

THE BIGGEST NEWSPAPER STORY IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD

(By William G. Shepherd, United Press Staff Correspondent.)

London, Aug. 24.—(By Mail to New York).—What started this war in Europe? Everybody knows that millions of men are lined up to kill each other; that the civilization which Europe has been slowly building up since the dark ages has been thrown to the winds, and that the situation is too big to either write or talk about, intelligently. It will take a hundred years for history books to give the news. As General Fred. Funston told me, just as I was hurrying away from Vera Cruz for London: "There's only one bigger newspaper story that could happen on this earth, and that would be another planet approaching ours with an inevitable collision two weeks distant." What started this biggest event the world has ever known?

The answer is: One little lead bullet from a revolver in the hands of a Serbian high school boy. And this bullet probably would never have been fired if an ordinary chauffeur had not lost his way in a little town in Bosnia. One little twist of a chauffeur's wrist, as he turned an automobile into a side street, when he should have remained on the main road; one high school boy—they started this war in Europe.

It's hard to find enough to say about this one lead bullet. It went into the head of an archduke as he rode in his automobile. It sped through chancelleries of Europe. It circled about thrones. It entered the bed chambers of the world's kings, emperors or czars and drove sleep from the eyes of statesmen. It sped into millions of homes and brought sorrow and death. Oceans of tears of women and little children it created. It flew into the bourses and money markets of the world and cut nerves. To understand the situation in Europe before this bullet was fired imagine, if you can, that every item of civilization—everything that is good—homes, science, art, music, surgery, education, culture, peace—had all been done up into one huge package and hung, by a slender thread over a deep precipice. For years this package has swung this way. The winds of war have often threatened it, but the statesmen of Europe have steadied it and have strengthened the hold and the storm has passed, time after time. And then along speeds this one lead bullet, fired by a high school boy named Gabriel Prinzip. It cuts the rope. The crash will be heard throughout centuries.

Where Prinzip is now is a secret. He probably is dead. From the day he was seized by the crowds in the streets of the little town of Serajevo and dragged off to jail, he has been out of sight. Austrian censorship kept back the news; his punishment is a mystery to the courts of Europe. It all happened on Sunday morning, June 28. King George of England was living in Buckingham Palace, in London, enjoying the social season. In far away St. Petersburg the Czar of Russia was entertaining Poincare, the president of France. The Emperor of Austria had gone to his summer home for his vacation. Emperor William of Germany was playing on his yacht at Kiel. It was play-time for the lords of Europe, and they were making the most of it. But, lords as they were, of various sections of mankind, their sight did not reach to that faraway town in Bosnia. Chauffeurs and high school boys don't often topple thrones and there are so many of them and they are so common that they cannot all be watched. But it would have well paid these lords of creation and it would have well paid all humanity this bright Sunday morning to have kept their eyes on Serajevo.

What's happening there seems small enough, at first. A little crowd of citizens go down to the depot to see a special train come in; it bears the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, who, if he lives, will some day be emperor of Austria and king of Hungary. He won't live three hours longer, but the crowds don't know that, neither do the kings and czars and emperors of the world. With the archduke is his wife. They have left their four little children at home in Vienna and have come to Serajevo, a little town in Bosnia, to pay a regal visit. Europe and all humanity might well keep their eyes glued to the automobile which is to pass through the badly paved streets of Serajevo at 10 o'clock in the morning. First, there is a bomb explosion. A typographer has thrown it. It does not hit the automobile; instead it hits the elbow of the archduke. It goes off a second later in the street, some yards behind the royal car. The chauffeur, whose wrong twist of the wrist half an hour later is going to help plunge into the greatest war mankind has ever known, has put on speed and saved the royal pair. Destiny has decided that it is not at 10:10 in the morning that the archduke shall die, but at 10:40 and that not a typographer's bomb, but a high school boy's hand shall cut the rope from which hangs over the precipice of war the world's civilization and peace. The car speeds on. The archduke is annoyed. When he reaches the hall, he says to the mayor, who has made a speech of welcome. "These speeches are all right, but what about bombs? You say I'm welcome in Serajevo, but they throw bombs at me here." The mayor looked worried, but the job is too small for a mayor. Kings, working all together and all the statesmen of the earth, with the gold of all the world behind them, won't be able to handle the job that the little mayor of Serajevo is picking up his brows about. He telephones to the police to renew their vigilance. What can the little police force of Serajevo do in this affair? It is a matter for the greatest armies the world has ever seen to decide.

smiling. He's accustomed to attempts at assassination; members of his own family have been killed in that way and he thinks a change in his route will outtrick any other attempt. "Go down the Appel quay, along the water front," is the order given to the chauffeur. He's a good chauffeur; only a little while before he has helped save the archduke's life by speeding up at just the right one-millionth of a second. "We want to go to the hospital to see those who were injured in the bomb explosion," says the Duke suddenly. The chauffeur doesn't know the town well. He should have continued along the water front. But he makes a mistake. One little turn of his steering wheel and the car is in a side street.

"Look, Europe! Look, all humanity! Turn your eyes from the altars of the churches where you are worshipping this Sunday morning or stop your Sunday-holiday playing and watch and listen." That's the way an orator or a historian might describe this moment a hundred years from now. Just an ordinary chauffeur has made an ordinary mistake. The side street is roughly paved. The car must go slowly. The street is narrow. Garbier Prinzip stands there. Just as if destiny itself had its hand on the wrist of the auto driver, the car slows up as it nears Prinzip. Here they are, a few feet apart, the revolver and the target. An inexorable fate has brought them together in this side street. The target seems to be only a man, an archduke. But it isn't. The real target is that slender thread from which hangs—over the precipice of war—all that civilization has gained through centuries of upward struggle. The finger of the high school boy assassin moves less than half an inch. The bullet flies. It enters the archduke's head and kills him. It also killed the peace of Europe, but the kings and czars and emperors of Europe don't know it—yet! All of them feel sorry for the little children who are left orphans in the palace at Vienna. Emperor William of Germany and his wife telegraph to the little children, "We can scarcely find words to express to you, children, how our hearts bleed. To have spent such happy hours with you and your parents only two weeks ago and now to think that you are plunged into this immeasurable sorrow."

The Emperor didn't know then that a million times four children probably would be plunged into immeasurable grief before the effect of the flight of that one lead bullet had died away.

The bullet which Gabriel Prinzip fired into the brain of the Archduke Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary on Sunday morning, June 28, shattered the peace of Europe.

I think the fittest, saddest-faced man I ever saw was M. Sazanoff, the premier of Russia, when, in an interview at Calais, France, on one of the dark days of the Balkan war, he said to me, "I believe we have saved the peace of Europe." But the thing he and other statesmen of Europe prevented then, has happened now. Prinzip's bullet, itself hit the European powder magazine and set it off.

The bullet fired by Gabriel Prinzip into the brain of Archduke Ferdinand, of Austria-Hungary, came almost straight from the Serbian government itself, insisted the Austro-Hungarians.

Twenty-five days after the assassination, Austria-Hungary sent a note of demands to Serbia. Serbia had countenanced criticism of Austria-Hungary the note declared. It had permitted its newspapers and its people to carry on movements in behalf of Slavs in Austro-Hungarian dependencies. It said that the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand had been planned at the Serbian capital. Officers in the Serbian army had helped Gabriel Prinzip, the Serbian high school boy, to get a revolver and ammunition with which to perform the deed. Serbian government officials across the border had helped Prinzip to cross into Bosnia on his journey to Serajevo. Austria-Hungary demanded that Serbia, within 48 hours, must print in the official Serbian paper, these exact words:

"The royal government of Serbia condemns the propaganda against Austria-Hungary from some of her dependencies."

The note also demanded that Serbia must curb its free press and its speech in order to stop criticism of Austria-Hungary and it must change its system of education so that, in the schools nothing should be taught the children that would cause them to hate Austria-Hungary. Serbia must also discharge from its army certain officers whom the Austro-Hungarians would name and who had spoken too freely in regard to the crime of June 28.

Serbia was given forty-eight hours in which to comply with all of these demands.

Prinzip's bullet has been flying 26 days toward its target. It will soon cut the string which holds European civilization hanging over the precipice of war. It will soon reach the heart of peace and kill her.

That same night, the night of July 23, the statesmen of Russia, in distant St. Petersburg, received a cablegram from Serbia.

"Help," it said.

The Russian statesmen talked for four hours about it in the country home of M. Goremykin. They reached some decision, secretly. At 7 o'clock in the evening they dashed off in their automobiles to their various offices, each man to do his own work in connection with what was at hand.

By this time the armies of Europe were mobilizing.

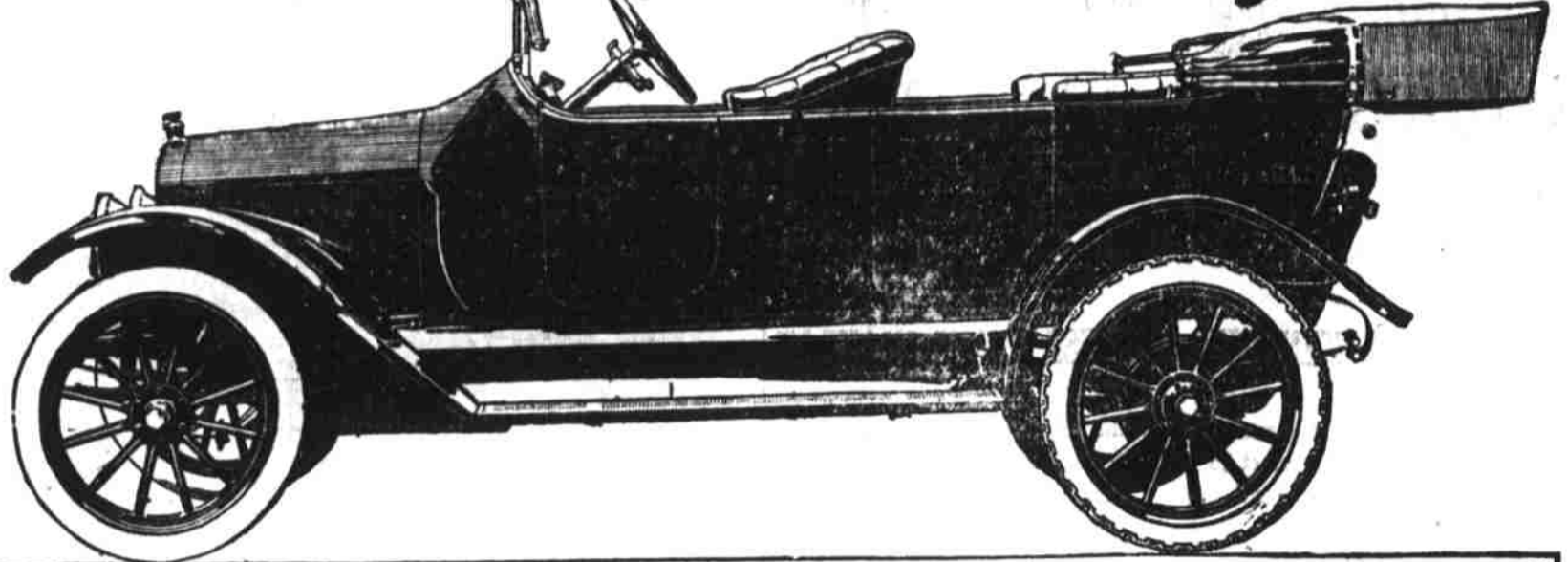
Serbia's forty-eight hours were up on July 26 at 6 in the evening. But before that time the Russian army was moving toward Germany and the

German army was moving toward Russia and in a dozen different directions. Prinzip's bullet had reached its target. It had struck the mine under Europe and this mine will probably kill a million men and create more havoc than anything else that has ever happened to humanity.

What Prinzip really said or thought after he committed the assassination, is not known publicly. The Serbian government, in a note, said that he said:

"I was not influenced by any other person or persons. The reading of anarchistic literature made me believe that there could be nothing finer in the world than to be an assassin. When in Belgrade I read that the Archduke was going to Serajevo and so I bought

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a revolver and went there." But what he said or thought matters little now. Europe is not fighting because Prinzip was a murderer, but because the long and ancient quarrel for "a place in the sun," a place for each nation to put its feet in the crowded land has suddenly been turned a contest of words and diplomacy into combat on the battlefields.

Some jolt would have set off the European mine, some time. It just happened that Prinzip's bullet did it.

METHODIST CELEBRATION.

Hartford, Conn., Sept. 26.—Methodists of Connecticut today celebrated the anniversary of the founding of Methodism in this state at Stratford in 1789.

APPLICATION FOR PARDON OF C. R. SANDLIN

Application will be made to the Governor of North Carolina for the pardon of C. R. Sandlin, convicted at the May term of the Superior Court of Lenoir county for the crime of selling whisky and sentenced to the roads of said county for a term of six months.

All persons who oppose the granting of said pardon are invited to forward their protests to the Governor without delay.

This the 24th day of September, 1914.

J. A. POWERS,
His Attorney.

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