to the usual custom was recently made at Frankfort, Ky., in the case of about thirty inmates of the Penitentiary, who had been led by the exhortations of Evangelist Barnes to see the error of their way and to repent. These converts rode in wagons to the river, the guards accompanying them with loaded rifles, and ready to pour a volley of cold lead into any believer who should take a notion either to swim away or to run. The immersion was performed in safety, and in as decorous a manner as was consistent with the extraordinary circumstances. The baptized brethren were duly returned to their places within the prison walls, and the Penitentiary echoed with the sounds of praise, as did the jail at Phillippi, where Paul and Silas sang hymns at night eighteen centuries ago.

PLATE-SWIMMING.—Plate swimming is a new method of swimming with the aid of plates adjusted to the hands and feet, that enables one to attain a speed far beyond that of professionals. They were invented by R. H. W. Dunlap, who gave an exhibition at New York, and consists of thin sheets of veneer, fastened together in such a manner as to combine strength and lightness. They are oval in shape, and bear a resemblance to palettes. Those attached to the feet are provided with a sort of rubber sandals, and are secured by straps similar to those of the old-fashioned skate. Their size is seventeen inches in length and fifteen inches in breadth. The hand "plates" are secured by single straps, and are about ten inches long and seven broad.