

Present Attitude of Roumania And Her History

Roumania's entrance into the war has been more or less of a certainty since last winter, when, after a tour of the Continental capitals, in which their longest periods of stay were in Rome and Paris, a Roumanian political delegation, accompanied by representatives of banking interests, returned home after having negotiated a loan of \$25,000,000 in London.

For more than thirty years such finances as the country had wanted had been obtained in Berlin and Vienna, but a change came in 1913, and the loans of 1913 and that of November, 1914, just mentioned, set the seal on the change of politics. Since the latter date a Roumanian commission has sat in Paris, studying both military and Red Cross supplies, and many such orders, as is known, have been placed with firms in the United States.

Roumania definitely ranged herself on the side of the Triple Entente in 1915, writes Charles E. Whittaker in the New York Herald. Ever since 1878 she had been dependent on and supporting the Triple Alliance. It took her more than thirty years to find out that such a policy was not merely unprofitable, but actually detrimental to her own interests and unfaithful to the aspirations of her harassed and oppressed three million living in the Austro-Carpathian Mountains. That change of policy in the more recent years was due in a large measure to the work of an enlightened statesman, Take Ionescu, who attained his end by the expedient of being a thorn in the flesh of the two chief political parties in the State, the liberals and the Conservatives, creating therefor a separate independent "wedge" similar to the Irish part in the British House of Commons.

Possibly a nearer and more exact parallel would be to compare the Roumanian followers of Take Ionescu with the liberal unionist party headed by Joseph Chamberlain in the British Parliament after the split in politics caused by Gladstone's introduction for the second time of the Home Rule Bill, in 1886. The Roumanian "conservative-democratic" party, as it was termed, was incapable by itself of governing, but it was powerful enough to make political existence impossible without its aid to either of the two prominent parties.

In comparing the party founded by Take Ionescu with the Irish party in the House of Commons it may be said of Roumania as a whole that her national aspirations probably will be better understood by Irish democracy than by any political mass in the world. For Roumania's struggle has been one for home rule. Blundered by Turkey, used as a false spaw of Russia, she lived in false hopes for many years, and at last, with the true perception of her own importance borne in on her, she concluded that she was strong enough to ask, not for new acquisitions of territory, but for that which had been solemnly promised her by the treaty of Berlin.

The Roumanians are no Balkan people. Indeed, to call a Roumanian a Balkan would be construed as being, at the least, tactless; at the worst, a positive insult. They are Latins in appearance, complexion, intelligence and language. They are more Latin than even the Italians, whom they so closely resemble. Roumania is, roughly, the same size as Ireland, a matter of fifty thousand square miles; has a population in her own borders of about seven and a half millions, and has been discontented with her political situation for years.

She declares, not without some justice, that it was her soldiers, fighting on the side of the Russians at Plevna, that turned the tide of battle in favor of Russia, and led to the rout of the Turks. For one hundred years Roumania had been living under a Turkish protectorate "enjoying" much the same sort of protection as the inhabitants of Crete and Macedonia or the unfortunate Armenians. Separated only nominally—such as England and Scotland—during the Middle Ages into Moldavia and Valachia, she had been pointed upon by the Sultans and condemned to live under a protectorate of the kind already indicated.

But education acquired outside Roumania made itself felt. The better class of land owner sent his sons to be educated in Paris, and a popular uprising occurred, as the result of which the twin States of Moldavia and Valachia were combined in one kingdom, a king of the Roumanians—in the person of Prince Charles Hohenzollern—elected, a constitution proclaimed and her independence recognized by Europe generally.

This was in 1868. Ten years after the Russo-Turkish War began, and at the preliminary peace treaty of San Stefano the Turks con-

ceded to the victorious Russians some (but not all) of their empire which they were unable to hold, and gave away, among other provinces, Bessarabia, lying on the north and eastern side of Roumania.

In exchange for the fertile wine and tobacco lands of Bessarabia Roumania was to have the sandy marshes of the Dobruja, situated on her southeast.

The treaty of Berlin was signed in July, 1878, and provided that the new Dobruja province should be surveyed at once by a commission which would settle on the spot the natural and most practical boundaries, and it provided furthermore that the new State of Bulgaria, which then and there was created, should be "an autonomous and tributary principality under the suzerainty of the Sultan."

Six months after the treaty was signed the surveying commission had finished its frontier limitation of the Dobruja, which was at that time in the possession of the new state of Bulgaria, and the survey was put forward over and over again for ratification by the great Powers.

For years Bulgaria consistently refused to hand over the Dobruja. The years passed away; Roumanians realized that the promise had not been fulfilled and never would be fulfilled. Yet the Dobruja was not worth a war, and there was no way of recovering by lawsuit. Then an odd thing happened—Bulgaria renounced the suzerainty of Turkey and Ferdinand declared her independence. That settled the Dobruja question for Roumania. The country that refused to carry out its promises as a vassal was unlikely to perform them as a sovereign state.

What had been really the matter was not entirely due to the strength of Bulgaria as to the mistaken policy on the part of Roumania. King Charles was a capable monarch only as domestic affairs went. And because Bessarabia had been torn from her King Charles concluded that for all time it would pay Roumania to remain an appanage of the Triple Alliance, forgetful of the diplomatic motto that the enemies of to-day are the friends of to-morrow.

The weakness of this theory lay in the fact that Austria, possessing nearly three million Roumanians in her own borders was not likely to grant an extension of territory on the part of her small neighbor with any great complacency. Feeble, old Franz Joseph, the Austrian Emperor, knew this; knew, too, that the Austro-Hungarian Empire, built like a house of cards, was so unstable that a blow in any spot would cause the whole fabric to disintegrate—and cleverly enough kept King Charles in Roumania quiet.

But while King Charles was given a soporific there were men in the country who were not so tamed by the Austrian amenities and to whom the holy name of Hohenzollern signified very little. "God gives us our relations; thank God we can choose our friends," said the Frenchman; in no matter is this truth more abundantly proved than in Kingcraft. The man who preached to the country that the old role of understudy to the Triple Alliance was too expensive to be useful and quite unfruitful of anything but vain regrets at unfulfilled pledges was Take Ionescu, whose name may be freely translated into English as Jack Johnson.

In appearance he closely resembles John Drew, the actor. By profession a barrister (and with a successful practice); by sympathy a man of the middle classes; by force of circumstances a politician, forced thereinto by his own natural talents and his friends' persuadings, and married to an Englishwoman, this D'Aragagnan of the Balkans forced his policy to the steps of the Roumanian throne.

There is no love lost between Take (as he always is called) and King Charles for some years; the mutterings of the people, however, proclaimed that they had enough of the old idols and had found them false. King Charles came down to earth and realized, with no little reluctance, that the day of old traditions was on the wane. Then the Balkan war of 1913 broke out.

At a private interview between King Charles and King Ferdinand of Bulgaria held in the Roumanian summer palace, at Sinaia, in June, King Ferdinand had promised definitely that if Roumania retained central the Dobruja lands would be handed over immediately after the war. Gueshoff, the Bulgarian Prime Minister, confirmed and ratified this through the usual diplomatic channels, adding that in the event of the Balkan Alliance triumphing over Turkey there would be no territorial acquisition on Bulgaria's part. The war was to be a Holy War, Cross versus Crescent.

Of course, Bulgaria's monarch cheated again. Gueshoff was deposed and Danoff became Prime Minister. Danoff had got it into his head that Bulgaria was a first class Power. He had been cajoled by Ferdinand into the belief.

It was Take Ionescu who made him change his mind. The astute Roumanian, who had received the portfolio of Minister of Finance in the coalition Ministry that had been formed at the outbreak of their neighbors' war, went to London while the Conference of London in January, 1913, was sitting. That Conference was supposed to arrange for the general partition of so much of Turkey in Europe as had been captured by the Balkan allies.

Only three interviews took place between Take Ionescu and Dr. Danoff. The Bulgarian offered nothing; wanted, indeed, to hold on to everything. The Dobruja is a piece of land about twenty-five thousand square miles in area. Danoff offered something smaller than Manhattan Island. Take Ionescu went back to Bucharest.

The snows melted in the late spring. By May all the other members of the Balkan alliance were fighting against Bulgaria, fighting in their spare time among themselves. Very quietly and with no great haste the Roumanian army, 600,000 strong, was mobilized. It walked, not marched, into Bulgaria in the month of July. There was nothing to stop it. On it went, while King Ferdinand, half frantic by this time, telegraphed to his royal confrere, King Charles, to delay the advance of the army, which camped within twelve miles of Sofia.

For the oddest of the situation was that the Roumanians were, in effect, not a hostile army—no war had been declared—but merely a half million of game keepers engaged in watching the poachers, who formed the Bulgarian Cabinet. Finally King Charles agreed to halt his army on condition that all the Balkan States attended a conference to be summoned at once in Bucharest. The army was halted on July 26th. By August 10th the treaty of Bucharest was signed and sealed. Peace reigned in the Balkans; a larger Dobruja of nearly twice the size of the original was at last handed over to Roumania.

Bulgaria, which had announced its independence some years before, had been bought body and soul by the Triple Alliance. The declaration of independence amounted to usurpation, so far as Roumania was concerned, and was therefore regarded as a danger to Roumanian safety. It was apparent that the German influence (noticeably exercised, as it was, during some years by the German Ambassador, Baron Marshall von Bieberstein, at Constantinoople) was spreading too rapidly all over the Balkans from the Black Sea to the Adriatic. Turkey had succumbed—witness the Bagdad railway—Bulgaria had been drawn into the net, and Roumania felt her own position none too safe. A general riot among the small States could have but one result, a grand clash between Russia and the Central Empires, in the net result of which the small States, whoever was victor, would suffer.

Changes more subtle had been working. The Crown Prince twenty years before had married an English Princess. Actually her title at the time of marriage was Princess Marie of Saxe-Coburg, but she was born as a daughter of the brother of King Edward VII, the Duke of Edinburgh, who afterward, on the German duchy falling vacant, had been invited to the custody of Saxe-Coburg's destinies. Princess Marie, however, was English to the core, with the smack and flavor of her Russian mother and with all the beauty of the Russian royal family. For at least twelve years after marriage she lived under a light of criticism so fierce and so harsh that life was nearly unbearable. The old Roumanian Queen Elizabeth (Carmen Sylva), had had the insane idea of marrying the Crown Prince to a Roumanian, with the object of consolidating the dynasty.

Of course, if there were ever a project calculated to weaken the new dynasty, this was it. Her programme, far from consolidating the dynasty, would have shaken the State to its foundation. The folly was indicated by Brailianu and Stourdza, the two men most responsible at that time for the construction of the State. Carmen Sylva was furious at the thwarting of her designs, and she "took it out of," the Crown Prince.

To Marie, brought up as she was in the extraordinary free environment that in royal circles is the privilege of the minor-English royalties the stuffy atmosphere of a petty court was as near slavery as could be imagined. The old Queen's encouragement left nothing unsaid or undone to blast the character and soil the reputation of the Princess. For twelve years the struggle went on between the old experienced and the younger woman who had been pitched forked into this maze of intrigue.

Marie was clothed as a Roumanian.

her English friends were cut off; she was not permitted to write to England; her English maid was dismissed; even the use of the Irish linen and lace that formed part of her trousseau was forbidden. Marie wore down the opposition by doing nothing at all. With apparent content she went on bearing beautiful children; she kept her light heart, despite all rumors, despite slanders which came from one poisoned source; he gave the lie to the worst by remaining quite faithful to her husband. Her children were frank, joyous, boisterous, even tomboys, and made friends rapidly.

The storm wore itself out and Marie came into her own. She became positively popular, and those who had thought it chie to malign her became at length her stoutest adherents. The stag of the old Queen was declining. It became the correct thing to speak a little English. Afternoon teas and bridge parties, English tailoring, Irish linen, Scotch tweeds, English race horses, dog carts, automobiles, monacles—all these were the symptoms of the change.

"Splendid isolation" is a poor policy for the little folk. The entry of the Turk settled the question for the Roumanians. They knew the "sick man of Europe" too well. They saw the effect of the closing of the Dardanelles; it meant something like bankruptcy for Roumania, unable to get her grain away from Constantza, Braila and Galatz.

The natural ally of Roumania at last became apparent; it was Italy, bound by the ties of two thousand years of race, tongue and blood; Italy, which had stood aloof from the Balkans, but saw the Trentino, Italy Irredenta, almost within reach. Austria, far from being a friend, had for years been the common enemy of both.

For years the men of Bucharest had been pleading for better treatment to be accorded to their fellow Roumanians living on the other side of the Carpathians. They lead the life of serfs, these Roumanians, and Austria has only listened to one argument in all history—that of the conqueror's sword. A pact with Italy was drafted, the terms of which were first disclosed to Paris and not to Berlin. It was for joint but not necessarily simultaneous action if Austria (having thoroughly upset the Balkan status-quo by her attack on Serbia) should refuse to restore the disturbed balance of power by withholding territorial compensation.

It is for the future to settle the spectacular fight for the passes of the Carpathians, but if organization is worth anything, and if the sentiment of a united people serves, the Roumanians should give a good account of themselves. The beginning of the war found Austria in the belief that Serbia was worth nothing, she Germany under the delusion that the Belgians were negligible. But the day of the little States, derided by Bismarck, is at last dawning, and the fusion of Roumania with Bukovina and Transylvania, a fusion as natural as that of England and Scotland, should weld Roumania together into one stable mass that will provide for the due development of the country's resources, mineral, pastoral and agricultural, as well as those less material but equally important developments that stand for industrial, economic and social progress.

PRISON FOR FIREBUGS

Young Men Tools Of Vengeful Hotel-Keeper.

Sarnia, Ont., Dec. 13.—John Anderson and Fred Blackmore, young men of the village of Wyoming, were given four and two years, respectively, in Kingston Penitentiary by Judge Macwatt, on charges of arson. Anderson and Blackmore were the tools of Robert Riddell, a former Wyoming hotel keeper, who to vent his spite on temperance people of the village, who were responsible for his losing his license, launched a campaign of arson in the town. Riddell on Monday was given seven years in the penitentiary for instigating the crimes.

SECURED LAND

Capt. Bernier "Farms" Land At Baffin Bay.

Ottawa, Dec. 13.—Capt. Joseph Bernier, late commander of the Arctic, and famed as an Arctic explorer, has taken up land. The captain during his Northern cruises established fishing stations at Button Point, in Baffin Bay, and on Baffin Island at the junction of the Salmon River with Pond Inlet. He has erected houses at these stations and has now procured from the Government a transfer of the lands, thirty acres at Button Point and sixty acres on Baffin Island, at a dollar an acre.

FOUR OF FAMILY BURNED

Father Gave Life In Attempt To Rescue Children.

Plenty, Sask., Dec. 13.—C. W. Mitchell, aged forty-eight and three of his children—Lenora, sixteen; Lucy, four, and Lloyd, six years—were burned to death in a fire which destroyed their farm house and granary. Mitchell was in the stable when his wife discovered the fire and called to him, in an effort to save the children. Mitchell ran into the burning house and saved two of his sons, but in attempting further rescue he fell and was burned with the other children.

Applications For Divorce.

Ottawa, Dec. 13.—Rudolf Vollhoffer, of Southey, Sask., harness maker, will apply for divorce from his wife, Eleanor Vollhoffer, on the usual grounds.

William Thomas Craig, of Chatham, farmer, is applying for a bill of divorce from his wife, Bertha Maud Craig, on the grounds of adultery and desertion.



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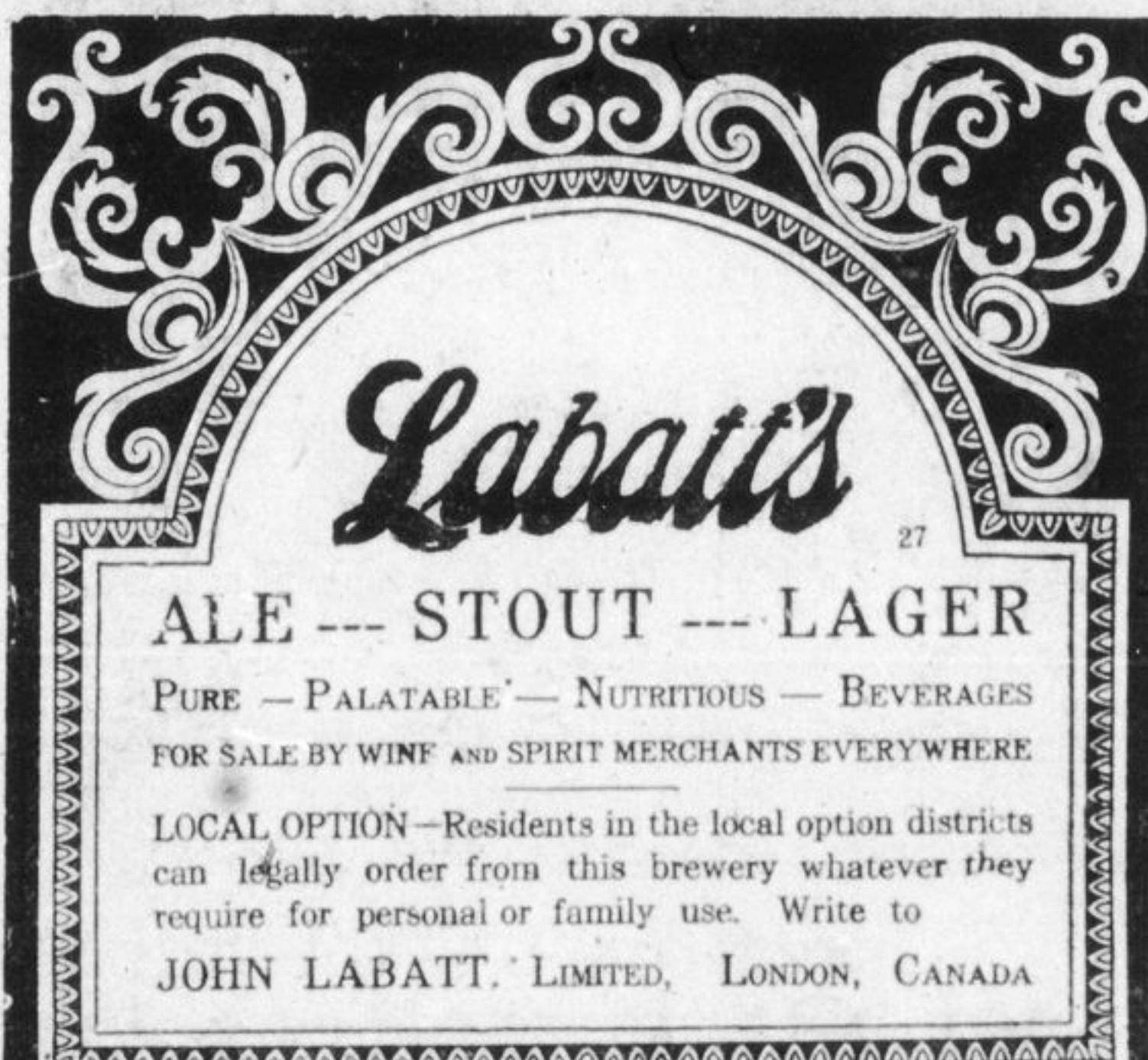
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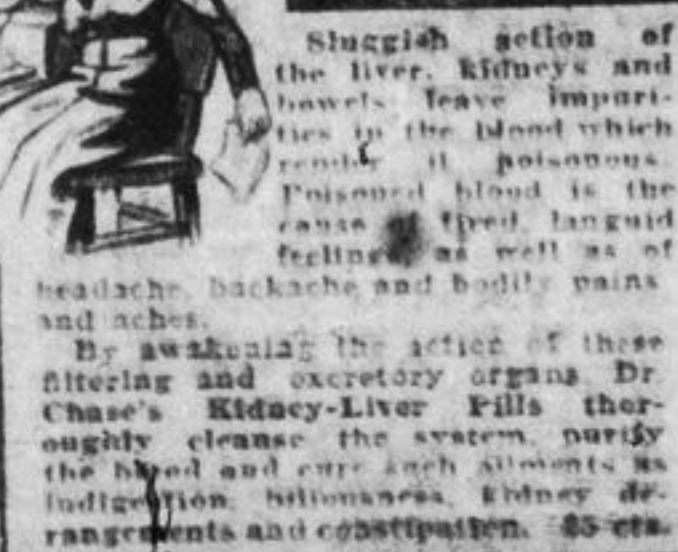
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