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THE FUTURE KING OF ENGLAND.

His Character and Tastes as Shown in His Relations With His Official Associates and His Personal Friends.

Although only an heir apparent, and forced to yield the *pas* to a younger brother and to three nephews, who have all attained the rank of full fledged monarchs, yet there is no royal personage in Europe who occupies the attention of the English speaking world to such a degree as does the Prince of Wales. No scion of modern royalty has been more frequently portrayed or more freely discussed, alike in print and in speech, than the future King of Great Britain and Emperor of India.

So great is the demand for details concerning the doings and sayings of "the prince" and his mode of life and surroundings, that many lights of journalism and literature have been unable to resist the temptation of making him the theme of extravagant stories, devoid of foundation, or at best based on mere hearsay. This is especially the case with regard to the scandals that have been laid at his door.

Those who know him best, and are acquainted with the ins and outs of London society, are aware that the sole basis of the charge against him in connection with Lady Mordaunt's divorce, was the fact that no one else was wont to pay her afternoon visits at the Alexandra Hotel in London. But the majority of people fail to remember that the laws of etiquette governing European courts and society provide that during a royal call, the door of the person thus honored shall be kept closed to all visitors of minor rank.

And should there be any disposition to criticize his attitude in the case of Sir William Gordon Cumming, of baccarat trial celebrity, it must be borne in mind that there was far more below the surface than was allowed to become known, and that the prince, whose conduct in the matter was indorsed by all those behind the scenes, had really no alternative open to him.

Yet the prince is no saint, and is the last person in the world to wish to be set up on a pinnacle as such. He is subject to exactly the same weaknesses, frailties, and errors of one kind and another as ordinary mortals, and gives way to them occasionally. That he does not do so more frequently is a subject for congratulation; for certainly no man living is exposed to greater temptations. His morals are neither better nor worse than those of the majority of his countrymen, and it is precisely this fact that endears him to them. The sympathy thus established between prince and people contrasts strongly with the unpopularity of his father, whose blameless behavior was generally regarded by the English as a reflection upon their own conduct, and led to his being denounced as a prig.

It is not therefore to any moral perfection that the Prince of Wales is indebted for the immense influence which he exercises not alone in his mother's dominions but throughout the world—an influence immeasurably greater than that of many a king or emperor. Nor yet is it due to superiority of education and intellect, the prince being only of average rank in these respects. Neither is it in any way attributable to the voice which, as heir to the British crown, he might reasonably be expected to enjoy in the administration of his country's government; for his mother's jealousy prevents him from taking any active part in the affairs of state. No: the explanation of the enormous influence that he commands is to be found in his tact. No other prince of the blood possesses this quality to such a superlative degree.

It is by the exercise of tact that the prince recently achieved for England, within the short space of three weeks, a victory in Russia which half a century of the most elaborate diplomacy and statecraft had failed to accomplish. It is by dint of tact that he brought about a reconciliation of the Emperor William with his widowed mother, the prince's sister, and dispelled that intense animosity toward England which characterized the outset of the young Kaiser's reign. To the same agency the British government is indebted for the smoothing over of many of its differences with France. So happy has Queen Victoria's eldest son shown himself in his dealings with this most sensitive and excitable nation, that he can boast of a popularity on the banks of the Seine superior to that of almost any

French statesman or politician.

But most of all has his tact been apparent in his management and direction of English society, which he rules with a rod of steel concealed in a sheath of velvet. He guides it as he lists, but solely by tact, experience, and *savoir faire*; and no prejudice, no preconceived ideas or theories, are permitted to stand in the light of his decrees. For instance, it is thanks to him, and to him alone, that all the ill feeling toward the Jewish race has disappeared, and that Hebrews—who in the early days of the Victorian era were not even admitted to the full rights and privileges of ordinary citizenship—are now to be found occupying seats in the House of Lords, on the bench of the Supreme Court of Judicature, and in the very front rank of the most smart, aristocratic, and exclusive circles of society.

It is thanks to the prince too, in great degree, that hard drinking and coarseness of language have gone out of fashion. When he was a boy, it was considered bad form for a gentleman to retire to rest otherwise than intoxicated, while almost every phrase spoken was embellished with appalling blasphemy. And if a higher tone of morality and a greater sense of propriety now prevail than in the first half of the present century, it is in great measure due to the unobtrusive but very excellent care that the prince takes to keep out of society those who have forfeited their right to remain within its pale. He is as ready as any other votary of pleasure to meet them in the sphere to which they have descended, and to treat them, there, with kindness and consideration. But he will not tolerate their presence in houses that are respectable. He cannot bear to see a woman of questionable antecedents consorting with ladies of unblemished reputation or with innocent young girls, and more than once have I known him to remark to a hostess, "My dear, your husband should see that you drop so-and-so's name from your visiting list," although the prince had possibly dined with the fair sinner on the evening before, and was engaged to sup there on the following night.

Probably the most striking illustration of the Prince of Wales' tact is to be found in the absolute ignorance which prevails, even among his most intimate friends and associates, concerning his political opinions. He has always manifested just as much consideration and regard for Mr. Gladstone as for Lord Salisbury. And if Lord Roseberry, as an old friend of His Royal Highness, and as a particular favorite of the princess, is a frequent visitor at Sandringham, why, so too is Mr. Arthur Balfour. He does not incline to the Tories more than he does to the Liberals, and neither can claim him as a partisan, although the late Mr. Charles Stewart Parnell was often wont to insist that with regard to Irish affairs the prince was strongly in favor of Home Rule. Mr. Chauncey M. Depew has even, I believe, placed on record his opinion, based on chats at Homburg with the British heir apparent, that the latter's views on the subject of Ireland actually border on downright Fenianism. But then, too, the prince has been charged with a leaning towards socialism, partly in consequence of his expression of warm sympathy for the sufferings of the toiling and starving masses, and partly because of his habit of spending a few hours, each time he passes through Marseilles to Nice, Cannes, or Mentone, with his old French teacher, who is one of the socialist members of the great southern seaport of France.

The only time when I myself have heard him pronounce himself strongly on any question relating to British policy was in 1878, when he bitterly denounced the Cyprus Convention, concluded by Lords Beaconsfield and Salisbury, as a breach of International good faith, and as calculated needlessly to embroil England's relations with France. But this does not imply that he is more Liberal than Conservative, any more than his warm friendship and intimate relations with Gambetta could be taken to mean that he preferred a republican regime in France to that of Napoleon III. at whose palaces of the Tuileries and St. Cloud he used to feel more at home than at Windsor or Osborne.

Only those who are acquainted with the violence of passions in English politics and can recall the altogether unconstitutional partisanship of the various sons of George III, can realize the degree of tact which the prince must have displayed, throughout the thirty-two years that have elapsed since his marriage, to keep his countrymen in such an absolute state of ignorance concerning his political views.

Perhaps the only particular in which the prince does not display his customary tact and *savoir faire* is in the selection of his friends and associates. Some of these, at any rate, are chosen without regard to their birth, breeding or merit, but solely because they have manifested a special faculty for providing him with entertainment. He is the most easily bored man under the sun—a perfect martyr to ennui; and any one like the late Sir James McKenzie, surnamed "the Benefactor," who started in life as a hatter, or Mr. Reuben Sassoon, the Parsee, who possesses the means of dispelling that ennui, at once becomes *persona gratissima* at Marlborough House and Sandringham. Provided people succeed in amusing him, he remains indifferent to their antecedents, their principles and character, and it is owing to

this that he is occasionally seen in the company of persons who are in every sense of the word unworthy to associate with him. With the prince the old adage of "Tell me whom you frequent, and I will tell you what you are," does not apply. Were one to judge Albert Edward by his friends and acquaintances, one would do him the greatest kind of an injustice. Nor is it possible very severely to blame His Royal Highness in the matter. For who of us is there who does not find more entertainment and amusement in the society of a clever and witty knave than in that of an eminently respectable and high principled bore?

Were the prince to drop these people when the novelty has worn off, and their resources for providing amusement are exhausted, there would not be much reason to deplore His Royal Highness' lack of eclecticism in the choice of his associates. He possesses, however, in a very marked degree that valuable quality, loyalty to his friends. No man is more true to his chums and associates than the future King of England. Just as he never fails to remember a face or a service, so in the same way does he never forget a friend, unless the latter has forfeited his consideration and regard by some act of meanness or dishonor.

I almost hesitate, after writing this, to mention the names of the prince's intimate friends and habitual associates, and beg my readers to believe that I have eliminated those to whom exception might be taken. The list comprises Lord Carrington, Sir Frederick Johnstone, Lord Londonderry, Lord Lonsdale, the Duke of Abercorn, Lord Hastings, Sir Allan Young, Mr. Christopher Sykes, Lord Rosebery, Lord and Lady Warwick, Mr. Alfred Rothschild, Baron Hirsch, Sir Henry Calcraft, the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, Lord and Lady Cadogan, and last but not least, the American born Duchess of Manchester, who, with her children, is a frequent and welcome guest at Sandringham.

In the first line, however, among the prince's associates are his equerries, his lords and his gentlemen in waiting, who are in constant attendance upon him. Previous to Queen Victoria's reign, royal personages were accustomed to go about unescorted. Indeed, her predecessors, old King William IV, and her other uncle, George IV, were in the habit of strolling quite alone in the neighborhood of Piccadilly and St. James'. Shortly after Her Majesty's marriage, however, her good looking young husband was made the object of marked and offensive demonstrations of admiration by certain female "cranks." It was brought to Victoria's ears, whether with justice or not I am unable to say, that projects existed to inveigle the prince's consort into feminine entanglements which need not be particularized. With the intention of preserving him from dangers of this kind, and for the purpose of avoiding the slightest pretext for scandalous gossip, the queen arranged that the prince should never set his foot outside the palace precincts unless attended by one or more gentlemen in waiting. The practice has been followed by all of her sons, and also by many foreign royalties related to the British court, including the Emperor of Germany, whose father and grandfather I used often to meet walking about the streets of Berlin or Potsdam unaccompanied; while King Christian of Denmark may still be seen, almost daily on the thoroughfares of Copenhagen, unescorted save by his two dogs.

(Continued on page 6.)

The King of D. C.

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