

CURRENT TOPICS IN EUROPE.

The young Duc d'Orleans may put forward a reasonable claim to be considered a first-class comedy artist. With a nation of a less lively temperament than the French, the little episode which has during the past week been enacted in Paris would only cause a hearty laugh. But France has seen strange things in her day. She has seen an exile coming from Elba, and in spite of king, nobles and army, quietly step into power and guide the destinies of France. She has also seen a man an exile, an escaped prisoner, at one time a common policeman of London, yet afterwards mounting the throne of France and receiving as his guests the proudest Sovereigns of Europe. And why was this? Simply because these men were rich in the prestige of a great name.

And no doubt Louis Philippe Duc d'Orleans had a dream that he might accomplish something similar when on the 7th of February he left his quiet home in Lausanne and, disguising himself as best he might, entered the forbidden territory of France, proceeded to Paris and offered himself as a recruit for the French army. That the young Louis Philippe had any desire to undergo the hardships of a common soldier's life is not at all probable. But he well knew that if France was a kingdom instead of a republic, he would, in all probability, hold a similar position to that of the Prince of Wales. He well knew that he could claim descent from the great Hugh Capet and Henri IV. of France, and trusting to the glamor of a great name he no doubt thought he could wield an influence in favor of a restoration of monarchy. The young man is just twenty-one years of age, and on the whole has a very good record. He has served six months in a British regiment and was for some time *ad-de-camp* to General Sir Frederick Roberts; and he has also done some successful hunting in India, having killed some half-a-dozen tigers, besides crocodiles and mammoth snakes, and he has had some narrow escapes. There is no doubt but that there was much truth in the speech of the Duc d'Orleans at the time of his trial, when he said, "The two hundred thousand young soldiers of France who belong to the same military class to which I, by right, belong will all sympathize with me and justify my conduct." It cannot be denied that as long as the exiled kings of France maintain their pretensions, the presence of these princes and their families do constitute a menace to republican institutions. When the third republic was established, twenty years ago, there were many who predicted that it would not last more than five, ten or fifteen years. It was remembered that the consulate had lasted only four years, the first empire ten years, the legitimist restoration sixteen years, the Orleanist episode eighteen years, the second republic four years, and the second empire eighteen years. It

was said the new republic had less vigor than many of the former governments, but so far it has shown itself more vigorous than any, and still shows no symptoms of decay—though princes and pretenders have fluttered around it like so many harpies and words of ill omen have been screamed from a thousand throats. That no dangers or perils await the republic will be believed by only the most sanguine; but on the other hand the toilers of Europe are looking toward France with expectancy and hope. Her well-being depends not on royal dynasties who procured for her flashy glories and caused infinite sorrow, but in the growth and development of freedom under republican institutions. Bonaparteism has failed, Bourbonism has failed, Boulangerism has failed, and last of all this young man, who is so well adapted to lead away the hearts of the young men of France, has also learned by stern reality that the laws of the Republic must be respected.

There is a peculiar charm about a young man which seems to awaken admiration the wide world over. As an example may be noticed the present Emperor of Germany. When he ascended the throne in 1888 there was among men of middle age a vague feeling of unrest, sadness for the death of Frederick, and fears for the possible incapacity of his youthful successor. At one time it was feared that he, by his impetuosity, would plunge the nations of Europe into a general way. But while the Emperor was active he professed peace, and so far the indications are that he will pursue a peaceful policy. While generally considered as the royal pupil of Prince Bismarck, he has given ample evidence that he is capable of thinking and acting independently. His latest movements seem to show clearly that he is willing to break away from the traditions of parties and policies in order that he may get at the bottom of the difficulty and do his people good. His action in regard to labor reform is arousing the dormant loyalty of the German people in a far greater manner than all of Prince Bismarck's schemes. While it is undeniable that the social-democrats have acquired many adherents during the past year, it is also true that the people are more united than they ever were before, and the foundations of the throne have been strengthened by the kindness of the young Emperor, who has given evidence that he regards the welfare of his people more than the soulless greed of capitalists. The Emperor William of Germany is consequently one of the best beloved of European sovereigns.

Another example of the charm that young men exert in society, may be seen in the remarkable career of William Pitt, one of the most distinguished of Britain's prime ministers. This great man, about which so much has been recorded, seems to have struck his contemporaries by his precocity, for he was only twenty-one when he entered Parliament, and only

twenty-four when he became prime minister. The boy-statesman was a wonder to them which they could not understand, and they were quite bewildered at the idea of a stripling encountering, with the weapons of intellect, some of the foremost men of his time. In a memoir of Pitt, just published, Sir James Bland Burges gives an account of one of the first of Pitt's intellectual victories. At the time when this event occurred the great historian, "Gibbon, was forty-five years of age, and William Pitt was only twenty-one. Gibbon had just concluded one of his best foreign anecdotes, in which he had introduced some of the fashionable levities of political doctrine then prevalent, and with the customary turn on the lid of his snuff-box was looking around to receive the tribute of applause when a deep-toned but clear voice was heard at the other end of the table very calmly and civilly impugning the correctness of the narrative and the propriety of the doctrines of which it had had been made the vehicle.

The historian, turning a disdainful glance towards the quarter whence the voice proceeded, saw for the first time a tall, thin and rather ungainly young man, who now sat quietly and silently eating some fruit. There was nothing very prepossessing or very formidable in his exterior, but as the few words he had uttered appeared to have made a considerable impression on the company, Mr. Gibbon thought himself bound to maintain his honor by suppressing an attempt to dispute his supremacy. He accordingly undertook the defense of the propositions in question and a very animated debate took place between him and his youthful antagonist, Mr. Pitt, which for some time was conducted with great talent and brilliancy on both sides. At length the genius of the young man prevailed over that of the senior, who, finding himself driven into a corner from which there was no escape, made some excuse for rising from the table, and walked out of the room. To some friends who had followed him into the ante-room, he remarked that Mr. Pitt's style might by some be considered ingenious, but for his part it was not exactly what he was accustomed to, and he went away in high dudgeon."

This is a sample of the anecdotes that abound in Mr. Burges' "Memoirs of William Pitt," and give to them a peculiar charm for youthful readers. Yes, no doubt it was William Pitt's youth that greatly aided him in making him the idol of the British people. How many thousands of school boys and young men have declared that famous piece entitled "William Pitt's reply to Horace Walpole," commencing with those sarcastic words, "The atrocious crime of being a young man I shall neither attempt to palliate nor deny?"

It is this charm of youth that makes William of Germany such a power among the people, and which no doubt the Orleanists perceived