

**THE ROYAL
MARRIAGE MARKET
OF EUROPE**

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The Royal Marriage Market of Europe by Catherine Radziwill

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CATHERINE RADZIWILL

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Photo: Brooks

PRINCESS MARY OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

The Royal Marriage Market of Europe

By
PRINCESS CATHERINE RADZIWILL
(Catherine Kolb-Danvin)

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

IN former times Royal marriages were considered the most important events in the political world, and their negotiation was generally entrusted to the ablest diplomats in Europe. Up to the latter half of the last century Sovereigns sought that the marriage alliances into which they entered should prove advantageous to the countries over which they held sway. It is certain that politics, in a far greater degree than personal feelings, were at the bottom of the marriages among the different dynasties of Europe, and that the relations of the various European empires and kingdoms depended considerably upon the direction in which these alliances were contracted. Notable exceptions were the matches contracted by Louis XVI. and, later on, by the great Napoleon himself when he sought the hand of the Archduchess Marie Louise.

At even so recent a period as the middle of the nineteenth century, the question of a suitable consort for the son and heir of King Louis Philippe caused ink to flow copiously in the chancelleries of the great capitals, as upon it was supposed to depend the consolidation of the Orleans dynasty on its usurped throne.

Later on, when Napoleon III. raised to the dignity of an Empress the fair Spaniard, Eugénie, who had

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won his heart and captivated his fancy, the unprecedented step was prophesied by many as being certain to bring about the fall of the newly restored Empire. In more modern days things changed, and it became evident that personal feelings, personal relations, and personal affections counted but little in matters affecting the welfare of nations, so that Sovereigns and their families found themselves more at liberty to choose consorts without any political interference or considerations. Like common mortals they were allowed to marry and to be happy according to their own ideas.

Nevertheless, some marriages—for instance, as those of the then Prince Frederick of Prussia with the Princess Royal of England, and of the Duke of Edinburgh with the Grand Duchess Marie Alexandrovna of Russia—caused a certain amount of sensation in diplomatic circles, as to the possible consequences that might follow upon them. But on the whole, nowadays, these events are looked upon as purely private matters, which concern only those immediately connected with them.

It is probable, however, that, after the present war has come to an end, Royal alliances will become once more subjects of general interest, and of greater importance than has been the case during the last twenty years or so. This fact has led me to include in my book a review of personages eligible to become one day the consorts of European rulers, or one or other of their relatives, in addition to placing before my readers a short recital of the circumstances which have