

## ROYAL BETROTHALS.

THE BETROTHAL OF THE DUCHESS SOPHIE CHARLOTTE OF OLDENBURG TO THE HEREDITARY GRAND-DUKE OF SAXE-WEIMAR.

THE Princess Sophie, as she is usually called, is one of the most charming young princesses in Europe, and since the death of her mother she has been the constant companion of her father, whose taste for yachting she fully shares. She is greatly beloved in Oldenburg, where for so many years she was the only grandchild of the Grand-Duke. Now that she has a little stepbrother every one is delighted; and the Princess is devoted to the baby Prince, whose birth has secured the succession in the third generation.

The Princess Sophie was born on February 2, 1879, and is the only surviving child



THE DUCHESS SOPHIE CHARLOTTE OF OLDENBURG.

The Hereditary Grand-Duke of Saxe-Weimar was born on June 10, 1876, has, like most princes, entered the army, and is *à la suite* of several regiments. He possesses a great number of names—Wilhelm, Ernst, Carl, Alexander, Friedrich-Heinrich, Bernhard, Albert, George, Hermann. He is the elder of the two sons of the late Hereditary Grand-Duke of Saxe-Weimar by his marriage with his cousin, the Princess Pauline, the eldest daughter of Prince Hermann of Saxe-Weimar, who is so well known by the frequenters of the Baden-Baden racecourse.

The late Hereditary Grand-Duke gave his parents great trouble and anxiety, and the first marriage that was arranged for him ended in a terrible fiasco, as when the bride and her parents had arrived for the ceremony and the Grand-Duke and Duch-



THE HEREDITARY GRAND-DUKE OF SAXE-WEIMAR.

of her father's first marriage. The death of her mother in the year 1895 was a terrible sorrow to her, as she had been most devoted to her and had hardly ever been separated from her. Since that time she has been hardly ever absent from her father, and has accompanied him on all his journeys both by sea and land. A more charming companion than the Princess Sophie cannot be imagined, and the Hereditary Grand-Duke of Oldenburg is extremely proud of her. She is nearly connected to our own Royal Family, as her mother was an elder sister of the Duchess of Connaught and her grandmother was a sister of the Queen of Hanover. Her maternal grandmother, the Princess Frederick Charles of Prussia, is extremely fond of her, and has had a great influence on her during her girlish days.

ess were preparing to go to the church, the news was brought to them that their son had bolted and no one knew what had become of him. It was a considerable time before a princess was found brave enough to marry so erratic a Prince; but at last his first cousin, the Princess Pauline, consented. She made him an excellent wife, and the fact that two sons were born of the marriage brought great joy to the Grand-Duke and Duchess. These two Princes have received a most careful education and are very popular in their own country, but, as they are still very young, not much has been heard of them out of the Grand-Duchy of Weimar. The Hereditary Grand-Duke of Saxe-Weimar is the heir of the Queen of the Netherlands to the Dutch Throne.

THE BETROTHAL OF THE ARCH-DUCHESS  
ELIZABETH MARIE OF AUSTRIA TO  
DUKE ROBERT OF WÜRTEMBERG.

Duke Robert of Würtemberg, who was born on January 14, 1873, is a fine, soldierly young man, and holds a commission in the Würtemberg Dragoon Regiment, No. 26, stationed at Stuttgart. He has an excellent character, and is very popular with his brother officers. He is a finished rider, a good dancer, a thorough sportsman, and excels in all kinds of sport, so that he has generally helped to arrange the equestrian performances which have taken place at Stuttgart before the King and Queen of Würtemberg, and has also taken part in them.

Duke Robert is likely to have a very handsome fortune, as his mother is enormously rich, and, as his elder brother is provided for, he is certain to have a large share of the property left by the late Arch-Duke Albrecht.

The charming young Arch-Duchess Elizabeth Marie of Austria completed her sixteenth year on September 2. It seems, to our English ideas, much too young to marry and encounter the trials and troubles of life, though joy will come too; but in Austria the girls develop much more quickly than with us, and the Arch-Duchess is equal in her mind and manners to an English girl of eighteen or nineteen. She is tall and slender, with a sweet, serious expression and the most beautiful eyes. Her complexion and hair are perfect, and when she is more developed she is likely to become very lovely. She has many of the tastes of her grandmother, the late Empress of Austria, for she loves to roam the mountains; and one of her favourite pleasures is riding—in fact, she is never happier than when she is riding with her mother on one of her horses, which are her greatest pets.

With the daughters of the Duke and Duchess of Cumberland she is on terms of very affectionate friendship. In the summer she spent several weeks at Gmunden with them, and during the time saw a great deal of the Duke and Duchess Philip of Würtemberg, who have a beautiful villa there, and whose son, Duke Robert, was staying with them at the time.

Duke Robert belongs to the Catholic Church, so that there will be no difficulties on the score of religion; and the fact that the Arch-Duchess has known him during the greater part of her life also gives hopes that the marriage may prove an exceptionally happy one. The young couple, though they will have great riches, will have none of the cares of ruling, and will be

able to spend their lives without those responsibilities that render the lives of crowned heads so often arduous.

The Crown Princess Stephanie is said to be extremely pleased at her



DUKE ROBERT OF  
WÜRTEMBERG.



THE ARCH-DUCHESS ELIZABETH  
MARIE OF AUSTRIA.

daughter's engagement; but several people are disappointed, as there was more than one prince, and more than one future sovereign, too, who had hoped to win the affections of the granddaughter of the Emperor of Austria.

It will be remembered that the cousin of the Arch-Duchess Elizabeth also became engaged to be married before she had quite completed her sixteenth year. The Princess Dorothy of Coburg has now been married for a little more than a year, and she only completed her eighteenth year on the 30th of last April, her engagement having lasted a considerable time longer than is usual with Royal personages. The Arch-Duchess is only following the rule in her family. The Crown Princess Stephanie was married before she had completed her seventeenth year, and her sister, the unfortunate Princess Philip of Coburg, was equally young.