

England.

v expected.

intend to marry?"

my husband."

no one. I"

name.

get It."

n his veins, but because her Virginian

nother had brought much gold to the

Northmoreland exchequer. Afterward

he had freely spent such portion of

that gold as had come to his coffers in

pointment. The hereditary grand duchy

of Baumenburg-Drippe was ruled by

a cousinly understudy of the German

Emperor William II.; the one son of

the morriage had been adopted as heir

to his crown by the childless king of

Hungaria: the handsome and lamenta-

ily extravagant old Duke of North

moreland was dead; his title and vast

estates had passed to a distant and dis-

agreeable relative, and the widowed

grand duchess, with her one fair

daughter, had lived for years in a pret-

ty old house with a high walled gar-

den at Hampton Court, lent by the

generosity of the king and queen of

For a long moment the Dresden

hina lady thought in silence and some-

hing of sadness. Then she roused her-

self again and asked the one and only

oyal princess with an American name

what, in the way of a match, she real-

"What do I expect?" echoed Virginia.

Why, I wish for the moon-no, I

mean the sun. But I don't expect to

"Is that a way of saying you never

"i'm afraid it amounts to that," ad-

mitted Virginia, "since there is only

one man in the world I would have for

"My dearest! A man you have let

yourself learn to care for, a man be-

neath you? How terrible! But you see

"I've never seen this man. And-Pm

not 'in love' with him. That would be

too foolish, because, instead of being

"Virginia, of whom can you be talk-

Virginia blushed a little and, instead

of answering her mother's look of help-

less appeal, stared at the row of tall

hollyhocks that blazed along the ivy

hidden garden wall. She did not speak

for an instant, and then she said, with

the dainty shyness of a child pinned to

a statement by uncomprehending eld-

ers: "It isn't a joke. Nonsense, maybe,

yet not a joke. I've always thought of

him-for so many years I've forgotten

when it first began. He was so great,

so-everything that appeals to me.

How could I help thinking about him

and putting him on a pedestal? I-

there's no idea of marriage in my mind,

of course, only-there's no other man

possible after all the thoughts I've

given him-no other man in the world."

"My dear, you must tell me his

"What! When I've described him-al-

most-do you still need to hear his

name? Well, then, I-I'm not asham-

ed to tell. It's Leopold.'

beneath, he's far, far above me.'

ing? Or is this another joke?"

Through the gate of dreams ties the fair land of romance into which you would travel, finding welcome relief from the daily grind. Now you are invited to Bat now it was all gone, and long ago accompany the Princess Virginia, 1 be had died of grief and bitter disapwho determines that the royal personage who would honor her with his hand must fall in love with her and woo her as any other man would a woman. Therefore she travels incognito in his realm, meeting adventures strange and full of excitement. You will learn with pardonable pride that the American blood in her veins gives her an independence unheard of in the presence of kings, but most of all you will want to know how she succeeds in her bold undertaking. That you will enjoy every minute of the reading is assured by the verdict of thousands who declare "The Princess Virginia" to be a most delightful story.



I'm dashed if I do.' "My darling child," exclaimed the grane duchess, "you're impos sible. If any one should hear you!

"It's he who's impossible," the princess amended. "I'm just trying to show you"-

"Or to shock me. You are so like your grandmother.'

"That's the best compliment any one can give me, which is lucky, as it's given so often," laughed the princess "Dear, adorable Virginia!" She cud dled into the pink hollow of her hand the pearl framed ivory miniature of a beautiful, smiling girl which always hung from a thin gold chain around her neck. "They shouldn't have named me after you, should they, if they hadn't wanted me to be like you?"

"It was partly a question of money. dear," sighed the grand duchess. "If my mother hadn't left a legacy to my first daughter only on consideration that her own extremely American name of Virginia should be perpetuat ed"-

"It was a delicious way of being patriotic. I'm glad she did it. I love being the only royal princess with American blood in my veins and an American name on my handkerchiefs. Do you believe for an instant that if Grandmother Virginia were alive she would let Granddaughter Virginia marry Prince Henri de Touraine?"

"I don't see why not," said the grand duchess. "She wasn't too patriotle to peror of Rhaetia." London as the first American duchess. Heavens, the things she used to do if one could believe half the wild stories my father's sister told me in warning! And as for my father, though a most charming man, of course he could not -er-have been called precisely estimable, while Prince Henri certainly is, and an exceedingly good match even for you-in present circumstances. "Call him a match if you like, mother. He's undoubtedly a stick. But, no; he's not a match for me. There's only one on earth." And Virginia's eyes were lifted to the sky as if, instead of existing on earth, the person in her thoughts were placed as high as the sun that shone above her. "I should have preferred an Englishman for you," said the grand duchess, "if only there were one of suitable rank free to"-

hobody was near. There were reports of speeches made by him since his ac- the princess. "Being royal does nothcession to the throne, accounts of im- ing but spoil all one's fun and oblige provements in guns and an invention one to do stupid, boring things which of a new explosive. There was a somewhat crude yet witty play which he had written and numerous other rec- went on the Dresden china prophetess ords of the accomplishments and of conventionality. "When alliances achievements and even eccentricities are arranged for women of our posiwhich had built up the Princess Vir- tion, we must content ourselves with ginia's ideal of this celebrated young the hope that love may come after man, proclaimed emperor after the marriage, or, if not, we must go on dogreat revolution eight years ago.

"You are worthy to be an empress." Her mother's voice broke into Virginia's thoughts. She started and found herself under inspection by the grand duchess. At first she frowned; then she laughed, springing up on a quick impulse to turn earnest into test against her will. I hate that everiast and so perhaps escape further catechising.

"Yes, would I not make an empress?" she echoed, stepping out from the shadow of her favorite elm into the noontide radiance of summer.

The sun poured over her hair as she stood with uplifted head and threaded it with a network of living gold, gleam- should despise him if he were less or ing into the dark gray eyes rimmed with black lashes and turning them to jewels. Her fair skin was as flawless in the unsparing light as the petals of lilles, and her features, though a repetition of those which had made a Virginia girl famous long ago, were carved with royal perfection.

"There is no real reason why you should not make an empress, dearest,' suid her mother, in pride of the girl's beauty and desiring, womanilke, to promote her child's happiness. "Stranger things have happened. Only last week at Windsor the dear queen was saying what a pity poor Henri was not But, no matter; he is well more. enough. However, if- And when one comes to think of it, it's perhaps not unnatural that Leopold of Rhaetia has never been mentioned for you, although there could be nothing against the marriage. What a match for any womana supreme one! Not a royal girl but would go on her knees to him if"-

"I wouldn't," said Virginia. "I might worship him, yet he should go on his knees to me."

"I doubt if those proud knees of his will ever bend in homage to man or woman," replied the grand duchess. "But that's a mere fantasy. I'm serious now, darling, and I very much wish you would be."

'Please, I'd rather not," smiled Virginia uneasily. "Let us not talk of the emperor any more-and never again after this, mother. You know now. That's all that's necessary, and"-

"But it's not all that's necessary. You have put the idea into my head, and it's not an unpleasing idea. Besides, it has evidently been in your head for a long time, and I should like to see you happy-see you in a position such as you're entitled to grace. You are a very beautiful girl (there's no disguising that from you, as you know you are the image of your grandmother, who was a celebrated beauty), and the best blood in Europe runs in your veins. You are royal, and yet-and yet our circumstances are such that-in fact, for the present we're somewhat handlcapped."

"We're beggars," said Virginia. laughing, but it was not a happy laugh.

"Cophetua married the beggar maid." the grand duchess reminded her, with elaborate playfulness. "And, you know, all sorts of things have happened in history-much stranger than any one would dare put in fiction if writing of royalties. My dear husband was second cousin once removed to the German emperor, though he was treat. Ing not to show in any way the sudden ed- But we mustn't speak of that. The sick pain in her heart.

"i'm tired of being royal," snapped one hates."

"Nevertheless noblesse does oblige," ng our duty in that state of life to which heaven has graciously called us."

"Bother duty!" broke out Virginia Thank goodness, in these days not all the king's horses and all the king's men can make even a princess marry ing cant about 'duty in marriage.' When people love each other they're kind and good and sweet and true because it's a joy, not because it's a duty. And that's the only sort of loyalty worth having between men and women, according to me. I wouldn't accept anything else from a man, and 1 uore exacting."

"Virginia, the way you express your elf is almost improper. I'm thankful that no one hears you except myself." said the grand duchess. But at this moment, when clash of tongues and opinions seemed imminent, there oc urred a happy diversion in the arrival of letters.

Virginia, who was a neglectful corespondent, had nothing, but two or hree important looking envelopes claimed attention from the grand duchess, and as soon as the ladies were once more alone together in the sweet scented garden she broke the crown stamped seal of her son Adalbert, now by adoption crown prince of Hungaria. "Open the others for me, dear," she lemanded excitedly, "while I see what Dal has to say." And Virginia leisurey obeyed, wondering whether Dal's ews would by and by be passed on to her. It was always an event when a long letter came from him, and the grand duchess invariably laughed and exclaimed and sometimes blushed as she read, but when she blushed the letter was not given to the crown prince's sister.

There was a note today from an old friend of her mother's of whom Vir ginia was fond, and she had just be cun to be interested in the third paragraph, all about an adorable Dandy Dinmont puppy, when an odd, half stifled ejaculation from the grand duchas made the girl lift her eyes.

"Has Dal been having something be yond the common in the way of advenures?" she inquired dryly.

Her mother did not answer, but she had grown pink and then pale. Virginia began to be uneasy, "What is the matter? Is anything wrong?

she asked. "No-nothing in the least wrong, far

from it, indeed; but, oh, my child!" "Mother, dear, what is it?" "Something so extraordinary, so

wonderful-1 mean as a coincidencethat I can hardly speak. I suppose I can't be dreaming. You are reallytalking to me in the garden, aren't you?"

"I am, and I wish you were telling me the mystery. Do, dear. You look awake, only rather odd."

"It would be strange if I didn't look odd. Dal says-Dal says" "What has he been doing-getting

engaged?" "No. It is-your emperor, not Dal.

who talks of being engaged." "Oh," said Virginia, trying not to speak blankly, trying not to flush, try-

"He wishes to marry-me?" she echoed dazedly, "Why?"

"Providence must have drawn your inclination toward him, dearest. It is indeed a romance. Some day, no doubt, it will be told to the world in history." "But how did he"- Virginia broke off and began again. "Did he tell this

to Dal and ask him to write you?" "Not-not precisely that," admitted from satisfaction to uneasiness, for Virginia was difficult in some ways. though adorable in others, and held such peculiar ideas about life-inherited from her American grandmotherthat it was impossible to be sure how she would receive the most ordinary announcements.

The princess' rapt expression faded like the passing of dawn.

"Not precisely that?" she repeated. "Then what-how"

"Well, perhaps, though it's not strictly the correct thing, you had better read your brother's letter for yourself." Virginia put her hands behind her frightened look came into the eyes which at most times gazed bravely upon the world. "I-somehow I can't," she said. "Please tell me."

"To begin with, then, you know what



sist Dal if he wanted to be liked? The chancellor has written to him from time to time, and Dal has quite eninformal way in which such affairs are Breitstein has written confidentially to Dal, as our only near male relative, eyes. asking how your family would regard

or if we have already disposed of your dove. hand. At last the emperor is inclined

marry, and you, as a Protestant princess"

"A Protestant princess, indeed." ing approached by him on such terms." The face of the grand duchess was lation. darkened by the gloom of her thoughts.

"My daughter," she exclaimed mildly, yet despairingly, "it's not possible that like solving a puzzle-there's no more rful chance, this unheard of chance, this chance that you were praying for, actually falls into your hands you will throw it away for for a sentimental schoolgirl scruple." "I was not praying for it." said Virginla. "I'm sure, mother, you would have considered it most bold in me to want so much, so much it would be pray for it. And I didn't. I was only refusing other chances."

rumor has reached Rhaetia that you are-good to look at. Leopold has been heard to say that, whatever else the future empress of Rhaetia may be, he won't give his people an ugly woman to reign over them. And so altogether"-

"And so altogether, my references being satisfactory, at a pinch I might do for the place," cut in Virginia, with the grand duchess, her face changing the hot, impatient rebellion of her youth. "Oh, mother, you think me mad or a fool, 1 know, and perhaps I am mad, yet not mad enough not to see that it would be a great thing, a wonderful thing, to be asked in marriage by the one man in my world if-ah, that great 'if'-he had only seen and fallen in love with me. It might have happened, you know. As you say, I'm not ugly, and I can be rather pleasant if I choose-so I believe. If he had only come to this land to see what I was like, as royal men did in the dear old fairy stories, and then had asked me to be his wife, why, I should have been conceited enough to think it was back with a childish gesture, and a because he loved me even more than because of other things. Then I should have been happy-yes, dear, I'll confess it to you now-almost happy enough to die of the great joy and triumph of it. But now I'm not happy. an admiration Dal has felt for Count | will marry Leopold or I'll marry no man, but I swear to you I won't be married to Leopold in Count von Breitstein's hateful old, cold, cut and dried way

"It's the emperor's way as well as Von Breitstein's."

"Then for once in his big, grand, obstinate life he'll have to learn that there's one insignificant girl who won't play Griselda even for the sake of being his empress.

The girl proclaimed this resolve, rising to her feet, with her head high and a look in her gray eyes which told the grand duchess that it would be hopeless for her to argue down the resolution. At first it was a proud look and a sad look, but suddenly a beam of light flashed into it and began to sparkle and twinkle. Virginia smiled and showed her dimples. Her color came and went. In a moment she was a different girl, and her mother, bewildered, fearful still, dared to hope something from the change.

"How odd you look!" she exclaimed. 'You've thought of something. You are happy. You have the air of-of having found some plan.'

"It found me, I think," the gir! answered, laughing, "all suddenly, just in a flash. That's the way it must be with inspirations. This is one-I know it. It's all in the air, floating round

me. But I shall grasp it soon.' She came close to her mother, still smiling, and knelt down in the grass at her feet, looking up with radiance in her eyes.

Luckily there was no one save the Dresden china lady and the birds and joyed the correspondence. The old flowers to see how a young princess man can be witty as well as cynical threw her mantle of dignity away, for if he chooses, and Dal says he tells the two did not keep royal state and a good stories. Now, it seems, in the royal retinue in the quaint old house at Hampton Court, and the big elm usually put forward, that Count von which Virginia loved kindly hid the mother and daughter from intrusive

"You do love me, don't you, dearan alliance between Leopold and you est?" cooed the princess softly as a

"You know I do, my child, though I to listen to his chancellor's advice and don't pretend to understand you," sighed the grand duchess, well aware that she was about to be coaxed into some scheme, feeling that she would cried Virginia. "I protest against be- yield and praying Providence that the yielding might not lead her into tribu-

> "People grow dull if we understand them too well," said Virginia. "It's

"I'm not thinking of an Englishman," murmured her daughter.

"If only you would think of poor Henri!"

"Never of him. You know, I said I would be dash"-

"Don't repeat it! Oh, when you look at me in that way, how like you are to your grandmother's portrait at homethe one in white, painted just before ber marriage! One might have known you would be extraordinary. That sort of thing invariably skips over a generation."

The grand duchess laid down the theory as a law, and, whether or no she were right, it was at least sure that she had inherited nothing of the first Virginia's daring originality-some of ber radiant mother's beauty perhaps, watered down to gentle prettiness, for the hereditary Grand Duchess of Baumenburg-Drippe at fifty-one was still a daintily attractive woman, a middle aged Dresden china lady, with a perfect complexion preserved by an almost perfect temper, surprised eyebrows, kindly dimples and a conventional upper lip.

She was not by birth "hereditary." Her lord and (very much) her master had been that and had selected her to belp him reign over the hereditary grand duchy of Baumenburg-Drippe. by him, which Virginia had tried soft-English duke with royal Stuart blood by to herself on her little plano when

"As if it could have been any one else."

"Leopoid. You're talking of the em-

"And you have thought of him. you've cherished him, for years as an ideal! Why, you never spoke of him particularly before."

"That's because you never seriously wanted me to take a husband until this prim, dull French Henri proposed himself. My thoughts were my own. 1 wouldn't have told you only-you see why."

"Of course, my precious child, How extremely interesting and-and roman-Again the grand duchess lapsed into slience, yet her expression did not suggest a stricken mind. She merely appeared astonished, with an astonishment that might turn into an emotion nore agreeable.

Meanwhile it was left for Virginia to look vexed-vexed with herself. She wished that she had not betrayed her poor little foolish secret-so shadowy a secret that it was hardly worthy of the name. Yet it had been precious-precious since childhood, precious as the immediate lewel of her soul because it had been the jewel of her soul, and no one else had dreamed of its exist-Now she had shown it to other ence. eyes, almost flaunted it. Never again could it be a joy to her.

In the little room, half study, half boudoir, which was her own there was a desk, locked in her absence, where souvenirs of the young emperor of Rhaetia had been accumulating for years. There were photographs which Virginia had contrived to buy secretly-portraits of Leopold from an early age up to the present, when he was shown as a tail, dark, cold eyed, warm lipped, firm chinned young man of thirty. There were paragraphs cut from newspapers telling of his genlus as a soldier, his prowess as a mountaineer and hunter of big game, with dramatic anecdotes of his haughty courage in time of danger, his impulsive charities, his well thought out schemes for the welfare of his subjects in every walk of life.

There were black and white copies of bold, clever pictures he had painted. There was martial music composed by

subject always upsets me. What I was leading up to is this-though there him. Of course, though she had been may be other girls who from a worldly



"Yes, would I not make an empress?

point of view are more desirable, still you're strictly within the pale from which Leopold is entitled to choose his wife, and if"-

"If.' And, as for me, I wasn't thinking my sweet, beautiful girl, it depends of a 'worldly point of view.' The em- upon-you." peror of Rhaetia barely knows that I exist. And even if by some miracle he Virginia like her own. Was she, too. should suddenly discover that little dreaming? Were they both in a dream? Princess Virginia Mary Victoria Alexandra Hildegrade of Baumenburg-Drippe was the one suitable wife for ginia's lap-dropped and fluttered to the him on earth I wouldn't have him want grass slowly, like falling rose leaves. me because I was 'suitable,' but-because I was irresistible. I'd want his clasped her hands over the young boslove-all his love-or I would say, 'No; you must look somewhere else for your of her heart. Perhaps such a betrayal empress.'

"But that's nonsense, darling. Royal people seldom or never have the chance to fall in love," said the grand duchess.

Of course she was not in love WILD childish enough long ago to make him her ideal and foolishly faithful enough to keep him so, she had always known that he would never be more to her than a shadow emperor. Some day he would marry one of those other royal girls who were so much more suitable than she. That would be natural and right, as she had more than once told perself with no conscious pang, but now that the news had come, now that the royal girl was actually chosen and she must hear the letter and read about the happy event in the newspapers, it was different. She felt suddenly cold and sick under the blowhurt and defrauded and even jealous. She knew that she would hate the girl -some wretched, commonplace girl, with stick out teeth, perhaps, or no figare and no idea of the way to wear her clothes or do her hair.

But she swallowed hard and clinched her fingers under the voluminous letter about Dandy Dinmont. "Oh, so our friend is going to be married?" she remarked lightly.

"That depends," replied the grand luchess, laughing mysteriously, with a catch in her voice as if she had been a nervous girl-"that depends. You must guess. But, no; 1 won't tense you My dear, my dear, after Dal's letter, coming, as it has come, in the midst of such a conversation, I shall be a firm believer in telepathy. This letter on its way to us must have put the thoughts into our minds and the words on our tongues. It may be that the emperor "Dear little mother, there's no such of Rhaetla will marry; it may not, for,

> "Me?" The voice did not sound to "He wishes to marry you."

All the letters dropped from Vir-Scarcely knowing what she did, she om, shaken with the sudden throbbing of feeling by a royal maiden decorously sued (by proxy) for her hand was scarcely correct, but Virginin had no thought for rules of conduct as laid down for her too often by her mother.

one now. It is yours,"

"Not in the one way I should have loved to see it come. Oh, mother, why loes the emperor want to marry me? because I never could be sure if I ac-Isn't there some other reason than just cepted him without his love and he 1088 ft

"Of course," insisted the grand duchess. faintly encouraged. "Dal mentions several most excellent reasons in his letter, if you would only take them sensibly."

"I should like to hear them, at all events," answered Virginia.

"Well, you see, the empress of Rhaetla must be a Protestant, and there aren't many eligible Protestant girls pulsiveness by the warmth of kisses who would be acceptable to the Rhaetians-girls who would be popular with ginia's bosom. the people. Oh, I have finished about that! You need not look so desperate. Besides, Dal explains that Leopold Is a young man who dominates all around is to please, please see with my eyes." him. He wishes to take for his bride a girl who could not by any possibility herself be heiress to a throne. Dal fancies that his desire is to mold his wife and therefore to take a girl without too many important and importunate relatives, for he is not one who would dream of adding to his greatness by using the wealth or position of a woman. He has all he needs or has happened. We are going to have wants of that sort. And then, Dal reminds me, Leopold is very partial to end of it will be-I don't know." England, which belped Rhaetia passively in the time of her trouble eight years ago. The fact that you have lived in England and had an English education would be favorably regarded both by Leopold and his chancellor. And, though I've never allowed you to have a photograph taken since you were a child (I hate seeing young girls' faces in the newspapers and magazines; even though they are royal their features need not be public property) and you have lived here in such seclusion that you've been little seen, still the

fun in it when it's finished. But you wish me to be happy, darling?"

"More than I wish for anything else. excepting, of course, dear Dal's"-

"Dal is a man and can take care of himself. I must do the best I canpoor me! And there's something I heaven on earth, all my own, if I could win it-Leopold's love, quite for my-"Well, at all events, you have this | self, as a girl, not as a 'suitable Protestant princess.' For a few horrid minutes I thought it was too late to hope for that and I must give him up. because I'm a proper Protestant prin- said it had come afterward; that it was really, really true. Anyway, it could never be the same, and I was miserable over what might have been. Then suddenly I saw how it still might be. I almost think I may be able to win his love if you'll promise to help me, dear."

"Of course I will," said the grand duchess, carried out of her pretty little conventional self into unwonted imsoft and sweet as the roses on Vir-

"That is, I will if I can. But I don't at all see what I can do."

"I see. And what I want you to do "They're very bright ones," smiled her mother.

Princess Virginia clasped the grand duchess round the waist so tightly that it hurt. Then she laughed, a loud, half frightened, excited laugh. "Dearest. something perfectly wonderful is going to happen to you and me," she said "the most wonderful thing that ever a-great-adventure. And what the

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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