

isters of the local Hungarian Government—a very great personage indeed.

The Duke had two sons, Karl the elder, his heir, and Gustav. Karl was a disappointment; and gossip was very free with his name as that of a morose, dissipated libertine, whose notorious excesses had culminated in an attachment for Madame d'Artelle, a very beautiful Frenchwoman who had come recently to the city.

Of Gustav, the younger, no one could speak too highly. He was all that his brother was not. As clever as he was handsome and as good as he was clever, "Gustav of the laughing eyes," as he was called, was a favourite with every one, men and women alike, from his father downwards. He was such a paragon, indeed, that the very praises of him started a prejudice in my mind against him.

I did not believe in paragons—men paragons, that is. Cynicism this, if you like, unworthy of a girl of three and twenty; but the result of a bitter experience which I had better relate here, as it will account for many things, and had close bearing upon what was to follow.

As I told General von Erlanger, I am not a "usual person;" and the cause is to be looked for, partly in my natural disposition and partly in my upbringing.

My uncle Gilmore was a man who had made his own "pile," and had "raised" me, as they say in the South, pretty much as he would have "raised"