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JOHANN HOCH HANGED

cal aid, sat by the bedside, held her hand and called her "sweetheart."

When Judge Kersten passed sentence upon him Hoch was asked if he had anything to say. As if willing to sacrifice his life merely to conform to the court's idea of propriety, he replied: "Judge, if you think I am guilty, I am willing to lose my life." And after his conviction in the solitude of his cell, he was borne up by his egotism. He spoke of himself as a third person of interest and importance.

He said: "Johann will die like a man. If Johann had money he would show you what he would do."

Hoch denied making the confession which was used as evidence in his trial; but would not take the stand to disprove it. His last utterance to a visitor was in keeping with his hypocrisy toward the judge and the wife he robbed. He said: "Death is better than this confinement, but I have given my word of honor to the jailer I would not leave even if I found the doors open."

Hoch claimed to be a great-grandson of Marshal Ney, who went to St. Helena with Napoleon, and the scion of a prominent family of Strassbourg. He said his father was a retired minister in Toulon, ignorant of the fate of his son. Two of Hoch's brothers are ministers. He said: "My great-grandfather, Marshal Ney, was one of the heroes of Napoleon's army; and I, his descendant, shall die as a soldier. I am going before my Maker, Jesus Christ my Saviour. I believe in God, and I believe I shall meet in the life beyond those who were near and dear to me here. How could I stand at the judgment seat with a lie on my soul?" On the next day he denied having told this story.

Information that led to the arrest of Hoch was given the police by Mrs. Emelia Fischer, his last wife. She married him Jan. 18, 1905, a few days after the funeral her immediate predecessor as Mrs. Hoch. On Dec. 10 of 1904 Hoch married Mrs. Marie Welker and took her to his house, where she died on Jan. 12 after a short illness, and when Hoch was alone with her. Preceding her death he obtained from all her money, as he had done in his previous marriages.

Three days after her death he married Mrs. Fisher, and the day following the wedding he obtained from her \$750 to be used he said, in paying a mortgage on the furniture and house. A day or two later he disappeared.

The search for Hoch extended to New York where he was arrested. Suspecting he would seek concealment in Germany, his former home, the police kept watch on outward-bound vessels.

A complete list of Hoch's "speculations" in matrimony would be difficult to compile. So far as can be learned, he was born in Germany 40 years ago, studied medicine, and in Vienna married Anna Hoch in 1881. Two years later he emigrated with her to America. Several years later she died.

His next wife (No. 2) he obtained in Chicago in May, 1892. Her name is not known, but it is known that he rented a flat under the name of C. A. Meyer. That wife died three weeks after the marriage.

The next month Hoch rented another flat in the name of H. Irick. A month later his wife (No. 3), name also unknown, died there, and Hoch, or "Irick" disappeared.

In 1894 he lived for two months with another wife (No. 4) when she died. In June of the same year he married Mrs. Julia Steinbrecher (No. 5). Two months later she became ill and died, leaving Hoch property valued at \$4000. Before her death she accused Hoch in the presence of a stepdaughter of poisoning her. Her funeral was stopped by the coroner, but was permitted to proceed when Hoch produced a burial certificate.

After Mrs. Steinbrecher-Hoch's death Hoch married Mrs. Mary Rankan (No. 6). Mrs. Rankan was "too cute" for him, according to her story. After several unsuccessful efforts to get possession of her savings he left her. In the same year he married Miss Martha Herfeldt (No. 7), gained possession of \$1800 and deserted her. Mrs. Herfeldt-Hoch now lives in Pasadena, Cal.

In 1896 Hoch was arrested under the name of C. A. Calford and charged by Mrs. Janet Spencer (No. 8), with having married and deserted her after taking her money. He was acquitted, but a year later was arrested again under the name of De Witt C. Cudney on complaint of Callie Charlotte Andrews (No. 9). The woman said she had met "Cudney," married him, and was deserted two hours after the ceremony, he taking \$500 of her money. The police then identified him as the abductor of little Hulda Stevans, and accused him of participating in a diamond robbery, but he escaped prosecution.

In 1896 Hoch appeared in Wheeling, W. Va., and married a woman (No. 10) under the name of Jacob Huss. This woman died suddenly three months afterward, leaving "Huss" property worth \$2500. Immediately after the funeral Hoch left Wheeling. Early in 1897 he re-appeared in Chicago with a woman supposed to be wife No. 11 and installed her in a flat under the name of Martin Dotz. In June this wife died. Hoch was arrested and sent to the Bridewell for swindling Simon Strauss, a furniture dealer who furnished the flat. He went to Cincinnati and there married Clara Bartell, widow of a saloonkeeper. Mrs. Bartell-Hoch (No. 12) died within three

months of supposed nephritis. Hoch married Julia Does (No. 13) in Hamilton, O., in January, 1897. He soon departed with \$600 obtained from Mrs. Does-Hoch and \$400 realized on Mrs. Bartell's effects.

On April 29, 1898, he was arrested in Chicago for having sold mortgaged furniture. He was sent to the house of correction, was released July 31, 1899, and immediately was re-arrested on a similar charge and sent to the same institution.

In 1900 Hoch changed the field of his operations to Milwaukee, and there married a sister (No. 14) of Mrs. J. H. Schwartzmann. She died three weeks later, leaving him \$1200. The next year he married Mrs. Mary Schultz (No. 15) in Argos, Ind. Together they came to Chicago with Mrs. Schultz's 15 year old daughter. Nothing has been heard of Mrs. Schultz-Hoch or her daughter since. Hoch made \$2000 out of this venture.

Within a month Hoch proposed marriage to Mrs. Nathalie Peterson of Chicago. Mrs. Peterson had almost succumbed to the "fascinating man" when she was warned that Hoch "was not straight." Hoch at that time sailed under the name of Jacob Adolph.

In 1901 Hoch appeared in St. Louis under the name of Jacob Schultz and posing as a millionaire. He married Mrs. Mary Becker (No. 16) after a week's acquaintance. In a few months she died under circumstances that aroused suspicions of the attending physicians. In December of the same year Mrs. Elizabeth Goerk (No. 17) "took in" a boarder in answer to an advertisement in a German newspaper. The man called himself Jacob Schmidt and after a few weeks, courtship she married him. He attempted to persuade her to turn her property over to him, but without success. He disappeared within a week. Mrs. Goerk declares Schmidt and Hoch are the same.

Hoch went to Milwaukee again in 1903 and in January married Mrs. T. O'Connor (No. 19), calling himself Edward Gerald James. He deserted her on Jan. 1, 1904, taking \$200 of her savings.

Hoch reappeared in Chicago in January of 1904 and married Mrs. Anna Hendrickson (No. 20). He secured \$1000 from her and then deserted her. The following June in Milwaukee he married Mrs. Lena Hoch (No. 21), who died in three weeks, leaving him \$1500. In October he married Mrs. Caroline Schaefer (No. 22) in Philadelphia, deserting her a week later, taking her savings, amounting to \$1800.

Returning to Chicago in December 1904 Hoch married Mrs. Welker (No. 23). She died on Jan. 11, 1905, leaving him \$250. Her body was exhumed and examined for traces of poison. The analysis disclosed arsenic.

Jan. 16, 1905, Hoch married Mrs. Emelia Fisher (No. 24) the sister of Mrs. Welker-Hoch, and disappeared with \$750 of her money. Mrs. Fisher's complaint first directed the attention of the police to Hoch's record.

The arch-bigamist was courting Mrs. August Praxmeyer in New York Jan. 21 when the woman saw his picture and an account of his crimes in a newspaper. She straightway wrote a letter informing the Chicago police of Hoch's whereabouts. He was arrested and returned to Chicago for trial.

He was found guilty and sentenced to be hanged but received a number of stays of execution. Through the efforts of two wealthy women his case was taken to the Supreme Court, which refused to reverse the decision of the lower court.

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