

Elizabeth of Austria.*

Clara Tschudi, the author of several well-known lives of royal women, has added largely to her literary reputation by a charming monograph on Elizabeth, Princess of Austria and Queen of Hungary, whose tragic death at the hand of an Italian assassin a few years ago startled the whole world. The deed startled less because an Empress had fallen than because she was known to be the innocent consort of one of the most illustrious houses on the Continent of Europe. She had never exercised the faintest influence on politics, and was in entire ignorance of the plans affecting the political interest of the country.

Princess Elizabeth Amalia Eugénie, Duchess of Bavaria, a daughter of Duke Maximilian Joseph and the Duchess Ludovica, was born at Munich on Christmas Eve, 1837. Her early life was spent in the fascinating neighborhood of Pussenhofen, which her father had purchased a few years before his death. Here she roamed at will, acquiring that graceful physical development for which she was distinguished.

In book learning, however, at this early period she was unusually backward, and she declared after she became Empress that she was the most ignorant Princess in Europe, for she knew nothing but the first principles of some half a dozen languages, in addition to the knowledge she had acquired while sitting on her father's knee. Notwithstanding this unpreparedness to assume the cares, responsibilities, and turbulence incident to the life of a consort to the ruler of nearly 40,000,000 of people, at the early age of sixteen she became the wife of her cousin, Emperor Francis Joseph I. He was but twenty-three. The wedding was celebrated with great magnificence at Vienna, April 24, 1854. It is said that she was the youngest, and also the loveliest, Empress that had ever graced the sceptre of the Hapsburgs. She is thus described:

She was tall and slight, with delicate hands and feet, and her childlike features were regular and refined. A sweet smile was frequently on her lips in her happier days, her eyes were of dark blue, her complexion was fair and rosy, and a wonderful effect of beauty was produced by her abundant hair, which when down fell around her like a cloak."

Thus this beautiful youthful Empress, without experience or knowledge of the world, flushed with the confidence inspired by youth, looked forward to days of unalloyed enjoyment, but which were days of bitter disappointment, to end finally at the hand of an assassin.

The author has vividly brought out the womanly nature striving to be true to herself as well as to her husband and subjects, over whom by love, kindness, and consideration she exercised an influence of transcendent power. Her faults, whatever they may have been, she does not overlook, but condones, as proceeding from a nature that could not brook restraint, and found its chief delight in the woods and mountains.

In mature life the Empress became a close student. Clever men of her day were amazed at her store of information. Few were able to equal her in the knowledge of history, art, and science. Notwithstanding this intellectual activity, her life was one of sadness. Estrangement from her husband, ill-health, and family affliction, especially the tragic end of her son, Rudolph, heir to the throne, upon whom she lavished all the affection of a mother, notwithstanding his wayward life, all pressed heavily upon her and made life burdensome.

The end came on the 14th of September, 1898, by the dagger of the Italian Anarchist Luccheni. Her remains were placed in the crypt of the old Capuchin Church, Vienna, where repose the bodies of the Hapsburgs of many centuries.

As sad as was the life of Elizabeth, the author has introduced so much of her charming personality into the book that it has all the fascinating qualities of a novel. The volume is well printed in large type.

***ELIZABETH, EMPRESS OF AUSTRIA AND QUEEN OF HUNGARY.** By Clara Tschudi. Authorized translation from the Norwegian by C. M. Cope. 8vo. Cloth. Pp. 260. New York: E. P. Dutton. \$3.