

ALPHONSO XIII, WHO ASCENDS THRONE OF SPAIN THIS WEEK

THIRTIETH OF THE WORLD'S MONARCHS WHO BEGAN TO RULE AS CHILDREN

BORN under an unlucky star, to the youngest crown in Europe, Alphonso XIII, is about to come officially to his own. The tall, slim, nervous-looking man, who writes after his name the unlikeliest of all the numbers in the records of Spain, comes of age a week from yesterday, when he will assume in his own person those ancient rights and privileges to which he was born 16 years ago. Then the only unmarried King in Europe and the youngest King in the world will sit on the throne of Madrid.

The Southeastern Peninsula of the Continent of Europe has produced its full quota of the potentates in pinfolds, who have helped rule the world. In the last 69 years, counting Alphonso in the ranks of the interesting little company, Spain and Portugal between them have seen two Queens in tiny short dresses and two Kings in Eton jackets. Modern history numbers 35 such small monarchs, Brazil,

Otto, of Bavaria. He sat on the throne at Athens during 25 years of almost constant dissension and turbulence, and then, in 1862, was expelled, only to be succeeded by another young man of 15, Prince George, of Denmark, the brother of Queen Alexandra, of England.

England has entered upon her chronicle the names of 10 "Infant Monarchs," the first of whom was Victoria the Good herself, who was but 15 on that historic June right when she was awakened from her sleep in the Palace of Kensington to hear that the King was dead and she the Queen ruled. Henry III came to the English throne when he was 10, Edward

widow at 14. When 15 she married Darnley, Bothwell when 15, and through all these years her hopes were constantly disappointed and her plans turned to naught. Forced to abdicate the throne that was hers by right, she was beheaded less than a year later.

On the Continent eight Kings have assumed the reins of government when only boys. The present Emperor of Austria was 18 when, in 1848, he was proclaimed. Charles XII of Sweden was 15, Louis IX of France II, Louis XIII, Louis XIV and Louis XV each 5. Louis XVI was 15 when he began the reign that was to end in deposition and death on the scaffold.



ALFONSO XIII KING OF SPAIN

Though he does not believe in war, holding that the powers of a country can best be maintained by extension through purchase, by the care of trade, rather than by the force of arms, Alphonso yet delights in military exercise. He handles the sword, revolver and gun with rare facility, and three days in the week he spends the whole afternoon on the drill ground. He is a strict disciplinarian, too, and possessed of a tact that would do credit to a much older head. One afternoon he looked in vain for the officer in command of a royal guard then on duty. At last, calling an adjutant, he asked the name of the missing man.

marked the coming of age of the young Queen of Holland. The crown of the realm, a circle of gold, richly decorated with jewels and precious stones, adorned with eight leaves and closed with four arches, will be borne before the young King in the procession, and placed on a cushion beside him when he takes his seat on the throne, the royal scepter in hand. Then he will take oath to observe the constitution, and the President of the Senate, while all the thousands there stand uncovered, will proclaim that Alphonso XIII is the rightful and duly constituted King of Spain.

Among the dozens of royal personages that will witness the ceremony—the Duke of Connaught, Prince Albert of Prussia, the Archduke Frederick, the Duke of Genoa, Prince Christian of Denmark, the Crown Prince of Sweden, the Grand Duke Alexis, the Duke of Oporto, the Prince Nicholas of Greece—there will be none who can take so peculiar and personal an interest in the proceedings as Dr. J. M. Curry, of Virginia, who will be present as the Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary from the United States of America. Dr. Curry is a person of great interest at the court of Madrid, for it was he, just 15 years ago next Sunday, who served as one of the official witnesses at the birth of Alphonso.

Dr. J. M. Curry's Story.

The narrative of his experiences when he first landed in Spain as the Minister from this country is one of interest. He



MARIE STUART
Crowned Queen of
Scotland
8 days after
birth



HENRY VI
of ENGLAND
Crowned when 8
years old



ALFONSO XIII
at Ten



LOUIS
XIV
KING OF
FRANCE
Crowned
when 5
years old



QUEEN
ISABELLA
of SPAIN
Grandmother of Alphonso
Came to Throne at 3 years
Sovereign at 13

ROYAL PALACE AT MADRID

Greece, France, England, Scotland, Sweden and Austria each contributing to the total of 35 royal girls, most of whom lived unhappily lives, and many of whom met untimely or violent deaths.

Alphonso's own grandmother, Isabella II, was one of these, into whose life has come so much of sorrow, though she bids more than fair to live to see sitting on the throne of her ancestors the frail and sickly boy, of whom it was openly predicted 15 years ago that he would never rule the people to whom he had been born. Isabella came to the throne when a child of 3, and actually took up the reins of government 16 years later. Her troubles then began: to be steadily continued throughout her life, first by her mother, Maria Christina, trying to force her to marry a man she did not love, then by the enmity of her mother after the little Queen had been wedded to her cousin Francisco de Assisi, then by the uprising of the populace against Maria, before which that self-willed matron fled into France, and then, a dozen years later, by a similar outbreak of the mercenary Spanish people, forcing Isabella herself to follow her mother, abdicating two years later in favor of her son, Alphonso XII, the father of the present King.

In the meantime, across the line in Portugal, Queen Maria, whose father, Dom Pedro IV, had given her the throne when she was but a slip of a child, not yet 7, was trying against an ill-affected people and a hostile Ministry to hold the power for herself, while over in Brazil her brother, Pedro, one of the most charming of young men, was doing his childish best to satisfy the demands of a rebellious people. Maria of Portugal died of discouragement, it is said. Pedro, of Brazil, driven from his kingdom, died of a broken heart.

When in 1893, Isabella was Queen of Spain at the age of 2, and Maria, was Queen of Portugal at the age of 7, and Pedro was Emperor of Brazil at the mature age of 5, Greece was in the rule of a boy not yet out of his teens, Prince

III when he was 15 and Richard II when he was 11. Two of the Kings in whose reigns the island was rent and torn by the Wars of the Roses, Henry VI and Edward IV, began their ruling when little more than mere boys. Edward IV at 10 and Henry VI when scarcely 4. The next Edward never lived even to be crowned, for Edward V, rightfully succeeding to the throne when 13, spent the 12 weeks of his minority of a reign as the prisoner of his uncle of Gloucester in the Tower of London, where he was murdered.

Henry VIII began his not over creditable reign when 10, and when the throne descended to his son, Edward VI, that boy was in his 10th year; he died before he was 15. Lady Jane Grey, "more sinned against than sinning," was England's Queen for just 11 months, which measured for her 45 weeks of plots and counterplots, strife and suspicion, ending in her execution before her 15th birthday.

Small Kings in Scotland.

Five of the seven "potentates in pinfolds" who sat upon the ancient Stone of Scone in the neighboring Kingdom of Scotland met untimely deaths. James I, who began to rule when 12, was murdered when 45, and his son, James II, was accidentally killed when 20, having worn the crown of his father 23 years. The third James, coming to the throne at the age of 5, was murdered when 45; the fourth, who began to rule when 15, was slain in battle when 41; the fifth, who was crowned when 11, was first weighed down by the crown, was dead at 20, while James VI, last united, was the only one of all the line of whom it may be said that he lived out the natural span of life. He came to the throne when only 13 months more than 1 year old, and died when 59.

His mother, the ill-fated Marie-Stuart, found in her portion all the sorrow that has come to be associated with the lives of infant monarchs. She was crowned eight days after her birth; she was a



Dr. J. M. CURRY
Who will
Represent the
U.S. at the
Coronation

Spain XVII, who became rightful King when 8 years old, was dead two years later. On the other hand, Louis XIV, "Le Grand," wore the diadem of French royalty for 72 years, the longest reign in history.

To the company of boy rulers Alphonso XIII of Spain is now to be added. The regency of Queen Christina is almost over, and the mother, who, through storms of unpopularity and opposition, has preserved the throne for her boy, will move away from the great palace at Madrid to her country home in the Pardo. There is to be hereafter not even the suspicion that she is influencing the government.

It was the will of Christina that gave to Alphonso the unlucky XIII. The con-

tinued superstitions of superstitious Spain were opposed to the numeral. Ministers and statesmen pleaded that this shadow should be withheld from the young King. But the Queen was unmoved in her determination to prolong in the child the honorable name of the father who had died before his long-hoped-for son had come to gladden his heart. Christina also wished to compliment, through the numeral, Alphonso's godfather, Pope Leo XIII. "Since His Holiness has so graciously bestowed the name of Alphonso," she said, "I have faith that my son also will be able to withstand it."

It is almost perfect education can help the young monarch in this he will be fortunate and happy as even a mother-love could wish. Since he could flap his

stepped ashore just an hour before the death of King Alphonso XII, and participated in the solemn functions attending his funeral. "About two months later," he continues, "I received an all other foreign representatives, a notice to be prepared to be present at the birth of an heir to the throne. A day later another official notice came to me, brought by a royal squerry. This was a very important-looking document in a huge envelope, tied with ribbons of the royal color, and bearing the seal of the Lord Chamberlain. On the third day came from the royal palace a messenger, accompanied by a guard of soldiers, to tell me I was wanted at once. The previous message had instructed me to wear court dress at the time of my visit, and I remember how absurd I thought it was to appear in full evening outfit at breakfast time, for my final summons had arrived while I was still at coffee. But a 'swallow-tail' is the only court dress an American diplomat can wear, so I put mine on and accompanied the royal messenger back to the palace."

Mr. Curry then relates how he was conducted to the Queen's bedchamber, where the Ambassadors and Ministers of foreign governments and the high court officials were all assembled. The room was a large one, and across one end and heavy curtains had been drawn to hide the royal bed. After the group of diplomats had been waiting for some time a courtier appeared from behind the curtains and cried out in a loud tone, "Long live the King!" He announced that the heir to the throne was a boy. Soon after a lady in waiting appeared bearing a huge silver platter on which lay a white cloth the baby King amid lace and frills. The diplomats formed in a semi-circle and a court lady, bearing the infant monarch, passed around the line to permit the officials to gaze upon the child. But had got but half way around when the youngest set up a lusty howl and she beat a hasty retreat behind the curtain. Dr. Curry said that this incident did not occur until after the infant had passed before his eyes, and he had performed his duty as witness at the first public appearance of the monarch who will soon become King of Spain—Alphonso XIII.

LANGDON BALLINGER.

(Copyright, 1902, by Langdon Ballinger.)

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has been in the hands of tutors, the wisest men of Spain. He knows Latin, the root of all the romance languages; Spanish, the tongue of his people; French, the glit medium of European diplomacy; German, the language to which his mother was born in Austria; and English, which even the Spaniards realize has become the language of commerce and advancement. He has studied religion as thoroughly as though he were to take orders, and has been schooled fully in geography, history, mathematics,