

Austria's and Serbia's War Excuse After Twenty-Five Years of Jealous Hatred

Gigantic Struggle Between Slav and Teuton Likely to Follow--Death of Heir Apparent Gave Austria Opportunity of Forcing Serbia to Show Her Hand--Countries Have Irritated Each Other for Quarter of Century



Crown Prince Alexander of Serbia. Arlieff, M. Pashitch, Serbia's able Prime Minister.

The assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife has been the spark that has kindled into flame the long smouldering embers of Austrian and Serbian hatred. Shocking as that tragedy was it was after all but one incident in a long chapter of political reprisals, an incident which Austria has never been able to forgive Serbia for existing at all, and Serbia has always fiercely resented her big neighbor's stubborn opposition to her own schemes for development. For twenty-five years jealousy and enmity have fed on each other, for twenty-five years each has irritated the other in all the numberless ways known to skilled politicians, for twenty-five years each has been held in check only by the pressure of outside influences. But now the tragic death of the heir apparent has put in Austria's hands an excuse so powerful that she dares to use it as a weapon, while Serbia, assured of the absolute loyalty and unity of her people and confident of the backing of all the southern Slavs, is only put in the position of having her hand forced.

As the first thought it would seem that, considering the differences in size and resources, any contest between these two countries must be unequal. Austria has enjoyed a long period of peace and possesses a large and highly trained army. Serbia, on the other hand, is only beginning to recover from two costly wars. Although she gained thereby the territory in Macedonia that she had long coveted, she has not yet had the time to profit by it. Serbia is poor and her army comparatively small, but she possesses an element of strength, the value of which is doubled to her by reason of the fact that the same quality is Austria's great weakness. The entire Serbian people are a unit on any question of national honor, the disloyalty of any part of its army is an impossible supposition. On the other hand, Austria, like the Austrian empire, is made up of many people of many minds, and it is not possible to be quite certain how it would conduct itself in a war in which racial considerations would be involved, as in a war with Serbia. In a war with Serbia practically all the military operations would be conducted in a territory populated almost wholly by Serbs, a people tied by the sympathy of common race and tradition to the people they would be fighting; ties that are, to the southern Slavs, many times more binding than the slender political threads that hold them to the Austrian empire. In prosecuting a war against Serbia Austria has long known that she would expose herself to the danger of arousing to open rebellion her entire southern Slav population.

In the present situation, as in every farstep in the Balkans, the importance lies not so much in the countries involved as in the probability of the entanglement of other nations, and the possibility therefrom of that dread bogy, a general European war. Montenegro has already announced that her fortunes are cast with Serbia. Serbia, also, by reason of the understanding she has with Greece and Rumania, might hope for support from them. Germany and Italy have declared their intention of standing by their ally Austria, though no one really believes that their intention is to do more than to keep other nations off and so leave Austria a clear field. Bulgaria, while claiming to remain neutral, would certainly be glad if she could snatch the chance to revenge herself for her defeat by Serbia in the second Balkan war. But more important than any of these is the attitude of Russia, which nothing as yet has been said, though it is in fact, however her official remonstrance against the growth of Pan-Slavism which threatens to alienate her South Slav people, and create a powerful Serb empire. She has rightly gauged Serbia's ambition to be the nucleus free Slav, to which all the southern Slavs could attach themselves and become one political and racial unit, and she claims to see the existence of an elaborate organization that has, with official connivance, been developed for the furtherance of this national scheme. In her

will she has endeavored to bring about in all the elections and in the disturbed relations with Montenegro. When Russia also took a hand in Serbian affairs as a check to Austria the distrustful little kingdom could but wonder what freedom meant after all. Only within the past few years has it been able to free itself from these various elements, enjoy an independent political life, and create a friendly understanding with Montenegro.

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Parliament Building at Belgrade.

fact that nothing has been sufficiently well defined to be open to official presentation has not rendered the aggregate less exasperating. Nor have the repeated denials of the Serbian authorities that the plots were sporadic and without the slightest official connivance served to satisfy her.

grade against its authority, were probably the most prominent of these proceedings, though there have been endless riotings and arrests and minor trials for which the union may have been directly responsible. The secretary of the society, Major Milan Pribitchewitch, formerly an Austrian army officer, was mentioned in the confession of the youth who threw the bomb at the Archduke. This naturally has given Austria sufficient ground on which to demand the entire wiping out of this inflammatory society, the suppression of all its literature and the punishment of its leaders.

Austria further claims that the public schools of Serbia have been used as an instrument for the instilling of anti-Austrian prejudice, and asserts that every branch of the Serbian official service is honeycombed with plots aimed against Austrian tranquillity.

Until she seized on the murder of the Archduke Austria was not able to put her finger on any tangible evidence of Serbia's malfeasance. But Serbia's reprisals for Austria's highhandedness were not less irritating for being intangible. Austria has felt for years that all of Serbia was a hotbed of intrigue and conspiracy against her, and she has recognized the slow encroachment of the disturbing influence centered there in her own territory. The

has been kept at the standard that no important a Power must require. The Serbian army was until the Balkan war on untried quantity, with the presumption against its efficiency. The dramatic events of that war gave it, however, a new rating, for the Serbian proved himself a splendid soldier and the organization of the army proved surprisingly effective. It had great power of expansion, while the wonderful esprit de corps and the galvanizing effect of devoted enthusiasm more than overcame formal defects.

In Bosnia on the west Serbia would hope to find a certain degree of assistance in that she expects that at the first alarm the Bosnians would rise in revolt and throw their fortunes with those of Serbia. But Bosnia is well garrisoned, and not it may be added with Bosnian soldiers. Bosnian recruits are quickly sent to other parts of the empire, while only Austrian soldiers are stationed at the Bosnian fortresses. Sarajevo and Zvornik have both large garrisons which could be readily moved to the rough Serbian frontier where the mountains would furnish natural defenses for military operations.

PEN PICTURES OF LIFE IN CITY OF MEXICO

Interesting pen pictures of life in the city of Mexico are given in a letter just received in New York from an American who is in business in the Mexican capital. It presents a phase of the situation about which little has been printed. Extracts from the letter are given below.

THE National Bank has closed all the branches it had in various cities of the republic. The head capital is open. What an index to the condition of the country! The National Bank has fifty-seven branches and agencies scattered through the principal cities and towns of the republic. It has a capital and reserve of \$48,000,000, bank notes in circulation to the amount of \$90,000,000, cash in the vaults of \$36,000,000 and the total assets of \$220,000,000. Its capital is largely French.

Even more sorrowful is the condition of the State banks. On January 7 their notes were made legal tender and they were allowed to issue notes for three times the value of their cash in hand, and, as a consequence, these notes have become more common than newspapers, and as for the speed with which they circulate it is matched only by the speed with which money is spent on Broadway on a Saturday afternoon. A friend as to the value of Banco de Durango bills. He replied: "Five minutes is plenty long enough to keep them."

Consider that formerly a Mexican dollar bought 50 cents United States money and that for the past six months the average rate has been about 32 cents. A poor Chinese laundryman who has to send home money to his family used to be able to buy about \$1 Hongkong for \$1 Mexican. Now he has been paying from \$1.50 to \$1.90 for \$1 of Hongkong money.

Gold coins are bought and sold at 35 and 40 per cent. premium. Silver pesos command 15 or 18 per cent. premium and small change has become so scarce that it is a scandal. Street car conductors sell it at 10 per cent. premium and if one offers a conductor a dollar bill he looks at you keenly, asks if you haven't change, and may force you to buy a sheet of tickets or perhaps let you have a free ride.

Kipling may be paraphrased thus: "The north is north and the south is south and never the twain shall meet." For I believe it not more difficult to acquire a Chinese or Filipino point of view than a Mexican point of view. Prices are sky high, factories are closed, friends are doubled, relatives and friends are drafted into the army to be shot down in this fratricidal strife, yet the Mexican dwells to it as inevitable and drinks his pulque as before.

One sees the same old beggars in the Alameda or on their usual street corners and they take their usual toll of one or two cents, rarely more, from passersby. Cripples on the sidewalks sell lottery tickets and there seems to be the usual confidence that the Government will distribute the prizes fairly. The first prize is \$10,000 and the total amount of prizes is about \$25,000, distributed every Tuesday, the larger amount being 60 per cent. of the amount obtained in sale of tickets.

TOO MANY GROUND HOGS. Indiana County Offered Bounty and 400 Scamps Were Returned.

WILLIAMSBURG, Ind., July 25.—Warren county is overrun with groundhogs and the farmers here have been making positive money this year killing the animals for the bounty offered by the Board of County Commissioners. The county has been offering 25 cents for each scamp turned in at the county house. At the July session commissioners bills were allowed amounting to \$450 for the 1,840 groundhogs killed during June. This proved such a heavy drain on the treasury that the board made an order during the bounty and henceforth will pay only 10 cents each for scamps.