

HISTORY'S MYSTERIES

THE LOST GRAND DUKE

THOSE familiar with the pomp and ceremony which hedged in the former court of Austria have always maintained that the tragic disappearance of Johann Salvator, archduke of Austria, prince of Hungary and grand duke of Tuscany, cousin of Francis Joseph and son of Leopold II, was due as much to his radical tendencies and the fact that he persisted in airing his views in print as to his infatuation for Ludmilla Stuebel, the beautiful daughter of a Vienna shopkeeper. In furtherance of this opinion, they advance the unassailable evidence that Kaiser Wilhelm insisted upon the punishment of Archduke Johann when the latter urged an alliance between Russia and Austria in order to curb the threatened dominance of Germany in European politics.

Whatever the cause, the young archduke's reaction to the discipline inflicted by his royal cousin was to resign all his honors, strip himself of his titles, convert a large portion of his estate into cash, and, as the crowning insult to his relatives, to elope with Ludmilla Stuebel, whom he had met inconspicuously some months before. According to all available reports, there was no doubt of Ludmilla's beauty, but a marriage between an archduke of the royal blood and the daughter of a poor shopkeeper was too much for the high-spirited Empress to swallow without a struggle. Johann, however, informed all who brought him messages from his titled kinsmen that he was no longer of the royal house—that he had renounced all his claims to the honors which were his by right of birth, and that henceforth he could be nothing more than Johann Salvator, a private citizen of the world.

When it became known that he really intended carrying through his wild plan, even force was resorted to in order to prevent him from contracting what was recognized as a mesalliance, but he concealed his identity under the name of John Orth—the name which he had used in courting Ludmilla Stuebel—and the pair were hastily married and then escaped to London. Here, still retaining his adopted name, the archduke chartered the bark Margharita, signed up a captain and crew and sailed for South America, where the ship had formerly been engaged in the nitrate trade.

The Margharita's usual course was between Buenos Aires and Valparaiso, and, after making several successful trips, she finally left the former port on July 13, 1900—and vanished as completely as if the sea had opened and swallowed her. Despite the most diligent searches, undertaken at the instigation of the Austrian government, nothing definite was ever heard of the ship or the members of the crew, though rumors that Archduke Johann had been seen at many times and in many places have been current from that day to this. The most credible of these reports is that made by an official investigator of the Uruguay government, who secured affidavits to the effect that the Margharita had put in at a lonely place on the coast of that country, where the name had been painted out and she had then sailed up the Uruguay river. "Orth," the report stated, had then paid off his crew, and with the help of two or three of his intimate companions had set sail further inland—but here the trail was lost, never to be refound.

During the Chilean war Archduke Johann was reported to be fighting on the side of the congressionalists, and, some ten years later, the son of the president of Argentina stated that he had made the trip from Buenos Aires to Cherbourg with a man who was none other than the former archduke of Austria. In addition the lost grand duke has been "located" in California, has been "identified" as Admiral Yamagata of the Japanese navy, and was "recognized" by reputable witnesses in several engagements of the World war. Evidently the emperor of Austria never placed full credence in the story of his death, for in Francis Joseph's will was a clause to the effect that the archduke's estate of some \$10,000,000 was to be held intact until something definite was learned about his fate—a point upon which the memoirs of the former kaiser may eventually throw some light. Until this the mystery of the lost grand duke must remain as one of the unsolved riddles of history.

Holland's Way.

In several places the rivers in Holland make their entrances to the sea over extensive sand-beds, the water being so shallow that large vessels cannot sail in it. Rather than remove the sand-beds, which were looked upon in olden times as a defense, since they then kept men-of-war at a distance, the Dutch adopt the plan of sending out two large flat-bottomed craft to the small trading vessels that wish to enter the harbor. Arrived on either side the ship, three pontoons, as they may be called, are partially sunk by admitting water, and when their sloping sides are well under the hull of the ship to be carried, the water is pumped out, and they rise buoyantly with their burdens between them. Across the shallows they then bear it in triumph, and lower it gently into the deeper water of the harbor. With equal care the return journey is made when the merchantman is ready to sail away.

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MADE NO SORT OF A HIT

Good Wife Failed Altogether to Appreciate Whatever Point There Was in Hubby's Story.

At a certain family dinner party on the North side the son of the house provided some good-natured rallery at his young wife's expense.

While attending a recent club luncheon, he had heard what he considered a "prize" story, and that same evening facetiously repeated it at his own dinner table. The story runs something like this:
Two old dinkies stopped to look at a circus billboard, one of them reading aloud that this circus was "the biggest and best on earth," while the other declared that its claim was "the biggest and best on earth 'cept one," and clinched his argument by pointing to the words "Sept. 1," printed at the bottom of the poster. (However, in telling the story all mention of the date is purposely omitted, as the listener's own ingenuity is supposed to fathom the meaning of the phrase, "'cept one.")

But the little story seemed to have fallen quite flat, as the wife sat and regarded him in stony silence.
"Don't you get it, do you?" queried the young husband.
"Sure I get it, but I can see nothing very funny in naughty stories, myself," was the exceedingly dignified answer.
"Naughty stories," exclaimed the astonished husband. "Just how do you make that out?"
"Why, 'cept one' means September Morn, of course," was the triumphant, if somewhat indignant, reply.—Indianapolis News.

SEEKING SECRETS OF PLANTS

Experiments Going On to Determine How Nitrogen Is Assimilated From the Atmosphere.

There is reason to hope that the world may be greatly enriched through the results of observations and experiments to determine just how certain plants manage to assimilate nitrogen from the atmosphere. It has been discovered that such plants as peas, beans and clovers have their roots invaded by myriads of minute organisms which may be either bacteria or parasitic fungi.

These organisms in some unknown way invite the plants to increased activity so that they are able to assimilate free nitrogen from the atmosphere and thereby to supply, through their own subsequent decay, an abundance of nitrates, nitrites, ammonia and other nitrogenous substances to the soil.
Efforts have been made to determine whether some other stimulus besides that furnished by the organisms referred to may not be supplied to plants which will enable them still more effectively to assimilate nitrogen from the air for the ultimate enrichment of the soil.—Washington Star.

Could Stay on Second Call.

Ruth and Marjorie were spending the afternoon with their little friend, Jane. At five o'clock they informed their hostess that they must be going.
"My dears," said Jane's mother, "can't you stay and have supper with us?"
"No, thank you," they both replied. "Mother told us to come home at 5."
"Hats and wraps were brought. As they were being put on, Jane's mother asked again: "Are you quite sure you must go before supper?"
"Yes, thank you; we must go," replied Ruth.

Marjorie seemed to have a different opinion, and said sotto voce to her sister: "We don't have to go. Mother said we could stay to supper if she asked us twice."—Judge.

Quick.

A. J. Balfour said on the Aquilina:
"I go back home impressed with your American quickness. You are certainly the quickest people on earth."
"An English farmer was showing an American over his sheep farm one day.
"How many sheep do you think there are in that field?" the farmer asked.
"Er—000," said the American.
"Right! Exactly right!" said the farmer. "How the deuce did you know?"
"Why, I drew the American. 'I just counted the legs and divided by four.'"

Warm Ladies.

The late Lillian Russell on her recent diplomatic mission to London, was a great success in London society. At a Park Lane luncheon a millionaire said to Miss Russell:
"How is it that women don't seem to feel the cold? If a man turned out in an ounce or two of lace and a yard of georgette he'd freeze to death."
"Well, you see," Miss Russell explained, "women who dress that way are so ashamed of themselves that they blush continually, and that keeps them warm."

Farm According to Military Rule.

Every major engagement of the American expeditionary force in the World war is represented by 48 former fighters, who, disabled and receiving government training, are engaged in reclaiming a tract of 8,000 acres of land near McGrath, Minnesota, to which has been placed in the veterans' names. Life on the tract is similar to army life. There are bunk and chow halls, and the squad arrangement for work.

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HISTORY'S MYSTERIES

THE FEMALE STRANGER

VISITORS to the cemetery attached to St. Paul's church in Alexandria, Va., seldom leave without examining the inscription upon a handsome monument which is one of the outstanding pieces of interest in the city as well as one of the most baffling riddles of identity which the passage of more than a century has failed to solve. This inscription comprises within a few lines all that the world knows of the woman in question, for it reads:

TO THE MEMORY OF THE FEMALE STRANGER

Whose mortal sufferings terminated on the fourth day of October, 1818, aged twenty-eight years and eight months, this stone is erected by her disconsolate husband in whose arms she breathed out her last sigh, and who, under God, did his utmost to soothe the dull, cold ear of death.

That is all—and the most determined efforts of the residents of Alexandria during the first half of the last century, failed to throw the slightest light upon the mystery.

The facts in the case are few, but such as they are, they are supported by the unassailable evidence of a number of persons who were eyewitnesses to the brief public appearance of the "female stranger." The brig Four Sons docked at Alexandria on July 25, 1818, en route from Halifax to the West Indies. The Virginia city was not a port of call on the regular route, but the captain stated that one of his passengers had been taken dangerously ill and that her husband had demanded that she be put ashore at Alexandria, where a boat was lowered, and a man and woman, the latter apparently very ill, were taken ashore.

Despite the heat of mid-summer, the woman wore a heavy black veil, and her husband secured the best suite in the Inn of the Bunch of Grapes, as well as the services of a well-known physician whom he engaged only after pledging him to strict secrecy. Even in the presence of the doctor, however, the woman's face was kept veiled, and the husband steadfastly refused to hire a nurse, saying that he was entirely capable of handling the case and that he was able to do anything that a nurse could do.

As the weeks of scorching hot weather progressed, however, the man began to wilt under the constant strain of watching beside the bed, and finally agreed to permit two of the guests in the Inn to help him—but only after they had taken an oath that nothing they might learn would ever be divulged, an oath which was kept as a sacred trust.
During the ten weeks which followed the woman's arrival in Alexandria, she grew steadily worse, and at last, at dawn on October 4, her husband announced that she had died. Then, for fear that someone might see the face which he had kept hidden from the world, he himself prepared the body for burial, sealed the lid of the coffin, and, after attending the funeral and ordering the headstone with the strange inscription, disappeared.

On October 4 of the following year, Alexandria was surprised at the sudden and unheralded return of the husband, who remained in the city only long enough to place flowers on the grave of the "female stranger," and to see that the plot in the cemetery was well taken care of. Once a year, for two years, he returned. Then his visits ceased and the grave was neglected until, a number of years later, a distinguished elderly man and woman came and ordered the monument to be replaced by another and more costly headstone bearing the same inscription, with the addition of the verse:

New loved, how honored once, avails thee not,
To whom related, or by whom begot,
A heap of dust alone remains of thee,
Thou art thou art, and all the proud shall be.

They, too, vanished—taking with them the secret of the identity of the woman whose history and personality is forever hidden from the world behind three words "The Female Stranger."

Novel Shooting Feat.

An interesting experiment in freak rifle shooting was described recently by an English officer. "I have fired an ordinary wax candle through four deal boards placed a foot apart," he said. "I used six grains of wax candle and thirty-three inches of powder with the usual wads. The shot was removed by cutting off the top half-inch of the case, and a candle weighing one and a quarter ounces was inserted. I fired at a range of about five yards. Each plank was perforated. There were plenty of pieces of dry wax on all the boards, but the first. When fired against planks placed immediately back to back, the candle went through the first and was brought up by the solid weight of wood of the other three." Major Hardcastle added that a certain gamekeeper won many bets by shooting candles through a spade.

Three Times and Out.

Diner—Waiter, do you mean to say this is the fish I ordered?
Waiter—Yes, sir.
"Well, it looks like the same fish that the gentleman at the next table refused to eat three minutes ago."
"Yes, sir; we always try it three times before we give it up."—London Auswers.

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TROPICAL VALLEY FAR NORTH

Area in British Columbia, Close to the Yukon Border, Has Hundreds of Hot Springs.

Discovery of an almost tropical valley with rivers of boiling water, mineral springs, abnormal plant growth and abundant with game. In far northern British Columbia is reported by Frank Perry, mining engineer of Vancouver, returned after 17 years passed in prospecting the valley close to the Yukon border. The area of the terrain covered by Mr. Perry is roughly 700 miles north and south and 300 miles wide, between the coastal range and the Lizard and Fort Nelson rivers.

The unusual sight of a heavy fog in a winter attracted him to the valley. Exploration showed the valley to be approximately 200 miles long and about 40 miles wide. Rivers of hot water running through, were fed by hundreds of hot springs, the steam from these being condensed on rising, forming the fog which Perry had first seen.

Tree growth in the valley was abnormal, Mr. Perry stated. Ordinary wild rose bushes were like trees, and so dense that it was impossible to force a way through. Some tree trunks were fully one foot and a half in diameter.

Important mineral deposits were discovered by Mr. Perry, including gold, silver and copper. Coal, iron and oil formations were also found.

HIS MIND FIRMLY MADE UP

Prospective Juror Evidently Not a Man Who Could Easily Be Influenced by Trifles.

The last time a jury trial was demanded in city court at Jeffersonville a special venire was issued by the mayor under act of the legislature, and the court took care that every member should be a man who could be depended on to vote according to the evidence—as well as at least as the court could judge, the Indianapolis News reports. The prosecutor, James L. Bottorff, threw some light on the reason. Recently, he said, a jury was being impaneled to try a liquor case and the witnesses were being interrogated. One local merchant had been practically accepted when the prosecutor asked whether he had any objections to finding a man guilty under the prohibition laws. "You could not present evidence that would convince me of his guilt," was the answer. "I should vote for acquittal if I knew he was guilty." The prospective juror was permitted to stand aside. He seemed to have found a sure way to avoid being drawn for jury service.

Real Golfing Hero.

Lord Riddell, who made many American friends at the Washington conference, speaking at a recent luncheon at the Cricketh Golf club, London, related:

"The greatest hero in golf history was a Scotsman, who in the year 1710 used to start playing at dawn and end by putting at the last green by candle light.

"Matters reached such a stage that his wife, an innkeeper, applied for a separation order. This enabled the man to make one of the most pathetic declarations in history.

"Let her have the business," he said, "provided she gives me sufficient to clothe and feed myself and provide myself with golf balls."
"The magistrates must have thought it a very proper disposition of the marital property, because they decreed accordingly, and the gentleman lived to be ninety-five and continued his vocation."

Bermuda Permits Autos.

Bermuda has given way and will now have automobiles, under public control. A majority of the legislative body of Bermuda has at last agreed to permit a system of motorbuses for passengers and freight. Private motorcars, however, will stay under the ban.

After religiously excluding the motorcar and permitting only horses and bicycles, Bermuda has declared for the motorcar, but only as a public conveyance with its operation and management subject to strict surveillance.—The Nation's Business.

Saw One on the Ceiling.

"What's a plesiosaurus?" asked Mr. Bibbles.
"A prehistoric monster that lived a long time ago," said Mr. Jagsby.
"What did it look like?"
"Like something that never was. I could have given you a pretty good description of a plesiosaurus after my last illness—the one that caused me to sign the pledge."—Birmingham Age-Herald.

Forgotten Great Ones.

"The old Thespian who played with Booth and Barrett has about disappeared."
"It's just as well. If he showed up in Hollywood he wouldn't make much of an impression. The beautiful stars, the directors and the eminent producers probably wouldn't know whom he was talking about."—Birmingham Age-Herald.

A Time for All Things.

"What sort of refreshments should be served at a radio concert?"
"Anything you happen to have in the house," said Mr. Bibbles.
"Would booch do?"
"Yes, but I wouldn't serve it until after the guests have heard the baseball scores and the market reports. You have to keep your mind on figures."—Birmingham Age-Herald.

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