

"Elizabeth, Empress of Austria: A Memoir"

By A. de Burgh. J. B. Lippincott Co.

ONLY a few months ago there was published a biography of the murdered Empress Elizabeth of Austria, purporting to be the work of one of her very few intimate friends and constant companions, although its inaccuracies on the one hand, and its recital, on the other, of events of which the author, even if she was what she claims to have been, could have no knowledge, would rather seem to point to a mystification of the "Englishman in Paris" variety, though on a less ambitious and historically less important scale. Certain it is that what she tells has long been current gossip in the capitals of Europe—especially in Vienna and Munich—together with much that she does not tell, but denies by implication. But, whatever the truth of the matter, the book furnishes interesting reading for many, and is not entirely unworthy of being a tribute to the memory of the martyred woman to whom the greatness of this earth brought a cross, not a crown, and whose dastardly murder brought all the world to mourn for a moment at her bier.

And now we have a second book on the same subject. It is less pretentious in the matter of its authorship; it does not claim to reveal secrets carefully hidden, or to correct with the authority of personal knowledge the gossip of the drawing-rooms of continental Europe. It is simply a compilation of information easily obtainable, intermingled with the polite fiction of official circles in monarchical countries, and of the somewhat sycophantic reports of the doings of royalty in their press. This is all the author, A. de Burgh, claims for her book, though her evidently slight knowledge of life at the Austrian court has hampered her somewhat in what she felt to be her duty, namely, "to sift thoroughly the material collected from various quarters, and to select only such parts as I could myself believe to be authentic."

The book is all the better for the absence of the court scandal wherewith the Hofburg has so richly supplied the world for the last fifty years or so. It deals simply with its subject—a regal, sad, and lonely

figure wandering through Europe in quest of forgetfulness, and of relief from pain. It considers the Empress as sovereign, woman, philanthropist, friend, and reader; as architect, sportswoman, and traveller, as the descendant of a stricken race, and as mother and martyr; and in all its many subdivisions it expresses a hearty admiration, a sincere love, for the author "had the happiness of meeting the illustrious lady," and had the "privilege of knowing some of those who were in her *entourage*, and who, from time to time, have given me news, anecdotes, and reminiscences of the woman they loved with all their heart and soul."

The book is well equipped with portraits and illustrations—among them a very curious "snap-shot" of the Emperor and Empress walking together, taken shortly before her assassination.