

An Intimate Glimpse of the Court Life of Italy.

Continued from page 2.

ous Naples artist, Kasevero, was her master in technical drawing, and he encouraged her to undertake portraiture also. The sketches of her children are particularly good and delight the King, for whom they are often a Christmas or birthday present. Several attempts have been made to induce the Queen to lend her work to public exhibitions, but she has hitherto refused to entertain the idea.

She is less exclusive with regard to her verses. Most of these appear from time to time in Russian literary magazines. Horror of the spectre of war, with which she was too familiar in childhood, has inspired her finest allegorical poems. This daughter of a race of heroes has shown, nevertheless, on manifold occasions that she possesses her father's fearlessness and self-reliance. Her devoted help to the sufferers of the earthquake disaster in Messina is still fresh in everybody's mind, but many traits of courage and presence of mind remain to be told by her intimates.

The Queen is an excellent shot, having often accompanied her father and brothers to the chase in Montenegro. She delights in going on hunting expo-

lentless towards the slightest infraction of obedience that the Prince constantly trembled in his presence.

"The cobler who neglects to learn his trade is a donkey," said the General, "and a Prince is no better."

Prince Victor's teachers were warned not to lift a book or pencil that had fallen on the floor during the lesson, nor to serve their pupil in any way, but rather to let themselves be served by him. According to Dr. Luigi Moranda, his Professor of Literature, they stood as much in awe of Ossia as the Prince himself. Many were of opinion that the Draconian system to which he was subjected was out of place when dealing with such a highly-strung temperament.

"I did not grudge the bodily hardships," said the Prince once, "such as being roused to ride on a chill, misty morning when I already suffered from a heavy cold; but the public blame and the long hours of enforced inaction inflicted as penance for some slight negligence in the fulfilment of my tasks—these weighed heavily on my heart."

Prince Victor was extremely sensitive. When his Latin exercises were torn up, and he was ordered to re-write them, he first put the shreds carefully away, lest his disgrace should become known to the servants. He was also ambitious and resented his mother's successful rivalry in the studies they undertook together. Queen Margaret began to learn Latin at the same time as her son, and

"Ifs" That Changed History.

By Albert Payson Tehuene.

The greatest events of history have often hung upon some small happening that at the time seemed to be of no importance.

A word unspoken, a simple message misquoted, a chance that led a man to follow one road instead of another—on these petty things the fate of the whole world has hung.

If some minor—often absurd—thing had or had not happened at a critical time the history of the nations and the map of the earth would have been altered.

IF COLUMBUS HAD NOT TURNED ASIDE FOR A NIGHT'S LODGING.

Late one autumn afternoon in 1491, two footsore, tired travellers plodded along the high road leading from Seville to Spain's Portuguese frontier. One of the two was a mere lad. The other was a grizzled, ill-clad man of 55. The grizzled man was Christopher Columbus, a Genoese mariner. His few friends charitably called him a failure. The rest of the world laughed at him as a harmless lunatic.

Columbus had knocked about Europe sailing many seas, picking up a living sometimes as a soldier of fortune, sometimes as a mechanic. In nothing had he scored a real success. Wool comber, book peddler, merchant, captain, pirate, fighter, his voyages had carried him far afield and taught him many strange and seemingly useless things.

"Wherever ships have sailed," he once wrote, "there have I journeyed."

In the course of his wanderings in Scandinavian waters he heard from Norse sailors the old tale of Leif Ericson's voyage to a wonderful westward land. The story excited the interest and envy of the man who hitherto had liked to boast that he had journeyed to every spot on earth "wherever ship has sailed." Columbus had read the books he sold, especially those dealing with science. And at length he had worked out the strange theory that made his fellows brand him insane.

A DREAMER'S STRANGE PLAN.

His idea in brief, was this: That the world was not a vast flat plain with somewhere a "jumping off place," as most folk of his day thought. He believed that the earth was round and that by sailing west, one might reach the east and at last come back to the point whence he had started. His main idea was right; but he distorted it weirdly. For instance, he thought the world far smaller than it really is, and he was certain that the westward land found by Leif Ericson must be India.

India was in those times supposed to be a treasure country. It could be reached from Europe only by a fearfully long tedious, dangerous voyage. If, by sailing west instead of east, he could come upon a shorter route to the far side of India, Columbus believed he would be opening to Europe a vista of boundless wealth. Lucky the country that could claim possession of India's treasures by dint of such a discovery.

Full of his new and distorted theory, Columbus laid the scheme before one European monarch after another, begging for a fleet to carry out the experiment. Everywhere his entreaty was refused. To each he offered the gift of a world. Each threw away the golden prospect. The King of Portugal, to whom he applied, laughed at him. But

when Columbus' back was turned, the king secretly sent out a ship along the route the discoverer had described. The vessel was driven back by a storm, and Portugal lost for ever her chance for world's greatness.

To the Spanish court Columbus went. The King and Queen Ferdinand and Isabella, put him off with evasive answers, not really believing in his plan, yet reluctant to have it taken up by some other nation than Spain. At last, after years of poverty and waiting, Columbus was turned away. The wise men of the Spanish court had gravely decided that the world could not possibly be round; as in that case all the people on the bottom of it would fall off into space. As the world was not round no one could reach India by sailing west. So with the contempt that greets a dreamer Columbus was dismissed.

With his son, Diego, the luckless man started for the frontier. Penniless, hopeless, worn out by failure, he longed to put Spain behind him. It was his poverty and his fatigue that led Columbus, at sunset, to turn aside from the highroad toward the hillside monastery of La Rabida, instead of keeping on to the nearest town.

THE LONG ARM OF CHANCE.

The monks he knew would grant him a night's lodging. His weariness urged him to break his journey there. It was a matter of the merest chance—a tiny chance that was the turning point of his life.

If Columbus had gone on America might, for centuries longer, have awaited its discovery. The name "Christopher Columbus" would have been forgotten. Another nation in another age would have claimed the New World and would have moulded America's history along other lines. On that one "if" hangs the whole story of modern progress.

Columbus entered the monastery of La Rabida. The prior, Juan Perly de Marchena, welcomed him and listened with keen interest to a recital of his marvellous scheme. The prior was a trusted friend of Queen Isabella. Becoming convinced that Columbus' theory was correct, he interested the queen in the project. Isabella backed the desperate enterprise—and America was reached.

To the day of his death, by the way, Columbus had no knowledge that he had discovered the Western Hemisphere. He died believing he had merely opened a new route to India.

"Si non vero," etc.

English judges seem to have suddenly arrived at the conclusion that humour is a necessary feature of modern judicial administration. I was told a very good story the other day concerning a pompous gentleman who had been robbed in one of our courts of law (relates a writer in an English weekly). "Yes, sir, robbed!" And he cried out it was disgraceful that one couldn't remain in an English court of justice for half an hour without being robbed under the very eyes of the law. At length the attention of the judge was directed to the raging gentleman. "What is it that is disturbing you?" he asked. "It's an outrage, sir!" fumed the other. "My overcoat has been stolen since I entered this court." "Oh, tut-tut! That's a mere trifle," said the judge, with a pleasant smile. "Why, whole suits are lost here every day!" The pompous one was almost immediately afterwards arrested for using profane language in public.

Almost Good Enough to Be True.

An officer of one of the North German Lloyd liners trading to New York tells a sensational story of what was going to happen to that well-known shipping concern had it allowed itself to become absorbed by the English steamship companies controlled by Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan. A proposal for an amalgamation of this kind was made, and the Kaiser, hearing of it, became very angry, and admonished the company's managing director. The latter promptly assured the Emperor that the company had not the least intention of parting with its fleet. "That is good!" said the Kaiser, adding, "Before I allowed a German steamship company to be bought by an English or any other foreign concern I would order the navy to sink every ship the company owned."



A BRAVE CONSORT.

The Queen of Italy, who threw herself in front of the King to save him from the assassin's bullet.

ditions with her husband, and supports the fatigues and privations of a day in the woods better than many male members of the suite. She has also more resourcefulness, as was proved in a memorable trip through the forest of Parziano, when the party got wet some miles from the nearest place of shelter.

At the Queen's initiative they set about kindling a fire of bracken, and soon had a comforting blaze, around which they all gathered. But one of the company approached too near, and his clothes became suddenly a mass of flames. Queen Helena was the first to rush to his aid, and extinguished the fire by enveloping the incautious victim in the folds of her wrap. In doing so she got some severe burns on her hands, but nobody are the Queen's sterling qualities more appreciated than by her husband. Her fresh, undaunted spirit, and her sound judgment reinvigorated him after those moments of lassitude inevitable from the dreary round of presiding over business of State.

King Victor suffers from the restricted role assigned to him in the guidance of Italian politics. He is well versed and deeply interested in all questions of the day without power to voice his opinions or try to influence the trend of legislation. King Victor was carefully taught and trained. He often expressed his obligations to the stern mentor of his youthful days, but nevertheless he does not follow the same severe discipline in dealing with his own son. General Ossia, his first tutor, was so re-

made rapid progress; but, as he took care to point out, she was not obliged to work at mathematics, and this explained why she made more headway. Only when she acknowledged that it was unfair to judge them from the same standpoint was the boy satisfied.

King Victor is not poor, as kings go, but his expenses surpass in proportion to his income those of any other Sovereign. When the small Italian States were incorporated with Modern Italy, the Government took over the various royal residences and made a present of them to the ruler of United Italy. They are a weighty burden on his purse, while being practically useless. He cannot possibly inhabit them all—they are ever twenty in number—and he is obliged to maintain them in proper condition. Moreover, the present King has not yet paid off the debts of his grandfather, Victor Emmanuel I. His private fortune amounts to no more than £300,000, and his Civil List is £600,000. Both he and the Queen are frugal and anxious to keep their expenditure within lawful bounds. Their economy, however, never takes a selfish form, as can be seen by the following:—

King Victor declines to dismiss a single one of the two hundred men employed, more by tradition than necessity, on his Alpine preserves, whereas he forbore to compete with Mr. Pierpont Morgan for the Strözel collection of gold coins he had long coveted. The Sovereign of Italy, who is so keen a numismatist, could not afford £200 to

gratify his hobby! Luckily, a Sicilian gentleman, Baron Pennisi, outbid the American financier and kept the treasure at home. The King intends to leave his "corpus nummorum italicorum" to the Italian nation. The extent of this famous collection may be judged by the fact that it contains specimens of no fewer than 250 mints, all of which worked until the eighth century. Among the most treasured are 3500 coins of the House of Savoy. Queen Helena has furnished a good number of old Slav coins to her husband's collection and has worked with him on the catalogues, for the greater exactitude of which the assistance of all private and public collectors is invited.