

The Biography of His Majesty—KING GEORGE V.—By Major C. F. L. Kipling

CHAPTER I

THE BEGINNING OF THINGS

The babyhood and early childhood of King George—The influence of Queen Victoria on his early life and upbringing—How that upbringing and education differed from that of his father—The Prince and Princess of Wales, and their family life—Days at Sandringham—Characteristics of the child who was to become King George—New stories of his early life—Thoughts of the sea.

Herewith is the first chapter in the Biography of King George V, ruler of the greatest Empire in history, by Major C. F. L. Kipling. The story which is to appear exclusively in the (name of paper), is hailed by critics as one of the greatest biographies of all time. It is the first and only life of His Majesty published with permission of the Royal Household, and at times amounts to an autobiography, so intimately does the writer, a cousin of the immortal bard, Rudyard Kipling, discuss the man whose lot it was to lead the Empire safely through the world's greatest war, strengthening the dignity and position of his Crown whilst all about him thrones were tumbling into oblivion. Unprecedented public interest attends the publication of the Biography of the Beloved Ruler, who, just over a year ago in Buckingham Palace fought—and won—his great battle with Death with the eyes of the world riveted on the spectacle.

By Major C. F. L. Kipling
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Even his birth cannot be called the beginning of things for King George.

It is not always remembered that the Hanoverian Kings were just as much Stuart as their predecessors, the only difference being that it was through the female line, in the person of James II's daughter, Elizabeth, who married the Elector Palatine.

So the Royal blood of England still persisted; they were, as King George is in that direct line of succession, back through Stuarts and Tudors and Plantagenets and Normans to Edward, Saxon King of Wessex, first of those fifty-seven sovereigns who have governed the English monarchy. There can be no pedigree approaching to that of King George in length and splendor throughout the whole of Europe.

And moreover, in spite of intermarriages, there can be no pedigree of its length so essentially English.

But the tiny child who lay in his cradle on June 3rd, 1865, knew nothing of these things, heard nothing of the guns booming from the Tower and Hyde Park, announcing the birth of a second son to the Prince and Princess of Wales.

Crowds had waited anxiously round the gates of Marlborough House for the young Prince and Princess were exceedingly popular. Upstairs, in the nursery, the Prince passed the waiting time in playing with Albert Edward, Duke of Clarence, eighteen months older than his new little brother, whilst Queen Victoria, in Buckingham Palace, as soon as she heard the news, began, we are sure to make plans for the education and upbringing of the small Prince.

She was one of the first to call at Marlborough House and on June 17th she wrote to the King of the Belgians that she had "seen our new grand-

son. He is very small and not very pretty, but bigger than Albert Victor, who is a dear little fellow."

There was a dramatic scene at Marlborough House a month later. The Princess of Wales was with her two little sons in the nursery, when she saw smoke coming up through the floor, and rushed out to the landing to call to her husband in great alarm.

"Edward, Edward, we are all on fire!"

The Prince came up from his study in all haste, and himself helped to tear up the flooring and discover the cause of the outbreak—apparently a smouldering cinder which had set on fire the dry boards. The affair was not serious in itself, but it led to an astonishing discovery—the fact that Marlborough House was not insured. The Prince and Princess would have suffered a terrible loss had the house been burnt to the ground, which might well have happened if the outbreak had taken place at night.

The christening of George Frederick Ernest Albert took place at Windsor on July 7th, when the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge were godparents. Queen Victoria wrote once again to the King of the Belgians. "To-day the christening of the new baby took place, but quietly and not 'en grande tenue'. Still, these ceremonies and events are painful to me in the extreme, as you know."

Atmosphere of Desolation

It was that atmosphere of desolation, natural enough in the early days of her widowhood, but carried to an extreme later, which, in Prince George's earliest memories, must have surrounded his grandmother. His father had lived completely in its influence during the time between Prince Albert's death and his own marriage, and it is pitiful to read the warning in one of Queen Victoria's letters to the tutor of the twenty-year old Prince of Wales, on their return from a foreign tour within the first year of her bereavement. She says in this letter that Bertie must remember he is coming home to a house of mourning—a place where no flippancy or jesting could be tolerated.

That dark cloud had even hung over the Prince's wedding day in 1863, for the Queen, attired in deepest black even to her gloves, watched the ceremony, herself unseen, from the Royal Closet in St. George's Chapel at Windsor.

No wonder the Prince and Princess of Wales determined that the lives of their little boys should not be overshadowed by the Prince, too, was resolute upon another point.

He remembered his own unhappy restricted childhood, cut off from companionship of his own age, with every hour of his day mapped out according to the disciplinary rules drawn up by his parents and Baron Stockmar, his tutor.

It had all been meant for the very best: the Prince Consort took his responsibility as the father of a future king of England with desperate seriousness, and he and the Queen determined that the little Prince should be the pattern for all boys, and, later, for all rulers.

In order that he might have no opportunity for naughtiness he was never alone, never unaccompanied by his tutors and attendants. He was allowed toys only of an instructional nature, and his books were all of the

driest description to be studied as a duty.

It was a miserable childhood, boyhood and early manhood, the worst training in the world for a pleasure-loving, affectionate, not particularly studious lad. Just because he was given so few chances to be naughty, he snatched every golden opportunity even if it meant severe punishment. Remembering this, the Prince was determined, from the day of his eldest son's birth, that his children should be brought up very differently, that they should, as far as it was possible for Royal Princes, lead a normal healthy childhood.

Needless to say that Queen Victoria strongly disapproved of much that went on in the nurseries at Marlborough House.

Perhaps it was partly because of this disapproval that the Prince and Princess of Wales took their children away with them as often as possible, feeling that "Grandmother" might try to take command, if they were left too much alone.

However that may be, the future King George began his travels at the mature age of two years, going with his parents to visit the Duke and Duchess of Sutherland at Dunrobin Castle. This necessitated a long drive of twenty-five miles, and the Princess was much afraid that her little son might catch cold. But the small boy appeared to enjoy himself thoroughly, and kept his eyes fixed on the horses the whole time.

At three years old, he made his first continental tour, going with his parents and his sister, later the Princess Royal, to Paris and Stockholm, and afterwards to Copenhagen and Charlottenburg, the home of his grandparents, the King and Queen of Denmark. From thence King George returned, with his nurse and two equestrians, whilst his parents went on to Berlin.

"Big Inquiring eyes"

For the Princess of Wales said that she loved taking "Georgie" about, for "he is such a good child; always so cheerful and merry, and with such big inquiring eyes. I think he is very much like Edward."

In these early days Prince George did not see a great deal of his Royal and rather awe-inspiring grandmother, although he had one vivid recollection of a visit when she gave him a biscuit with sugar on top, which he ate bravely, so as not to hurt her feelings, although it was not a very nice one.

There were two "homes" for the future king and his brothers and sisters in these days, and in the beginning perhaps Marlborough House was the best-loved, for the busy streets and tall houses fascinated the tiny boy, and he dearly loved to go, for drives through the London crowds and practise saluting—just as his little grandchild Princess Elizabeth, does to-day.

When a town house for the Prince of Wales was needed at the time of his marriage, Queen Victoria chose Marlborough House, the private property of the Royal family, because of its nearness to the Palace, and the Prince and Princess made it a "home" in the real sense of the word.

However busy the Princess might be in her public life, she always managed to spare time for her children,—to read to them and to play with them. In her own boudoir there was a sofa, especially designed for her by the Prince, and this sofa, had a particular attraction for "Georgie". He would creep into the room and curl up upon it, unobserved, to feast his eyes upon a favorite screen covered with family photographs. When rebuked gently by his mother he would raise those big eyes of his to her face and say, "It's got a nicer feel than the nursery sofa."

It was a little later that the home-life of the "Wales" children shifted its centre, and King George's most vivid memories of his childhood cluster round Sandringham Manor, the house his parents always loved so dearly.

The place had been bought from Lady Harriet Cowper by the Prince Consort, £220,000. The estate had historical associations with the scholarly Earl Rivers, once peer of Caxton and his printing press, but the red-brick house, in Elizabethan style, was built in the early seventies.

Here the Prince and Princess lived a very quiet informal life and here the children were brought up in the greatest simplicity. The small boys were not allowed to be called "Royal Highness"; they were just Prince Eddy and Prince George to all around them, taught, from a very early age, that just because they



"His Most Excellent Majesty, George V of Great Britain, Ireland, and the British Dominions beyond the seas, King, Defender of the Faith and Emperor of India."

Princes, they were no better and probably not as good as other people.

"It is very hard work being a Prince," the Prince of Wales once said gravely to little "Georgie". You must try to remember all the time that other people matter more than yourself."

The small boy evidently thought the matter over, for a few days later he confessed shamefacedly to his mother that he had cried, because he couldn't have another cake for tea.

"Don't tell Daddy," he begged.

"Princess oughtn't to cry."

But, on the whole, the remembrance of their Princeship was not forced upon them, as it had been upon their father. The Princess of Wales believed in teaching her children to interest themselves in others, and often when driving about the countryside, she would pick up village boys and girls on their way from school and take them back to their cottage homes, and question them about domestic matters, in her charming sympathetic way. Meanwhile the little Royalties fraternised with the small villagers, an intercourse which they thoroughly enjoyed even quarrelling companionably on occasions, for, it is said, that Prince George was not at all averse to a friendly fight.

Most children love the country, and the fir plantations and sandy heaths round Sandringham were a splendid playground, ideal for picnics and childish games and expeditions. Little "Georgie" in especial soon began to distinguish the different birds by their notes, and his mother often asked him to pick wildflowers for her, "because he gathered them so tenderly."

We can see what springtime at Sandringham must have seemed to the children and their parents, in a charming description of the neighborhood given by Miss Sarah A. Tooley.

"Who can adequately describe its beauties," she writes, "when the primroses peep forth in the Wolferton Woods and the whin-bushes which line the Tyne road are a mass of golden glory, and the rhododendrons make brilliant patches amongst the larches and pines."

Chided by "Grandmamma"

The children had few toys and for that reason prized them all the more. Prince George, in especial, owned a nondescript woolly animal which was his great joy and accompanied him everywhere, day and night, coming down with him to the family breakfast when the children loved, and when there was always a scramble to obtain the coveted seat next to "Mamma". It is said that Queen Victoria once caught sight of the grimy woolen beast and remarked that she thought it high time the child should learn to do without such things.

"He is only six," answered the Princess of Wales. "And he does love it so."

One six . . . but six was to be rather an important age for Prince George, in many ways.

By this time, the essential differences between him and his elder brother had become more noticeable. Prince Eddy had always been delicate; he was a quite reserved boy, whilst Prince George was always brimming over with joy of life. Bishop Wilberforce, writing of the two, noted in the elder "a certain look of melancholy, whilst the younger was 'full of fun and spirits and life.'"

In spite of his grandmother's rather disparaging remark at his birth, Prince George as a child is described as "the sweetest, chubbier, merriest little man you ever saw, but as full of mischief as an egg is full of meat, always getting into scrapes and always laughing his way out of them."

In fact so full of pranks was he that he had earned the name of "Right Royal Pickle" and seemed set upon deserving it. At six years old he was sturdy, normal, healthy boy, with the foundations of a character rapidly becoming as strong and virile as his body. With all his mischief, he had plenty of earnestness and a capacity for enthusiasm which has marked him ever since.

He was never slack and there was always plenty of determination in the set of his childish lips, and the gleam in his blue eyes.

As to his education, it had begun in the first place with his mother who said once to a friend, "Georgie only likes the pretty letters. He will make any number of S's and Y's, but X's and H's he will not make."

Perhaps it is rather fanciful to think that, even as a baby, the future King George was never fond of the letter "T". It is not a prominent factor in the thoughts of

the man and the ruler of to-day.

Under French and German governments, the children were almost unconsciously familiarised with these languages, and when Prince George was four and his elder brother nearly six, they were put under the tutorage of Mr. John Neale Dalton, then a curate of Sandringham, who was to be their guardian and friend for many years.

From the first Prince George had had a passion for mechanical toys, for anything of which "the wheels went round", and that interest in machinery has always distinguished him. But towards the age of six a new love began to develop, which was noticed by one of his little sisters to the remark, "Georgie can never talk about anything, except his old boats."

Ships and the sea had indeed become his great interest in life. Captain Marryat and Jules Verne were his favorite authors and he knew many of their thrilling pages almost by heart. A chubby little figure, in his sailor suit, with a big straw hat and shock of fair hair, he often escaped from his tutor to do some contraband sailing on a tiny pond in the garden.

The Prince of Wales was very lenient towards these particular escapades. He himself was always a sea lover, and it was already well-known that he wished his second son to enter the Navy as a serious profession.

And so when, as was sometimes the case, he went to the pond himself to bring back the culprit, the sin would be forgotten in sea stories which he told the wide-eyed little boy, and they would discuss the question, which Prince George already took much interest in, as to when he could be a real sailor.

Another influence at this time was the philosophy of the two young Princes with Charles Kingsley, the famous author. The old man was a keen boy-lover, and a very real influence grew up between him and the Princes, as is shown by the touching little notes which he received from them when he lay a-dying at Eversley.

The love of animals, and especially of horses and riding, which has always been a marked trait in the character of the man was fostered in the boy Prince George from very early days. The children had a little Indian pony, called "Nawab" with a wonderful red and gold harness, decorated with ribbons, which was "Georgie's" first mount. He was indeed particularly adventurous in the feats which he attempted, and exceedingly proud of himself when he one day succeeded in riding Nawab up the steps and right into the clubhouse at West Newton, a neighboring village. He was punished for this, but remarked philosophically that "it is better to be punished after you have done a thing than just for thinking about it."

On Sundays, after the immemorial country-house fashion, the Prince and Princess of Wales would walk around the stables after lunch with their guests, and with Prince Eddy and Prince George in attendance, if they had been passably good during the week. Each child went to the kitchen beforehand and received a little basket of apples and carrots, and an especially favored occupant of the stable was their mother's beautiful mare "Viva".

Then there were their own beasts to display, the dove-cote the two calves and ponies; whilst visitors at Sandringham noticed that little Prince George, hanging on to his mother's arm, would sometimes make surprisingly observant remarks about trees and birds and flowers. In that the small boy was much the father of the man—there is very little which King George does not notice of what goes on around him.

Meets future bride

There are still old people at Sandringham who recall story upon story of that happy family of parents and children, and especially of the lovely informal mother, and the small boy who was the future King. The

Princess liked nothing better than wandering in and out of the tenants' cottages on the Estate, with his

walked over to Appleton Farm, some two miles away. The door was opened by a maidservant, who did not recognize the lady with the cheerful party of boys and girls, until Prince George stepped forward and, taking off his cap, remarked gravely, "This is the Princess of Wales, and we are her children."

On another visit to one of the cottages on the Estate, with his mother and a clergyman, the latter left his walkingstick and did not discover the loss until he reached Sandringham Manor. Nobody had noticed "Georgie" until he came forward suddenly with the courteous request, "Mafy I have the pleasure of fetching it for you?"

A small story, no doubt, but it shows the spirit which pervaded the simple upbringing of these children. Guests at Sandringham have always spoken of the charming spirit of informality which prevailed—and still prevails—there. The Prince of Wales early drilled into his young sons the desirability of personally looking after one's guests and he carried out his own precepts.

In Lord Fisher's "Memoirs" we read a delightful story of how the Admiral, invited to Sandringham for a week-end, was unpacking when a knock came on the door. Shouting, "Come in!" rather curtly, he was startled to see King Edward himself enter, and go over to the washstand to feel the copper jug which stood there. "I always like to make sure myself that it's hot," he remarked, as he went away, after making sure that there was nothing more that his guest needed.

But to return again to that sixth year of his, it was to bring about Prince George's first meeting with someone who was to be very important in his future life—more important than any other person.

He had gone with his mother for a holiday to Rumpenheim, where the Prince had spent much of her early childhood. It is a lovely old house, on the Main, opposite Frankfurt, and was left to the Duchess of Cambridge, Aunt to Queen Victoria, by the Landgrave Frederick, with the request that she and her descendants should meet there, every second year.

This tradition was kept up, and it was here that the Princess of Wales met her future husband, and here, too, that she formed her lasting friendship with Princess Mary of Cambridge, the Duchess of Teck, whose little girl accompanied her to Rumpenheim in this particular summer of 1871.

Her mother called her "May-blossom" and wrote of her to a friend at about this time, she really is as sweet and engaging a child as you could wish to see. Full of fun and life, with the deepest blue eyes imaginable, quantities of lovely fair hair and a tiny rosette of a mouth."

So it was at Rumpenheim, with its wonderful gardens, which were such a fairyland for children, that Prince George met the tiny girl who was to be his future wife.

After the Rumpenheim visit, he saw her constantly. The Duke and Duchess of Teck lived in a suite of rooms at Kensington Palace, and when the Prince and Princess of Wales were at Marlborough House, the respective families of children spent a good deal of time in each other's nurseries. As the Duchess of Teck wrote her diary, "Wales' children came in this afternoon and I went up to the nursery to keep them in order."

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