

# EUROPE'S MOST VENERABLE SOVEREIGNS.

WHILE the oldest sovereign in Europe is declared to be the grand Duke of Luxembourg, who celebrated his eighty-third birthday on the 24th of last July, yet his grand duchy is so very small, with its area of only 999 square miles and population of less than a quarter million, that he can hardly be ranked among the great rulers.

The oldest of the kings and kinglets of Europe is Christian IX of Denmark, who was born April 8, 1818, and whose royal consort, Queen Louise, is seven months his senior. Both are older than Victoria, queen of Great Britain and Ireland, who first saw the light May 24, 1819, but who, having been crowned in 1857, had already reigned 26 years when her venerable friends came to the

ed a doctor of laws by Cambridge university. He is well entitled, too, to the distinction, being one of the very few crowned heads that also wear the bays, for his literary works include a rendering of "Faust" into Swedish and a valuable memoir of King Charles XII.

While his ancestor, Bernadotte, never acquired the language of the people over whom he was placed, King Oscar, on the contrary, is master of several tongues besides Norwegian and Swedish, and when on his last visit to England conversed with nearly everybody presented to him of whatever nationality. Traveling incognito as the Count

square miles and with an annual income of nearly or quite \$400,000, yet the grand old spendthrift of Austria-Hungary is said to be in a chronic state of impoverishment. He is still hale and hearty at 70 years of age, despite the terrible family afflictions he has undergone in the tragic death of his only son and the assassination of his consort two years ago. A complication has arisen in the imperial succession, since his nephew, Franz Ferdinand, upon whom it naturally devolved, has renounced it in favor of his brother Otto, himself having contracted a morganatic marriage with the Countess

at alliances, through which it is estimated that the king and his descendants reign over more than 500,000,000 people. The czar of Russia, king of Greece, the Prince of Wales and numerous other promising sons of royalty are intimately allied with the king of Denmark, the royal name being his grandson, the second his son and the last his son-in-law.

King Christian is a fatherly old man and is so affable and polite to all that he has been called the "first gentleman of Europe." Like the king of Sweden and Norway, he is happiest when he can stroll about incognito and make the acquaintance of his subjects without their being aware of his identity. All the world knows of the poverty stricken family that occupied the royal palace at Copenhagen during the early years of the reign, that the future empress of Russia used to trim her own bonnets and the Princess Alexandra (of Wales) clear starched her own linen, while the boys were sent into the navy to save expenses. In fact, the royal Danes have never got on very well in the world, except by marrying, and the latest rumors are that they have just sent over to the United States to negotiate a little loan of some \$15,000,000. They are handicapped by their colonial possessions—one group, Iceland and Greenland, in the arctic zone, and the other, St. Thomas, St. John and Santa Cruz, in the tropics. They would fain sell the last named to the United States, but if they do Uncle Sam's best offer will not be over \$5,000,000 for the lot.

Their Danish majesties celebrated their golden wedding in 1892, and per-

## IS IT A DUCK OR 'A HEN?

If any one can decide as to the classification of the fowl shown in this illustration, its owner will receive the decision with profound gratitude, for he is uncertain whether it is a duck or a hen and would give something to find out. It has the body of a duck, but its feathers are undoubtedly those of a



hen. It has webbed feet like a duck, but it lays hen's eggs. Again, the upper mandible of its bill is short, arched and pointed, like that of a hen, while the lower is long and flat, like a duck's. The result is that the hybrid fowl cannot pick up grain from the ground and can only eat by having its food immersed in water.

It is a curious bird altogether, and is almost as much of a nondescript as the celebrated duck billed platypus of Australia, which some naturalists claimed to be more of a fowl than a mole.

## A BUCKET OF GOLD IN MIDAIR.

It is not generally known that gold in quantities exists in the British Isles; but, according to the latest reports, there are some mines in Wales that not only yield gold in paying proportions, but, what is better, yield fat dividends to the owners of their stock. The illustration shows a bucket of gold ore in midair on the way from the mine to the crushing mill after it has been brought out by the trucks from its subterranean hiding place. The wire that carries the buckets is kept in constant motion by water power, and different buckets are hooked on, one after another, as quickly as the operators can get them in position. The amount of gold in comparison with the ore containing it is almost infinitesimal, but it is extracted by chemical processes so carefully that more than \$20,000 worth have been loosened by three blasts of dynamite.

## GENERAL CHRISTIAN DE WET, THE FAMOUS BOER COMMANDER, AND HIS WONDERFUL GUN.



If all the Boer commanders had made as hard a fight and persistently offered so many obstacles to the British advances in South Africa as General Christian de Wet, the famous guerrilla leader, there would be no talk of bringing home the crack regiments and leaving only a corporal's guard on duty there. The portrait which is presented here shows him as wearing a pair of breeches appropriated at Rhenoster river and holding a rifle which had been previously taken from the Boers and then recaptured. The lock was injured and the barrel bent—in fact, the arm was thrown away as useless—but the skilled Boer armorer repaired and refitted it, and it has since made several good reports for itself in the hands of de Wet.

It is safe to say that, notwithstanding the long pursuits he has led the British troops and the sharp and terrible fights he has occasionally given them, there is no more popular commander on the Boer side than General de Wet, and if he were taken his reception would be far different from that of others. He has shown himself a foe worthy of their steel, and that is the kind a soldier admires and appreciates.



throned of Denmark. Next in order of seniority is Albert, king of Saxony, born in 1828 and crowned in 1873. He and his queen are childless, but they are rich in this world's goods, having a royal castle, villa and town house, their residence in Dresden being the abode of hospitality. But as their kingdom ranks merely third in the German empire, has an area of only 6,000 square miles, with a population of scant 3,500,000, income \$46,000,000 and outgo about the same, they are rarely heard of as training among high and mighty folk of royal lineage.

Then there is Oscar II, king of Sweden and Norway, born on the 21st of January, 1829, but who did not ascend the throne until 1872. He is a personage of knightly qualities and kingly attributes, grandson of no less a celebrity than Bernadotte, Napoleon's general, a one time marshal of France, who married the beautiful Desirée Clary, Joseph Bonaparte's sister-in-law. His son, again, married a daughter of Prince Eugene Beaumont, son of Empress Josephine, the first wife of Napoleon, and so the present king of Sweden, offspring of this alliance, is doubly connected with the great family that inflicted so much suffering and shed such lustre upon France.

Like his father, Oscar II, the king of Sweden and Norway is an enlightened, educated man, has written several books and only last summer was elect-

von Haga, yet his tall form—6 feet 2 inches—made him conspicuous, and the Scandinavians in London greeted him wherever he went. As ruler over the dual kingdom of Sweden and Norway Oscar II has had many difficulties to meet, but his seven millions or so of Scandinavian subjects, whether Norwegians or Swedes, all love and respect him thoroughly, as was shown during the illness from which he has but recently recovered.

Next in age to the king of Sweden and Norway, though second only to Victoria in length of reign—52 years, having succeeded to the Austrian throne in 1848—is Francis Joseph, ruler of the Austro-Hungarian empire, who was born Aug. 18, 1830. With an empire next to Russia, the largest on the continent of Europe, containing a combined population of more than 60,000,000, a total area of about 285,000

Chotek and taken oath that their children should be ineligible to the throne. Leopold II, king of the Belgians, may be entitled to be called venerable from his years, having been born in 1835, but from all accounts he does not support his kingly dignities as he should. His little kingdom of some 11,000 square miles is one of the most densely populated countries of the world, but its annual revenues of \$75,000,000 or so hardly suffice for the royal expenditures, and it already has a debt of nearly \$500,000,000.

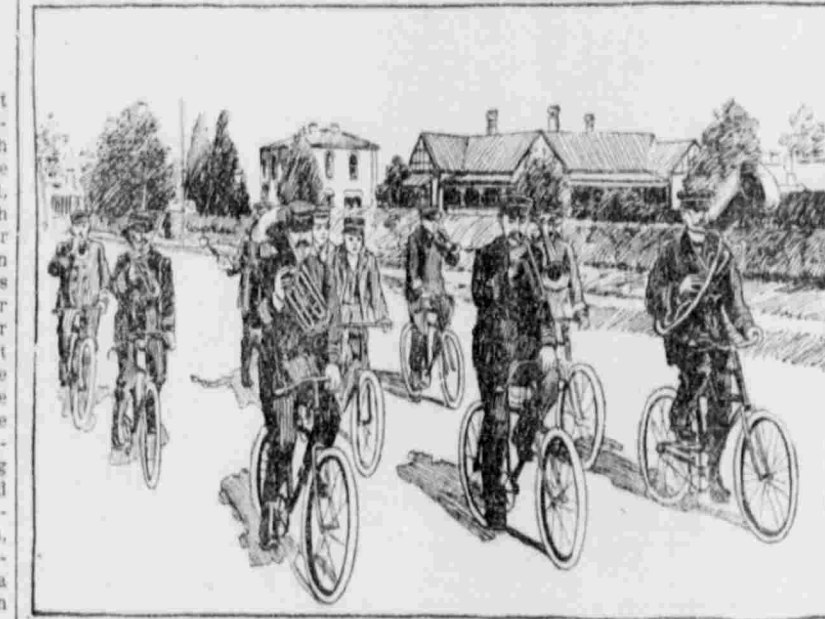
In refreshing contrast to the Belgian king stands out the highly moral court of Denmark, presided over by the venerated Christian IX and Queen Louise. The area of the home country is but 4,000 square miles greater than that of Belgium, and its population hardly surpasses 2,200,000, but it has become a power throughout the world by its roy-

haps the only royal event of recent times to compare with it was the golden jubilee of Queen Victoria, the fifty-fifth anniversary of whose accession to the British throne came to pass June 21, 1887. As may be said of the Danish sovereigns, the ramifications of her family extend all over Europe, even throughout the world of royalty, and as to descendants, she can boast a far greater number, as the British taxpayer is well aware. The festivities attendant upon the "queen's jubilee" were on the most magnificent scale, and in the state processions to Westminster abbey were at least four of the sovereigns mentioned above. She had then reigned as long as her grandfather, George III, and was vastly more a credit to her nation than that semi-insane monarch, but when her diamond jubilee was honored, in 1897, Victoria had completed a longer reign than any other sovereign of modern times.

It is needless to narrate the virtues and queenly qualities of Britain's sovereign, as she has been the central figure in its history for 63 years of this nineteenth century. She has had, according to Lord Salisbury in his address at the diamond jubilee, "the longest, the most prosperous and the most illustrious reign, marked by a continuous advance in the frontiers of the empire."

Since that speech was made still further advances have been made in the empire's expansion, consequent upon the war in South Africa, and ex-President Kruger, who released two recalcitrant outlanders as a token of his good will on the occasion of the last jubilee, is now an exile in Europe.

## A BRASS BAND ON BICYCLES.



It is New Zealand, that progressive colony which leads the world in social experiments and governmental paternalism, that now claims to have started the first brass band on wheels. This particular band of musicians has its headquarters at Christchurch, and when wanted at any reasonable distance from the home station promptly sets off on its wheels and not only plays to perfection when arrived at its destination, but also discourses sweet music on the road. It consists of ten members, and its chief is a Mr. Painter, who is a musical artist of ability and leads his ambulatory band about the towns of New Zealand, where it has now become so common a sight as no longer to attract attention.

## CHANCELLOR VON BULOW.

Count Von Bulow, who has so recently stepped into the diplomatic shoes once worn by mighty Bismarck, is only 51 years old, which is considered young for a master diplomatist. His immediate predecessor, Hohenlohe, is now 81, Bismarck was 75 and Caprivi over 60 when they were promoted to the same office. Count Von Bulow has been extensive service in European capitals. He was in Athens during the Russo-Turkish war, has been minister to Roumania and was one of the secretaries of the Berlin congress. He has not really plumed his wings for international diplomacy as yet, but it is thought that his previous experience in the continental courts has eminently fitted him for his important post.

While the French population is stationary, there is a steady progress in prosperity, which is indicated by the increasing consumption of meat and the decreasing consumption of bread.

## A LORD MAYOR OF LONDON AND HIS DAUGHTER.

The new lord mayor of London, Alderman Frank Green, has been in politics, as they understand it abroad, for nearly 30 years. Forty years ago he set himself up in the paper business, and ever since he has been closely identified with municipal affairs, prominent in public life and in the forwarding of improvements, such as the great Tower bridge, electric lighting, etc.

The new lady mayoress of London, Miss Kathleen Haydn Green, is his only



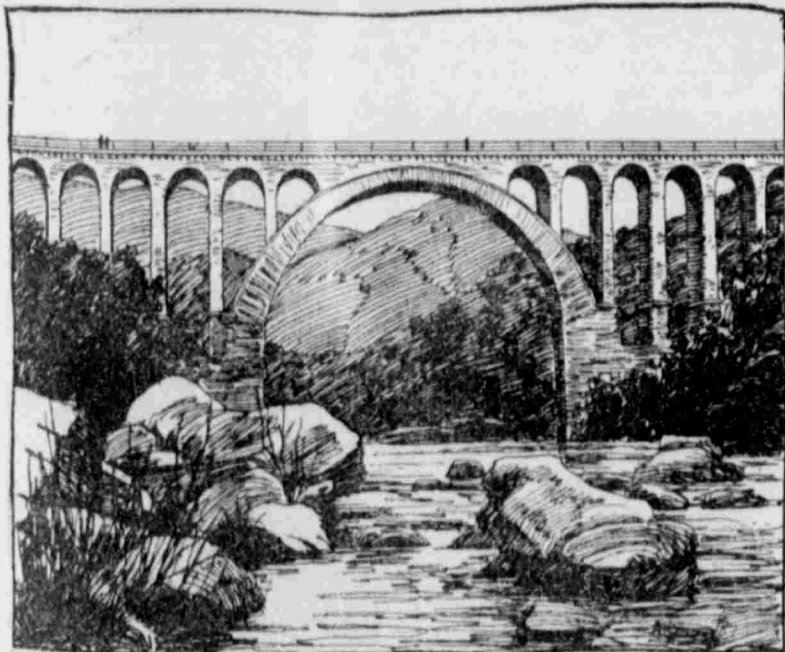
daughter, and, as she is a poetess of ability, devoted to charity, and a handsome and charming woman besides, great things are predicted of the lord mayor's receptions during the coming season. The lord mayor's wife, who died last winter, was a daughter of the celebrated Joseph Haydn, author of the "Dictionary of Dates," and it is popularly intimated that the talented granddaughter of the latter comes rightly by her faculty of being strictly up to date.

## FOX HUNTING IN THE ROMAN CAMPAGNA.



The country around the Holy City is well adapted for hunting the fox or the chase of the festive masked bag, for it offers few obstacles to the hunter and is generally open and undulating. As soon as the air begins to be crisp and the malaria may be safely defied the hounds are let loose, and reward is given the exercise he has so long craved. The sportsmen are mostly British, who ride half blood Irish hunters, and both horses and hounds are imported. But in recent years the Italians themselves have taken up this invigorating exercise, and in the company that centers over the Apennine may be seen several personages of great distinction. For instance, recent participants have been the Marquis de Sagorin, master of the hunt; Viscount de Modrone, Marquis Calabini, Baron Morpurgo, the Prince of Sanino, Prince of Frasso, Duke de Belgioioso, etc., princes and members of the titled aristocracy being as plentifully sprinkled over the field as blackberries in a ten acre lot. They rarely kill the fox, however, for the animal is rather scarce in the Campagna and has to be cherished with care. In fact, "Bro' Fox" is now so well trained that he enters into the sport with an abandon born of long exemption from harm and seems to enjoy it as much as the hounds and their masters.

## THE BEAUTIFUL BRIDGE OF ABARINES.



One of the latest additions to the public works of France is the beautiful bridge thrown across the river Abarines, which was completed only last month. It is a magnificent viaduct, consisting of a central arch of nearly 100 feet, which springs audaciously across the river, and with minor arches on each side. There is a roadway across it 15 feet broad, on each side of which are sidewalks, or "trottoirs," protected by iron railings.

In this connection might be recalled a notable structure of the kind in America—the viaduct near Washington known as Cabin John bridge, which has, it is believed, the largest arch in the world, having 220 feet span.

## ODDS AND ENDS OF INTEREST.

Portable schoolhouses are being used in the congested districts of Boston. In China criminals and political prisoners are beheaded. Some of the executioners are so expert that they can change and behead a man in 18 seconds, which is about the shortest cut a man can take in the hereafter.

The largest toy factory in the world is in New York, where playthings in tin

are manufactured literally by the million. It stands five stories high and turns out 1,607 distinct varieties in tin toys.

An enormous and increasing amount of burlap is used in this country—500,000 yards a year, it is said. Burlap is used for making bags. It figures in coat linings, among other things, and is even entering in a dressed up state into

wall coverings. But it is chiefly used for packing and wrapping, and, with our increasing export trade, great quantities of it are demanded.

The dogwood tree was at one time considered worthless, but it has recently been found that piano keys made out of this wood take a fine ebony stain and polish and are as durable as the genuine article.

A fluent speaker utters between 7,000 and 7,500 words in the course of an

hour's uninterrupted speaking. Many orators do more than usual rapid utterance will reach 8,000 and even 9,000, but 125 words a minute, or 7,500 an hour, is a fair average.

Sugar manufacturers in Queensland invariably purchase the year's crop of cane standing and cut it at their own cost.

Uncle Sam owns large tracts of land in the southern states—1,500,000 acres in Florida, 2,500,000 in Arkansas, 500,000 in

Louisiana and a similar quantity in Mississippi—which, however, are mostly swamps. In Michigan 438,000 acres are still available and in Wisconsin 313,000 acres.

The autograph book is not confined entirely to the humble people who are supposed to have no right to ask for signatures. President Loubet of France is interested in autographs and has one of the best private collections in that country. On this he spends considerable

money, and not long ago he paid a large sum for a letter written by Bismarck.

Islington, London, is the most densely populated parish in the United Kingdom. A return just issued by the medical officer shows that at the present time there are 112 persons living on each acre as against 88.5 persons at Bolton, which ranks next on the list.

Australia's commission to select a federal capital has rejected Albury and

recommended Orange, on the Blue mountain plateau; Yass, on the Yass plains of Bombala, in the Monaro country. Of these Bombala stands the best chance, as it is nearest the seacoast, with an excellent harbor at Eden near by.

Elephants have only eight teeth—two below and two above on each side. All an elephant's baby teeth fall out when the animal is about 14 years old, and a new set grows.

## THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR MEDAL.



It has been considered the proper thing by her gracious majesty Queen Victoria to have a commemorative medal struck in the royal mint in honor of what she and her soldiers have accomplished toward the subjugation of the Boers. It is a beautiful work of art and was designed by a well known sculptor, Mr. Emil Fuchs. There is some obscurity about the symbolical figures, however, as what seems to be (as represented on one side of the medal) a lady tickling a sleeping soldier's ear with a straw is really intended for the angel of peace or victory offering a defunct warrior the laurels he has won. Just what good it will do the defunct soldier is not stated, but the inscription on the other side explains that the medal is "To the memory of those who gave their lives for queen and country." This, too, is rather obfuscating, since neither the queen nor her country has been in actual peril during the 63 years and more she has sat on the throne.

If it only read, "To the memory of those who gave their lives trying to grab some more country for the queen," it might be more in accordance with facts as they can be recalled while the history of events in South Africa is fresh in memory.