

The Emperor of Japan.

The Man Behind the Sovereign.

Cable news of the last few days states that the Emperor of Japan is dying from diabetes. At the time of writing he was announced to be sinking fast.

EVEN with the greatest respect for one who must be a ruler of no mean ability, we of the West, accustomed to kings less hedged about by divine mystery, need not be ashamed of our wish to know something more of the Emperor as a man. In his character as chief of the Japanese State, he has given ample evidence of his ability above and apart from the Ministers by whom he has been surrounded. It is given, perhaps, to few Sovereigns to play such a great part as the Emperor Mutsuhito has played in the complete transformation of his country from a hermit kingdom to a world Power of the first class; and to every call upon his cooperation and ability the Emperor has nobly responded, both as a statesman and as the father of his people.

Yet from time to time comes an inkling of the man, of his interest in racing, and of his devotion to some particular breed of dogs. One story in particular had to do with the great celebration some years ago of the silver wedding of the Emperor and Empress. This great day, observed as a national holiday, was celebrated in the morning at 11 o'clock at the Imperial Palace, after the devotions of the Emperor at the shrine of his ancestors, by a Court held by their Majesties at which were commanded to be present all the Diplomatic Corps and members of the Japanese Court circle. In the afternoon his Majesty held a review of the troops; and in the evening there was a State banquet at which their Majesties were present. After the banquet there was a performance of old historical dances.

The usual customs of the English Court were observed as to dress, and the gathered crowd of guests waiting to be shown into the Throne Room looked very like that gathered on such occasions at Buckingham Palace. The Emperor and Empress received each foreign legation in the order of the seniority of the chiefs of each; and it was at this function that the homely incident occurred. A lady who reside in Tokyo for many years and who was a regular attendant at all Court functions during her residence says:

Though I have seen the Emperor many times, I find it impossible to describe him. I think no one but a flatterer could call his Majesty handsome. His face, whenever I saw it, wore the same stern, unmoved, almost bored expression; and I always felt that his anger would be terrible and unforgiving. Seeing him thus, it seemed easy to understand the aloofness and loneliness of the Mikados of Japan through so many centuries.

By his side sat Haruko, his consort, daughter of Prince Ichijo Tadaku, the head of one of the branches of the Fujiwara, the most noble family in the Japanese peerage whose descent is equally ancient and only one degree less illustrious than that of the Imperial family. Small even for a Japanese lady, daintily clad in a beautiful gown of silver brocade, her neck covered with beautiful diamonds, and her hair dressed almost exactly like that of our own Queen Alexandra, surmounted by a diamond crown, she stood a figure of perfect dignity.

On this solemn occasion, as the file of guests passed through, the Emperor stopped the First Secretary of the British Legation, and with a sudden show of interest held an animated conversation about the health and recent feats of a pony belonging to the Englishman which had taken the fancy of the Emperor at the last meeting on the local race course. When one remembers the occasion, one gains here a slight glimpse of the man behind the Sovereign.

No doubt much of the Emperor's ability and adaptability to new circumstances is due to his sensible upbringing. He was a son of the Emperor Komei and a Court lady; and was called to the throne in 1867, when only fifteen years of age. At first it was thought that the young Sovereign's extreme youth and influences surrounding his childhood would prevent his taking any more active part in the government of his country than his secluded ancestors had done; but, partly owing to his first excellent adviser at

the moment of his accession—the Tycoon Hitotsubashi, whose leaning towards foreign customs is a matter of history, and partly to his own determination and powers of observation, which, even at that early age, seem to have been wonderfully developed—the country soon realised that here was no mere figure-head, but an Emperor or Tenno who intended to hold the reins of government and to hold them firmly.

Mutsuhito had been in the lifetime of his father entrusted to the care of a Court noble to be brought up in his pri-

the year 1809 the Emperor received the foreign representatives in audience, and a natural and easily written description appeared in one of the English newspapers then published in Japan. It is too long to quote in full, but the description by an eye-witness of the young Sovereign may be of interest. The audience was held in a large hall, in the centre of which was a raised platform on which stood the throne.

The day chosen was January 5; bitterly cold, the snow-laden atmosphere adding to the perpetual gloom of the Imperial precincts. On the throne, swathed in the masses of crepe and silk, which composed the Court dress of that day, sat the young Mikado, a languid-looking boy . . . whose face either from training or indifference showed no sign of interest or vitality.

When in 1890, arrayed in the uniform of a generalissimo of the army, wearing

owe their origin to the English or foreign experts of long ago.

The Emperor takes the keenest interest in all military manoeuvres, often spending hours in the saddle watching the reviews of his troops, regardless of fatigue or bad weather. His Imperial Majesty is himself one of the finest horsemen in Japan. In the beautiful Fukianga Gardens surrounding the imperial palace he has his own private racecourse, where it was one of his pleasures to invite parties of guests to witness feats of horsemanship, and where he himself often rode in private. Apart from the pleasure, the Emperor desired to encourage his subjects to a keener interest in horses, and thus to assist him in improving the breed. There is now a large and flourishing horse-farm in the North Island at Sapporo.

His Majesty also honours with his patronage and occasional presence the race-meeting in Yokohama, held twice a year, in which all the European residents in Japan take keen interest and part. He always presents a cup, which is eagerly competed for.

Special preserves are set apart in some of the Emperor's grounds for the shooting of game and netting of ducks, the latter an exciting national sport in which his Imperial Majesty occasionally favours distinguished foreigners with invitations to take part.

Art and literature are both encouraged by the Emperor and Empress, who occasionally visit the periodical Art Exhibition held in Tokyo, almost always sending a Court attendant afterwards to make purchases amongst the exhibits. His Majesty is himself possessed of literary talent; he has written much poetry, though only a few of his verses written on special subjects connected with his country have been made public. One short poem quoted in Baron Suyematsu's book, "The Risen Sun," said to be written during the war with Russia, shows in one short verse much feeling for the nation.

Here is a stanza:

Kora wa mina
Ikusa no niwa ni
Ichitate
Okita ya hitori
Yamada morurusu

Translation:

I suppose all sons to the front are gone
To do their duty all under arms,
And their old Sire at home alone
Guards and watches their lonely farms.

Curiosities of the Magnet.

The magnet can lift five and a-half tons. These giant magnets used in iron and steel mills can (says the "New York Tribune") pick up hot as well as cold billets, and a single one of this character will displace half a hundred workmen. A further improvement may be noted in the combination of "skull-cracker" and magnet. The "skull-cracker" is a huge pear-shaped ball of iron suspended by a chain to a hook and steel ropes. This "skull cracker" is dropped with great force on scrap metal to be broken up for re-melting. It breaks the metal into convenient small pieces, and is lifted up and down by the magnet until the scrap is reduced to proper size. Then the invisible fingers of the magnet gather up the small pieces and carry them to the melting furnace. The entire operation is accomplished in one-hundredth of the time formerly required by manual labour. More recently magnets have been employed in the milling industry to pick out small particles of metal that frequently get into flour and cause explosions through friction when they come in contact with the big rollers. Not a particle of metal can escape the powerful magnets suspended over the chute through which the grain passes. In mining and metallurgical work the magnet has become an indispensable labour-saving agent. The magnetic separation of ores has saved thousands of dollars to mining companies. When the rocks are crushed and pulverised powerful magnets gather up the infinitesimal parts of metal released from their beds and convey them to the smelting furnace. Quantities of ore can thus be saved from old tailings that were formerly considered pure waste. Recently commercial magnets were employed for the novel purpose of raising sunken treasures. A big cargo of nails was lost in twenty fathoms of water, and the loss seemed irreparable until some enterprising genius raised them easily and cheaply by means of a magnet suspended from a derrick by steel cables.



HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY MUTSUHITO, EMPEROR OF JAPAN.

vate family in a sensible, simple manner, without the over-indulgence and flattery which the wise parent knew would fall to the child's lot in the Court. It is probable that these early days did much to mould the character of the Prince.

Discussions on the opening up of the country to foreigners may have fallen on attentive young ears, and in the hours when he sat on the throne apparently without interest or vitality the busy brain of the young Emperor may have been revolving schemes even then for the development and glory of his country.

It was with feelings of horror on the part of most of the old nobility that the Emperor's leaning towards the new civilisation was recognised. It seemed to their little short of sacrilege that the Being, almost too sacred to be seen or looked on as he passed on his first journey from Kyoto to Tokyo in 1868, carried in his nimble or litter of plain white wood, with a roof of black lacquer ornamented with the Imperial chrysanthemum in gold, fine bamboo blinds allowing him to see without being seen, surrounded by Kuges or Court nobles on foot, as he passed in a profound silence through crowds bowed down in reverence, should, in less than three years, drive in a foreign carriage, dressed in European costume through the streets of Tokyo where all might gaze at him.

the order of the Rising Sun as his chief decoration, the Emperor Mutsuhito opened his first Parliament, he presented as great a contrast to the boy of seventeen as does the Japan of to-day to the Japan of the first year of his reign.

In appearance now the Emperor of Japan is tall in comparison with most Japanese. He is not handsome, but he has strongly marked, rather thick features, and keen, watchful eyes. His manners are like those of Japanese of all classes, courteous; but he seems always surrounded with an air of mystery and aloofness, perhaps the heritage from the long line of secluded ancestors who came before him. His determination and force of character are well known, but Mutsuhito is one of those Sovereigns sufficiently enlightened to force no measure of his own which can in any way militate against the good of his beloved country. He devotes hours of each day to the close study of the affairs of State in an apartment in the palace where he attends to public matters, showing special interest in the navy and army. Most newspapers of the country find their way into the palace, and many are said to be read by the Emperor himself. Very soon after his accession to the throne of Japan foreign advisers, teachers, and medical men were engaged to instruct the Japanese, and very many of Japan's present successful institutions