

trayed the presence of living beings in the silent train.

After a long moment a carriage door opened, and a giant in a long pale-gray cavalry coat and a blue forage-cap braided with scarlet piping and adorned with a gold tassel, stepped out softly, and making straight for me, said:

"Hush! They are asleep."  
It was two o'clock in the morning. The first official reception had been arranged to take place at Dijon, where we were due to arrive at nine o'clock. I took my seat in the train, and we started. Not everybody was asleep. In the last carriage, which was reserved for the servants, a number of maids, wrapped in those beautiful red shawts that one sees on the quays at Naples, were chattering in Italian with the greatest animation. The musical and expressive language called up in my old Corsican heart memories of my childhood.

It was broad daylight, and we were nearing Dijon, when Count Guicciarini, the King's Master of the Horse, came to take me to the sovereigns to be presented.

Grave black eyes, proud and gentle; a forehead framed in a wealth of dark hair; beautiful and delicate features; a smile that brought little dimples on either side of the mouth; a tall slight figure—I at once recognised the lady of Milan in the charming sovereign, stately and shy, who came toward me. It was the same little white hand that had tried on the gloves that she extended to me. Should I recall the incident of the gloves? I had it on my lips to do so—I was afraid of appearing ridiculous. Of course, she did not remember. I said nothing.

"Delighted, M. Paoli, delighted to know you!" exclaimed the King, fixing me with his piercing eyes and shaking my hand vigorously.

"Sir—"  
"But, stay. Paoli is an Italian name!"  
"Very nearly, sir. I am a Corsican."  
"A fellow countryman of Napoleon's, then? I congratulate you!"

Our conversation, that morning, was limited to these few words. From Dijon onward the journey assumed an official character, and I lost sight of the King and Queen in the crowd of glittering uniforms. However, a few minutes before our arrival at Paris I saw them both standing by a window—the Queen in an exquisite costume of pale-gray velvet and silk, the King in the uniform of an Italian general, with the broad ribbon of the Legion of Honour across his chest. While watching the landscape they seemed to be talking affectionately.

Meanwhile, a sedate footman entered, and placed upon a table, behind the sovereigns, an extraordinary object that attracted my attention. It looked like an enormous bird buried in its feathers. I went closer, and then saw that it was a helmet, covered with feathers of fabu-

to a little girl who had thrust herself close to the carriage. The King, on another occasion, walked straight to the colours of the battalion of Zouaves who were presenting arms in the courtyard of the foreign office, and raised to his lips the folds of the standard, on which were inscribed two names dear to Italian hearts and French memories alike: Magenta and Solferino.

The Foreign Office was turned into a "royal palace" for the occasion of this visit. The Government had the apartments on the first floor, which the King and Queen of Italy were to occupy, decorated in the most sumptuous style, and Mme. Deleasse, the wife of the Foreign Minister, did her best to relieve the somewhat cold and solemn appearance of the rooms. With this object she procured photographs of the little Princesses Yolanda and Mafalda, and placed them in handsome frames on the Queen's dressing table. The Queen was greatly touched by the delicate attention. On entering the room she uttered an exclamation that betrayed all a mother's fondness:

"Oh, the children! How delightful!"  
"The children?" how often those words returned to her lips during her stay in Paris! She spoke of them incessantly to everybody—to Mme. Lombot, to Mme. Deleasse, to the Italian ambassador, even to the two French waiting-maids attached to her service.

"Yolanda, the elder, with her black hair and black eyes, is like me," she would explain. "Mafalda, on the other hand, is the image of her father. They have both such good little hearts!"

Her maternal anxiety was also manifested by the impatience with which she used to wait for news of the princesses. Every evening, when she returned to the Foreign Office after a day of drives and visits in different parts of Paris, her first words were:

"My telegram!"  
And, a little nervously, she would open the telegram that was despatched to her daily from San Rossore, where "the children" were, and greedily read the bulletin of reassuring news that it contained.

The authorities, conforming to royal usage, had considered it the proper thing to prepare two distinct suites of rooms, one for the King and one for the Queen, separated by an enormous drawing-room. Great was our surprise when, on the following morning, the rumour ran through the Foreign Office that the King's bedroom had remained untenanted. Had he found it uncomfortable? Did he not like the room? Everyone began to be anxious, and it was felt that the mystery must be cleared up. I therefore went to one of the officers of the royal suite, took him aside, and, while talking of "other things," tried to question him as to the King's impressions.

"Is His Majesty pleased with his apartments?"

The officer looked at me, and smiled. "But the King never leaves the Queen!" he exclaimed. "With us, married couples seldom have separate rooms, unless they are on bad terms. And that is not the case here!"

They were never parted, in fact, except at early breakfast. The King was accustomed to take *café au lait*, the Queen chocolate. The first was served in the small sitting-room, where the King, already dressed in his general's uniform, went through his letters; the second in

paid our guests during their brief stay in Paris, one surprise prepared for them was, if I am not mistaken, more acceptable to them, especially to the Queen, than any other. This consisted in the recital before their Majesties, by our great actress, Mme. Bartet, of the *Comédie Française*, of an unpublished poem from the pen of the Queen herself.

Helena of Montenegro, in her leisure hours, in fact, had been a poet. When she was engaged to be married, she wrote a poem in Russian, which she sent to a



A RECENT SNAPSHOT OF THE KING AND QUEEN OF ITALY, TAKEN WHILE THEY WERE DINING.

It is said of this Royal couple that they represent the perfect type of a middle-class household that found its way by accident into a King's palace. They often dismiss the servants and wait upon themselves at meal-times.

the boudoir, where the Queen, in a pink surah dressing-gown trimmed with lace, devoted two hours every morning to her correspondence, or to the very feminine pleasure of trying on frocks and hats.

The King, as I have said, takes a keen interest in military matters. He displayed it on the occasion of the review of the Paris garrison. Even as he had appeared bored at the concert at the Elysee Palace on the previous evening, so now he seemed to enjoy the impressive spectacle that we were able to offer him on the drill-ground at Vincennes.

He wished to ride along the front of the troops on horseback, and for this purpose had brought with him from Italy his own saddle, a very handsome, richly caparisoned military saddle. The Governor of Paris lent him a mount, and the King proved himself a first-rate horseman; for the animal, unversed at having to carry a harness heavier than that to which it was accustomed, displayed ill temper, regardless of the august rank of its rider. It was the worst day's work that horse ever did in its life, and it was forced to recognise that it had found a master.

After making a thorough inspection of the troops, the King expressed a desire to examine the outfit of one of the soldiers, and a private was ordered to fall out of the ranks. Victor Emmanuel took the soldier's knapsack, handled it, looked through it, and made a move as if to buckle it on the man's shoulders himself, whereat the worthy little pion-pion, quite scared and red with dismay, cried: "Oh, non, merci, mon—mon—"

But the poor fellow, who had never even spoken to a general, had no notion how to address a King!

Thereupon the King, greatly amused, made a charming reply:

"Call me what your forebears, the French soldiers in 1859, called my grandfather on the night of the battle of Palestro; call me non caporal!"

Victor Emmanuel is too practical and matter-of-fact to be what is known as a man of sentiment. Nevertheless, I saw him betray real emotion when he was taken to visit the tomb of Napoleon I. The tomb was surrounded by six old pensioners carrying lighted torches. There were few people there. The fitful flames of the torches cast their fantastic gleams upon the imperial sarcophagus, and the invisible presence of a Great Conqueror hovered over us. It seemed as if he would suddenly rise bodily out of that coffin of marble, dressed in his grey overcoat and his immemorial hat.

During a long silence, the King stood and dreamed, with bowed head. When we left the chapel, he was still dreaming.

Among the many attentions that we

St. Petersburg magazine under the pseudonym of "Blue Butterfly," and the magazine printed it without knowing who the author was. It was written in rhetorical prose; and I was so fortunate as to procure a copy of the translation.

"VISION:"

"The mother said to her daughter: 'Wouldst thou know how the world is made? Open thine eyes.'"

"And the little maid opened her eyes. She saw lordly and towering mountains, she saw valleys full of delight, she saw the sun which shines upon and gilds all things, she saw twinkling stars and the deep billows of the sea, she saw torrents with foaming waters and flowers with varied perfumes, she saw light-winged birds and the golden sheaves of the harvest. Then she closed her eyes.

"And then she saw, she saw the fairest thing upon this earth: the image of the beloved who filled her heart, the image of the beloved who shone within her soul, the image of the beloved who gave his love in return for the love that was hers."

This charming fragment had been recovered by a collector of royal poetry some time before the visit of the Italian sovereigns. M. Andre Riviere, one of our finest poets, transposed it into French verse, and M. Loubet caused it to be recited to our hosts in the course of a reception given in their honour at the Elysee Palace.

At the risk of disappointing the reader, I am bound to confess that no tragic or even unpleasant incident occurred to spoil the pleasure of the sovereigns or their peace of mind. It appeared that the anarchist gentry were allowing themselves a little holiday.

In the absence of the traditional plot, we had, it is true, the inevitable shower of anonymous letters, and even some that were signed. The Queen, alas! had done much to encourage epistolary mendicants by announcing her wish that replies should be sent to all letters asking for assistance, and that in every possible case satisfaction should be given to the writers. The result was that poverty-stricken Italians, with whom Paris teems, gave themselves free scope; and the usual fraternity of French begging letter writers—those who had so ardently striven to excite the compassion of the Shah of Persia—also tried what they could do.

But what reply was it possible to send to such letters (I have kept a few specimens) as the following?

To Her Majesty the Queen of Italy,

Madam—We are a young married couple, honest but poor. We were unable to have a honeymoon, for lack of

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THE CROWN PRINCE AND HIS THREE SISTERS.

The Queen, who is a devoted mother, has a telegram reporting the children's health sent to her every day when she is travelling.

lous dimensions. I was not the only one to be astonished at the imposing proportions of this head-dress. Whenever the King donned it while in Paris, it met with a huge success; it towered above the crowds, the livery servants' cockades, the soldiers' bayonets; it became the target of every kodak.

From the first day, they showed themselves full of pretty thoughts and generous impulses. At one time, the Queen took a rose from the bouquet of roses de France that she was carrying, and gave it

"Delighted."  
"Was there anything wrong with the heating arrangements? Or perhaps the King does not care for the bed provided for His Majesty's use?"

"On the contrary, I believe His Majesty thought everything perfect."

Alas! I felt that my hints were misunderstood. I must needs speak more directly. Without further circumlocution I said:

"The fact is, it appears that the King did not deign to occupy his apartments."