COMMUNICATIONS

THE ROYAL OCULIST*†

BY

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IN this fiftieth anniversary of the death of Carl Theodore, duke in Bavaria and accomplished eye-surgeon, it is perhaps fitting to recall this gentle and distinguished colleague, who, in the days when social lustre was so artlessly admired, added such panache to the world of ophthalmologists.

Carl Theodore was born in 1839, the second son of Duke Maximilian and of the Duchess Ludovica, who was a sister of Ludwig I of Bavaria and an aunt of Franz Joseph of Austria. He fought with distinction in the war of 1866 against Austria, and then seriously set himself to the study of medicine under the famous chemist Justus von Liebig, the physicist Jolly, the diagnosticist Ludwig von Buhl, and the anatomist Rüdinger. This was interrupted

by the Franco-Prussian war of 1870, when the duke re-emerged as a Colonel of the Bavarian Light Horse, but by the summer of 1872 he was created an honorary doctor by the Medical faculty of Munich University, taking his degree "with shining honours" the following year. He then studied ophthalmology under Prof. Deutschland, and was apprenticed at Zürich and Vienna, meanwhile publishing treatises "On the Variability of the Vitreous", "On the Pathological Anatomy of Shortsightedness", "The Bacillus in the Human Eye", and many others.

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† Most of the biographical details have been drawn from contemporary articles in *The Windsor Magazine* and *The Ludgate*.

The duke first started to practise in 1877 in Mentone, where he took over the "business" of Prof. Iwanoff; then in 1880 he converted his beautiful castle at Tegensee into an eye-hospital, and later started clinics at Moran and Munich. In these he performed over 5,600 operations, of which 3,500 were for cataract; and in the majority of them he was assisted by his second wife, who held the head, washed the wound, and applied the bandages!

The Duke's palace at Possenhofen.

His sisters had all married well (one had become Queen of Naples, another the Empress of Austria, and a third the equally ill-fated Duchesse d'Alençon), but his elder brother, with a disposition inherited from his Uncle Ludwig I, had made a morganatic marriage with an actress of the Court Theatre at Munich, and on her death he promptly married another "theatrical vocalist of humble birth", so Carl Theodor acceded to the duchy.

He lived to a ripe age, sharing his enthusiasm with his second wife (a daughter of King Miguel I of Portugal—his first wife, a daughter of King John of Saxony, having died in childbirth) and their five children; his daughters were acclaimed as "the most accomplished lady cyclists in Germany". By a happy coincidence, one of these daughters—now Queen Elisabeth of the Belgians—has just renewed her association with ophthalmology; and in gracing the opening of our 18th International Congress at Brussels has honoured a faculty that happens to be near to her heart.

By all accounts the duke was a generous, wise, and gentle man; sometimes too a romantic dreamer, like his sister the Empress Elisabeth. Although his practice included the Emperor of Germany, by far the greatest number of his patients were the poor among his subjects; and if it is only for the compass of his philanthropy, it is seemly that his name should not be forgotten.