

A Monarch with Influence.

King Charles, the Most Influential and Impressive Potentate in the Balkans, has made Roumania Modern, Peaceful, and Wealthy, and raised the Finest Army in Europe.

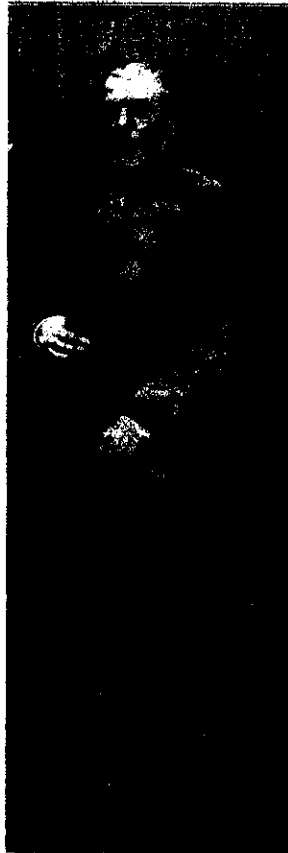
ALONE among the potentates ruling an independent realm carved from a slice of Turkey, Charles, King of Roumania, kept out of the war in the Balkans. His Majesty, indeed, repudiates the notion that he is a Balkan king. He is reputed the fiercest foe among the many enemies of Czar Ferdinand of Bulgaria. Time and again he has been proclaimed that when Ferdinand forces his way into Constantinople, Charles will march into Sofia. The whole policy of King Charles is based upon the theory that whatever aggrandizes Ferdinand menaces Roumania. The feud of these potentates has long kept the Balkans alive with rumours, now of their reconciliation, again of their approaching clash. They are, as the "Figaro" of Paris thinks, a well-matched pair. Their external careers run parallel, although their personalities are at opposite poles. Like Ferdinand, Charles came to a country in the last stages of desolation, torn, as the London "Outlook" remarks, by internecine dissensions, the prey of rapacious feudal aristocrats. When he made his triumphal entry into Bucharest as a dashing young prince, Charles found an army disorganised, a bureaucracy corrupted, a peasantry degraded and a patrician caste immoral and inefficient. In the forty-seven years of his reign, Charles has made Roumania modern, peaceful, wealthy. Once the cockpit of eastern Europe, occupied again and again by Turk, Russian and Austrian, Roumania has risen to power, to glory and even to intellectual distinction as a land of poets, artists and statesmen.

King Charles, who springs from a branch of the Hohenzollerns older even than the dynasty now ruling Prussia, retains in his old age the shrewdness, the nervous energy, the artistic tastes and even the skill with the foils that were his as Prince Charles Eitel-Frederick Zephyrin Louis. He shows no trace of that fantastic and visionary spirit which seems to animate his rival Ferdinand, but, as the Vienna "Neue Freie Presse" tells us, Ferdinand is without the discretion, the gravity and the humanitarian instinct of Charles. Ferdinand wants the centre of the stage. Charles prefers to manage the show. The difference between them is additionally conspicuous through the fact that Ferdinand is always pushed for money, whereas Charles pushes into no extravagance and pays all bills promptly. Charles, too, shows perfect placidity and poise, avoiding the spectacular, having few intimates and forcing no issues. His one passion is the army, and here, perhaps, he is very like Ferdinand. But Charles is not at all eager to have a gaily dressed, parading and conspicuous army, like Ferdinand's. The Roumanian troops are known only through the reports of military experts, who pronounce them the finest in Europe. No "pipe clay" is tolerated.

The influence of the Queen of Roumania—last Princess Elizabeth of Wied who is known to all the world as Carmen Sylva—may explain the eagerness of the court of Bucharest to educate the masses. At any rate, Charles is the most pedagogical potentate on any throne. If his passion is the army, his relaxation is the schools. Teaching and the paraphernalia of education engross him always. Nothing seems to afford him such delight as the primer and the elementary grammar. He has set up schools in the wildest and least accessible portions of his dominions for the children of peasants who themselves have never seen a book. When travelling in Roumania, that close student of the Balkans, Edith Sellers, chanced to visit a village high up in the Carpathians, where in winter "wolves and even bears have still to be reckoned with." To her amazement, she found in these wilds a large school with well-appointed class rooms. The boys and girls had not a choice of stocking among them, while their garb was ragged. They could all read, write, and reckon. They could recite poetry and impart an amazing mass of informa-

tion about the United States, about the moon and about radium. The system behind this is the personal creation of Charles.

Now that they behold the fruits of his unremitting labours for their welfare, the Roumanians, writes Miss Sellers in "The Fortnightly Review" (London), no longer clamour for his deposition, no longer march upon the capital with threats to behold him. He need no longer walk armed from head to foot, constantly on guard lest a conspirator among the territorial aristocracy stab him in the back. His policy, which once made Bucharest the most turbulent spot in Europe, has been crowned with success, and the throne is safe. "There was a time," observes the lady, who knows



A HOHENZOLLERN WITH THE BREEDING OF A BOURBON.

her subject well, "when he who is now hailed as his country's saviour was dubbed tyrant, was held up to public execration as a traitor, and had every form of insult hurled at him." Time was when even the members of the Ministry sneered at the King in the Royal presence itself and made arrangements in contemplation of his flight. He was threatened with the loss of his throne to his face. He was reminded of what had happened to his kinsman, Maximilian, in Mexico. "There is probably not another Prince alive to-day," writes Miss Sellers, "who, had he been treated as King Charles was treated by a section of his subjects, during the first six years of his reign, would not have shaken the dust of Roumania from his feet." Seldom has the trait of tenacity, which pre-eminently characterises the King, been put to so severe a test. The quality was manifested in another sphere through the pains it cost him to acquire the dialect

of the Roumanian peasantry. It is a most baffling idiom, but the King mastered it after nine patient years. There is said to be no part of Wallachia and Moldavia in which he cannot make himself understood in the local lingo.

The temperament, the personal charm and good looks of the King of Roumania are inherited from the Beauharnais, the fascinating family into which the great Napoleon married when Josephine became his wife. King Charles, says the Paris "Matin," has the exquisite softness of the Beauharnais manner, the ineffable sweetness of the Beauharnais smile, the inexpressible grace of the Beauharnais deportment. They are all a direct inheritance from that Stephanie Beauharnais, who was the great Napoleon's adopted daughter and of whom the King of Roumania is grandson. He has her swimming eyes, we read, and her pensive melancholy, her impenetrable reserve and, to be quite candid, her unconquerable obstinacy.

To the Beauharnais blood in him must be ascribed, the French daily infers, the absence of certain domineering traits conspicuous in the Hohenzollerns. Thus the King of Roumania lacks that sense of personal intimacy with God which the Prussian dynasts can never forget. King Charles meets his Ministers upon the simple equality existing among gentlemen. The instincts of the gentleman, we read, are all his—impeccable politeness, an easy and unimposing manner, a delight in the amenities of life and a tact that is pronounced enchanting. He is a true Beauharnais in his love of the society of literary men and artists, with whom he corresponds freely. His personal tastes are decidedly French in such matters as reading and the theatre. His morals, as is pointed out by the same authority, are not French in the Bourbon sense. Charles is emphatically a "respectable" King, with decided ideas regarding the sanctity of marriage and the importance of religious faith. Although a Hohenzollern, he comes, as Miss Sellers points out, from the democratic branch of the family, the Roman Catholic. He has set his face against the traditional immoralities of garrison life, frowning upon duels, upon cards and upon the type of officer whose gallantries are notorious. The tone of court life at Bucharest is, in truth, pronounced Puritanical in the early Victorian sense and the King is anything but popular with gilded youth. The piety that seems to come over Bonapartes in their old age is said to be his in a disconcerting degree.

In "the art of being King," as the French call it, Charles invariably excels. Balkan monarchs are often laughed at in the more ancient capitals as parvenus of the worst description, flamboyant, loud, vulgar. Peter, of Serbia, for example, is sneered at as a newly rich. Nicholas of Montenegro is called a mere press agent. Ferdinand of Bulgaria seems the strutting actor. George of Greece is humdrum and bourgeois. Charles of Roumania alone impresses the French dailies as a real king in the finely royal sense—distinguished in bearing like the Hapsburgs, handsome like the Bourbons, regal like the Braganças, suggesting a race of superior beings like the Hohenzollerns, and yet inoffensively condescending like the dynasty on the British throne. He is the only Balkan king, we read, too, who "makes an etiquette." His subjects copy his clothes if they want to be fashionable and imitate his manners if they wish to seem well bred. There is a something in the atmosphere of society at Bucharest which proclaims the presence of a member of one of the great European dynasties. If Charles goes to Rome, to Berlin or to St. Petersburg, he is received by potentates there upon a plane of equality as one legitimately among them. To use the jargon of this subject, "he belongs." Poor Peter, King of Serbia, who lived so long in a cheap boardinghouse on money borrowed from his tailor, very obviously does not "belong" while Nicholas of Montenegro is palpably a laughing-stock. Ferdinand goes about with such a retinue of gamblers, that the courts he visits are impregnated for weeks after. Moreover, he is very poor pay. His bills are enormous, but the tradesmen of Paris find it hard to collect. In details of this sort Charles of Roumania remembers that punctuality is the courtesy of Kings. He never haggles over the price of a picture and no member of his suite tries to borrow your money. Furthermore, he understands the use of a knife and fork, and not every Balkan king has got that far. Nicholas of Montenegro ate spaghetti in Rome with his fingers at the palace!

The civilisation, the culture and the courtesy of the court of King Charles

have been maintained, according to French dailies, in the face of all sorts of influences tending to subvert them. Life at Bucharest is coloured by the demoralised state of the Boyars, or great landlords. Their tone was destroyed by a long subjection to the Turk. The moment they were freed—and freed by the success of Charles himself—they became the most extravagant, the most dissolute and the most luxurious of all existing societies. They lived upon their rents, reeking an illiterate peasantry. The life-work of King Charles has been the civilisation of this element. Set over an aristocracy plunged in sloth and vice, he established a literary and puritanical court. Surrounded by men with the morals of Moslems, he lived like a Christian gentleman. His Queen won a world-wide fame as a writer while living among savages. The Crown Prince, who happens to be the King's nephew, has taken his cue from Charles. The ladies of the court—that is, the Princesses—live according to those standards which etiquette sets for royal families in England. The aggressive correctness of deportment, the rigid observance of form and ceremony and the Puritanical propriety at court are said to be as irksome to the royal family as to the Boyars. The flood of barbarism all about has left the Roumanian King no alternative. Sunday is rigidly observed at court. Dress is prescribed for every occasion, and there can be no departure from conventionality. Literature and the arts are systematically patronised. Manners must be civilised. It is all bewildering to the Boyars, who are a drinking, swaggering, and spendthrift lot, prone to extracting the last coin that can be wrung from their tenants.

Nothing in the career of King Charles has so surprised Europe, however, as his inactivity in the whole Balkan crisis. Is it possible, asks the Paris "Figaro," that Charles has abandoned his role of the policeman of the Balkans? Or has he come to some agreement with Russia? The unexpected honour recently conferred upon Charles by the Czar—the rank of field marshal in the Russian army—in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of his accession to the throne of Roumania, is interpreted as a hint. Amid the darting currents of conjecture Charles steers his course serenely, keeping his own counsel, maintaining his habitual courtesy and looking warily to the equipment of one of the finest armies in Europe.

Pius X. has forbidden smoking in the Vatican, and the guards, chamberlains, and attendants are disconsolate. Not even in the privacy of their own chambers are they allowed to puff their cigarettes or pipes. The Pope, in consequence of a severe cold, has himself abandoned smoking, and, like Leo XIII., contents himself with snuff. American tobacco factories formerly sent the Pope annual presents of tobacco. He has now requested them to stop sending cigars and pipe tobacco, but to send snuff instead.

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