PRICE ONE SHILLING.

BORN A KING.

CASSELL & COMPANY, LIMITED:

LONDON, PARIS & MELBOURNE.

1239

Dedicatoria Autógrafa Autor

Alice Benson

from one of the writers

of 47

With many thanks for her help.

Christmas. 1991

ALFONSO XIII.

BORN A KING;

OR,

Passages from the Early History of His Most Catholic Majesty, Don Alfonso XIII., King of Spain.

BY

FRANCES AND MARY ARNOLD-FORSTER.

Illustrated.

CASSELL & COMPANY, LIMITED:

LONDON, PARIS & MELBOURNE.

1892.

To

WILLIAM EDWARD ARNOLD-FORSTER,

THIS ACCOUNT OF HIS ROYAL COEVAL

IS AFFECTIONATELY

Dedicated

BY THE AUTHORS.

PREFACE.

FROM the earliest period in human history Kings and Babies have attracted a very large share of the interest and attention of mankind.

In one respect the Infant and the Monarch have usually displayed a common peculiarity: they have alike sought for absolute power—an object which the former has always, and the latter occasionally, obtained. But in most other respects their lives and occupations have been as dissimilar as was to be expected from the disparity in their positions and duties.

It has occurred to the authors of this little book that an opportunity presented itself of claiming for the subject of this memoir a double share of interest, and of combining in this brief history the interest of two classes of readers.

To be able to unite in one recital the story of an occupant of the throne and of the occupant of the cradle is a privilege which has not hitherto been accorded to any historian. The picture in itself is one which is worth painting. The accession of the little posthumous child to the historic throne of the kings of Spain, the mingling of the trifling and familiar incidents of a baby's life

with the stately ceremonies of the most stately court in Europe, is in itself quaint, pretty, and pathetic.

So rare a combination deserves at least some few pages for its record.

Some great kings there have been whose lives have counted for less in the history of Europe than that of this little one, whose advent was everywhere hailed with gladness as one more addition to the influences which make for peace.

And if the biography of a baby king should be written at all, it should be written while he is still a baby. The realities of boyhood and manhood will soon take the place of those of babyhood and childhood, and will assuredly overshadow, if they do not obliterate, the pretty picture of the child-king in his mother's arms, the centre of the hopes and affections of a great nation.

CONTENTS.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

Here all things in their place remain,
As all were order'd ages since.
Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and Pain,
And bring the fated fairy Prince.

TENNYSON.

BORN A KING.

CHAPTER I.

THE COMING OF THE KING.

"THE cyclone has passed and the king has come: the smallest possible quantity of king."

Such were the opening words of the *Ilustracion Iberica* one morning in May, 1886.

Newspapers do not always tell the truth, but the *Ilustracion* this time was recording solid facts. The cyclone which passed over Spain in the early part of May was one of exceptional severity. It passed away on the 14th and its departure was followed by an arrival. That arrival was his Majesty Don Alfonso XIII., who was born on May 17th.

The cyclone had passed, the king had come, and—the king *was* a very little one.

To put it plainly, his majesty was a baby, a new-born baby, and a very small new-born baby.

In every sense the event was remarkable. It will be readily admitted that not everyone is born a king; on reflection, we shall also realise that not by any means every king is born a king either. In fact, though the Court of Spain has a tradition and a precedent capable of being appealed to in almost every conceivable circumstance in the exalted lives and exalted deaths of the sovereigns of Spain, not even the long archives of the Court of Madrid could furnish a precedent of a king who had been born a king. Nor are the combined records of Europe richer in examples. Our English Henry VI. was proclaimed King of England and France before he was a year old; but even he had had to put up with an interval of nine months of uncrowned obscurity between his birth and his coronation. Louis XV. of France was led to his coronation in leading strings at the tender age of five. But neither Henry nor Louis, nor any of their royal forefathers, or royal descendants, ever attained the peculiar glory reserved for the monarch whose accession and entry into the world are here recorded.

Six months before the birth of Alfonso XIII. a dark cloud hung over Spain. Alfonso XII., the much-loved sovereign, had just passed away at the early age of twenty-eight. The hopes of moderate men of all parties in Spain had rested on the life and reign of the king. For a brief ten years that reign had lasted, and Spain, meanwhile, had rest under a settled and peaceful government. In November, 1885, the news, sad and unexpected, passed from one end of Spain to the other that Alfonso was dead. Soon it was known that, following the immemorial custom, the body of the king would be laid amongst the tombs of the sovereigns

of Spain, in the royal monastery of the Escurial, and a sorrowful crowd surrounded the building waiting to witness the royal funeral.

Very imposing and very impressive must the ceremonial have been. Slowly the long funeral procession from the station wound up the hill to the monastery, until the funeral carriage reached the great doors of the building. These were closed, and the Lord Chamberlain proceeded to knock at the gates, to ask for admittance. From within the question came:—"Who seeks to enter?" The answer was given:—"Alfonso the Twelfth," and thereupon the doors were thrown open.

No one descended into the vault save the Prior, the Minister of Grace and Justice, and the Lord Chamberlain. The coffin was placed in the magnificent black marble vault where are laid the kings of Spain in their great marble tombs. The Lord Chamberlain, unlocking the coffin, which was covered with cloth of gold, and raising the glass lid from over the king's face, commanded perfect silence.

He then knelt down and cried three times aloud in the monarch's ear—

"Señor, Señor, Señor."

Those who were waiting in the church above heard the thrice-repeated call sounding like a cry of despair as it came from the lips of the king's favourite companion and friend, the Duke of Sexte.

The Duke then rose, saying in the words of the ritual—

"His Majesty does not answer; then it is true the king is dead."

He locked the coffin and handed the key to the Prior, and taking his wand of office, he broke it in pieces and flung them at the foot of the coffin. Then, once more, the procession left the monastery, the bells tolled, and the guns announced to the people that Alfonso XII. had been laid with his ancestors.

"El rey e muerte!"

The king was dead; but, alas! they could not cry, as they were wont on such occasions, "Viva el rey;" for though one king was dead, another was not alive: the throne of Spain stood vacant.

Queen Christina, the late king's widow, was appointed regent. The Princess of the Asturias, her five-year-old daughter, would, in default of any other heir, have succeeded in natural course to the throne of Spain, but for the hope that a son might yet be born to fill the late king's place. It was known that such a hope might be fulfilled, and a month later, in the closing days of 1885, the queen appeared before the Cortes to take, in the presence of the representatives of her people, a solemn oath of allegiance to the heir to the crown.

The President of the Congress, approaching the throne, said—

"Will it please your majesty to recite before the Cortes the oath which you have already made before the Council of Ministers."

Queen Christina rising, placed her right hand on the Gospels, and said in a low tone, but with composure and dignity—

"I swear by God and the Holy Gospels to be faithful to the heir to the crown during his or her minority, and to guard the laws; so God help and defend me."

It was in the second week of the following May that Madrid was visited by the terrible cyclone, whose passage we have seen chronicled by the papers, as immediately preceding the birth of the king.

The fierce storm did terrible injury to life and property, and amid the distress which prevailed among the suffering people of the capital the queen won the love and admiration of her subjects by visiting the scene of the disasters and comforting the wounded in the hospitals. That was on the 13th of May. It was on the morning of Monday, the 17th, that the great event took place.

The good citizens of Madrid, in eager anticipation, thronged the Plaza del Oriente watching the flagstaff over the palace for the expected signal. It is past noon, and still the crowd waits on in the sunshine, in suspense. When lo, suddenly and silently, there rises to the top of the flagstaff the royal standard of Spain, the broad red and yellow folds showing the castles of Castile and the lions of Aragon, and announcing a great fact.

Ferdinand and Isabella, Charles and Philip had yet another successor, and the KING was born! "Viva el rey!"

Bang! Bang! the guns have begun to celebrate the event with that noisy form of expression which seems to be essential to the happiness of kings—a royal salute. Twenty-one! there can be no mistake about it—the loyal hearts of the citizens of Madrid may rest in peace, Alfonso XII. is dead, but Alfonso the XIII. reigns in his stead.

The flag and the cannon announce the good news to Madrid, and the telegraph and the post pass it on to Spain, and to the

rest of the more or less interested world. Spain itself belongs to that part of the world which is necessarily very much interested, and soon Barcelona and Seville, Valladolid and Granada and all the great cities of Spain, are saluting and cheering, while in the provincial churches they are singing Te Deums in emulation of the capital.

Meanwhile there assemble in Madrid, as in duty bound, all those high dignitaries of Church and State whose presence is always considered to be indispensable on all important occasions, sad, solemn or joyous. Deputations from the Cortes, representatives of the army, the navy, the church, and the municipality, and all the great dignitaries of the court, hasten to the palace, obeying the imperative summons of official etiquette.

At half-past twelve the Duchess of Medina de las Torres, the mistress of the robes, emerges from the royal apartments, and appears among the gathering of expectant officials in the antechamber. She makes her way to the prime minister, Señor Sagasta, and to him announces the great news that a king is born.

A few more minutes only passed, and, while the crash of the royal salute still echoed through the palace, a still more important and interesting person enters the apartment where the gathered courtiers are waiting. The doors are thrown open and there enters no less a personage than His Majesty the King. As to the manner of his entry there is some conflicting testimony. That he was carried in the arms of his aunt, the Infanta Isabella, is conceded by all; but as to the exact nature of the article upon which His Majesty reposed there is still some obscurity. According to one

contemporary account, his majesty was throned upon a silver salver; but another historian has it that he reposed upon a cushion; such are the discrepancies of history! But these conflicting accounts are reconciled when we read in a Spanish paper that the king "was carefully laid upon a rich silver salver, upon which a cushion, trimmed with deep flounces of lace, was artistically arranged." In this manner the sovereign was borne in, and then the salver, with its little burden, was entrusted to the hands of Señor Sagasta, to be by him presented to the assembled dignitaries.

"Viva el rey!" cried Señor Sagasta.

"Viva, viva!" was the joyful cry of all.

But if his subjects were pleased, it is to be feared the king was not. He alone took no part in the joyful demonstrations of his loyal subjects, but "His Majesty wept bitterly." A king has often dissolved an audience by violent speech or hasty act, but it has never before been recorded that any monarch dissolved an audience by his tears. This was, however, undoubtedly what happened in this case. His Majesty cried, whereupon the silver salver once more headed the procession, and was borne back by the Duchess of Medina to the queen's rooms, and the baby was returned to his mother to be covered by her kisses.

The king having withdrawn, the council broke up, and the ministers left the palace and bore to the parliament the news of the king's birth, with feelings of loyalty perhaps none the less fervent because relieved of the somewhat embarrassing presence of their sovereign.

President Sagasta spoke of the past sorrows and anxieties

of Spain, and of the renewed hope of the country centred in the royal cradle. He ended by calling upon all Spaniards to be ready to defend their little king; words which were received by a spontaneous outburst of loyal cheers, both from the Conservative and Liberal ranks. It was remarked that the Republican members alone were absent from the House.

The outburst of loyal cheers in the Cortes was, indeed, but the echo of the rejoicing of all Spaniards who loved their country and desired her prosperity. The birth of a king meant for Spain the continuance of a peaceful and orderly government. Without a king it was but too probable that the country would again have been plunged into all the horrors and miseries of the long civil war to which the accession of Alfonso XII. had put an end in 1875.

The memories of those years of strife were still fresh in men's minds; they could not lightly forget how, little more than ten years ago, Spain had been the bloody battlefield in which Carlists, Republicans, and many another faction had fought out their quarrels, how their country had been laid waste, her trade ruined, and how, during those years of anarchy, government succeeded to government, but all governments alike failed in bringing back order and peace to the divided and blood-stained country.

Spain had been brought by civil war to the brink of destruction, her national existence had been nearly destroyed, her trade had been ruined; she was only saved by a sudden and general rallying of the best of the nation in support of Alfonso XII.

For ten years Alfonso reigned over Spain; and in those ten years the country gradually settled down in peace, whilst her trade revived and prosperity returned.

Liberals and Conservatives alike had learned to look to the throne and constitution as the best guarantee of the peace of Spain, when the death of the king fell on the country as an unexpected and crushing blow. It is impossible to realise the importance to Spain of the birth of the infant king Alfonso, unless we can to some extent realise the story of the preceding years, and what Spain had suffered during her long civil war. That story we have tried to tell very briefly, for it is not a history of Spain, but a history of her tiny king that we are now recording.

CHAPTER II.

THE NAMING OF THE KING.

THE fact of the king's birth had been duly proclaimed, but to proclaim the king himself was more difficult, inasmuch as he had no name whereby to be proclaimed. So strong was the popular feeling as to the name it behoved him to bear, that on the very day of his birth telegrams of congratulation came pouring in to the palace, addressed to "Don Alfonso XIII." In this the popular wish was at one with the royal mother's own desire, but there were more points to be taken into consideration and more opinions to be consulted than might have been supposed. "Now that His Majesty has been born," wrote one

of the Spanish illustrated papers, "it is necessary to decide on the name which he is to bear. If the name of a private nobody gives his family so much to consider, imagine how much the intelligence of the palace must be exercised in choosing the name of a king, for the name of a king is not a name for times of peace only; it is wont, on the contrary, to be a battle-cry as well, and it would be difficult to rally troops to the cry of 'Viva Cucufate!'"*

It was well known that his father had been disposed to call his heir Ferdinand; the Cabinet, however, met to discuss this important subject, and was understood to have been divided upon the rival claims of Philip and of Charles. It is to be feared that the Cabinet was not wholly above popular superstition, for it objected to the otherwise eligible name of Alfonso, on the ground that this king would be the thirteenth of the name, and that thirteen was an ill-omened number.

The mother was lifted above all such superstitions by her desire to have her boy called by his father's name; and she further strengthened her cause by pointing out that all the Spanish Alfonsos have been either good or wise.

The newspapers, of course, were bound to have their say in the matter, and the question of baby's name became the theme of many leading articles. The Government discussed it, and the Opposition discussed it. Señor Canovas, who was a leading figure at the Conservative club, gave a weighty opinion on the subject. "I have no objection," said he, "to calling His Majesty Alfonso, but personally I should have preferred

* San Cucufate was one of the most renowned of Spanish martyrs.

Carlos. What does not seem to me good is to call him Ferdinand. By all means, let us call him Alfonso, if the country prefers it to Carlos. Still, in my judgment, Carlos would have been better; there would have been far more policy in it, and it would produce results not to be obtained by calling the king after his august father." And Señor Canovas proceeded to demonstrate that, by calling his majesty Carlos instead of Alfonso, the ground would be cut from under the feet of those enemies of the constitutional monarchy, the Carlists, who, finding a second monarch in the field with as good a name and a better title than their own, would find themselves at a disadvantage. Some of the newspapers fully approved this line of argument, others laughed at it. "Don Antonio Canovas," said a hostile journalist, "a gentleman who has a receipt for all his country's ills, has a saving name. He desires that his majesty should be called Carlos—a fine idea, forsooth! A Carlist can no longer call himself a Carlist, for fear of being accused of being a Liberal." In fact, what with his majesty's godfathers and godmothers, his mother, the ministers of state, the Opposition, the rival newspapers, and the general public, the question of what His Majesty was to be called became a very lively and much-debated subject. But though it was made a Cabinet question and a party question, this particular matter was, in the long run, decided much in the same manner as such matters generally are decided in less exalted circles. The Cabinet and the newspapers, and the sovereign people were in many minds as to what the king should be called, but her majesty, Queen Christina, being the king's mother, was in only one mind

as to what she should call her baby; she made up her mind from the first that his name should be Alfonso, and Alfonso it accordingly was. But it must not be supposed that his most Catholic Majesty, King of Castile and Aragon and the Indies, and a Grandee of Spain, would go through the world with only one name. Not only had his mother, and his godfathers, his godmother, and his loyal subjects, to be satisfied, but in the case of a King of Spain satisfaction was due to the claims of half-a-dozen saints, who have a special interest in the fortunes of Spain and its royal house.

Alfonso, besides being his father's name, was that of the saintly Bishop of Toledo, whose festival is celebrated on January 23rd, henceforward to be also the festival of the little king. Leon came to him from his godfather, Pope Leo XIII. Fernando had been the name desired by his father. No good Spaniard could omit the name of Maria, or that of Santiago, the patron of Spain. The ploughman Isidore was the especial patron of Madrid, while Paschal, the shepherd saint of Aragon, is the patron of the king's birthday, and Marcian of Ravenna is the patron of his christening day.*

Authorities are divided as to whether his majesty's last name is "Marcian," or "Anthony." That high authority, the "Almanac de Gotha," gives it as Anthony, but the reason for this is not so obvious as for the other names.

* A cousin of his majesty, now the wife of one of the Austrian Archdukes, is even better provided. H.I.H.'s Christian names are twenty in number. She is Blanche of Castile, Mary of the Conception, Theresa, Frances of Assisi, Margaret, Jane, Beatrice, Charlotte, Louisa, Ferdinanda, Aldegunde, Elvira, Ildephonse, Regine, Josepha Michelle, Gabrielle, Raphaelle.

And thus it came to pass that the whole style and title of the Sovereign came to extend to eight names, and that when, if ever, His Majesty is called upon to sign his baptismal name in full, it will be his duty to write—ALFONSO, LEON, FERNANDO, MARIA, SANTIAGO, ISIDORE, PASCHAL, MARCIAN, R.

But though the bestowing of eight names is a matter requiring grave consideration and careful discussion, it was necessary in this case that the discussion should be brief, for, according to Roman Catholic custom, the baptism was arranged to take place within a week of the baby's birth. And, indeed, there were even weightier reasons pointing to despatch. Is not the King of Spain, by special edict of his Holiness the Pope, known and to be known as "the Most Catholic King"? and was he not, by virtue of his lofty position, Grand Master of the various Spanish orders of chivalry? But how could an unbaptised infant, not yet admitted within the pale of the Church, claim and receive this high title, or these distinguished offices? It was plain on every ground that the baptism must take place forthwith.

CHAPTER III.

A ROYAL CHRISTENING.

IT was the general feeling that so great an event as the baptism of the king must be fittingly celebrated.

It took place at one o'clock on Saturday, May 22nd, in the royal chapel within the palace. The space was unfortunately very

limited, but it was made the most of by arranging tiers of seats, one above the other, for the representatives of the Government and other high personages, and conspicuous in the royal seats round the font were the king's little sisters, Mercedes and Maria Theresa. By the queen's special wish the galleries, both of the chapel and palace, were thrown open to the public. Very early they were filled by a strangely varied assembly:—artisans, and peasants in their bright, picturesque costumes, stood amongst the ladies of Madrid society, who were robed in court dresses and white mantillas.

On the clock striking one, a peal of bells and the firing of the royal salute announced the coming of the royal *cortège* as it passed from the Queen Regent's apartments along the galleries. A procession of lords-in-waiting and chamberlains and the great Spanish grandees in uniform preceded seven officers of the court, also grandees of Spain, bearing upon seven golden trays the paraphernalia required in the Roman Catholic rite of baptism.

The procession was followed by the heralds and the pursuivants-at-arms, wearing their ancient tabards which have descended from the time of Philip II. But the centre of interest to all was the tiny figure of the king as he was carried in the arms of the Duchess of Medina de las Torres, a little pink face appearing enveloped in a white cloud of laces and embroideries. On his majesty's right and left walked his sponsors—his aunt, the Infanta Dona Isabella, and the Papal Nuncio representing Leo XIII., who had already written to Queen Christina to express his joy in this "new spiritual link with the royal family of Spain."

At the door of the chapel the procession was met by the Primate of Spain the Cardinal Archbishop of Toledo, and by a host of priests, bearing the cross and scattering incense.

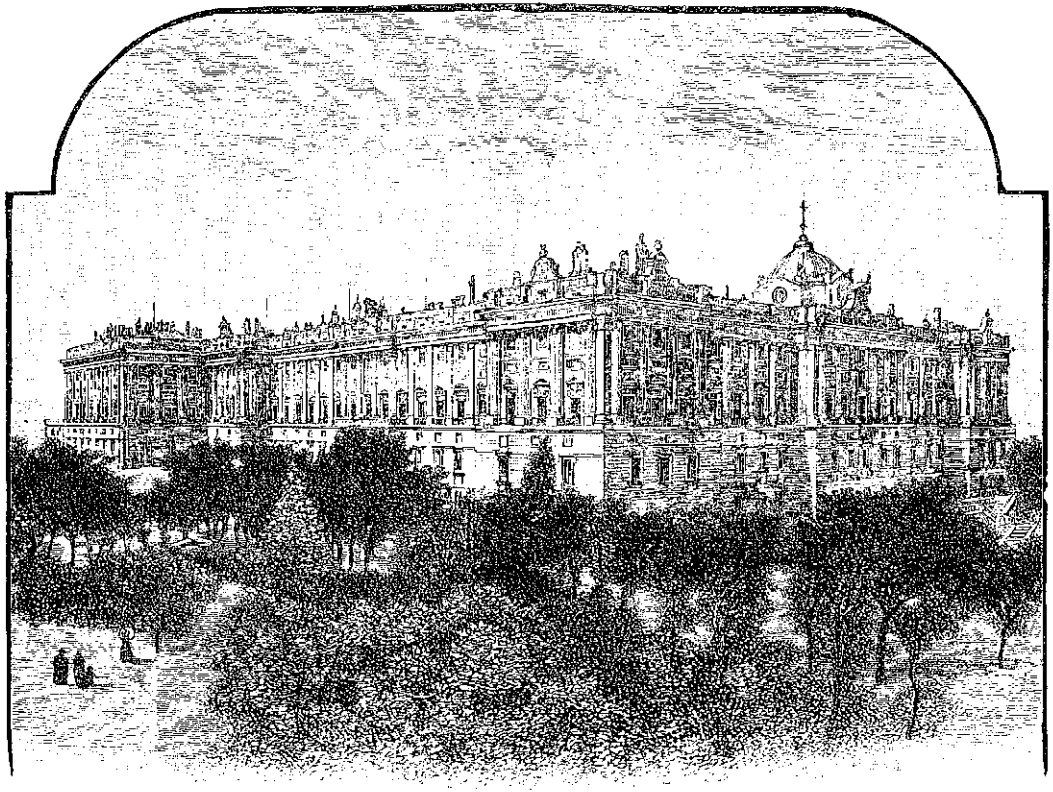
From the monastery of San Domingo de Guzman the historic font had been brought, in which, more than seven centuries ago, the founder of the great Dominican order was himself baptised, and which, since the Middle Ages, has always been used for the christening of the royal children of Spain. The Infanta Isabella held the baby over the ancient baptismal font, and the cardinal archbishop duly gave him his eight names.

We are told that, during the ceremony, "His Majesty several times protested in a loud voice," and, indeed, even a monarch of more mature years might have been excused if he protested, for the service was a terribly long one; nor was it over when the baptismal service had come to an end. It was necessary that the investiture of His Majesty as the Grand Master of no less than seven orders of chivalry should take place; and first and foremost he must be installed as Grand Master of that most illustrious of Spanish orders, the Golden Fleece, which, founded by Philip the Good, had passed through a succession of great princes—Charles the Bold, the great Duke of Burgundy, and Ferdinand, the patron of Columbus, to his present majesty, Alfonso XIII.

The ceremony over, the king was restored to his natural guardians. And here we must mention an important appointment which had to be made thus early in the royal household. When a new king ascends the throne, the ceremony

generally has to take place of filling the high offices of the state. In this case a new office had both to be created and filled. This high personage had to fulfil a series of important offices, rarely, if ever, confided before to the same individual. The duties of body-guard to His Majesty, purveyor to his majesty's table, groom of the chamber, and mistress of the robes, were entrusted to this fortunate but responsible public servant. Seldom, if ever, has the intercourse between a sovereign and subject been so complete as in this case it immediately became. No chancellor was ever so secure of obtaining an audience; no minister, however favoured, was ever received with such evident marks of gratification as this new and high dignitary of the Spanish court. The official in question was tall and handsome, wore an apron and a velvet bodice with silver chains, looked like, and, in fact was, a stout young peasant of Asturias, and was known first to the court and then to all Spain as Maximina, His Majesty's nurse.

As in the case of humbler mortals, the duties of the royal nurse were, for the most part, performed in the royal nursery; and the centre of interest in that department was naturally enough the royal cradle. But one is not a royal babe for nothing: His Majesty the King of Spain possessed not one cradle, but two; there they stood, side by side, like cots in a children's hospital. If our king had been a fairy king, and this were a fairy story, it would be easy enough to guess where the two cradles came from; we should know at once that they were the gift of His Majesty's two fairy godmothers—the one good and the other bad, one benevolent and the other



THE ROYAL PALACE, MADRID.

spiteful: but as this is a true story, and not a fairy tale, we must put grandmothers for godmothers, and then we shall be quite correct. One cradle was the gift of her Imperial Highness the Archduchess Elizabeth, grandmother of his majesty on his mother's side; the other of her majesty, the ex-queen Isabella, grandmother of the young sovereign on his father's side.

The time of kings is of necessity much devoted to ceremonial. We have already seen our little king attending church in state on the occasion of his own christening, and, before he attained the age of six weeks, we again find him engaged in performing another public duty. On this occasion, also, the ceremony was a religious one. His Majesty, accompanied by the queen, proceeded to the chapel in the convent of the Atocha. The queen appeared, veiled from head to foot in the long black "manto" or shawl, the traditional Spanish emblem of widowhood. In her arms she bore the king. As she passed on her way, the shouts and vivas with which the crowd were generally wont to greet their sovereign were hushed in sympathy with the mother and the widow. At the church a Te Deum was sung, and the king, as befitted a monarch of Spain, was entrusted to the especial care and protection of the Virgin, whose black and ancient image has been enshrined from time immemorial in the chapel, revered as the patroness of Madrid, and of the royal family in particular.

CHAPTER IV.

AFFAIRS OF STATE.

BUT the ceremonial observances of the king's early life were not by any means all of a religious character. Some of them were secular but dull, others were secular but distinctly amusing. Each stage in the life of a prince is usually considered to be worthy of record. The way in which the record is made differs considerably in different countries. When his Imperial Highness the Crown Prince of Siam attains his majority a ceremonial takes place befitting the dignity of the heir apparent to "the Lord of the Universe, the possessor of the White Elephant, and the potentate of the Great Umbrella." The dignitaries of the kingdom, the nobles and the priests, attend, an appropriate service is performed, and before the assembled thousands the prince has his hair cut. In ancient Rome the putting on of the toga, which meant the end of boyhood and beginning of manhood, was a public act. Other times and other countries had other customs, and Spain, the land of customs good and bad, was certain not to be behind them in the matter of such observances. The point at which they begin in Spain is the point at which the king first puts on his shoes.

There is a Spanish byword or proverb that "the Queen of Spain hath no legs," and, like most proverbs, this one is true in part though not wholly. The story runs that a Spanish queen once visited a city within her dominions whereof the chief industry was that of stocking weaving. A deputation of loyal

citizens waited, as in duty bound, upon Her Majesty and sought permission to present to her some specimens of their handiwork. But the Spanish court was ever starched and stiff, and Spanish etiquette is not to be trifled with. Stockings! the very idea caused a shock! Could anything be a clearer offence against the laws of etiquette? "The Queen of Spain has no legs," replied the Lord High Chamberlain with awful and deliberate formality. The loyal burghers retired, taking the unfortunate offering with them, but the honour of the Spanish monarchy was preserved. Hence it will be seen that the proverb above quoted has a good and certain foundation in tradition if not in fact. But whatever may have been the case with regard to other Spanish sovereigns, from her of the stocking episode downwards, our own particular little king had certainly no defect of the kind hinted at, but undoubtedly possessed, and in all probability made good use of, two fat baby legs, and a pair of little feet, which in due time required to be shod, as baby feet generally do. And so in due course—in his fourth month—the royal foot was duly measured, the royal boot-maker was duly instructed, and the royal shoes were in due time sent home. Beautiful objects they were, too; tiny, of course, as befitted a baby, but lovely to look at; gold broidered on white, as befitted a king. And the same day that Alfonso XIII. put on his shoes, 600 other new shoes were put on to 600 other baby feet in Madrid, making 602 in all, for her majesty the queen was pleased to ordain that the occasion of the king's putting on his boots should be a ceremony, and to celebrate the important event she bestowed new shoes upon 300 of the poor children in Madrid, and thus made a right royal entertainment of the matter.

Nowadays all children who are lucky and happy go to the sea-side; of course, his majesty King Alfonso, being both lucky and happy, very soon found himself by the sea-shore. His first visit was undertaken at the age of three months. The king was accompanied by his mother and sisters and two of his ministers. The place selected was San Sebastian, a name well known to English readers, and recalling one of the most terrible sieges of the Peninsular War. Unluckily, the stay was a brief one, for serious news recalled the queen to Madrid. Several regiments had become disaffected, and had broken out in open mutiny and declared against the constitution. But the majority of the troops remained true to their colours, and by prompt and decisive action the rising was put down. The queen entered Madrid with her son, and the loyal populace turned out into the streets to welcome her return in this hour of danger. The bands would have played their welcome, but the queen bade them silence their music, which jarred upon her at a time when men were still awaiting trial on grave charges of treason against her son's throne. But the revolt and its suppression were useful. Military risings or *pronunciamientos* have ever been the curse of Spain, but now the young queen regent had borne herself firmly in the face of a formidable conspiracy, and her government, acting in the name of the little king, had proved itself strong enough to crush armed revolt. Best of all, the bulk of the people were plainly on the side of the crown. The lesson was not thrown away, and the dangerous crisis has been followed by years of undisturbed tranquillity, unhappily too rare in Spanish history.

Every child, rich or poor, has a birthday once a year—many children wish they had two. Although a king, Alfonso had not two birthdays in the year, but he had the next best thing to it: he had a birthday on May the 17th, and he had also a *fête* day on January the 23rd; that is to say, the day dedicated to his patron saint, St. Alfonso; and this *fête* day served all the purposes of a second birthday. Most children expect to receive presents on their birthday, and an excellent plan it is. With the King of Spain, however, it appears there is another arrangement: the person who has the birthday gives the presents, and that, no doubt, is a good plan, too. This, probably, was the opinion, at any rate, of those who were selected to receive the king's bounty on his *fête* day. Thirty thousand of the poor in the capital received a present from his majesty—a noble birthday indeed! This great giving was followed soon afterwards by another royal gift which was much more likely to do lasting good. The queen, on behalf of her son, founded and endowed a home for the fatherless children of officers. As the little king grew older, she taught him to take a special interest in this home; for was not he, too, the fatherless child of a Spanish officer?

The first visit of the king to the sea-side was, as we have seen, unfortunately interrupted. A second, undertaken a year later, was more satisfactory. This time, also, the spot chosen was San Sebastian. The arrival of the king was made the occasion of a great popular demonstration of goodwill. Flags were hoisted, arches were constructed, and all the people turned

out *en fête.* Evidently our own fellow-countrymen were well represented at San Sebastian, for, among the mottoes and inscriptions, such sentences as "Welcome to Alfonso," and "Long live the King," in good plain English, were to be seen in many places. Whether the king very greatly enjoyed the flags the arches, and the mottoes, may be doubted. At a year and a half these things are not, perhaps, much appreciated. But a year and a half likes to see pretty birds flying in the air, and there is very little doubt that the pigeons which the bystanders released close to the royal carriage, and threw into the air, afforded much gratification to His Catholic Majesty. San Sebastian is near Bilbao, and Bilbao is in the centre of a district, the inhabitants of which are not disposed to waste much love on the reigning house of Spain. The province of Biscay is a Basque province, and every Basque who is not a Carlist is probably a Republican, and to either Carlist or Republican the person of King Alfonso XIII. is, theoretically, exceedingly distasteful. Perhaps, if the king had been verging on fifty, and six feet in his stockings, the orthodox hatreds of the Basques would have betrayed themselves in the proper fashion. As, however, the king was still on the rosy side of two, and considerably under thirty-six inches in his thickest boots, his advent appears to have struck the men, and especially the women, of Bilbao, in rather an agreeable light. Certain it is that one and all turned out from every village and fishing hamlet along the coast, in every available craft, to welcome the royal baby. How many went out to see the baby, and how many to see the king, we cannot say; but the fact remains

that the welcome the king received from his somewhat doubtful subjects of the north was everything that could be desired in the way of cordiality and enthusiasm. Political correspondents, as usual, had their eye on the royal party, and it is satisfactory to learn that, in the opinion of the observers, his majesty had grown much, and was especially robust.

In his eighteenth month, and in the eighteenth month of his auspicious reign, His Majesty first entered upon the public duties of his high office. As father of his people and chief of the great council of the state he opened the new session of his Cortes.

A little key is sometimes enough to open a very big door, so in this case a very little king was found amply sufficient to open the session of the Parliament of Spain.

All the chief personages of Madrid were anxious to witness the opening ceremony, and the senate house could not contain a tithe of those who desired to enter. Every approach to it was crowded with ladies, with senators and with deputies at the moment when the royal march of Spain—which has descended from the time of Charles V. and which is also the royal march of Austria—announced the queen's coming.

The king appeared in the arms of his faithful Asturian nurse, who stood at the right hand of the queen, close to the throne. He was arrayed entirely in white; his white sombrero hat, tied with white ribbons, was removed on his entrance, and with an excellent composure he surveyed the scene, alternately watching the crowd and bestowing his attention upon the queen as she read the speech in a low voice to the assembly. The speech over, His Majesty evinced a decided wish to be among the first to leave, but being

taken in the queen's arms, he remained very quietly until the long proceedings were ended, when he departed from his first official interview with his Cortes amid loud "vivas."

The Princess of the Asturias could not appear in the procession; for the Spanish papers very solemnly relate that as she was standing, ready arrayed for the ceremony, and trying to balance herself on tiptoe on a chair, she tumbled off—as was but natural—and bruised her face.

CHAPTER V.

A ROYAL PROGRESS.

In the second year of his reign the cares of royalty and the duties of his high office came to weigh more heavily on the king. He began to be known by sight as well as by report to many thousands of his subjects. On the 17th of April, 1888, he was the central figure in a celebration peculiarly fitted to a child-king. On that day there took place in Madrid a colossal school treat, to which were invited no less than twelve thousand children of the different schools and charitable institutions of Madrid. The *fête* was well-organised; the twelve thousand little subjects were fortified with sandwiches and oranges and marched, ranged in rank in long procession, past their king. All Madrid was there to see the show; one hundred and twenty thousand spectators were collected on the race-course. It is gratifying to learn that no mishap of any kind took place. One terrible regulation had been made

specially appropriate to the occasion—"No child must kiss His Majesty the King," and not a child committed this one penal offence.

On the eve of his second birthday Alfonso XIII. travelled down to his royal city of Barcelona to open an exhibition in that place. At each of the principal stations on the line the train stopped some minutes, and the peasantry were admitted in large numbers on to the platform, and allowed to give free vent to their enthusiasm.

It is not only eminent and venerable statesmen who attract demonstrative crowds to greet them at every stage of their journey: a two-year-old king may in this respect rival a famous orator, even though he have less eloquence at his command.

A very large proportion of the spectators at each place consisted of children. It was undoubtedly this class of his subjects who chiefly attracted the king's attention, and as the troops of little ones uttered their cries of "viva," and waved their ragged hats, the king responded by smiling and gaily clapping his hands.

Indeed, it is plain that his majesty, like most other kings, and like many who are not kings, had a keen relish for popular applause as the following story proves.

One day there arose an alarm in the palace, The king was missing! Instant search was made, and before long, His Majesty was discovered in the balcony. There he sat kissing his hands to his enchanted subjects in the street below, and if his subjects were delighted, so was His Majesty. Like a wise king he had taken precautions to protect himself from disturbance in the rear and

had closed the shutters behind him. When at length that important functionary his nurse discovered his hiding-place and tried to draw back her charge through the open window, his majesty positively and flatly declined to be withdrawn; he preferred to stop and kiss his hands to the people, and he resented the interference. When nurse was baffled, reinforcements had to be sent for, and it was not until Señora Tacon, his governess, had been summoned that the king was induced to re-enter the room.

But to return to the Barcelona *fête*. Among the innumerable pageants and ceremonials that go to make up the life of a king, there was much to mark this visit to Barcelona as unique. For one thing, it was made the occasion of a striking international demonstration. The representatives, not only of all the European powers, but of Mexico and Brazil, came down expressly from Madrid to do honour to the two-year-old king, and in the harbour lay over fifty men-of-war of all nations, constituting, as it was observed at the time, "probably the strongest international force ever assembled together in a friendly port."

The baby king had been ushered into the world with sound of artillery, a veritable "enfant du canon," and in his two years' experience he must have become more or less familiarised with the roar of artillery; but he can never have heard it on so overpowering a scale as on his second birthday, when the numerous salutes from each gaily-dressed ship formed an almost incessant cannonade throughout the day.

But Queen Christina was careful that national feeling should

not be lost sight of in international demonstrations, however friendly these might be; and the six thousand invited guests who attended the birthday reception at the temporary palace were exclusively Spaniards.

Three days later came the formal opening of the Barcelona Exhibition. The occasion was marked by a great event in the life of the king. It was then, for the first time, that Alfonso XIII. took his seat upon the throne like a proper orthodox king. Hitherto on public occasions he had taken his seat, with less dignity but probably with more satisfaction to himself, upon the knees of his nurse. To-day, however, he occupied the throne—"a circumstance," remarked a Barcelona newspaper, "which has not hitherto occurred in His Majesty's official acts." The mayor of the city headed the deputation to the sovereign thus enthroned, and the natural instincts of a mayor in the presence of so solemn an "official act" were too strong to be overcome. The mayor, as mayors always do, came provided with an address; the address, as such addresses usually are, was a very long one. But hap what might, the mayor was bound to read it, and the baby on the throne was bound to sit and appear to listen to it like a grown-up king. "Our desire to express the devoted loyalty of this ancient city of the counts of Barcelona . . . My belief that this happy occasion will long be remembered as one of the brightest pages in the history of our beloved king Alfonso;" and so on and so on, with much more after the same fashion, and after the fashion of all similar loyal addresses that ever were made by a mayor and corporation.

THE INFANT KING OPENING THE BARCELONA EXHIBITION.

The little king sat as good as gold, perfectly self-possessed throughout the ceremony. The mayor was probably thinking about himself; what the king was thinking of nobody knows. But everybody else in the great mass of spectators who thronged the hall was thinking of the king and admiring the good behaviour of the staid little sovereign who was perched up to receive the homage of his subjects. His Majesty was at this time two years old, and was already a general in the army. He had not, however, taken to appearing in the uniform of a field-marshal, and his muslins and laces, and the big befeathered white hat that he wore, were probably more becoming than a more martial uniform would have been. His Asturian nurse, gorgeous in red satin, and with a red kerchief on her head, occupied the post of honour to the right of the king, the clasp of her hand giving courage to her little charge.

On the other side sat the Queen Regent, and on a velvet cushion at the foot of the throne sat the two little princesses, Mercedes and Maria Theresa, dressed, like their brother, all in white. At the close of the alcalde's address, Señor Sagasta spoke a few words, declaring the exhibition open in the name of his majesty the king, who, having fulfilled his part to admiration, was allowed to return to the Town-hall to the temporary nursery which had been decorated for him with gold and white hangings.

But life has its trials as well as its pleasures, and it is a trite reflection that domestic cares afflict kings as well as humbler people. The pageants and processions of Barcelona

were hardly over before it became apparent that a severe trial had overtaken the king. His Majesty was cutting a tooth. This painful but not unprecedented occurrence interrupted the royal progress. Soon, however, the worst of the crisis was passed. The tooth safely came through, and the king was speedily well enough to continue his travels. He was taken to Valencia, and here the loyal manifestations of Barcelona were renewed, and as the carriage drove through the crowded streets it was filled with flowers and garlands—a fit offering from the "Garden of Spain."

It was at this period that the king performed a duty which is expected of all sovereigns: he sat for his portrait. That a king, and especially a King of Spain and Grand Master of so many illustrious orders of chivalry, should be depicted on horseback was obviously the correct thing.

The long line of our own English kings recorded on their respective broad seals, all mounted on horseback, from William the Conqueror downwards, shows the strength and persistence of the tradition; and the equestrian portraits of the Spanish kings, due to the genius of Velasquez and Vandyke, might well have created a precedent even if it had not already existed. But to mount a baby of two years old upon a war-horse might have looked somewhat absurd. On the other hand, a king in a panier on a donkey would have shocked the dignity of the stately court of the Escurial. Plainly, then, a compromise was necessary: the king must be mounted, his steed must be spirited and worthy of a king, and yet not too spirited for a two-year-old rider.

The picture on page 42 will show how the compromise was effected, and how the king's rocking-horse was impressed into the service. The little figure with its floating ribbons sits right cavalierly astride of his steed, foot in stirrup and hands holding firmly the pony's mane. The sombrero he wears seems in keeping with his cavalier attitude, but looks quaint enough pushed back from the little bald head and the childish face. The horse on which he rides is no mere wooden hobby-horse; it was once a favourite of the queen's, and now it is stuffed and mounted, gallantly prancing; and daily carries the king for his exercise in the nursery.

CHAPTER VI.

"LE ROI S'AMUSE."

FROM time immemorial one of the first and most invariable ways in which the rulers of the earth have proclaimed their sovereignty to their subjects has been by impressing their portraits upon the coin of the realm, and thus making their features familiar to everyone who handled the gold, silver, and copper issued from the Mint. To this ancient custom an addition has been made in these latter days when the Post Office has put a paper currency into the hands of the poorest in the form of postage stamps which are used in such millions upon our letters. And thus when

SPANISH POSTAGE STAMP.

Alfonso XIII. ascended the throne it was not long before steps were taken to place His Majesty's portrait upon the Spanish "reals" and "pesetas," and upon the postage stamps.

Here are representations of the coin and of the stamp. A

SPANISH GOLD PIECE.

very unique stamp it is, with the baby profile and the wavy hair leaving the forehead in its infantine baldness.

Some of our own early issues of Nova Scotian stamps bore an excellent portrait of the Prince of Wales represented as a boy of ten years old in Highland dress with bonnet and plume on his head, but the Spanish stamp is the first that bears the portrait of a real unmistakable baby.

No king gets through his reign without becoming the subject of many anecdotes more or less true and more or less characteristic, and our little king is no exception to the rule. Many amusing stories now began to be told about him.

Here are a few of them:—*Noblesse oblige,* and before our king was quite three years old he had attained to a very royal measure of self-control, for in the midst of his childish crying fits he would stop himself with the reminder:—"*No,* I am the king," thus showing himself worthy the name of king

EQUESTRIAN PORTRAIT OF ALFONSO XIII.

(From the Picture by Professor Koppay.)

according to Carlyle's derivation of that word, the man who "*can*."

Many of these stories have for their background King Alfonso's happy holiday visits to the Castle of San Sebastian, when he was able to enjoy far more freedom than was possible in the Court life at Madrid.

Here is a pretty picture of him at that time. The king has risen early and stepped out on to the low balcony to listen to the regimental band and to watch the troops relieving guard. A crowd of children gathers round below. Seeing them every morning little Alfonso has learnt to know many of them and to call them by name. He leans over to chat with his favourites, until suddenly a tap at the window summons him back. "Adios," says His little Majesty, "I must go in now, for my mamma is waiting for me."

"Donde está el rey esta la Corte," says the fine old Spanish proverb. "Where the King is, there is the Court;" and the old words found a new illustration when the Court was for the moment transferred from the stately palace, and was to be found in the public street grouped about the baby King.

Here is another scene in this happy holiday time:—Soon after nine o'clock in the morning the three children, the king and his two sisters, are on their way to the sands. Two governesses and two footmen take charge of them and form a little state procession. But once arrived at the shore formality is at an end. Off go His Majesty's boots and socks; and off go the boots and socks of the two infantas, and soon the three children, barefooted and happy, are paddling and splashing in the water

and digging in the sands to their hearts' content. The king bathed too, carried into the sea in the arms of his little sister the Infanta Mercedes.

At midday the king would return to lunch, and as he passed, the palace guard would turn out and salute him. As head of the Spanish army, Alfonso did not waste his time, and he was soon heard trying to imitate in his own fashion the sound of the military bugles. The afternoon brought more formality with it, the king passed down the staircase to his carriage between two ranks of halberdiers of the guard. As soon as he was seated he would turn to Colonel Loijorri commanding the halberdiers, and, reciting the lesson which he had received, would give the necessary order with perfect gravity: "Let them retire."

At eight o'clock came bed-time, and his mother never failed to go up and kiss her boy and hear his prayer for "my papa in heaven, and for the country which God has entrusted to us."

Most kings make "favourites," and Alfonso XIII. is no exception to the rule. Some of the dignitaries of the court and household who especially pleased him he would call by their Christian names. General Juan di Cordova, chief of the military staff, was among those specially favoured, and Juanito or "Little John" was the king's name for that distinguished officer.

One Sunday the king was with his mother in the gallery in church, and when he caught sight of General Cordova kneeling in the nave below, the quiet of the church was broken by gleeful cries of:—"Ah, little John, there you are, dear little John!" It

was with some difficulty that the queen and his governess silenced the eager little boy.

And with respect to the king and this same "Little John," yet another pleasant tale is told of what befel a year later. The king may invent nicknames for his ministers, but it is the business of those who are responsible for the king's behaviour to have a care for His Majesty's manners. His governess, to whom, among others, this charge was entrusted, and who was a great believer in strict etiquette, had more than once some trouble in checking what she considered as the undue familiarity of her charge towards his subjects. His Majesty had a way, whenever he recognised a grandee or gentleman whom he included among his personal acquaintance, of calling them by their Christian names, dropping surname and title without the slightest ceremony. This was the practice which his governess invariably thought it her duty to rebuke. One day the Duke di Bivona passed.

"Hi! Xiquena!" cried the king.

The governess stopped him at once.

"Sire, permit me to remind your majesty that the person whom you do the honour to address is the Duke of Bivona."

His majesty did a dreadful thing; he burst out laughing.

"The Duke of Bivona!" cried he. "That is nice! but I know it is Xiquena. Are you not Xiquena?" he added, addressing his friend. "Do you see?" the little king went on. "This lady is always giving people new names. Why, she pretends that my Juanito is the Marquis di Sotomayor."

"Indeed, sire, but he is," said the governess; "and you

will permit me to remind your majesty that he should be so addressed."

The monarch's reply was more direct than polite.

"Do not be stupid," said he. "This *is* Juanito, and that other one *is* Xiquena"; and so that matter was settled, and etiquette, for a time at any rate, had to retire into the background.

It is evident, indeed, that his excellent governess was rather a thorn in the flesh to the young monarch. The king early displayed a strong love of liberty, and in the matter of walking alone he was somewhat disposed in his early days to make what one of the Spanish papers terms "an immoderate use of his autonomy." He greatly resented being led by his protector; but at three years old little feet, even if they are the feet of a king, are not always very steady.

"In spite of all possible precautions," says one of the Spanish papers, "His Majesty tumbled down just as other children do." Whenever this catastrophe occurred during his walks, the king had to pay the penalty for his tumble by having his hand held as a precaution. Happily, however, the kindly white-haired señora was no longer very keen-sighted, and if he had the good luck to tumble while he was in front with his nurses, and out of the sight of his governess, he would hastily pick himself up, and, laying a tiny finger on his lip, say to his companions, "Do not say anything, or she will lead me."

The talent of remembering faces has at all times been considered a royal prerogative, and at three years old King

Alfonso had shown that he was not behind his royal colleagues in the possession of that accomplishment. "He is an excellent physiognomist," says a Spanish newspaper, "and he recognises a great number of the poor people even from a distance." One pretty example of this habit is on record. Here is the story as told by a contemporary newspaper:—

"In his drives along one special road the king frequently noticed among the crowds who followed the carriage a little lame girl not much bigger than himself. 'Where is the little lame girl?' he used to ask his governess; and when she came in sight nothing would satisfy him but that his nurse should get down and give her something. His thoughts were very full of this little lame child, and next day at breakfast his question was, 'What do you think the little lame girl is doing now? Is she having breakfast like me?' 'She is probably having breakfast,' replied the queen, 'but not a breakfast like you; she will only have bread, as all poor children do.' The king looked at his mother, and went on eating for a little while, saying nothing. The idea was a very novel one to him that there were people whose breakfast was only dry bread. Then he asked, 'Why do not you send something to the little lame girl?' The queen did not answer, and after a minute the child ventured to say, 'Mamma, if I could give orders like you, I would take sweets to the lame girl. Look, *those!*' 'Then listen, baby; so that you may give pleasure to the lame child and to others who are poor like her, I will let you give orders as I do.' And in the afternoon as the king was going out for his walk, he did not

omit to say to his governess, 'Don't forget the sweets, for the little lame girl, you know.'"

To bathe in the summer sea at San Sebastian is one thing: to get out of bed and into a cold bath is quite another; and one autumn morning his majesty so firmly declined to take the first step that the nurses were obliged to appeal to the queen.

"You must take your bath, baby," said she; but the king had an obstinate fit and neither moved nor answered.

"Let us see," said his mother, seating herself by the bedside. "If I tell you to do it, will you have your bath?"

Still silence.

"Well, then, I will not tell you to do it, baby, but I shall go to my room and cry because you will not obey me. Do you wish this?"

The little fellow's better feelings were touched, and with the words "No, mamma," he threw back the bedclothes. Since that day there have been no more difficulties over the cold-bath question.

In the little king's loving heart his mother reigns supreme. One night as he was being put to bed, the queen, as often happens, was in the nursery, for it is a favourite time with her, as with other mothers, for being with her little boy.

The king was in high spirits—dispensing to all the circle his baby favours. "I love you very much—and you—and you," said he to his governess, and to the staff of nurses, and nurserymaids; then, last of all, coming to his mother he kissed her, adding, "and you—most of all!"

After so many stories about our little king and his doings, our readers, perhaps, may be anxious to know how he appears to his subjects, among whom he has so many friends. Let us look at him as he takes his daily drive in the Prado. His equipage has become a well-known one in his capital, and indeed we cannot wonder at it, for it could hardly pass unnoticed through the streets—a smart equerry, in cocked hat and uniform, rides first, then come two outriders brilliant in scarlet and gold, and then, drawn by four mules, comes the close carriage with another still smarter equerry riding at its side. Inside the carriage, as it drives slowly along, the good people of Madrid can get a good view of a fair baby face in shady white hat, and a little figure seated in a small white satin chair, somewhat like a baby's saddle in shape, and placed on the seat facing his mules. Every day he may be seen driving to a shady spot in the Prado where he can get out of his carriage and play about. The mules wait for his majesty's games of play more patiently than horses would do, and so they are chosen to draw the king's carriage.

CHAPTER VII.

A SHADOW IN THE PALACE.

THE year 1890 opened gloomily for Spain. The influenza epidemic which held all Europe in its grip was nowhere more virulent than in Spain, and brought with it not only the discomfort and danger of a serious disease, but all the attendant

miseries of distress and poverty which follow in the train of sickness. Relief committees were established by the leading citizens, the queen herself taking an active part in all measures for mitigating the distress. With the new year the tide of sickness turned, but in the political world a ministerial crisis came to introduce confusion into the councils of the State, and to complicate the tangled thread of Spanish politics. Señor Sagasta, the Liberal Prime Minister, who had been in office ever since the death of Alfonso XII., declared he could no longer retain his post, owing to the perpetual opposition to which he was exposed by the discontented members of his own party, and he sent in his resignation. The queen refused to accept it, and desired him to form a fresh ministry. Throughout the ensuing week, from early morning till late at night, negotiations were carried on without a break; yet, in spite of all this labour, no solution was arrived at. The Spanish papers were filled with rumours and speculations, statements and counter-statements, and minute accounts of conferences between the various leaders. In the very midst of all this political excitement came a calamity which filled men's hearts with consternation, and alarmed not only those who were politicians, but all those who had at heart the welfare of Spain, and the continuance of peace within her borders. The little king was grievously ill, and it soon began to be whispered that he was sick unto death. The news fell upon the capital like a thunderbolt. For some time past poor Alfonso had been ailing, but little had been made of his condition, and those who, like the Prime Minister, had been made aware of the illness, had been assured that convalescence was soon to be looked for. The doctors kept

their own counsel, and one of the staff, being unmercifully pressed by an inquirer to state whether the king's illness was or was not dangerous, avoided a categorical reply in a manner that combined professional discretion with Spanish courtliness:—"Dangerous? The illnesses of kings are always dangerous."

The anxiety had indeed been far greater than the public were aware of, and was soon to deepen again. On the evening of January the 8th, the queen, who had been watching beside her child every night since his illness began, observed as she sat down to dinner, "God be thanked that this night I shall get some moments' rest. This is the fifth night since I have undressed." Nevertheless she hastened over the meal, that she might return to her watch in the nursery.

The set of rooms devoted to the little king were characteristic of their baby owner, for in place of books or pictures their chief decorations were his playthings. One picture indeed there was, of the Nativity—a present to him from his mother on his last birthday.

In the middle of the night there was a sudden change for the worse; the fever increased, and there was a heart attack which caused the utmost alarm. All day long the terrible suspense continued; the fever continued, and the broken snatches of sleep brought no improvement. The queen hung over her darling's bedside, watching every change in the little face. Now and then she turned aside that he might not see her tears, and once the cry burst from her, "Oh! child of my heart! My God, do not take him from me!"

Towards evening the king raised himself in bed and asked

for his toys, with which he played for a little while. His nurses were overjoyed, but the doctors spoke no word of encouragement, and one glance at their faces showed the queen that they looked upon this as merely a temporary rally; from that moment the games of her baby boy only added to her distress.

But if the scene within the palace was touching, not less touching in its way was the sympathy shown by the multitudes without. Everywhere, in clubs, in cafés, wherever people met together, the one subject of conversation was the king's illness. Rumours were frequently circulated throughout the day that he was dead, and until the appearance of the evening papers with their alarming but not despairing bulletins, the report was generally believed. Since yesterday the word "crisis" had changed its import. "We do ill," wrote one of the Spanish papers, "to give this title to the political situation of to-day, when really nothing, or next to nothing, is said concerning politics or crisis. . . . Political life in the Spanish capital remains in suspense. . . . The attention of the whole world is fixed on the cradle where a terrible illness threatens the life of the baby king."

As night drew on the state of tension became greater, and the heavy fog that had settled down upon the city did not disperse the crowd of anxious inquirers of all ranks who still came thronging to the lord chamberlain's office to hear the latest report. Beneath the palace walls the white-cloaked halberdiers marched up and down, keeping their silent watch; and within were other watchers—the little

group who were admitted to the sick-room, and the larger number who passed the night in earnest prayer in the royal chapel.

At ten o'clock an informal meeting of the outgoing Cabinet was held at Señor Sagasta's house to consider the question of the succession, and the immediate steps to be taken in the event of the king's death. The ex-Prime Minister, by tacit consent, had resumed his former responsibilities. However much he might wish to resign, however advantageous it might be to him in a political point of view to insist upon so doing, he felt that this was not a time when the administration could be left without a head, or the queen deprived of her most trusted counsellor.

From the Cabinet he went straight to the bedside of his baby master, and stayed there till one or two o'clock in the morning, when he was summoned to be present at a medical consultation. The alarming symptoms of the previous night had recurred, leaving the tiny patient in a terribly exhausted condition. It was decided to try the effect of giving more food and at shorter intervals. Blisters were applied to the head, and it was necessary, therefore, to cut off the little king's golden curls. At about 5 o'clock in the morning Don Alfonso woke out of his feverish sleep, and seemed rather livelier than usual. For some time past he had lain in a state of extreme languor, but his consciousness had never failed. At the sound of his mother's voice he would always rouse himself to take food and medicine from her hand with an obedience that was touching to see, and the consideration that he showed for his nurses would have been remarkable in a much older patient than this little boy, not yet four years old.

"Are you tired, mother mine? Do you love me very much?" he would ask; or, "Are you not going to bed? You will be very tired," and the small autocrat added tenderly, "I think I ought to send you away."

And indeed the queen was very tired, so tired that more than once she fainted at her post. The doctors watched over her almost as anxiously as over her boy, and knew not how to bear her earnest, silent scrutiny of their faces.

The little king's more hopeful waking brought gladness to all hearts. He sat up in bed and threw his arms round his mother's neck with the words, "Mamita mia! how I love you! and I love my nurse, too!"

From that moment hope revived, and the report of the doctors that the case was "grave but not desperate" was received with intensest joy.

In the course of the day one of his aunts came to his bedside, and the king, instantly recognising her, said, "Auntie, I wish you would bring my cousins to come and play with me."

He was, in fact, more alive now to outward things than was good for him, and the doctors advised his being moved into a smaller room where only his mother and the nurses were admitted. Not long before the beginning of his illness the king had been taken to the royal stables to see a beautiful grey pony on which his riding lessons were soon to begin. Great was his majesty's delight when the pony trotted across the yard. The nursery steed fell into disfavour, and he cried, "I don't like toy-horses any more, I like real ones—like this one that can trot." And now in his illness his thoughts often turned to his new

favourite, and he would say, "I should like to go and play with it soon."

Yet, though there were signs of improvement, it was well known on how slight a foundation they rested, and throughout both Friday and Saturday the streets and the square in front of the palace were thronged with inquirers who stood patiently waiting for news, casting many a glance at the window of the room where their little king was known to be lying.

The official bulletins were placed in the picture frame of a large battle-piece, and were instantly pounced on by half a hundred reporters from the various embassies and legations; but the waiting crowds outside preferred getting their reports by word of mouth from the privileged few—royalties, statesmen, or officials—who were admitted into the inner circle in the palace. And all were freely willing to tell what they knew, for was not the whole city swayed by one common anxiety?

On the Friday the Cortes opened their session for a few brief moments, only to suspend them again in view of the ministerial crisis and the king's illness.

A few hours earlier, on leaving the palace, Señor Sagasta had driven to the house of the Conservative leader, Señor Canovas, and there agreed with him upon a common line of action until the present tension should be relieved. Such unity between the opposing leaders met with general approval. "Conservatives, Liberals, the Liberals in opposition, men of all sides of the House," says the *Imparcial* in its leader, "appear animated by one sole generous impulse. In presence of the risk that endangers the king's life, in presence of his royal mother's grief, differences,

rivalries, animosities vanish, and leave room only for pity, for affection, for loyalty, for fervent prayers for the recovery of the royal patient." The business of the Cortes, therefore, was purely formal. Resolutions of sympathy were passed by the leaders on both sides of the House, and listened to in respectful silence by the Republican senators, and then the House adjourned.

All who have had any experience of nursing sick children will understand the satisfaction felt by the nurses on the Sunday when His Majesty began to show himself restless and capricious—in fact what is known in nursery phraseology as "fractious"—asking for toys that he instantly rejected, and food that he would not touch. Tin soldiers and clock-work dogs soon ceased to please, and suddenly the child sat up in bed and asked, "Mamita, where are my sisters?" Once before, in the middle of the night, he had asked for them, and when he was told, "They are asleep; do you want to see them?" had made answer, "No, no! do not wake them; but if they are asleep it is because it is night—it is always night now. Why do I not get up?" But this time he was bent on seeing them, and insisted, "Why do they not come? I should like to see them."

The eldest little girl, the Princess of the Asturias, was therefore sent for. The little sisters had not been told how dangerously ill their brother was, and their mother had not seen them since she gave them their good-night kiss on the Thursday evening before the king was at the worst. The poor child threw herself into her mother's arms with the cry,

"Mamita, what has happened that you have been so long without coming to see me?"

It was touching to see the two children together once more, but the queen was obliged soon to part them, and with many kisses she led the little princess away.

The improvement in the king's state was maintained; his appetite returned, and the doctors began to speak of convalescence.

As soon as the queen was able to leave her patient for a few minutes, she sent for the intendant of the palace, to ask whether her orders with regard to a soup-kitchen and other means of relief for the suffering poor of Madrid had been carried out. Queen Christina had some talk, too, with Señor Sagasta. She said to him that she now felt calmer; she thought God had heard her prayers, and she was hopeful that her child would be spared to her. And surely hers were not the only prayers that had been offered up for the continuance of the child life so precious to the kingdom. Throughout these anxious days there was not a church in Spain where heartfelt prayers had not been sent up for the safety of the little king.

Señor Sagasta said something now to the queen of the intense sympathy felt for her by all classes.

"They do not know," she replied, "how grateful I am. My heart can never forget the affection shown by the people of Madrid through these bitter days."

A day or two later the king was officially pronounced to be out of danger, and Señor Sagasta lost no time in urging the queen to send for the leaders of the Liberal Opposition.

And now that the strain of the last eight days was removed, it was as of old in the Palace of the Sleeping Beauty when the spell was broken.

The work-a-day world woke to its ordinary life; suspended negotiations and suspended cabinet-making were resumed once more, and even suspended animosities found voice afresh; and ill-natured people were heard whispering that, after all, the king had not been so very ill, and that the alarm had been of the prime minister's own making to gain time for his political ends.

Ten days more and the king had taken his first drive and was pronounced convalescent. But nearly a week before that event the political crisis had ended, and Señor Sagasta, the "baby's prime minister," as we may call him, had resumed the post that he had held ever since the birth of his little sovereign.

The king advanced towards recovery with all a child's amazing rapidity, and before the end of January a public thanksgiving service was held in one of the churches, which was attended by all the notables of Madrid. A day or two later there was a grand reception at the palace, but His Majesty did not appear on either occasion, for it was very properly thought unwise to let him run the risk of fatigue and excitement. A third day was kept as a public holiday, but by far the most remarkable celebration of the king's happy recovery was the decision of the government to grant a "general remission of sentences passed upon persons convicted of criminal, political, or common law offences." *

* *Times*, March 3, 1890.

THE KING OF SPAIN AND QUEEN CHRISTINA.

(*From a Photograph by Fernando Debas, Madrid.*)

It sounds as if a display of kingly clemency on so very large a scale might somewhat have endangered the peace of the country, but fortunately we do not hear of any ill effects resulting from it.

And so the dangerous illness of Alfonso XIII. became a matter of past history, and everything fell back into its former state, with this one difference—that the baby king was now more firmly enthroned than ever before in the hearts of his subjects.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PASSING OF BABYHOOD.

THE health of those who fill high stations has always been and will always be the subject of many an untrue story and many a fictitious report, and our little king was no exception to the rule. Although he had, as we have seen, perfectly recovered from his illness, and was looking stronger and more robust than he had been before it, yet some newspapers, desirous of filling their columns, or increasing their circulation, continued to put forth at frequent intervals the most alarming reports as to his little majesty's health. Indeed, rumour did not stop short at hinting that the king was ill, or in a dangerous state, but whilst he was perfectly well the French newspapers hastened to announce to the world that the king was dead.

Stories of this kind could hardly have found much credence in Madrid, for there the fact that the king was not dead, but

on the contrary very full of life, was well known to all his subjects.

His daily drives made him familiar to many, and the inhabitants of his capital had besides plenty of opportunities of seeing him for themselves during the great holiday *fêtes* held in honour of the king's birthday in May, at which Queen Christina and her children were present. Many hundreds of his subjects, also, who were invited to the birthday *levée* at the palace had a still closer view of their little sovereign, as he stood by his mother's side, dressed in his sailor suit, all through the long ceremony of the reception.

The summer months found the little king again enjoying the out-of-door life and the sea-breezes of San Sebastian, and again the children were to be seen every day digging in the sands and splashing in the pools. Every fine morning, too, they were seen running gaily into the sea for their bathe, followed either by the queen or by a tall Basque baigneur.

The August of this year was an important point in the progress of his majesty towards manhood. He had reached that period which mothers must regret and which their sons usually welcome. It was at this time that Alfonso XIII. had his hair cut short for the first time by a hairdresser at San Sebastian—Queen Christina had always before this trimmed her little son's hair herself. The pretty yellow curls fell under the scissors, but the queen, like a good mother, found her boy still lovely without his curly locks. "How nice he looks, my little lad," said her majesty, and she gave one of the fallen locks to each of the little

sisters and to his governess and nurse as a souvenir. The race of hairdressers is known to be a curious and a talkative one, but this time the little boy turned the tables on the operator, and the curiosity was all on his side. The worthy hairdresser was bald: his majesty wanted to know why. "How did this strange thing come about? Had all the poor man's hair been pulled off?" An embarrassing question, to which history does not give an answer.

His majesty was by this time accustomed to taking part in great public functions, but it is pleasant to know that there were some from which he was dispensed. In the same month which was marked by the cutting of his majesty's hair, a great ceremony took place at Bilbao. But the weather was bad, and it is satisfactory to learn that the presence of the king was not considered indispensable to the launching of a "belted cruiser." The queen and the ministers duly attended, and His Majesty remained in the nursery.

The year 1891 brings us a step nearer to the end of all that is interesting—from our point of view—in the history of our little king. Babies grow to be boys, and boys grow to be men; and baby kings grow to be boy kings, and so also, finally, to be full-grown man kings.

The world is already full enough of histories of grown-up kings, and our business is not with them. The King Alfonso in whose history alone we are interested is King Alfonso the baby; and in 1891 King Alfonso made a great step out of the land of babyhood into the land of boyhood. In that year the Countess Peralta—does his majesty, we wonder, deign to

recognise his old friend, the Señora Tacon, under this new name?—was obliged by ill-health to give up her post as the chief guide and instructor of the youthful king. Her repose was well-earned, for, thirty years before this time, "the grandmother governess," as she was called at the palace, had been chosen by Isabella II., our little king's grandmother, to act as governess, first to her daughters and afterwards to her son, Alfonso XII.

With the end of her reign has come the end of nursery government. Tutors and professors have begun to take the place of nurses and governesses; and though the beloved nurse, Maximina, remains in attendance upon the king, "by his majesty's especial desire," her authority, if not her influence, is passing away into the hands of less picturesque if more learned preceptors.

Such, then, is the history of the early years of his majesty Alfonso XIII., told, for the most part, by those faithful recorders of contemporary events, the daily newspapers. What the future may have in store for our little king it is idle to speculate. His career may be famous, it may be disastrous; but one thing is certain: the first five years of this sovereign's reign have been without a parallel in the annals of the sovereigns of Europe, and for that reason, if for no other, they deserve at least to be remembered. Happy is the monarch who can look back upon as blameless a record of five years of sovereignty!

In this little history we have said enough to show that, even in the life of a baby king, there may be periods full

of true human interest and fraught with real emotion; that the sentiment of loyalty may wisely and honourably find an occasion for its display in devotion to a child king and his widowed mother, and that a great country may gain both in material prosperity and in clearness of national purpose by identifying its hopes and its aspirations with the person of a little child.

THE END.

PRINTED BY CASSELL & COMPANY, LIMITED, LA BELLE SAUVAGE, LONDON, E.C.

New Volumes for Young People

Published by CASSELL & COMPANY.

By the Author of "A World of Girls."

A SWEET GIRL GRADUATE. By L. T. MEADE, Author of "A World of Girls." Illustrated by Eight Full-page Plates. Crown 8vo, cloth gilt, 3s. 6d.

NEW WORK by the Author of "Dick's Hero."

THE WHITE HOUSE AT INCH GOW. By SARAH PITT. Illustrated by Eight Full-Page Plates by JOHN H. BACON. Extra crown 8vo, cloth gilt, 3s. 6d.

Uniform with "Wanted—a King."

GREAT-GRANDMAMMA. By GEORGINA SYNGE. Illustrated by GORDON BROWNE. Cloth gilt, 3s. 6d.

ROBIN'S RIDE. By ELLINOR DAVENPORT ADAMS. Illustrated by W. S. STACEY. Cloth gilt, 3s. 6d.

THE BIOGRAPHY OF A LOCOMOTIVE. By HENRY FRITH, Author of "Under Bayard's Banner." Eight Full-Page Illustrations by PAUL HARDY. Extra crown 8vo, 256 pp., 5s.

PLEASANT WORK FOR BUSY FINGERS; OR, KINDERGARTEN AT HOME. By MAGGIE BROWNE, Author of "Wanted—a King." Illustrated. 5s.

New and Enlarged Series.

"LITTLE FOLKS" HALF-YEARLY VOLUME. Containing 432 pages of Letterpress, with Pictures on nearly every page, together with Two Full-page Plates printed in Colours and Four Tinted Plates. Coloured boards, 3s. 6d.; cloth gilt, 5s.

CASSELL & COMPANY, LIMITED, *London, Paris & Melbourne.*

WORKS BY H. O. ARNOLD-FORSTER.

THE CITIZEN READER. Illustrated. 3 Coloured Plates. 175th Thousand. Price 1s. 6d. With Preface by the late RIGHT HON. W. E. FORSTER, M.P.

"Merely to conceive such a plan was laudable; to carry it out in such a way as to combine interest with instruction is to confer *a national benefit of which it is impossible to exaggerate the value.*"—*Academy.*

"Mr. Arnold-Forster converses with his little readers, and tells them of great things in simple language. He does not alter the facts, nor withhold them. He always remembers that children can see the stars."—*Birmingham Weekly Post.*

MISS CHARLOTTE M. YONGE *says*:—

"Nothing is more wanted than good, cheap papers conveying not only information on Church matters, but such absolute *simple information on the laws and constitution of the State as is to be found in Mr. Arnold-Forster's admirable* 'CITIZEN READER'—*a book that should be in every night-school and club-room.*"—*Extract from paper by Miss Yonge, read at Church Congress, October 8th*, 1886.

"It ought to be in use in every English-speaking school in the British Empire."—*Saturday Review.*

"We have no hesitation in pronouncing Messrs. Cassell's 'CITIZEN READER' *the most important contribution to the literature of elementary education that has appeared in the last decade.*"—*Journal of Education.*

"*Every school in the country would be the better for the use and study of this excellent Reader.*"—*The Teachers' Aid.*

"*We feel bound to admit that we know of no school-book of more undoubted practical utility.*"—*The English Teacher.*

CASSELL & COMPANY, LIMITED, *London, Paris & Melbourne.*

THE LAWS OF EVERY-DAY LIFE. Illustrated. 40th Thousand. Price 1s. 6d.

"Mr. Arnold-Forster, in words of studied simplicity and clearness, and by the judicious use of interesting and easily grasped examples, has succeeded in making readily intelligible the scope and action of the most important laws of political economy. The chapters on the laws of supply and demand, prices, work and wages, the relation of capital and labour, co-operation, trade-unions, and strikes, are sound expositions, which not only lay a solid foundation for the study of more advanced treatises, but will exercise with no little profit the mental powers of schoolboys. We heartily commend the book to schoolmasters of every grade."—*Spectator.*

"Mr. Arnold-Forster writes with a simplicity and lucidity that is fascinating to the old as well as the young reader. The facts have been selected and arranged with judgment that is, alas! rare in school-books, and the brilliant illustrations which illuminate every fact and argument will give an adhesiveness to them which the dry, dead morsel which so often constitutes a lesson entirely lacks."—*Bradford Observer.*

HOW TO SOLVE THE IRISH LAND QUESTION. Price 6d.

". . . The proposal is ingenious, and if the Land Purchase Scheme were accepted by the Irish people, it would render it almost certain that the British taxpayer would sustain no loss."—*Leeds Mercury.*

". . . The cleverness of the scheme is very apparent. It is ingenious almost to high statesmanship."—*Western Morning News.*

"Mr. Arnold-Forster has offered a solution of the Irish Land Question which is worthy of consideration. . . ."—*Echo.*

CASSELL & COMPANY, LIMITED, *London, Paris & Melbourne.*

SELECTIONS FROM

Cassell & Company's Publications.

By H. O. Arnold-Forster.

THIS WORLD OF OURS. Being Introductory Lessons to the Study of Geography. Fully Illustrated. 3s. 6d.

MAP-BUILDING FOR SCHOOLS. A New Method of Instruction in Geography. 6 Maps: England, Scotland, Ireland, France, German Empire, and Europe. 1s. for a Set of 12 Maps.

IN A CONNING TOWER; OR, HOW I TOOK H.M.S. *MAJESTIC* INTO ACTION. Illustrated by MR. W. H. OVEREND. Price 1s.

PAUL BERT'S EXPERIMENTAL GEOMETRY. Translated, with Original Examples, by MRS. H. O. ARNOLD-FORSTER. Illustrated. Price 1s. 6d.

From "The Teachers' Aid":—

"We have been charmed with the perusal of this admirable work. We cannot speak too highly of the benefits accruing from the study of such interesting little treatises as the one before us, and cordially commend it to our readers."

BORN A KING. By FRANCES and MARY ARNOLD-FORSTER. Being the Story of the Life of Alfonso XIII., the Boy King of Spain. Illustrated. Price 1s.

CASSELL'S CLASSIFIED CATALOGUE. Containing particulars of upwards of One Thousand Volumes published by Messrs. Cassell & Company, ranging in price from threepence to fifty guineas, will be sent on request, post free, to any address.

CASSELL & COMPANY, LIMITED, *London, Paris & Melbourne.*