

Johanna M. Singer

Arme adlige Frauen im Deutschen Kaiserreich

[Poor Noblewomen in the German Empire.]

Published in German.

Nobility and poverty – that these two states of existence could fit together seems to be a contradiction in terms. The fact that penniless nobles existed thwarts our image of an aristocracy usually associated with castles, rolling estates and glittering balls attended by elegant ladies in magnificent gowns dancing with dashing guard officers. The German Empire's nobility was meant to be its elite and this was the case during no other period more so than in the run up to what is considered the aristocratic heyday of 1914. But that was only part of the reality of noble life in the 19th and early 20th centuries. In this volume, Johanna M. Singer reveals another lesser known aspect of the era far removed from opulent lifestyles and political influence: a problem made up mainly of unmarried women and widows living an impoverished life. The author searches for the causes and characteristics of, as well as the coping strategies for, female poverty among the nobles. How did not only the women themselves and their families cope with hardship but also other nobles and the authorities deal with this phenomenon?

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