

He Walked With Kings—

SHADOWS OF THE GREAT

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Fired and Rehired
I took her to the hotel, got her a room and arranged for her to get into the Countess's room during the night and try to find that letter. I dare not try to get her any chloroform, there was not a chemist in Ninice who knew me, but I gave her a huge silk shawl to put over the Countess's head and muffle her if she awoke. I would be handy if required.

Presently the girl spoke:
"My dear—there's nobody here!" I went in the room it was quite true. The bird had flown! There was nothing else for me to do but to go back to Paris and report failure.

When I came back the King was obviously disappointed at my failure calling me a bungler and ordering me to return to London forthwith. I packed up but before I could reach the station he sent for me:

"Where are you gallivanting off to now?" He asked.

"I am returning to London as you ordered, Your Majesty," I answered. "Never mind," he said "better stay where you are. If anybody else came I suppose they would bungle just as badly as you do and you are probably safer bungling with me than in a more responsible position—such as directing traffic in the Strand for instance." He smiled roguishly and I knew everything was all right again.

The King Disrupts a Party
That was King Edward, the real King Edward, one minute furiously angry, the next smiling and smoothing ruffled feelings with very substantial salves.

We were travelling once to Marlenbad, using four royal saloons lent by the Kaiser and attached to the ordinary express because there was some difficulty in running a special at that hour.

I occupied a coupe at the end of the next saloon to the King's saloon. Mr. Fehr was with me. As a rule we occupied the first coupe nearest the King. At one station where the train stopped Mr. Fehr noticed two ladies behind the barrier whom he knew. He recognized them as English actresses and crossed the platform to speak to them. Presently he came running back.

"Woodhall," he said "just nip along and see what the King's doing. These girls are travelling to Marlenbad and they will have to wait until the second portion of this train. This is all first class and fully booked up. We might give them a lift with us."

As I went along and saw that the King was chatting animatedly to Baron Kellman and unlikely to come along our way, Fehr brought the girls along so as soon as the train started we ordered some champagne and caviare sandwiches and had quite a little party. Indeed we were so engrossed that none of us noticed the King arrive at the door of the compartment.

"Oh! Ho!" he exclaimed. "So this is the explanation of the heavy expense sheets, is it, Fehr?" There had been a little sensitiveness between Fehr, the Master of the Wardrobe, and the Keeper of the Privy Purse recently about expenses. The King, when it was referred to him, came down heavily on Fehr's side for he hated niggardliness.

"Haven't I seen you before?" the King asked one of the girls. "Yes Your Majesty," she replied and began to tell him how she had appeared before him in a command performance, adding that she had been in George Edward's Merry Widow Company.

"Ah! Yes of course," said the King. "A most excellent show. Best waltz ever written, I heard it three times running. Well, well, it is very nice of you fellows to present these ladies to me. Come along ladies, come along I am quite disengaged now."

He led the girls through to the next saloon: where we soon saw waiters and servants dashing with bottles and trays!

In a few minutes a waiter came to our coupe with a tray on which were two bottles of Bass and two excellent cigars and with them was a card bearing in the King's scrawl: "A consolation prize!"

"Bass you notice!—We had been making free with his champagne!"

(Next week: How the King's pet idea of making Kitchener Indian Viceroy was defeated—King Edward fires his brother from the Army—A Coachman who gave orders to Queen Victoria and had them obeyed.)

The King's place in a constitutional monarchy is often very greatly underestimated. The general public knows that his Majesty is "advised" by his ministers and the assumption is general that when the Cabinet as a whole or any departmental minister individually has come to a decision which requires the royal assent, then the royal assent is forthcoming automatically.

When high appointments are made a notice appears in newspapers merely recording the fact that "His Majesty has been graciously pleased to appoint etc.," but only those in intimate touch with the King know of the fights and the struggles behind the apparently placid announcement.

A typical incident of the kind occurred in 1910 when the Vice-regal appointments to India changed hands.

Everybody near the King knows perfectly well that he had set his heart on Lord Kitchener becoming the new Viceroy.

To that end, Kitchener's service as Commander-in-Chief in India had been made to come to an end by private arrangement, just in time to fit in with the new appointment.

The King returned from Biarritz and in Paris M. Fallieres came to the station to greet him as he passed through. I stood beside the King and noted with pleasure how cordially he greeted the distinguished Frenchman who had done so much to assist in building up the Entente Cordiale. Many subjects were lightly touched upon and amongst others the Indian Viceroy.

"I am arranging for Kitchener to go," said the King.

The morning after his return Mr. Asquith came to the Palace and remained for a while. After he had gone the King was obviously upset about something, his temper was quite out of control. He sent his sergeant-footman for a present he had brought back for Lord Halifax. By some means the present had been mislaid in packing. The King was out of all proportion enraged. He accused his valet and sergeant-footman of conspiring together to rob him, and finally, wound up by flinging the contents of a huge sperme in the face of the trembling footman.

Obviously something had greatly annoyed the King. Later in the day I was to find out what it was. Sir Ernest Cassel came to see the King and as he was one of the three privileged visitors, he was shown into the King's dressing room.

The King had sent for me just previously to deliver a personal letter for him. I stood waiting for the letter to be finished so I can recall the occasion with amusement as well as affection. The scene was so typically Edwardian. The King sat at a bureau with a big grey dressing gown loosely thrown over his shirt sleeves. As he wrote, he grunted and grumbled, made little chuckles, and kept inter-

rupting himself to call for various things.

A Message for Kitchener
His valet lit his cigar at least four times. It was burning badly but the King refused to have another.

"No!" he said "I'll make the thing burn anyway!"

Sir Ernest Cassel came in and the King half rose. Sir Ernest came across and greeted his friends affectionately:

"I am so glad to see you looking so improved!" he exclaimed.

"I can tell you this much -- my temper's not improved!" proclaimed the King with twinkling eyes and a sly look round the room to where I stood and the valet and footman.

"What's the matter?" asked Sir Ernest Cassel with a little laugh. The King's face grew stern again.

"You know how I have planned to send Kitchener to India?" Sir Ernest Cassel nodded. "Well they're trying to frustrate me. Morley insists upon Harding's going. I won't have it. KITCHENER WILL GO. And I'm

just sending a little note to Kitchener by the hand of my detective here, to tell him to stand firm and I'll back him!"

"What does the Prime Minister say?" asked Sir Ernest.

"Oh! Asquith's all right!" replied the King. "He's fond of Kitchener and considers the appointment perfectly satisfactory. Haldane doesn't forget the help I gave with the Generals over his Territorial scheme and he backs Kitchener, but it is the other dry-as-dust old Puritan-lawyer who is going to cause the trouble. Wait a minute and I'll finish my letter."

Then the King went on writing. After a while he handed the letter to me and I departed with it to Lord Kitchener.

The great soldier came to the hall of his club with the letter in his hand:

"Who are you, exactly?" he asked and I told him.

"I see," he said, "I will give you a reply in a minute or two." And I took

the reply to the Palace. As events turned out the King's plans were frustrated, Lord Morley leaving his way.

Another appointment which caused the King great anxiety was the command in the Mediterranean. In case I recall the really furious row there was when His Majesty's brother, the Duke of Connaught, insisted upon resigning. Many army men considered the command unnecessary and the Royal Duke thought it beneath his dignity. The King and the late Lord Haldane thought otherwise.

The King was down at Sandringham when the late Lord Haldane came to him with the news that the Duke of Connaught had definitely decided time when he would retire in any case and would agree to prolong his stay no longer.

The King was walking through some fields when the Minister arrived. He was examining some new locks on several gates and I was demonstrating how the gates could be

opened with a stick from above for the convenience of people riding. A Bailiff accompanied the King and myself. We were so engrossed that nobody noticed the approach of Lord Haldane. The Minister began by apologizing for his intrusion by pointing out that he had a Cabinet meeting that afternoon. The King cut short his apologies and greeted him with great cordiality.

The King Liked an Audience

Strolling back, the minister spoke the news that the Duke of Connaught refused to stay in the Mediterranean. The War Minister spoke quietly, but suddenly King Edward stood still in the field:

"What?" he shouted, his eyes flashing. Little Caesar, the terrier, jumped back a step in sudden fright. Have you conveyed to the Duke my express wishes?"

The Minister quietly bowed his head and said that His Majesty's wishes had been made known to the Duke.

"Then convey to him further," said the King loudly and sternly. "That I am very much surprised and intensely annoyed that my wishes should be completely disregarded by him. You may further tell him that he may consider his military career definitely at an end!"

His Royal Highness was not further employed during King Edward's reign but upon the accession of King George he went to Canada as Governor General.



King Edward (left) strolling near the beach at Biarritz. Note the two stylish figures at the right.

In King George's case, friction with Ministers and high officers of State are very rare events because his father and he were totally different in character.

Even if he had something weighing very heavily on his mind our present King would never speak before servants, but would wait until the doors were closed upon the minister and himself.

King Edward never noticed the presence of people. He hated to be alone and nearly always had at least two or three servants of one sort or another about him at all times. The present King will shut himself up for hours with his stamp collection and thoroughly enjoy himself, King Edward had such a fund of energy that

he could never be still five consecutive minutes.

But I recall one instance when King George took me into his confidence.

In December 1911 a man called Mylius was arrested in Bayswater for libelling the King. He had some weird story printed about the King having married Admiral Seymour's daughter at Malta when he was attached to the Mediterranean fleet.

The King was most anxious for de-

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