

MODEL MOTHER IS THE FUTURE QUEEN OF BELGIUM'S PEOPLE

Princess Albert Greatly Attached to Her Family and Also Held
in the Highest Regard by the Subjects of Leopold
—Great Rejoicing Over Princess' Birth.

In Ostend this year the greatest event of an eventful season was the birth of Prince and Princess Albert of Belgium of their first daughter. To the joy of all the baby's birth took place in the height of the season. Its coming had been eagerly awaited. For a full month the news was expected every moment, and every strange sound which was heard in the air was taken to be made by the booming cannon which heralds a royal birth. Practical jokers took advantage of the people's expectancy, and a week before the baby came telegrams to the governor of the neighboring district of Bruges announced the safe arrival of a prince, and brought forth showers of congratulatory addresses from high officials and from civic bodies, as well as a preliminary display of rejoicings with their full accompaniment of bands and cannon, flags and flowers.

Prince Albert of Belgium, the baby's father, though the father already of two sons, as well as heir-presumptive to the Belgian throne, is not free from bashfulness on these occasions, and the premature congratulations confused him, but the incident had no dampening effect on the people. As a matter of fact, the good women of Belgium wanted a girl, for they were convinced that their friend, the princess, wanted one—had she not two boys already?—and they would have been hugely disappointed had she falsified their predictions and presented them with another baby prince instead. As it was, they were hugely delighted when what they foretold came to pass at last.

ENTERPRISING PICTURE DEALERS

Not one doubted how it could be. The baby was born at 3 in the morning. By breakfast time (and people breakfast at dawn in Belgium) the hawkers of Ostend were selling postcards with pictures on them of the infant shown in its nurse's arms. Dispatch could not have been more happily joined to intelligent anticipation.

The wife of the Belgian heir loves quietness, but she does not resent the watch which the people keep on her most intimate affairs. There is no such thing as prying where a princess in the direct line of a throne is concerned, and thrones have been lost and countries plunged into war before now because events were surrounded with privacy when state custom and policy ordained there should be none. Statecraft, however, had little to say to the public interest in the newest royal birth; the two sons already born to the baby's parents rendered the coming of a third child a matter of small political importance; it was the popular affection for the baby's mother which made the coming of the little princess such a great event.

The baby's mother has long ago

won herself into the hearts of the women of Belgium by her gentle womanliness, but what in days to come will be known as her motherliness, but which has not yet come to be so called because somehow her small youthful personality makes her appear more in the light of a very deeply resourceful sister, a young kind, marvelously unselfish, sister whose wisdom and sagacity cause her to take and fill a place rather than in that of an august royal mother. All the women of the poorer classes know that Princess Elizabeth, as they call her—using her own name, which to them seems more personal than her official title—is the daughter of a great doctor. They believe, not unjustifiably, that with her father's kindness she has inherited some of her father's learned magic, and they accept, with her help, her advice on recondite matters regarding infants' care, but all the time, even when they listen with awe to her instructions, there is found something of a protecting spirit mixed with their affection. They do not call her so, but they figure her to themselves in their minds as their little princess; the kind and wise motherly, little princess whom they so love to think of with a little baby girl of her own in addition to two fine boys.

CHRISTENING AN EVENT.

Now the desire of princess and people is gratified, and the royal household has settled down again to its customary routine. Before that was possible there had, of course, to be a great official poacher over the christening of the baby. Ministers of state had to be attendant on its birth, nominally within sight and call, but only nominally in these days, and special trainloads of other ministers had to come for the registration of the event.

For that registration itself, difficulties had to be coped with which kept the officials at Ostend, great and small, awake and troubled for a full week beforehand, while the newspapers chronicled every perplexity. Every baby's birth must be registered in a book of special form kept in the record office of the commune. All men, even when babies, are equal before the eyes of the Belgian law, and this baby had to be registered in the same book as the other babies of the commune, in its proper place amongst the others, properly described as "a baby of the feminine sex," and with the proper name and description of its father added, he signing the record as witness of its correctness.

ALL BABIES ARE NOT ALIKE.

About the signing there was no difficulty. Royal persons are so mighty that they sign their Christian names alone, as though, even among royals there were no other "Alberts" or "Georges" or "Edwards," than each particular one of them. Therefore Prince Albert signed "Albert," and his signature took up less room than that of any fisherman who, like him, was made a happy father that day, but, if princes parade simplicity about the signing of their names, there is no such simplicity about their titles, and the long list of titles of Prince Albert, with that of his decorations from the Golden Fleece of Spain to the Double Dragon of China, would alone more than fill the burgomaster's book; and yet all had to be fitted into the book. Not a man, official or journalist, was found daring enough to suggest that the list of titles should be abridged, and what would have been done I do not know, had not some clever person suggested that an additional half-dozen pages or so might be prepared, and inserted into the book, each inserted page being duly attested, as being properly inserted, by a judge's signature. This done, and the birth of her Royal Highness Marie Jose Charlotte Henrietta

Sophie, Princess of Belgium, Duchess of Savoy, is fully and legally entered in the records of Ostend, as are the births of those other royal highnesses, her little brothers, Leopold and Charles, in the civic registers of Brussels.

They are fine children, these little Belgian royalties, and they also are dear to the Belgian people. The baby's birth was not made for show; they neither bow themselves double when they speak to a royal personage, or stop and yell when they see one in the street. It would, indeed, be particularly irksome for them if they had any such custom for the royal personages of this small country love to frequent places crowded by people, and to come and go as others do. The Belgians pride themselves on this unfettered movement, and while the people of other kingdoms make a great point of the flourishing of hats and handkerchiefs at kings and princes, obliging kings and princes to an almost perpetual hat-lifting in return whenever they set foot out of doors, the Belgians pride themselves on "respecting the incognito" of their royalties. There is, in reality, far the more courteous and kindly proceeding, and one consequence of it is that the Princess Albert and her little toddlers can and do take their walks abroad in the simplest manner, enjoying the lovely parks and avenues of Ostend and the broad sands of the sea, and there are no apparent edging away in contrast to other countries, there is not the least crowding about the spot where the royal children play.

POPULACE LOVES LITTLE PRINCES.

I do not think it is the glamor which surrounds royalty so much as the real affection, the sense that the little boys are "our princes," which makes every one look with particular kindness on the gambols of the little princes, and which brings a smile to every face which looks on them. There are none in Belgium who refuse that smile, and, truly, it is merited, for the two little princes of the Belgian house are open, bonny children. They have already learned the lesson, which has sunk so deep into their parents' minds, that it is the duty of princes to entertain and please the people, and they are always considerate for all they come in contact with, and eager to please. Their mother is a great patroness of children's holiday homes by the sea, and all such institutions, and the little princes are constantly brought into contact with their poorer fellow-citizens of their own age. In thrifty and sober Belgium there is no tragedy of child life, and the poor children are as gay, as well nourished, and as stoutly clad as the royal princes who come to visit and play with them in their kindergartens and in the village at the seaside where the organization which Prince Albert protects, secures summer holidays for thousands every year. There is a great display of wonderful baby clothes whenever a royal baby is born in Belgium, and on such occasions the mothers who entertain Princess Albert's friendship or protection, or who belong to any of these innumerable societies with which she is connected, manage to get within the palace walls on some pretext or another to present an address in common, or, it may be, individually,

to carry their congratulations with a bunch of flowers to their patronesses, and for months afterwards they tell and wonder tales of laces and ribbons and muslin, of cradles and pillows and pincushions. But generally the clothing of the little princess is exquisite only in its freshness and simplicity. Their mother, with her German good sense, and her special medical lore, is a high priestess of hygiene; she wages unceasing warfare against microbes. She prides herself more on a particularly useful and cleanly combination of toilet table and baby's bath than on any lace draped cradle, and so far, in the earliest years of her motherhood, did she carry her precautions against infection that all entering the nursery from the street had to cover their clothes with a huge overall. This precaution is now dropped, but furs are still strictly forbidden, and the baby's grandmother herself, the widowed Countess of Flanders, Prince Albert's mother, has to remove her furs on entering her son's palace, before her grandchildren are let near her.

MOTHERS MIGHT ADOPT PRECAUTIONS.

Every mother would do well to follow the careful example of the Belgian princess in the separation of her children from all contact with dirt, and in warding off evils from them as far as possible, but watching these gay little tots, one realizes that if there are immense possibilities for happiness in a prince's life, there are also shadows hanging over it more heavy than those which threaten lesser men. Both in public and in private life, the parents of these little princes are above reproach. Each of them is devoted to duty; each of them strives honestly and seriously to fill the day with good work, and yet one sees the glad play of their tiny children surrounded with precautions against unknown danger for which the fear of microbes alone cannot account.

Princess Albert, the Belgians, she knows that she has no fear of any of them; yet her motherly precaution, even in their play out of doors in crowded places, cause her to draw the two boys who stand in the succession to the throne so far apart as to be without almost touching them—and it is not the same within their home itself. Can it be that she dreads that some mad Anarchist hand, reckless of the parents' good or of the children's innocence, should cast a bomb between them? Whatever the cause, this excessive care, may evil omen be averted from them.

The careful guard against every fact that the little princess—the eldest is only four and a half years old, the youngest just three—when they travel to the same place, go by different trains, thus the advice of the day, on a visit to their grandmother at her country chateau, and Prince Leopold, the elder, went one day before his brother, Prince Charles.

For themselves, their story is quickly told. They are intelligent, dole little children. Prince Leopold is graver than his brother, sedately like his conscientious father, while Prince Charles, the younger, is a great romp, and full of more ready laughter. They have the long limbs of their father, while in their faces the soft Bavarian look of their mother are clearly shown.

Young Men and Play Writing

Although George M. Cohan started to write songs when he was 10 years old, and sold one called "Venus" to Gus Williams when he was 12, every dramatic author has not begun work at the trade so young. Still there are large numbers of dramatists who have met with success early in life, says the Chicago Tribune. Some of them have never seen the face of success again, and others have gone on to greater triumphs.

It was natural that Cohan should begin young, because he has been on the stage since babyhood. He and his sister Josephine, who is now Mrs. Niblo, acted with their father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Cohan, when they were quite young.

Precocious as Cohan was, another young Irishman won success before Cohan did. This was Dion Boucicault, who wrote more dramas than any other man who ever wrote for the English-speaking stage. Boucicault wrote his first success, "London Assurance," when he was but 19 years old. It was a great success and is still acted. He followed it with more than 400 plays of various sorts, all but a few of which were successful.

Further back than Boucicault the stage had young Christopher Marlowe, who wrote brilliant plays, but whose life ended at an age when most men have seen nothing of success. Savage, too, whose memory is preserved in the admirable sketch of his life that is to be found in Samuel Johnson's "Lives of the Poets," died after giving much to the stage. The work of Edgar Allan Poe from which stage adaptations have been made was done in his younger days.

This year sees the triumph of a new dramatist who is not yet 25 years old. This is Avery Hopwood, of Cleveland. He was graduated from the University of Michigan about a year ago, and already his name is known wherever good dramatic workmanship is admired as the author of "Clothes," the Grace George success of this season.

Young Mr. Mackaye, two of whose dramas are being played by E. J. Sothman and Julie Marlowe, this season, has been out of college but a short time. He is the son of the noted dramatist, Steel Mackaye, one of whose schemes was the immense building that was erected near the World's Fair grounds in Chicago in 1892, and in which it was intended to play great spectacles. The project failed, unlike Mackaye's dramas. His son has marked talent. So have the two sons of that De Mille who was David Belasco's first partner in playwriting. The young De Mille have "strongheart," "The Genius," and other pieces to their credit, and neither of them is yet 26 years old. Young is also Augustus Pitou, jun., husband of Gertrude Coghlan, and

manager of "The Lion and the Mouse" company, in which his wife is appearing. He has done considerable work for the stage, and those managers who have read it say that it shows promise. His father is Chauncey Olcott's manager, and the author of several of Olcott's successes.

Edgar Selwyn is young. Only a few years ago he was an usher in a theater in which he has since appeared in leading roles. He has been writing for the stage ever since he has been on it. So has his young Margaret Mayo. Clyde Fitch was in his early twenties when he began the career that has carried him to the summit of the writers of light society plays. He was just out of college and he was poor. When he engaged himself as Richard Mansfield's secretary he had few clothes, and those he had were cheap.

Writing for the stage is more of a young man's business than it used to be. Now that Ibsen is dead and Bronson Howard has quit writing most of the plays that are written are written by young men. Pinero has been at it for a quarter of a century, it is true, and Henry Arthur Jones has been in the harness about as long, but they are exceptions, as the plays they write are so brilliant that they, too, are exceptions to the general rule of stuff that is written. But Fitch has been writing less than fifteen years, and Augustus Thomas about that long. Lawyers and physicians there are, and many of them who have been practicing for more than 35 years. In the list of men who have dramatic practices there are few to be found who have worked for a score of years. The young men are continually coming from behind and crowding the oldsters out. The foremost author of poetic drama in the English language is Stephen Phillips, and he is young William Vaughn Moody, who most closely approaches him on this side of the water, is a young man.

Jesse Lynch Williams, who wrote "The Stolen Story," is a young instructor at Princeton, his alma mater, from which he went out a few years to engage in newspaper work in New York. In New York he met Richard Harding Davis, who has had such success as "The Taming of Helen," "The Dictator," and "The Gallop," and who is still a young man. George Ade is on the right side of 40. He has a string of winners that is a long one. There is Oliver Morosco, who has within a year written "The Half-Breed" and "The Judge and the Jury," the latter a failure in New York, but a success in the west, and Morosco, who is only 28, not only writes plays, but manages a theater and a high-class stock company.

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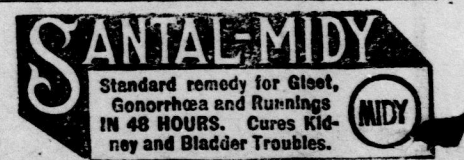
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