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TWILIGHT OF ROYALTY

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Alfonso R.
1931.

KING ALFONSO AS HE LOOKED IN 1931, SHORTLY BEFORE
THE REVOLUTION.

TWILIGHT OF ROYALTY

By

ALEXANDER
GRAND DUKE OF RUSSIA



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To EDWIN BALMER

*to whose stern advice and critical judgment
I owe so much in this new life of mine*

FOREWORD

The more I see of Democracy, the less I am inclined to believe that its contribution to human progress contains anything startlingly new or makes the return of absolutism impossible. There is very little indeed in the practice of the modern republican rulers which could be considered an improvement on the system created by the Czars, the Kaisers and the Cæsars of the Holy Roman Empire. Sometimes, when I watch a Monsieur Chiappe disperse a parade of Parisian workers or a Mr. Mulrooney handle the May Day crowds in Union Square, I even begin to fear for the morals of the exiled royalty, lest on their return to the thrones they be tempted to try the methods of upholding "personal liberties" used in the United States and France.

I dread to think of what the great American Press would have said, what meetings of protest and indignation would have been staged throughout the world, had the much maligned Cossacks dared to behave in the manner of New York's Finest. Not that I envy Democracy the efficiency of its watch-

dogs. God forbid. In the words of Georges Clemenceau I would merely like to ask Monsieur Chiappe: "Brother Chiappe, what didst thou to Liberty?"

I must likewise admit that it is rather puzzling for me to realize that, having seen at the age of six the jubilant procession of Garibaldi in Naples, I am witnessing today, sixty years later, the universal, overwhelming triumph of what my German professors used to call the *Polizeistaat*. Something must have no doubt happened to the Onward March of the Masses that sent them rolling all the way back with a speed that ominously warns of the probability of many an imperial comeback. Always mindful of that roundtrip itinerary which reads Bourbons-Robespierre-Napoleon-Bourbons, I consider that now is as good a time as any to retrace the lives and the careers of the contemporary Royalty-on-Leave. The percentage of resurrection of those buried by the editorial writers is amazingly high.

ALEXANDER

Grand Duke of Russia

Autumn 1932

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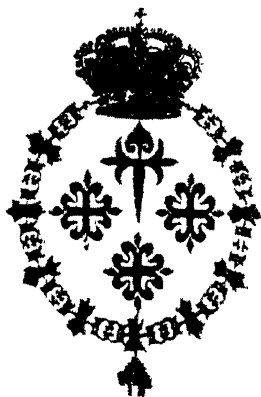
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THE COAT-OF-ARMS OF
THE KING OF SPAIN.

PART ONE:

“ARE ROYALTY PEOPLE?”

PART ONE:

“ARE ROYALTY PEOPLE?”

1

AS a profession, royalty has always lacked professional education. Not unless an Heir Apparent came to the throne quite late in life—as happened in the case of both King Edward VII and King George V—did he know anything at all about the business of ruling. Brought up and educated by a coterie of pious bishops, iron-headed generals and grandiloquent professors, an average Crown Prince was obliged to discover for himself the all-important fact that a sovereign has no right to be human or honest. The ultimate success or failure of his reign depended on the degree of his niceness. The over-nice ones were invariably thrown down and, sometimes, shot; the moderately nice ones learned their lesson and stuck. And while the textbook on the Art of Pleasing the Masses is yet to be written, it is certain that no “sweet” man ever made

a successful Emperor. This is as it should be. A ruler, if he wants to be a ruler not in name only, must be ruthless. Not an ideal husband, not a loving father, not a fancier of flowers, not a modern edition of Marcus Aurelius, not a noble exponent of the principles of enlightened absolutism, but a cunning tactician capable of outsmarting the biggest cheats among his ministers and not ashamed to draw on the vast deposits of hatred and jingoism when no other course is open for quick and decisive action. But, above all, a ruler must eschew his "hidden talents." Many a kingdom collapsed just because its crowned head was put to sleep by the soothing melody of his "violon d'Ingres." I have the former Kaiser in mind. Now that he hibernates at Doorn and does his frowning in the rotogravure sections of the Sunday papers, it has become quite fashionable to question his administrative abilities and consider him a chump. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The Kaiser would still be reviewing his adoring troops in Potsdam had it not been for his sincerity and the wealth of his hidden talents. He was a great orator, a super-architect, a warrior extraordinary, but his speeches left Germany without a friend in the world, his artistic aspirations were responsible for the monstrosity of the Siegesallee, and his experi-

ments in strategy, backed by those of his trusted friend von Kluck, immortalized “Papa” Joffre and saved Paris in the fall of the year 1914.

Whether he was “nice” or not, depends on one’s conception of niceness, but human he was, altogether too human. He raved like an unrecognized genius. He threw scenes like an aging primadonna. He paraded his various idiosyncrasies as only an exhibitionist poet would. His was the charm of utter eccentricity, and when one saw him at seven o’clock of a spring morning, jumping out of his shining victoria in front of the Hotel Adlon and testing the cleanliness of the sidewalk with a white-gloved finger, one felt genuinely touched and wished this overgrown boy would definitely choose between the job of Sanitary Inspector of Berlin and that of Emperor of Germany. Like all persons of overwhelming sincerity, he indulged in emotional luxuries which no sovereign can afford. His animosity against England, his perennial desire to grab the British by the throat were fed not by his envy of the power of their Overseas Empire but by a purely personal hatred for his London Uncle. It is terrifying to think that the World War could have been postponed for at least another generation and millions of lives saved had the Kaiser been willing in his dealings with

Great Britain to overlook his memories of King Edward VIII

He hated all that pertained to Uncle Bertie. His jovial face ("what is he grinning about?") His massive shaking shoulders ("Just like an old woman . . ."). His mistress and his friend Sir Thomas Lipton ("A King, a paramour and a grocer! What a trio!"). His popularity with the Parisians ("Shaking hands with those republican swine!") His fondness for beautiful women ("Somebody ought to tell him he is a grandfather"). . . . He hated, passionately and unreservedly, even the sidecrease of his uncle's trousers ("It would be still more original if he walked around in drawers"). Anyone else of lesser sincerity placed in the Kaiser's position would have managed to draw a line between the two hundred pounds of King Edward and the four hundred and fifty million subjects of the British Empire, but drawing lines was not the gift of the Orator of Potsdam.

Nothing is more human than hatred, and the Kaiser persisted in his determination to remain human until the very end. His quarrel with King Edward, his dismissal of Bismarck and his declaration of the submarine war—these are the three fatal mistakes of his reign and these are precisely the

three things in his life he enjoyed most. A ward-politician would have known better, but then royalty *are* people.

2

NEXT to Hatred, Love is responsible for the heaviest casualties among royalty. Love for their wives much more than love for their mistresses. The latter demanded money and jewelry, the former helped to destroy the thrones.

A Pompadour bled her royal lover white, but a Marie-Antoinette led her husband to the scaffold. A Gaby Deslys did her intriguing against courtiers and playwrights, but an Empress Eugenie went after Emperors and Kings. No major country has ever gone bankrupt because of its philandering sovereign, but the most appalling débacle of the twentieth century was brought about by the love and devotion of an Emperor for his consort. The Russia of 1894-1917 could have easily footed the bill of an extravagant imperial paramour, but it happened that the last Czar was an ideal husband. . . .

Flippant as the assertion may sound, it is true that all really great sovereigns of Europe merely tolerated their wives. They knew they had to marry, they

realized they had to assure the continuation of their dynasty, but they never discussed affairs of state with the mothers of their children nor permitted their consorts to interfere with their decisions. Peter the Great imprisoned his first wife in a convent just because she attempted to organize her own "party," and Catherine the Great disclosed her extreme cunning in the way she dismissed a particular lover the moment he tried to tell her how she should deal with this or that problem of importance.

I am not talking from hearsay. I have spent many an hour in the archives of our family reading the secret diaries of both Peter the Great and Catherine the Great, and at the luncheon-table of my late father-in-law Emperor Alexander III I had many an occasion to see for myself how even the shrewdest of rulers fell a victim to the influence exercised by his loving and beloved wife. A Danish Princess, Empress Marie, could never forgive Wilhelm I and Bismarck the humiliation caused her native country in the war of 1866.

"Germany must be punished! Russia must make an alliance with France! . . ." Coming from that diminutive woman of self-effacing sweetness, this sounded like a prayer. Her husband blinked and sighed. It would have been a real waste of time to



Eugenia
1931.

THE QUEEN OF SPAIN AS SHE LOOKED IN 1931, SHORTLY
BEFORE THE REVOLUTION.

try to explain to the Empress that her subjects liked the Germans and distrusted the French and that not one in a million of Russian peasants cared a rap about Denmark or the injustice suffered by that country in 1866.

“Germany must be punished.” She never stopped repeating it. She said it at the rate of three times a week, for twenty-two consecutive years. She was boring her husband from within, using every conceivable means to make him see her “point” and understand that his German cousin was a traitor and a brute. I confess that I admired her courage. The Emperor stood six feet two in his stockinged feet and was never known for the mildness of his temper. Had anyone else dared to tell him what to do, he would have probably committed manslaughter.

Each time I heard my mother-in-law broach that fatal German subject, I was prepared to witness a formidable scene. On a few occasions the Emperor did get up from the table; once he even seized a huge silver fork and bent it into a knot, but that was all. Unfortunately for him, for Russia and for the world, he was deeply in love with his wife, and his desire to make her happy must have obscured his view and interfered with the workings of his mind. I know of no other reason why a man as farsighted and

as practical as my father-in-law should have sanctioned our treaty of alliance with France, a sentimental nonsense in the 1880's, a bloody nightmare in 1914.

Not much need be said about the fatal part played by another Russian Empress, the last Czarina, in the débacle of 1917. It is a simple matter of record that in the crucial days of his life, facing the certainty of a revolution in the rear of his armies and the danger of a defeat at the front, Czar Nicholas II chose to ignore the warnings of his advisers and followed the hysterical promptings of his wife until the very end. In my book *Once a Grand Duke* I have given a detailed description of that unfortunate ménage. Hers was a case for a Siegmund Freud, and while no one has the right to throw stones at a woman who had lost her mind because of the illness of her son, historians will deal harshly with my late brother-in-law. They will never forgive him for the underlying reasons of his abdication, for the desire to spend one's life "just with wife and children" is middle-class at best, a virtue laudable in a grocer but utterly ridiculous in a ruler. What will there be left of the whole idea of monarchism if the fulfilment of a sovereign's oath to uphold the Throne of

his ancestors is made contingent on his love for wife and children?

3

THEN there is that inclination to overestimate the intelligence of the masses—a fatal trait that makes all royalty so hopelessly ineffective in their dealings with the brewing revolutions. So often does a monarch refer in his public pronouncements to the “clear heads,” the “golden hearts” and the general “greatness” of his people that, unless he is the possessor of the cynical mind of a Henri de Navarre, he usually falls a victim to his own phraseology.

“Let the Nation judge my actions,” he exclaims at the moment of a dangerous crisis, and incredible as it may seem, he actually believes that the Nation is capable of judging actions and reaching sensible decisions. Poor chap! What does he know about the mentality of that cowardly monster which he calls the Nation? His teachers, sycophants and bunk-purveyors, have filled his mind with the giddy tales of his country’s history, and, taking them at their word, he imagines that the bearded peasants who were slaughtered during the war with Napoleon really did like to die for the “noble cause” of liber-

ating Europe. It never dawns upon him that the very word "Europe" was unknown to the vast majority of the hard-bitten heroes of 1812 and that they hated their own generals much more than they did the French.

No nation knows enough to admire statesmanship—no nation can resist a good show. Individuals may vary in their characteristics, but the masses are everywhere the same lazy, treacherous, fantastically cruel masses. Be it in Russia or in the United States, in England or in Abyssinia, the masses care for nothing except their three meals a day. A dictator often succeeds where a sovereign fails not because his program is better or his methods more efficient but because, a product of the masses, he knows their deep-rooted ignorance and his stock of "tricks of the trade" is built on realities, not on illusions. It is quite instructive to note that in organizing their present Ideal State the bolsheviks have entrusted its protection to the hands of the former members of the Imperial Secret Police. They recognized the dependable qualities of that venerable apparatus, provided it were given full freedom of action, unhindered by the liberal press and spared the trouble of bothering with the attorneys-for-the-defense.

"I am leaving these people just as poor as I found

them, and yet they cheer me. . . ." This valedictory of Napoleon has lost none of its piquancy in the 1930's. It travels a long way toward explaining the durability of the Stalins and the Mussolinis and it could be profitably used by the remaining royalty of the world. A little more showmanship, a little more ruthlessness and a little less admiration for the underlying common sense of the masses!" The recipe is simple, perhaps too simple to suit the Hamletian minds of royalty. They like to "wonder"—all of them. Even the cleverest of them, the late Emperor Alexander III of Russia, did his share of painful wondering.

"I often wonder," he said to me as we were traveling aboard his train in the South of Russia shortly before his death, "to what extent the average Russian peasant realizes the responsibilities of his sovereign?"

I wondered too and suggested that my father-in-law put this timely question to one of his supposedly "adoring" subjects. He laughed. The idea appealed to him. At the next station while acknowledging the vociferous hurrahs of the crowd he motioned to a husky fellow in the front row and told him to come close to the platform where we stood.

“Would you like to be the Czar?” he asked him in all seriousness.

The peasant gasped and looked bewildered.

“Answer ‘yes’ or ‘no,’ ” ordered the Czar.

“Y-y-yes. . . , Your Majesty,” came in stuttering tones.

“Now then,” said the Czar, “what would you do first of all if you were put in my place?”

The answer was not slow in coming.

“I would grab five hundred rubles and beat it,” said the peasant. The crowd roared but the Czar motioned for silence.

“Is that all?” he asked trying to keep a straight face. “Don’t you know that there’s much more than five hundred rubles in the job?”

“That may be so,” said the peasant ominously, casting a look in the direction of the crowd, “but I know what these mugs can do to a Czar. . . . I’d rather boss a pack of hungry wolves.”

4

SAY the traffickers in platitudes: “A modern sovereign must be thoroughly democratic. It appeals to the people. Look at the Prince of Wales.”

I doubt the soundness of this advice and I have

looked at the Prince of Wales, more than once in my life. I have seen the three of them: the present one, his father and his grandfather. And I still maintain that no sovereign, for that matter no real gentleman, could or ever did become “democratic” in the sense that a candidate for political office is. A transformation of this kind is not to be achieved by anyone brought up in an environment of a certain respectability of thought and honesty of feeling. Cheapness of mental reactions and vulgarity of spirit cannot be imitated. Hackneyed phrases and five-and-ten slogans come to one either naturally or not at all. That most exclusive club in the world—the guild of the former monarchs of Europe—counts among its members several who attempted to put on a “democratic” make-up while still in their prime. The results were disastrous, the remorse profound. Looking at the list of them, I come across the name of King Alfonso of Spain, a pioneer of the democratization of royalty, although a fine gentleman with a sharp sense of humor. His life, as he relates it, sounds like one long sustained object lesson. His efforts were honest, his sincerity beyond doubt, and yet he failed. The word “yet” is used by me in a purely ironical sense; “therefore” would have been much more appropriate.

I am presenting the story of King Alfonso's reign in the pages that follow, not in the manner of an omniscient historian but as a friendly interviewer would. My bias is obvious but the facts speak for themselves.



THE KING AND HIS CHILDREN. PHOTOGRAPHED IN 1931.

PART TWO:

THE AFTERNOONS OF FONTAINEBLEAU

PART TWO:
THE AFTERNOONS OF FONTAINEBLEAU
THE RECORD OF A MAGNIFICENT FAILURE

1

I WAS to have a luncheon engagement with my own past. I was going to be the guest of His Catholic Majesty King Alfonso XIII of Spain, who had just started upon the road so familiar to us, the few survivors of the House of Romanoff. On my way from Paris to Fontainebleau, while driving through the majestic forest, unaffected by centuries of human bondage, I marveled at the pranks of fate and bowed to its superb irony.

Fontainebleau! To think that of all places on earth I was to meet the King in that beautiful spot of France where, on April 11th, 1814, Napoleon was forced to abdicate by Emperor Alexander I in favor of King Louis XVIII. I felt as though I were perusing the pages of an old-fashioned play: "*The curtain falls to denote the passing of one hundred*

and seventeen years; when it goes up again, Emperor Alexander's grandnephew, Grand Duke Alexander of Russia, is seen alighting at the Hotel Savoy, which houses King Louis' collateral descendant, King Alfonso XIII of Spain."

A glance at the grounds—the Savoy is situated in the midst of a centennial park—and I enter the lobby, a typical French "foyer," with the room-clerk reading his morning paper, and the gold-braided porter busily engaged in preparing the account of the "incidental expenses."

Another ghost of the past! The gentleman who awaits me in the lobby happens to be the Duke de Miranda, a lifelong friend of King Alfonso, who served his diplomatic apprenticeship forty years ago in the Spanish Embassy at St. Petersburg.

I am delighted to see this charming man and to be able to learn from him that the Marquis de Torrès de Mendoza, another old friend of the King, is likewise staying in Fontainebleau. Not every sovereign has carried that much of his former life into exile.

We chat of this and that; mostly of the past. The sunsets were beautiful in the early 1890's in St. Petersburg and so were the rubies and the emeralds in the show windows along the Nevsky Prospect.

He sighs and so do I. He fears we shall never see St. Petersburg again. "Let us hope not," I reply. He is puzzled but then he is too young an exile to understand a veteran like myself.

We go upstairs to the rooms of Her Majesty. I search my mind for appropriate words to express what would not sound like too idiotic cheerfulness, but there are none to be found, so I bow in silence. She smiles, kindly but rather faintly. The tragic events she has lived through during the past months have added a certain spiritual halo to her striking blonde handsomeness. Otherwise she is just as friendly and refreshing in the simplicity of her manner as in the old London days, when she was still the very youthful Princess Ena of Battenberg. I look at her and think: "The eternal British. . . . Tenacity and loyalty. . . . That's what helps her keep her head up. . . . It takes an English woman to make a proud Queen."

WE sit down and talk. In a way we are related to each other, one of her cousins having married my niece, known today as Lady Milford-Haven. Something much stronger, however, than that incidental relationship is responsible for the cordiality of our

conversation. Although she does not say it, I can read in her clear eyes the inevitable question:

“You who have had fourteen years of it, tell me what is going to happen to us.”

Her salon is a small room. “A single room for one,” in the parlance of the porter of the Hotel Savoy. Here and there I notice a few attractive bits and pieces of furniture and bric-à-brac, things of exquisite taste. “They are mine,” she says with a half-smile, “all that is left to me.”

All that is left to her! These words sound familiar. I must have heard them not less than a thousand times from my own wife and from my mother-in-law, the late Dowager-Empress Marie of Russia.

“You see,” she explains, “we were naturally obliged to leave most of our belongings in Madrid; but the Republican Government is going to ship everything over to us.”

“I DOUBT it!” I exclaim almost automatically.

Next moment I regret having made this cynical remark, and wish I were not so much of an expert on all matters revolutionary.

She talks in a strained voice. Two small pink spots appear on her cheeks. The emotion is breaking up her sentences.

“I have read and heard many heartbreaking stories about the Russian Revolution, but really, I can not believe it could have been any worse in St. Petersburg. It came so suddenly, so unexpectedly. It seems I returned from London only a day before, not wishing to be absent from Madrid during the political crisis. And the crowds at the station in Madrid that met my train! Oh, Alexander, if you could only have seen those people! Cheering, delighted, throwing flowers at me! I thought I was the most popular human being in Spain! And then! . . . It is unbelievable. . . . How could a nation change its sympathies so abruptly?”

At this moment the door of her salon opens. His Majesty the King! A bit thinner, and a gay smile on his lips, perhaps too gay a smile.

A firm handshake, the handshake of a sportsman. And then, with his expressive eyes shining brilliantly and a hearty outburst of laughter:

“Eh bien, Alexandre, nous voilà dans la même situation!”

I have to join in his laughter. What else can I do? He is not one of those who believe in sour faces as a cure for misfortune. His remark, taken in itself, may not have been so excessively humorous; but the way he said it—each muscle in his face alive, and his

trim athletic figure shaking—made it contagiously funny.

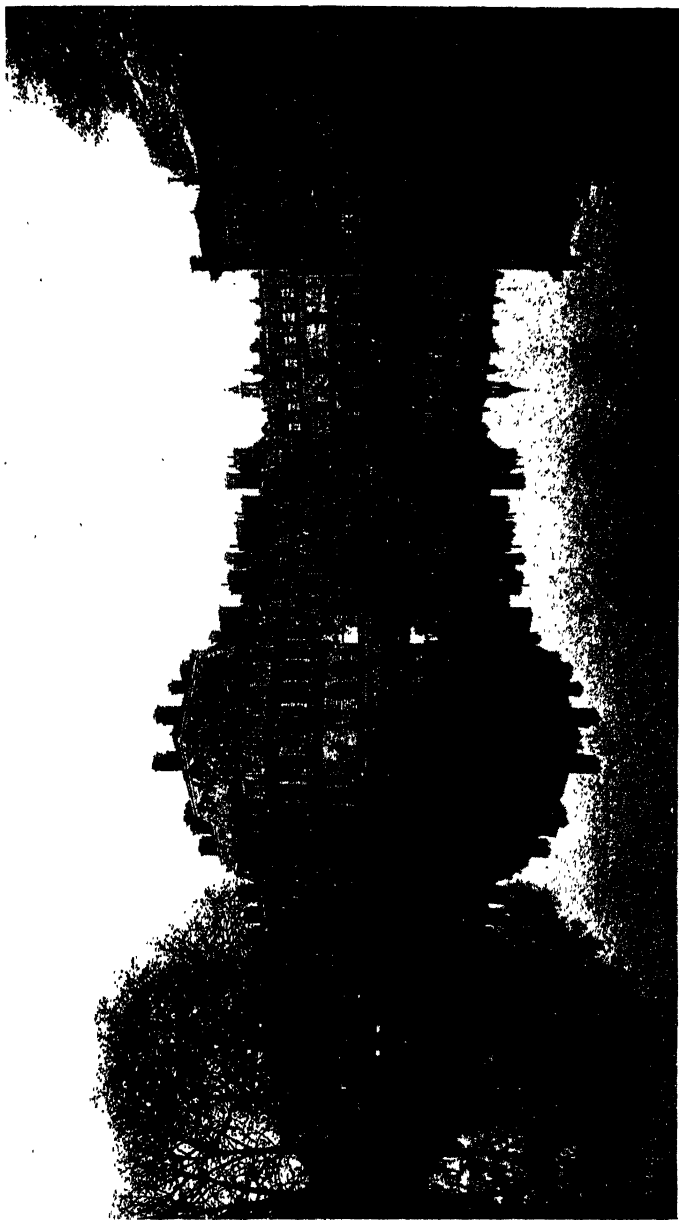
He tells me that I am “just the man” he has wanted to see for the past three months.

“We are about to enter the preparatory class of that very severe school which is obligatory for all exiles of our caliber, and we are looking for a good experienced tutor. Will you help us?”

We are conversing in French. The King in addressing me uses the singular of the second person, which corresponds to the English *thou*, and which is customary among the members of the royal families of Europe who consider themselves relatives. This familiarity puts me at ease. My initial nervousness at seeing him in an atmosphere so different from that of our former meetings gradually disappears. We chat, not as a king with a grand duke, but as two men who have both had their fill of the bitter bread of exile.

“Your surroundings are restful and pleasing,” I observe with a gesture toward Fontainebleau, which is lying around this provincial hotel in all its green-and-marble glory.

THE King goes to the window and remains silent for a while.



THE GENERAL VIEW OF THE PALACE OF FONTAINEBLEAU.

“Very beautiful, indeed,” he admits with a sigh, “beautiful but sad, extremely sad. Don’t you see, Alexander, there are moments in one’s life when it becomes difficult to breathe an air which is overcharged with history? You commence to wish the great ghosts of the past would recede and leave you alone! Whenever I walk past that gorgeous palace, I can not help thinking of Napoleon, his last morning as Emperor, his farewell speech to the Old Guard, his pathetic desire to enthrone his beloved son, his eaglet, his poor Roi de Rome! And then I see the others. Your granduncle resplendent in his victory. The scheming Metternich. The merciless Castlereagh. They are all gone, and yet something remains in these shaded avenues, even in the air of Fontainebleau itself, that talks to me constantly of their joys and sorrows. Mostly of sorrows. I do not know much of the average longevity of the carp, but I am told that there are several of them in the lake of Fontainebleau that remember the days of Louis XV and are still displaying golden rings in their mouths which were placed there nearly one hundred and seventy years ago. What must it be like to swim in a lake for all that length of time!”

While he talks, I watch the heavy furrows lining his forehead. He must be in his middle forties. His

figure is quite youthful, which is not surprising considering his passion for polo, golf, tennis and all other kinds of outdoor recreations. But his eyes—the same eyes that participate so whole-heartedly in his laughter—tell the story of his thirty years on the throne of Spain. Next to Nicholas II, he holds the record among the world's sovereigns for having escaped the greatest number of revolutionary attempts on his life. The late Russian Czar always sympathized with His Catholic Majesty of Spain and admired his pluck and courage. How often did I hear him remark:

“I wish I could meet the King of Spain. I think we have many things in common.”

Alas! Such a meeting would have given too much worry to the secret police of the two countries, both sovereigns being the favorite targets for the international terrorists, and it never took place. They had to be satisfied to remain “long distance friends,” exchanging written and verbal greetings with the aid of their ambassadors. When the Russian Empire was no more, the Czar's relatives found a great deal of comfort in the encouragement and moral support given to them by the King of Spain. Nor could I forget the beautiful way in which he treated the destitute Empress Zita of Austria. He was the first

one to come forward with his offer to house her and to educate her large family of fatherless children. He refused to be frightened by the frowns of the Allied diplomats, who attempted to square their score with the Hapsburgs by persecuting a helpless woman and her innocent babies.

HE was always a man—a real, hundred-per-cent man. They call him “the Gentleman King” throughout Europe and America, but I hate that greatly abused word *gentleman*. It tends to say too much, and it means nothing. Very often it reminds me of that venomous American journalist who claimed that a “gentleman” signifies an individual who “bathes every day and has never been in jail.” If King Alfonso XIII of Spain needs any sobriquet at all, he should be known as the Manly Sovereign of Europe.

We go downstairs and pass through a large hall.

“Alexander, have you ever taken your meals in a billiard-room?” asks the King quite seriously.

In a billiard-room? Not that I could recall it, various as my experiences are. While visiting the Fiji Islands, I dug my fingers into a bowl placed in the center of a suspicious-looking hearth that was strangely reminiscent of cannibalistic housekeeping;

but with all of it, I had never eaten my stew, as yet, with the aid of a billiard-cue.

“Well, we won’t go so far as depriving you of fork and knife, but you will have to eat in a billiard-room this time.”

The Queen explains: “You see, we asked the management of the Savoy to spare us the ordeal of taking our meals under the fire of a battery of curious eyes, so they arranged for us a private dining-salon in the former billiard-room.”

To be sure, the room we enter still preserves some of the features so dear to the hearts of the followers of that ancient though not so noble game. The billiard-tables have been removed, but the cue-stands are still in the corners, and a few marks are visible on the walls. The King nudges me, winks at the cues, and makes a gesture of a player preparing to send his ball into the corner.

The center of the room is occupied by a large table decorated with exquisite simplicity. We are fifteen. The King sits in the center, between the two ladies-in-waiting; the Queen is placed opposite him, with myself on her right, and the Heir Apparent, the Duke of Asturia, on her left. Two handsome boys are seated next to the two attractive daughters of Their Majesties. These four exchange glances

and frequently whisper between themselves. There is something infinitely touching in their bright eyes and in the tenderness with which they address each other. I look questioningly at the Queen, and she nods:

-“Yes, you have guessed it right. We are going to have a double marriage in our family in the very near future.”

The two boys are the sons of the Infanta Beatrice and grandsons of my cousin the Duchess of Edinburgh, a daughter of Emperor Alexander II of Russia.

MORE reminiscences are in order. I tell the two happy fiancés of the childhood of their mother. I hate to appear so old, but I must admit having seen her for the first time forty-two years ago in London. She was the youngest one of the four beautiful daughters of the Duke and the Duchess of Edinburgh, and was known as “Baby B.” The judges of pulchritude would have had a hard time choosing between her and her three sisters, “Missy” (the present Dowager-Queen Marie of Rumania), “Ducky” (the present wife of Grand Duke Cyril of Russia) and “Sandra” (the present Princess of Hohenlohe-Langenburg).

The youngsters stare at me with awe. At their age it must seem almost unbelievable that anyone among the living can sit and talk of the days when the late King Edward VII of England was still an "*enfant terrible*" in the estimation of his august mother. They ask me to tell them of my meetings with Queen Victoria, their great-grandmother; but I demur. In the first place, they would next expect me to go farther back, possibly to the days of King Solomon; in the second place, I would much rather let them do the talking instead of listening to the sound of my own voice.

The King and the Queen laugh happily, and even the gloomy faces of the members of their court brighten up. Forty-two years ago! What a care-free life it must have been then! The King was scarcely four, the others, with the exception of the Duke de Miranda, were just born or even less than that.

By the time the wild strawberries with the famous Fontainebleau cream have been served, we all feel much better. We drink a toast to the younger daughter Christina, in the honor of whose Saint's day this luncheon-party is given.

I congratulate the royal parents on having raised such a lovely girl and on having found for her such an attractive fiancé.

“I suppose you are right, and we should be proud of our daughters,” replies the Queen, “but there is one *but* that clouds their horizon. What does the future hold for them? Their fiancés are about to be graduated from an engineering school in Switzerland, and are perfectly willing to work hard to make a living; but will they be able to find positions, particularly in these days of world crisis? They want to go to the United States; and while we have no desire to interfere with their ambitious projects, I am really wondering whether it is a wise move or not. What do you think, Alexander? You know America so well.”

It is my turn to become pensive. I think of the efforts of my own sons directed toward finding employment in America. It took them years—years of heartbreaks, disappointments and exceptional perseverance. I do not want to misguide the Queen, and I tell her frankly of the difficulties facing her future sons-in-law. I quote the experiences of my sons Dimitri and Vassily, who fought for their jobs in New York, and of my son Rostislav, who is working for a big drygoods firm in Chicago.

My mentioning the word “Chicago” performs a veritable miracle at this table, where the troubles

of the past, present and future were being gravely weighed but a second before. It is as though a "shot of iron" had been administered to all the parties present. Of all the questions, exclamations, curiosity and laughter!

Do I know Chicago very well?

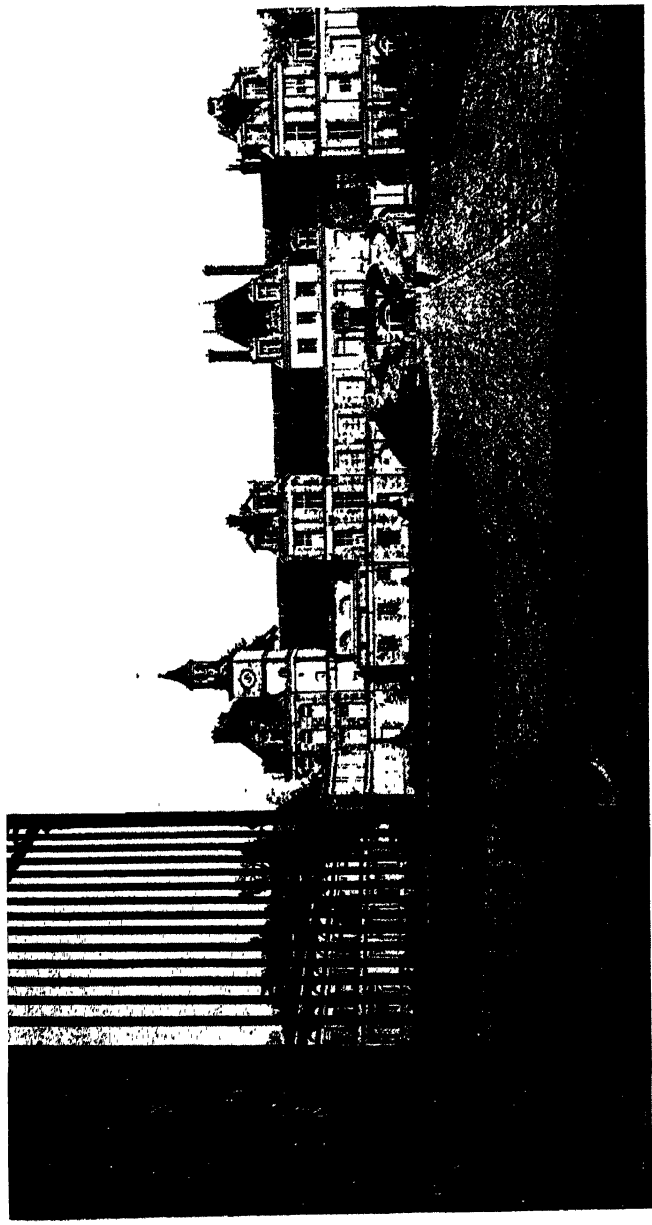
Have I ever seen a "pineapple" being thrown at a judge's house? Have I read Edgar Wallace's Chicago serial in the *Daily Mail*, and "Geo" London's Chicago serial in *Le Journal*?

Do I personally know any one of the famous gangsters?

Is it true that an especially high premium has to be paid by all Chicago holders of life-insurance policies?

"Now, wait, wait!" the King interrupts the excited youngsters. "Let me ask a question of Alexander: What is the latest news of that famous Chicagoan? Oh, you know whom I mean—my namesake; I believe they call him 'the King Alfonso of Chicago.' Is it true that he owns a gorgeous island in Florida? Have you ever seen him, or perhaps met him socially, while wintering at Palm Beach?"

I sit nonplussed. It seems extraordinary that these people so engulfed in their sorrow and so centered on the efforts of building a future, could be inter-



“AN AIR CHARGED WITH HISTORY”: “LA COUR DES ADEUX” IN FONTAINEBLEAU, WHERE NAPOLEON MADE HIS FAREWELL SPEECH TO THE OLD GUARD.

ested in the devious ramifications of Mr. Capone's career. But there they are, almost indignant at me for not knowing the exact nature of the relations existing between "Al" Capone and a gentleman they refer to as Mr. "Legs" Diamond. They consider it an unforgivable shortcoming for a man of my traveling experiences not to have been present at one of those "spectacular Chicago funerals."

"But how, in heaven's name, do you find time to follow all these things?" I ask the King. "How do you know so much about Mr. Capone?"

"Now, Alexander, how could you!" exclaims the King reproachfully. "Fancy a man living in this year of grace and not following the career of Al Capone! Good gracious me, I should hope I do know everything about him. I get the clippings."

The youngsters shriek in complete delight. I think admiringly of this wonderful father, a man who is willing to do everything, even pretend a tremendous interest in Al Capone, in order to bring cheer into his daughter's birthday party.

We spend the rest of the meal in "talking Chicago," and in comparing the gangster organizations of the United States with the ill-famed society of the Mafia, which caused considerable trouble to the

Italian Government during the last twenty years of the Nineteenth Century.

After the coffee—in the absence of a “*petit salon*” we are taking it at the table—the Queen sends Christina to bring some Russian cigarettes. I attempt to protest; I do not want to cause additional worries by my presence at their table; but Her Majesty insists. Nothing, not even exile, can change her ideas of hospitality: “Alexander must have his Russian cigarettes. We were not able to cook a Russian meal for him, but at least he should enjoy his favorite tobacco.”

“One sees so much Russian in Paris nowadays,” remarks the King, “Russian shops, Russian theaters, Russian taxi-drivers, but particularly Russian restaurants. It is strange and at the same time significant that of all the professions, the exiles should choose that of restaurant-keepers. Now, take for instance the French political emigrants during the years of the Revolution and Napoleon’s reign. Some of them became teachers of French in the schools and private houses of England, Germany and Russia; the majority, however, fancied the culinary profession. How do you account for it? What makes the exiles believe that it is so much easier to work in a restaurant than do anything else?”

ONCE more I exercise my prerogatives of expert extraordinary, to whom all revolutionary phenomena are simple and clear, and volunteer a comparison:

“The exiles invariably remind me of that man who wanted to write a play just because he needed money, and because in his days of prosperity he used to patronize the theaters. Every one of the political emigrants, who was, is, or intends to be engaged in the profession of a restaurant-keeper, belongs to the class of former *gourmets*. All of them have spent fortunes in the hostelries of St. Petersburg and Moscow, which leads them to believe that they have all the necessary qualifications of a caterer.”

The King follows my improvisation with sympathetic attention. It can be plainly seen that he is worrying about the fate awaiting the numerous Spanish aristocrats at present in France. Not that he has in any way influenced their decision to flee their native country, but he realizes no other choice was open to them, and he wishes he could somehow help them.

We smoke and are about to begin a “serious” conversation, when looking at the two young couples, I notice the nervous expression of their

faces. They fear my talk with their father may last for hours—so many hours taken away from their happiness, while the etiquette of the court precludes any one's rising from the table before the King. The Queen smiles understandingly and signals to His Majesty. We get up. The two young couples make for the park in a hurry. The King invites me to his study, a small room containing a large table and several armchairs. Not a thing of his own, not a sign of its being occupied by a sovereign.

Now that we talk on the subject dear to his heart, he is again the ruler—every inch a great ruler.

He speaks in clear, concise phrases, in the manner of one accustomed to sum up in a single sentence the contents of a two-hundred-page report. He never raises his voice. He does not need to fall back on this weapon of haranguing politicians, for his ideas are crystallized by conviction, and his facts arrayed as so many mathematical formulae.

“Not so long ago,” he commences with a mixture of amusement and resentment, “an American publisher made me what I thought a quite unusual proposition. He offered to pay me ten thousand dollars for one thousand words. Naturally enough, I rejected his proposition, magnanimous as it was. In fact, I did not know where and how I could find

all those words. Only think, Alexander, he wanted one thousand words, when there is just one worthwhile word left in my vocabulary, but that word is not for sale. *Spain!* Nothing else interests me; nothing else concerns me. Spain and its happiness. Spain and its future.”

He stops for a short moment and then adds in a tone the solemn quietness of which accentuates the utmost importance of the declaration:

“The very moment I put my foot on the friendly and hospitable soil of France, I told the French Government in the simplest possible fashion: ‘I am not a conspirator!’ I wish to repeat it once more. *I am not a conspirator.* I sha’n’t move my little finger to help anything or anybody cause any difficulty whatsoever to the present Government of Spain. If my people want me back, now or at any future time, I shall go back and serve my country in the same way I did since the day I was sixteen. But this desire of my people would have to be expressed in the same strictly constitutional manner, free of any interference, in which I permitted them to express their republican preferences on the eve of my departure. Please, understand it clearly, once and forever: *I am a King, not a conspirator!* The task of the present Spanish Government is sufficiently hard to

make me wish to guarantee them complete freedom from any hindrance on the part of myself or those who continue to take my orders. If they should succeed in making my people happier than before, I should be the first one to rejoice heartily and to extend my congratulations!"

WHAT could one reply to a speech of such sincerity?

A long pause. I see his eyes light up with kindness. He realizes that I am thinking of another sovereign, who sat across the table from me, just as he is doing now, and spoke of *his* desire to give complete freedom of choice to his one hundred and sixty million subjects.

"I do not want to appear overemotional," the King says shyly, "but you can not expect me to remain entirely cool, can you?" Then he continues.

He analyzes the tragic epic of the last spring as a historian would, unafraid, unbiased, enfranchised. When he mentions his own actions, he appears to be speaking of some one else: "The King of Spain," he says, "is a tight-rope walker who spent thirty years of his life trying to maintain his balance."

I have the impression of listening to a cautious

professor discussing events of tremendous importance in the light of newly obtained data.

He knows of my intention to write about him for the American readers, and he reacts to it in a characteristic fashion:

“I gladly authorize you to write about me and our conversations; but remember, Alexander, you must promise me one thing—no flattery! You must criticize me!”

In French this last phrase of his sounds almost like a command: “*Tu dois me critiquer!*”

2

“AND none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great.” This line comes to my mind as I sit in the improvised study. During luncheon I did most of the talking, but now that we are alone, I am prepared to maintain an uninterrupted silence. There is just one question, a plain and a cruel one, that I would like to ask of the King:

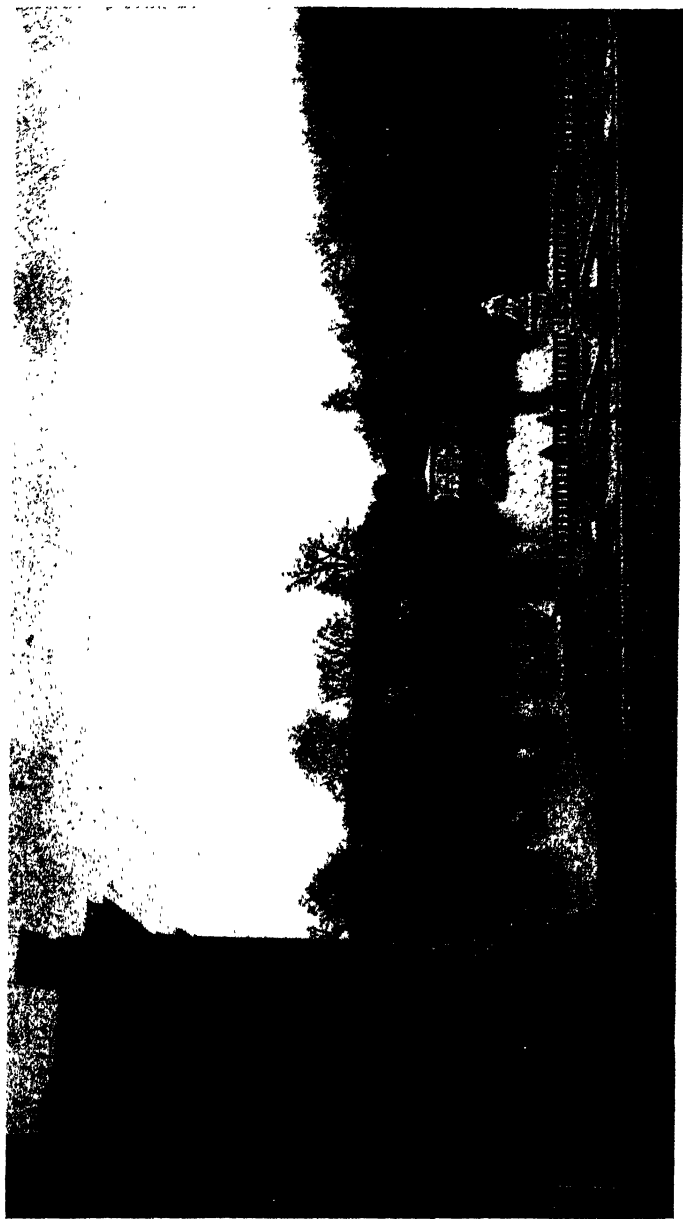
“How did it happen? So sudden—so unexpected! Occurring just at the moment when we all thought you were the most popular man in Spain!”

He reads my thoughts and spares me the ordeal.

“The last Spanish Revolution,” he remarks in the way of introduction, “would present, no doubt, an unsolvable puzzle for anyone not familiar with the continuity of the thirty years of my reign. The troubles that befell my kingdom even long before my arrival in this world, the peculiar circumstances surrounding my birth, the atmosphere of my childhood, the insurmountable handicaps that accompanied my first steps as sovereign—all of this must be understood and analyzed. It all serves to prove, I suppose, that one can not change the solid pattern of one’s life, the joy of Genesis in the beginning, the disenchantment of Ecclesiastes at the end!”

His words startle me. They would have sounded more natural coming from the fatalistic Czar Nicholas II. Am I still in Fontainebleau in the year of grace 1931; or have I been transported into Czarskoie-Selo in 1917?

The King smiles. I never saw another face capable of changing its expressions so rapidly. All sovereigns are trained in the art of smiling, but with him it amounts to a veritable magic. Only a short moment ago he was “all jaw”; he suggested the daguerreotype likeness of a maternal ancestor of his, a ruler of the Holy Roman Empire: he was a Hapsburg. His smile brought back his father’s son, a Bourbon—a



THE LAKE OF FONTAINEBLEAU.

finished product of that unique culture which carried its fascination unscathed through ten centuries of pillaging Saracens, thundering wars and tottering dynasties.

A Hapsburg and a Bourbon! A quintessence of ages, this combination of resounding names! Next to them we are mere newcomers, we the Romanoffs, our British cousins the Windsors, and the haughty Hohenzollerns of Prussia. He is forty-five; I am sixty-five; yet I am several centuries his junior—a difference negligible, perhaps, for history, but rich in consequences for the undisturbed development of an enthusiastic attitude toward life. It dawns on me that he was born with too young and too responsive a soul in a family crushed under the weight of awe-inspiring traditions.

The King begins his story. I am the audience again. Once in a while he stops, stares into space and illustrates his viewpoint with a remark somewhat Edwardian in its dry humor. He talks of the things that are no more. Spain in the nineteenth century—a peninsula ravaged by all imaginable plagues, including Napoleon, an endless civil war and the short-lived republic of 1868. The nation is stunned by the sudden passing of his father, King Alfonso XII, who died at the age of twenty-eight on November 25th,

1885, leaving no male heirs and bequeathing the throne to his young Austrian wife Maria-Christina. The Dowager Queen is expectant. On the morning of May 17th, 1886, hidalgos and farmers alike are watching for news from the royal palace. Everybody realizes that the fate of the country depends on the sex of the posthumous infant. The birth of another girl would be certain to provoke a new outburst of the fratricidal slaughter; the supporters of the heirs of Don Carlos are all set to fight the Dowager Queen just as they had fought her mother-in-law Queen Isabella II since 1833.

The ministers, the generals and the parliamentarians are assembled in the throne-room of the palace, all eyes riveted on the door leading into the Queen's apartments. The liberal Prime Minister Señor Sagasta, and the leader of the conservative opposition, Señor Canovas del Castillo, are talking in excited whispers. Both of them are praying for a boy. The hours crawl along. It seems an eternity. The door opens. The eldest lady-in-waiting to the Queen is standing on the threshold, holding in her hands a silver salver covered by a chiffon veil. Señor Sagasta crosses the throne-room and raises the veil. He turns toward his colleagues and exclaims triumphantly:

"Viva el Rey!"

Next moment the crowds in the streets of Madrid join in that exuberant shout, and the Government rushes out a manifesto announcing the birth of "Alfonso XIII, by the Grace of God and the Constitution, the Catholic King of Spain."

"There is a story attached to that pompous ceremony in the throne-room for whose authenticity I can not vouch," adds the King smilingly. "Some of the historians claim that I remained perfectly calm at the sight of the liberal Prime Minister Señor Sagasta, but that the approach of the conservative leader Señor Canovas del Castillo made me scream. If it is true, then we may call it a striking case of infantile liberalism. In any event, I became the King at the very moment of my birth, the youngest king ever known in the history of the civilized world. King Jean I of France was the only other sovereign of equally demure age, but he kept his crown for only five days."

KING at the age of sixty seconds! I shudder. It is bad enough to become one at any age, but at least an heir apparent to a throne has a chance to enjoy his early childhood, while my host had to exercise his dangerous profession long before he was able

to walk unassisted. At the age of eleven months he "opened" Parliament (the Cortes). At the age of two he inaugurated an exhibition in Barcelona and held his first royal levee. Although he delegated the actual powers to his mother for the next sixteen years, his subjects persisted in their desire to see "El Rey" in person, and an amusing episode marked the third year of his life and reign. One morning, while awaiting the arrival of an important delegation, he became uncomfortable on the seat of the throne of his ancestors, and profiting by a short absence of his nurses, crawled down and climbed astride one of the gilt lions supporting the throne.

"You see," he comments dryly, "my childish instinct of self-preservation made me realize the safety of a lion as compared to a throne."

A NIECE of Emperor Franz-Joseph, his mother brought to Spain the stern educational ideas of her native Austria. A Bourbon was raised by her as a Hapsburg. The King of a nation that enjoyed its *dolce far niente* was put in care of physical trainers. Very frail as a baby, he grew up to be an accomplished athlete. Naturally enough, he felt inclined to let the fervent imagination of his Franco-Spanish ancestors find employment for the physical strength

of his Austrian relatives. Translated into terms of childhood, it meant a desire to throw mud-pies at the boys in the streets, and an irresistible urge to imitate the exploits of the famous bull-fighters (*toreros*.) During a visit to a bull-farm he jumped into the training arena and very nearly lost his life in a reckless combat with a fierce two-horned champion. Whenever he could sneak away from his vigilant tutors, he would rush to the royal stables and ask the grooms to let him break in some untamed mount. A marvelous horseman even at ten years of age, he turned each one of his morning rides into a species of cross-country steeple-chase.

“In due course of time these exploits came to my mother’s attention,” he says of that period of his childhood. “She asked me not to do it again. I parried with a series of my celebrated why’s. You must know that I was an undisputed champion of all the why-boys of Spain. It is a mystery to me how my mother succeeded in controlling her temper. Our daily dialogue usually ran as follows: ‘You must not play with the boys in the streets,’ my mother would say kindly but firmly. ‘Why should I not play with the boys in the streets?’ I would answer, enjoying the dispute. ‘Because the King of Spain should remain in his palace.’ ‘Why should the King of Spain

remain in his palace?' 'Because the nation is watching your actions.' 'Why is the nation watching my actions?' And so on, *ad infinitum*. In her place I would have lost my patience after the very first 'why' and would have shouted: 'Because such are my orders!' But not she. Her determination to explain everything peacefully knew no limits."

An outlet had to be found, however, for the overproduction of energy displayed by the youthful King. Once more the Dowager Queen drew upon the deposits of her Austrian ideas, and new subjects of learning were added to the program of her son's education. At the age of ten he possessed a full-sized army of tutors and teachers, headed by a trio consisting of a bishop, a general and a well-known professor of the University of Madrid. The bishop supervised his "spiritual development." The general taught him all an officer should know. The kind professor took care of the rest, which covered two score of subjects. Long before the day of his coronation in 1902 he spoke, read and wrote English, German and French just as easily and fluently as his native Spanish, and he knew as much about the affairs of state as any one of his ministers. In order to please the professor, he had learned the lengthy Spanish Constitution by heart. According to him,

that unusual feat of memory served him well in the years to come:

“Many a time when dealing with my Council of Ministers, I had occasion to discover that the gentlemen who were extremely fond of referring to the ‘spirit and the letter of the Constitution’ were in nine cases out of ten ignorant of both! I must admit I derived a certain amount of malicious pleasure from reciting to them the correct version of this or that paragraph of the Constitution quoted by them in a most haphazard fashion. Thanks to my professor and to my mother, I received a thorough governmental training in my early youth. In fact, even during our meals Mother never stopped lecturing me on the subject of the spirit of government. I do not doubt that had a fire threatened the palace, she would have seized upon it as an opportunity for imparting to me additional knowledge and experience.”

The year 1902 came, a significant year in his life. He became the King of Spain *de facto* and not in name only. He was sixteen. He is naturally reluctant to praise his preparedness for the occupation of the throne; but while he talks, I recall the impression made by him on Mr. Curry, who represented President Roosevelt at the coronation of 1902 in Madrid.

The American delegate was struck by the proud motto of Spain—*Dignidad, Lealtad, y Amor de Dios* (Dignity, Loyalty and Love of God), and thought that nothing in the whole country illustrated it better than the young sovereign himself.

I am about to repeat to the King the words of Mr. Curry, but on second thought I decide it is better not to: he loathes anything even remotely suggestive of flattery.

His own memories of the year of the Coronation cover two particular episodes.

“Now that you are a full-fledged King, what will your first action be?” asked a friendly Minister.

“My first action? I shall fill my cigarette-case with dozens of cigarettes.”

Up to then he was permitted by his mother to smoke but one dozen daily.

A somewhat more significant answer was reserved by him for an exalted representative of the Catholic Church.

“You must always remember, Your Majesty,” said the latter sententiously, “that you are a son of the Church and a godson of His Holiness Leo XIII.”

“I shall likewise remember,” replied the King,



THE HOTEL SAVOY IN FONTAINEBLEAU WHICH HOUSES THE EXILED KING.

“that I am the father of my people.” A typical 1931 answer, though dating back to 1902!

“Later on,” recalls the King, “both of us were often to think of that exchange of remarks. As everybody knows, the relations between the State and the Holy See were largely to influence the course of the following quarter of a century. However, it is a subject with which I shall deal at greater length later on. So far we are still in 1902. I have just come of age, and the Spanish anarchists are losing no time in taking due notice of this fact.”

THE first attempt against the King's life took place in 1903. He was fired at while escorting his mother from the chapel. The buzz of bullets conveyed no new sound to Queen Maria-Christina, her late husband having encountered his would-be assassins twice during his short reign. She looked at her son anxiously. He laughed. The very idea of being killed at seventeen seemed ludicrous to him. A Bourbon had to have faith in the Bourbons' star.

The following year an infernal machine was discovered hidden in the royal palace.

“Both sides held their respective ground firmly,” explains the King. “I wanted to go on living; they preferred to see me dead.”

Spring of 1905 came. He left for France to pay a state visit to President Loubet. He liked the French, and he loved Paris, a combination certain of scoring heavily with the crowds lining the boulevards. In no time at all, he became "*notre Roi*" (our King), threatening to give King Edward VII of England a hard race for the occupancy of the heart of the French nation.

On May 31st, 1905, at half-past eleven at night, after a gala performance at the Opera House, he drove in an open carriage, seated next to President Loubet, and being wildly acclaimed by the Parisian population. The President, a dignified man in his middle sixties, felt pleased by the reception given to his very young guest. They talked gayly and smiled at each other, reaping more ovations as they progressed down the Rue de Rivoli. At the corner of the Rue Rohan, a man standing in the front row of a dense crowd raised his hand. A flat object fell under the right wheels of the state carriage. A terrific explosion followed, accompanied by a bedlam of angry voices and groans of agony. The King sat perfectly still. Turning toward the trembling President, he patted his knee gently:

"I am so sorry for you, Mr. President. They could have had a little more respect for your age. Are you

sure you are not hurt? Stand up and see if your feet are alright."

Mr. Loubet lost his power of speech for a moment.

"But what about you, Your Majesty?"

The nineteen-year-old monarch burst out laughing.

"Do not worry about me. We, the kings, are different. Such are the risks of our trade."

Another year passed. The King was about to be married, and the entire Spanish nation went sleepless trying to guess the identity of their future queen. There was no lack of suggestions. Every minister had his own idea of the "most appropriate bride for His Majesty." Princess X. would help the development of the foreign trade. Princess Y. would improve Spain's international standing. Princess Z. seemed to be the favorite of the Holy See.

"How about myself?" asked the King. "Has it ever occurred to you that I too have something to say?"

"His Majesty is too great a patriot not to recognize the necessity of serving the interests of his people."

For six consecutive months he opened his eyes in the morning with the same question.

“Well, to what princess have your papers married me this morning?”

The ministers frowned.

“His Majesty must make up his mind.”

“You are quite right,” agreed the King. “Indeed, I must make up my mind before you make it up for me. Next week I am going to baptize my new yacht, and then you shall know the name of the future Queen of Spain. Only do not tell it to anyone just yet. Keep it secret.”

They did keep it secret. Next week some twenty millions of Spaniards tiptoed in the streets, repeating to each other: “Just between you and me, tonight we shall learn the name of the King’s bride-to-be.”

When the beautiful yacht slid down the runways into the water, the ministers saw written on its bow: “*Queen X.*”

The King watched the expressions of their faces on the sly. Their laughter was rather perfunctory. One had to laugh at one’s sovereign’s jokes, but he failed to observe any genuine gayer.

The truth was that he had reached his decision long before they had commenced to press him. He was going to marry Princess Victoria-Eugénie of Battenberg, a granddaughter of the late Queen

Victoria, and a daughter of Prince Henry of Battenberg. He had met her in London the previous year; and to use his own expression, "From that moment on, English became" his "language of love." She was eighteen, tall, beautiful in that singularly striking way of a blonde English girl who would much rather ride to hounds than sit at a bridge-table. The old Empress Eugénie of France brought about their acquaintance, and their approaching betrothal promised to give equal satisfaction both to the two interested States and to the two royal youngsters—an unprecedented case in the annals of the old continent.

"Knowing only too well that we would have little, if any, privacy in the years to come," relates the King, "I was guarding my secret jealously. In January, 1906, my future wife and her mother came to visit Princess Frederica of Hanover in the latter's Villa Mouriscot in Biarritz. Simultaneously I told my ministers that I would spend a week-end in my Miramar Palace at San Sebastian, which is situated just across the border from Biarritz. It seemed to me that even the busiest gossipers would be unable to detect any 'irregularity' in that innocent-looking trip of mine. I was mistaken. Forty-eight hours later the newspapers of Paris, London, New York, Ma-

drid, Rome, Berlin and Vienna proved their knowledge of geography and their ability to put two and two together. There was nothing to do but authorize the official statement."

Princess Victoria-Eugénie and her retinue were to arrive in Madrid on May 15th; the marriage itself was to be performed on May 31st. Stupefaction was expressed at the choice of the latter date.

"Does His Majesty realize that May 31st will be the first anniversary of the Parisian attempt on his life?"

"Yes, of course I do. A lucky date! I came out without a scratch, did I not?"

Superstitious courtiers shook their heads dubiously. They did not believe in the advisability of tempting fate twice.

In the meanwhile, most elaborate preparations had to be made for the royal wedding. Forty Spanish peasant women were to work for fifty-six days and fifty-six nights weaving the gorgeous bridal gown of satin and silver embroidered with the lilies of the Bourbons and the roses of England. No pains were to be spared, as the King wanted to prove to the world the unsurpassed craftsmanship of Spain.

From May 15th to May 30th Madrid witnessed a series of spectacular festivities attended by the

representatives of all the European reigning houses. At half-past eight on the morning of May 31st the King drove to the El Prado Palace to have breakfast with his bride and her relatives. Ten o'clock found them in the church of San Geronimo El Real, kneeling before the Primate of Spain, the Archbishop of Toledo.

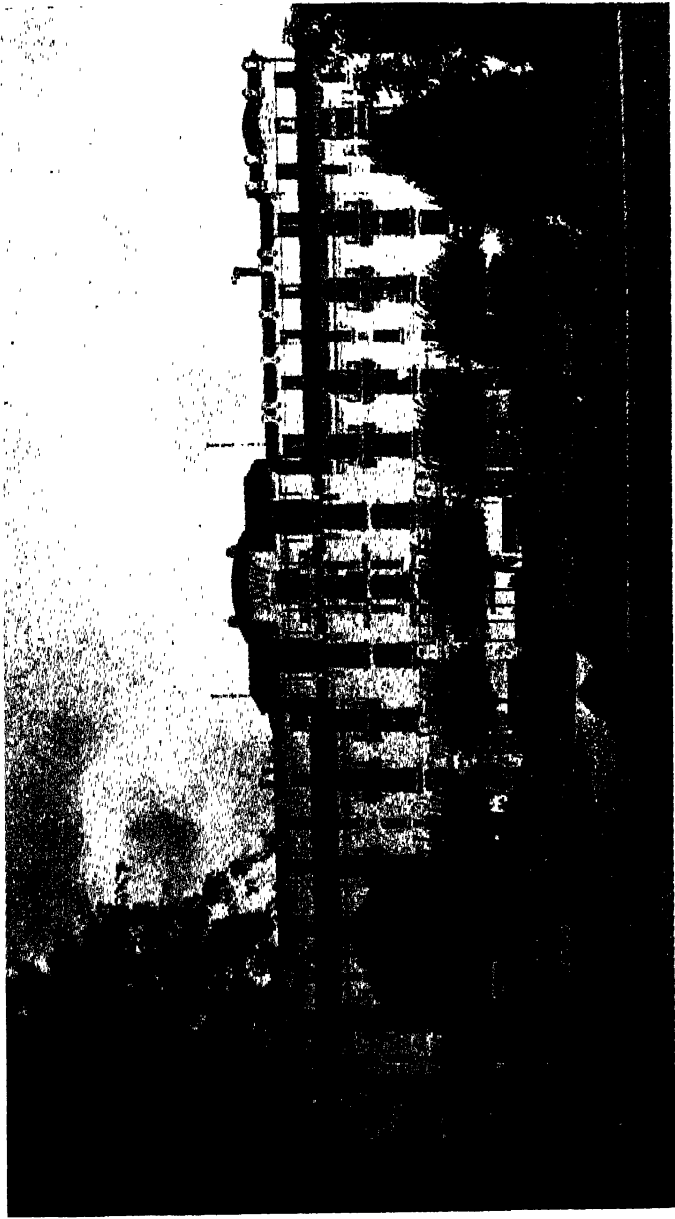
Finally the lengthy solemn ceremony drew to an end. "*Ite in pace*" ("Go in peace"), said the Archbishop, and the newly-weds stood up to face the assembly: she in her radiant blonde beauty accentuated by the background of the gorgeous gown, he with his fascinating smile of a Bourbon, more pronounced than ever.

Vociferous *vivas* arose outside. The procession started, headed by the so-called "coach of respect," an empty carriage driven by four horses. The King and Queen drove in the gilt state carriage, surrounded by a guard of honor of the Royal Wad-Ras Regiment. The density of the crowds could be judged by the fact that it took the state carriage twenty-five minutes to cross the Puerta del Sol, a distance usually requiring not quite three minutes.

When the procession turned into the Calle Major (Main Street), the King called the Queen's attention to the people waving flags and throwing flowers

at them out of the windows of the Government buildings. The Queen turned her head in the direction pointed by him, and in doing so she moved closer toward him, to the left side of the carriage. At this moment they reached No. 88 of the Calle Major. That house being situated on the right side, the strange happenings in the window of its fourth story escaped the attention of the newly-weds. A man stood there—it was the notorious anarchist Mateo Morrales—holding a bulky bouquet in his hands, his lips moving visibly as though reciting a prayer, and his eyes glaring at the state carriage. His pale twitching face attracted the attention of some of the guards below, but before they could reach any conclusions as to what should be done, he let his bouquet fall, missing the top of the royal coach by a few inches. There was a sudden white flash, a thunderous noise, scattering of broken glass, shrieks and cries.

“I caught a strange acrid odor,” relates the King, “and for at least two minutes I could not see a thing through the thick smoke. When the smoke cleared away, I saw blood all over the lilies and roses of the Queen’s bridal gown. She was unhurt, but several of our guards were thrown from their disemboweled mounts. Men and horses bled profusely. The Calle



A VIEW OF THE HOTEL SAVOY IN FONTAINEBLEAU.

Major presented a terrific sight. Twenty-eight people were killed, forty wounded. Everybody shouted hysterically: 'The King and the Queen are killed!' Only the superhuman discipline of my Wad-Ras Regiment, who did not break their lines, checked the general stampede.

"I took the arm of the Queen and walked with her along the street toward the 'coach of respect' amidst scenes of horror and enthusiasm. Had it not been for my desire that she should acknowledge the greetings of the personnel of the Government buildings, she would have been dead now: the bomb exploded on the right side of our carriage."

Strangely enough, the year 1907 passed without any particular accidents, outside of a minor attempt to derail the royal train. The year 1908 ushered in the tempestuous strikes in Barcelona. Immediately upon the receipt of the news of considerable bloodshed in that city, the King decided to go there at once. His ministers turned pale and said Catalonia was the very last province of Spain fit to be visited by the sovereign. On this occasion the King lost his patience.

"I wish you would understand," he exclaimed tersely, "that I am the King of the whole of Spain! The day I feel afraid to visit any part of my king-

dom, I will be honest enough to sign a manifesto of abdication."

His Prime Minister Canaleyeas was assassinated in 1909. In 1911 an explosion coincided with the King's sojourn in Malaga, while 1913 witnessed his miraculous escape from the bullets of the anarchist Rafael Sandez Allegro. He refers to the latter episode with the utmost simplicity:

"I was always used to being approached by people in the Streets of Madrid. One would solicit assistance, another would complain of the treatment received by him at the hands of this or that official. In fact, I encouraged that habit, as it brought me into close contact with the nation. There was nothing unusual nor suspicious in the appearance of Allegro. He stepped out of the crowd just as I was riding past the place where he stood. He had a sheet of paper in his hands. It looked like a petition. I was about to stop my horse, when he brandished a pistol and began to fire at me. He must have been a poor shot. The first two bullets missed me. There was nothing for me to do except what I actually did. I made my horse rear, and drove straight at the crazy fellow. I knocked him down. The whole show lasted about thirty seconds. His

third bullet landed in the neck of my beautiful Alarum. Fortunately, the noble animal recovered. Come to think of it, I prefer revolvers to bombs: they do not scatter; you are hit, or you succeed in dodging the bullets. In either case you do not feel responsible for having caused the death of scores of innocent onlookers."

He expresses his "preference for revolvers" in the manner in which one would state one's partiality toward seasoned cheese or extra-dry champagne. He is not trying to be humorous, and I do not feel like laughing. I know something about bombs and revolvers, the former having been used in the assassination of my uncle Emperor Alexander II and my cousin Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich. I note, however, that the King has omitted to mention his refusal to sign Allegro's death-sentence. Evidently he thinks it natural, considering his "preference for revolvers."

THE outbreak of the World War, which followed closely the attempt at regicide made by Allegro, seemed for a while to cool off the zeal of the Spanish anarchists.

"Spain tried to stand for the ideals of humanity in the midst of a world-wide conflict. My archives

in Madrid contain some of the evidence of our conciliatory work." Thus the King summarizes his attitude in 1914-1918.

This concise formula fails to satisfy me. I remember vividly how the King of Spain had become overnight the Good Samaritan of the bleeding world, and how his country, the only Great Power in Europe to remain neutral, was intrusted by all belligerent states with the difficult task of representing their respective interests in the camps of the enemies. I insist on getting a more detailed story of his "conciliatory work." He willingly describes the efforts of his ambassadors, but talks most reluctantly about his own achievements.

"My ambassador in Berlin took charge of seven deserted embassies; my ambassador in Vienna handled six. At the end of the war their services were gratefully acknowledged by the Allies and the Central Powers alike."

"But what about the numberless soldiers located through your own efforts? What about those French women rescued by you from the German courts-martial?"

He answers in monosyllables. I am afraid that in this particular instance I have to recur to the assistance of his friend Marquis de Torrès. The picture

drawn by the latter (notwithstanding the reproachful glance of his King) deserves to be brought to the world's attention.

Right after the first battle of the Marne a strange letter arrived in Madrid. The address read: "*To the King of Spain.*" Nothing else. The writer, a French peasant woman, wondered whether His Majesty would locate her son, who had disappeared on the second day of the battle. "He is an awfully good boy, and I must have him back." The plain language of the letter touched the King. He wired his ambassador in Berlin, ordering him to take action before the German Red Cross. Two weeks later the boy was found in a prisoners' camp. The story caused a sensation. By October, 1914, the daily mail of the King of Spain jumped to four thousand letters. The French and the British, the Germans and the Austrians, the Turks and the Australians, the Belgians and the Poles, the Canadians and the Russians—everybody begged him to locate their fathers, sons and husbands.

The benevolent organizations followed the example of the private individuals. The Austrian Red Cross asked him to intervene with the Russian Imperial Government on behalf of their nationals. The British Red Cross stated that their wounded in

Saloniki were craving for a taste of Spanish oranges. The German Red Cross solicited his assistance in arranging an exchange of permanently disabled prisoners with France and Great Britain.

The belligerent Governments came next in line. Would His Majesty wire to the Kaiser asking clemency for a French woman accused of espionage in Belgium? Would His Majesty wire to the President of the French Republic asking clemency for a German spy caught in Paris? Would His Majesty wire to the King of England pleading extenuating circumstances in the case of an Austrian arrested in London?

By the beginning of 1915 a whole wing of the Royal Palace in Madrid was turned into a mammoth bureau of research, hundreds of secretaries assorting, answering, and following up the letters and petitions. The cases where a human life was at stake were handled by the King in person. He worked out a formula which seemed to affect even the stern Kaiser: "*Il y a déjà assez de victimes*" ("There are enough victims, as it is"), he concluded his wires to Berlin, Vienna, Paris, London, St. Petersburg, Sofia and Constantinople. The French Government credited him with having saved the lives of sixteen

French citizens (nine women among them) condemned to be shot by the German courts-martial. The exact figures dealing with the other nationalities are not available, but the aggregate amount must run into several hundred.

On January 23, 1917, a delegation of 9281 Spanish municipalities (*Ayuntamientos*) presented him with an address and a special decoration commemorating his services to humanity. A poet in far-away San Salvador dedicated to him an ode, its three concluding lines echoing throughout Latin America:

*Y en tanto que en Europa escandaliza
El odio, el disipa sus nublados,
Con la aurora triunfante de su sonrisa.*

("And while Europe is shrouded in hate, he dispels the clouds with the triumphal aurora of his smile.")

I can hardly qualify as a judge of Spanish poetry; but I am able, nevertheless, to appreciate the sentiment of that San Salvador ode. It fits my own memories of the King of Spain in the years of Europe's madness. We used to call him then "the Mother Dolorosa of Madrid."

The King raises his hand in protest: "May I sug-

gest our leaving San Salvador and returning to Spain?"

WAR or peace, weekday or holiday, there were the duties of the royal office to be attended to.

"Lots of people are using the expression 'royal office,'" comments the King, "but very few recognize that the emphasis should be laid on the word '*office*.' The only difference between the office of a King and the office of a big modern executive lies in the additional and very cumbersome social duties attached to the former."

I remind him jokingly that once upon a time there was a sovereign, Louis XIV by name, who referred to his duties as "my delightful royal profession" (*mon délicieux métier de roi*). We both laugh. He has his own experience to consider, while I keep before my eyes the ever-vivid figures of my uncle, my cousin and my brother-in-law, the three emperors of Russia who would have disagreed most bitterly with the "horn-tooting" philosophy of the Versailles autocrat.

The King talks of his former strict and rigorous routine.

He was up at seven A. M., sometimes earlier but never later. After a light breakfast at eight—coffee



Wide World photo

KING ALFONSO AT THE AGE OF SIXTEEN.

and rolls—he began his working day by receiving the Prime Minister. The two of them discussed the latest political news and the projects pending before the Council of Ministers. From ten to three the King sat and listened to the steady eloquence of other ministers, important industrialists and foreign visitors. Although the ruler of the most ceremonious country in the world, he suspended all rules of etiquette. Transatlantic bankers anxious to meet the King of Spain used to call up his secretary a few minutes before the appointed time, asking him what they should wear.

“What have you got on now?”

“Right this moment I am in my golf-suit.”

“Come straight along.”

The very old courtiers, remembering the splendor of the '80's, looked with bewilderment at the soft collars, knickers and multicolored sweaters appearing in the stately antechamber of the royal palace. The King did not care. “I took it for granted that they brought in their trunks all that is necessary to make a fine appearance, but I preferred to have them do their talking in comfort.”

He ate his luncheon alone, the family having long since finished theirs. At half-past three he was back “on the job,” ready to spend the balance of the after-

noon in company of native parliamentarians and foreign visitors. He was never able to determine which one of these two categories possessed a bigger gift of fluent speech. He knew that it took the Spaniards four thousand speeches to pass the Local Government Bill through the Cortes; but he was likewise sufficiently familiar with the "matter-of-fact" captains of industry from across the seas to question their reputation for briefness and lucidity. They all began by saying: "It will take me, Your Majesty, but a few minutes. I am not an orator, I am a business man." And they were still talking full speed long after the passing of the allotted time.

The English ancestry of the Queen made it obligatory for him to attend the family tea at five-thirty. That was the only time of the day he could spend with his four sons and two daughters. The Heir Apparent, known to his father as "Alfonsito," wanted to become a farmer. The elder daughter, Beatrice, showed signs of unmistakable talent for painting. The second son, Don Jaime, disclosed a preference for the affairs of state. The younger daughter, Maria Christina, was an accomplished sportswoman. She wished she were permitted to play polo on her father's team. The third boy, Don Juan, dreamed of the life of a sailor. The youngest boy,

Don Gonzales, excelled in the manly art of boxing.

They were a friendly and a cheerful lot, and something exciting was happening to them almost every day of their lives. An American gentleman driving through the woods where Beatrice was painting a landscape stopped his car to admire it, and instructed his wife to "talk to that girl and buy her work as a souvenir. Only don't you dare offer her more than a couple of bucks. You know how those Spaniards are." Another conquering visitor met the young Heir Apparent near the royal farm on the River Manzanares, and slipped him a quarter "in good American money" for showing him the road to town.

The Queen wanted her children to be educated in England. As their father, my august host sympathized with this desire, but as King of Spain he had to insist on choosing native institutions of learning.

AN hour spent at the tea-table filled him with new enthusiasm. At half-past six he went back to the office and stayed there till late in the evening. Sometimes he granted particularly urgent audiences long after midnight.

"Talk about an eight-hour day," he exclaims

laughingly; "why, I think kings should organize a union and pass a resolution insisting on a maximum twelve-hour day!"

The analysis of an average day, picked at random, discloses the following appointments and audiences:

(1) Conference with the Prime Minister.

(2) A report of the Minister of Public Instruction on the progress of the Ciudad University founded by the King a few years before.

(3) Report of the War Minister.

(4) Audience to an American magnate.

(5) Audience to a delegation representing Spanish tourist industries. Would His Majesty consent to organize a regatta at Santander? It would be sure to attract most desirable voyagers to Spain.

(6) Audience to a delegation of Barcelona workers.

(7) Audience to a foreign ambassador soliciting some very special privileges for the industrialists of his country. His request is impertinent. He must, however, be sent away smiling broadly.

(8) Audience to a delegation of Spanish shipping interests. Would His Majesty consent to take a trip to London aboard their new vessel? It would be certain to promote the maritime passenger traffic between Spain and England.

(9) Solicitors of royal charity, of both sexes and all descriptions.

(10) Social calls: Ambassadors departing and ambassadors newly arrived.

AND so it went, almost every day of his life and reign. He traveled a great deal, but without any exception his voyages were undertaken with some ultimate purpose of state in view.

The readers of the American newspapers used to say on seeing his photo in the rotogravure sections: "The King of Spain is certainly having a good time." The truth is that he very rarely succeeded in having even a moderate degree of good time, although his smile left nothing to be desired by the exacting camera-men of the ubiquitous transatlantic syndicates.

He officiated at football matches, raced yachts and motorcars, played tennis and polo, not because he could not find something else to do, away from the crowds and the reporters, but because his determination to instill a new spirit into the heart of a very old nation required his showing a personal example and exercising a continuous active leadership.

"I did enjoy playing polo, though," he confesses

quite readily. "It is a marvelous game, particularly for one who is obliged to control his temper every second of his time. What I mean to say is this: when you play polo, you are supposed to hit the ball hard, the harder the better. Now, if you are endowed with any imagination at all, you can visualize the ball as the face of an annoying person. You hit it with all your might, and you add under your breath: 'I am about to get even with you, you pest of my existence; take that, and that, and that—and some more is still coming.' . . . I do believe polo, if approached scientifically, could be used as a very efficient safety-valve for all sorts and cases of suppressed emotions."

I like this idea exceedingly well and regret that polo never acquired much of a vogue in Russia.

The memory of the days when the King of Spain galloped on the polo-field—a bright spot of his own colors of Castile indicating his participation in a hard-fought match—makes him think of his other, still less conventional attempts to modernize the stereotyped conception of a monarch. Looking back at that aspect of his thirty years on the throne, he characterizes his "unusual actions" as a policy of four paradoxes.

"Very early in life," he concludes with a slight tinge of sadness in his voice, "I became convinced

that, not unlike a human being, a State can not remain at a standstill. It goes forward or it rolls backward. What was I to do? Usual methods spelled stagnation. I was obliged to try the paradoxical ones. I attempted to be an up-to-date king in the country of the most ancient royal traditions in the world. I endeavored to create a democracy without the benefit of screaming demagogues and cheap grandstand players. I strove to reconcile the orthodox dogmae of the Catholic Church with the boldest theories of modern science. And most daring of all, I believed in the necessity of building heavy industries in a land that had preserved its purely agricultural character even after the passing of a century of epochal technical discoveries. Does it surprise you that I experienced considerable difficulty in maintaining my balance? Have you ever heard of a circus performer who had to walk a rope as tight and thin as mine?"

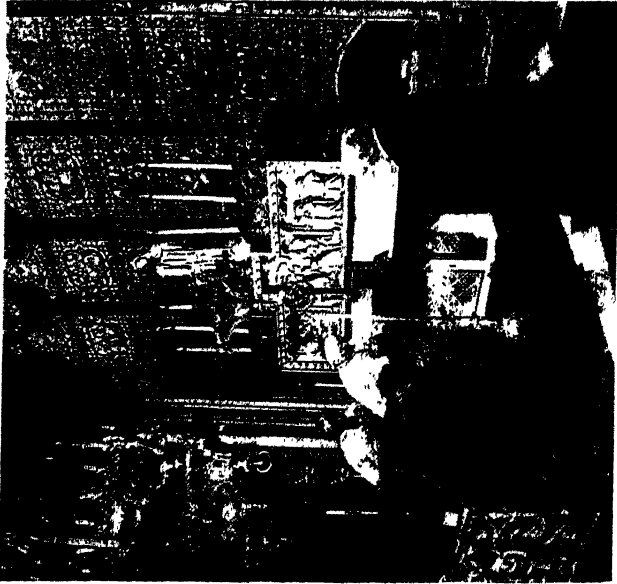
A STRANGER entering this sparsely furnished room of the Hotel Savoy in Fontainebleau would be surprised to discover that the management calls it the "Royal Study." Least of all would he be willing to believe that the man seated behind a plain desk piled with books and documents is really King Al-

fonso XIII of Spain. All photographs lie. His Catholic Majesty's brilliant humorous eyes suggest but remotely their likeness so familiar to the readers of the Sunday rotogravure sections. His always even manner and well-modulated voice never disclose the emotionality to be expected from the chief protagonist of one of the tensest dramas of modern times.

Fontainebleau is lying outside, mellowed by age and eloquent in its uninterrupted green-and-marble silence.

The King's two young daughters and their fiancés are playing tennis in the park, not far from the court where Napoleon held his last review of the Old Guard. The memories of 1814 enter the continuity of 1931, creating an atmosphere of soothing unreality. The odd fascination of life grows clearer and more tangible.

I look at the King. I think of my own past. My mind drifts across the ocean. Thirty-five hundred miles away, in the cañon of Wall Street, overexcited people are wringing their hands in despair, and are prophesying the imminent end of the world just because the perfidious stock-market failed to act in accordance with their wishes. Here in Fontainebleau the two of us are mourning two thrones lost by the Spanish sovereign and my late brother-in-law; and



KING ALFONSO KNEELING IN THE CATHEDRAL OF NOTRE DAME IN PARIS.



KING ALFONSO AND THE FUTURE QUEEN OF SPAIN SHORTLY BEFORE THEIR ENGAGEMENT WAS ANNOUNCED.

yet neither of us is inclined to consider his personal tragedy as a sign of this planet's dismal failure. While I myself have long since written down to "profits and losses" the fifty years of my Imperial life, my august host has likewise preserved his ability to appreciate the supreme sarcasm of human comedy.

We talk of our countries, drawing parallels obvious to an outsider, but full of meaning for the two interested parties.

I maintain with fervor that his experience and mine travel a long way toward proving the transitory character of all values conceived on a purely material plane. He listens sympathetically, but the corners of his lips are twitching.

"I have noticed, Alexander," he remarks casually, "that today your sermon scored rather heavily with the ladies at the table."

"So it would appear," I reply, a bit embarrassed, "but I have noticed, on the other hand, that you were smiling all through our discussion."

His strong, athletic figure shakes with laughter.

"I am afraid, Alexander, you misunderstood the meaning of my smile. Needless to say, I thoroughly agreed with you. Unfortunately, I was still under the impression of a somewhat different discussion

that took place this very morning, shortly before your arrival. The selfsame two ladies, friends of ours, who showered you with compliments expressing their contempt for the riches of the world, had spent a full hour crying and begging me to do something to protect their investments in Spain. I feel much better now that I have discovered their spiritual inclinations. In fact, I think I shall refer them straight to you for further guidance, should they broach the financial subject again."

The joke is on me.

"Some people are funny," I suggest compromisingly.

"Did you say, 'some people'? You are being very mild, indeed!" he answers with a marked sarcasm in his voice. "I suspect that most people are excruciatingly funny, particularly to one with a weakness for slapstick comedy. But then, of course, I might be prejudiced in this matter, having dealt a bit too frequently with professional politicians. Oh, those politicians!"

HE makes a grimace expressing his acute dislike for the word *politicians*.

"Have you ever heard, Alexander," he asks quite seriously, "of a monarch who has been too lenient

and too ruthless at the same time? Who has proven himself both a cruel tyrant and an oversentimental humanitarian?"

His question requires no answer. The allusion is plain. Although not a monarch, I happen to know what he is talking about. For quite a few years now, I myself have been accused of near-bolshevism by the Russian royalists—a fact which in no way decreases the hatred felt for me by the Soviets. In the words of Anatole France: "One is always somebody's bolshevik."

"Well," continues the King, "according to my recollections, such was the case of King Alfonso XIII of Spain! The Conservatives were always denouncing me for my so-called 'excessive radicalism,' while the Liberals never stopped reproaching me for violating this or that irrelevant clause of the Constitution. The Conservatives told me that the whole of Spain was clamoring for an uncompromising autocrat, for a replica of a Caesar of the Holy Roman Empire. The Liberals, on the other hand, swore that the nation would be certain to revolt against any sovereign attempting to change even a comma in the sacred document of 1876. I often wonder what all those brilliant diagnosticians have to say now, after the supposed admirers of autocracy

have voted three to one in favor of the Republic, and after the alleged worshipers of the Constitution have witnessed without a murmur the spectacle of its being torn to pieces by the present Government of Spain!"

He shrugs his broad shoulders, giving me to understand that having made this swift thrust at his former critics, he feels no further desire to review the petty disputes of the political yesterday.

The past interests him only in so far as its unsolved problems are bound to determine the course of the future.

"The day is not far off," he says with utmost modesty, though emphasizing each word, "when the Spaniards will realize that I was not such a bad king, after all, and that I did do something for the welfare of Spain. In my personal opinion, I have achieved as great a degree of success as could be expected from a ruler who had to contend with four major and a dozen minor attempts against his life, the consequences of two costly wars and numberless ever-smoldering uprisings. Mine was, indeed, a life of deep vicissitude.

"As I see it from this distance, the main achievement of my reign consisted in my having charted a 'middle course' for both ruler and people. *'Glissez,*

mortels; n'appuyez pas! (Glide, mortals; do not force issues)'. . . . Revolutions will come and go, but any Spanish government will have to continue navigating between the highways of the vast industrial empires and the trails of the rustic agricultural countries. Independent of future political developments, the nation will be obliged to reconcile the daring attempts of its grandchildren with the binding traditions of its forefathers.

“The eloquent orators of the present Spanish republican régime have nicknamed last April’s uprising an ‘elegant revolution.’ I sincerely hope for the sake of all Spaniards that the months and the years to come will not rob their revolution of its ‘elegance,’ but one thing is sure; there is no getting away from those well-nigh insolvable problems which have turned my thirty years on the throne into thirty years of walking on a tight-rope. . . . My problems were many. The first and foremost of them had to do with the relations between the State and the Church. The Ruler of Spain and the Holy See!”

He pronounces these last words of his in the manner of a convention-orator sounding the keynote of a political platform. I am extremely glad he has broached that very delicate subject on his own ini-

tiative. While in America the whole of last spring, I had searched in vain through the long columns of the New York newspapers for a plausible explanation of the anti-religious riots in Spain. Although the "special correspondents" spared no colors in describing the burning of one hundred and fifty-odd convents and cathedrals—which occurred hardly four weeks after the outbreak of the revolution—their dispatches failed to mention whether those outrages in any way reflected the real feelings of the Spanish people. Faithful to my habit of drawing parallels, I recalled at the time that it took fully eight months of a gradual increase of the Red tempo before similar disturbances took place in Russia. I felt amazed that the Catholic Church, having done so much for the cause of civilization, should have seemed to inspire no more respect in the revolutionaries than the Greek Orthodox Church, never known for its cultural achievements.

The King hastens to assure me that the acts of vandalism committed by the hoodlum section of the "elegant revolution" were never approved by the republican régime, least of all endorsed by the Spanish people.

"The Spaniards," exclaims the King, "are just as deeply religious today as they were six months ago!

Only a person utterly ignorant of the vital events of our history would believe that the mere fact of my absence from Madrid could suffice to uproot the secular tree of Spanish Catholicism. Let us not forget that the very definite religious policy of the Spanish state had always been dictated by the people to the throne, never by the throne to the people. It is not by accident nor through a fancy of my ancestors that of all sovereigns of ancient and modern times, we, the kings of Spain, were the only ones to have the word *Catholic* added to our title."

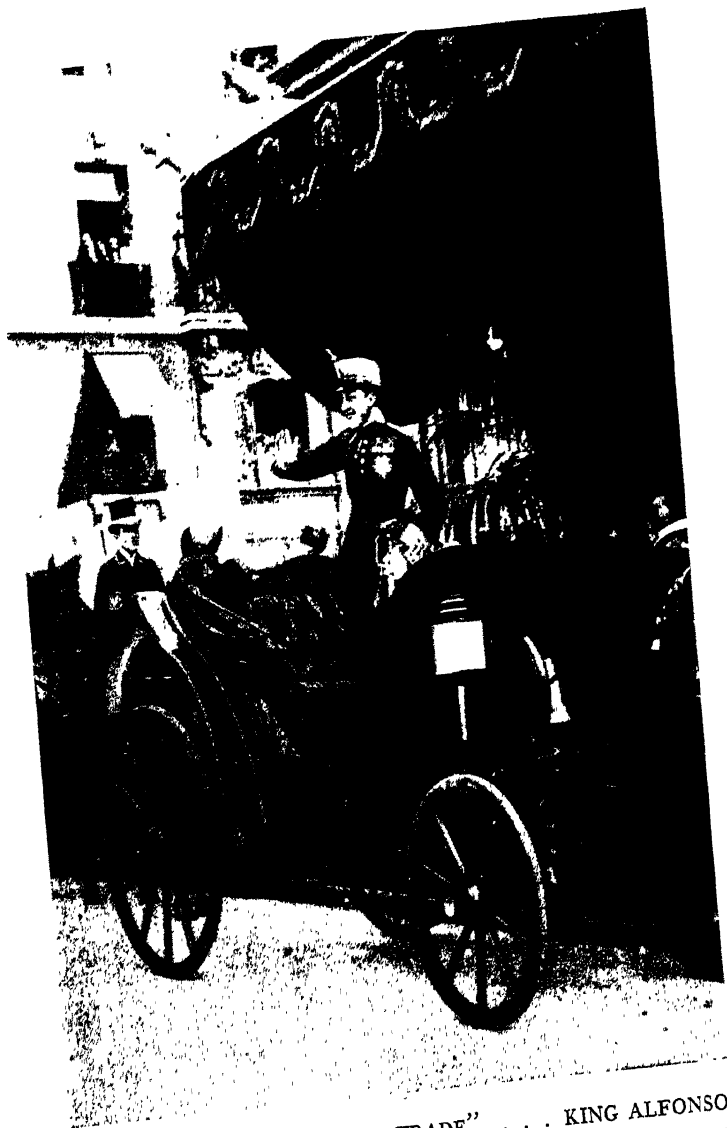
The logic of his argument is striking. Perhaps for the first time in my life I feel inclined to analyze the resounding titles of European royalty. He enumerates the past and present sovereigns.

The Emperor of Austria was known as "His Apostolic Majesty," the King of France as "His Christian Majesty," the King of Portugal as "Fidelissimo," the King of England is still using the title "Defender of the Faith." "His Catholic Majesty" was an exclusive attribute of the kings of Spain as far back as the Middle Ages. Unlike some other monopolies, this particular one signified more obligations than privileges. The Popes considered Spain as the "favorite daughter of Rome," in consequence of which the Catholic clergy, having lost its strongholds in

France, Italy and Portugal, decided to transfer its activities into my august host's kingdom. In due course of events, and long before the birth of King Alfonso XIII, Catholicism had become both the main cultural force and the leading influence in the internal life of Spain. Nothing illustrates this situation better than two historical religious traditions of the royal court which the King describes in detail.

"Beginning with the year 1242, each and every king of Spain had to dedicate Thursday of the Holy Week to the ceremony of the washing of the feet of thirteen beggars. My ancestor Fernando III introduced this tradition, anxious to show his royal humility in imitation of the Savior's act of washing the feet of his disciples. The Spaniards liked this custom. It reminded them that their monarchs were first of all Christians and then only kings.

"THE ceremony itself ran as follows: on the morning of that day thirteen poor men were brought into the palace, given new clothes and then invited to take their seats in the Hall of Columns. The King would appear, escorted by the attendants carrying all necessary paraphernalia. The officiating priest read the corresponding chapter from St. John, with the King scrupulously following each of the three



"THE RISKS OF THE ROYAL TRADE" . . . KING ALFONSO
PHOTOGRAPHED A FEW MINUTES BEFORE A BOMB WAS
THROWN AT HIS CARRIAGE.

principal movements described in the Scriptures.

“*Posuit vestimenta sua* (he laid aside his garments) *Precinxit se* (he girded himself) *Cœpit lavare* (he began to wash).’

“Naturally enough, the actual washing of the thirteen pairs of feet was done before their possessors entered the Hall of Columns, but even so, I did gird myself with an apron and did use a sponge soaked in water. The ceremony over, each one of the thirteen men was given a whole turkey, a whole baby lamb and so forth, to take home for Easter. They used to sell it to the Madrid merchants or to foreign visitors curious to taste of ‘royal food.’ ”

Another equally characteristic religious tradition of the court of Spain had to do with the installation of the new Cardinals of Spanish origin. On this occasion, the Pope used to send a special edict to the King, delegating the divine powers of the Holy See to the lay throne of Spain. The ceremony took place among scenes of medieval splendor and was attended by the highest representatives of the clergy and the numerous dignitaries of the court. The King ordered the edict read, and then placed, with his own hands, the red “biretta” dispatched from Rome on the head of the new Cardinal. The symbol-

ical meaning of this procedure, established by centuries of history and generations of rulers, invariably met with the enthusiastic acclaim of the Spanish masses. They felt as though their king brought them closer to God by acting as the emissary extraordinary of Christ's vicar on earth.

The Holy Father's affection for Spain found still another expression in the traditional act of presenting the so-called "*fajas henditas* (girdles for the infant's wardrobe)" to the newly-born royal children and the blessed "golden roses" to those of the kings and queens whose piety left no doubt in the minds of the Vatican. The "golden rose habit" dated back to 1148, when King Alfonso VII of Castile was the first to receive that cluster of roses of gold with gold leaves and thorns set with precious stones which had been blessed by the Pope on the fourth Sunday of Lent.

"Among my immediate relatives," the King relates, "my grandmother Queen Isabella II, my mother Queen Maria-Christiña, and my own wife were the three proud recipients of the golden rose. Contrary to the misrepresentations of the revolutionary writers, this token of the esteem of Rome had created, perhaps, even greater jubilation among the masses than it did at court.

“I AM relating to you these details so you can understand the origin of Spain’s religious policy. I may say that the coöperation between the kings of Spain and the popes of Rome antedates almost any other cardinal fact of modern civilization. No government can afford to destroy light-heartedly that which has proved beneficial for over nine centuries. I admit cheerfully and readily that I made it a point to exercise particular care in preserving Spain’s friendly relations with the Vatican. I am a great believer in the progressive forces within the Catholic Church, and from the very beginning of my reign I knew that the Holy Father would be only too glad to collaborate with me in promoting healthy reforms. I claim that, thanks to my determination to uphold the institutions of the Catholic Church, I was able to bridge the past and the present, the Middle Ages and the Twentieth Century, the dogmae of the Fifteenth Century and the boldest theories of our very conceited era. The superficial critics of the Holy See are totally unaware of the tremendous changes which have entered the policies of the Vatican during the past fifty years. It would not be an exaggeration on my part to say that Rome has left the democracies far behind in its straightfor-

ward desire to recognize the pressing needs of the less successful classes and groups of humanity.

“Had I, as a king, been given as much encouragement by the politicians as I received from the clergy, the history of Spain would have taken a vastly different course. I have mentioned already that mine was a policy of four paradoxes. Well, the paradox Number One dealing with the relations between the state and the Holy See caused me no particular trouble. It is not my fault that in the very first month of its rule the republican government has destroyed the fruit of thirty years.

“Now I shall describe to you the workings of the second paradox of a king who attempted to become an up-to-date ruler in the most tradition-bound country in the world.”

He stops for a moment, evidently searching his mind for facts illustrating his “second paradox.” We smoke in silence.

The tooting of automobile horns and the sounds of loud laughter come from the park. Life goes on with its tourists and picnic parties, indifferent to royal heartbreaks, and ignorant of the political history of Spain that was.

“There was a Spanish aristocrat once upon a time,” the King commences again, “who thought he

deserved a high court position. My mother, Queen Maria-Christina, entertained a slightly lower opinion of his qualifications, and on this hinges the story of a titled follower of the revolution. The gentleman in question turned Red overnight. He became a friend of Blasco Ibañez and dedicated all his time to a shameless campaign against the King of Spain. Foreigners said he was a man of courage. Native radicals claimed him as their leader. As a chamberlain of the court, he would have been outspoken in his condemnation of parliamentarism; as a rejected aspirant, he advocated revolt. . . . A typical product of an epoch of transition, he should be remembered as a living example of that Spanish society which combined a deep admiration for titles with a passion for rather childish feuds against the Crown.

“I must admit that at first I was slightly amazed by this unique mentality of the higher classes. Then I decided to beat them at their own game. If they thought it correct for their sons to gather in the republican clubs and for their wives to preside over the ‘pink radical salons,’ it was only logical for their sovereign to assume leadership of the democratization of Spain. In other words, much to their disgust,

I interpreted their speeches literally and took their slogans at face-value.

“THE denunciations of the ‘royal Camarilla’—which have resounded throughout Spain for the last fifty years—were met by my orders to reduce the staff of the court to a minimum, and not to grant any further appointments. There was likewise a considerable amount of idle talk about the necessity of ‘pouring new wine into the old cask.’ Imitating the British habit of criticizing the House of Lords, the parlor socialists of Spain claimed that something should be done to rejuvenate the aristocracy. I liked this idea exceedingly well, so much so that I created a new series of titles, distributing them chiefly among the publishers of the influential Spanish newspapers. . . . The proud possessors of names dating back to Charles V suddenly found themselves side by side with the owners of Madrid and provincial dailies. . . . Unless I am very much mistaken, this measure of mine failed to cause any excessive jubilation among the champions of the ‘new blood.’ My next democratic steps were traced in the direction of the students and Parliament. The former complained that the kings of Spain paid but little attention to the interests of higher education;

the latter brooded over the growing phantom of socialism. Once more I accepted idle words as true facts. I began to visit the University of Madrid and sit through lectures of professors known for their bitter opposition to the régime, congratulating them on their frankness, and at the same time asking them some 'embarrassing questions' as to the sources of their amazing information. Furthermore, I founded the Ciudad University, conceived and planned as an institution of pure learning. The students applauded my appearance in the auditorium but continued their participation in the republican clubs. Politics interested them much more than science.

"Now, as to Parliament: You may recall the sensation created in Europe in January, 1913, by my decision to consult the leaders of the Republican-Socialist Party during the course of a governmental crisis. Bear in mind that it occurred long before anyone could have thought that the chiefs of the British Labor Party would sit on the benches of His Britannic Majesty's Government. In fact, I was the very first sovereign of Europe to invite a socialist to pay me a visit in my palace. In the presence of the Prime Minister, Count Romanones, I told Ascaratez (such was the name of that socialist) that I intended to make it a rule always to consult his anti-régime party

before reaching any important decision, and that, generally speaking, I was inclined to consider myself a 'crowned president of a republic.' The newspapers of all the world quoted this last remark of mine; but the Spanish parliamentarians expressed their extreme dissatisfaction with the 'dangerous turn taken by the King.' They had the right to use the bugaboo of socialism, but I had no right to consult its champions! And speaking about my rights: a prominent Spanish Conservative leader once told me that no king has a right to express his ideas in an outspoken fashion. . . . I could not think of a better reply than that telling the truth was a duty rather than a right of the sovereign.

"Duties and rights, rights and duties! No other subject interests the parliamentarians. It seems they could spend centuries debating the question whether the King's insistence on passing this or that reform does not disguise his desire to infringe upon some cherished rights of Parliament. By the time they finish talking, so much precious time has been wasted that the debated reform utterly loses its practical purpose.

"Do not think that I am opposed to democracy. Far from it! I am the greatest friend of democracy, provided it consents to rid itself of demagogues and



HIS FIRST CAR . . . PRESIDENT LOUBET OF FRANCE
DRIVEN BY HIS ROYAL CHAUFFEUR.



THE ROYAL HUNT.

grandstand-players. Up to this day no democracy has ever been able to achieve that miracle. I myself tried to perform it in Spain and failed, although I did my very best to keep prejudice and bias from influencing my judgment. I am not discouraged, however. I do believe that a day will come when the people of Spain will express their readiness to follow the program of their king. *I have not abdicated as yet. Do not forget it!*"

He is not threatening anyone. As he told me before, not for a second would he think of handicapping the labors of the present Government of Spain. His words, "I have not abdicated as yet," simply state a historical fact. While living away from Spain in his temporary exile abroad, and letting his subjects enjoy freedom of choice, he remains, nevertheless, the King, ever ready to answer the call of the nation when and if it should be sounded. It would not be the first time in the history of Spain nor of several other European nations that a monarch who left his country voluntarily would be invited to resume possession of the throne. The editorial writers, vociferous in their proclamation of a New Era, seem to forget that even the well-established Republic of France is but sixty years old. My understanding of history leads me to believe that ten centuries of

Bourbons may easily outweigh the sixty years of the presidents of France on the scales of Europe's destiny.

I need not communicate these thoughts of mine to the King. He knows his history better than I do, and is well aware of the fact that the first abortive Spanish Republic of 1873 lasted scarcely one year, just long enough to bring the nation into a state of complete despair, and was followed by the invitation issued by Parliament to his father, King Alfonso XII, to occupy the throne of Spain.

Now that the King has told me of his efforts to become an up-to-date ruler and promote an honest democracy, there is one more "paradox" to deal with: he believed in the necessity of building new industries in an agricultural country. On this occasion the ledger speaks. During his reign Spain reached a point when for the first time in almost a century its annual budget was balanced, and its currency, the peseta, enjoyed an unprecedented stability—which collapsed immediately after the revolution of last April. . . .

Although a fervent Spaniard, first and last, Alfonso XIII developed a cosmopolitan outlook and an understanding of foreign countries in his early

youth. That helped a lot in attracting foreign visitors and capital to Spain.

“In order to restore its former prosperity, Spain, the new Spain of the Twentieth Century, had to become known to the world at large,” explains the King. “A country just as beautiful and fascinating as France, Spain suffered from the lack of facilities reserved for the visitors. Therefore I, the King of Spain, was obliged to act as inspirer of an industry counting innkeepers among its most important leaders. ‘Build highways and construct modern hotels, and you will enjoy prosperity,’ I invariably said to the delegations of tradesmen visiting my palace. ‘But first of all, understand the necessity of advertising.’”

“The results of my initiative speak for themselves. At the moment of my coronation there were hardly five hundred miles of highways suitable for automobile touring. Today there are some sixteen thousand miles of concrete roads that could compete with the best to be found in the United States. The modern Spanish hotels are highly admired by all tourists, while the Hotel of Alfonso XIII, recently constructed in Seville, is conceded to be the most luxurious in the world.

“The consequences of this external transforma-

tion of Spain could be well imagined. Each of the past thirteen years saw an ever-increasing flow of visitors. They came to see and to learn. The American capitalists became interested in financing the Spanish public utilities. A powerful New York concern was granted by me a concession for telephones and telegraphs, a transaction which proved highly beneficial to both sides. The American stockholders acquired a new interest in the country that paid a handsome return on their investment, while the Spaniards were given an ideally constructed system of communications. Naturally enough, the example of the International Telephone and Telegraph Company influenced the other large American concerns. In the days of Alexander Moore as Ambassador of the United States in Spain, hardly a day passed without at least one American mining or utilities magnate arriving in Madrid to submit a proposition for my approval. All of this meant steady employment for Spanish workers, better wages, healthier living conditions.

“Politically speaking, it signified a very broad and very comprehensive basis for Spanish-American friendship. I am proud to think that in the short thirty years of my reign, continuously interrupted by external and internal complications, I did make

a sympathetic friend out of a country which had made war on us but four years before my coronation.

“The principles that guided my relations with the United States were applied by me with equal success in my dealings with England and France—two other former foes of Spain, and its present cordial friends. I am tempted to hope that even the revolutionary historians will admit that having inherited from my ancestors a provincial agricultural country, plagued by its technical backwardness and deprived of friends in the outside world, I was able to pass to the present republican government a first-class European power well advanced in its industrial development and enjoying an excellent standing on both sides of the Atlantic. It would appear that I came out victorious in my struggle with paradox Number Four.”

Undoubtedly it would. But for that matter neither had the Russia of the Czars suffered from lack of foreign allies, friendly international magnates and enterprising industrial geniuses. While there is the World War to blame for the débacle of my own country, I am naturally curious to learn the name or the names of the Spanish villains. Why should any nation revolt against a king as talented

and as efficient as the man who sits facing me in this narrow room of a provincial French hotel?

The facts communicated by him so far fail to explain the causes of the recent tragedy. Unlike Nicholas II, he ascended the throne fully prepared for his royal responsibilities. Contrary to Wilhelm II, he possessed a distaste for pose and a genius for conciliation. And finally, the homogenous character of the Spanish population spared him the troubles that befell his Austrian relatives.

Having exhausted my repertory of all-explaining parallels, I am obliged to ask the King a possibly naïve question:

“What are the principal factors that prepared the revolutionary storm of April?”

His answer comes instantaneously:

“Thunder on the right and thunder on the left!”

“Which one of the two was the stronger?”

“It is the weaker one that caused the greater damage. As is always the case, the extreme right elements were not sufficiently well organized to defeat the attack of their left adversaries, but they possessed enough strength to embarrass the throne and to deprive it of a possibility of reaching a compromise. Nothing new in this controversy for you, Alexander. Very much like Russia, is it not?”

Very much like Russia, indeed, with our ultra-royalists too much engaged in plotting against the court to pay any attention to the subterranean preparations of the revolutionaries. I am about to advance my argument as to the World War having played a decisive part in the Russian Revolution, when my host anticipates me by pointing at the other war, the Spanish-Moroccan war of 1921-1924, which in his estimation was largely responsible for the "two thunders." This brings back memories of Primo de Rivera's dictatorship.

"Volumes of lies have been written about the relations between General Primo de Rivera and me," says the King. "The Spanish radicals accused me of encouraging the brave General to seize power in 1923. The imaginative magazine-writers exploited the theme of the King-versus-the-Dictator-combat. The high priests of constitutional law asked heaven to bear witness to the fact that the King of Spain had violated his oath to the Constitution. The revolutionaries of all countries called me a crowned fascist. I am afraid that we would have to go all the way back to 1921 and the tragedy that befell the Spanish army in Morocco, to reconstruct the correct historical perspective.

"I grant you that you may find elements of drama

in these ten pivotal years of my life, but I resent most emphatically the attempts at making it look like an old-fashioned hair-raising melodrama, with myself cast in the rôle of a shrewd calculating autocrat who is using his generals and ministers like so many pawns in a ruthless game of chess.

“I am well accustomed to being libeled. It is not my habit to issue statements and denials. The moment I left Madrid I promised myself to refuse to be interviewed, and to answer all lies with silence. To you, however, I will say this: I did not violate my oath; I did not inspire in any manner, shape or form the bloodless military *coup* organized by Primo de Rivera and supported by the best element of the Spanish army; I spent many sleepless nights thinking of every possible means to prevent a dictatorship in Spain and the ensuing dissolution of Parliament. I was not a calculating autocrat! When I tell you the truth about the events that preceded General Primo de Rivera’s pronunciamiento of September 13th, 1923, you will understand that I was then, on that tense September night eight years ago, and I am now, in the year of our Lord 1931, simply a son of Spain willing to make the supreme sacrifice for the greater glory of his country!”



THE CORONATION. THE KING AND THE QUEEN ARE ABOUT TO PROCEED TO THEIR PALACE.



KING ALFONSO HUNTING AT RAMBOUILLET IN COMPANY OF THE PRESIDENT OF FRANCE. 1905.

ONCE again I am on my way to Fontainebleau. His Catholic Majesty has promised to tell me today the dolorous story of his last forty-eight hours in the city that had for over twelve centuries been the proud capital of his royal forbears.

Two feelings are vying with each other in my heart while I drive through the half-awakened streets of Paris, which resemble the scrubbed decks of a battleship. As a conscientious reporter, mindful of his self-imposed duties, I anticipate the thrilling pathos of a supreme tragedy; as a man who sat side by side with Czar Nicholas II during the excruciating days of his abdication and parting from the Army, I would much rather not disturb those memories. What worries me most of all is the realization of the fact that, even though the King of Spain escaped the fate of my late brother-in-law, he had nevertheless to cover in just forty-eight hours that same Calvary of anguish and despair which it took the last ruler of Russia twenty-three years to ascend. The lightning tempo of the Spanish upheaval makes the Russian revolution appear like a landslide photographed by a slow-motion camera; but it remains,

of course, a matter of opinion whether the continuous clinging to a withered branch on the brink of a precipice should be considered less horrible than a stone-like fall to its bottom.

I try to brace up and forget the past. The morning is clear and pleasant, but there is a rawness in the air suggestive of the approach of bitter storms. The roads to Fontainebleau are covered by a thick carpet of yellow-and-red leaves. Yellow and red happen to be the colors of both autumn and Spain, the royal Spain of yesterday. If I am to believe the newspapers, the Spain of today is leaning toward a solid red, thus employing that self-same color-scheme of all revolutions, which calls for a dreamy blue in the prologue, relies upon a timid pink in Act One, and floods the stage with streams of crimson at the climax. A straight line leading from initial idealism to final slaughter is the course charted by history for each and every revolution.

The secular trees towering over the road to Fontainebleau bear witness to the struggles of other generations who expended their time and zeal and sacrificed untold numbers of lives in an equally impetuous desire to reach the ever-escaping star of universal happiness. More than one flamboyant revolutionary leader galloped through this majestic

forest carrying the tremendous news of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity to the four corners of France; and more than one royal exile returned by this spectacular highway, thinking that he who tries to save his nation by attempting to change the existing régime is merely prescribing death for illness. The firebrands of 1793, the bloodthirsty poets of 1830, the fanatics who died on the barricades of Paris in 1848, the communistic visionaries of 1871—they all slaughtered their brethren for the greater glory of mankind, failing to bring us even an inch closer to the ultimate solution of the problem of contentment.

“Let each one sweep in front of his own door, and the whole world will be clean.” This was the recipe for universal happiness written down a century ago by dying Goethe in the album of the youthful Sigmund von Arnim; and this is the very simple though utterly impractical idea that crosses my mind as I alight in front of the Hotel Savoy.

The sight of gold-braided porters busily engaged in handling the baggage of visiting American tourists brings me back to the realities of 1931. The headline of a paper spread on the table in the lobby advises me that “epochal results” are expected from the coming international conference in Geneva.

I go upstairs, present my respects to Her Majesty the Queen, and escort the King to his study.

We sit and talk, exchanging our summer impressions. He has spent his vacation in northern and central Europe; and I can tell by the healthy tan on his vivid face that the sea-voyage has helped restore his physical strength undermined by the ordeal of the previous April. His eyes seem shining with new energy. He is pacing the floor of the small room with brisk strides, a striking picture of a strong young man anxious to get back to work and action.

His thoughts are in Spain more than ever. The latest news from his country indicates at least a temporary triumph of the radical elements over the moderate leaders that headed the Spanish republican government in the beginning of the revolution. This, however, causes him not nearly as much concern as the general situation in Europe: several weeks have passed since the day of our first meeting on the soil of France, weeks marked by anxiety and the shattering of the world's two greatest illusions. His Britannic Majesty's navy has gone on strike, and a laconic statement issued by Number Ten Downing Street has announced the demise of the gold standard of the pound. The old continent

is dangerously ill. It is running a high temperature and is muttering incoherent phrases of sadly belated regret.

The King dwells upon the events in England and the external signs of acute economic depression noticed by him throughout central Europe. Half-laughingly he tells of the reporters that pursued him during his voyage, never tiring in their efforts to get a "personal interview." It amazes him that practically none of those very experienced journalists displayed any ability to comprehend that the fate of Spain depends in the long run not on the pronouncements of its king or its republican government, but on the outcome of the present world crisis.

"I wish the people would finally realize," he exclaims with a mixture of impatience and sorrow, "that from the very beginning of the Spanish political crisis, which dates some twelve years back, my country has suffered the unavoidable consequences of a grave condition which originated far beyond its borders! At first it was the famous Armistice madness that spelled revolutions, strikes and riots. Then we were called upon to pay our share of the price exacted from the world-at-large by the exigencies of the economic readjustment. Everybody, Alexander, has paid, and is still paying, for the late

war, the neutral nations as well as the belligerent ones. No mountains were high enough and no ocean was sufficiently wide to protect a nation against the onrush of the post-war calamities. The United States, the South American republics, the British dominions, each and every country under the sun was given a grim lesson in solidarity! It would take a person very naïve indeed to imagine that a mere king could have fought single-handed against the forces of destruction unchained by the war. Were I to live these past twelve years anew, I doubt whether I would be capable of finding a program of action differing from that which I followed in 1919-1931.

“I am going to give you a brief outline of the main political events that took place in my country since the day of the Armistice, and I shall leave it to you to decide as to what was right and what was wrong in the policies of the Throne of Spain.”

WHILE listening to the King's speech, I can not help thinking that at least a half-score of the present leaders of great democracies would have good reason to sympathize whole-heartedly with the Spanish sovereign. For one thing, President Hoover would be justified in recalling to his disgruntled fellow-citizens that “no ocean is sufficiently wide” to save

a nation from getting its grim lesson in solidarity with the suffering world.

The King commences his story with the "cannon of the Armistice"—a clarion call of a new Joy which turned out to be the signal of an approaching Flood.

While shrewd calculating statesmen, true to their habit of decorous deceit, are bargaining around the oblong table in Versailles, the nations represented by them emphatically refuse to return to the former routine of life. The younger generation vaguely feels that it has been "done in" by its elders. Partly inspired by their own just resentment, and partly goaded on by the communistic propaganda of Moscow, they are willing to listen only to the prophets of "direct action." A wave of political unrest rolls over the belligerent countries. When it reaches the neutral ones, it stirs up the workers, who had been accustomed to exaggerated wages during the four fabulous years of inflated prosperity, and who find it impossible to adjust their newly developed tastes to the scale of prices which prevailed before 1914. The three neutral kingdoms of Scandinavia are able to wade through that extremely dangerous period, thanks to the coolness of their national temperament; but in Spain the unrest attains the proportions of a veritable catastrophe.

A perennial desire for a radical change of the existing régime seems to be in the very marrow of the Latin race; not unlike their Italian cousins, who have seized factories and mills in Turin and Milan, the workers of Barcelona create a state of complete anarchy in no time. They are headed by a formidable organization known as the "Sindicado Unico," which combines an arch-communistic program with the methods of the Mafia and the Black Hand.

"A FEW statistics will suffice," says the King. "During the year of 1921 alone, three hundred and twenty-seven employers of labor in Barcelona, and one hundred and sixty-seven workers who would not bow to the dictates of the Sindicato Unico, were assassinated by its agents. The same fate befell the eighty-year-old Cardinal Soldeville y Romero, the Archbishop of Saragossa, and my capable Prime Minister Dato. For the next two years it looked as though no government at all existed in Spain. Anarchy reigned supreme. As a constitutional king, I had to follow the decisions of Parliament; I regret to say that the persons chosen by Parliament to head the government were lacking both in courage and in ability.



1906. THE YOUTHFUL KING ON A YACHTING CRUISE.

“While my army was engaged in fighting the native bandits in Morocco, the ministers intrigued and the parliamentarians talked. Everybody in the outside world knows about the disaster that befell my army in Mellila in the summer of 1921; but very few people are aware of the fact that Parliament had been directly responsible for that disaster, having refused to vote the necessary military credits. The foreign editorial writers, so fond of blaming the throne of Spain for the defeat of the Spanish army rarely mention the revolting fact that no munitions had been supplied by the Spanish Government to its officers and soldiers, who had to die in Morocco because the World War had discredited the white man in the eyes of the natives and led the Moroccan bandits to believe that the time was ripe to get rid of the foreign conquerors.

“What I am trying to explain to you is this: the Moroccan war was forced upon Spain by circumstances which were not of our making, while our initial defeat should be credited to the same politicians who afterward said that the King of Spain had broken his oath to the Constitution. I can blame myself for just one thing: I was too much of a constitutional King in the years of the after-war anarchy. Had I been willing to ignore the voice of Parlia-

ment, Spain would have been spared both the humiliation in Morocco and the ensuing dictatorship at home. As it was, I was firm in my determination to keep my oath and to remain a strictly constitutional monarch."

HE stops, lights a new cigarette. His jaw is firmly set, his eyes aglow with indignation. This dispute as to whether he has kept or broken his oath to the Constitution may appear somewhat theoretical to outsiders; but to him it is a question of vital importance. He wants to prove that no matter how his heart bled and his common sense revolted, he has kept aloof from the political strife and was ready to tolerate Parliament as long as it had the support of the people. Only those who have lived in the atmosphere of a palace, and in proximity to a man regarded as a near-god by popular fancy, can estimate the depth of his anguish. To be obliged always to remain on the sidelines and to watch the toboggan-slide of one's own country in helpless sorrow—I know of no more cruel torture.

After a short pause, the King continues his description of the years of anarchy that followed the Armistice madness and the Moroccan war.

“In 1921-1923 the Spanish Government failed the Nation, while the Spanish Parliament failed the Army. Such was the only logical conclusion to be drawn by any unbiased observer. I need not tell you of the indignation of the generals, officers and soldiers. Returning home from Morocco, they minced no words in denouncing the politicians. Not versed in the intricacies of constitutional law, they looked with amazement in the direction of the royal palace. What was the matter with their King? He was supposed to be their friend, and yet he had tolerated a parliament that voted down military credits. He was the ruler of Spain, and yet he had permitted the anarchist murderers of Barcelona to escape thus far unpunished.

“What could I have answered to my warriors? Reduced to inactivity, I was likewise bound by still another constitutional obligation of mine—that which expected the throne to keep a glorified silence and make no speeches except the ones prepared by the ministers. The latter thought I should take their part and order a severe chastisement of the patriotic generals. It was unbearable. Things were going from bad to worse. By late summer of 1923 the relations between the Army on one side and the Government and Parliament on the other had

reached a state of open conflict. I continued to listen to all and to keep a strict neutrality.

“IN September I left for San Sebastian, where society and members of the diplomatic corps usually spent their vacations. Mr. Alexander Moore, then the Ambassador of the United States in Spain, accompanied me. He felt greatly concerned about the political situation in Madrid, and generously volunteered his advice, disclosing a profound knowledge of American politics which have little, if anything, in common with the procedure followed by the Spanish Parliament.

“Late at night on September 12th, I received the sensational news of the *coup d'état* organized by the military governor of Barcelona, General Primo de Rivera. Announcing his decision to restore order in Spain, the General referred in his pronunciamiento posted in the streets of Barcelona to ‘the immorality of the Government, its disastrous Moroccan policy and its abandonment of public authority.’ He was particularly harsh in denouncing the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Señor Santiago Alba, who happened to be on that night a guest in my Miramar Palace in San Sebastian. Later on Señor Alba claimed that I was all the time aware of the

preparations made in Barcelona, and that I had invited him to San Sebastian so as to deprive the Madrid Government of his valuable advice. I need not answer this childish accusation.

“During the night I received numerous telegrams from Madrid and from abroad. It appeared that my ambassadors in Paris, London and Rome were informed by General de Rivera of his program, which was expressed by the straightforward General in the following terms: ‘Peace is our motto, but peace founded on dignity abroad and salutary severity at home.’ Sitting in San Sebastian, it was difficult to decide whether General de Rivera was right in his claims that the whole Army was in back of him, or whether the Madrid Government was nearer the truth when it described his movement as a ridiculous attempt by an uncouth soldier.

“Next morning I left for Madrid. Ambassador Moore traveled with me. This excellent man became obviously agitated, it being his first experience with a Spanish revolution. He produced a diminutive automatic pistol and said that if it came to the worst, he would place both his life and his gun at my disposal. I thanked him for this magnificent offer, but begged him to put the deadly weapon back in his hip pocket.

“Immediately on my arrival in Madrid I became submerged in a pool of contradictory rumors. Prime Minister Alhucemas thought I should declare General de Rivera an enemy of the people. As a speech it sounded extremely firm. As a practical measure it meant nothing. In the presence of all the ministers I asked Alhucemas a point-blank question: ‘Considering the present mood of the Army, can you guarantee to restore order in Spain and protect the Crown and the Government? He answered that he could not guarantee a thing—but General de Rivera should be court-martialed anyway!

“While we sat in endless conference, the news was brought in that even the Madrid generals were adhering to the Barcelona governor’s movement. Simultaneously General de Rivera sent me a telegram guaranteeing the maintenance of civil order, loyalty to the Crown, and the restitution of all constitutional liberties as soon as the anarchy was suppressed. The last line of his telegram read: *‘Long live the King, long live Spain, long live the Army.’*

“It became clear to me that the choice between Alhucemas and General de Rivera amounted to choosing between a certain débacle and possible salvation. I wired General de Rivera to come to Madrid at once. The ministers said that I was breaking my

oath to the Constitution, but the outside world answered the news of General de Rivera's triumph by marking up the quotations of the peseta and of all Spanish securities.

"This is the whole of the story of my so-called participation in the *coup d'état* of General Primo de Rivera. It differs, no doubt, from that very popular version which tends to represent me as a perfidious Bourbon, outwitting the innocent ministers of Spain, but real facts somehow have a peculiar charm of their own."

The King shrugs his shoulders and looks faintly amused. Thirty years on the throne have developed in him an extreme leniency toward the imagination of excitable "eyewitnesses." The subject he is about to broach will put his impartiality to an acid test: so much has been written on both sides of the Atlantic of the alleged jealousy between the King and the Dictator that I am curious to hear his appraisal of Primo de Rivera's personality.

"General de Rivera was a military man, first and last," he begins, weighing each one of his words. "He possessed all the qualities and all the limitations of a career-officer raised in the army. Perfect honesty and a complete absence of egotistical purposes were his two outstanding virtues. The figure of a fine dis-

ciplinarian he presented, making a religion of duty, will remain forever a striking and a lonely contrast against a background made by dense crowds of hustling and jostling masters of intrigue. As a politician, the General was a pure improvisation built up with the aid of his enormous adaptability and his knack of getting down to the substance of things. A man of no particular culture, he was obliged to rely upon his natural intelligence, which circumstance proved beneficial, in many instances protecting his judgment from the influence of prejudices invariably imposed by all schools of thought and all systems of mental training.

“A champion of common sense, he succeeded in pleasing the nation as long as the distasteful memories of ever-talking Parliament stayed fresh in the mind of the man-in-the-street. Having had no experience, however, in the art of keeping the voters excited, he overestimated the longevity of the appeal to common sense. Toward the end it suddenly dawned on him that the people were interested not only in constructive achievements but likewise in a semblance of free public opinion provided by Parliament. Just as he was about to propose a new set of legislative reforms, he discovered for himself that the nation had become tired of him. He was a



THE KING AND THE QUEEN PHOTOGRAPHED ON THE DAY
OF THEIR CORONATION.

man who had stayed too long! In his desire to build a powerful Spain, he showed no patience in dealing with the demagogues. I suppose he did make a few mistakes, insignificant from the point of view of the welfare of Spain, but fatal for his standing with the masses.

“I WOULD like to remember General Primo de Rivera as an unselfish administrator who did things and promoted the progress of the country. During his régime civil order had been restored, five thousand new public schools opened, thousands of miles of highways built, and—most remarkable achievement of all—the budget of the kingdom balanced for the first time in over fifty years. His sincere willingness to coöperate with France combined with my old pro-French sympathies made it possible for us to pacify Morocco, working hand in hand with the army of the Gallic republic. This in turn created new possibilities for Spanish foreign trade and the Spanish merchants.

“It would not be an exaggeration to say that in the six years of Primo de Rivera’s régime, Spain had made a step forward which under ordinary circumstances would have taken at least twenty years. For the first time since the era of the Napoleonic

wars, the country had been spared the handicaps imposed by political unrest and the slowness of a parliamentary mechanism. It is rather significant that the end of this highly beneficial régime coincided with the commencement of an acute European economic crisis. In other words, once more Spain had to suffer for other people's blunders, and once more its unceremonious politicians were to exploit an international calamity for the sake of their own glorification.

“Primo de Rivera came to power because the nation revolted against the demagogues. Primo de Rivera had to quit because the nation, having recovered its breath, was growing restless without its demagogues. His success was made possible by a six-year period of comparative prosperity of the world. His failure was precipitated by the wave of a general depression. While the business men prospered and the workers were employed, all good things were credited to General de Rivera and to the absence of Parliament. The moment the merchants encountered the unbreakable wall of the world crisis, and the laborers had to cope with the slackening tempo of production, all calamities were laid at the door of the selfsame dictator, and a cry was raised for the convocation of a Parliament.

“This explanation may not sound very logical, for the simple reason that no trace of logic is ever to be discerned in the emotional fits governing the actions of the masses. It usually takes a historian living many years afterward to substitute scientific formulæ for shouts and yells. I expect that my grandchildren will read a much more coherent story of Primo de Rivera’s rise and fall than that which I witnessed with my own eyes.”

The King talks like a practical philosopher. He does not mean to be sarcastic. He is simply striving to keep off the beaten track of hackneyed all-explaining theories. No man could remain in a royal palace as long as he did, without acquiring the habit of looking slightly above the heads of his contemporaries. The royal profession is a school of tolerance. A king in exile learns to forget nothing and forgive almost everything. There is no bitterness in his heart. Just pure undiluted pity. We both know without telling it to each other in so many words that, not unlike a babbling infant, a nation dearly loves to play with matches.

A MOMENT of silence ensues, with his thoughts in Spain, mine in Russia; then the King proceeds with his description of the last act of the Spanish tragedy.

“It would have taken a much greater thinker than General Primo de Rivera to recognize that the march of world events had made the further application of his methods impossible and that his resignation was imperative. The poor General quit with a broken heart. Astounded by the ingratitude of the people, he left for Paris, and died shortly afterward.

“Another general, Damaso Berenguer, was called to replace the fallen dictator. You may ask why I chose still another soldier. Because only an outsider free from political entanglements and party allegiances could be entrusted with the execution of a great national program that included the preparations for general elections. The Army trusted General Berenguer; and in such trying times, no government could succeed unless supported by the best elements of the Army. Do not forget that until the very last day I trusted my Army implicitly. I called myself ‘the first soldier of Spain,’ and would never have believed, not even for a second, that my officers and soldiers could break the ties of our lifelong friendship and coöperation.

“General Berenguer was not a miracle-worker. He tried his best, but the best of a Spanish general was obviously not sufficiently good to bring back financial prosperity while the entire world was still

ailing. The depression continued in Spain as much as in England, Germany and the United States. More workers were discharged by the shutting-down of industries, and fewer customers entered the deserted shops of the Spanish merchants. Detailed statistics and profound economic discourses were never able to appease the anger of a suffering nation. People believe in panaceas, and in moments of distress they are likely to turn to magicians and political mountebanks. Long before General Berenguer had a chance to do the groundwork for his reforms, the Spanish nation deprived him of their confidence."

"People believe in panaceas." To me these words sound rather American. . . . Unless I am very much mistaken, the present master of the White House used a similar phrase in his Valley Forge speech. I am quite certain, in any event, that, not unlike my august host, the President of the United States has learned to his dismay that "detailed statistics and profound economic discourses were never able to appease the anger of a suffering nation" and that "in moments of distress people are likely to turn to the magicians and political mountebanks." Had it not been for the latter characteristics of all nations stricken by an economic crisis, the American business men would hardly have displayed their present

exaggerated interest in the "achievements" of the Soviet Union and would have realized that no unemployment exists today in Russia for the same simple reason that no colored slaves were ever known to be out of jobs even in the leanest years of the Louisiana plantations.

The King continues: "Statesmen of wisdom and friends of proven sincerity told me that the government of Berenguer would not be able to last till the elections and that immediate "radical changes" were imperative. By that time, I confess I was feeling weary of generalities and platitudes. The expression "radical changes" contained no practical advice. If the people were dissatisfied with Berenguer, there should be someone else capable of pleasing them. . . .

"In February 1931 I came to the conclusion that a chance should be given to that political party which had advocated the convocation of a parliament invested with the extraordinary powers of making changes in the Constitution and prosecuting the allegedly guilty members of the former cabinets. Therefore I invited two leaders of the radical party, Sanchez Guerra and Melquiades Alvarez to come to my Palace. I explained to them that according to my understanding of the duties of a constitutional

monarch I should propose to them the forming of a government. Both gentlemen praised my 'loyalty to the people' and my sincere patriotism, but at the same time declined the task. For reasons too obvious to warrant an explanation, they preferred to remain the chiefs of the irresponsible opposition rather than the heads of a government entrusted with the salvation of the country!

"Had it been my first experience with the eloquent champions of the common people, I would have been frightfully indignant. As it was, I smiled a rather knowing smile. The leaders of other parties, to whom I communicated this decision of Señores Sanchez Guerra and Melquiades Alvarez, expressed no surprise whatsoever. Politics was always like this, they said gravely, and suggested my forming a coalition cabinet. I agreed at once, distributing the portfolios between the chiefs of several different parties. Following their advice, Admiral Aznar, a man respected by all parties, was made Prime Minister. The program of the new cabinet emphasized the economic problems and promised to hold municipal and legislative elections at an early date.

"Everybody predicted glorious success for the coalition government. The English newspapers referred to me as a 'master politician of the world.'

The population of Madrid gave me a vociferous ovation. The Queen, returning from London, was met by a reception seldom if ever accorded any living sovereign. The people shouted with joy at seeing her again; they threw flowers at her feet; they grasped and kissed her hands, and they sang songs glorifying the reigning house. All this took place in the month of February, 1931—that is to say, barely two months before the final upheaval.

“I AM certain that even the most rabid revolutionaries believed at that time in the absolute security of the throne. It could not have been otherwise. The new government fulfilled each one of its promises. It arranged the release of the imprisoned republican leaders. It granted a pardon to an army captain who had headed the revolt in the fortress of Jaca. It succeeded in obtaining an important loan in the United States, making the coming stabilization of the peseta possible. It gave its unreserved attention to the organization of the relief for the unemployed. And it finally set the date for the municipal elections on April 12th, a rapidity that caused a complete surprise to the republicans.

“My ministers and I were equally aware of the importance of these elections. For the first time in

almost ten years the Spanish nation was going to express its political preferences. In order to be sure of the popular feeling, all measures had been taken to guarantee the unhindered freedom of the voters' choice. The throne was prepared to bow before the judgment of the people.

"On the evening of Sunday, April the 12th, I sat in my palace in Madrid waiting to hear the verdict. I realized the important part to be played by the grievances of the workers and merchants, and I expected to see the triumph of the extreme left parties in the large centers. I did not doubt, however, that the pro-governmental vote of the rural districts of Spain would be quite sufficient to overrule the cities.

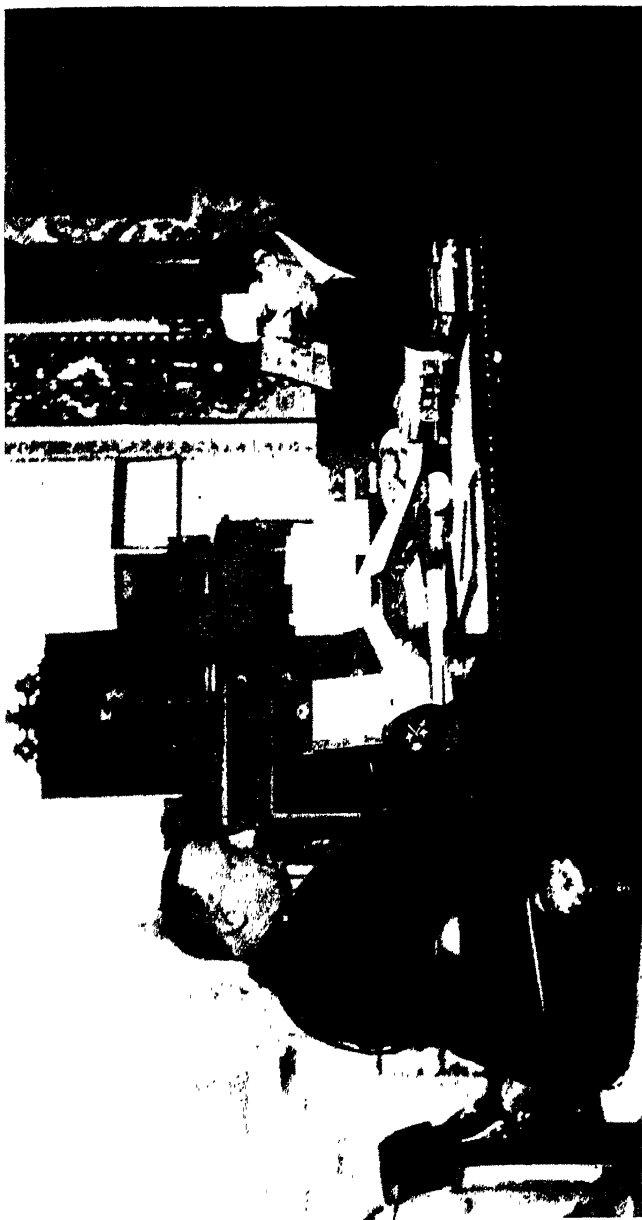
"Shortly before midnight I learned the bitter truth. Nearly seventy per cent of my subjects had voted a straight republican ticket. I can not say that I was the most surprised man in Spain. My astonishment was mild compared to that of the republican leaders! The biggest optimists among them counted on carrying from twenty-five to thirty per cent of the seats—instead of which they suddenly found themselves in possession of an overwhelming majority. As for myself, I felt like a man calling on an old friend and anticipating the pleasure of a cheerful evening,

only to discover that his friend has just passed away."

The King is calm and cool. Even now when his narrative is approaching the last forty-eight hours spent by him on the soil of Spain, he is able to maintain the poise of a philosopher.

"THERE was not a moment to be wasted," continues the King. "The results of the elections showed that I had lost, at least temporarily, my people's love. While I still had ample means at my disposal to protect the prerogatives of the throne, I had no intention of using them: I never considered myself infallible! No matter what was going to happen to me personally, I wanted to prevent bloodshed at all cost.

"In the early morning of Monday, April the 13th, I called in my ministers to discuss the situation. Count Romanones, my Minister of Foreign Affairs, had spent a night haunted by a peculiar dream; it seemed to him he was suddenly transported to Russia in 1917 and made witness of the frightful end that befell the Czar and his family. He begged me to leave Spain at once. He predicted the possibility of an ugly outburst on the part of the triumphant revolutionaries. He doubted the loyalty of the Army.



Wide World photo

1927. A KING VS. A DICTATOR. LISTENING TO THE DAILY REPORT OF GENERAL PRIMO DE RIVERA.

“I was obliged to remind Count Romanones of the answer given by me in 1905 to the French President Loubet, right after we both had escaped the bomb of a terrorist: ‘Such are the risks of the Royal trade.’ I love life as much as anyone else, but as a king I had to think of my country above all. I visualized the dangers inevitably accompanying all changes of régime, and I wanted to make one more effort to save Spain from a catastrophe. Inasmuch as my people had voted for the republicans, I thought I should have a talk with the leaders of the triumphant party. Señor Zamora, the future president of the Spanish Republican Government, was invited by me to the palace and received my offer to form a cabinet. He said no. The wine of victory had gone to his head.

“At five o’clock in the afternoon of Tuesday, April the 14th, I bade good-by to my ministers. Half an hour later Miguel Maura, a man of considerable showmanship, proclaimed the Republic in his speech delivered from the balcony of the City Hall. At nine o’clock that night Admiral Rivera brought three powerful automobiles to the palace door. It had been decided that I would motor to the port of Cartagena, where a battle-cruiser would wait to take me to France. My wife and children were

to leave by train the next morning, the Republican Government having guaranteed their safety.

“It is an eight-hour ride from Madrid to Cartagena. My faithful collaborator the Duke of Miranda, and my cousin Alphonse de Bourbon accompanied me in one of the three automobiles; the other two were occupied by Admiral Rivera, a few loyal officers, my valet and my hand-baggage. We drove at an average speed of sixty miles per hour. While passing through towns and villages, I heard the shouts of celebrating crowds; but the night was pitch-dark, and I could not discern those fields and groves of Spain that I had known for forty-five years. I was worried about my wife and children. I hoped to God the republicans would be able to keep their word. Otherwise I felt a deep moral satisfaction at having prevented the calamity of a civil war. All during that night just one thought possessed my mind: ‘It is better to go into exile than to be responsible for bloodshed.’

“At four o’clock in the morning we arrived at the port of Cartagena and were met by Admiral Magar, commander of the local naval arsenal. He and his staff seemed crestfallen at this sudden turn of events. They talked to me in hoarse whispers, break-

ing down with emotion. Shaking hands with them, I said: 'Gentlemen, I have preserved my traditions intact. Long live Spain!' A few minutes later I was aboard the cruiser *Principe Alfonso*, and we weighed anchor for Marseilles. The lights of the shore, pale in the dense fog of dawn, grew dimmer. The commander asked me what ensign he should hoist on the mast. Under ordinary circumstances he would of course have raised the Royal standard. To protect him from the rancor of the Republican Government, I advised him to hoist the national flag of Spain. Then I went to my cabin. Anticipating a manifestation of the idle curiosity of the world, I gave orders not to answer any radios from shore. And well I did! Hardly had we cleared port, when the messages began to pour in: the American correspondents wanted to know all about my plans and my destination; one of them suggested my answering a long questionnaire. . . . I had to laugh. There I was, exhausted by three sleepless nights and living through the darkest hours of my life, and they expected me to give them a short outline of world history! When an hour passed, bringing no answer to their radios, they informed their newspapers that our cruiser was evidently 'lost' somewhere in the Mediterranean.

“We reached Marseilles before dawn on Thursday, April the 16th, several hours earlier than was expected by the French authorities. The port was deserted, and it took my valet quite a time to find a taxi. Just as I was about to drive away, a young man stepped out of the darkness and said ‘Your Majesty, would you grant me a short interview? I represent . . . ’

“My dear fellow,” I interrupted him, “try to be kind even if it hurts you and leave me alone.” My voice must have carried a certain amount of persuasion, because he bowed and stepped aside. Three hours later I met him again at the railroad station, at the head of an army of reporters. Fortunately, by that time the French had the situation well in hand. . . . It was while answering the queries of the French Admiral Jaubert in Marseilles that I said: “You are surprised to see me here? You want to know how it all happened? Well, Admiral, it is much more difficult to fulfill one’s civic duty than to charge a crowd at the head of a squadron of cavalry.” It was before leaving Marseilles for Paris that I issued a manifesto explaining that my departure from Spain should in no way be construed as an abdication. The months that have passed since that day have failed to alter my feelings in that respect. I

still maintain that I have voluntarily ceased to exercise my authority, and that I shall wait for future developments. My love for Spain alone dictated that decision, and I hope to God that all other Spaniards now and in years to come will hear the call of duty as clearly as I have. . . . ”

5

“AFTER the present world crisis, what? Will Europe be able to return to economic sanity? will the Monroe Doctrine prove as effective in saving the Americas from the far-reaching claws of bolshevism as it has been in protecting their sovereignty against the threats of the Nineteenth Century European powers? Right now I know of no other question of equal importance.”

These questions interest the King as we talk of the future: his own, his children's, that of his country smoldering in its revolution—and that of the world at large.

The King feels restless and tells me he does not at all enjoy the “freedom” of which all monarchs are in the habit of dreaming. After thirty years spent in constant fulfillment of rigorous duties, he finds it irksome to idle his days away. Otherwise he

has no complaint to make. Of course we both are aware of the gigantic campaign of calumny launched against him by the Spanish revolutionaries, but striving as I am, I cannot discern the slightest trace of anger in his finely shaped face, so detached and so typically Bourbonesque in moments of repose. He realizes that he is approaching the crucial turn in the life of a royal exile, obliged to maintain uninterrupted silence while the foulest libels are being spread abroad; and that very knowledge makes him straighten up to the full height of his moral stature. He is willing to face this new danger in the way a King and Christian should—pitying his ruthless aggressors, and trying to condone their actions.

“Do you remember, Alexander,” he asks me with a slight smile, “that old venerable legend about a queer creature that was born with the divine head of an angel and the loathsome body of a monster? As you no doubt recall, so extremely fascinating were its facial features, that not until a year had gone by did anyone notice its hairy limbs, its shapeless massive breast and its hooflike feet. And then its beautiful face suddenly commenced to acquire a new and savage expression, and everybody raised the cry, ‘A monster!’ I say the revelation came at the end of the first year; but for all I really know, it may have taken

an even longer period. It seems to me that you Russians have had quite an experience mistaking monsters for angels. . . . How long did it take your people to recognize their frightful mistake?"

I can see the half-sarcastic, half-romantic gist of his parallel between a revolution and a monster; but this does not make it easier for me to answer his question.

"Some of the Russians," I finally reply with a sigh, "noticed the hoofs the very first day of our revolution; but others are still hypnotized by what is left of the divine light in the monster's eyes."

"Just what I thought," comments the King; "apparently it all depends on the viciousness of the monster and the gullibility of the people. In any event, I am extremely fond of this legend, and I do think it is an excellent symbol of the present Spanish revolution. In the beginning the latter was referred to by everybody as the 'elegant revolution,' but very soon hundreds of lives were sacrificed in senseless riots and religious brawls. At this date, after but a few short months of sway, the 'elegant revolution' is responsible for a much greater number of deaths than the thirty years of my reign. It stands to reason that the Spanish people are now likely to raise the cry, 'A monster,' any day.

“What is there left for the revolutionary leaders to do in order to justify their inability to keep their promises of ‘immediate happiness for all’? Just one thing: they must find a scapegoat whom they can blame for the misfortunes brought by their rule. Hence the present outburst of calumnies and hatred against the King of Spain. Hence the Republican Parliament’s decision to sit as a self-styled supreme tribunal to judge my imaginary crimes. This disgraceful comedy at the same time provides the revolutionaries with an excuse for the confiscation of my personal property in Spain. If this only could help the Spanish people, I would have nothing to say and no complaint to make.”

The King is obviously not in a mood to discuss his financial affairs at any greater length. In his estimation any grievances he may have against the Spanish revolutionary government are rather insignificant, compared with the vast problems occupying his mind. The subject is painful, but I venture to press him for more details. The American and the European papers almost daily dedicate considerable space to the idle discussion of the “millions amassed and lost by the King of Spain.” It seems to me his own statement would help to settle this matter once and forever.

The King explains that persons keenly interested in counting other people's money do not understand the difference between the property of the Crown of Spain and that of the King. While each and every revolutionary government invariably takes possession of the palaces, lands and museums belonging to the Crown it replaces, only the Russian bolsheviks so far have appropriated the personal estates of the former Monarch and his relatives. The present French Republic (established in 1871) never attempted to confiscate that which belonged to the members of the Bourbon, the Orléans, the Guise and the Bonaparte families. The German Republic paid a huge sum of money to the former Kaiser for his estates sequestered by the Reich. The Portuguese Republic made a similar settlement with former King Manuel. In fact, it became almost an unwritten law governing the relations between a fallen sovereign and the triumphant revolutionaries, that the former be given the choice of either continuing to hold or selling his possessions. That is why the attitude taken by the revolutionary government of Spain bewilders not only the King himself, but likewise all the legal experts in historical precedent.

"Everything that I possess in Spain," says the King, "has been either inherited by me from my

grandmother and mother, or purchased with my own funds. Most of my estates were never run on a profit-making basis; they represent valuable historical monuments which I tried to preserve for future generations.

“When my mother, Queen Maria-Christina, bought the Miramar Palace in St. Sebastian, it was just a cottage. She spent a great deal of money, time and perseverance in erecting the buildings, which today attract universal admiration. My palace of Santander, situated on the spot where I used to hold the annual regatta, although presented to me by the city, was rebuilt and redecorated entirely out of my own funds. The same condition exists in regard to my Barcelona palace.

“I CAN not understand what law can give the Republican Government power to confiscate my personal estates. So long as the institution of private property continues to exist in Spain, I should be accorded by the Government the same rights and protection as any other Spaniard. As far as the seizure of my bank-accounts and securities is concerned, no comment is necessary: the Republican Government is well aware of having committed a glaring infringement of my rights. It could think of no other



Wide World photo

KING ALFONSO WINNING A TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIP.

way of explaining its illegal actions except ordering the newspapers to attack my character and record.

“What can I say? No king can qualify for his job unless prepared to endure the ingratitude of his people. My life is an open book; it can be read by any man, Spaniard or other, who is capable of distinguishing real facts from the libelous products of a malicious mind. I do not care to repeat those vile accusations. I am quite certain that you and everyone else have read them in the newspapers, both here and in America. A day does not pass without this or that foreign journalist getting Fontainebleau on the wire and demanding to know what I have to say in reply to the calumnies of the unscrupulous politicians. I have nothing to say, now or at any future time.”

While he speaks, coolly and reservedly, some of the clippings shown to me in Fontainebleau and Paris come to my mind. The contemptible mud-throwers have used every low trick and every dastardly invention to revile the character of the man who forsook his kingdom in order to spare his people the calamity of a civil war. The Madrid correspondent of a Porto Rican paper advised his far-away readers that, according to the “latest discoveries,” the King of Spain was not the son of King Alfonso

XII, but an illegitimate child of Queen Maria-Christina by her paramour, a well-known leader of the Spanish revolutionaries. . . . The Paris correspondent of an American newspaper, having exhausted his repertory of calumnies about the King himself, deemed it in good taste to invent a tale of some "unforeseen complications" keeping the two daughters of the King from marrying their fiancés. . . . Half a score of Madrid newspapers announced in bold type that the King was in the habit of "squandering the people's money," but they failed to provide any documents or other proofs to substantiate their accusations.

There is nothing more repelling than the spectacle of a crowd of cowards attacking the man whose favors they were soliciting but yesterday. My heart goes out to the King. I need not tell him of my sympathy. He knows what my relatives and I have gone through: for one solid year after the Russian débacle, no publisher considered his "revolutionary duty" fulfilled unless his paper contained daily several columns of the vilest lies about the House of the Romanoffs. Looking at the horrible Porto Rican clipping, I cannot help recalling how one gray morning of 1917 I woke up to discover that my

ancestor Peter the Great was nothing more than a degenerate.

As though reading my thoughts, the King remarks philosophically:

“It is as it should have been expected. Throughout the ages the masters of libel were guided in their doings by the old French saying: ‘*Calomniez, calomniez—il en restera toujours quelque chose.*’ (‘Go on and libel—some of it is bound to strike home.’) All of them are hoping that at least a few listeners will be ignorant enough to believe their inventions. Humans will be humans, and the bread of exile will forever retain its bitter taste. Let us not talk about it any more. I repeat, nothing can make me happier than to see the welfare of the Spanish people bought at the price of my personal sacrifices.”

The King commences to talk about his children. Unlike the Queen, who is extremely worried about their future, he believes that they will make their own way in life.

He has just placed his youngest boy in the University of Louvain in Belgium, and he is looking forward to seeing the fiancés of his two daughters graduate from an engineering school in Switzerland.

If no new developments take place in the meanwhile in Spain, he is willing to let his youngsters try their luck in America.

As to his own personal plans, he prefers to maintain a policy of "watchful waiting." He has read the newspaper tales of the "fabulous bank-accounts" he is supposed to have in England and the United States, but he does not wish to break the hearts of the editors by asking them to take several ciphers off the figures mentioned in their publications.

"Fortunately," he exclaims laughingly, "I do not have to consult the newspapers in making my plans for the future. Otherwise I would be in a complete quandary as to which particular 'special dispatch' of an unusually well-informed correspondent should guide my decision. Within one single week I was reported as having bought a castle in France, a palace in Czecho-Slovakia, a farm in Argentina, a villa in California, a shooting-lodge in Scotland, and a mammoth town house in London. It would appear as though I were doing quite a bit of purchasing and were bent on spending the balance of my life aboard a steamer running back and forth between Europe and the two Americas.

"You realize, of course, that all of these rumors owe their origin to the untamed imaginations of

the correspondents. The truth is much simpler, and covers considerably less mileage. I have not decided as yet as to where I shall spend most of my time. I have not abdicated my throne, and in consequence all my plans depend on the future developments in Spain. So far, I am quite comfortable right where I am. I am being treated by the French people with the utmost courtesy and touching friendliness. I see no reason why I should be in a hurry to leave this beautiful and hospitable country."

"But how about your desire to visit the United States?" I ask the King. "I feel certain that you would be received over there with equal friendliness. I do not have to tell you of your popularity with the Americans. Not so long ago a California paper said that the local Chamber of Commerce should take 'energetic steps' to persuade you to come to the Olympic games in Los Angeles."

The King laughs, and looks through the window half-dreamily.

"No particular energy is necessary to persuade me to visit California. I have for a great many years hoped to do it. The only reason that keeps me from starting for America right at this moment is my determination not to do anything that might embarrass the present Spanish Government. I fear they

would interpret my trip as a mysterious political move. I would much rather wait another year, until the situation has become somewhat clearer and the passions have cooled off.”

WE chat for awhile about the latest political and economic events in the United States.

The King is anxious to hear my impressions of Detroit and the automotive industry. Well acquainted with the theories and books of Henry Ford, he wants to know what measures, if any, were taken by Mr. Ford to decrease unemployment and fight off the effects of the depression. I tell of my own interview with Ford, during the course of which I had the temerity to say that he was “all wrong” in his idea of the future.

“What did Ford answer?”

“Just that it is quite a few years since he heard that word *wrong* applied to him.”

The King nods approvingly. It is at this juncture of our conversation that he makes the remark which I have quoted previously:

“After the present world crisis, what? Will Europe be able to return to economic sanity? Will the Monroe Doctrine prove as effective in saving the

Americas from the far-reaching claws of bolshevism as it has been in protecting their sovereignty against the threats of the Nineteenth Century European powers? Right now I know of no other question of equal importance.”

The fact of his having mentioned the Monroe Doctrine amazes me. It had always been taken for granted that all sovereigns were bitterly opposed to the “new system” proclaimed by a farsighted President of the United States; and yet it seems to me I have detected a note of praise in the intonation of my august host.

He confirms my supposition:

“The former rulers of Europe failed to appreciate the positive features of the greatly abused Doctrine. In it they saw only a menace to their Central American and South American interests, entirely forgetting that the principles established by Monroe could be used at the same time as a shield protecting the new world against the dangers of pernicious propaganda continuously brewing in Europe. I would go further than that, and say that even the South American republics themselves have underestimated the benefits to be derived by them from a clear division between the Western and the Eastern hemispheres. The history of the spread of bolshe-

vism provides me with an excellent illustration of my point. Had it not been for the Monroe Doctrine, the South American continent would have become sooner or later a battleground of clashing European powers, which would have led in turn to industrial unrest and an accumulation of revolutionary spirit.

“Bolshevism is a pure and undiluted product of that hapless European system which made Europe spend the whole of the last century in destroying the class of the small property-owners, the only class capable of supporting organized government. Look at Europe today: Of all the countries situated between the Gulf of Biscay and the mountains of the Ural, France is the only one that can boast of immunity from the danger of bolshevism—because it possesses some twenty million small owners among its citizens. I do not know whether the present government of Spain will succeed in its fight against the ultra-red elements; but if they do, they will have to thank the Kings of Spain for encouraging the growth of the class of small land-owners.

“Now then, turning once more toward the South American republics, we must admit that had it not been for the Monroe Doctrine, the whole economic development of that virgin continent would have taken a different direction and would have followed

in the steps of the European countries, thus bringing its peoples into the same *impasse* where we see today some of the most powerful empires of Europe.

“You may think it odd that I, a descendant of the former masters of South America, should be inclined to praise the Monroe Doctrine; and so it would be, if the relationship between the Old and the New Spain were based solely on the fact of the latter having been conquered by Cortes, Pizarro and the other daring Iberian adventurers of the Sixteenth Century. Fortunately for both countries, the sisterhood of the Iberian peninsula and America Hispana was built on a much more enduring foundation.

“Historians annoy me. In their childish attacks against the ruthlessness displayed by Cortes and Pizarro they completely ignore that while holding the sword in one hand, the Iberian conquerors were carrying the Cross in the other. Perhaps half-consciously, perhaps even involuntarily, those conquerors brought into the New World the light of the most magnificent civilization of modern times. The Pilgrims who landed in North America were merely trying to escape from persecution in their native country; but the Spaniards who stormed the fortresses of the ancient Aztec rulers were burning

with the fire of veritable crusaders. That is why they succeeded in just fifty years in achieving the conquest and the colonization of the South American continent, while it took the descendants of the Pilgrims two hundred and fifty years to fight their way from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

“The selfsame greatly maligned Cortes displayed the farsightedness of an empire-builder. Very few people know that as early as the year 1529, that is to say nearly four hundred years before the opening of the Panama Canal by the Government of the United States, Cortes wrote a letter to the King and Queen of Spain in which he said: ‘We have not found as yet a passage from Iberia to Cathay, but we must cut it. At no matter what cost, we must build a canal at Panama.’

“A typical child of the Sixteenth Century, Cortes may not have been particularly elegant in his methods, but he was the very first European to recognize that ‘westward move the Empires.’ In his dreams, the whole Western World, from Mexico to Brazil, and from Brazil to Tierra del Fuego, was destined to become the ‘America Hispana,’ a proud daughter of old Spain, and a worthy legatee to the treasures of the Iberian civilization. He did not live to see his dreams fulfilled, but his task was well done; and

the Empire founded by him in South America remained faithful to its Spanish traditions.

“When the Nineteenth Century came along, bringing in its wake the Monroe Doctrine and the victories of Bolivar in Colombia, Spain had nothing to worry about. Great Britain may have lost its prestige in the New World because its transatlantic standing was based on conquest and military occupation; but the Spanish civilization needed no army to strengthen the ties between the Iberian peninsula and the young republics founded by Bolivar. It became the duty of the future Kings of Spain to see that no effort was spared in developing a permanent cultural exchange between the mother-country and its now numerous daughters in the New World.

“BEFORE I proceed with my account of what I personally did to promote the idea of Ibero-American civilization, I want you to see some of the letters received by me within the past few months from Argentina, Chile, Peru and other South American republics.”

The thick package of letters he produces for my inspection is well worth commenting upon.

All of them are written by people who await no favors from the royal tenant of the Hotel Savoy,

and who could easily afford to express their feelings freely. Every one of them is inspired by the same sentiment, and is permeated by the same fear: their authors maintain that something infinitely valuable was lost for the Spanish world on the day King Alfonso left Madrid. According to them, the Spanish sovereign, although living far away from the South American continent, had always been considered a vivid symbol of Ibero-American unity. They draw a parallel between the part played by him and that filled by the present King of England. They say that just as the existence of the latter succeeds in keeping together all the member-nations of the British Commonwealth—notwithstanding economic and racial divergencies—so also has the figure of King Alfonso XIII reminded the often quarreling republics of South America of the obligations imposed by their common past, and of the splendor of their early history.

They claim that a president of the Spanish Republic, no matter how great his talents may be, would never be able to appeal to America Hispana, which today, in the cool matter-of-fact Twentieth Century, thrives more than ever before on the proud tradition of cultural unity based on spiritual allegiance to Spain.



Wide World photo

KING ALFONSO PHOTOGRAPHED AFTER A HARD-FOUGHT
POLO MATCH.

The grieving authors of these extremely significant letters from South America resemble in their disappointment the possessor of a priceless string of pearls who, having lost the emerald clasp, is told he will be given just as solid a clasp, only made of rhinestones. . . .

They finally confess that their complaints may contain more emotionality than logic, but then, isn't the whole driving power of life derived from emotional sources?

"I must have been still a mere child," recalls the King, "when the thought of the millions of Spanish-speaking and Spanish-thinking people living outside Spain proper first came into my mind.

"I always felt that as a nation we Spaniards have stood on the extreme border of Europe, with our backs toward the old continent and our faces toward the New World. While bowing before facts and realizing that the spirit of the modern era precluded the possibility of further colonization of South America, I decided to apply new methods in recapturing the dreams of my ancestors.

"They were the masters of South America; I was content to be its friendly brother. They were financing the expeditions of Columbus, Cortes and Pizarro, but I preferred to entrust the flag of Spain

to the hands of the scientists, writers and merchants.

“The records of my reign prove that beginning with the year 1910, when my relative Infanta Isabella was asked by me to be present at the centennial celebrations in Argentina and Chile—thus marking the good will of the Crown of Spain—a steady stream of my representatives kept a live contact between the royal palace in Madrid and the capitals of the South American republics. My instructions to them were exceedingly simple: ‘No interference with political developments; utmost neutrality in dealing with the leaders of different parties; good will toward every Spanish-speaking person; all possible support to the South American merchants.’

“I SHALL mention some of the most striking episodes in the history of my relations with America Hispana.

“In 1920, during the visit paid to me by the chairman of Argentina’s delegation at the League of Nations, we established a well-defined policy to govern the commercial and cultural intercourse between Spain and Argentina. In the same year I dispatched a mission headed by the Infante Don

Fernando to Chile on the occasion of the four hundredth anniversary of the death of Magellan.

“In 1922 the President of Argentina, Alvear, came to Madrid, the first South American chief executive to make a pilgrimage to the ancient capital of all Spaniards. Next year the Spanish writer Benavente, who had just received the Nobel Prize for literature, made a triumphant lecture tour of South America.

“In 1924 our aviators succeeded in accomplishing the first flight across the South Atlantic, and were met by an outburst of national pride and cultural solidarity.

“At the same time, while my relatives and representatives were visiting and lecturing across the ocean, I was laying the foundation of several important Ibero-American institutions at home.

“I established so-called ‘Houses of America’ in Barcelona, Cadiz and Seville, dedicated to the study of South American culture, and I founded an Ibero-American Academy of Sciences, and an Ibero-American law-school in Madrid. Right at the moment the revolution occurred, I was working on two still more ambitious projects: I was going to turn my estate in Aranjuez into a Palace of South American Nations, and I intended to open an Ibero-American

University in Seville for the winners of numerous scholarships created by me in South America.

“The climax of my activities was reached in 1929. That year a magnificent Ibero-American Exposition was organized in Seville. Every South American republic constructed a spectacular pavilion, displaying the products of its trades, and testifying before the entire world to the fact of the unbroken continuity of our common culture. An enormous map of America Hispana—placed by its representatives at the entrance of the exposition grounds—bore a caption which in itself was a sufficient recompense for my efforts. It said: ‘*South America owes a great debt of gratitude to Mother Spain.*’

“Aside from my personal satisfaction, the material results of my policy spoke for themselves: in 1913 the trade with Spain amounted to but three per cent of the entire trade balance of the South American republics; by 1929 it was multiplied far and beyond all expectations.

“You may ask, why so much talk about South America? Why make such strenuous efforts to promote that distant land? Well, I must admit that it does make me feel proud to think that in the years of the after-war panic, when every European government was fretting about the competition of the

Americas and dreaming the nonsensical dreams of an anti-American trade combine, I was the only responsible head of a European régime who said to the transatlantic peoples: 'More power to you! I am willing to coöperate with you; so let us help each other.'

"Why did I do it? In the first place, because I was certain that there was much more to be gained through coöperation with the United States and the South American republics than through wasting my time and energy in continuous regrets of the past glories of Europe. In the second place, I have always lived in the future. Let the politicians fancy that they can check the onward march of history by a cleverly worded treaty! We, the kings, are accustomed to think of tomorrow. And the tomorrow of the world lies not here in Europe, in the countries choked by jealousies and blinded by mutual hatreds, but there across the ocean, among the new nations that were fortunate enough to escape the necessity of fighting for more land.

"I CONSIDER that as a King, a Spaniard and a European, I have done my duty by turning the attention of my people from the past toward the horizons of the future. As long as Europe persists in closing

its ears to the voice of history, no progress at all can be achieved by its statesmen. Each time another republic replaces a monarchical régime, they imagine they have taken a step forward; but I seriously doubt whether a republican government headed by even the most well-meaning politicians will ever be prepared to assume the same tremendous responsibility my ancestors and I did. Talk about 'modern times favoring the spread of radical policies!' Who could possibly be more radical than a king born and raised in an atmosphere overcharged with memories of continuous changes? It all depends, of course, on the meaning attached by one to the word *radicalism*. If it indicates the vote-getting attitude of an all-promising demagogue, then I shall gladly cede this honor to the politicians; but if it strives to convey a determination to work for the welfare of the masses, then I was and I am the ranking radical of Spain.

"Should the present government of Spain come out victorious of its many difficulties and restore peace, order and prosperity to the people, I shall admit that its leaders are better radicals than I was, and I will be overjoyed to extend to them my heartfelt congratulations. I often hear it said, and almost every day see it written in the newspapers, that

'King Alfonso's day is gone' and that 'his bolt has been shot,' but I invariably add: 'Wait and see.'

"It is agreed, Alexander," he reminds me as I am about to thank him for his patience and take leave, "that you are not obliged to make my conclusions your own. Use the facts and do not be afraid to criticize me. Constructive criticism never causes harm. Only libels do, but they have a peculiar knack of turning, boomerang-like, against their perpetrators."

We walk through the corridor and join the Queen in her little salon. I ask Her Majesty for a photograph, which she signs "*Ena.*"

"*Ena—Princess Ena.*" A quarter of a century has passed since she was known under that name. It reminds me of the days when on visiting the house of Princess Henry of Battenberg I used to admire the radiant blonde beauty of her little daughter Ena. Hardly did I think then that many years later I should meet that adorable child in a provincial hotel in France, the mother of two beautiful girls who now bombard me with eager questions about the United States, the mysterious land of their dreams.

I say my adieux and express the hope to meet the

two infantas in the shadows of the Empire State Building.

“Is it very beautiful? Is it really so inspiring?”

“It is as beautiful and as inspiring as your youth. At night it resembles a gigantic candle lighted by the Twentieth Century for the greater glory of the all-conquering human genius.”

“One more description like this,” exclaims the King, “and I shall be ordering my transatlantic transportation!”

I wish he would. It seems to me that while in America, far away from the scenes of the tragedy, he would be able to see his own life from a distance and to find considerable mental comfort in the realization of the immensity of the task performed by him with great courage and utmost honesty. I know that I shall always remember him as a brilliant-eyed boy of nineteen who sat perfectly calm in a carriage wrecked by the bomb of an anarchist, laughing and saying that such were the risks of the royal profession.

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PART THREE:

“THE TECHNIQUE OF THE COMEBACK”

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“THE TECHNIQUE OF THE COMEBACK”

1

MY dear uncle,” wrote the Crown Prince of Germany from his provincial retreat in Silesia in the early spring of 1932, “so hectic were the last six months of my life, so often did I figure in the news, that both Cecilia and myself feel as though we could stand a bit of privacy. Flattered as we are by this sudden outburst of public attention, we confess that we did not solicit it in the least. . . .”

The “hectic six months” mentioned in the letter of my German nephew happened to be precisely the six months which had elapsed since I had bid adieu to King Alfonso of Spain in the lobby of his hotel in Fontainebleau. The stocks of royalty which had touched a “new low” on the day of his landing in Marseilles—April 16th, 1931—had suddenly staged a vigorous rally and recovered a goodly part of the

ground lost in the course of the previous fourteen years. Democracy had failed to surmount the economic crisis and this, logically enough, constituted bullish news insofar as the Pretenders were concerned. The rules of politics are no less stringent than those of the Stock Exchange: the shorts must cover sooner or later, and the self-same operators who had raided the Hohenzollerns, the Hapsburgs and the Wittelsbachs in 1918 began to bid for them in 1932.

“Things never were so bad under the Kaiser,” this whining phrase (whoever coined it!) proved extremely popular with panicky bankers and starving ex-soldiers alike. In no time it became the battle-cry of the Restoration, and it took an emphatic “no” from the old gentleman in Doorn to keep his son from being pitted against von Hindenburg.

Not that the elder Hohenzollern felt jealous of his offspring; far from it. The disagreement, if any, had to do with the “method,” not with the principle. The son was willing to reach the throne with the aid of the handy ladder of the Presidency. The father, always a stickler on etiquette, thought that this idea reeked a little too much of that clumsy upstart, the third Bonaparte. After all, said the patriarch of the Clan, a Hohenzollern should not accept favors from



Keystone photo

GRAND DUKE CYRIL OF RUSSIA.

an Austrian adventurer and even though Berlin might well be worth a mass it is better to have it said by some other bishop, not Herr Hitler.

The Doorn decision delivered, an eloquent silence descended upon the haunts of the German monarchists and now it fell to the lot of the international legitimists to continue the dispute as to the best technique of an imperial comeback. Listening to their angry shouts under the awnings of the sidewalk cafés in Paris one might have thought that the clocks were moved eighteen years back and that a man by the name of Lenin was still debating the platform of a would-be soviet government of Russia. There is something in the air of the Grand Boulevards that enables the exiles—be they monarchists or communists—to see through the smoky clouds of the future. Perhaps, it may be merely an after-effect of too much *vermouth-nature* and too little *eau de seltz*.

NATIONS have changed a lot since the days when Charles II was perambulating between Holland, France and Spain in search of cash and an army to fight Cromwell. Military intervention, except in China, has become a distinct thing of the past. Even

the Rumanians, eager as they always are to score an easy victory, sulked at their Queen's idea of fighting the Hapsburg battle in Hungary. True enough, the Allies did send their troops to Russia in 1919 but that was done for the sake of oil and manganese, not for the Romanovs. A modern pretender must rely solely on the counter-revolutionary forces within *his own* nation if he really expects to stage a comeback. I say "really" because not every Pretender cares to ascend the throne. Some of them—the Guises in the case of France, the Braganzas in the case of Portugal—do their pretending with the tongue in the cheek, simply to keep up a grand and glorious tradition. I imagine that the late Duke of Orléans would have been the unhappiest man in the world had he awakened one morning to learn that the "beloved" French nation was ready to receive him in Paris. He liked London, he got thoroughly accustomed to thick fogs and thin coffee, and whenever he had to address a gathering of French royalists, he sighed and said under his breath: "what asses . . ."

I may be hopelessly wrong, but it is my sincere belief that even the Kaiser would think twice before accepting the invitation to return to Potsdam. The fourteen years spent by him in the simple but solid

comforts of his castle in Doorn must have cultivated in him a taste for healthy life.

The same is the case of the present “first citizen” of Coburg, my wise and big-hearted friend the ex-Czar of Bulgaria, and as for the late King Manuel of Portugal, no forces in the universe could have made him exchange England and his priceless collection of first editions for the Royal Palace in Lisbon and the Portuguese street scene. Gaby Deslys or no Gaby Deslys, he would have remained in London until the very end and it is pleasant to think that his last day on this planet was spent by him in the civilized atmosphere of Wimbledon.

Then there is that gentlemanly white-bearded chap in Nice, the ex-Sultan of Turkey and the ex-Calif of Islam. His was a dignified, if somewhat forced, exit; in fact, his trunks were packed and reservations made *before* the order of expulsion signed by the energetic Kemal could reach the premises of Yildiz-Kiosk. Strolling in the Promenade des Anglais and smiling cheerfully, he does not resemble the preconceived type of a Bloody Sultan’s descendant in the least. He tips well and the French like him. He married his daughters to the two sons of a fabulously rich Rajah and has discovered that the taste of Perrier compares most favorably with that

of the celebrated sweet waters of Beykos. A Sultan of his age can easily exist without the benefit of kneeling subjects. One of these days he may learn to play contract and then he shall find an amiable and capable partner in the person of ex-King George of Greece: a massacre or two are easily forgotten after the first rubber. For I likewise doubt the ultimate ambitions of my Hellenic cousin. Brought up between the Royal Palace in Athens and his father's favorite retreat in Italy, in a constant turmoil of packing and unpacking—he was obliged to leave Greece twice while still a boy—he finds it distinctly restful not to live the life of a pursued commuter. He does not begrudge Mr. Venizelos the republican attempts to exploit the imaginary "royalist plots" because he realizes that the absence of snakes is apt to imperil the job of a St. Patrick.

3

THIS leaves us with just four men who are willing and eager to answer what we royalty tentatively refer to as the Call of the Nation. Alfonso of Spain, Friedrich-Wilhelm of Germany, Cyril of Russia and the youthful Otto of Hungary. Curiously enough, with the sole exception of King Alfonso, none of

them ever has occupied a throne, which fact might explain both their eagerness and their lack of fear.

We have seen that His Catholic Majesty of Spain has decided to pursue his policy of “watchful waiting.” No such spirit of resignation is apparent in the case of the other three: if the Call of the Nation ever reaches their present residences, they will be the ones to help put it through. So different are their financial situations and the degree of their popularity at home that their experiences instead of evolving a general Technique of the Comeback prove that there are as many techniques as there are pretenders.

The Crown Prince is permitted to live in Germany. His exile in Holland lasted but four years, failing to injure his popularity with the ex-soldiers or to damage his beautiful estates in Silesia. The employees of his office in the Unter den Linden would be very indignant indeed were one to refer to their organization as “office” or to themselves as “employees.” The heading of the stationery reads: “the Chancellery of His Imperial Highness, the Crown Prince of Germany.” The secretary to the Prince signs his name as “Berg, private councilor.” The newspapers, all but the soviet ones, speak of the Crown Prince in terms of respect. They often dis-

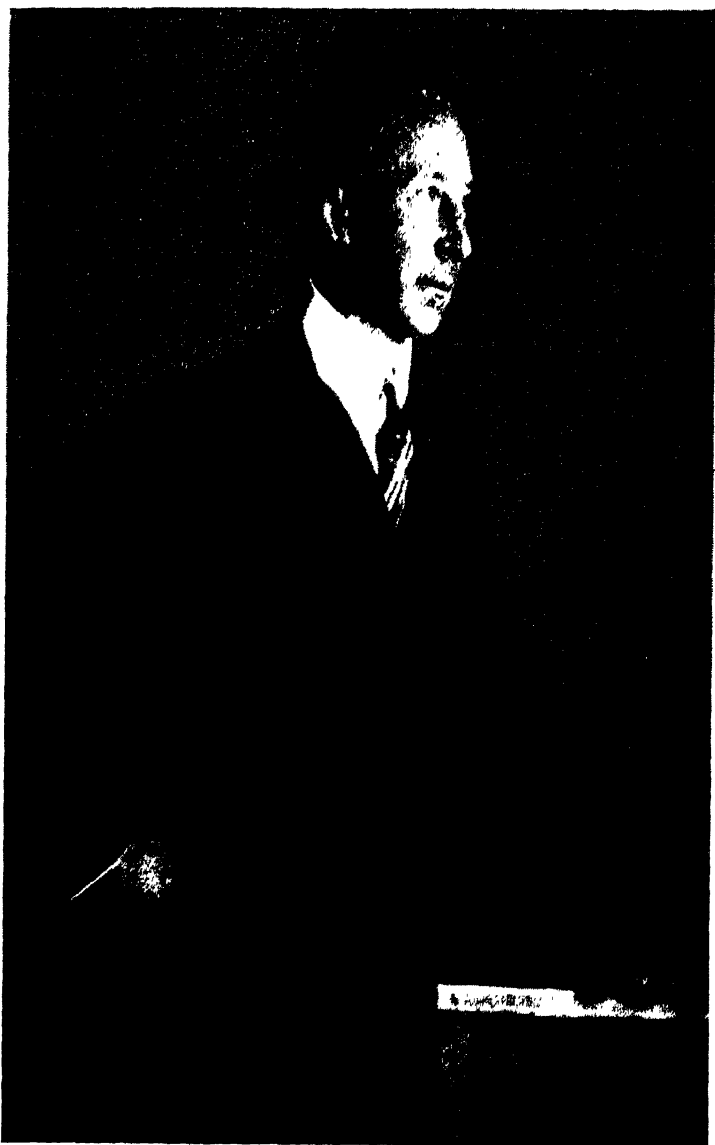
agree with his program but he is still "His Imperial Highness." The privilege of calling royalty by their last names is being left by German journalists to their American colleagues: it does take a transatlantic *homme de lettres* to conclude that a "Crown Prince" (meaning the eldest son of an Emperor) or a "Grand Duke" (meaning a son or a grandson of an Emperor) ceases to be his father's son on the day Revolution triumphs.

Although by no means as wealthy as he was before the war, the Crown Prince is relatively well-to-do and in any case free from worries about tomorrow's dinner or the-end-of-the-month bills. He does not write for magazines. He need not sell his endorsement of a popular brand of cigarettes. He never accepts invitations from war profiteers, and innkeepers are still excluded from the circle of his social acquaintances. This puts him in a class by himself as a Pretender because none of his prototypes in the past or colleagues in the present can boast of the same degree of financial independence. Charles II lived off the extremely meager donations of his French and Dutch relatives and there were long stretches in his exile when he could not afford a warm coat for himself or a new saddle for his horse. Louis XVIII earned his bread and butter as a

teacher of French in a high-school in Russia. Louis-Philippe tried his hand at every conceivable job, both in Europe and in America. And as for the present day pretenders, neither the would-be King of Hungary nor the would-be Emperor of Russia can write a check for as much as one thousand dollars. They live from month to month, depending on the generosity of their impoverished supporters or the bounty of their reigning relatives, their revenues derived from both sources failing to cover the bills of their landlords.

Grand Duke Cyril has settled down in the small village of St. Briac on the coast of Brittany, while Otto remains in Belgium where he moved after a protracted stay in Spain as a “guest” of King Alfonso. So far Otto’s talking has been done by his mother Zita, a throne-struck woman if there ever was one. A Bourbon of Parme by birth, she is more pronounced in her Hapsburg clannishness than any real Hapsburg ever was, which is invariably the case with all ambitious women who come to the throne through a sheer prank of fate. As a child, Zita showed such fondness of court etiquette that it made her the pet of the Master of Ceremonies and the despair of her chums. As a middle-aged woman, an exiled Empress and an impoverished widow, she has

lost none of her original pride. She is a confirmed believer in the veracity of stock phrases and because she had insisted that the Hungarians "adore" their sovereigns, her handsome husband Charles quit his peaceful abode in Switzerland and boarded an airplane to fly to Budapest. He landed on the Island of Madeira where he died shortly afterwards, a heart-broken and puzzled prisoner of the self-styled Castle-reaghs of the Little Entente. The lesson was cruel, its moral obvious, and yet it failed to change Zita's ideas or her technique. She can never forget that she is a Bourbon by birth and a Hapsburg by marriage, and her talent for memorizing these cardinal facts of her family's history plays havoc with the plans of the Hungarian legitimists. The homecoming of a King must necessarily be disguised behind the veil of a "new deal" and the country of Kossuth is the last one to get excited over the arrival of a bourbonesque Hapsburg. An American politician versed in the art of convention trading and convention double-crossing would bring Otto to Budapest in less than a year. It is just a question of quieting this minister's fears and flattering that orator's vanity. The job is simple—for an American politician—but not for a fantastically proud woman who would rather be a Hapsburg in a village in Belgium than a hostage of



Wide World photo

FRIEDRICH-WILHELM, THE CROWN PRINCE OF GERMANY.

stunt-masters in the Royal Palace in Budapest. She is willing to wait and wait she will. According to the family records, the "waiting period" of a Bourbon may consume as much as twenty-five years.

Were I to risk my reputation as a prophet, I would predict that of the four Pretenders the Crown Prince of Germany will be the first to reach the Throne, closely followed by King Alfonso and separated by miles and miles from a Hapsburg and a Romanov. I am not sufficiently foolish to try to guess even as a joke which particular Hapsburg and which particular Romanov shall return to the capitals of their ancestors. Grand Duke Cyril has a son. Both the latter and the youthful Otto will, no doubt, marry some day and give birth to male heirs. This will take time but neither one of the two nations seems to be in too great a hurry.

The Germans are. So much so that, admirable as the Crown Prince's technique is, he would be doing just as well by merely avoiding gaffes and not posing too much for the American photographers. There is such a thing in the career of a Pretender as attending too many parades.

To compare the actions of the Crown Prince with those of Grand Duke Cyril would be obviously unfair to the nominal head of the exiled Romanovs. It

is not the fault of the Grand Duke that our immediate ancestors never stopped to consider that a dynasty must have a party, that the backbone of every régime is formed by a well maintained system of political patronage. The Hohenzollerns, thanks to the clear wisdom of Bismarck, had always known that the class of wealthy Prussian landowners constituted the solid basis of the German Throne. They cherished the affection of those muchly criticized "junkers" and no Heidelberg theoretician and no talkative Berlin economist was ever able to make them quarrel with their natural supporters. It is only because Emperor Wilhelm I favored the "junkers" that his great-grandson may depend today on the unlimited loyalty of a von Papen. The enthusiastic support of even a half of one per cent of the population is all that is necessary for the maintenance of a régime. The Hohenzollerns understood it in Germany, the communists in Russia, but the Romanovs missed their chance. When my grandfather Emperor Nicholas I died he left to his son what he called "the army of the forty thousand chiefs of police," meaning the forty thousand-odd wealthy landowners of Russia who were accustomed to receive favors from the throne. These forty thousand faithfuls realized that they stood and fell with the

dynasty and made it their self-imposed duty to police the vast Empire. They would have stuck to the Romanovs just as the “junkers” did to the Hohenzollerns had it not been for the fact that in the year 1861 a strange gesture was made by Emperor Alexander II. The gesture is known to the historians as the Emancipation of the Serfs and it had for net result the disappearance of the party that was supporting the régime. Had the serfs been given adequate land together with their freedom, they would have rallied around the throne and replaced the party of the rich agrarians. As it was, the serfs became politically neutral at best while, at the same time, the dynasty lost its claims on the fealty of the masters. Seventy years later the peasants were driven back into practical serfdom because the communists of 1931 understood what had escaped the mind of Emperor Alexander II: whatever the name of the régime, its only hope of survival lies in the maintenance of a compact party of a few favored ones, not in the millions of lukewarm voters.

I am quite certain that this interpretation of the Chief Event of modern Russian history would horrify Grand Duke Cyril. His program reeks of noble-hearted liberalism and his technique consists of appealing to the now disfranchised majority of

Russia. I am wishing him the best of luck, but I doubt his ability to re-write the axioms of practical politics. Even the Presidents of the United States must have their faithful postmasters.

Were I to rule over an Empire, I would pit any day of the year the thorough loyalty of 40,000 against the grumblings of 120,000,000. Were I to attempt a comeback, I would think up a program that would make it worth while for those 40,000 to take a chance even against loaded dice. I realize that this statement classifies me with the enemies of Democracy but I can endure it when I think of the League of Nations. If this is fascism, then the first name of Lenin was Benito.

PART FOUR:
THE ART OF RIDING THE STORM

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1

WITHIN my lifetime the number of the leading reigning houses of Europe has dwindled down from eighteen to ten. The Emperors of France, the Kings of Portugal, the Czars of Russia, the Kaisers of Germany, the Caesars of the Holy Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Sultans of Turkey, the Kings of Greece and the Kings of Spain have passed on,—in the order named,—leaving in their wake a wealth of glamorous romance and a considerable accumulation of bitter object lessons.

Now, whenever a great international institution registers within the short span of sixty years forty-four per cent of casualties among its member-firms, something is obviously and radically wrong both with its policies and practice.

As a Grand Duke and a former beneficiary of the

Imperial Régime, I am tempted to give vent to a certain amount of resentment, but as a man not entirely deprived of logic, I realize that the causes of the fall of my relatives and friends are much less interesting to outsiders than the methods which help the remaining European sovereigns to continue in office.

To each nation its measure. That which delights one may appall the other. I do not need to emphasize that the last ten wearers of the royal purple have recourse to widely different means in their ceaseless combat against time and tide. For purposes of classification I shall divide them into four groups.

Group One—characterized by its sense of enlightened paternalism—includes one Queen and four Kings: Wilhelmina of the Netherlands, Albert I of Belgium, Christian X of Denmark, Gustav-Adolph of Sweden and Haakon VII of Norway.

Group Two—permeated by a strong desire to uphold the Balkanic brand of absolutism—consists of Alexander I of Yugoslavia, Boris III of Bulgaria and Carol II of Rumania.

The other two groups possess a one-man membership each. There is King George V of England and there is King Victor-Emmanuel III of Italy: the great

British enigma and the outstanding paradox of the Fascist State.

To be absolutely exact, we have still with us the King of Albania, the reigning Grand Duchess of Luxemburg and the Prince of Monaco, but, as the part played by their respective countries is somewhat limited in scope, I may ignore them in my roll call of the surviving sovereigns of Europe just as I disregarded the passing of the Kings of Bavaria, Saxonia and other German half-sovereigns in my report of the casualties among royalty.

2

How do the Big Ten of Europe succeed in keeping their glorified jobs?

The question is plain and simple, but the various answers, as given by the omniscient political observers, leave me in a serious dilemma.

I am told that the House of Windsor is just a "good old English tradition"—and then I think of the last Emperor of Austria who died a destitute exile on the island of Madeira. Surely no one can deny that the almost endless reign of the Hapsburgs outdated by a great many centuries any other "good old tradition" of the modern world.

I am told that King Albert I of Belgium owes the

stability of his throne to his "one hundred per cent patriotism," and again I evoke the image of the present woodchopping squire of Doorn. Whatever the Kaiser's shortcomings may have been, not even his bitterest enemies have ever attempted to question the completeness of his patriotism.

When talking to Yugoslavs, I am usually given any amount of proofs of King Alexander's "tremendous personal popularity" and to them I quote the example of King Alfonso. Up to April 12th, 1931, was there a more "popular" Spaniard in the whole of Spain?

The journeyman type of Scandinavian pro-royal argument deals with the "democratism" and the "niceness" of the three Northern Kings, and while I bow to no one in my admiration for Christian X, Gustav-Adolph V and Haakon VII, I am obliged to remind my informers that with a very few exceptions there never existed a sovereign who did not possess the secret of being charming and simple. Even the so-called "bloody" Sultan Abdul-Hamid of Turkey impressed me at his luncheon table as a man of great fascination who would not harm a fly, let alone slaughtering thousands of Armenians.

I can go on and on quoting the stock-phrases one overhears in the political circles of London and The

Hague, Brussels and Stockholm, Belgrade and Sophia, but in the end I still will have to use the very caustic remark of the exiled King of Spain as a searchlight to guide me through the labyrinth of "royal mysteries."

"How do you account for the survival of the remaining thrones of Europe?" I asked him recently in Fontainebleau, "do you consider those sovereigns greater statesmen and more experienced pilots than those who have been dethroned by war and revolution?"

"Tight-rope walkers, every one of them!" answered the King without a moment's hesitation, "just as I was and as anyone born to a crown is and always will be. You know how it is with the tight-rope walkers: sometimes they manage to maintain their balance until the very end of the performance; then they glean applause, no end of it. Often, however, they experience a slight vertigo; then they fall and break their necks. . . . Who is there to decide whether the one who succeeded was a more talented tight-rope walker than the one who failed?"

Opinionated as this judgment may appear, it set a definite goal for my investigation: I had to find out what devices help a royal tight-rope walker to maintain his balance and what dangers, lurking in

the stupendously involved political life of contemporary Europe, would be likely to cause a slight vertigo.

My task was delicate and arduous, and could not have been accomplished at all had it not been for the extensive ramifications of my family tree. Not unlike the Southerners, we, the royal exiles, possess an incredible number of uncles and cousins, nephews and nieces. With the exception of the Royal Family of Belgium and the dethroned house of Hapsburg, I am related to each and every one of the present and former reigning dynasties of Europe. To some of them I am doubly related, and only the fear of causing mental discomfort to the readers keeps me from explaining how it happened that I am both uncle and cousin of the sovereigns of Denmark. In any event, I felt at home in my investigation.

Since the day I was old enough to understand that each throne is only as strong as its weakest mainstay, I took an active part in conversations revolving around the subject of that "uncertain future facing us all."

Many a time while walking with the late Czar Nicholas II along the trail connecting our respective palaces in the Crimea, I heard him discuss the rela-

tive merits of a friendly parliament and a strong police; and on many an otherwise perfect morning, while playing golf with King Edward VII in Biarritz, I listened to the frank prophesies of the Father of the Triple Alliance.

Years went by. An exile at fifty-two, I had become, in the estimation of my reigning relatives, an expert on all matters revolutionary. We often met. We reminisced. We sized up the present. We considered the future. The intercourse between the "ins" and the "outs" varies but little, be they royalty or politicians. The "ins" are inclined to take the advice of their less fortunate colleagues with certain reservations; the "outs," on the other hand, are invariably prone to exaggerate the danger-signals. All in all, I learned a great deal. Because of this I can say that I would not exchange my present precarious position for any one of the ten remaining thrones of Europe, and least of all for the one that stands in the white-and-gold room of Buckingham Palace.

3

May the world come against her,
England yet shall stand . . .

WHEN a nation is fighting for its very existence, the proudest of flowery quotations is bound to fall

flat: Lord Tennyson's two celebrated lines sounded more pathetic than impressive when recited in the late summer of 1931 from the benches of His Britannic Majesty's Government by the pale-faced invalid Philip Snowden, then Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Though the honorable members present "waved their papers," applauded vociferously and shouted "hear, hear" in voices trembling with emotion, nothing, not even the rhythm of martial poetry, could obliterate in their minds the fatal significance of the events which had taken place during the two weeks preceding this historical session of Parliament.

The pound sterling had gone off the gold standard! The Bank of England, that age-old symbol of financial reliability, was facing a panic, perhaps complete collapse and bankruptcy!

Poet Tennyson may have been right in his day, and England in the course of her glamorous past may have succeeded on more than one occasion in her single-handed fight *against* the world, but would she be able to survive and come out victorious now, when she had to call upon all her resources of tenacity and grit in her present battle *for* the salvation of the world?

Such was the ominous question wracking the

nerves of the British nation in the Month of Despair of the Year of Damnation 1931.

The politicians raved while trying to reconcile the unequivocal commands of a tense moment with the highly involved platforms of their respective parties.

The economists wasted quarts of ink and ran out of words suggesting useless panaceas.

The simple citizens looked around and turned to the traditional device of hoarding gold and currency.

There remained just one man in the whole of the gigantic Empire to whom his duty was painfully clear and in whose estimation the "proper thing to do" looked obvious though infinitely difficult.

A night's ride from London, in his ancestral castle of Balmoral, sat George V, King of Great Britain, Emperor of India, "Defender of the Faith." If faith ever needed a defender, now was the moment to come to its rescue.

The King ordered his special train, rushed back to London and spent the next morning in momentous conference with Messrs. MacDonald, Baldwin and Samuel, the leaders of the three great political parties of England. Around luncheon time the Empire learned that a Government of National Union was to be organized, an amazing combination that

had seemed thoroughly impossible only twenty-four hours before.

What did the King say to the three political leaders?

What were the arguments used by the Tenant of Buckingham Palace that made Conservatives, Liberals and Laborites cast aside their historical differences and forget their traditional hostility?

They did not need to be told of the calamities throttling the Empire. Nothing the King could have said to them in regard to the World Crisis would have been new to men of their wisdom and experience, while an appeal to their patriotism would have sounded decidedly out-of-place when addressed to statesmen of their caliber.

The newspapers groaned with the anguish of unsatisfied curiosity. The whispering busybodies strained their ears in vain.

No explanation was forthcoming from Buckingham Palace and no hints were volunteered by the participants in the Royal Conference.

The iron-clad rule which protects the King of England against the "risks" of being quoted was to be respected even after the downfall of the pound!

Overindulgence in guessing rarely helps solve a puzzle; on the contrary, it is often likely to obscure

the correct perspective. That is why I prefer to effect my reconstruction of the British Royal Enigma by dealing solely with facts, recent facts which are beyond doubt, as well as facts that have sufficiently receded into the past to permit frank and uncensored discussion. In this way I will not violate any confidences, and, on the other hand, I will resist the temptations which overcome all explorers in the Realm of Guesswork.

4

CONSIDER the case of a King at sixty-six, facing the most formidable problem of his life and realizing that England must be saved and the stricken world shown the "way out."

And then consider the case of the *two* Kings, for it would appear as though there always were *two* different men, both bearing the name of George V, and both living in Buckingham Palace, but resembling each other as little as a faded effigy of Caesar resembles the vigorous warrior who led his legions into ancient Gaul.

There were and there are, indeed, two Georges V: one—extremely familiar to the multitude of his subjects and to humanity at large; another—pos-

sessing a personality hidden from everybody except his relatives and close collaborators.

One whom the world has grown accustomed to consider as "just a figure-head," a mild-mannered, soft-spoken, markedly reserved, smiling, old gentleman, officiating at the race meets, and reading to Parliament the anodine speeches written by his very clever ministers.

Another—a rugged naval officer with iron nerves, who went through the fifty-one months of the war without losing his courage even for a second, a firm head of a vigorous family who succeeded in maintaining the best of the Victorian traditions in the face of a general collapse of morals; a forceful and a lucid talker who refuses to use sonorous words as a camouflage for his thoughts.

One who remained throughout the twenty-one years of his reign the Guardian and the Prisoner of the Constitution, never attempting to usurp the right of initiative vested in the Government.

Another who borrowed the stern intonations of Queen Victoria's voice when demanding of his counselors an immediate settlement of this or that thorny problem of State.

One who acquiesced and confirmed, while his ministers led and ruled; who presided at garden



Wide World photo

A HAPSBURG BY MARRIAGE, A BOURBON BY BIRTH:
EX-EMPRESS ZITA OF AUSTRIA.

parties and with a uniform smile greeted visiting American lawyers and disgruntled Hindoo revolutionaries, Arabian warriors and complaining Hebrew delegates—while his ambassadors orated at International Conferences and crossed oceans looking for a compromise that would cure the post-war ills; who welcomed anyone approved by his Parliament—whether he be an over-taxed Lord or a Laborite swelled with ambitions—while the politicians quarreled with each other and threatened resignation; who stayed secluded in his Palace not sharing in the triumphs though always ready to shoulder the blame, while others took the credit for all achievements and disclaimed responsibility for failures.

Another—the “papa” of his four sons whom these boys know to be a vastly different human being: an earnest thinker who spends many a sleepless night awaiting the dispatches from abroad or the messages from Number Ten Downing Street, and who often has to make a strenuous effort to regain that cheerful expression which the crowds lining the streets of London expect their Sovereign to wear constantly.

Of all personalities the personality of a King is the hardest to X-ray, and so the world, the near-sighted, self-complacent world of editorial writers,

foreign correspondents and political observers, overlooked the unassuming Head of the British Commonwealth and took note only of the work and quoted only the so-called "historical phrases" of his famous Prime Ministers.

The legal-minded Asquith, the ever-boisterous Lloyd George, the sadly phlegmatic Bonar Law, the meditating Baldwin, the reformed labor-agitator MacDonald—each one of these five succeeded in capturing the popular imagination, but the King himself remained, to all appearances, only the Last Mohican of Good Old England, only a certain undefinable something which was presumably helping to keep together the sister-nations of the Empire.

Didn't the bright young radicals remark almost within Royal hearing: "the existence of our Kings and the annual running of our Derby merely tend to remind Australia and South Africa, New Zealand and Canada, of their membership in the self-same organization!"

No radicals were needed, however, to demonstrate to George V the odd character of his position and to prove to him the advisability of maintaining his dual personality. His own father, undoubtedly the most talented and most brilliant of all Windsors, entertained but a very slight illusion as to the possi-

bility of the monarchistic régime being continued in Great Britain for any great length of time.

I shall never forget the reconciled irony of King Edward VII's voice when, as he sat on the terrace of his summer Palace and looking at his then very youthful grandson, the present Prince of Wales, playing in the garden below, he nudged me and said with the air of an astrologist reading the future: "You see that boy—the last King of England!"

The twenty-four years that passed since the day "Uncle Bertie" made his remarkable forecast came within an inch of proving the extreme wisdom of that Royal thinker. The three great Empires have fallen: cousin Nicky has met his death in an obscure town in Siberia; cousin Willy has retired to the life of a ruddy woodchopping squire in his very middle-class castle in Doorn; cousin Alfonso was forced to exchange the glitter of Madrid for the oblivion of Fontainebleau; and a group of odd-looking individuals, coal miners of Wales and school-teachers of Scotland, have firmly planted themselves on the benches of His Majesty's Government.

It looked as though nothing could save the Throne of the Windsors from passing out of the picture.

And then, suddenly, something strange happened, something which dealt a deadly blow to the very

idea of Democracy just at the precise moment when Democracy was riding the crest of the waves.

Mussolini and Stalin, Hitler and the firm militaristic régime in France, fascisti and nazis, leather-coated communists and gold-braided generals—in spite of the difference in their slogans, they all resembled each other in their methods. Brothers under the skin, they found supreme delight in ridiculing the “Ideals of Democracy”; they turned its program into an infernal joke, and they spoke to their cohorts of heavily armed men in a language that would have brought a grin of envy to the faces of Napoleon, Wellington and Blücher.

Depression becomes a Dictator!

When the World Crisis sounded its dismal horn, only the countries ruled by an iron fist were able to withstand the panic. Even the United States has discovered to the utter dismay of the liberal American philosophers that the Man-in-the-White-House could obtain effective results only when willing and able to substitute his own decisions for those of Congress.

What was England to do?

The choice obviously lay between appointing a dictator of unknown possibilities—a measure that would never have appealed to the liberty-loving

Britishers—or preserving the Rule of Democracy under the tutelage and protection of an unobtrusive King.

There is no limit to the pranks of history. What would King Edward VII have thought and said were he to know that fully twenty-one years after his death the flamboyant, anti-dynastic Scotsman MacDonald would be begging his son, George V, to save the British Empire from chaos and the Labor Party from the “impossible demands” of the conservatives?

5

TRAVELING in his train from Balmoral to London, the King must have mused quite a bit over this wholly unexpected turn of the wheel of history.

At the age of sixty-six, having done his utmost to keep up with the “spirit of modern times,” he was now recognizing, perhaps with a great deal of bewilderment, that he should turn to his grandmother’s and father’s policies both for inspiration and example.

He was certainly eager enough to accept the suggestions of his country’s political leaders, provided they were willing to forget their party-platforms—a thing which they obviously were not prepared to

do. And, on the other hand, every one of the problems that threatened to crush the Empire, had confronted his immediate predecessors on the Throne at one time or another.

Now and in the past his eyes had been invariably open to realities. From the very first moment of his reign he had made it a policy to keep in constant touch with his people, and, in "taking the temperature" of the Empire, not to rely solely on his ministers' reports. Aside from his own very pronounced level-headed scepticism, there was a grave object lesson provided by the fate of his German cousin the Kaiser—the Kaiser who had ordered that a special "all's well" journal, printed on gilt-edged paper, be served with his breakfast and who read with no end of childish glee the flattering comments of the Court's privy editorial writers.

Nothing of that sort would have been tolerated by George V. Every morning, whether sick or well, he began his work by perusing thirty newspapers, printed in three different languages and representing the veritable consensus of all parties' and all countries' opinions. Thanks to that lifelong habit, his knowledge of national and international affairs compared very favorably with that of the most illustrious observers of the Foreign Office. Therefore,

the alarming telephone messages which reached Balmoral Castle the day of his precipitate departure for London added but little to what he had been able to read between the sinister black headlines of the papers. His favorite journals, all thirty of them, had told him everything in unmistakable terms.

The unrest in India. The menacing financial dictatorship of France in Europe. The advisability of reaching a harmonious understanding with the United States. The necessity of granting special tariff privileges to the overseas members of the British Commonwealth. Ambitious Italy. Disgruntled Germany. A disrupted "balance of power" on the old continent. The overwhelming shadow of the "Russian bear."

The more he pondered over all those puzzles described at large in his thirty newspapers, the more clearly it dawned upon him that he had to turn to yesteryear for guidance and practical advice.

Gandhi may have been but an infant-in-arms in the days of Queen Victoria's apogee, but the Indian Problem was just as acute in those almost forgotten "glorious eighties."

His grandmother never stopped worrying over India's internal strife. The sarcastic historians notwithstanding, it was not her passing fancy nor a long-

ing for additional glamor that prompted her decision to be crowned Empress of India. It was thus that she tried to consolidate the hostile races and religions of that colossal country around a Throne that would be impartial, unbiased and helpful. Long before the big-hearted American missionaries and the sensational "special correspondents" had become aware of the existence of "untouchables" and of the revoltingly uneven distribution of wealth in India, Queen Victoria had attempted to be friendly with all classes of Hindoos. A woman in her early seventies, she decided to learn the Hindustani language and chose for teacher a simple Hindoo of small means by the name of Munchi.

"Munchi". . . . His name revives in my memory a story extremely characteristic of Queen Victoria's Indian policy, a story which is well known to King George V.

It happened in 1889. I was twenty-three and a sublieutenant on H.I.M.S. *Rynda*. Stopping in London on my return from a three-year cruise around the world I received a telegram from my cousin, Emperor Alexander III, ordering me to present his respects to Queen Victoria. As the relations between the two countries were more or less strained at that moment, I did not relish my

assignment. I had heard a great deal about the alleged coldness of the powerful Queen and was prepared to be frozen.

The invitation to the Palace mentioning "the luncheon" increased my fears. An audience has at least the advantage of short duration, but the thought of sitting through a long meal with a sovereign known for her distrust of Russia filled me with apprehension. Arriving at the Palace ahead of the appointed time, I was shown into a large somber salon. I sat alone and waited for a few minutes. Then two tall Hindoos appeared, bowed to me, and opened the double doors leading into the inner apartments. A short plump woman stood on the threshold. I kissed her hand and we began to talk. I was slightly taken aback by the very pronounced cordiality of her manner. At first I imagined it signified a coming change in Great Britain's Russian policy. The explanation was forthcoming, however.

"I have heard all sorts of good things about you," the Queen said with a smile, "I must thank you for your very kind treatment of one of my dearest friends."

I looked surprised. I could not recall ever having met anyone capable of boasting of friendship with Queen Victoria.

“Have you already forgotten him?” she asked laughingly, “Munchi, my teacher of Hindustani.”

Now I knew the reason for this warm reception, although Munchi had never told me of being the teacher of Her Britannic Majesty. I met him in Aghra while inspecting the Taj-Mahal. He spoke most intelligently of the different religions of India and I was naturally pleased to accept the invitation to dine at his house. It never dawned upon me that the fact of my breaking Munchi's bread could elevate his standing in the eyes of the haughty Hindoo Rajahs and that he would write a long letter to Queen Victoria glorifying my “marvelous kindness.”

The Queen rang the bell. The door opened letting in, of all people, our mutual friend Munchi in the flesh. We shook hands and wished each other good morning, the Queen watching this scene with obvious delight.

By the time luncheon was announced, I felt completely at ease. Fortunately I was able to answer the Queen's very relevant questions about the political situation in South Africa, Japan and China. The British Empire had a right to be justly proud of that remarkable woman: sitting at her desk in London, she followed at close range the changing conditions in far-away countries, her brief remarks dis-

closing sharpness of analysis and shrewdness of judgment.

Two days later I was invited to attend the Royal family dinner, and from that time on, for the following twelve years, the Queen continued to favor me with her friendship, our meetings taking place in the Hotel Cimiez in Nice where she was in the habit of staying each spring.

6

No Windsor, setting his course by the star of Queen Victoria and adjusting it in accordance with the "chart" drawn by King Edward VII, could possibly go wrong.

King Edward VII—"Uncle Bertie" to me and mine, and the father of the man whose train was approaching London and who was preparing to make what could be considered the most important decision in the history of modern England.

No sovereign and no prime-minister ever approached King Edward VII in quality of statesmanship and none surpassed him in clearness of thought. Round, jovial, possessing the gift of fascinating speech and suggesting in appearance a conventional dandy of the early 90's, he went around Europe

turning England's former foes into friends and supporters. He "beat" his garrulous nephew Willy to a treaty with Russia, thus settling the perennial British-Russian strife and sticking a knife in the back of the German armies. He fully realized the potential financial power of the French, a nation which never spends but always saves, and he became the most Parisian of all Parisians, feeling that such was the best way of gaining the hearts of the sceptical Latins. Had the present British Government followed King Edward's tradition of "flattering the French into working for the English," there would have been no danger of the French Government refusing to grant the Bank of England an additional loan and of the French bankers raiding the pound.

He was the first Britisher to preach the spectacular future of America, a prediction based by him on the impressions gathered in the course of his supposedly "holiday tour" through the United States in the 60's. Each summer, while playing golf with prominent New York and Chicago financiers on the links of Carlsbad, King Edward VII used to find out more about the Transatlantic policies and prejudices than could ever be learned by a dozen ambassadors spending their lifetime in Washing-

ton. He became an out-and-out pro-American in the days when the visiting citizens of that nation were still being referred to as "those impossible colonials" by the haughty members of the smart social set of London.

It was quite natural that King George V should inherit his father's Americanomania. How could the United States have taken the British side during the world conflict had it not been for certain very private talks which the King had in 1915-1916 with Mr. Walter Page, the American Ambassador in London.

"There is today one hypocrite less in London," George V said to Mr. Page on learning that President Wilson had signed the declaration of war.

"What do you mean, Your Majesty," asked Page, pretending to be surprised by this strange Royal greeting.

"You know what I mean, Mr. Ambassador, and I knew all the time that you personally were on our side from the very beginning."

Pro-American, pro-French, pro-Russian, pro-Italian! It seems that the Windsors were practicing the League of Nations virtues without learning its pompous covenant and without participating in the notorious endless conferences of the world's sixty-four war-crazed countries. One hundred per cent

Britishers, they were never little Englanders, Heaven be praised. Everyone in their family, including King George V and the present Prince of Wales, was invariably capable of sympathizing with the other nations. To be sure, the Prince of Wales resembles King Edward VII while the King takes after his grandmother, but both are made of the same material and their love for Good Old England never interferes with their understanding of changing conditions.

7

Most of those musings and recollections belong to the past. The past could have interested the London-bound King George V only insofar as it abounds in object lessons.

There were the present and the future to be considered. His thirty newspapers talked a lot about the necessity of cutting down the budget and introducing a rigid all-round economy. That was fine. He was ready to be the first to show the example. Both he and the Prince of Wales were going to voluntarily accept considerable reductions in the "civil list" granted to them by Parliament, although nobody, not even the most rabid foe of the Royal Family, could ever have accused them of prodigality.

Long before the advent of the World Crisis, the King, the Queen and their four sons had reduced their expenses to a minimum. The King's racing stable cut to a small fraction of what it was in the days of Edward VII and his yachting activities conducted on a scale far from befitting the premier yachtsman of the world, he spent the biggest part of his "civil list" in ever-increasing contributions to the various charities. Foreigners would be surprised and shocked to learn that even the secretarial department of the Court had felt the repercussion of a policy of financial retrenchment: every member of the Royal Family, including the King, writes his letters in long-hand, and there is no doubt that an average Park Avenue dowager or a Detroit automobile manufacturer employs a much greater number of private secretaries than Buckingham Palace does. As to the four Royal Princes, it is an open secret among their friends that the youngest of the boys had to wait for the day of his coming of age before being able to afford a new set of curtains in his drawing room.

Economizing and keeping a strict check on expenses had been the régime of the Royal Family since the day of the declaration of war. If further sacrifices had become necessary, the King was pre-

pared to cut his allowance from the State by still another fifty thousand pounds. Obviously, however, this was not sufficient for the salvation of the pound, even if the Government executives and employees should consent to imitate the example of their sovereign. Something besides rigid national economizing had helped Great Britain assume her spectacular place in the sun, and that something else was sadly lacking at the present moment. National Solidarity. The willingness of the statesmen and politicians to put the country above their parties, to join efforts, and to work together disregarding probable resentment and an inevitable defeat of personal ambitions.

The King knew that nothing short of a Sacred Union of all classes and parties could pull the country away from the brink of the precipice, and he must have found comfort in the realization that he would preach only what he himself had practiced when demanding sacrifices and fighting his ministers' egotism. In no way did he try in 1917 to influence his Government to intercede with the Russian revolutionaries on behalf of his imprisoned cousin Emperor Nicholas II. Although extremely fond of Nicky, he recognized that such a step would be likely to jeopardize the relations between the two

countries. So he kept this feeling in check and suffered in silence. In that same year of 1917 he even let his elder son, the Prince of Wales, join the rank and file of the fighting armies in France, thinking always of England and never of himself and his family.

Not that he wanted to be praised for his unselfish actions. Far from it. But he saw no reason why the others, the ministers, the politicians and the bankers, could not afford to do that which he had done as a matter of course.

Coming to London for a "final talk" with the three leaders, he was facing a battle, a doubly difficult battle, because while speaking in the presence of their King each one of the three powerful statesmen was likely to overemphasize the obstacles put in the way of the National Union by his political enemies and to underemphasize the handicaps created by his own party.

Had Edward VII been placed in George V's position, he would, no doubt, have endeavored to outwit the great wits and outpoint the formidable scorers of points. Fortunately or unfortunately, King George V had not inherited his father's fencing talents; only his loyalty to the nation. That being the case, he was going to talk to the three gentlemen not in the

inimitably brilliant manner of the creator of the Anglo-Franco-Russian Alliance, but in the blunt fashion of a former sailor accustomed to hear and use plain language. "God damn the soul of the Kaiser!", he exclaimed in 1918, in the course of a conversation with General Pershing, thus summarizing the attitude of the large masses of British soldiers and civilians. After all, black was black and white was certain to remain white, even in a Royal Palace, even when confronted by the glittering lights of eloquence and the fireworks of the three great leaders' generalship.

What was he to do, on the other hand, should Messrs MacDonald, Baldwin and Samuel meet his proposal to form a Government of National Union with a flat "no"?

Being a cautious Britisher, he surely must have weighed the possibility of getting a negative answer.

Continuing to think along the straight lines of a man aware of his duty, he could have reached but one conclusion: the "no" of the three leaders would have necessitated his acting forcefully and promptly. An enemy of melodrama and a great believer in the Constitution, he would have indignantly rejected any possible offer of forming a committee invested with dictatorial powers. A Windsor never breaks his



Brown Brothers photo

A KING AT SIXTY-SIX. H.M. KING GEORGE V OF ENGLAND.

oath. He swore to rule in accordance with the decisions of Parliament, and the vogue of half-Napoleonic, half-Fascist ideas sweeping England at that moment left him entirely cold.

There is just one possibility open for a loyal constitutional King when his Ministers decide upon what looks to him to be a road of inevitable peril: he can advise the country that while still eager to serve its best interests, he can not and does not wish to remain at the wheel, if the latter is to be swung by a hysterical crew in the direction of certain disaster.

In other words, a loyal constitutional King quits at the moment when, having exhausted all efforts in an endeavor to save his country, he realizes that his desire to act according to the *spirit* of the Constitution has encountered the stone wall of arguments advanced by the political leaders who prefer to stick to its *letter*. In a measure his position could be compared to that of a conscientious chairman of a mammoth concern who prefers to notify its stockholders of his resignation rather than to cover with his authority some particularly reckless decision of its board of directors.

BUT to return to facts:

It is a matter of historical record that on August 23rd, 1931, the King "saved the day" by hurriedly returning from his vacation to the capital where the leaders of the three great political parties of Great Britain were hopelessly deadlocked in their endeavors to reconcile their common loyalty to the country with their widely divergent platforms. So utterly erroneous was the public's idea as to what the King could and should do that the news of the mad all-night rush, made by the royal train from Balmoral to London, came in the nature of a revelation to many otherwise well-informed persons. Nobody needed to witness the conference between the King and Messrs MacDonal, Baldwin and Samuel to realize that the sovereign who came to demand the immediate formation of a Cabinet of National Union and the pleasant middle-aged gentleman who each spring accepted the curtsies of the American *débutantes* proved to be total and absolute strangers. Were the King to follow the constitutional interpretations of those writers who insist that "the Kings of England reign but never rule,"

he would have stayed at his castle in Balmoral awaiting the moment when the political leaders would have finally straightened out their differences and agreed upon a decision to be confirmed by him. As it happened, the King preferred to act as he had always done before: in accordance with his own conception of the responsibilities of his "job" and the limitations of his prerogatives.

"Time never runs against the King," proclaims the classical phrase, but, in truth, "time" can change its habits instantaneously and swiftly if the tenant of Buckingham Palace does not constantly watch the political developments and does not possess the knack to choose the right moment to step in. Nothing in the whole career of a modern King of England is more difficult and more nerve-wracking than this vital necessity to combine the shrewdness and the cunning of an experienced parliamentarian with the impartial and aloof attitude of a constitutional monarch. Speaking plainly, it amounts to this: a sovereign whose voice is never heard by his subjects, except on such solemn occasions as the opening of Parliament or the inauguration of a hospital, must be as eloquent and persuasive in dealing with his ministers as the most celebrated of Great Britain's statesmen and orators; a man whose

entire time is being taken up by his innumerable social duties must develop a sixth sense, a veritable set of antennae, permitting him to feel the ever-changing pulse of the country while amiably smiling at Court receptions and garden parties.

The people say: "the King of England is able to continue in office in spite of all troubles and revolutions shaking the world simply because he obeys the decisions of his government and never attempts to dictate them."

The people seem to forget that when dealing with a Cabinet made up of representatives of *one* party, the King can never overlook the "law of cycles" governing politics: a party often outlives its popular appeal long before its leader ceases to be Prime Minister of Great Britain, and the King would lose his "popularity" in no time and would show himself a mere amateur tight-rope walker, indeed, should he acquiesce placidly and meekly in each and every plan of the political combination in power.

The last twenty years in the history of Great Britain provide numerous proofs of the discreet leadership exercised by its King. His dramatic return to London on the morning of August 23rd, 1931, though containing all elements of a tense climax, should in no way be considered tantamount to

the birth of a "new" George V. Long before the World Crisis did away with venerable traditions and precedents, the King had on three important occasions demonstrated the efficiency of his "antennae." In the troublesome days of the Irish unrest he had put his foot down and demanded of his hesitating ministers an immediate settlement of that thorny problem of the Empire. In the dark months of 1916, when it had become clear to him that Lloyd George had grown up to be the symbol of victory in the minds of the alarmed Britishers, he was the one who insisted on the creation of the Coalition War Cabinet of the brilliant Welshman. And finally, in the spring of 1923, faced with the necessity of appointing a successor to the ailing Andrew Bonar Law, he scored a master-stroke of political strategy: ignoring the clearly indicated candidacy of Lord Curzon, he summoned Stanley Baldwin to Buckingham Palace, thus expressing his sympathy with the prevailing mood of the country which clamored for a sober business man and minced no words in denouncing the old-school diplomats.

All fanciful "ifs" of history are cursed with sterility. It would be idle speculation to try to guess whether the British Empire would have followed a different course if Queen Victoria or King

Edward VII had been handling the manifold tasks which confronted King George V. To one who knew all three of them well and intimately it seems as though the chief asset of the present British sovereign consists in his having solved a great puzzle which had remained a perennial mystery both to his grandmother and father. He discovered the way of reading the thoughts of that Great Britain which is lying outside of the Houses of Parliament, and this intuition, so rarely, if ever, to be found in a royal palace, overcomes the partisanship of the ministers much more effectively than those venomous letters which Queen Victoria used to address to the stubborn Mr. Gladstone or those celebrated and stinging witticisms dropped around the drawing rooms of Mayfair by King Edward VII.

Among the various comments brought forth by the overwhelming triumph of the Cabinet of National Union in the elections of October 28th, 1931, one was missing rather conspicuously: the editorial writers failed to note that the victory of the MacDonald-Baldwin-Samuel block proved, first of all, the political acumen of King George V who had foreseen it nine weeks in advance. This ability to tune his mind in harmony with the masses is something which his immediate predecessors on the

throne did not possess. His grandmother believed her prerogatives protected by the Almighty. His father never doubted the ultimate doom of the monarchistic régime. King George V, with all due respect to their memories, prefers not to disturb the Supreme Being or anticipate the future, but sets the course of the House of Windsor by that fugitive star known as "Majority." Not the majority that sits in Westminster but the majority that lives and laughs and struggles and fights its daily battles throughout the length and width of the British Isles.

It is extremely characteristic of the utter abandon of the public trend of mind that while a detailed and highly colored account of a few minutes spent by the Prince of Wales in a Whitechapel "pub" is being cabled to the four corners of the world and offered in explanation of the stability of the throne of the Windsors, no correspondent seems to notice that a much more significant, almost revolutionary, change in the relations between People and Crown has occurred in the course of King George V's reign. As recently as twenty-four years ago, the nation relied upon the Government and Parliament to guard its inalienable rights against any possible infringement by the sovereign. When the then youthful

Lloyd George was denouncing the interference of the "reactionary" House of Lords, he made no bones of the fact that he expected to find King Edward VII on the side of what in the United States would be termed "special privileges and vested interests." Today, the staunch leaders of the laborites publicly pay compliments to King George V for His Majesty's protection of their cause against the excessive demands of the conservatives, and the masses are viewing Buckingham Palace as the residence of their deputy-at-large representing that vast and heterogeneous constituency known as the British Empire. This entirely new popular attitude, product and result of the sustained statesmanship of the Crown, would be sufficient in itself to provide an impressive safeguard for the throne were it not for one danger: the nights of Great Britain are dark and foggy, and it takes the piercing eye of a rugged navigator to locate the guiding star! Possibly because of his long service in the navy, King George V encounters no difficulties in finding the nebulous "Majority," but it remains to be seen whether his successors will inherit this particular talent of the present "Defender of the Faith." I, for one, would venture no prediction as to the probable longevity of the monarchistic régime in England—

nor in any other European country for that matter; no one could without a thorough knowledge of the essential characteristics of the coming generation of sovereigns involved.

"I hope to God that there is no foundation to the rumors which have it that the Prince of Wales may refuse to ascend the throne when his turn comes," said to me an important British statesman known for his radical leanings, "that would be really tragic. It would be certain to precipitate the gravest national crisis."

The gentleman may have underestimated the capability of the younger brothers of the Prince of Wales and may have paid too much attention to idle gossip, but the point he raised was indisputable: the chances for the survival of an outmoded régime depend solely on the personal ability of its titular leader, and the mere readiness to obey the Constitution would never suffice to keep a King on his throne in the dynamite-charged atmosphere of after-war Europe. Sometimes—witness the case of Yugoslavia—an open challenge to Parliament and a bold suspension of all constitutional guarantees appeal to the masses much more and better succeed in nipping an embryo revolution in the bud.

It is a far cry from London to Belgrade. An in-

investigator would do well to first visit the more "enlightened" capitals of Europe. The logical itinerary makes Brussels his next stop.

9

ASIDE from secondary details, the constitutions of Belgium, Holland and the three Scandinavian Kingdoms were largely patterned after the English model. An expert would be sure to frown at this statement and quote numerous differences, such as certain legislative rights vested in the King of Sweden, the non-existence of the royal power to dissolve Parliament in Norway, the wide executive prerogatives of the Queen of Holland, the intricacies of the mechanism of the royal veto in Denmark and the absence of the so-called "suspension-clause" in Belgium, but the fact remains that the authors of all five constitutions were inspired by the typically British idea of demoting the monarch to the position of glorified spectator.

It is not unusual for imitators to improve upon their prototype, and were it not for the similarity in title there would be nothing left today to permit us to classify the crowned heads of Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Sweden and Norway as members of

King George V's profession. The arbiter and supreme judge of the disputes between the government and the opposition, he stands *above* but never *out* of politics, while theirs is a purely decorative office closely resembling that of the President of the Republic of France, just as far removed from active participation in the running of the State and just as much of a pompous misnomer. According to the constitutions of their countries they are allowed a greater latitude of initiative than King George V, but their keen understanding of the radical spirit of their nations makes them look toward Paris rather than toward London for inspiration, and prompts them to behave in exactly the same manner the nominal head of the Gallic Republic does. The students of modern history will recall that Alexandre Millerand, the only President of France who attempted to exercise the rights of initiative given to him by the constitution, was forced to resign three years before the expiration of his term just because of that attempt. Unlike the Americans who measure the greatness of their Chief Executives by a Rooseveltian yardstick, the majority of the Frenchmen maintain that only an affable person, thoroughly prepared to remain a mere figurehead, should be permitted to occupy the Elysée Palace.

The statesmen of Brussels, the Hague, Stockholm, Oslo and Copenhagen endorse this somewhat vulnerable point of view most heartily; they gauge the "goodness" of the ruler by his willingness to let the prerogatives of the Crown become a vague symbol of the past.

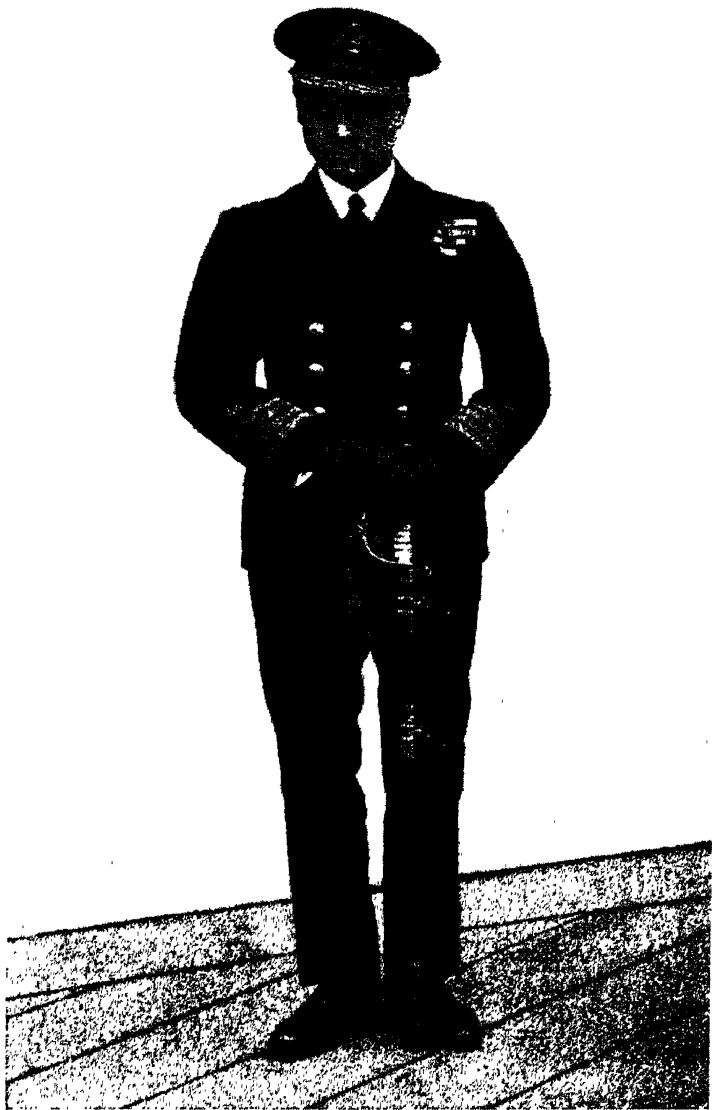
"You are quite alright. We are satisfied with you," said Anseele, the old leader of the Flemish Labor Party, at the conclusion of an audience with King Albert I, and the Belgian sovereign acknowledged this homely compliment half blushing, half gratefully. A remark of that sort would have been certain to incense his late uncle, King Leopold II, although even that confirmed stickler on royal etiquette entertained but small illusions as to the future of monarchism. Whenever talking of the growth of republican ideas in Europe, he used to add wistfully: "For myself I am not worried in the least. I have a nephew who is a socialist. . . . With him on the Throne my country will be just a hereditary republic!"

A socialist nephew succeeding to an autocratic uncle! This seems to be a complete summary of what took place in all the other Kingdoms of occidental and northern Europe. King Christian X of Denmark and King Haakon VII of Norway (known

as Prince Charles of Denmark before his coronation in 1909) broke away from the regal ideas of their grandfather King Christian IX in no less resolute a way than King Albert I of Belgium, and an equally wide gulf, both mental and emotional, separates King Gustav-Adolph V of Sweden and Queen Wilhelmina of Holland from their predecessors on the thrones. For one thing, no plainer "folk" ever inhabited the historical palaces of Europe. Hollywood directors, accustomed to think of their royalty in terms of ermine and pearls, if given an opportunity to spend a week-end with the family of reigning Bernadottes or Glucksburgs would be greatly shocked: they would find these tall healthy men and women dressed in an unobtrusive manner bordering on poverty, eating the simplest kind of food and discussing subjects that would be considered distinctly "middle-class" in the mansions of Long Island and Newport. It may amuse the Park Avenue hostesses to learn that the Belgians usually credit the democratic attitude of their ruler to the beneficent American influence: he stayed for a while in the United States, in the late 90's, studying the railroad business under the tutelage of James J. Hill. Unfortunately, neither Uncle Sam nor Mr. Hill can be held responsible for the policies of the other four

“democratic” sovereigns. Guided by a natural desire to maintain internal peace and always remembering the bitter experience of their Russian, German and Austrian relatives, all five of them are reconciled to leading the existence of crowned presidents.

In the game of political give-and-take they are to be found, when at all, invariably on the giving end, gradually divesting themselves of the few remaining vestiges of the prerogatives of their forebears. Queen Wilhelmina proclaiming immediately after the fall of the Central European Empires that her desire is “to see the necessary reforms promised by the Crown accomplished with the rapidity befitting the social rhythm of our times.” King Gustav-Adolph V meeting an identical emergency with a readiness which made the leading radical newspaper of Sweden say, “our dream has been achieved; our people have finally become the supreme masters of their destiny.” King Albert I reminding a zealous delegation of ultra-royalists that “Parliament alone can and must decide.” So similar are the defensive methods of these sovereigns that even the humor of the anecdotes built up around their “democratic demeanor” reveals exactly the same trend. As a rule, the cream of the jest is provided by the “plain-



Wide World photo

THE HAPPY PRINCE.

spoken American." That justly celebrated remark presumably addressed to the Queen of the Belgians by the wife of a high New York City official in answer to the royal appreciation of the skyline, "You said a mouthful, Queenie," finds its Swedish counterpart in a tale laid in Monte-Carlo and dealing with King Gustav-Adolph V, a famous American millionaire (sometimes described as my old friend Charles M. Schwab) and the latter's Swedish valet. Said the U. S. tycoon to the King, pointing to his servant, "I want you to meet my Eric, King. He is a Swede, too."

Both stories are great favorites with their Belgian and Swedish Majesties, who would not swap them even for that blue ribbon entry of the Buckingham Palace collection of anecdotes which describes a gentleman from Iowa as stepping out of the crowd at the Wimbledon Exposition and asking King George V to "shake hands with the son."

GRANTING the efficiency of the modern "royal defense," I must admit, however, that the best-laid plans of the Kings would have long since gone awry had it not been for the unwillingness of their peo-

ples to run the risks accompanying the initial steps of every new-born republic. The object lesson provided by the three fallen Empires has impressed the man-in-the-street not less than the man-on-the-throne. The latter shuddered and felt uneasy, but the former was equally frightened, the example of Russia—where the storm once unchained had refused to limit its destructive fury to the Imperial Palaces only—being rather discouraging to a believer in democracy.

“A campaign against our Royal Family would never meet with popular approval.” I constantly hear this hackneyed phrase which conveys no meaning other than that the devil we know remains much better than the devil we don’t know, and that it is much easier for the politicians to handle a King than to chance the appearance of a Hitler or a Trotzky. If any additional proof of this axiom is required, Italy is the country to furnish it.

What makes Mussolini tolerate the existence of the Italian Crown? No pilgrim to Rome has as yet dared to ask Il Duce this logical question, and the Encyclopaedia Britannica continues to claim, even in its last and newest edition, that “Italy is a constitutional monarchy in which the executive power belongs exclusively to the sovereign.” To quote one

of my reigning relatives: "It is a good thing that the members of our profession are still able to count on the support of the editors of the *Britannica!*"

In the estimation of the persons who are directly interested in the continuation of the pro-royal attitude of the Fascisti, Mussolini is influenced both by his fear of offending the shadow of the Liberator of Italy, King Victor-Emmanuel II, and by his unconscious imitation of the ideas incorporated in the Soviet Constitution. Just as the existence of the so-called "President" Kalinin reminds the citizens of the U. S. S. R. that theirs is, after all, a Republic—an accomplishment of the dream of three generations of Russians—the presence of King Victor-Emmanuel III symbolizes for the Italian nation the everlasting Garibaldian* idea of an United Italy. Brothers under the skin, the Communists and the Fascisti both put their official rulers in a position of similar impotence. Kalinin could no more resist the decisions of Stalin than the King of Italy could veto the bills introduced by Mussolini. The "President" of the U. S. S. R., himself an old communist, naturally rejoices in the power of his party; Victor-Emmanuel III, a descendant of the proud House of Savoy, merely bows to the inevitable, having accepted Fascism as the only way out of anarchy.

Not much need be said about the defensive methods of the King of Italy. His is an attitude of silence and of "hoping for the best." Because the fate of his royal cousin of Spain has proved that a monarch has to pay for the mistakes of a dictator, even if no particular love is lost between the two, Victor-Emmanuel III realizes that the often-asked question—after Mussolini what?—likewise affects the destinies of the reigning dynasty. When a country is threatened by revolution, a monarch should either unreservedly accept the "man-on-the-white-horse" or dare invest himself with dictatorial powers. The latter course, unattainable in the case of Italy, has often been tried, with a moderate degree of success, by the Graustark rulers of the Balkanic Kingdoms.

11

ON the warm and clear morning of April 14th, 1925, an open car of American make was slowly proceeding along the badly paved highway leading toward the capital of Bulgaria. The man at the wheel, a slender, pale-faced, dark-haired youth, breathed deeply of the fragrance of the spring air, while his two passengers, one dressed in the uniform of a chauffeur and the other suggesting an elderly professor, sat in the rear, silent and half-asleep.

Approaching a group of trees at a turn of the road, the young man thought he heard the sound of subdued human voices and glanced around questioningly. Almost simultaneously, the crack of a rifle sounded, followed by a real salvo. In the small mirror in front of him he saw his two passengers sink to the floor. He applied the brakes, vaulted out of the car and made for the nearby village. The bullets whizzing in his ears helped increase his speed and he ran for dear life.

Less than a mile from the place where he started he bumped into a heavy bus parked in the middle of the highway, with its chauffeur and passengers eating their lunch on the grass. His appearance created a storm of excitement. They glared at him as though he were a ghost. Before anyone could ask him a question he jumped into the bus, turned it around and was off.

The chauffeur and the passengers looked at each other. Could it be possible that they had really witnessed the incredible spectacle of King Boris III of Bulgaria stealing a bus?

The rest of this story should gladden the hearts of the veterans of the American frontier. There was a posse of soldiers and peasants who searched through the woods all day and all night long,

guided by their pale-faced King. More shots were exchanged, although no culprits caught.

"This incident is bound to make the King still more popular with his subjects," cabled the American correspondents in Sophia, but the hero himself thought differently. He feared that a human life is too precious to be risked for the sake of popularity and doubted whether such counterfeit pleasures should be paid for in genuine coin.

At this particular phase of the continuous Balkanic drama the curtain falls to denote the passing of three years. When it goes up again, on June 20th, 1928, the scene represents the solemn hall of the Yugoslavian Parliament. More shots are being heard: a deputy enraged by the stubbornness of his Croatian colleagues brandishes a gun and silences five of them.

Such are the Balkans. The danger spot of the world and the most unhealthy climate for a King to live in. Obviously, the British methods of upholding the popularity of the monarchistic régime would prove a dismal failure in the countries where a King gets ambushed on the highway and where parliamentary disputes are settled with the aid of a .45 Colt.

As King Alexander I of Yugoslavia expresses it

in his frank fashion: "I prefer to be called a tyrant in France and elsewhere than allow to continue in my country such political customs as would lead it toward chaos and dismemberment."

The word "allow" is being used by King Alexander I not in its Buckingham Palace sense, but in a way the snipers can appreciate. For King George V not to "allow" a measure detrimental to the welfare of his country means to make an appeal to the patriotic spirit of the leaders of the three great political parties. In the case of King Alexander I it signifies his decision to suspend the constitutional guarantees, a measure recurred to by him in January, 1929, and partly revoked since then.

"I admit," he says, "that it may be necessary to consult the leaders of the nation and I believe that the new Parliament which has just been elected understands that. But what is still inadmissible and will always remain inadmissible is that the political machinations of a single party or a local interest should be allowed to work against the good of the nation."

His reference to the "local interest" should strike a sympathetic chord in the heart of King Carol II of Rumania. The generosity displayed by the Allies in Versailles toward their Balkanic supporters has

made the position of these two young rulers extremely difficult. In 1919 it seemed quite nice to be able to put under their respective sceptres millions of brand-new subjects and miles upon miles of additional land. In 1932 they find it very nearly impossible to prevent a clash between their pre-war nationals and the strangers allotted to them by Georges Clemenceau. What King Alexander I terms "the political machinations of a local interest" represent in reality an imposing sum of grievances bred by an array of religious, racial and national differences.

Of all professions the royal one should be the last to borrow troubles, and I am appalled to think of the lightheartedness with which the rulers of Yugoslavia and Rumania have accepted the explosive gifts of the Allies. Not only did their "great conquests" jeopardize the stability of their thrones—that could be considered rather a minor tragedy from the point of view of humanity at large—but the selfsame conquests made another European war well-nigh unavoidable. No suspension of constitutional guarantees can succeed in vanquishing the animosities of millions of Hungarians, Croats, Russians and others who were "sold down the river" by the Allies, and no degree of "personal popularity" will protect a King in case of another fratricidal slaughter.

I WISH I could persuade my friend Ras-Tafari, the present Emperor of Abyssinia, to pay a visit to the European sovereigns and preach to them his sermon on the subject of Wars and Kings.

“What were you Europeans fighting for in 1914-1918?” he asked me when I saw him last in 1925 in Addis-Ababa.

I explained as well as I could.

“I know all of that,” he said impatiently, “but I can not understand why any Emperor or King should declare war unless his *own* country had been invaded by the enemy. Didn’t they know, those relatives of yours, that they would be sure to lose their thrones in case of defeat? You ask my Secretary of State what we think of war here in Abyssinia.”

The Secretary of State spared no words in describing how little they thought of war in Abyssinia. While talking in the presence of Ras-Tafari and the Dowager-Empress, this elderly statesman had to keep a handkerchief in front of his face so as to prevent his “unclean breath” from offending the sovereign.

Abyssinia, I thought, was, no doubt, the cleverest

country in the world. It did seem odd, though, that I had had to travel all the way to Africa to find the last Mohican of that majestic profession of Absolute Rulers which is no more. The Kaiser himself could not have improved upon the handkerchief idea.

