



## THE WOMAN WHOSE SOUL WAS POISONED



The Duke  
d'Aosta.

### Is the Beautiful Duchess d'Aosta to Die of a Broken Heart?

**HELENA**, the beautiful Duchess d'Aosta of Italy, intimate friend and beloved companion of Queen Alexandra of England and sister of the queen mother of Portugal, is reported to be dying in Cairo, Egypt, of consumption. In point of fact, she is dying of a broken heart—rather, to be strictly accurate, dying of the terrible physical poisons that are produced in the human organism by sorrows not to be comforted, by a grief not to be assuaged. Most tragic is the assertion that her poisoner is her own husband, the equally handsome Duke d'Aosta, who, for the gratification of his passions, it is charged, plunged her into the mental anguish which—suddenly, dramatically, tragically—doomed her youth, her beauty and her loving heart to the untimely grave. Her soul, poisoned by the titled husband whose affection she claimed by every right of wifehood and every charm of womanhood, has poisoned her formerly strong, healthy young body. The princess for whom the late Duke of Clarence vainly pined until he died, some years ago, with her name upon his paling lips, is perishing, in her turn, of love's deadly cruelty.



The Duchess  
d'Aosta and  
her Family

her husband's love to maintain its health and its vitality, she sought the assent of the king to such a separation as should free her from an association that constantly renewed her pain. But Victor Emmanuel dreaded the political consequences of a full exposure. He could not deny her right, if she chose to exercise it; but he appealed to her to show the royal house the consideration which he and his family needed. The story of the sudden, crushing unhappiness that had befallen her traveled widely, notwithstanding her dignified reticence. Her friend, Queen Alexandra of England, thought too much of her to let her sacrifice all chance of regaining the duke's affection. The queen last summer hastened to Naples, where she found the royal pair, and made an appeal to the duke's dormant regard for his wife and to Helene's love for her husband. She succeeded, and they were reconciled. But consumption was already doing its cruel work on the body that had but little aid from a mind whose entirety of happiness had been forever destroyed.

### BROKE ALL BOUNDS

What the most scientific care and a full renewal of the lover-like bearing of the duke might have accomplished will never be known, for only a few months more elapsed when his passion for his inamorata broke all bounds. The girl in the intrigue, who had been secluded by her family, had been conducting a correspondence with her lover clandestinely. In December she fled from her place of confinement, and, it is asserted, went straight to Aosta at Naples. For one week his renewed infidelity remained hidden. Then the girl was discovered under his protection. His duchess, all hope of her lost happiness departed, left him at once. She went to Cairo, ostensibly for her health. But the physicians there declare her doomed. To live would have been a desperate struggle, at best, and now for her there is nothing left to make life worth her living. The poison of unrequited love, more deadly than the poison of appa, is doing its fatal work steadily, swiftly, perhaps mercifully. It has been less than a century that Caroline of Brunswick, queen of England, died within a month after her triumphant triumph on charges that shamed King George IV, the libertine monarch who brought them against her on evidence as false as his own tongue, lying on her deathbed. A woman of magnificent physique, as powerful of mind as she was of body, her years of suffering left her but faint strength to survive her complete acquittal—left a dying wreck of the woman upon the instant the need had passed for the use of all her vitality in defense of her maligned virtue. She left this inscription to be set upon her tomb: Here lies Caroline of Brunswick, the injured queen of England.



The Little  
Crown  
Princess of Italy,  
who came between the  
Duke and a Throne.

Italian people hold the duchess in an esteem as sincere as their dislike for her husband is emphatic. The nation was at once rejoiced and saddened when the Socialists, in one of their recent campaigns, succeeded in unearthing a scandal which dragged the Duke d'Aosta from his high seat of morality and practically convicted him of an intrigue with a lovely young noblewoman of Naples, whom the most anxious of her family failed to rescue from his seductive wiles. Little, unassuming, of Aosta that, in any event, they were likely to have insisted upon the enthronement of Yolande, the little princess of the direct line, had her father died. To the Duchess Helene the extinction of her expectations of the throne brought no great disappointment. Her fortune is ample; her husband, the heir of the immense wealth left by his grandmother, the Countess de Merode, is one of the richest men in Europe; and her happiness, in his love and her home was imbued with the calm delight which contents a woman of her domestic, affectionate nature.

It has been little more than a month that the settlement was reported in Pennsylvania of a legal suit which, when it was begun, gave some promise of establishing in law the principle of proving death by injury to the emotions—that principle which in Europe and America, from queens and princesses to simple gentlewomen, has been demonstrated thousands of times as being the most tragic reality in human existence. Her father sued for \$25,000 damages the lover who sinned his daughter, left her to brood over her misery until she died of her sufferings. Compromised, it is said, for \$5000, the case left no precedent in law. It looks for subsequent claims and no entering wedge for a statute safeguarding woman in the most vulnerable portion of her being. And when the lovely, loving Helene, princess royal of the ancient Bourbon line, adored by a legion of the most famous reigning sovereigns in Europe and destined by the head of another on which her ancestors would have looked with contempt, dies of the wounds he dealt the girl that was more beautiful than her beautiful face, who but some hysterical, sentimental wames will have the courage to arraign the handsome Duke d'Aosta as her murderer?

Man's love is but a thing apart;  
The woman's whole existence.

**S**ADDEST of all is the fact that the Duchess d'Aosta is only one of thousands of women who, by swift or slow degrees, are being similarly murdered throughout the world by men similarly deliberate in their soul-poisoning work. What, clergymen, what physician, expert in the deadly lore of toxicology, from the venom of the rattlesnake to the lethal poison of uric acid, will hesitate to affirm the moral guilt of the man? And what lawyer, what judge learned in the laws of all peoples will deny that he bears any taint? The question comes directly home to many households in the land; for many families hold in a hidden and oftentimes an open—almost belonging to some of its kin the skeleton of such a tragedy. Real life has had those tragedies in countless numbers played to their appalling end and not merely in the domestic circle, but upon the most exalted stages of history. But it was not until the penetrating genius of Balzac made romantic the unromantic realities of everyday life that the world began to awaken to the moral responsibilities involved in crimes for which the vagging law can find no penalty. Medicine, even now, is only awakening to the full extent to which the body is influenced by the mind, and only the most distinguished of physicians appear to appreciate that influence to the full extent of its importance. One of the foremost living specialists in disorders of the mind and the nerve, Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, has ever been sedulous to note the effect of the spirit upon the body and to insist upon the need of moral influence to supplement the physical treatment. Written in commemoration of the discovery of anesthesia, some passages from his feeling poem, "The Birth of Pain," might well have been penned on the suffering of the Duchess d'Aosta and of all unhappy women whose names no laws redress, no medicine can cure.

**The Birth of Pain.** Let centuries roll away,  
Come back with me in nature's primal day,  
What mighty forces pledged the dust to life?  
What awful will decreed its silent strife?  
Till through vast ages rose on hill and plain  
The saddest voice, the birthing wail of pain,  
The keener sense and ever growing mind,  
Served but to add a torment twice refined,  
As life more tender, as it grew more sweet,  
The cruel links of sorrow found complete.  
When yearning love to conscious pity grown  
Felt the mad pain thrills that were not its own,  
And Science lays her hand on the hopeless task,  
And Love and Faith in vain an answer ask,  
When thrilling nerves demand what e'en is wrought,  
Where torture cloys the very source of thought.

Born in England, sister of the duke of Orleans, claimant to the overturned throne of France, the Duchess d'Aosta is the sister, also, of Amelie of Portugal, one of the most attractive women who ever occupied a throne. She bore the title of Princess Helene when King Edward's son saw her and fell desperately in love with her classic, rounded beauty, her golden hair, her tender, loving soul and her unusual wit and cleverness. Princess Helene was widely read, yet she was no wearisome blue stocking. She and her sister, Amelie, were sportswomen to the core, and she had all the high health and high spirits that come of a life given up much to exercise in the open as to study and culture indoors. But the young man who seemed destined to be heir apparent to Great Britain's throne was not one who could be permitted to contract an alliance with a Roman Catholic, however ancient her lineage. They betrothed him to his cousin, Princess May of Teck, and not long afterward he died, his loyalty to the belle Helene inspiring his last breath.

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