THE ROMANCE OF A DUKE AND AN AMERICAN GIRL: Should the Rumored ...

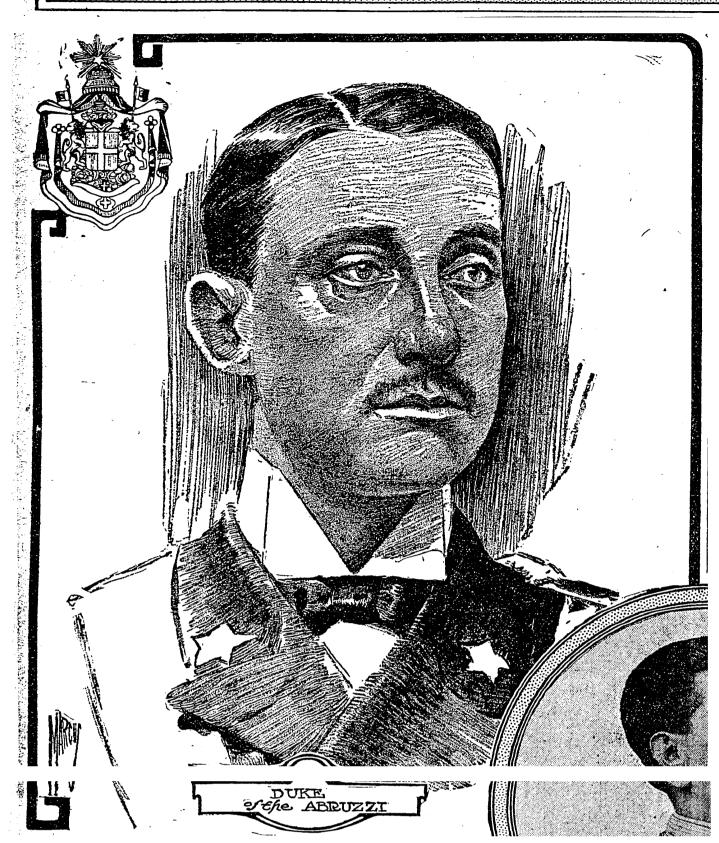
By A VETERAN DIPLOMAT.

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THE ROMANCE OF A DUKE AND AN AMERICAN GIRL &



Should the Rumored Marriage Take Place Between Prince Louis of Italy and Miss Elkins, Will the **Bridegroom Renounce His Titles** to Insure His Bride's Happiness?

By A VETERAN DIPLOMAT.

INCE LOUIS of Italy's application to the Naval Department at Rome for furlough next month. coupled with his request to King Victor Emman-

el for permission to leave Italy in der "to visit England," has naturily served to revive all the rumors ncerning his alleged engagement to fiss Katherine Elkins, and it is reorted that the visit to England will e extended to the United States, for ie purpose of making the final aringements for an early wedding.

While of course it is possible that a

strothal may really exist, and that a arriage may take place, it is only fair point out that no member of the signing house of Italy, and no one innected in any official capacity with ie Court of the Quirinal or the Italn Government, either at home or groad, has been willing to admit that by such union has been promised or contemplated; while Senator Elkins's mily has manifested a similar retience about the matter. In fact, thus r the entire story of the rumored gagement and impending marriage sts on wholly irresponsible gossip, d it is difficult to understand why, a betrothal between the Prince and iss Elkins has actually taken place, me definite pronouncement could not we been made ere this, so as to avert the idle talk to which she has been

ibjected.

eason for Silence. There is only one explanation of this traordinary silence on the part of ose chiefly concerned if the engageent is already an accomplished factmely, the pronounced opposition of e members of the reigning house of aly and of the other sovereign famiis of Europe to the match. And the -will to all idea of any such matrionial alliance manifested not only · Old World royalty but likewise by e people of Italy belonging to every ass of society should go far to deter nator and Mrs. Elkins from wishing see their daughter become the bride the Duke.

No one can deny that Louis of Savoy a gallant Prince in every sense of e word; comely, with the cut and gring of a thoroughbred, skilled in profession, which is that of a sailor, d justly celebrated as a singularly id, successful, and withal modest plorer. No American girl, in fact, hid wish for a more attractive conrt, were he of bourgeois or even of ble birth. But the fact of his being scion of one of the oldest sovereign nasties of Europe, the grandson, the and the nephew of Kings, and sely related to most of the reigning uses of Europe, should constitute insuperable obstacle to his being acded the hand of any American girl ose parents have at heart her wel-

e and her happiness. then, in 1864, Prince Frederick of leswig-Holstein, brother of the pres-Kaiserin's father and of that nce Christian who makes his home England, became a suitor for the of Miss Mary Esther Lee of New her family, who would not hear morganatic arrangement, stip-as the price of their consent

to the union, that he should abandon his status, his titles, and his prerogatives as a Prince of the blood and descend to the rank of an ordinary noble, so as to be able to wed his American bride on a footing of equality.

He complied with this condition, and, renouncing his royal rank, secured from the Emperor of Austria the title of "Fürst," or Prince, Noer, which of course he was able to share with his wife. In spite of the disparity of age the union was a very happy one. The former Mary Lee was welcomed everywhere not as the consort of a scion of royalty but as the wife of a noble, and it was as Princess of Noer that some years after his death she married, en secondes noces, the late Field Marshal Count Waldersee. Renunciation of Royalty.

There is only one condition upon which the Senator and Mrs. Elkins should permit their daughter to wed Louis of Savoy, that is to say, if they wish for her happiness-namely, they should insist that, like Prince Frederick of Schleswig-Holstein, he should renounce his membership and standing as a member of the reigning house of Italy and as a Prince of the blood. should abandon his place in the line of succession to the throne, and should descend to the rank of a mere ordinary Italian noble, obtaining from his cousin, King Victor Emmanuel, the title of Count or Marquis, or even of

a non-royal Duke. This was what the present King of Sweden's sailor brother Oscar did when he fell in love with and married Miss Ebba Munk, who was maid of honor to his mother, the now widowed Queen Sophia, and a daughter of one of the oldest houses of the proud Swedish aristocracy. He renounced his rights of succession to the throne and his position and prerogatives as a Prince of the blood and as a member of the reigning family, securing the title of Count and Countess Wisborg for himself and his wife, by which they are now known. He has, however, retained his rank as Admiral, and figures in the list of the Swedish Navy among its flag officers as Oscar Bernadotte, Count of Wisborg.

There is plenty of precedent, therefore, for Louis of Savoy in the matter. If he is so deeply infatuated with Miss Katherine Elkins he will find it no sacrifice to surrender for her sake his place in the line of succession to the throne, and his rights, prerogatives, and honors as a Prince of the blood. contenting himself with his rank in the navy and his fame as an explorer. In fact, there is plenty in him to attract and to bind the love and hold the heart of any girl, be she European or American, even if he is divested of all the glamour of royalty.

It is doubtful whether Miss Elkins and her relatives-or, rather, I should say, the people who wish to see her wed Prince Louis of Savoy-have any notion of the humiliations, the slights and the "misères" of every kind that await her in the event of her becoming the wife of the Duke of the Abruzzi without his having followed the example of Prince Oscar of Sweden and of Prince Frederick of Schleswig-Holstein in descending to the status of a noble for her sake. It betrays a complete ignorance of the conditions which pre-

would be placed above the reach of any such treatment as she had received

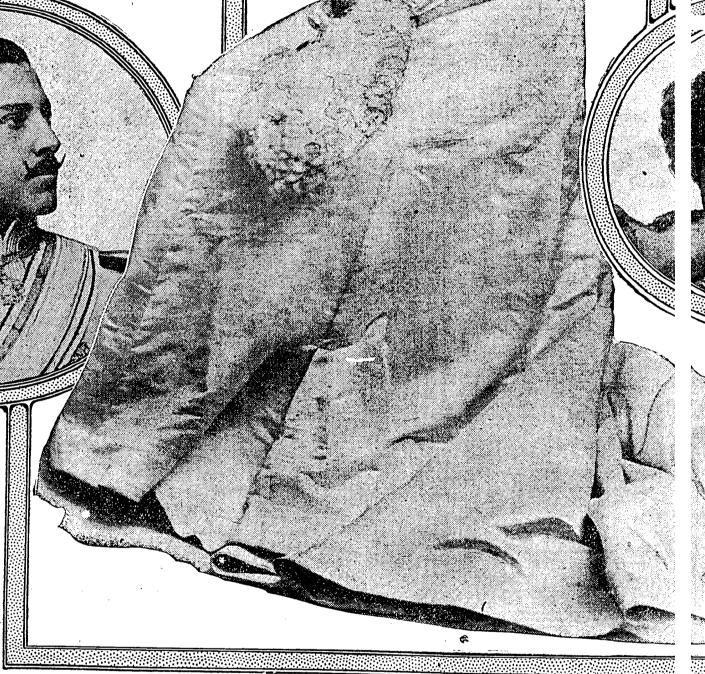
Amadeus discovered, however, too late that it was a case of stepping out of the frying pan into the fire. At Madrid his Queen was boycotted to such an extent by the old Spanish aristocracy that she was unable to find any women possessed of the requisite Grandezza to take office at her court as Grand Mistress of the Robes, as Ladies in Waiting, and Maids of Honor. While they were ready to accord all the respect due to royalty to King Amadeus they absolutely refused even to bow to his Queen when they met her out driving, seized every opportunity of professing their contempt for her demands upon their homage, and encouraged the lampoons, pictorial and in print, at her expense, with which the country was flooded.

In fact, it was altogether owing to the intolerable treatment accorded to his wife by the Grandezza of Spain and by the people, who there, as everywhere, take their cue from the social classes above them, that King Amadeus suddenly hurled aside the crown in anger and disgust, announcing in a memorable proclamation that he would no longer consent to reign over the people of Spain. His abdication, one of the most remarkable ones in history. took place only a few days after "La Cisterna," as his Queen was derisively styled at Madrid, (and as she had been also nicknamed at Turin and Florence,) had given birth to a son, the present Duke of the Abruzzi, and it was because she was obliged to leave



Nor, no matter what arrangement Senator Elkins might make with the Duke, would the Duchess enjoy the free control of her personal fortune. For in all the monarchical countries of Europe it is within the power of the sovereign to deprive, if he sees fit, any member of the reigning family of the power of spending a penny piece of his or her income and estate, and to vest the administration thereof in the hands of trustees appointed by himself. Usually this has been done for the purpose of checking undue extravagance. But there have been a number of instances in which a Prince or Princess of the blood has been subjected to disabilities of this kind as a mere measure of discipline, and even of spite.

And this brings us to the methods of discipline at the disposal of the sovereign in case of any infraction of the rules which have been established by himself and his predecessors for the guidance of the reigning family. He can, without legal process, subject Princes and Princesses of the blood to arrest, in the form of confinement to or chateaus or in their apartments. with sentinels placed at the door to prevent the egress of the prisoner, or the entrance of visitors. They may even be consigned to captivity in a fortress, or to detention in a sanitarium. The mad house is, indeed, always available for cases of extreme indiscipline and misbehavior where royal women are concerned, as has been shown in the instance of Princess Philip of Coburg, daughter of the King of Belgium, who spent several years in an



MISS KATHERINE ELKINS

vail in Rome, and also in the other capitals of monarchical Europe, to imagine for one moment that Miss Elkins, as the wife of Prince Louis of Savoy, would be treated on a footing of equality or as a Princess of the blood by the members of his family or by any of the foreign reigning houses, either in their own countries or when visiting Rome. She would always be made to feel that she was not to the manner born, and that she was in their eyes an intruder and a True, King Victor Emmanuel might,

if he saw fit, compel his troops and the officers of the army and navy to accord to her the military honors reserved for the women of his house. But he could not force the great nobles of his court, and especially the feminine ornaments thereof, to accord to her any of that homage which they concede to Queen Margherita, to Queen Helene, to the two Duchesses of Genoa, and to the two Duchesses of Aosta Nowhere, save perhaps at Vienna, are the patricians more proud of their lineage and of the oft-historic grandeur of their families than at Rome.

Americans and Royalty.

Were Miss Elkins to come among them as the wife of a mere noble they would welcome her with that same friendliness that they have manifested toward certain other American women who have married into old Roman nobility. With their highbred courtesy they would refrain from permitting her to feel that they regarded her as anything else than their equal in rank, and even in birth. In fact, her position would be an agreeable one. But if she appeared among them as the consort of a royal Prince expecting to receive the honors and tokens of respect accorded to the other Princesses of Savoy they would feel it to be their duty to manifest on every occasion their own superiority and her inferiority in their eyes. Nor could anything that the King might do in the matter, such as for instance bestowing upon her the predicate of "Royal Highness," improve her position in the matter.

It is perfectly true that the mother of Prince Louis of Savoy was not of royal birth. Her mother, however, belonged to that great Belgian princely house of de Merode which formerly exercised petty sovereignty in Central Europe, and which, figuring among the mediatized or once reigning houses of the Old World, retains the right of mating on a footing of perfect equality with the dynasties now occupying the thrones of the Old World.

Her father, the Prince de la Cisterna, it is true, was a mere Italian noble, though one of ancient lineage, and it was precisely because this singularly heautiful, wonderfully clever, and altogether fascinating woman was so badly treated by the great ladies of Florence. Milan, and of Turin, who refused to accord to her the homage due to the daughter-in-law of the King, that her husband, Amadeus, accepted the offer of the throne of Spain in 1870, glad to get his wife away from the affronts and humiliations with which she was beset both by day and by night in his father's dominions. He fondly imagined that as Queen of Spain her position would be improved, and that ocSpain before she had sufficiently recovered her health and strength to travel in midwinter that she died almost immediately after reaching Italy. Miss Elkins's position as the wife of Prince Louis of Savoy would be infinitely worse than that of his mother. For whereas the latter enjoyed the profound admiration, affection, and support of all the members of the reigning family of Italy, and in particular

of her father-in-law, old King Victor Emmanuel, who was devoted to her, the American consort of the Duke of the Abruzzi is already assured of the ill will of all the Princesses of his house. There is no one more terribly strict on the score of etiquette, lineage, and the prerogatives of royalty, more imbued with the old-time doctrines of the divine right of Kings, than the aged Duchess of Genoa, sister of the late King of Saxony and mother of Queen Margherita. Margherita has always been subject in a very marked degree to the influence of her extremely able and masterful mother, who, although it is not generally known, was one of the principal authors of the in-

clusion of Italy in the Triple Alliance. Then there is Queen Margherita's sister-in-law, the young Duchess of Genoa, a Bavarian Princess and member of a family which boasts of being the oldest sovereign dynasty in Europe. There are also the two Duchesses of Aosta-namely, Letitia Bonoparte, widow of the late Duke, and Helene of Orleans, wife of the present Duke and sister of the Duke of Orleans and of the Queen of Portgual. Both are reported to be strongly opposed to the idea of Louis of Savoy marrying outside his rank, and they have been

brought up from their earliest life among surroundings that would lead them to regard any such match as a mesalliance, deplorable from a dynastic and from a political point of view, In fact, at the Court of the Quirinal the Duchess of the Abruzzi would find no support or good will among her relatives, whose attitude would still further encourage the ill will of the people connected therewith and of the

But leaving aside all this, and admitting hypothetically for a moment the impossible-namely, that Senator Elkins's daughter were welcomed with every honor, kindness, and cordiality alike by the reigning family, the nobility, and the people of Italy, she would even then find herself surrounded on every side by restrictions that would appear intolerable to any American girl accustomed to the freedom of a spoiled child of indulgent

Thorny Road of Princesses.

To begin with, Princesses of the blood-and in that category I include the full-fledged wives of royal and imperial Princes-are subjected to an amount of discipline and constraint of which few people in this country have any conception. As Duchess of the Abruzzi Miss Elkins would not be allowed to leave the country nor even to travel within its borders from one portion thereof to another without having in each instance obtained before hand the permission of the King. It is he or the Queen who selects the members of her household, in which she has no voice, and if either the monarch or his consort is disposed to be unfriendly toward her they could perfectly well surround her with people who would be eminently objectionable to her, and from whose probably inimical eye there would be no privacy

This is what happened to Emperor and Empress Frederick when they were still Crown Prince and Crown Princess of Germany. They had in curred the ill will of Bismarck by their undisguised distaste for his despotic methods and by their liberal views and leanings, and accordingly he got even with them by inducing old Emperor William to assign to duty as aids de camp, as gentlemen in waiting on the Crown Prince, and as Chamberisins and as ladies in waiting on the Crown Princess people who were devoted to his own interests and policy. The Crown Prince and his wife, the latter a sister of King Edward, were perfectly aware that they had been in this fashion surrounded on every side by people who were not merely uncongenial but actual enemies and ready to report in a prejudiced light everything that they saw and heard to their patron, the Chancellor. But they could

not help themserves.

Education of Royal Children. In the same way Prince Bismarck insisted upon selecting men offensive in every respect to the Crown Prince and Crown Princess as tutors and teachers of their sons, and this went on until in two instances the nominees of the Chancellor, notably a certain Capt. O'Dane, were discovered to be such blacklegs and such scoundrels that a scandal ensued and the Crown Prince and Crown Princess pleaded with success to be allowed at least some voice in the education of their boys.

Thus, were the American Duchess of the Abruzzi to have any children, she would be obliged to submit to the possibly friendly, but possibly, also, unfriendly, dictation of the King and Queen in the rearing of her offspring and in their bringing up. The youngsters would be amenable to their direction, not to hers. It is the King and Queen who would determine the choice of the children's medical attendants, and of their religious instructors, and the Duchess would not be permitted to take her children out of the kingdom, or even to any Italian Summer resort, without the consent of their Majesties. In fact, Princes and Princesses of the blood are treated in every monarchical country of Europe much in the same way as minors or as lunatics in that the legal guardianship and control of their children is vested not in their hands but exclusively in those of the sovereign.

The King and Queen would likewise have their say in the selection of the friends and acquaintances of the Duchess, and might, if they felt so disposed. forbid her from receiving this or that person, or from visiting some one else to whom they had taken exception. All this may sound exaggerated, and even incredible to American ears. But there are plenty of instances which could be cited in support thereof.

asylum for the insane, although it has been established since that she has never at any moment been crazy, but

only misguided. Emperor Frederick, while still Crown Prince, was on several occasions sentenced by his father to "Stubenarrest." that is to say, to confinement in his apartments. Prince and Princess Frederick Leopold of Prussia have several times been disciplined by confinement to their Potsdam palace of Glieniecke for violation of some of the rules instituted by the present Kaiser, and Princess Letitia, widowed Duchess of Aosta, was punished by the late King Humbert by a temporary withdrawal of the use of the royal liveries and the withholding of royal honors for some particularly flagrant piece of unconventionality-it was in connection with a bicycle costume-that had terribly shocked her mother-in-law, the old Duchess of Genoa.

A Case of Brotherly Affection.

While of course we are no longer in the eighteenth century, when King Frederick William of Prussia had determined upon the decapitation of his son, afterward Frederick the Great, for a revolt against parental tyranny, and was only prevented from putting his design into execution by the interference of the Austrian, the French, and the English Ambassadors, who went so far as to threaten war in case the Crown Prince was sent to the scaffold, yet it must not be forgotten that at the present moment an Austrian Archduke-namely, Louis Victor-has been kept in strict confinement in a remote mountain château near Salzburg for several years past, in the closest seclusion, by order of his brother, the Emperor, without any legal process whatsoever.

The youngest son of Grand Duke and Grand Duchess Vladimir has just been banished by the Czar to Siberia on account of his refusal to abandon hisproject of marrying a danseuse of the St. Petersburg opera; while another Grand Duke-namely, Nicholas Constantinovitch, brother of the Queen of Greece-spent thirty years of his life closely imprisoned in a Transcaspian fortress without any legal process, but as a punishment for indiscretions of speech, correspondence, and behavior in connection with his infatuation a Philadelphia woman, Mrs. Blackford alias

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