



Prince Alexander

It Takes THREE GENERATIONS to MAKE a GENTLEMAN and LONGER to MAKE a KING

Prince Who Redeemed a Dynasty's Shame is Monarch Without a Country

throne clothed as natural, while fantastically garbed or not at all garbed subjects upon whom he had conferred fantastic and ridiculous titles passed in review and saluted by kissing his big toe. For this he was disinherited and banished.

In the background, during this tumult of the crown prince's making, was the second son of King Peter. He was Prince Alexander, of the same blood as the disgraced youth, but totally different. Alexander was studious and serious. He excelled in mathematics and had dreams of being an engineer before being called to live in a palace. He was beloved by the troops he commanded and respected by the officers of the army.

Alexander was made heir apparent. It was a matter of small moment to the chancelleries of Europe, who were disgusted with the Serbian spectacle, and acknowledgments of the change were perfunctory and frapped. In the two wars preceding the big issue Alexander acquitted himself creditably.

Then came the deluge and poor little Serbia was annihilated. In July, 1914, King Peter announced in Belgrade his surrender of the throne to the regency of Alexander and wise men foresaw that defense and occupancy of the country was to be of brief duration. When the Austrians began their serious drive through Serbia there was no chance to stop it. The diminished and diminishing army fought valiantly but vainly until the Serb was without country.

Through the succession of reverses

It takes three generations to make a gentleman and longer to make a king.

For in the code of caste royalty is the pinnacle of gentle breeding, of courage, of culture and of all accomplishments attainable by man.

True, the opinion has not always been unanimous that rulers have possessed these virtues. Once upon a time an insurgent courtier declared to one of the English Georges:

"Birth made you a king, but God Almighty could not make you a gentleman."

Out of Serbia, that land of immemorial misery, has been thrust a prince anointed by a peasant warrior four generations back who by his clean living, his heroic behavior at the head of his people in war, his gentleness and above all his justice has redeemed the shame of a race of profligates only to find himself a king without a country when those he was set over to rule had learned to love him.

Prince Alexander of the Karageorgevitch dynasty, regent ruler of a phantom kingdom since the abdication of his father, King Peter, in July, 1914, is commanding what remains of the Serbian army "somewhere in France." Recently he visited England and he not only was a guest of Britain's royal family, but was shown marked attention and respect by the Prince of Wales and other members of that reigning house.

Until the beginning of the war, when unhappy Serbia was made the pretext for precipitating the conflict, King Peter had received scant recognition as a reigning sovereign. True, the powers had forgiven him the assassinations of King Alexander and Queen Draga, which ended the dynasty of Obrenovitch and cleared the way for the Karageorgevitch restoration. They had accredited diplomatic representatives to his court, but Peter, the man, they did not invite to their royal homes.

Nor was it entirely because Peter was suspected of guilty knowledge of the plot in Belgrade which boosted him to the blood-stained throne. It is within the memory of tottering spendthrifts of the French and Austrian capitals whose lives have lasted through decades of dissipation how Peter in his youth and vigorous manhood stepped gaily along the route of roues and needed no urging in his worship of Bacchus.

He was seventy when he abdicated, and threescore and ten lives in memories when primrose paths had been preferred avenues of a gay-blading youth. From 1844 to 1858 King Peter lived in the royal palace in Belgrade and was tutored privately until the expulsion in the latter year of his reigning father from the country. Paris was the chosen city of exile and the young Peter was sent to St. Cyr, the French West Point.

His parent was the third generation from the swineherd ancestor and had the veneer of gentleness. So the dashing princeling secured entrée to the fashionable life of the gayest of capitals. Equally fortunate was the thrift which enabled the family to grant him a fairish allowance. There were many companions in those days who had more, but few who could boast of being royal, even if the royalty was recent of acquirement and more recent in the divestment.

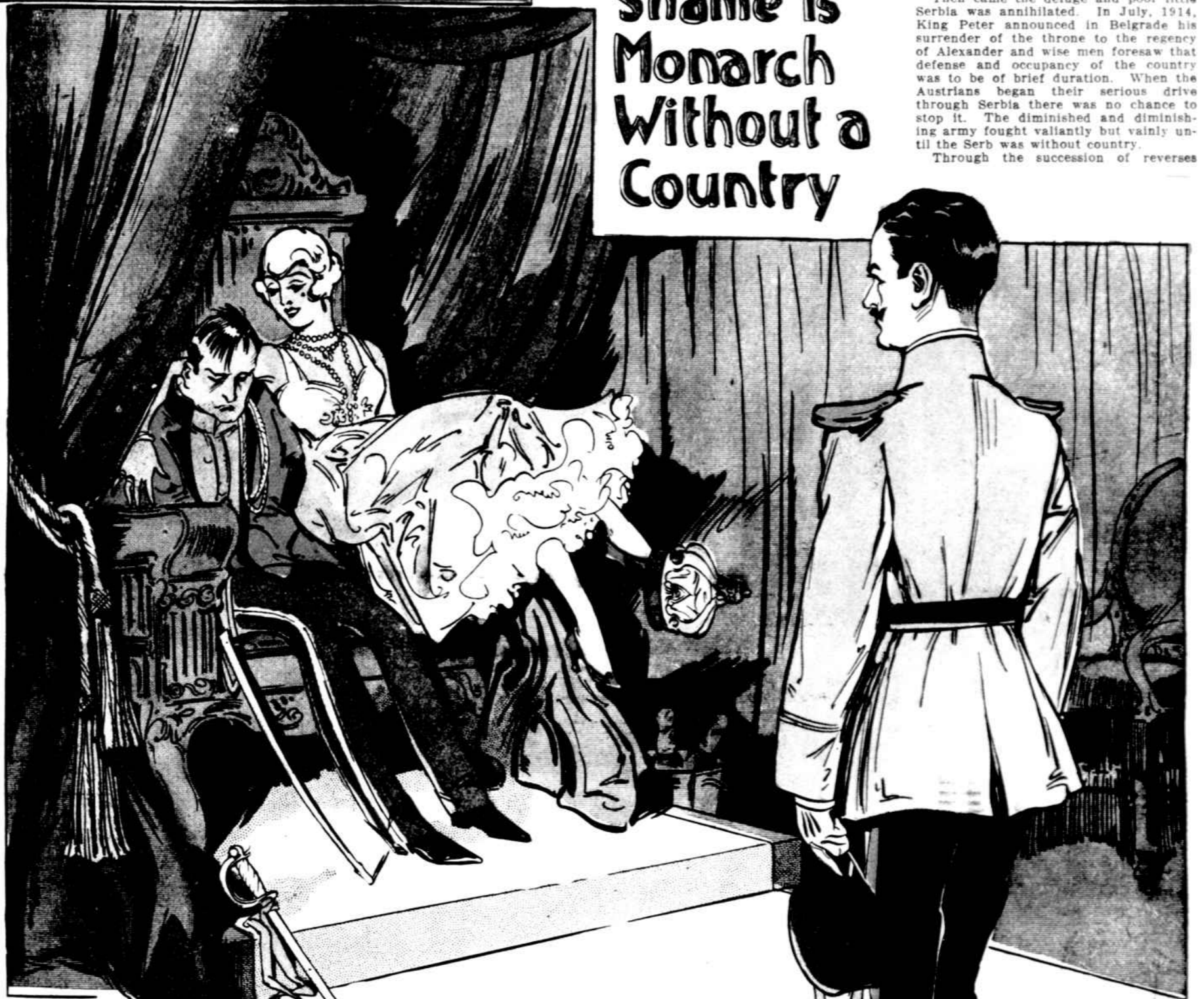
The Paris of Peter's time held infinite

variety for the roysterer. There were queens of the half world, the opera and the salons. Peter knew them all. Many tales are related of the swaggering officer's escapades, and some of the scandals were sordid. And Serbia, then under reign of the Obrenovitch Milan, knew what Peter did.

In a way Milan was loved for his soldierly qualities and his democratic policies. A state ball at Belgrade in the time of Milan included the butcher, the baker and candlestick-maker. One was as apt to meet a milk magnate as a milord, a brewer as a baron.

Milan was a sensualist, openly, brazenly, almost proudly. His affairs d'amour were so numerous and followed with such quick succession that attempt to chronicle them would require a book. Moreover, they soon ceased to excite more than passing curiosity in his own capital except when an added tax was suspected of defraying the expense.

In these crises the wise Milan went to



came nominal ruler, subject to a regency established. Before he was seventeen his profligacy was the amazement of Europe. At eighteen he declared himself of age and stepped upon the throne. And to the wonderment of the world he laid his crown and his life it afterwards proved at the feet of the Draga Maschin who had openly been his father's paramour. The queen mother, Natalie, was furious. She had been endeavoring to make a match for her son with a Montenegrin or German princess, but the youth's reputation for licentious restlessness barred the way. In the end he married Draga. When taunted with her "low birth," he said he himself was descended from a tender of hogs. Nothing could deter him. The marriage took place in 1900. It was the night of June 11, 1903, the thirty-fifth anniversary of the assassination of the king's uncle by Alexander Karageorgevitch, that officers of the army and a mob of followers shot down Alexander and Draga on the roof of the palace. Then the bodies were tossed into the gardens below that the populace might see the work was finished.

Eleven days later Peter Karageorgevitch entrained at Geneva for Belgrade, and his coronation followed. The queen, a daughter of the king of Montenegro,

soon found favor with her new people. Peter himself was too old to find amusement in folly. He settled down to rule the land reclaimed to his race.

But the profligacy of Serbian royalty was not extinguished. Peter, the rake, had reformed when drained of vitality. But Prince George, heir to the crown, showed willingness to take up the role where his father had laid it down and an aptitude that startled.

Finances had been cramped in the Geneva home of the pretender and for the first time George had ample spending money and unlimited credit. Royally he squandered. Early he showed his preference for women of the theater. His first exploit of consequence involved a pretty actress upon whom he bestowed such conscious favor in the theater and

in the apartment he maintained for her that the king had him confined to the palace.

He delighted in supper parties where favor passed to the wearer of the fewest clothes unless it was a tie because there could be no further competition. On occasion of a religious ceremony he confronted the solemn procession with a troupe of dancers some of whom wore parts of his princely wardrobe and others the scant costume of their calling. As the king passed he swayed drunkenly to his feet, called "Hurrah for papa!" and sprawled on the carriage floor.

In a drunken moment he shot a sentry who refused to bite off the head of a live rat, in another frenzy he thrust his sword fatally into a soldier who had offended him. Twice he ran away to Paris with opera singers and had to be forcibly brought back. On an occasion when he knew his planned elopement had been intimated to the king he and a show girl smuggled into a baggage coach, got over the Austrian border, bought a cheap gypsy outfit and took to the road until his pursuers caught up with them.

The escapade that forever forfeited his chance to reign occurred during his father's illness. George was bored until, a suggestion was whispered, whereupon he organized a mock court, sat upon the



Prince George Karageorgevitch

Paris, not the Paris of the faubourgs and drawing-rooms but to the Paris of the cabarets and all-night haunts of revelry. He made many women notorious and some unhappy. Others he merely made opulent for the moment. Then came his intrigue with Draga Maschin, later Queen Draga, but then the unusually beautiful wife of an obscure engineer.

Him Milan transferred to the country's diplomatic corps, which permitted assigning him to posts far distant and without a return stub to his ticket. The husband journeyed alone, leaving his wife in his country's capital. After some years of such service Maschin quietly killed himself, and it is not recorded that his widow wore the conventional black. Attempt or pretense of concealment was thrown to the winds. Draga became the power behind the purple and made and unmade ministers, formulated policies and presumably assessed taxes. It should be mentioned in passing that Milan had a queen. In fact it was a lady-in-waiting to her majesty that Draga Maschin first appeared at court. When the king's consort found herself not only second in her husband's heart but subsequent to her attendant in the councils of state, she fled to Germany with her son. In 1889 Milan heeded the advice of his statesmen and abdicated in favor of his heir, Alexander.

Alexander was thirteen when he be-

Woman Spy Carries Secrets in Bandages

HOW a woman spy carried official secrets in the bandages on her supposedly broken arm, is a story told in the first issue of the Growler published in the "Canadian Fire Trench West of the German Lines," in war-swept Flanders. Here is the story: "On the Swiss-Austrian frontier," it says, "the regulations are very strict. Women passengers are always more closely examined than the men. The other day they caught one with her arm in a sling—a fractured arm set in plaster. Despite her tears and supplications they removed the plaster and brought to light an arm as sound as a bell all bandaged with documents of military information. Another woman had notes of information written on her back with indelible ink."

The Growler is a unique and very interesting paper. A recent issue had twelve pages and from cover to cover was filled with news that indicated that the Canadians were in the thickest of the Flanders operations, that there was mud, and lots of it, everywhere, but that despite the handicaps the soldiers of Canada were confident that eventually the great drive which would compel the Germans to retreat will start. "All communications," says the Growler, "are to be sent direct to the managing editor, Canadian Fire Trench, west of the German lines. A branch office is contemplated just in the rear of the German reserve lines."

Every page of the Growler showed that the Canadians were impatient to attempt an advance.

and since, Alexander has been the idol of his subjects. He has accepted their privations and shared with them his resources. He has proved himself a man, clean, honorable, just. A gentleman and a king.

Serbia is to be restored. That much has been admitted by both sides. As a buffer state it is necessary to continued peace. But the occupant of the throne will depend upon who dictates terms at the final surrender. If the allies win, then King Alexander will ascend a throne stained with much blood in a palace notorious for scandals and shame, and those who know him say that he will cleanse the atmosphere of the foulness of which it has reeked.

A gentleman and a king! Alexander of Serbia. Perhaps.