

Napoleon's Second Wife an Imperial Victim

(From the Nation, London, Eng.)

"An Imperial Victim: Marie Louise, Archduchess of Austria, Empress of the French, Duchess of Parma." By Mrs. Edith E. Cuttill. (Stanley Paul. Two vols. 24s. net.)

The marriage of Marie Louise and Napoleon was a desperate thing. Napoleon himself, could he have divined but a very little of the future, would not for an instant have contemplated the Austrian alliance. As for the young bride, our sympathies of necessity go with her. Rightly did she describe herself (on the subject of the faithful Monsieur) as having been "cast in prey to the Minotaur." There she sat, a fresh-looking, plump, obedient (German schoolgirl of 18, waiting to be disposed of by her father, who, if the most easy-going of monarchs, was scarcely the most considerate of parents. The man he chose for her husband just inflicted upon Austria two tremendous and humiliating defeats, and in her not very brilliant little mind she must have wondered why her innocent hand should be given in reward.

But, as a child of the house of Hapsburg, she had already learned that she would be married when and to whom it should be pleasing to Papa Francis; and off she went to Compiègne to meet the Minotaur, having first been united to him by proxy in Vienna. Considering that the marriage was purely a piece of state policy, it resulted far more successfully than might have been anticipated. Napoleon, to be just to him, surrounded Marie Louise with every care, heaped presents on her, and did his utmost to make her happy. He took her about with him more than he had taken Josephine, honored her in public, and caressed her in private. At 41, despite the struggles he had already endured, his vitality was still immense; and though he had indeed begun to show signs of boredom, and his humor was becoming sarcastic, he was generally charming with his bride, and always affectionate and gentle towards her. He was doubly tender with her after she had borne him the heir of his imperial dynasty.

Marie Louise herself was essentially banal. All the Austrian princesses underwent a severe training in the schoolroom, but in her case education had done little to deepen or fortify a shallow and feeble character, and it may safely be said that never had any understanding of Napoleon. She was neither awed nor fascinated by him. The measure of her intrinsic littleness is found in some of the first letters she wrote to her father after marriage. She tells him that she and Napoleon "suit each other perfectly," and that the most she knows him the more she appreciates and likes him. Never before had Napoleon so striven to make himself everything to a woman, and this light-hearted slip of a German actually "gets to like him."

Apart from her utter lack of imagination, the explanation is that, both in her married life and after, the man whom Marie Louise obeyed in heart was not her husband but her father. She was never in love with Napoleon, and she never escaped from the influence of her father, behind whom stood the astute, smiling, and inflexible Metternich. Hence, when Napoleon lost his throne, Marie Louise quickly left her concern for him, and it must be added, her indifference extended to her infant son, in whom the father's hopes were centered. A story for which the Comte d'Haussonville is responsible shows her almost worse than frivolous in a situation of national disaster: "I was present," says the count, "when the Comte de Saint-Aulaire related an anecdote which showed that the feelings of the Empress were in no way suited to the circumstances. The arrival of M. de Saint-Aulaire was announced to her majesty very early in the morning, while she was still in bed. She was but half-awake when she received him, sitting at the side of the bed, with her bare feet showing from beneath the coverlet. "Completely overcome by the gravity of the situation, for the letter of which he was the bearer not only brought the news of the fall of the empire, but also that of the Emperor's abdication at Fontainebleau, M. de Saint-Aulaire stood with his eyes cast down."

After-Effects of Fever

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anxious to appear unconscious of the effect produced on the Empress by this sad intelligence: "Ah! you are looking at my feet," she exclaimed, "I am always being told how pretty they are!"

We can scarcely be surprised that the French have cherished bitter feelings against the second wife of Napoleon. But, as history knows, there was no partner for any man with brains. The liaison (followed, when circumstances permitted, by a morganatic marriage) with the Count de Neipperg. Here again, however, we must pause to note that the deposed Empress (now not much above three-and-twenty), was once more, in a measure, the victim of a plot. Napoleon, as Mrs. Cuttill says:

"had wrapped his young wife round with every conceivable precaution, lest her innocence should be sullied by contact with courtiers of a world and an epoch notable for its immorality. Her father chose for her intimate counselor when the alliance had bestowed on her the Duchy of Parma—a man of most disreputable private life."

For, as M. Max Billard says, in "The Marriage Ventures of Marie Louise," Neipperg could have given lessons in gallantry to Don Juan himself, and no conceivable Lovelace would have been his equal where women's hearts were concerned. He had already carried off one wife from her husband, and he said to have boasted that in six months he could be the lover of Marie Louise. Yet he was now an ugly, one-eyed, middle-aged man, gifted enough, to be sure, with a role of a calculating intellect, very fluent and ingratiating; a soldier, a diplomatist, a creature of many accomplishments—reminding us not a little of our own Jack Wilkes. It is difficult not to believe that Neipperg—well known to be friendly to Austria—was deliberately placed in the path of Marie Louise, Lord Holland, in a passage cited by Mrs. Cuttill, writes that the Emperor Francis:

"was never gentle and benevolent. As for his private marriage, one must admit the alternative: either that he consented to sacrifice his child to a cowardly policy, or that he cruelly abandoned her and destroyed a prince he had chosen for his son-in-law. He separated his daughter from the husband he had given her, and helped to disinclinate his grandsons to confide in the mind of the daughter the memory of her exiled and deposed husband, whose conduct to her had been irreproachable, they say he encouraged and even himself connived at making her unfaithful."

The one-eyed gallant, having worked his way into power, proved no bad administrator, and Parma gained something by his talents. He may have tired of Marie Louise, who was no partner for any man with brains, but he seems never to have shown himself openly indifferent and for him she preserved such affection as she was capable of. Her third husband was the Comte de Bonaparte, a man of far higher character than Neipperg, and not without a talent for affairs.

The ability of these two men was reflected upon the duchess, whose subjects came to think her both wise and good, though we may not forget that there was some amount of persecution for religion.

Having regard to the unsympathetic nature of her subjects, let us say that Mrs. Cuttill has produced a very valuable book.

It was while tramping in Scotland that I contributed my first article to the Press. I was getting a living of sorts at the time by selling bootlaces and other odds and ends. One day, while walking along a row of villas in the residential quarter of Dundee, I had the good fortune to obtain an interview with a gentleman of some standing in the city.

"I want to be a Poet!"

This gentleman seemed to think it a great pity that a "strong, able-bodied, and intelligent chap like me" should spend the best part of his days tramping about the country and selling bootlaces. "Have you no other aim or ambition in life?" he asked. "I replied, 'I have the same time producing some rather disreputable-looking exercise books, and handing them to him. "I want to be a Poet," he said, and he looked at me with an air of surprise. "My particular disreputable work," I explained, "is the production of a series of little exercise books, each containing a few lines of poetry, and a note of introduction to a man connected with a paper here. He may be able to do something for you."

And he was as good as his word, and gave me a half-crown, together with a letter of introduction to a gentleman named Mr. Thomson, "Weekly News," which paper is published in Dundee, and circulates largely throughout Scotland and the North of England. That same night I sat down in the recreation room at Rose's Hotel in Commercial street, and wrote to Mr. Shand (the gentleman connected with Thomson's "Weekly News") asking for an appointment, and inclosing my note of introduction. I received a courteous note from Mr. Shand by the first post two days later, in the course of which he said he would be pleased to see me. The interview between Mr. Shand and myself was of a satisfactory nature, and before I left the office I was introduced to the editor of the paper, who, after asking me not so bad in the morning, he said to me: "I will give you a half-crown and a note of introduction to a man connected with a paper here. He may be able to do something for you."

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I wrote my first article in the recreation room at Rose's Hotel, which is the principal common lodging-house in Dundee. I was seated at a table along with half a dozen other men, two of them being Scotchmen, and the remainder English. Another two in playing draughts. It was Sunday, and the room was uncomfortably crowded, every available seat being taken. I was not very conversational, and my thoughts were not very clear. On Monday morning I took the article up to the office, and the editor, Mr. Thomson, was very kind to take it at once. "Very well written, but too much in the form of an essay," was his verdict. "Give us more incident, and make it more of a story. Try again." So I went back to the hotel and tried again, and so well did I stick to my task that on the following day I was able to take two finished articles to the office. As on the previous day, the editor read them through at once, and

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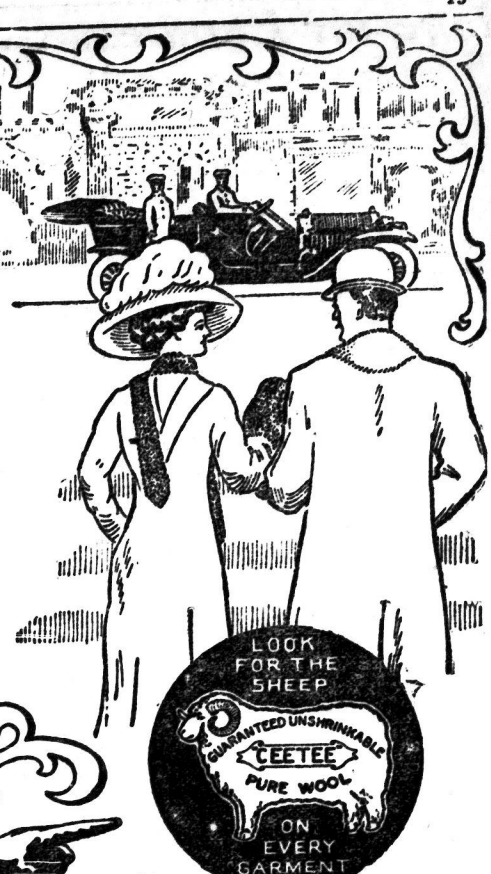
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and the stamps and postage, I had frequently to beg myself even the bare necessities of life.

Six Months in Clover.

At the commencement of 1908 Mr. Whymper was given an important commission by the editor of a Scotch paper, and fulfilled it so well that other commissions speedily followed, and for over six months I had regular work. Acting on behalf of this paper, I visited nearly all the phalarope institutions in Scotland, and wrote as much of their respective activities. Then I visited Glasgow, and the result of a month's sojourn in the "second city of the Empire" was a series of "flow life" articles which caused something of a sensation at the time. Glasgow has some of the worst slums in Great Britain, and in these are to be found some of the vilest dens in Europe. While here I visited numbers of famous old houses and castles, and was initiated into the condition of affairs.

In Society.

While engaged upon this work I met a great many people of good social standing, and on several occasions was invited out to lunch and dinner. But I never lost attending these functions, for although I can write a little, yet as a conversationalist I did not shine. My social life was very lonely, and I dropped my articles persistently the more so when making an effort to be correct. Then, again, I know nothing about the manners and customs which prevail at the tables of culture. I have sat down at a table before about half a dozen times, and have never been able to get on. Life is a very lonely one, and what the precise function of each. People were always very kind and friendly, and made all due allowance for a man who had been brought up in a Poor Law school and the workhouse, but even this did not lessen the em-

barrenness. Obviously, I was not fitted for a position of this sort, and so, after six months, I decided to try my luck in London, and I arrived in the capital about the end of July, 1908.

In London.

For over a year I was fairly successful, and contributed occasionally to many of the most popular periodicals. Then very gradually my sight began to fail. Before leaving Scotland I had seen a famous oculist in Edinburgh, and he had warned me that if I did not give up close work I should go blind. But how could I give up the thing most dear to me in life? I reassured myself with the reflection that doctors are only human, and as prone to err as the rest of humanity, and then went on writing harder than before. But about the middle of 1909 I deemed it advisable to again take medical advice, and attended an ophthalmic hospital, but the result was the same as at Edinburgh. Once more I ignored the warning, and went on writing. But toward the end of October of the same year my sight grew so bad that it was only with great difficulty that I could see to write at all. For a few months I went on the road, and got my living as a pedlar, but I wanted always to be back at the writing again. And this is why I no longer have any joy in life, and have grown careless for the future. I have written this with the object of raising enough money to obtain a pack, and if this object is realized I shall get back to the road again, and stay there.

HARRY PAYNE.

GREATEST ALPINE CLIMBER DEAD

Englishman, Edward Whymper—
Ascended the Matterhorn and
Four Companions Perished—
Mountain Sickness—Explored
Canadian Rockies.

Edward Whymper, the great mountaineer, explorer, and author, died at Chamoni, Switzerland, on Sept. 23. Mr. Edward Whymper, who was undoubtedly the greatest of mountain climbers, and had been described as the "Ulysses of the mountains," was born in London 71 years ago. He was trained as a draughtsman, and it was his skill as an artist that introduced him to the Alps. He was only 20 when he was commissioned to make a series of sketches of Alpine scenery, and to illustrate the attempt, which proved unsuccessful, made by Professor Buntz's party to ascend Mont Pelvoux, at the time believed to be the highest peak of the Dauphine Alps. Where Bonney failed, Mr. Whymper succeeded. He got to the top of Mont Pelvoux, and made the discovery that it was overtopped by a neighboring peak, subsequently named the Petit Pelvoux. The ascent of that peak by Mr. Whymper's party in 1864 was the most remarkable feat of mountaineering at that date.

From that time Mr. Whymper gave up his life to climbing. Amid the great heights he lived, and amid them he passed away after a career which embraced amazing adventures at the cost of the lives of four members of the party. Six times previously Mr. Whymper had tried to storm the famous peak that dominates Zermatt, but failed. The successful party, which reached the top on July 14, 1865, comprised Mr. Whymper, the Rev. Charles Hudson, Mr. Hadow, Lord Francis Douglas, and the guides, Michael Croz and the two Taugwalders. It was a race with a number of Italian and French parties to reach the summit first. The party returned to the valley, and the Taugwalders, who had been the last to turn back, were the first to be rescued.

"The old traditions are true," they afterwards reported, "there are spirits on the top of the Matterhorn." But the success was dearly bought. The descent proved one of the most tragic of Alpine adventures, for only three of the party returned. The Whymper and the two Taugwalders. The catastrophe came just after the party had left the summit, Mr. Hadow slipped, stumbled against Croz, who was leading, and knocked him over. "I heard one startled exclamation from Croz," Mr. Whymper wrote afterwards. "The other three fell. I saw Hadow flying downwards; in another moment Hudson was dragged from his steps, and Lord F. Douglas immediately after him. All this was the work of a moment. Immediately we heard Croz's exclamation of Peter (Taugwaller) and I planted ourselves as firmly as the rocks would permit. The rope was cut between us, and the jerk came on us both as on one man. We held; but the rope broke midway between Taugwaller and Lord Francis Douglas. For a few seconds we saw our unfortunate companions sliding downwards on their backs, and spreading out their hands, endeavoring to save themselves. They passed from our sight uninjured, disappeared one by one, and then fell from precipice to precipice on to the glacier below, a distance of nearly 4,000 feet."

The bodies of all the climbers, save that of Lord Francis Douglas, which was never found, were subsequently recovered. Subsequently Mr. Whymper made an expedition to Greenland, where his geological discoveries proved that the country once enjoyed a warm climate, and had rich vegetation. Later an expedition to Ecuador was designed primarily to collect data for the study of mountain-sickness and of the effect of diminished pressure on the human frame. His observations on mountain sickness led him to con-

cluded that it was caused by diminution in atmospheric pressure, which operates in at least two ways—by lessening the value of the air that can be inspired in any given time and by causing the air or gas within the body to expand and to press upon the internal organs. These effects, he also noted, were often temporary, and passed away when equilibrium had been restored between the internal and external pressure.

Mr. Whymper achieved further fame by twice ascending Chimborazo, in the Andes, and 20,517 feet above the level of the sea. He was the first man to reach the top.

From 1901 to 1903 he explored the Canadian Rockies, his feats among the

great peaks of Alberta and British Columbia doing much to popularize knowledge of the Canadian mountains, which he maintained constitute "a Switzerland rolled into one."

It is a strange circumstance that his most serious accident occurred at Birkenhead in 1894. He stumbled on the steps of the platform on which he was going to lecture and fractured his collar-bone. Whymper was indeed a popular lecturer, his books are among the most valued on mountaineering, and he was honored by many learned societies and Alpine clubs. Five years ago he married Miss Mary Lewin.

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