

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

## PRINCE WILL CHOOSE BRIDE FOR HIMSELF BE SHE COMMUNER OR PRINCESS—KIPLING CHAPTER 20

King George's biographer declares Empire can trust H. R. H., however, in his selection of a life mate to share throne with him—has already welded bonds of imperialism never before dreamt of—achieved manhood in France in "reckless adventures" with danger—a revealing pen study of the heir to world's greatest crown.

It is an otherwise unfortunate aspect of his position as the most popular young man to-day, that the world must be naturally curious as to the Prince of Wales' matrimonial intentions. Major Kipling, in his celebrated biography of King George pays due deference to the limits of delicacy, but none the less sacrifices interest in his frank discussion of this phase of his subject.

By Major C. F. L. Kipling (Copyright 1930)

We have already seen how completely King Edward VII when Prince of Wales, reversed in the training of his own sons the scheme of education which was laid down and carried out for himself by Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort—a scheme adhered to all the more rigidly by his widow after Prince Albert's death.

King George, realizing the value of his father's training as regards his own outlook, educated the Prince of Wales on the same lines, except that he carried the system in some respects even further, but was obliged by circumstances to modify it in other ways. In as far as it was possible, the Prince and his brothers and sister had a perfectly normal, healthy childhood, with the consciousness of their "Royalty" thrust upon them as little as possible. But when the eldest boy reached boyhood, the time inevitably came when he must realize the vast responsibilities of his station as heir to the Throne and the Empire, and must begin to prepare for them. It could not be otherwise, and King George, with that ultra-conscientiousness of his, was the last man in the world to shirk the issue for himself, or for his son.

Nevertheless, the Prince of Wales,

as King George was then, had determined that, as far as might be, his son should receive the same training as himself, that training in discipline and self-forgetfulness and self-control, which is given by the Sea service. It was helped by the fact that the boy had inherited his father's love of the sea, and was as anxious as ever his father had been to embrace it as a career. For the moment this seemed possible; it was only in 1907, and King Edward was still apparently strong and vigorous, likely to live and reign for many hedge him around, try as he may to break out. ("I have no last name—its awful")

The story was told in the young Prince's first letter to his parents, after his father had left him at Osborne, extremely shy, extremely sensitive, desperately anxious not to be noticed for what he was. On the very day of his arrival, it seemed, another cadet had stopped him, and asked him his name. "Edward," was the nervous reply. "Edward what?" demanded the other boy. "Just Edward—that's all," the Prince responded uncomfortably. Later, the cadet found out who he was, and came back to apologise. "I told him it was all right," finished the boy in his letter. "But, you see, I really have no last name, and its awful. I never thought how hard it would be to be your eldest son."

Much of this 'awfulness' wore off, as the Prince grew accustomed to Osborne life and made himself acceptable to his companions in his own person, so that the unhappy lack of a last name was forgotten in the nicknames which took place.

The terms as a cadet were happy ones for both father and son, and they were to be seen at Sandringham and elsewhere, during the boy's leaves, pacing up and down in nautical fashion, hands linked behind their backs, discussing what were obviously serious and technical naval matters.

The time of cadetship passed undisturbed; it was not until the last term at the Royal Naval College that the event happened which changed everything. King Edward died, and the boy became the direct heir to the throne, with all which that involved. It was a position which King George had not filled

until the death of his elder brother, when he was a grown man; now, at sixteen, his son was already Prince of Wales, and as such must learn to know other phases of life as well as the sea—other men, as well as sailors.

Just for the moment things went as before; on his sixteenth birthday, Prince David was created Prince of Wales and was afterwards appointed midshipman on H.M.S. Hindustan. King George was most insistent that his son should be treated exactly like all the other midshipmen; should mix with his fellows and find his own level just as he himself had done. But he knew, and the boy must have guessed that, as Prince of Wales, he could not stay at sea much longer, much as the young Prince had grown to love the Navy. Both father and son felt it deeply, when, having finished his training on October 26th, it was decided that he should spend the winter at Sandringham, to study with Mr. Hansell preparatory to his University career. Those who think that Royal persons are spared suffering of ordinary folk should imagine what it means to give up a loved and chosen career at the call of duty. It is what King George and his son did, one as a man, the other as a boy, and did willingly, but that scarcely infers that he did it without pain.

The Prince of Wales went to the University under very different conditions to those which ruled the Oxford and Cambridge life of his grandfather. King Edward had been withheld almost entirely from mixing with the other undergraduates, and permitted to make only a few chosen acquaintances. He did not live in College, but in a separate house, with a separate suite and attendants. He took no part in University life, was allowed no freedom of body or mind, no opportunity to go his own way, even for a moment, and in the most harmless directions.

The younger Prince of Wales was very differently, and in most respects as an ordinary undergraduate. It is impossible to say that no distinctions were drawn, but they were as lightly indicated as possible, and if the University part of his career was perhaps the least formative, as regards his character, it played its part in shaping it.

No "Peter Pan" of Empire Then came the War—and one cannot doubt that in the opinion of the Prince of Wales himself this was his great training ground—the time and place where he found himself; he has indeed said so in so many words. He went into the War in 1914 as a boy; he came out of it a man, grown to his full stature in many respects, although the British people have always been strangely and rather perversely unwilling to accept this fact, have always tried to treat him as the "Peter Pan" of the Empire.

From the time of his intensive training as a Guards' officer at Warley, from the time when his strenuous and unceasing efforts at last took him to the Front, the Prince was all soldier and it is an ex-soldier, of the war that he regards himself now, the "Old Comrade" of all the men who fought, and their comrade still in all that he can do to help them, and serve them. His first reckless adventures in France, those attempts to gaze into the "bright eyes of danger" which caused such anxiety in those around him, settled down to serious work, wherever at the Front he could be most useful. He would have liked to be from the first and to the last a regimental officer, with his men, in and out of the trenches;—as that was not possible, he did what he could, and came out of the War shaped and moulded by what the War had taught him, more of a man, and by so much the more fitted to become a ruler.

But King George was determined that the Prince should not fore-go that other, part of his own training, for which he had always been so grateful. His son must have his own knowledge of the Empire, must, if possible, exceed that knowledge. And so, even before the War was over, the King had announced that the Prince of Wales would, at the earliest possible opportunity, set out on the first of those great tours as the young Ambassador of Empire—and had seen how the Dominions welcomed the prospect.

The plans were not delayed. On the 5th of August 1919, the Prince of Wales left for Canada, still enough of a boy with his parents that he especially asked for the "good byes" to be said in the Queen's own room at the Palace, so that there might be no fuss in public, at the Station. Just before Christmas he returned, and was met by the King and Queen at Victoria, delighting those who saw the arrival by the spontaneous simplicity with which he hurried to kiss them, saying: "It's great to see you both again, and its ripping to be home."

At the dinner given in honor of his return, the Prince made a very good speech and it was evident to the keen and affectionate eyes of his father that the young man had broadened and widened his outlook, that travel had already begun to do its good work. It gave father and son more in common, if that was needed. They discussed places they had seen by the hour, the King extremely interested in all the modern improvements and modern ideas that were being exploited in the new young countries. He realized, too, and frequently said that it made the Prince's task more difficult than his own had been, since it was necessary now to know more, and on more widely different topics.

There was only a short interval before the beginning of the next tour. In March 1920 the Prince left England returning until October. The Canadian experiment had succeeded even beyond the King's expectations. The Prince and Canada had mutually loved and respected each other; indeed His Royal Highness has a ranch in the Dominion, goes there as often as he can on informal holidays, and has spent in that wide and spacious country probably some of the happiest days of his life.

Now, in Australia, a different point of view was needed; it was well that King George had passed down to his son not only his own love of travel, but his own adaptability in, perhaps, even a larger measure. Neither father nor son have ever apparently been at a loss what to say when the occasion demanded, and both recognised the varying personalities, as it were, of the widely separated Dominions and Commonwealths of the Empire.

The tour upon which the Prince embarked in 1921 held, perhaps, more difficulties than either of the others. For he was to go now to India—India with its age-long traditions, so widely set apart from the young Colonies, and an India, moreover, which, at that moment, was in the worst throes of its post-war disaffection.

Threats in India The position was not easy for any of the officials concerned, either those in authority in India, or those who accompanied and were responsible for the Prince's safety. There

were ugly threats, and, in some places, worse than threats, strikes and partial boycotts, the possibility of actual violence. The complete disregard of the Prince for the possibility of personal danger—an attitude which he had inherited from his father and grandfather—did not altogether lessen the difficulties, although, actually, it may have been the best way out of them.

Who can say, for instance, that the Prince of Wales did not act with the surest wisdom, when at Poona he insisted on going almost alone and quite unprotected, if evil had been intended, into the vast crowds of natives who thronged the race-course to welcome him. It gave those responsible for his welfare some very ugly moments of anxiety, but it roused the enthusiasm of a native population to a height which could never have been reached without that gesture of complete trust and fearlessness.

It was the same in other places all over India; doubtless the authorities and his suite heaved sighs of relief when the young man was safely out of the country, but to the inhabitants of India he has become someone glorified—the Son of the King-Emperor, who went amongst them fearlessly, and who showed himself, and smiled even upon the out-castes—a legend which will not easily be forgotten, and which played and will play a great part in the

unity of India with the Mother-country.

The first Imperial Tour was in 1919; the last was only interrupted at the end of 1928 by the illness of the King and the dramatically lightning return of the Prince from Africa. In between he has travelled through practically the whole of the British Empire, from the great capitals to the most remote outposts; he has seen and spoken with white and brown, black and yellow subjects of the King-Emperor, and confirmed and strengthened their allegiance to the Empire of his father—the Empire which will someday be his own.

He is probably the most popular personality in the world; to the charm of his grandfather he unites the wide humanity and sympathy of his father. But let those who affect to think that it is merely a question of exploiting a personality consider the work that each of these great tours represents, the number of people who must be interviewed, the oracles and his suite heaved sighs of relief when the young man was safely out of the country, but to the inhabitants of India he has become someone glorified—the Son of the King-Emperor, who went amongst them fearlessly, and who showed himself, and smiled even upon the out-castes—a legend which will not easily be forgotten, and which played and will play a great part in the

The people so lacking in perceptibility who persist in regarding the Prince of Wales as a mere irrespon-

sible boy should try to realize the work which he has done, and is still doing for the stability of the Empire for the solving of those post-war problems, which can only be smoothed out by the co-operation of the Dominions with Great Britain. That is where the special knowledge not only of circumstances and conditions, but of men. He saw the War for himself; he has seen over seas conditions for himself and from it all he has reached conclusions which he expressed in his own human and simple way, when speaking as recently as October 1929 at a meeting of the Post-war Brotherhood—that alliance of more than 20,000 members of all sorts and conditions which was founded soon after the Armistice.

"During the Great War we learnt a lot of lessons," said the Prince on this occasion, "and the most important one was that we should take very great care indeed that there should be no question or chance of another. And another lesson was the necessity and the amazing advantages to be gained out of comradeship and goodwill in a time of national crisis. If there was one thing which stood out in those terrible years, it was the amazing capacity of the people of Great Britain and of all the other countries that go to make up the British Empire, for sinking differences and

pulling together cheerfully and willingly. . . . Why should this great spirit of comradeship end with the War? Could it not be applied to post-war problems, social and industrial? When you founded this Brotherhood if you asked yourself these questions and the answer was most emphatically 'Yes'."

It will be noticed that the spirit of these words is precisely that which has filled the utterance of King George himself ever since the War; father and son alike, King and Prince, both urge the need of comradeship, of the sinking of social differences in the endeavor to help the work of the Empire. It is a spirit which speaks well for the future of that Empire, which gives that feeling of hope which only over-tire confidence in the men at the head of affairs can ever impart.

More than ever since his father's illness the Prince of Wales has become an institution. It was curiously symbolic that his swift return seemed to synchronise with a change for the better in the King's condition; that wave of joy and relief which his presence brought in the Palace to those who were nearest to him seemed to spread through the country, so that it was no figure of speech merely—that phrase heard on all sides: "I'm glad that the Prince is back!"

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