

House of Hapsburg has been an exceptionally unfortunate one. The Crown Prince died a violent death in 1889, the tragic death of the Duchess D'Alencon by fire, in Paris last year, is still fresh in public memory, the Emperor Maximilian of Mexico lost his throne and was shot in 1867. The Archduke Johann, who dropped his ducal title and served as a common seaman, was drowned off the coast of Brazil. The Archduchess Matilda was burned to death. Prince Louis of Trani committed suicide, the Archduke Laislaus was shot while hunting, and King Louis II. of Bavaria, who committed suicide, and the present King Otto, who is confined to a lunatic asylum, were cousins of the late Empress. The Empress was much beloved, and the news of her death was received at Vienna with profound sorrow, and the indignation felt at the dastardly deed is extreme. It is some slight consolation to know that the Empress felt no pain. A post mortem examination proved that her death was caused by internal hæmorrhage from a wound which penetrated the heart and passed out the other side. That the Empress should, after receiving such a wound walk to the boat and that not a groan should, throughout all, have escaped her, shows her indomitable will power and self-control. The death, as the life, of Elizabeth of Austria was Imperial. The body has been embalmed, and will be interred at Vienna to-day, Saturday. The scene in the Austrian Parliament, when the Premier rose to speak, was a pathetic one. Baron Banffy utterly broke down under the painful duty of announcing to the House the death of his beloved Empress, and burst out crying. It was some time before he could speak, and there was scarcely a dry eye in the Assembly.

The founder of the Red Cross Society, M. Dunant has propounded the idea of a new philanthropic work, which he proposes should be organized under the badge of the Green Cross. M. Dunant suggests that feminine effort shall be concentrated upon an effort to encourage, help, and guide those of their sex who have no one but themselves to depend upon for a living, by means of establishing international centres. "These beneficent international centres," says M. Dunant, "will be, so to speak, oases of moral and material strength for the millions of struggling women in the large and congested centres of population." Belgian ladies have, already, begun to carry out this scheme, and already, though the work has only been set on foot a few days, four escutcheons of the Green Cross are to be seen in Brussels. In this country the organization might well be carried out through the National Union of Women Workers, and, indeed, the Central Bureau of Women's Work, at 60, Chancery Lane, already works very much on the lines indicated.

A Book of the Week.

"RUPERT OF HENTZAU."*

MR. ANTHONY HOPE has given us a sequel to the "Prisoner of Zenda." It is most artistic; everything Mr. Hope does is artistic. The workmanship from end to end is good, one incident grows out of another, one false step necessitates the next, the results of an apparently trivial act are as far-reaching as the

* "Rupert of Hentzau." By Anthony Hope. Arrowsmith.

vengeance of the Furies of Aeschylus. The story is a finished whole; the destinies of Queen Flavia and Rudolf Rassendyll are withdrawn from the halo of distance and uncertainty in which the former book left them, and are rounded off, completed, bared for our inspection.

Is the result pleasing?

As regards the present writer, the answer must be,—"No."

Queen Flavia, as pictured in the "Prisoner of Zenda," is the most fascinating feminine character of modern fiction. A woman who is capable of more passion than the undisciplined, sensual creations of the ordinary novelist, but who is great enough to see and know, even when her feeling is strongest, that the gratification of the passions is not the one thing in life, that there are other and wider issues, that the member of a Royal dynasty is a patriot before she is a lover, and that a great renunciation is better than a great passion.

In her last words to her lover, as they parted at Zenda—when she reminded him—"Love is not all; if love were all, you would have left the King to die in prison," lingered in the mind—the re-annunciation of a great truth, which, in these days of the apotheosis of pure selfishness, was greatly needed. That there are women who can help men to be strong—who can be statesmanlike, noble, great, and self-sacrificing—was a thing that we believed as we read it, and which made our heart rejoice.

And now Queen Flavia has come down from her pedestal. She seems to disprove the truth of Matthew Arnold's great, wise saying, that

"Tasks in hours of insight willed
Can be through hours of gloom fulfilled."

The hours of gloom prove too much for Queen Flavia. Disheartened, weary, sad, she loses courage; and with her courage, there disappears the noble pride and self-restraint which we loved in her, and she cries out to the man whom she loves, thereby of course showing him—letting him see that her burden was too heavy for her.

Natural enough, perhaps. We are all so devoted to the natural nowadays. The natural comes first. A great thinker knew that, and told us so—

"First that which is natural, afterwards, that which is spiritual."

We had hoped that the spirit of Queen Flavia would have trodden nature underfoot; but it does not do so.

Our Queen is discrowned. I fancy Mr. Hope feels this, all through—and it renders the scenes between her and Rudolf strained and difficult.

That her first emotion, on hearing that the husband for whom she had resigned so much, has been assassinated in a lonely hunting-lodge at dead of night, should be as follows!

"She looked at Rudolf Rassendyll and he at her . . . I saw the swift look that passed from the Queen to her lover, carrying in it grief, remorse, and most unwilling joy."

This gives one a sense of broken idols indeed.

The book is a masterpiece of style; throughout it is in the author's best manner: but the "consecration and the poet's dream" which hovered over that exquisite fantastic idyll "The Prisoner of Zenda," has vanished like the water-springs in the great heat of this summer; and it carries with it a lingering, loving regret.

G. M. R.

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