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London Letter.

The Empress of Austria's murder has created a great sensation here. She was well known in England and Ireland, where she made many friends especially among sportsmen and sportswomen. During the hunting season, when she was over here, she used to stay at the poorest country inns. She rather preferred humble quarters and disliked fuss. On one occasion, when she had bespoke rooms at a rather smart seaside hotel, the manager thought to "do the thing handsomely," so decorated the suite of apartments with exquisite roses. When the lady-in-waiting arrived to prepare for the Empress—about an hour in advance—she was stricken with horror and exclaimed: "For heaven's sake, take away all these flowers! Her majesty cannot endure flowers, especially roses!" So all hands had to set to work and get the unlucky decorations out of the way before the royal visitor appeared. I had this story from a young lady who was staying in the hotel.

Another characteristic anecdote which the press has not got hold of is the following, which was told by one who was present. It dates back to the palmy days of the beautiful Empress, when she was yet full of the "joie de vivre." A circus visited Vienna, and gave a special "command performance" before the Empress and court. After it was over, Elizabeth sent for the ringmaster and questioned him about a certain wonderful equestrienne, who was placarded as "the finest horsewoman in the world, and whose feats had sent the noble audience in ecstasies of applause. "Is she really the best living rider?" asked the Empress. "Absolutely, your Majesty." "Then listen to me," said the fair autocrat, "and mind you keep my secret. You are to have this place ready tomorrow morning, and keep all the doors shut. I will come down with one or two ladies only—not Viennese, you may be sure!—and if you will lend me Mlle. X's horses, I will do all that she has done, and more." She was obeyed, of course, and she duly arrived, wrapped in a long ulster, which, being removed, showed a black costume consisting of ballet skirts and tights. Of her two companions, one was a Frenchwoman, who relates that the exhibition which followed was marvelous. The Em-

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press not only performed Mlle. X's programme, but added several during feats of her own invention, and seemed to thoroughly enjoy the amazement of her observers, including the ringmaster. When she had finished, she asked him: "You must own now that your young lady is not the finest rider in the world. You must not put that statement in the bills anymore." "But, madame—though what you say is true—may I remind you that this girl works for her daily bread" pleaded the man. "The statement to which you object is part of her stock in trade. May we not continue to print it?" "No," said Elizabeth firmly, "because it would not be true. But you may say she is the finest circus rider in the world. You see I am not a circus rider—unfortunately!" She added this with a deep sigh, and the look of triumph faded from her face.

Poor woman! She met disillusion very early. It is an open secret that her husband's weakness where women were concerned embittered her marriage from the first. It seems harsh to recall this now, since the monarch has long since sown his wild oats and has suffered so cruelly; nevertheless truth must be told. Her own purity was Arctic. Those who knew her best said that no man was ever able to obtain the shadow of influence over her. There were several passionate scenes with young nobles about the court; but she crushed them under her feet like so many butterflies. One man she caused to be sent to a post abroad. Her strict views caused her to feel intense anguish at the escapades of her unhappy son, Rudolph. She well knew that he was not fit to be married; and during the ceremony she broke down, sobbing—a most unusual weakness. By the way, his child, the little Archduchess Elizabeth, who is now fifteen years old, has always been devoted to her. At the time of the Empress's murder she was staying alone at the Castle of Luxemburg; and the Emperor, knowing how acutely she would feel the blow, gave orders that the news should be kept from her until her mother could get to her and console her.

You know the legend of the white lady of Hapsburg—the special ancestress who always comes to give warning when one of the ill-fated house is about to meet with a sudden and tragic death. She was seen in 1867, before the execution of the emperor's brother, Maximilian; again in '89, just previous to the suicide of Rudolph. She preceded the news that the ex-Archduke John had been lost at sea; and she was again seen before the awful end of the poor little archduchess, who was burned to death through

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