EMPRESS EUGENIE Plaything of FATE

AMONG the visitors to the hospitals in which the English wounded are assigned is a bent and pallid old woman of eighty-eight. Painfully she hobbles from cot to cot, giving a flower here, a pat and a word of encouragement there. In appearance she is no different from any old lady of eighty-eight, unless the keen observer may see that she has suffered great and enduring sorrow.

The aged woman is Eugenie de Montijo, for seventeen years, 1853-1870, empress of the French, wife of the Emperor Napoleon III and mother of the ill-fated prince imperial, who was killed in the English war against the Zulus in 1879.

The old woman of sorrows has been an empress of romance as well as of France. Granddaughter of an Irishman named Kirkpatrick and a Spanish lady, with her mother and sister she roved the cities of Europe for seven years, looking for a great marriage. Scarce of noble birth, though her father was known as the count of Teba in Spain, a petty title at best, her chances for a grand union seemed vague indeed. At the age of twenty-five she achieved a notable if not a grand marriage. No doubt it is a very great thing to be empress of the French and reputed one of the most beautiful and charming women in the world and to set the fashions of the universe. For it was to Eugenie that the world owed the terrible crinoline or hoopskirts and the dreadful chignon of the sixties. Previous to the birth of the prince imperial, Eugenie, very vain of her figure, assumed the hoopskirt. The world of women followed suit to the great amusement and derision of their daughters and granddaughters. Yet Napoleon III was far from being a grand man, though he was emperor of the French. In the early fifties the countess of Teba and her two daughters, the elder a dark Spaniard, the other a type of northern beauty, chestnut hair, violet eyes, a perfect complexion and lovely oval features, appeared at various European capitals. The mother lived a semibohemian life at hotels, something which was not approved of those days, when grand ladies believed that a lady should live at home and visit only at the houses of her friends. The girls were of an age when they should have been in a convent. So, attractive as they were, and popular, it was noted that many more men than women called upon the Spanish countess and her daughters. Women viewed the attractive Spaniards with lifted eyebrows of question and suspician. The daughters of the countess of Teba were beautiful, rarely so. They were not of great accomplishments and it cannot be said that they were respected in the fullest sense of the word. They were interesting, they were lovely, but in the early fifties it was held that ladies of rank should not live at hotels or be seen at public dining rooms.

However, both girls made brilliant marriages. The elder married the duke of Alva, owner of a historic title. This marriage was regarded as a triumph for the managing mother. A wit said that the duke was unfortunate in that she did not choose to marry both daughters to him by papal dispensation, the implication being that not even the pope could withstand the blandishments of the countess. No one, however, imagined that the lady would be successful beyond her wildest dreams and see her younger daughter an empress, received with honor by the courts of Europe, especially by the intensely proper Victoria of England.

Eugenie had been, if was said, a good deal of a femme gallante, or very forward lady in love affairs. She had thrown herself at the heads of two young noblemen. At one time she had a violent fancy for the Spanish count di Galva and tried to commit suicide by swallowing shoe blacking when he made it plain that he did not desire her. Women gauged her as a wild and undisciplined girl, a sort of Lydia Languish, Becky Sharp and Lady Teazle combined, a girl calculated to fill the mind of even ardent suitors with misgivings as to her conduct as a wife. She was always Spanish and never understood the French. She had great personal courage and feared nothing. She was a meddlesome matchmaker and in after years earned the unenviable distinction of having married the famous songstress, Adelina Patti, to the marquis of Caux, a marriage which turned out most unhappily. She was superstitious, dealt with mediums, would flirt audaciously, yet was always cold and emotionless within.

This was the young lady of twenty-five, who appeared in Paris in 1851, just after Louis Napoleon, president of the republic, had accomplished the bloody coup d'etat in which his troops shot down hundreds of innocent persons along the boulevards of Paris. But Napoleon caused himself to be re-elected president for a term of ten years, and later, in 1851, had himself declared emperor of the French.

The previous life of the new emperor had been rather a discreditable one. He had been a constable in London, a penniless exile in Hoboken, N. J., he had made several futile and ridiculous attempts to restore the empire, his reputation was that of a silly, impracticable dreamer. He had had many disreputable love affairs and it was known that an English woman who was enamored of him had financed his successful effort in that direction. Soon afterward he caused her to be deported by the police.

Though he bore the magical name of Bonaparte, it was doubtful that he had a drop of Napoleonic blood in his veins. He was personally brave, he established a brilliant court at the Tuileries and promised to revive the Napoleonic glories of France in peace, not in war. But he had had an illegitimate son in America, he had been arrested in an evil resort in Paris, he had been promiscuous in his love affairs, he had an unattractive personality, bad skin, poor eyes, poor carriage. Yet he was attractive to women who did not think he ever would be an emperor.

He was fascinated by Eugenie and made love to her in an informal, easy-going manner. But he tried hard to marry some princess of an established dynasty. No woman of royal rank would accept the adventurer. Had anyone signified her willingness to do so Eugenie had never been empress of the French.

It is said that he at first offered her a morganatic marriage. This she refused, and also refused to see him again. Chance drove Napoleon into the marriage. His uncle, Jerome, former king of Westphalia, circulated a rumor that he was incapable of marriage. Bismarck, it is said, believed the story. To disprove it, Napoleon asked Eugenie de Montijo to share his throne. They were married January 30, 1853, at Notre Dame, Paris, and began a reign of seventeen years, in which good was intermingled with much evil.

Their positions were hard at first. Not being of royal blood, royal families looked askance upon them. They circulated all sorts of stories about them. In his marriage proclamation the emperor said: "I hope that she will revive the virtues of Josephine." Cynical Paris roared. It remembered the easy virtue of Josephine before and after her marriage to the great Corsican. A postcard bearing the picture of the empress had this sentence upon it:

"The portrait and virtues of the empress—all for two sous."

None the less Eugenie's influence was great. She urged her husband to undertake many enterprises that proved dangerous to his empire, but for twenty years France was successful in peace and in war. The court glittered. Every form of pleasure was encouraged. The empress shone with the supreme radiance of womanly fascination. Paris was the center of international society. Whatever Eugenie did was done by the women of all the world. She wore the ridiculous crinoline and huge, fantastic chignon. The world wore them, too. She had Haussman remodel and rebuild Paris. The great boulevards and avenues of today are the work of the little old woman who now moves among the wounded in England.

In 1856 an heir was born, the little Louis, whose end was to be so tragic. She dabbled in politics and offended her husband. She even led a party which opposed him in the chamber of deputies. He found out that the love letters which had charmed him had been written by the distinguished academician, Prosper Merimee, hired by Eugenie to do it. When Eugenie had to write herself, her letters were no better than those of a semiliterate peasant girl. Asked about it Merimee said: "God gave her the choice between beauty and brains and she chose beauty."

Eugenie loved bohemianism and laxity and Paris became effeminate. Handsome faces, a small gift of epigram, a romantic past, were the credentials to the court of the empress. A gradual decay honeycombed society and the army and the foundations of Sedan were laid.

Eugenie was not popular with princesses who flouted her birth or with French women who felt that when Napoleon made up his mind to marry a woman of less than royal rank he should have chosen one of their countrywomen.

However, in the end Eugenie was received in all the courts of Europe. Napoleon won Victoria of England, a very conservative queen, and Eugenie made a conquest of Victoria's husband, Albert. France and England fought against Russia in the Crimea. Napoleon and Eugenie visited London and the man who had been a police officer on its streets was now received with royal honors and declared an emperor by the grace of God. The beautiful woman who had run the gamut of life in every large city of Europe and who had swallowed blacking in an attempt at suicide was now an empress, welcome everywhere. She was thrice made regent of France when her husband was out with his army. She represented France at the opening of the Suez canal in 1869. She had the escort of the khedive at the first performance of the opera "Aida," for writing which Verdi got 80,000 francs.

In many wise she had been her husband's evil genius. She had urged him to set up Maximilian as emperor of Mexico that she might patronize a people speaking her native tongue. When Maximilian fell the star of Napoleon also waned.

It was the "empress' party" in the chamber of deputies that forced the war of 1870 upon France, though Napoleon knew his country was not prepared for war with Germany. After Gravelotte and Sedan he would have returned to prepare for the defense of Paris as Joffre retreated after the defeats of Liege, Mons, Charleroi, La Cateau and Maubeuge, but Eugenie imperiously commanded him to retrieve his fortunes in the field. Then she disobeyed his most positive injunction and summoned parliament. She refused to allow the king of Italy to enter Rome, though he promised to lend France his army for the privilege. She estranged Italy and offended Austria, which might have joined Napoleon against Germany.

Quickly the star of Eugenie declined. Her husband was taken prisoner at Sedan and rushed into Germany. The parliament she had summoned against his order dethroned her and her emperor. The glittering empire fell in a tremendous crash. Her life was threatened by Apaches on the boulevards. In disguise, Doctor Evans, the famous American dentist, helped her to sneak out of Paris to the seacoast, where a British yacht conveyed her to England. Stripped of her glory in a few weeks, Eugenie settled in a modest home given her by Victoria at Chiselhurst, England. Three years later Napoleon died there of cancer of the stomach.

It seemed as if fate, which had lavished all its favors on Eugenie, was now bent upon her destruction. Bereft of empire, husband, honors, her cup seemed full to the brim. But the bitterest blow of all was yet to fall upon Eugenie. Her son, Prince Louis, whom she brought up as heir to the French throne, was killed in a petty war against savages in South Africa. He was an amiable, attractive youth of twenty-three, with excellent parts, when a Zulu assegai found his heart. The gay French had mocked when he had been sent to South Africa. They felt that Eugenie was "making a play" to their well-known love of martial glory. So in the cafes chantants they sang:

"Loulou, Loulou,
He cuases Zulus."

But even the French cry of mockery turned to an agonized wail of sorrow when the prince imperial was stricken down in a savage ambuscade. It was a sad death. The party had knowledge of the coming of the savages and proceeded to mount their horses and gallop away. Thinking that the prince had mounted, his English companions galloped off. Alas, the horse used by Eugenie's only son proved restive and ran away, leaving his rider to the mercy of the savages, who did not know a prince from a pauper and who gave no quarter.

The women of the world who had once dressed with Eugenie now mourned with her. It was the last of the many blows sustained by the once beautiful Mademoiselle de Montijo.

Then it was said that her fierce, impenetrable pride and ambition had lost her her son. He had been wanting to marry a gentle English girl and Eugenie wanted him to marry a reigning princess. She sent him to South Africa to separate him from his love. So, the high ambition of this Spanish woman raised her to the position of the greatest monarch in Europe and dropped her to a state so lowly that even peasant women pitied her forlorn plight.

She had been responsible for the death of Maximilian, the madness of Carlotta, the loss of the French empire and for the lives of her husband and only son.

Even the wildest French socialists now show deep respect for the small, bowed figure, always clothed in deepest mourning.

Such is the story of the little, white, bent old woman who moves among the English wounded. She is of the past. She is a living sorrow. An old woman, poor in everything that makes a woman rich, save in sympathy. Her dearest desire is to be forgotten.

OUT-OF-ORDINARY PEOPLE

HAMMERING THE TURK

Gen. Sir Ian Standish Monteith Hamilton, in supreme command of the British-French army now landed on the Gallipoli peninsula to co-operate with the British-French fleet for the conquest of the Dardanelles and Constantinople, is a poet-soldier, with the tough, wiry frame of the Scotch and the Scotsman's long, narrow head, strong nose and bold chin, and with the big ears of the generous Irishman and the Irishman's ingratiating smile. The eyes are shrewd and calculating, as becomes a canny Scot but no less emotional and full of fun—the endowment of a son of Erin.

The son of a Scotch father, stern industrious and far-sighted, a distinguished military man himself, and of an Irish mother, fascinating, vivacious and artistic, Hamilton was born sixty-two years ago in the fortress at Corfu.

Hamilton came under the notice of Roberts in the Boer war of 1880, where he went with the Gordon Highlanders, and where, at the British defeat at Majuba hill, he discovered that there wasn't a British soldier in a hundred who knew how to handle his musket, and not one in a thousand who appreciated the necessity of learning how.

Wounded at Majuba hill and taken to the hospital, Hamilton was given up for dead. He revived when Sir Evelyn Wood dashed up, covered with mud from a long ride, to tell him that the dispatches home were going to mention his bravery. It was the first of a series of honor records which now have become so numerous that they would fill a book, while his medals and clasps, if he wore them all at the same time, would weigh him down like a coat of mail.

SING SING'S NEW WARDEN

When Governor Glynn appointed Thomas Mott Osborne warden of Sing Sing prison he said he did so that those who claim the present method of trying to reform men who have gone bad is wrong might have a chance to prove that their theory is the correct one. Mr. Osborne is unhampered by any power except the laws, and the trial of his system of treating prisoners is being watched by the country with keen interest.

Mr. Osborne, who is heir to a large fortune, has been intensely interested in prison reform, and he believes there is something good in everybody, even in the unlucky wretch who has to wear prison gray and sleep in a cell.

Not only does Mr. Osborne believe in the men in the cells, but he goes further. He does not believe in the cells. If he could have his way, there would be no Sing Sing; there would be no more of the dank cells, dark and gloomy, with their walls dripping moisture and breeding disease; there would be no more of the wearing down a man with solitary confinement, shattering his health and ruining his self-respect so that he is indelibly stamped "prison made" when he again gets out and tries to get a job.

ILLINOIS' FIRST WOMAN MAYOR

Mrs. Angela Rose Canfield of Warren, first woman mayor in Illinois, who was elected over two other candidates by a plurality of four votes, has ideals for her little city.

Warren, situated within half a mile of the Wisconsin state line in Jo Daviess county, is not a bad place at all, she says. She will try to make the city even more attractive than it is during the two years she will oversee its municipal affairs.

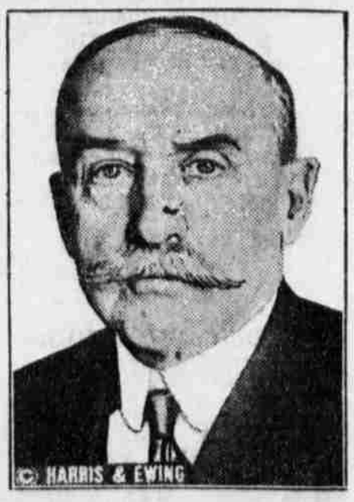
The first woman mayor in Illinois, and, incidentally, the second in the United States, is seventy-four years young.

"Young as I certainly am," she said "I am confident that I have reached years of discretion. I know I can run Warren's affairs better than they have been in the past.

"There are things in the city of Warren that need to be remedied. I have not lived here for 35 years without knowing all about them. First and foremost among them is graft. Graft has got to go from this town."

Mrs. Canfield was born in New York state. During the Civil war days when she was Mrs. O. J. Hildreth—she has been twice married—she was superintendent of the Nashville messhouse of the United States army.

"DEAR OLD BEN"



His intimate friends refer to him affectionately as "Dear Old Ben." His superiors describe him with the single word "loyal." His subordinates call him "human." And, in brief, coupled with his record for steady advancement and absolute dependability, which has made him the prototype in the navy of what Brig. Gen. Hugh Scott, chief of staff, stands for in the army, these characteristics give perhaps as good an idea as can be obtained of the kind of man Rear Admiral William Shepherd Benson, chief of naval operations, really is.

But be not misled by the nickname, or by the fact that he was graduated in '77, and is nearing his sixtieth birthday, into picturing him as a crotchety and bewhiskered old seadog; for after you have heard his friends call him "Old Ben" and have heard how he has spent 22 years at sea, circumnavigating the African coast at one time and going to the Arctic with the Greely relief expedition at another, meeting Admiral Benson includes considerable of a shock.

In appearance "Old Ben" is a "fine upstandin' man" of forty-five. He is tall, well knit, and compactly sinewy. His dark hair is closely cropped and shows traces of graying. His mouth is large and friendly, and his eyes, dark and deep set, snap with the light of instant comprehension, for you don't have to say a thing to "Old Ben" more than once.