Subject: King Carol of Roumania and Princess Elena of Roumania.

After the abdication and exile of King Carol of Roumania it happened that we became good friends. When I was stationed in Vienna as Minister from 1934 to 1937, Carol was on the throne in Roumania. As I followed so closely the activities of the Nazi government and its agents in every part of Central Europe and Southeastern Europe, I naturally knew a good deal of what was happening in Roumania. There was a good deal of conflict of opinion about Carol. There were those who thought that he was playing with the Nazi government in Germany and with the Nazis in Roumania. At that time Elena Lupescu was known to be his mistress. I had a good deal of direct touch with certain important Roumanians whom I saw from time to time in Vienna. This is not the place to go into the details of the Roumanian picture at the time. I only wish to state that on the basis of the, I believe, altogether sound and correct information I had, Carol was really the only one of the heads of the governments of Southeastern Europe who was actively opposing the Nazi penetration of his country. It was because he so actively opposed it that he was so bitterly attacked by the Nazis in and outside of his country. Every endeavor was made by the Nazi government and the Nazis in Roumania to paint him as a sinister figure. The attitude of the British government in those days, which was naturally concerned about Nazi penetration in Roumania, was not very kind towards Carol. The British oil interests in Roumania were not happy about Carol because he would not let them have their own way. So far as I could learn and I think an objective examination of the actual facts would determine that this is correct, Carol was only doing what a responsible chief of state in Roumania would have to do. He did not in any way give improper treatment or permit the government of Roumania to give improper treatment to these oil interests.
It is well known that when Carol was obliged to abdicate, he would have been able, through the influence of the Nazis in Roumania, to remain on the throne if he had been willing to give up Madame Lupescu. One of the conditions was that she would have to leave the country and his reply to that was that if she had to leave he would leave. He went first to Spain, after the abdication, and as the German influence in Spain and in the Spanish government was so strong, all sorts of difficulties were made for him so that he left Spain for Portugal.

I did not meet Carol and Madame Lupescu until they arrived in Cuba. Shortly after he arrived in Cuba, I believe, in 1941, we met and it was the beginning of what proved to be a very pleasant and interesting friendship. Carol left Portugal for Cuba because although the Portuguese government did not tolerate the interference in its affairs which the Spanish government did, he realized that his presence in Portugal was creating difficulties for the Portuguese government. While Carol and Lupescu were in Cuba they lived at the Hotel Nacional. We saw them quite frequently. It was not long, however, after he arrived in Havana that I was transferred to Mexico City.

It was, I believe, a year or so after we had arrived at our new post in Mexico City that King Carol and Madame Lupescu came to Mexico City to live. They found the climate of Havana a little trying, a little too hot. They were accustomed to warm weather in Roumania, in the hot summers which they have there, but like other Roumanians, they had the opportunity to go to higher spots of the country and get relief. Carol got the authorization of the Mexican authorities to live in Mexico and he took a house on the outskirts of the city in the suburb of Coyocacán, which is one of the oldest parts of Mexico and dates back to Cortés. He had a very nice and comfortable home there and entertained
a good deal in a modest way. Count Urdurianu, who had been chamberlain of the court when Carol was on the throne and who had gone into exile with Carol, had accompanied him to Spain and Portugal and to Cuba and later to Mexico.

The Mexican government received Carol generously and the officials of the government treated him with courtesy and consideration. He did not seek to become a figure but preferred to live quietly. He became, however, very popular as did Madame Lupescu with the members of the very large and also the considerable British Colony in Mexico City. They went out a great deal to evening parties and gave small dinner parties in their home.

It was not long after Carol came to Mexico City that he came to see me also on a business matter. He said that all the money which he had was in the Chase National Bank in New York and that in order to make any withdrawals on this account he had to get, in each case, a special permit. He said that the amount which he was permitted to withdraw every month was not really sufficient to cover his living expenses. He asked me to get an increase in the amount which he was permitted to draw. It was because of these circumstances that I got to know what the financial position of Carol was. There was a legend in Europe and which had followed him to the Americas, that he had been able to get very large sums of money out of Europe, that is, out of Roumania, into banks in New York and elsewhere. As a matter of fact I was amazed at the modest amount which he had in the Chase National Bank. I was amazed to find that it was really the only money which he had available. The monthly amount which Carol was drawing from his account in the Chase would have been sufficient to cover his ordinary living expenses but the fact was, as he put it, that the general impression was that he was a
wealthy man and that there were so many appeals to him from charities and from individuals for assistance in Mexico City that he could not resist all these appeals and he had to give away every month really more than he was spending on his personal expenditures. As I found this to be the case and that he was much too generous for the slender amount of money which he had at his disposal, I did not hesitate to get the approval which he wanted for withdrawal of larger monthly amounts. I wondered at times whether I should do this because it might not be a real service to him in view of the fact that he was rapidly exhausting his account in the bank. He always said that when the money was exhausted he had a few pictures which he had been able to bring out of the country and which he could sell.

I found Carol to be a very intelligent man. I had been given the impression by many that he was a quite stupid person. As a matter of fact, the conversations which we had in Havana and in Mexico City on developments in Europe and elsewhere were among the most interesting which I had in that period. He had an extraordinary, keen political perception and he was very well informed. He was not only intelligent but he was a man of very real vision and understanding and of real kindness of heart. After he left Mexico City for Brazil and later again for Portugal I had letters from him from time to time and the analysis which he made of developing world events were extraordinarily keen and, as time went on, many of the prophecies which he made turned out to be correct.

My wife and I invited Carol and Madame Lupescu frequently to our home for dinner. We did it because they were pleasant charming people and we enjoyed them and our friends enjoyed them and they were friends. I recall one day I received a letter from a good friend of
mine who held a high position at the time in the Department of State in Washington. It was a very short letter to the effect that he understood, from mutual friends who had been in Mexico City, that I was having Carol and Madame Lupescu on occasions in the Embassy residence. He wanted me to know that I was not doing me any good at home and that it would be much better for me if I did not have them in my home. I was really furious when I received this letter. I wrote to my friend and said that I was not going to endeavor to put on paper what I thought about the whole thing because what I would say would burn up the paper, but that I would see him the next time I was in Washington. I only wanted to let him know that in the meantime I was going to continue and my wife was going to continue to invite Carol and Madame Lupescu to our home.

I was furious about this whole matter because one of the definite ideas, to which my wife and I adhered during our whole period of service for our government abroad, was that a Foreign Service officer while he had very definite obligations as an officer of our government also had a right to have a certain personal life of his own. From the very outset of my service at the tiny post at Fort Erie, Canada, our life was more or less divided into two parts; we entertained the local officials and the people whom we should entertain because of the position we held. We entertained entirely separately the people whom we enjoyed the most and who became or were our friends. Naturally the two groups mixed and these were in no sense water-tight compartments. What I'm trying to say is that although we were willing all during our period of service abroad and in Washington to do all that we thought that we should do to further the interests of our government through entertaining in our home and in our relations in general, we had a right
to our personal life. My wife and I liked Carol and Madame Lupescu. I thought that he was a fine, decent, upstanding man who had shown a great deal of courage and who had the courage of his convictions which went beyond his remaining on a throne. I admired him because I knew the character of the relationship which existed between him and Madame Lupescu and I had seen few people more attached to each other and more loyal to each other than they were. Madame Lupescu, we had learned from the very first days that we knew her to be really a great lady. She was a very beautiful woman but she was at the same time a woman of fine heart and fine spirit and real character. My wife, during the many years that we have been so happily together, has shown an extraordinary perception with regard to people and she has been generally more right about people than I have been. In any event she has made fewer mistakes about people than I have, and one of the things that I prided myself on, and still do, is that I have made few mistakes about people.

The next time I went to Washington, which happened to be not so long after the receipt of this letter, I went to see my friend in the Department and I referred to this letter. I said that I had only one thing to say and that was that, if he in his relationship with his own wife had been as correct and as loyal as I knew Carol had been in his companionship and relationship with Madame Lupescu, he could consider himself as good a man as Carol. I said that I thought that Carol was, in that respect, a better man than he. My friend flushed and had not a further word to say.

Life treats some people kindly and others it treats unkindly. Life did not treat either Carol or Madame Lupescu kindly. The shadow of what had happened to members of her family and of the distress in which some of her family were in, hung over her always as a shadow after
they left Roumania. They were naturally interesting figures for columnists and for certain types of less responsible writers. In general, the Mexican press and Mexican columnists treated Carol and Lupescu with kindness and understanding and with respect. Every once in a while, however, some one would arrive from the United States with the desire to write an article about Carol and Madame Lupescu and I was asked frequently by these American writers to arrange for an interview with them. I did not do anything of this kind. Some of them succeeded in getting interviews. There wasn't a single one of these, as I recall, who did not distort and misrepresent what Carol and Madame Lupescu said to them, and those who did not succeed in getting an interview at all wrote grossly inaccurate and misrepresentative articles in the press or in certain periodicals in the United States. One of the things which was printed periodically in the United States was to the effect that Carol well known was the owner of a/night club,in Mexico City. All informed people in Mexico City knew there was nothing to this and any responsible writer could easily have determined the facts.

Carol found that the altitude was difficult for Madame Lupescu and the decision to leave Mexico was made with great regret. The doctors advised her to get out of the high altitude of Mexico City and they tried Cuernavaca and lower altitudes but Madame Lupescu could not endure the heat. He therefore endeavored to get visas for either Brazil or Argentina and, preferably, the Argentine. As there was delay in getting the appropriate authorization for the issuance of a visa to live in the Argentine, he went with many misgivings to Rio de Janeiro. When we went to Buenos Aires, Carol wrote me from Rio de Janeiro stating that they would like to come there to live and I mentioned the matter to the Argentine authorities who were very happy to give the permission. When
it came, however, Madame Lupescu was quite ill and it was impossible for her to travel. When Mrs. Messersmith and I went north in May or June of 1947, after completing our tour of duty in Buenos Aires, our ship stopped for a day in Rio de Janeiro. We called on Carol and Madame Lupescu at their apartment and found him in tears and she critically ill, so ill that the doctors had forbidden her to have any visitors. Carol told me that he despaired of her life. It was while we were on the steamer a few days out of Rio de Janeiro on our way to New Orleans that we received a cablegram from Carol stating that he and Madame Lupescu had been married.

That was the last time that Mrs. Messersmith and I saw Carol and Madame Lupescu. We remained in touch with them after they returned to Estoril in Portugal to live. We kept getting news from them through mutual friends who saw them in Estoril and we had occasional letters from Carol and from her.

His life was much saddened by the fact that his son, Michael, turned against him. The two people to whom Carol was most attached in this world were his son, Michael, and his companion, Madame Lupescu. In Mexico City in particular he used to speak to me by the hour about his son. There are many who believe that Carol had the hope that he would some day return to the throne of Roumania. If I am any judge of human nature Carol nourished no such hope; he had abandoned that hope by the time he came to Mexico City. His one hope was that his son, Michael, would be back on the throne. He was not thinking of any personal advantage to himself, he was thinking of his country and of his son. I am not one to be in a position to pass judgment on the way that Michael treated his father, but I know that the father treated the son with every consideration and every kindness and was willing to make
every possible sacrifice for the son. Carol's death in 1954 from a heart attack was not only unexpected by him and his family but by his many friends. Madame Lupescu who, after the marriage in Rio de Janeiro, became Princess Elena of Roumania, was as devoted a companion to a man as one can conceive of. She was and is a great woman and a great spirit and today, among those who know her, she enjoys unlimited sympathy, admiration and respect.

At some time in these notes on Carol I want to insert at the appropriate place the circumstance that while they were in Mexico, Bateman, the British Minister, came in to see me and asked me if Carol and Lupescu would be at a certain dinner to which we had asked him and his wife. I told him that it so happened that they would not be. He said that if I had by chance invited them, he would not be able to come nor would his wife. He had instructions from the Foreign Office that he was not to attend any private functions at which Carol and Madame Lupescu were present, and that he was to pass this on to the members of the British Colony. Later he came in to tell me that he had a letter from King George to the effect that the instruction from the Foreign Office had been sent out against his will. He was fond of his cousin Carol. I told the British Minister I was not accustomed to telling my guests in advance who would be at a dinner and in the future he would have to take the risk when he got an invitation from us.