

**A ROYAL TRAGEDY; BEING THE
STORY OF THE ASSASSINATION
OF KING ALEXANDER AND
QUEEN DRAGA OF SERVIA**

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A royal tragedy; being the story of the assassination of King Alexander and Queen Draga of Serbia by Cedomilj Mijatovic

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CEDOMILJ MIJATOVIC

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THE STORY OF THE ASSASSINATION
OF KING ALEXANDER AND QUEEN
DRAGA OF SERVIA

BY

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PREFACE

THE murderers of King Alexander and Queen Draga, who on that gruesome dawn of the 11th June 1903 made themselves masters of Belgrade, and consequently of Serbia, have taken care that many of the details of their terrible deed should not be made public. But those few details which could not be hidden were of such a revolting and horrible nature that the whole civilised world stood aghast; indeed, the conscience of the civilised nations has not yet recovered from the shock that it then received.

But the assassination of King Alexander and Queen Draga was more terrible, and the drama of King Alexander's destiny more tragical, than is generally known. It has seemed to me, in the interests of history and justice, that the world should learn the whole truth.

In presenting an historical sketch of the last years and sad end of the Obrenovich Dynasty I have no political object in view. An inscrutable Providence has enacted on the volcanic platform of a small Balkan State a tragedy, of which the extraordinary sadness must always arouse in the

hearts of noble and generous men and women the deepest pity and sympathy. I intend to describe that tragedy. I wish impartially to relate all that can be justly and truthfully said for and against King Alexander and Queen Draga, that can explain that horrible deed, and all that can be said in justification—or at least in extenuation—of that crime. My desire is to tell the whole truth, and by truth to move my readers to pity the victims as well as the principal actors of this, the greatest tragedy of the last hundred years.

Before proceeding with the history of the last days of the dynasty Obrenovich I will introduce here the

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

KING ALEXANDER OF SERVIA.—A young man in his twenty-seventh year, intelligent, patriotic in his own way, self-willed, with exaggerated ideas of his Kingship, somewhat blind towards the light of morality. Born under exciting circumstances, in the critical years of tender childhood he saw his parents hate each other and create a world scandal by fighting over the possession of his person, all the time professing love for him, but practically killing his love for them. In his thirteenth year he was made King of one of the most difficult countries in the world, abandoned by both his parents, delivered into the hands of cynical men, without proper moral education, taught to distrust everyone, or rather to hate everyone. Later he fell in love with and came under the influence of a handsome widow, some nine years older than himself, made her his

Queen in the face of every opposition, and remained faithful to her to his death. This, the only love his heart deeply felt, gave the pretext to the old and permanent enemies of his dynasty to organise a conspiracy and to assassinate him.

QUEEN DRAGA OF SERVIA.—A fascinating widow of a small Servian official. By her loveliness, beauty, and talents—backed by descent from Nikola Lunyevitza, an intimate friend of the founder of the dynasty Obrenovich—she moved the pity of Queen Nathalie to complete her education and to take her as one of her Court ladies (*Dame d'honneur*). At the villa of the Queen in Biarritz she became the object of King Alexander's love proposals, which she resisted for some time, but ultimately became his mistress, and, having obtained an absolute control over his will, made him marry her and make her his Queen. She loved him with an entire devotion, and hoped by good deeds to reconcile the people to her.

KING MILAN.—Father of King Alexander, who voluntarily abdicated in favour of his son (1889), whom he loved and adored; he worked to obtain the hand of a German Princess for him, and had every prospect of succeeding, when his son unexpectedly married the widow Draga Mashin, closed the frontier of Servia against him, and behaved towards him with cruelty. King Milan shortly afterwards died of a broken heart in Vienna.

QUEEN NATHALIE.—Mother of King Alexander, a beautiful, intelligent, self-willed and imperious woman, with a strange mixture of the Roumanian, Russian, Levantine blood in her veins, from the middle class of the Bessarabian nobility raised by King Milan to the station of a Queen, for which

station she lacked proper qualities. She made, not without provocation, her husband's and her own life bitter and unhappy, and finished by hating everyone and everything she once loved: her husband, her son, Russia, Servia, the very Church in which she had been born. To paralyse King Milan's influence with his son she allowed her Court lady, Draga Mashin, to flirt with the young King; but, once awakened to the real facts, tried bravely to save him from his mistress when, unfortunately, it was too late.

RUSSIA.—The great Orthodox and Slavonic Power exercised an overwhelming influence over the simple and naïve Slavonic and Orthodox people of Servia, hating with implacable hatred King Milan for his refusal to continue to be a tool in her hands, and for his seeking for his own and his country's interests protection with Austria. To separate King Alexander from his father, and to close the doors of Servia for ever to the latter, Russia facilitated (if not invented) the programme of the marriage of King Alexander with the widow Draga Mashin, and helped very materially its execution.

PARTISANS OF THE DYNASTY KARAGEORGEVICH spread and deepened the dissatisfaction with Alexander, the childless and only representative of the dynasty Obrenovich, and organised conspiracies for his overthrow and for placing the Pretender, Prince Peter Karageorgevich, on the throne of Servia.

A GROUP OF SERVIAN OFFICERS—some as partisans of Karageorgevich, others as single-minded patriots, others again from sordid motives—decided to assassinate King Alexander and the more important of his Ministers and courtiers, as