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THE ADVENTURES OF A MODERN PRINCE

LUIGI AMEDEO, DUKE OF THE ABRUZZI

BY

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ILLUSTRATED WITH PHOTOGRAPHS

AT daybreak on the 12th of last September, the steamer *Oceana*, arriving from Bombay, entered the port of Marseilles. Among the noisy and hurrying throng who made haste to land as soon as the vessel was docked there was one who seemed to be the object of deferential curiosity: the captain and his officers escorted him to the gang-plank; some of the passengers saluted him. He was still a young man, in spite of the fact that the hair

at his temples, beneath his yachting cap, had begun to turn gray. Of medium height, nervous and muscular, with an energetic head, and a smooth, deeply tanned face to which two very clear gray eyes imparted fire, he suggested, as he stood there enveloped in a huge, dark-colored ulster, the classical type of the Anglo-Saxon.

Silent and courteous, he confined himself to shaking the hands that were offered, while his traveling companion endeavored to push aside

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indiscreet reporters. As soon as he reached the shore, he walked through the wind and rain straight to an automobile which was waiting near at hand, seated himself in the chauffeur's place, grasped the steering-wheel, and sped away.

Luigi Amedeo of Savoy, Duke of the Abruzzi, had returned from his expedition to the Himalayas, and was on his way to Turin.

It has been justly observed that there is no princely figure more sympathetic and attractive than he; we should feel tempted to add that there is none more enigmatic. The Count of Turin, his brother, once said: "My brother the Duke of Aosta is the dandy, my brother the Duke of the Abruzzi is the learned man, and I am the *bon vivant*—the gay boy."

Luigi Amedeo of Savoy is, in fact, a grave and singular spirit, who has grown up under the spell of the unfathomable mystery of nature, the complex problems of science. Nevertheless, we know that he has not escaped the universal law of sentiment, and that before he attacked the cliffs of far-away mountains he had already passed through the vicissitudes of a sad and romantic love affair.

It is not our place to discuss with the reader this chapter of his life, which is said to be concluded. It has already provided sufficient material for gossip for the public to have become amply informed, and for the principal figures in the tale to have suffered in their most intimate susceptibilities. This, indeed, is said to be the cause of the instinctive antipathy which the Duke of the Abruzzi expresses for journalists. Truth to tell, he seems to have been reared in the school of silence, in the solitude of the great snowy peaks, and to have brought back a reflection of their melancholy. A learned man he is without a doubt, as his scientific works, his reports of his expeditions, his notes and his reflections demonstrate. Contemplative? One wonders whether he has ever had the time to be so; for he is, above all things, a man of action, a sportsman in the fullest sense of the word, enamoured of movement, of change, possessed by a passion for danger and difficulty; he is a voluptuary of a special sort, who delights in the inward joys that peril, faced and conquered, affords him. Add to this that there is no pedantry about his learning: very simple and reserved, he always endeavors to pass unnoticed and his manners are democratic in the extreme.

An illustrious artist of the Paris Opéra, who spent a month last autumn in the same hotel with him at Salsomaggiore, the famous Italian baths, remarked to us: "We saw him arrive one day in his automobile, a few weeks after his

return from the Himalayas. He was alone. No one was expecting him. He installed himself in a modest room on the second floor and went down to the table d'hôte, where he took his meals with the rest of us; he had not even brought his servants with him: his chauffeur served as his valet. As he happened to know several members of the Italian aristocracy who were stopping in the hotel, he joined our circle almost immediately.

"Naturally, he became the target for all the pretty eyes in the place, the object of all the coquetries. And I must admit that he was not insensible to these glances. He is a flirt—a taciturn flirt. One would never have imagined that the ardent and gallant man who was to be seen every evening flitting like a butterfly among the rocking-chairs could possibly be the bold explorer who had just broken the record for altitude, for his modesty was such that he never spoke of his exploits, unless in discreet allusions, when he referred to some piquant anecdote of his travels. His simplicity, which constituted his charm, was especially displayed in his attitude towards the lowly, and here is one instance of it among a thousand: At Salsomaggiore there was a laundress who had always, up to that time, enjoyed the patronage of the Duke whenever he came there to take the cure on his return from one of his expeditions. The Duke, of course, knew nothing about this matter, which was attended to by his chauffeur-valet. Now, for some reason of which I am ignorant, the servant had taken a notion to change laundresses; hence great humiliation on the part of the good little woman who, naturally, prized her celebrated patron. What was she to do? She wanted to get an explanation of the matter, at any rate; so one day she placed herself on the road where the Duke was to pass. When he came up, she said to him: 'Your Highness is no longer satisfied with your former laundress?'

"'Who said so?'

"'Why, Your Highness no longer sends me his linen, and I am very unhappy about it.'

"'My poor child,' exclaimed the Prince, 'I knew nothing about it! Come with me, and we will settle the matter out of hand.'

"'No sooner said than done. The Duke ordered his chauffeur to send his linen to his usual laundress in the future, and when she narrated the incident to me (for I was also one of her patrons), she added enthusiastically:

"'And he isn't a bit proud, isn't our Duke, for he is the first man who ever lifted his hat to me.'"

After that, one can understand the popularity that he enjoys in Italy.