

# THE MYSTERY OF A HUNGARIAN CASTLE

**I**N the center of an immense plain, moss-covered, almost a morass, at the southern edge of the Carpathians, near the Galician borderland, workmen are building one of the strangest, most mysterious, and weird structures in all the world. What it is, why it is, and for what purpose no one in all the great plain south of Ungvar knows.

There, within sight of the Carpathian hills, in a country almost devoid of trees, high, flat, desolate, and unproductive, the Count Alexander Berepök is erecting a grand structure: "The Castle of Mystery." It is called all through that district. The Magyar peasants and the gypsy tribes shun the plains; soldiers, encamped miles from the scene of operations, turn back all the curious ones, and these soldiers themselves are not permitted to approach within a mile of where an army of imported workmen are engaged in rearing the strange edifice.

Count Berepök is a member of one of the richest landed families in the Bodrogkos, and the holdings of the family comprise tens of thousands of acres of wild land. The old castle of the Berepök family stands on the plain of Bodrog, near the cultivated land, which it overlooks from an eminence. Southward for scores of miles the land lies flat and desolate, more desolate than the moors of Britain and less adapted, even, to agriculture. At times the plain is crossed by the gypsy caravans, and in fair times the plain in the vicinity of the towns is dotted with their tents and wagons, but mostly it is deserted. A few herds graze by day along the edges of the vast plain, and at night it is given over to the wild animals, and, according to the natives, to the evil spirits.

### Recognized Authority on Masonry.

The young count spent most of his early life in Vienna and in Paris. Highly educated, a student in the strictest sense, he promised to attain prominence in the world of letters. At 22 he had won some recognition in Hungary by his writings, especially his brochure on "Early Masonic Lodges of Hungary." At 24 he was recognized in Paris as an authority on Masonic history of Western Europe, and his investigation into Masonic rites among the Magyar tribes in the Carpathians was received with much interest by students.

He early identified himself with Masonry, and his interest in the organization was intense from the beginning. Frequently he spoke of devoting his life to investigation of Masonic rites among the semi-civilized peoples of the world, and especially in China and in North America among the Indian tribes of the southwest. This, however, he has not yet attempted, devoting his entire time to his investigation among the people of his own part of the country.

Part of the estates of the count were situated in the immense, almost boundless, plain that runs for scores of miles south from the foothills of the Carpathians. Two railroads cut the edges of the great plain, but it would be hard to find a more deserted, desolate part of the world. Moss and lichen, scrub trees, here and there a pool of water, grasses, mud—that is the country, a high plain, cold, wind swept, and almost useless from an agricultural viewpoint. Far to the southward, near the center of the vast plain, there arises a gently sloping hill on which is a spring that pours in a pure stream down the hillside.

### Guarded by Mounted Soldiers.

Without warning, without notice, one day last spring a force of cavalry from Eperjes was shipped into the country. It established picket posts at short intervals in a circle two miles around that hill. Then the railway "goods" trains began to bring car after car of stone and cement, all surrounded by heavy canvas and covered as if to hide it all from the eyes of the curious. At the same time a crowd of workmen appeared—possibly 100 of them—skilled artisans, and not from that part of Hungary. Carts were loaded with the stone, squads of soldiers accompanied each caravan, and train after train of carts moved southward across the plain towards the hill.

The rumor spread that Count Berepök was building a castle on the hill. Curious peasants walked towards that



hill, only to be turned back by mounted pickets who rode their beats in arcs around the hill. The peasants simply were warned that no visitors were allowed. Meantime the hordes of workmen was busy. Those who approached within two miles of the hill could see some massive structure arising. Curiosity was aroused to the highest degree. Caravan after caravan of carts, evidently loaded with cut stone, or other building material, moved

across the plain towards the scene. Residents of the district, excited over the mystery with which the building had been surrounded, strove to lift the veil of secrecy and discover what was going forward. They made attempts to learn from the workmen something about the "Castle of Mystery." In that effort they made a discovery which added to the mystery. They learned that every workman employed in the building of the castle was a Mason.

### Peasants Wild with Curiosity.

That added fuel to the fire of curiosity. People said that Count Berepök was striving to build another tower of Babel. Others declared he was erecting a huge retreat for the Masons of the world.

Members of the Masonic order who lived in the district talked with the builders. Whether or not they were let into the secret no one knows, but after they had talked with the builders, they ceased to show curiosity any longer and strove to their best ability to quiet the talk of the others. Again and again daring persons strove to pierce the line of defense at night, but after three or four of the adventurous ones were captured by the mounted pickets and given lashings with whips, these efforts ceased.

From afar it could be seen that the army of workmen was making rapid progress, for the outlines of a great building appeared, and soon the trains brought in and the carts carried away furniture, paintings, draperies, and other goods.

Evidently, so the people said, the castle had been planned at Vienna, the stone cut there, the furnishings made there, else how could such a building have been erected within seven months?

But why any person should build a castle at a remote spot, practically isolated from all the world, in the middle of a vast desolation, they could not imagine. Therefore those who were curious began to investigate. The soldiers were withdrawn within a few weeks after the final cart load of stuff had trailed across the moor from Eperjes, and a few at a time, the workmen departed. Not one of the workers would tell a word of what he knew, unless, perhaps, he told it to some man with the mystic grip of the Masonic fraternity, and when the castle was finished and furnished, and the count remained there with his retinue of followers, the secret was as deep and the mystery as great as when the first guarded cart went out across the expanse of grass and woods, and moss.

### Visited by Mysterious Men.

People from Munkacs, and Ungvar, and Eperjes ventured out towards the castle site after the soldiers had withdrawn, and some of them approached within half a mile of the hill. They found the whole hill surrounded by a wide ditch, filled with water, and on the other side they saw beautifully laid out grounds, with the grass already springing up on the carefully built slopes of the old hill. At the top of the hill they saw a seven-towered castle of plain, fine hewn granite and polished marble. The building was severe, heavy, and without ornamentation, according to the description of those who caught glimpses of it from afar, and the count remained there with his retinue of followers, the secret was as deep and the mystery as great as when the first guarded cart went out across the expanse of grass and woods, and moss.

At all times guards patrol around the outer edges of the moat, serving simple warnings on those who approach, not to make any attempt to cross the water.

At times the Count Berepök makes visits to the outside world, going to Paris or Vienna, and every few days when he is at home carriages take men across the desolate moors to the castle. Who these men are, why they come, and what they do during their visits with the count in the "Castle of Mystery" no one knows. It is known that no woman ever has crossed the moat or entered the castle.

Whether the building of his castle is but a whim of the wealthy young nobleman or whether it is the rendezvous of the leaders of the secret society to which he has devoted his life, the people have not been able to determine.

All that they know is that the castle is there, and they shun the moor more than ever.



PARSEE WEDDING IN BOMBAY.



EMPERESS' HAND

DECORATED MUMMY



This head of a mummy was found in Antine, Egypt. The headdress is formed of heavy dark leaves.



TOMBSTONE CARVER.

It is that of Tsai An, the dowager empress of China. The third and fourth fingers have wonderful long nails protected by carved and painted shields.

The tombstones in the valley of Joseph are carved after they have been placed over the grave.

## FROM NEAR AND FAR

PARIS HAT.



One of the millinery eccentricities fashionable in Paris has a sweeping brim surmounted by a high waving plume. The French main model sketched above shows various shades of mouse brown and gold.

TO BE KING.



The youngster is Prince Alexander, son of Haakon VII., king of Norway.

HORSES' GYMNASIUM.



The cavalry schools of France have a regular gymnasium for horses, where, by means of suitable apparatus, they train them in many difficult tricks. The particular kind of leap which this horse is being made to practice is called "croupade."

NO SKYSCRAPERS.



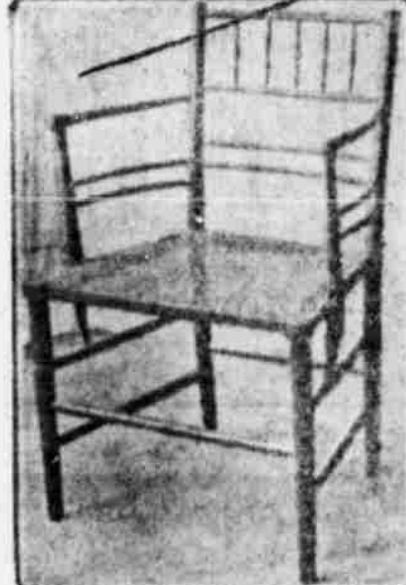
This view of Ludgate circus, in the heart of London's business district, shows the average height of buildings there. The county council building act, enforced in the city, prohibits the erection of any building over 100 feet in height. The main building may be eighty feet high, and there may be two extra stories in the roof.

VINAIGRETTE.



In the French city of Beauvais a small vehicle, built with two wheels and drawn by a man or boy, is in common use. It is called a vnaigrette.

NAPOLEON'S CHAIR.



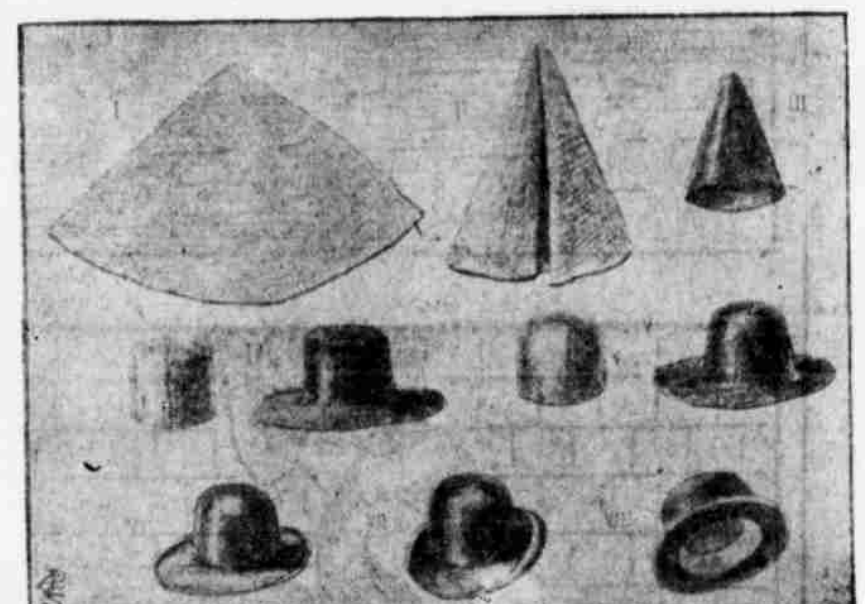
This is a chair of which the pedigree satisfactorily demonstrates that the fallen emperor used it at St. Helena.

SWALLOW'S FLIGHT.



This snapshot shows how swallows, flying high in air, look when on the wing.

MAKE A DERBY HAT.



Many steps are necessary in the making of a derby hat. They are: (1) Cutting the material into a triangle; (2) bending into a cone shape; (3) folding; (4) pressing cone over mold; (5) finishing the crown; (6) binding the rim; (7) turning the rim. The eighth picture shows the finished hat.

ROUGH OPAL.



What rough opal looks like. This identical piece was thrown at George Street, the famous London dealer in precious stones, and hitting his saddle, split, revealing a good piece of opal, as shown here.

VEIL'S BORDERS.



These patterns were favorites for veil borders among the beauties of classic Greece and Rome.

NO PREJUDICE.



Photograph of group of schoolboys in Berlin shows two American negroes who are arm in arm with the Germans.