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The Crown and the people

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The man who might be on the throne of England today has been moved, by the Coronation of his niece, Elizabeth II, to ponder the elements of contrast in the reigns of which he has personal recollections and to reflect upon the passing of time ; to examine the reasons for the hold that the monarchy has upon the affection and imagination of English-speaking people today. Here is an intensely personal glimpse into history—a new insight into the relationship of the crown and the people.

When the Duke of Windsor was young there were twenty monarchies on the Continent of Europe ; today there are six. Friends and relatives of the English royal family have lost their crowns and in some cases their lives in the years since the turn of the century. But the vigor of the English crown, and the very special regard in which it is held are due to a number of influences which worked to strengthen it in the years when other crowns were weakened and finally destroyed. Many of those influences were entirely personal.

THE CROWN AND THE PEOPLE

1902-1953

Also by the Duke of Windsor

A KING'S STORY



Queen Elizabeth II returns to Buckingham Palace after her Coronation, wearing the Crown of State and bearing the Orb and Sceptre

*The Crown
and the People
1902—1953*

H. R. H.
THE DUKE OF
WINDSOR

K. G.
EDWARD VIII

*with frontispiece and sixteen
pages of illustrations*

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I have undertaken to put down certain thoughts of mine evoked by the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, my niece. I agreed to do so only because my years of service in furthering the interests of the British Empire would seem to qualify me to write on this subject more authoritatively than most.

To be sure, the act of being crowned was one condition of kingship which I, for reasons that by now must be fairly well known, never attained during my brief reign. Nevertheless for a quarter of a century I was separated only by a single heartbeat from the throne.

I do not propose to recount here the ceremonial details of the Coronation service itself, that magnificent ritual of Church and State going back through a thousand years of British history, which has for its object the consecration of the sovereign in the service of his or her people. These matters I leave to others.

Here, my purpose is simply to record my recollections of two earlier Coronations that I attended at Westminster Abbey and to set forth, on the basis of my own experience, certain observations concerning the functions and influence of the British Crown in the twentieth century.

Edward

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Queen Elizabeth II returns to Buckingham Palace after her Coronation, wearing the Crown of State and bearing the Orb and Sceptre
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King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra in their Coronation robes
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The crowd outside Buckingham Palace awaiting news of King Edward's illness, 25th June 1902, when his Coronation had to be postponed
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St. James's Street decorated for the Coronation of King Edward VII
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King Edward VII is crowned, 9th August 1902
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Canada Arch erected in London to celebrate the Coronation of King Edward VII
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The Coronation Procession of King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra passing across the Horse Guards Parade
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King George V and Queen Mary in their Coronation robes
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King George V in France, 1917. He is with the Duke of Windsor, then Prince of Wales, examining a gas bomb at the Gas School, Helfaut
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King George V at the microphone at Sandringham
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King George V and Queen Mary driving along the Strand on their way to St. Paul's for the Silver Jubilee Service, May 1935
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The Duke of Windsor, then King Edward VIII, leaving Westminster after the opening of Parliament, 3rd November 1936
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King George VI and Queen Elizabeth in their Coronation robes, with Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret, 12th May 1937
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King George VI receiving homage from the Earl of Shrewsbury at his Coronation
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King George VI leaving Westminster Abbey after his Coronation carrying the Orb and Sceptre
The Times

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A general view of the supreme moment of crowning as the Archbishop of Canterbury places St. Edward's Crown upon the head of Queen Elizabeth II *Fox Photos Ltd*

Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh on the balcony of Buckingham Palace with their two children Prince Charles and Princess Anne after the return from Westminster Abbey *Sport and General Press Agency Ltd*

London on Coronation night. Immense crowds throng the floodlit Mall *Fox Photos Ltd*

IN COMPARING THE CIRCUMSTANCES of the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II with the two that I witnessed, I am struck by the fact that while the British monarchy has remained firm, the dynasties of continental Europe have meanwhile been all but decimated.

Before the first world war my family was constantly receiving and returning visits of what we called "the foreign relations"—Queen Victoria's host of descendants who sprinkled the ruling houses of Europe. As a boy I saw Kaiser Wilhelm II, my father's first cousin, at a shooting party at Sandringham, an occasion also memorable to me for my first ride in a horseless carriage. I remember the visit of Czar Nicholas II with his family to Cowes only eight years before this unfortunate Emperor, another of my father's first cousins, was murdered by the Bolsheviks. The dashing Alfonso XIII of Spain, who married one of my father's first cousins, often came to Britain to shoot or play polo. My parents, as Prince and Princess of Wales, had in fact ridden in Alfonso's wedding procession in Madrid in 1906 when an anarchist's bomb burst under the King's coach, killing many people but sparing him and his British bride. And the plump and jovial King

Carlos of Portugal, who in 1908 met an untimely end from an assassin's bullet, was also during my childhood a guest at Sandringham. While I was an undergraduate at Oxford I was called to Windsor Castle by my father when he entertained the elegant Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir apparent of the Austro-Hungarian Empire—likewise to meet his fate by an assassin's bomb at Sarajevo in 1914.

The monarchies personified by these rulers and many others have all vanished. The Braganza throne of Portugal was the first to go—by revolution—in 1910, a few months after my father's accession. Young King Manuel, Carlos's surviving son, fled his palace, taking refuge in Gibraltar. Against the advice of his foreign minister, who was anxious to range British policy on the side of the new Portuguese Republic, my father sent his royal yacht, the *Victoria and Albert*, to bring the exiled monarch to the safety of Great Britain. The cataclysm of World War I accounted for the house of Hohenzollern and the three minor German Kingdoms, together with the Hapsburgs in Austria, the Romanovs in Russia and the Montenegrin throne.

Midway between the two world wars the proud Spanish Bourbons fell by revolution in 1931. So swiftly, that an invitation to me from King Alfonso to break a journey back from South America and spend Easter with him in Seville was overtaken by his abdication; instead of my being his guest at the Alcazar I joined him in an hotel at Fontainebleau whither he had fled, baffled by the nature of the events which had brought him down, but still unbroken in spirit.

Then the social upheaval produced by the Second World War took toll of four more of the surviving European monarchies. The Soviet occupation of the Balkans was followed by the exile of the boy kings of Rumania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. And finally, by plebiscite in 1946, the house of Savoy in Italy gave way to a republic. Whereas in my youth twenty monarchies held sway on the Continent of Europe, today only six remain—those of Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Holland, Belgium and Greece.

That the people of the United Kingdom and the British Commonwealth should attach a profound meaning to the crowning of their rulers is, of course, understandable. It is cause for pride with them that their own monarchy, an institution which goes back in history more than a thousand years, has survived more than ten centuries with undiminished prestige and dignity while other thrones have disappeared. But what impressed me particularly about the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, my niece, was the extraordinary interest it excited throughout the world and especially in America. In my curiosity I have discussed this phenomenon with my American friends and I have concluded that two reasons primarily account for it.

The first struck me as somewhat macabre. It is that in this present-day world of continuing strain and tension, with Britain itself not yet recovered from the aftermath of war and the impact of drastic experimentation in Statism, some in America seem to feel that my niece's Coronation may well be the last. I, for one, do not subscribe to so gloomy a foreboding.

If the British monarchy can be said to have demonstrated one outstanding quality, it has been its capacity to adapt itself to social change. That faculty of self-adaptation has perhaps never been better demonstrated than in the turmoil of these post-war years, and today the Royal Family holds as firm a place as ever in the affections of the British people.

The other reason partakes of the familiar substance of a fairy tale. A young Queen—only twenty-seven—ascends a great throne. In the felicitous phrase of an American journal, there has appeared “a fresh young blossom on roots that had weathered many a season of wintry doubt.”

Not since Queen Victoria, who was only eighteen when she came to the throne in 1837, has Britain had so young a monarch. Victoria lived to the age of eighty-one. Her reign, the longest in British annals, lasted into the second year of the twentieth century. Combined with the mature age of her two immediate successors, it had the effect of giving the monarchy a middle-aged, even elderly aura. My grandfather was fifty-nine at his accession and lived to be sixty-eight. My father was forty-four when his turn came and had passed his seventieth year when he died in 1936. I was forty-one when the succession fell to me, and my brother Bertie was three days short of that age when he took my place. It is not surprising, therefore, that the advent of this girl, only seven years older at the time of her accession than was Queen Victoria and precisely the same age as was the great “Virgin Queen” whose name she bears, should have fired the imagination of America where youth is

almost idealized, and that in her own kingdom and the British Commonwealth it should be taken as a happy augury to those familiar with the famous eras presided over by those two sovereign ladies.

I well remember the circumstances of my niece's birth. The year was 1926. It was spring and I was in Biarritz recuperating from an operation. On April 21st there came to me from my brother Bertie, then Duke of York, a telegram announcing happily the birth in London of his first child, a daughter, Elizabeth. My parents were at Windsor Castle. They hurried immediately to the Yorks' house in Bruton Street, to welcome their first grandchild. They were overjoyed and wrote me all about the baby. But their joy over this happy family event was almost immediately clouded by a grave national crisis.

Ten days after the birth of this future queen the coal miners of Britain struck. Shortly afterwards the Trades Union Congress called a nation-wide strike in sympathy with the miners, thereby paralyzing the whole country. The General Strike was over by the time she was three weeks old. Still, it was an ominous birthright for a royal Princess destined to reign twenty-six years later over a people still bearing the scars of a social conflict that may not yet have run its course.

To a certain extent the consequences of that uneasy heritage are now visible in the affairs of the great Commonwealth over which she has been called upon to reign. While she has had a happy youth she has lived through a period of grave turmoil and trouble. Britain, after all her sacrifices in two great struggles

on behalf of the free world, has passed from the summit of power. The relationship of the Mother Country with her Dominions has undergone profound change, and even the once proud name of Empire is no longer used. A large part of the vast subcontinent of India over which Elizabeth II's great-great-grandmother was proclaimed Empress only seventy-six years ago, and where her grandfather held a great durbar in Delhi in celebration of his Coronation, has now become a republic. The India of Prime Minister Nehru recognizes the Queen of England only as its "first citizen." In Malaya, in East Africa, in the Middle East—there is hardly a place where a once paramount British power is not hard pressed by the insatiable drives of nationalism and Communism, to say nothing of the burden laid upon Britain herself as a partner of the Western Powers in the struggle against Soviet aggression.

The spate of commentary about the preparations for my niece's Coronation caused me to ponder certain elements of contrast which show the passing of time.

I was rather amused by the controversy as to whether television equipment should be permitted inside the Abbey. It is interesting to note in this connection that not until my father's Coronation, in 1911, was photography allowed to be used as a means of recording the service itself and I imagine there must have ensued the same kind of solemn discussion over the propriety of introducing such an innovation.

I was also fascinated by accounts in the British press of the sharp exchange between the Marquess of

Bath, who was determined to ride to the Coronation in his ancient family coach and six, and the Metropolitan Police who were equally determined that this outmoded vehicle should not clutter up their traffic and parking arrangements. However, at my grandfather's Coronation in 1902 more than one noble Lord made history—and drew upon himself the dirty looks of his fellow-peers—by arriving at the Abbey in a spluttering motor car.

Among the survivors of long-past British military campaigns who were present in the Abbey was my Uncle Alge, the Earl of Athlone, who fought with the cavalry in the Boer War. It is sobering to reflect that that war is now further removed in time from my niece's Coronation than was the Crimean War from my grandfather's.

Other changes of even deeper significance have no doubt been visible. While the outward magnificence of this Coronation will remain, the old foundations of opulence and privilege upon which the ceremony rested in my grandfather's and my father's time have been undermined. Testifying to the reduced circumstances of many of the aristocracy and officialdom in general, is the concession implicit in a recent Court regulation permitting the wearing of robes trimmed, not with the traditional ermine, but with rabbit skins.

But even more revealing of the changed atmosphere in which this ancient ceremony took place is a recent statement by a former Socialist Minister of the Crown. While professing "the highest respect for the young Queen," he described the aristocracy as "doomed and almost damned." He therefore pro-

posed that instead of leaving with the hereditary nobles the immemorial right to carry at the Coronation service the swords, the spurs, the gloves, the canopy and all the other articles of regalia that symbolize the attributes of kingship, the Queen should have appointed her attendants from among the miners, the scientists, the farmers, the steel workers. "These," he says, "are the salt of the earth."

The British aristocracy has certainly been damned by its class enemies but I, in common with many of my compatriots, would hate to believe that it was doomed. Fortunately it, too, includes its essential proportion of the salt of the earth. For centuries it has provided Britain with leaders in politics and war. But while its prestige remains high there can be no question but that its power and influence have been diminished. In fact the aristocracy, along with the once politically powerful landed gentry, is being rapidly impoverished by a confiscatory taxation. The paradox of the Crown's retaining its high position while the resources of the surrounding hereditary system upon which it rests are being steadily depleted has had the effect of leaving the monarchy more and more isolated.

Right up to the outbreak of the last war the hereditary landed families, ennobled or not as the case may be, still retained in great part the means of upholding the traditional way of life of their ancestors. True, some of the oldest families had been bankrupted during the depression after the first great war and their estates had passed into the possession of what they probably would have called "the new rich." Scarcely

shaken by these premonitory casualties, a sumptuous life marked by splendid entertainments and sport continued to revolve, as in the past, around the country seats of these old families, their "Palaces," their "Castles," their "Abbeys," their "Halls" and their "Manor Houses." There was never a lack of retainers in livery to maintain the style associated with each estate; to keep up the gardens and the forests, to run the stables and garages, to take care of the great rooms filled with art treasures and attend to the wants of the guests.

As Prince of Wales I often stayed with the squires of many of these places—with the Duke of Marlborough at Blenheim Palace, the Duke of Sutherland at Dunrobin Castle, the Duke of Portland at Welbeck Abbey, the Earl of Dudley at Himley Hall, Earl Beauchamp at Madresfield Court, Lord Brownlow at Belton Park, and the Duke of Beaufort at Badminton House. By tradition this landed aristocracy provides both a background and a setting for the monarchy. In a sense they are complementary one of the other. From the ranks of the aristocracy come the Great Officers of State, the Lord Steward, the Master of the Horse, the Lord Chamberlain and until recently most of the courtiers who serve the sovereign in the household. In their ancestral homes the sovereign could always expect to be royally entertained.

How different the picture is now! Many of the stately homes of Britain have passed under the auctioneer's hammer or been taken over by the National Trust. In many others the squire and his family have retreated perhaps to one of the wings, or to the

housekeeper's old quarters, the lodgekeeper's or the gardener's cottage, or in more fortunate circumstances to the dower house. What is left of the shooting has in most cases been let. The retainers—those who have not been pensioned off—have scattered to the factories and farms.

The decline in the fortunes of the landed gentry has tended to leave the monarch and his court more or less marooned. So remorselessly has this process continued that the last time I saw my brother Bertie at Buckingham Palace he remarked almost despairingly: "If this kind of thing goes on at its present rate I may one day find myself in the unenviable position of being the last private landowner in the country."

In the nature of things every sovereign inevitably becomes the symbol of the era spanned by his or her reign. However, this is not to say that, under a constitution wherein a monarch rules but does not govern, the crown necessarily dominates the course of events; that is the prerogative of Parliament. Nevertheless, because of his or her exalted position it is possible for a monarch, by the influence of example and personality, to impart a character and colouring to an era in a manner that lies quite outside the day-to-day functions of government.

Now, therefore, that my niece has entered upon the stage of history, she knows full well that the manner in which she chooses to exert her queenly influence, indeed the very nature of her responses, will be compared with the actions of her predecessors. With this thought in mind I propose now to describe the two Coronation services that I have attended in

Westminster Abbey—that of my grandfather Edward VII in 1902, and that of my father George V in 1911, and to show how these two Kings, as well as my brother George VI, moulded and interpreted the monarchy each in his own way.

I was eight years old in June, 1902, when my grandfather was to be crowned. Queen Victoria had died seventeen months before. The Peace of Vereeniging, ending the Boer War, had been signed in May of that year. The date set for the Coronation was June twenty-sixth.

Although my father had by then become Prince of Wales my family were still living at York House, St. James's Palace. That spring my brother Bertie and I had acquired a tutor, Henry Peter Hansell, who took advantage of the bustle and stir in London to try to teach us something of the religious and historical aspects of the Coronation. He took us to the Tower of London to see the crown jewels and other articles of regalia that my grandparents would wear during the service, and to Westminster Abbey to see the 600-years-old Coronation chair which Edward I had had built and on which all British sovereigns, with the solitary exception of Mary Tudor, have been crowned. In a recess below the seat of this chair is housed the famous Stone of Destiny which Edward I removed from the Abbey of Scone in Scotland. According to legend, the stone served as a pillow for the patriarch Jacob when he dreamed of a ladder reaching to heaven. Even that vigorous regicide, Oliver Cromwell, used this same chair when he was installed as Lord Protector.

Mr. Hansell's historical discourses held our attention up to a point, but Bertie and I were much more interested in all the hammering and other activities in connection with the preparation for the great event. Along the processional route we watched hundreds of carpenters erecting vast wooden stands, while other workmen festooned the streets with bright bunting, painted emblems and soaring arches. In the course of these excursions with Mr. Hansell we saw practice parades for troops, and often we would pass a string of magnificent state coaches being given a trial outing. The parks of London had been transformed into tented camps for detachments of Colonial troops that had come to Great Britain from all parts of the British Empire. I remember being taken to one given over entirely to Indian soldiers, and at that tender age being scared of the bearded Sikhs from the Punjab and the tough Ghurkas from Nepal.

However, what I remember most vividly was the consternation caused by the sudden illness of my grandfather on the eve of the Coronation itself. The princes and representatives of all the foreign states had in fact gathered in London when a bulletin from the palace announced that the King had perityphlitis—what is now known as appendicitis—and had undergone an emergency operation. In consequence the Coronation had to be postponed at the last hour. I well recall how in the midst of their anxiety my parents were called upon to entertain and placate the visiting potentates, and to represent the King at functions that could not be cancelled.

The Coronation eventually took place on August 9th, and because of the postponement was somewhat of an anti-climax. By that time the visiting royalties had long since departed to their respective countries, and to re-assemble them all would not have been practicable. Moreover, inasmuch as the King had not fully recovered his strength, the long Coronation service was somewhat curtailed. Bertie and I were taken by Mr. Hansell to the Abbey in a carriage. Finch, our valet, rode on the box seat, very handsome in the royal red livery. As we were too young to be included in any of the state processions we were slipped through a back entrance into the royal box reserved for the Princesses, to the right of the altar.

In front of the box was a dais on which stood the two ornate Chairs of Estate to be used by my grandparents for the first part of the ceremony. My father took his place in front of the peers of the realm, between the Duke of Cambridge and the Duke of Connaught, both distinguished royal soldiers. The Duke of Cambridge, my mother's uncle George, who was then 83, had commanded a Guards Brigade in the Crimean War. The Duke of Connaught, my grandfather's youngest living brother Arthur, had led another Guards Brigade in Egypt against Arabi Pasha in 1882, in the punitive campaign that ushered in the long period of British occupation of that country.

After a lapse of more than fifty years many incidents of this undeniably magnificent event have unfortunately faded from my memory; and in any case the mind of an eight-year-old boy was hardly capable of taking it all in. Years later, Finch used to tell us

how at a tense moment in the ceremony one of my great-aunts dropped her book programme over the side of the box. It fell with a clatter into a large gold cup below, evoking among us children a merriment which my mother suppressed with a stern glance.

The Coronation service lasted almost three hours—an interminable time for small boys to be expected to keep still. Perhaps it was for that reason I have no clear recollection of my grandfather actually being crowned. Afterwards I was to hear my father describe how the octogenarian Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Frederick Temple, after dropping on his knee to do homage, was so enfeebled by age and overcome by emotion that he could not rise; of how the King helped him to his feet and of how the old Primate at the conclusion of the service collapsed entirely, bewailing to his fellow prelates, “It’s not my head; it’s my legs.”

My parents had foresightedly arranged for Mr. Hansell and Finch to be posted nearby in the background as a precaution against our becoming too unruly. Once I looked up and noticed Mr. Hansell with his eyes closed and his lips moving as in prayer. Finch told me afterwards that he was convinced our tutor was praying not for the King but that the Archbishop would last through the service.

After the placing of the crown on the King’s head, the most impressive incident in the Coronation service is the act of homage of the heir apparent when he is of age to render it. In a moment of hush my mother bent down to whisper to us, “Now Papa will do homage to Grandpapa.”

With that the intricate and tedious ceremony took on for us a personal meaning. We watched as my father, in his crimson robes, advanced up the steps of the throne to kneel there in filial humility. After reciting the Oath of Fealty he rose to his feet, touched the King's crown and kissed him upon the cheek. My grandfather was moved to embrace him in a sudden spontaneous gesture which lifted the ritual out of formality. When, nine years later, it came my turn as Prince of Wales to render homage to my father as monarch, I was to experience myself the emotions he must have felt on this occasion.

Because my grandfather was a genial and ample man, with a liking for people and a cosmopolitan taste for good living, his reign is chiefly remembered for its gaiety and exuberance. But what is not so well known is that Edward VII entered upon his kingly responsibilities in a mood of despondency growing out of the ambiguity of his position. He was in his sixtieth year—an age when most men are thinking of retiring; his life had been passed under the shadow of the tremendous figure of his mother, Queen Victoria. To the end she was determined to bear her burden alone, and in consequence there fell to him during his most vigorous years only the lesser crumbs of official duties.

It is impossible in the context of present-day life and politics to convey an adequate impression of the sway exercised by Victoria as a constitutional monarch in a democratic society. Her six decades on the throne had given her an almost unequalled store of knowledge of constitutional matters. Her blood relationship

with many of the reigning houses of Europe imparted to her views of foreign affairs a personal insight and understanding that few dared challenge. Victoria had dealt with no less than ten different prime ministers, from Lord Melbourne to Lord Salisbury, with Mr. Disraeli and Mr. Gladstone in between. Even the great and forceful Liberal leader, Gladstone, approached her presence with caution and often left, if not empty handed, at least something less than victorious. By the end of her reign the great Queen had become in the eyes of her subjects something more than their sovereign; she had come to personify Great Britain itself. Given such a formidable predecessor her son may well have felt that his turn, when at last it came, had arrived too late.

As matters turned out, my grandfather's estimate of his own ability proved over-modest. In many respects his reign was a brilliant one. With an intuitive understanding of what the British people expected of their Royal Family he restored to the State ceremonial the splendour and precision it had lost during his mother's widowed retirement.

Whereas Victoria had remained a withdrawn—almost mysterious—figure, seldom seen in London, preferring instead the seclusion of Windsor Castle, of Osborne in the Isle of Wight, and of Balmoral in the Highlands of Scotland, and rarely venturing beyond the confines of her royal estates, my grandfather undertook to bring the monarchy back into public view. He reopened Buckingham Palace on a grand scale for state and social entertainment. He made a point of opening Parliament in person at the begin-

ning of each new session, a practice that Victoria had allowed to lapse. He was often seen driving around the streets of London, and his frequent appearances at Newmarket, Epsom, Ascot, Doncaster and the other more important race meetings were always signals for a popular demonstration. In this sense King Edward made the monarchy more accessible.

My grandfather's cosmopolitan interests and his intimate acquaintance with continental Europe and its personages led him to take more than a sovereign's normal interest in diplomacy. While Queen Victoria's sympathies had been distinctly Germanophile, partly out of affection for the memory of her beloved husband Albert, the Prince Consort, King Edward's lay more with the French—and not merely because of his love of Paris. To a certain extent my grandfather's suspicions of Germany were coloured by personal prejudice. His wife, Queen Alexandra, had been born a Danish Princess. She never forgave what she used to call "Bismarck & Co." for robbing her father, Christian IX, of the Danish duchies of Schleswig-Holstein and Lauenburg and dispossessing her brother-in-law, the Duke of Cumberland, of the kingdom of Hanover that would have fallen to him. But my grandfather's antipathy towards Germany was also influenced by more practical considerations; the "sabre rattling" of Prussia threatening the peace of Europe, caused him to look with increasing disfavour upon the struttings of his nephew Kaiser Wilhelm II. The Franco-British Entente Cordiale of 1904 which ended Britain's long isolation from Continental entanglements came about in no small

degree by reason of King Edward's personal prestige and influence.

Yet even as King Edward moulded the monarchy in reflection of his many-sided personality, there was much at home to worry and perplex him. The fortunes of the Conservative Party, which had been in slow decline, were finally shattered in 1906 by the spectacular victory of the Liberals, that brought to power brilliant and audacious politicians.

Among them was a young Welsh lawyer, David Lloyd George, who earlier had shocked British Conservative opinion by his pro-Boer sentiments and who now incensed the hereditary class by his outspoken attacks on privilege.

Towards the end of King Edward's reign Lloyd George became Chancellor of the Exchequer. His revolutionary "People's Budget" of 1909, proposing higher taxes and other financial measures on a scale many then considered confiscatory, precipitated the political crisis that darkened the last days of my grandfather's life and clouded the first days of my father's reign.

The House of Lords being preponderantly Conservative rejected the "People's Budget" out of hand as being revolutionary in nature. That action at once brought the Lords and the Commons into violent collision. The Liberals, under Mr. Herbert H. Asquith, decided to carry the issue to the country. In a general election in January, 1910, a few months before my grandfather died, they were returned to power. Asquith now moved to erase the opposition of the Lords by introducing the so-called "Parliament Bill,"



King Edward VII is crowned, 9th August 1902

Canada Arch erected in London to celebrate the Coronation of King Edward VII





The Coronation Procession of King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra passing across the Horse Guards Parade



The Coronation Procession of King George V and Queen Mary
coming up Whitehall



Edward, Duke of Windsor,
as Prince of Wales, in the
robes of the Most Noble
Order of the Garter, at
the Coronation of King
George V



King George V in France,
1917. He is with the Duke
of Windsor, then Prince
of Wales, examining a gas
bomb at the Gas School,
Helfaut



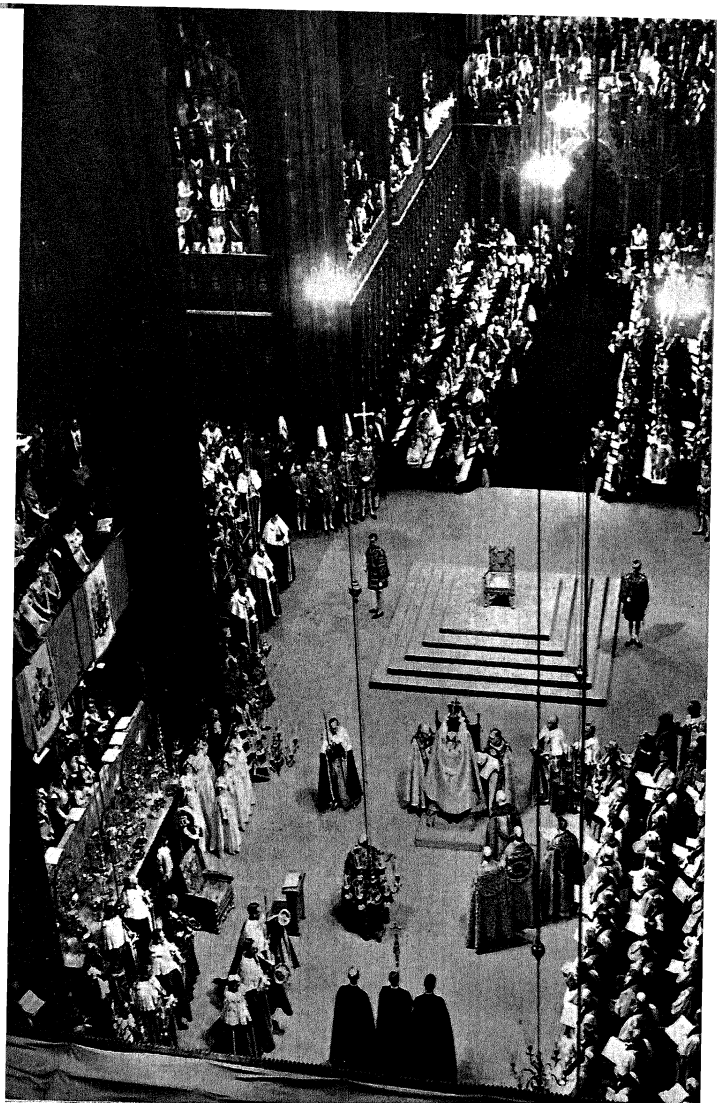
King George V at the microphone at Sandringham

King George V and Queen Mary driving along the Strand on their way to St. Paul's for the Silver Jubilee Service, May 1935





The Duke of Windsor, then King Edward VIII, leaving Westminster after the opening of Parliament, 3rd November 1936

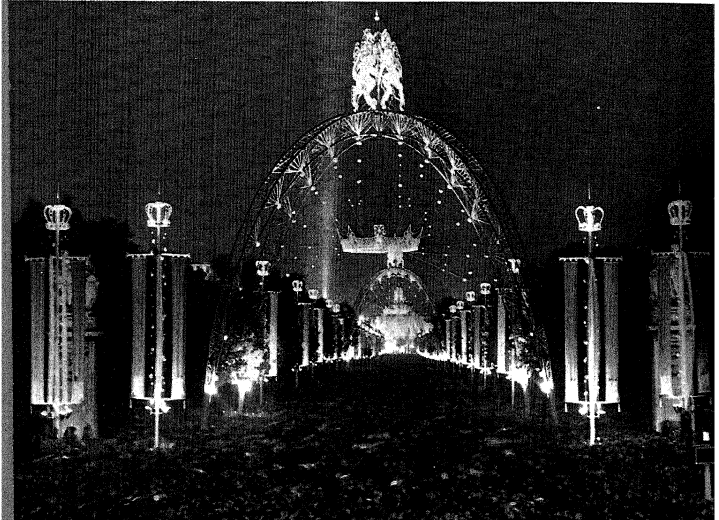


A general view of the supreme moment of crowning as the Archbishop of Canterbury places St. Edward's Crown upon the head of Queen Elizabeth II



Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh on the balcony of Buckingham Palace with their two children Prince Charles and Princess Anne after the return from Westminster Abbey

London on Coronation night. Immense crowds through the floodlit Mall



which would have abolished the veto power of the hereditary house over money bills and other popular legislation. To ensure the passage of this bill he proposed to extract from the King a promise "to pack," in the American phrase, the Upper House by creating enough Liberal peers—even as many as five hundred at one stroke—to swamp the Conservatives.

My grandfather was at once placed in an extremely difficult quandary. Constitutionally he could not oppose his prime minister without appearing to flout the will of the people; at the same time he recognized that a creation of peers on a mass production scale would debase the peerage and make a mockery of the House of Lords. He was still pondering this dilemma when death overtook him at Buckingham Palace, and this issue, which by now had inflamed public passions, became my father's to resolve.

Against his better instincts and, as many authorities contend, against strict constitutional practice, my father was persuaded to give a secret pledge that in the event of the Liberal Government's being returned in another general election scheduled for December of that same year, he would do as Asquith wished. The Liberals won again by a narrow margin. The Bill, reintroduced into Parliament, was again blocked by the Lords, the controversy roared on through the rest of that winter and into the spring and summer, with only a brief pause for a political truce to quiet the air during my father's Coronation.

The violent injection of the throne into party politics, combined with his own misgivings over the pledge he had so reluctantly given, weighed heavily

on my father. He was often to refer to it later as one of the most distressing experiences of his entire life. In the end, however, the House of Lords capitulated; the need of my father's redeeming his pledge disappeared. But meanwhile the constitutional crisis provided a sombre background for his Coronation.

In December, 1910, my family had moved into Buckingham Palace. I was still a naval cadet at Dartmouth. In the normal course of events I should have passed the final Dartmouth examinations in the spring and left on a six-months' cruise to North America and the West Indies with my term-mates. However, my father decided that I was old enough to play my part as Prince of Wales at his Coronation; I was forced to forgo the cruise and break my service in the Royal Navy. This was the first serious disappointment in my life.

I was now rising seventeen and better able to understand the significance of the Coronation ceremony. Twelve days before, I had been invested at Windsor with the Order of the Garter, one of the oldest orders of chivalry. My father conferred this honour upon me so that I might be suitably attired at his Coronation. Being still a minor, and not entitled to take my seat in the House of Lords, I could not yet wear peer's robes. However, on my becoming a Knight of the Garter I could now wear the blue robe of the Order.

The last days before the Coronation were unusually crowded. My parents and their guests had spent the Ascot race-week at Windsor Castle. My sister Mary—who was then about fourteen—my brother George, and I, had been sent with a tutor and

governess to Frogmore nearby. My diary entries for that period reflect something of the atmosphere of preparation as the great event drew near.

Tuesday, April 4, 1911. Buckingham Palace, London.

. . . At dinner Papa gave me much information for the summer, telling me amongst other things what I should wear at the Coronation. . . .

Friday, April 7, 1911.

. . . A man came to try on the Garter dress and robes that Papa has given me. There are going to be made some alterations, as it does not fit well in parts. I think it is a beautiful dress, and will look very well when ready. It is so lucky that Papa can let me have his dress, as another would be expensive and very hard to get.

Tuesday, April 11, 1911.

After lunch, the jeweller from Garrard came to try on the diamond Garter that Uncle George left me. It is far too large and he will have to alter the whole thing. . . .

Tuesday, June 6, 1911.

I dined alone with Mama at 8.30 and she told me a lot of useful and interesting things. . . . She told me that Papa had arranged that Lord Revelstoke should carry my coronet at the Coronation. He is a member of the Duchy of Cornwall Council.

Wednesday, June 14, 1911. Frogmore House, Windsor.

I went later to the Castle to see Papa and Mama, who are both very busy now. I heard that the Grand Duke Michael is unable to attend the Coronation owing to slight indisposition. This complicates matters. . . .

June 17, 1911. Buckingham Palace, London.

I finished packing up at Frogmore and at 10.00 drove up to the Castle, where we got into a carriage with Mama and Papa and drove down to the station. We arrived in London at 11.10 and drove to Buckingham Palace with an escort. . . . In the evening I drove to the Bath Club with Mider (Mr. Hansell) and George and had a swim. We were delayed by an immense procession of suffragettes who were marching up Piccadilly. Oh! how the fools annoy me! Then I arranged a lot of coronation circulars, and dined as usual at 8.30. . . .

June 18, 1911.

Uncle Christian, the Crown Prince of Denmark, also dined as he is one of the first Coronation representatives to arrive.

June 19, 1911.

At 1.15 there was a most alarming family lunch with all the foreign representatives staying in the house. The Crown Prince of Germany was there as well as Grannie, Aunt Minnie (Dowager Empress of Russia) and Aunt Toria. Then in the afternoon I saw Lord Shaftesbury and Ashley, his son, who is going to carry my robe at the Coronation. At 4.30 I went to the Abbey, and there I was told what I had to do by the Earl Marshal. The whole place is most beautifully arranged.

June 20, 1911.

I saw Lord Revelstoke about some arrangements for the Coronation. He is coming again tomorrow. I dined upstairs, as Papa and Mama had an enormous banquet of over five hundred people.

June 21, 1911.

After breakfast I saw Lord Revelstoke about the

Coronation arrangements. At 11.00 I went alone with Mider to the Abbey to have one last look before the fateful day, tomorrow. I think I have now gathered most things. There were a few of the foreign relations at lunch. In the afternoon I went with Mama and Papa to the Horse Show at Olympia . . . after tea I went through the service with Mider and he explained a few things to me. I dined with Mama and Papa. Bertie also dined. Papa gave me some valuable hints for tomorrow.

My father, like his father before him, set great store by the meticulous conduct of ceremonial detail. He questioned me closely to make sure I knew exactly what I had to do in Westminster Abbey. My answers seemed to satisfy him and he ended the talk with a reminder that my deportment should conform to the solemnity of the occasion.

While at my grandfather's Coronation I had been bewildered and fidgety, I was now thoroughly scared. I had only just been pulled out of the obscurity and regimented ways of a naval college which had been my lot for the previous four years. To be thrust forward suddenly as one of the principal actors in the Coronation of a king was in itself hard enough; but the realization that I would be on public trial for the first time, that my every movement would be critically scrutinized by my elders, filled me with an apprehension bordering almost on terror.

On the day of the Coronation, June 22nd, Finch had me and my three brothers up long before our usual waking time. Even at that early hour some of the 50,000 troops detailed to line the streets were

beginning to take up their positions around Buckingham Palace. From our windows on the third floor looking down the Mall, Mary and I watched all this activity until we were summoned by the harassed Finch for breakfast. Afterwards we paid our usual morning call on our parents, to find them surrounded by maids and valets fussing over the last details of their elaborate Coronation clothes.

Preoccupied as he was, my father nonetheless put aside his preparations long enough to show me in *The Times* an Admiralty Order rating me "a Midshipman in His Majesty's Fleet," and to hand me the dirk that goes with the rank. This special promotion was no doubt intended to assuage my disappointment over missing the cruise with my term. Despite this brief interlude it was plain to me that my father was not entirely himself; his quarter-deck manner was more in evidence than usual. With the feeling of perhaps being in the way I backed out, drawing some secret comfort in the knowledge that somebody else was nervous too.

It was awe-inspiring to find myself in Westminster Abbey under the new circumstances attaching to my exalted position as Prince of Wales. This time, instead of watching the proceedings from the Princesses' box, I sat in front of the peers, in the same chair that had been occupied by my father nine years before. Archbishop Temple had died and in his place was Dr. Randall Davidson, who had confirmed me the year before in the Protestant faith. The old Duke of Cambridge had also died meanwhile. Only Uncle Arthur remained to sit beside me. And instead of

the knowledgeable Hansell and the faithful Finch to hover watchfully in the background, I was now attended by a page, Lord Ashley, to carry my robe, and by a peer, Lord Revelstoke, to carry my coronet.

In that gorgeous, glittering assemblage, watching the stately measures of the prelates and the Great Officers of State in their robes of scarlet trimmed with ermine and gold, listening to the fanfares of trumpets, the rich tones of the organ and the voices of the choir, I became aware as never before of the true majesty and solemnity of kingship.

I shall never forget the sight of my father as he advanced to the altar and knelt there bare-headed and alone, with his hand on the Bible, to swear to the Coronation oath. That oath is a compact between the sovereign and his people; the language is intensely eloquent and moving. He swore to "Govern the people of this United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and the Dominions thereto belonging, according to the statutes in Parliament agreed on and the respective laws and customs of the same"; to "cause law and justice, in mercy, to be executed in all his judgments," and to uphold the Protestant faith and the Established Church of England of which he was the Defender. If my father had been at all nervous beforehand, he was now wholly in control of his emotions. His voice was strong and clear.

My father, although a religious man, had not too much patience with lengthy church services. Wherever he worshipped on Sundays the preacher was notified that his sermon must be brief. But my father

was also an invincible traditionalist, and however much his simple spirit may have been oppressed by all the pomp surrounding him, the fact that this was the way British monarchs had for centuries been crowned was enough for him. He also had an unusual capacity for detaching himself from his immediate surroundings. I am sure that on that solemn occasion there were moments when he was oblivious of the mechanics of the pageantry revolving around him and was conscious only of the simple and indeed sacred fact that he was dedicating himself to the service of his people.

Absorbed in the drama I forgot my own tension. The ancient ritual went on. There was the anointing of the King with consecrated oil; the touching of his heels with the golden spurs; the girding on of the sword of state; the placing in his hands of the two sceptres, and finally the actual crowning itself. That was the signal for all the peers to put on their coronets. From all came the cry in unison "God save the King." There was a blare of trumpets and from the Tower came the boom of a sixty-two gun salute.

When the archbishop had rendered homage to the King, I knew my moment had come. It was all the more difficult for me because what I had to do now involved my father. Were I to blunder or behave clumsily he would have felt that I had failed him. He was generous enough to record in his diary, "Dear David . . . did it so well"—but I must confess that in my anxiety to fulfil his expectations of me I was scarcely conscious of my movements.

Eventually the Coronation service came to an end.

We had been in the Abbey almost four hours—it had seemed a lifetime. Then came the long procession back to Buckingham Palace following my parents in the gold coach wearing their crowns. Mary, my three brothers and I all rode together in a state landau.

We had been instructed to be meticulous in returning the greetings of the throngs which lined the streets. So literally did my sister carry out this injunction that her bows of acknowledgment became lower and lower until one particularly profound obeisance dislodged her coronet from her head. It fell, with a clatter, between our feet. Delighted at this break in the suspense which had held us all since early morning, we four brothers all dived down to rescue it. The crowds surrounding us laughed at her discomfiture and our collective gallantry.

Later that afternoon I found my father in his sitting-room. There was still a huge concourse of people at the palace gates but he had taken off his Coronation clothes. Dressed in a comfortable business suit he was at his desk, piled high with red despatch boxes, and was hard at work on state papers.

That mental picture of my father at his desk with those official “boxes” has always seemed to me a more authentic representation of the work of kingship than all the state occasions with which the public is more familiar.

These boxes pursue Kings or Queens wherever they may go. I remember them as inseparable features of a small child’s fleeting impressions of Queen Victoria; there were always two or three of them on a table beside the chair where she worked in the

garden, whether at Windsor, Osborne or Balmoral. Later I used to see them in my grandfather's sitting-room at Sandringham. Then in a more intimate sense I saw my father turn to cope with them, and rare indeed was the occasion that I went to his room without finding him poring over their contents: Cabinet Minutes, Governmental Reports, Foreign and Colonial Office despatches, commissions and warrants for signature, not to mention appeals, petitions and even individual protests from all parts of the British realm. I had to deal with them for a short while myself. When I visited my brother Bertie after the war, and only last year my niece Lilibet after she had become Queen, I had opportunities to observe how with the growth of bureaucracy their number had increased.

If King Edward VII had ascended the throne with some misgivings, so did my father—but for different reasons. There had never been any question in his mind of having been held down by his predecessor. On the contrary his affection for his father verged on veneration. King Edward wanted his heir to treat him as an older brother, and the unconscious rivalry that had grown up between Queen Victoria and her eldest son was wholly absent. In fact, the bond of mutual sympathy and understanding between them was almost unique in the traditional relationship between a British sovereign and his heir. King Edward encouraged—almost pushed—my father to be active in public affairs; to make a habit of listening to debates in both Houses of Parliament and to make himself familiar with the correspondence between the

Foreign Office and heads of British missions abroad, a concession which Victoria had withheld from her heir.

But perhaps the most far-sighted service he rendered my father was to provide him with a trusted and singularly wise and experienced adviser—Sir Arthur Bigge, later Lord Stamfordham. Bigge was sixteen years my father's senior; during the last five years of Queen Victoria's reign he had been her Principal Private Secretary after serving a rigorous apprenticeship under that most sagacious of royal counsellors, Sir Henry Ponsonby. He was at my father's elbow for thirty years to school, stimulate, protect and guide until his death in 1931 at the age of eighty-one, when my father said of him, "He taught me to be a king."

The causes of my father's trepidations on becoming king lay in his temperament. In contrast with King Edward's expansiveness he was shy and retiring. Outside the family circle and the company of a few close friends he was usually ill at ease. This withdrawn side of his nature had been to some extent accentuated by the habits of thought and discipline formed by his two decades of service in the Royal Navy. At heart he was a sailor, and his memory was forever travelling back to his naval associations; it was to occur to me more than once that he might have aspired to be First Sea Lord of the Admiralty rather than King.

Queen Victoria's death, by making my father the immediate heir to the throne, brought an end to his active naval service and proved the beginning of his

public duties. He was then thirty-five, and during the next nine years as Prince of Wales he carried out his princely functions faithfully and conscientiously. The corner-stone laying, the inauguration of expositions and municipal buildings, the public dinners—all these he performed if not with zest at least as part of an inescapable routine.

In his quiet way he never sought to assert himself. Unlike his father he had no appetite for diplomatic wire-pulling; to the bone and sinew he was British, and by and large foreigners bored him. Content to leave the glamour and high politics to the King, he found his deepest satisfactions in his family life and in the pursuits of his hobbies—shooting, sailing and stamp collecting—in which few in Great Britain excelled him. The closeness of his ties with his father was mirrored in the fact that his four homes—in London, at Sandringham, at Windsor and in Scotland—were all within a literal stone's throw of King Edward's houses at these places.

Kingship immediately intruded its heavy claims upon this composed and agreeable existence. The resolution of the conflict between the Lords and the Commons shortly after his Coronation had, nevertheless, left a hangover of political acrimony. The growing industrial unrest manifested itself in a wave of strikes. My parents' public life was plagued by fanatical demonstrations of the Suffragettes, who, having failed to move the Cabinet, now made the King and Queen the principal targets of their aggressive campaign in the cause of Woman Suffrage. Their leaders chained themselves to the railings of

Buckingham Palace; they embarrassed my parents at the theatre by scattering on the audience leaflets demanding "Votes for Women," and one misguided suffragette during the running of the Derby went so far as to try to stop the King's horse at Tattenham Corner, an action in which she miraculously succeeded at the cost of her life.

The Irish question began to seethe and civil war between the Catholic south and the Protestant north for a long time hung in the balance. Overshadowing these domestic troubles was the menace of Germany, which had begun to threaten British naval supremacy. The problems that now filled my father's boxes were far graver and more complex than those with which any other British monarch had hitherto had to deal.

In his approach to his task my father was fortunate in receiving the shrewd advice of a former Liberal Prime Minister under Queen Victoria, Lord Rosebery. A few months after his accession Lord Rosebery wrote for him a remarkable memorandum in which he set forth his concept of the line to be followed by the sovereign. The document reposes in the Round Tower of Windsor Castle. I was unaware of its existence until I came upon it in Sir Harold Nicolson's excellent biography of my father, *King George V*. I am quoting it because it seems to me to spell out with rare wisdom the unique problems facing any monarch in the modern world:

... But it is now that [the King] has to give colour and stamp to his reign. *He will be judged by the next two years.*

If he wishes to make his reign illustrious, he will have to give up the next two years to that task and give himself up to that and nothing else, just as an ambitious and patriotic minister would do. He must make himself felt all the time.

He must make it clear to his subjects that he is earnest and industrious, as indeed he is. That should be the stamp of his reign. He should show that he is willing to deny himself any pleasure to do his duty; more, that he is ready to do anything disagreeable to himself. This is a hard saying, but most truths are hard.

There is something harder still. He must remember that every word of a King is treasured in this country as if it were God's; that he cannot speak without the chance of his words being noted, and carried, even by servants. To his intimate friends he can no doubt unbosom himself, but even this with precaution. . . .

Besides devotion to duty and reticence there is something else to be noted, and that is the instinct of striking the imagination.

Reticence, devotion to duty, industry and earnestness—these came easily enough to my father. But from what I know of his make-up, Rosebery's suggestions that he should attempt to strike the imagination and make himself felt all the time fell, I suspect, on unreceptive soil. Any form of exhibitionism and histrionics was contrary to my father's natural instinct. In character and outlook he belonged rather to the tradition of monarchs described by Walter Bagehot's *The English Constitution*: "The occupations of a constitutional monarch are grave, formal, important, but never exciting; they have nothing to stir eager blood,

awaken high imagination, work off wild thoughts." In this sense my father could be said to have been the ideal monarch for whom the British Constitution was waiting.

Nevertheless, he achieved in an undramatic manner quite his own what Lord Rosebery had hoped for him. The first World War brought him for the first time in contact with his people at close range. Previously, his public appearances had been for the most part formal, distant and generally rehearsed. Until then I would judge that he had probably been fairly selective as to whom he shook hands with in public. However, his visits to his Army at the front, his constant inspections of troops in training and of munition plants in Britain now projected him into crowds. The idea that their King was with them sharing the ordeal of war gave rise among the people on every side to spontaneous exhibitions not only of loyalty but of affection. I remember my father telling, with a mixture of surprise and pleasure, how a working man had come up to him, hand outstretched, and said, "Put it there, George!"

As the years went on my father made himself felt in other ways. The post-war period, instead of producing, in Lloyd George's slogan, "A COUNTRY FIT FOR HEROES," became a Pandora's box of trouble. Britain came upon hard times. Depression brought widespread unemployment which, in turn, brought in "the dole." Meanwhile the political power which into my father's middle age had remained in the hands of the gentry now passed faster and faster into the hands of the working classes and their leaders. In

1924, after the fall of the Conservatives under Stanley Baldwin, my father had to send for the Socialist leader, Ramsay MacDonald, and invite him to form the first Labour Government.

My father and Lord Stamfordham later supplied me with some of the details of that remarkable encounter between the King and his new Labour Ministers. They included, besides Ramsay MacDonald, who had begun his career as a low-paid clerk, three trade unionists—the colourful J. H. Thomas, who had been an engine driver; Arthur Henderson, who had been a foundry labourer, and J. R. Clynes, who had been a mill hand.

My father had been shocked by a report that his new Prime Minister had presided over a public meeting at the Albert Hall only shortly before, at which the Bolshevik anthem, the Internationale, had been enthusiastically sung. Fixing Ramsay MacDonald with a cold eye to show his concern and disapproval, the King asked squarely whether the newspaper accounts of this incident were true. The Prime Minister admitted with some embarrassment that the song had indeed been sung that evening. “But that is a dreadful thing to do,” said the King. Ramsay MacDonald agreed but added, to my father’s consternation, that his followers would in fact have sung it again in the House of Commons in jubilation over the defeat of the Conservatives but for his restraining influence and that of his moderate colleagues.

“Good Lord,” exclaimed the King, “they’ll sing it outside this Palace next.” Shamefacedly, the Prime Minister explained, “The trouble is, your Majesty,

that they have lately got used to singing that song and it may take a little time to break them of this habit."

That evening my father recorded in his diary, "Today twenty-three years ago dear Grandmama died. I wonder what she would have thought of a Labour Government."

As I recorded elsewhere in my memoirs, there was much about the post-war world that troubled and perplexed my father's conservative mind. But nothing worried him more than the class strife that introduced new and unfamiliar violences into British life. Instinctively he distrusted whatever was new and untried; he deplored disorder and discord in all forms, and as the manners and habits of his youth were supplanted by the freer ways of the younger generation and as the stability of the society he had known was undermined, he became convinced that all he had known and believed in was slowly but inexorably slipping away.

My father was not one to hold back his own opinions. He had a habit of expressing his views to his ministers with a sailor's forcefulness that could on occasion take them aback. But whenever he had to choose between his personal predilections and his duty as a constitutional monarch, it was always the latter that in the end prevailed. I myself have often seen him blow up in wrath over some measure presented to him for the Royal Assent, only to hear him shrug off his anger with the statement, "But of course there is nothing I can do about it."

Under the constitutional limitations upon the executive powers of the British monarch, the most

important contribution that he can, perhaps, make is in the field of his personal influence. Except under extraordinary circumstances his intervention in constitutional questions is confined to the right "to advise, to encourage and to warn."

Through the probity of his own nature, the consistency of his principles and beliefs and his dislike of extremes my father made the monarchy a stabilizing factor in an era of violent change. In his custodianship he caused the crown to be recognized as standing above class and party rivalry. His service as a sailor Prince had taken him to the British Dominions and possessions overseas. He came to have a sharper insight into the new idea of the Empire and Commonwealth as an association of free and equal nations united by a common dynasty than Edward VII possessed. Under him the Crown became a focus of an empire and eventually of a commonwealth composed of vigorous independent nations proud of their shared past and to-be-shared future. From being something remote and apart the Crown became under his personal influence a powerful example of cohesion and continuity in a society in gradual revolution.

My father unbent slowly, and to the extent to which he did unbend the credit should be given in large measure to my mother. Throughout their long married life—they were married for almost forty-three years—she was not only the loving wife who bore him six children but also his gracious and enlightened Queen Consort who had an intuitive understanding of what was expected of them.

My father was essentially a man of habit in his daily

routine and seasonal schedules. Any proposal that required deviation from his accustomed routine was certain to be met with resistance. But my mother knew his mind so well that on occasions when his advisers were unable to persuade him to undertake novel projects which they judged beneficial to the Crown she usually managed with infinite tact to bring him round. After his prolonged and nearly fatal illness in the winter of 1928-29, my father leaned upon her more and more.

The fact is not generally known that it was Queen Mary who finally persuaded my father to make his annual Christmas broadcast to the British Empire. A number of others, including myself, had tried in vain to induce him to use the wonderful new medium of the radio. But he would have none of it, associating the "wireless" with electioneering and the British equivalent of soap opera. However, my mother saw the advantage to the monarchy of the King's being able to reach in this way millions of his subjects whom he had never seen and who would otherwise never even hear his voice. He gave in to her with misgivings and without enthusiasm. But, delighted with the world-wide acclaim of the first experiment, he came to take a secret pride in the preparation and delivery of each Christmas message.

I know that he did so from an amusing experience which happened at Sandringham a year or so before his death. The broadcast was always made from a little room, after Christmas dinner. The rest of the family, gathered in the main hall adjoining, would listen to his voice as it issued from the box. Then,

when he was finished, my father would stride back to join us, to ask us how his message had sounded. However, on this particular Christmas afternoon my brothers and I, being already familiar with the contents of the message, decided to take a walk. Although my father made no comment at the time he must have noticed our absence from the listening family circle, for not long afterwards, when I had occasion to ask him what he thought of an important radio talk I had given in London, he looked at me quizzically and answered, "I did not hear it. Why should I? You didn't listen to mine last Christmas!"

In a manner that he perhaps never intended, the monarch in my father's person came to exemplify the British ideal of the family man. In their King, his subjects saw a summing-up of the domestic virtues which, rightly or not, were widely regarded as peculiarly British—probity, forthrightness, sobriety, devoutness, moderation and a mistrust of innovations. In this image he came to fulfil Lord Rosebery's hopes for him as a monarch who would "strike the imagination," although once again one might wonder whether the king as "family man" was exactly what that patrician statesman had in mind. That this indeed was how the British people regarded my father, and, moreover, what they desired in their monarch, was demonstrated at the celebration of his Silver Jubilee in 1935.

The dominions and colonies overseas joined with the United Kingdom in a month-long carnival of homage which established beyond question that King George V had raised the prestige of monarchy to new

heights. Even his imperturbable temperament was surprised and stirred, and never more than when he and my mother drove through the poorer quarters of London; through Limehouse, Whitechapel, Lambeth and the London docks. The tumultuous welcome they received from the working people struck deeply into my father's emotions. On returning to the Palace he remarked, almost in unbelief, "I'd no idea they felt like that about me."

It is, of course, too early to predict exactly how my niece will elect to employ the varied functions of monarchy in the interests of her subjects. It is, perhaps, enough to suggest here that the British monarchy is not a fixed and static thing; rather it is an institution in continuous and enlightened evolution. That Queen Elizabeth will follow the example of her illustrious forbears by carrying the process of adaptation forward yet another step, I have no doubt.

She has already shown that essential instinct, so well described by Lord Rosebery, of making herself felt, and of striking the imagination of her people. In her first Christmas broadcast as Queen from Sandringham she said: "Many grave problems and difficulties confront us all, but with a new faith in the old and splendid beliefs given us by our forefathers and the strength to venture beyond the safeties of the past I know we shall be worthy of our duty."

This noble aspiration, which had long needed to be said in Britain, has been taken by many as a signal that she intends to seek to rekindle among her compatriots something of the spirit of adventure of the

first Elizabethan Age. To be sure, a glance at the present position and circumstances of British power must suggest that this would not be an easy task. For the conditions that made possible the grandeur and glory of the first Elizabethan Age—the age of Drake, Frobisher, Hawkins, Raleigh and the other gentlemen adventurers who opened the sea routes and the “far lands” to British enterprise—have all but disappeared. And in any case the management of state affairs has long since passed from the monarch’s hands.

Still, if British power is not what it once was, certain hopeful portents surround the young Queen. She is fortunate, indeed, at least to my way of thinking, that her reign should begin under the auspices of that great Englishman, Sir Winston Churchill, who in standing forth as the eloquent protagonist of a free society, has remained a staunch champion of the monarchy.

Sir Winston Churchill has served six sovereigns. As a cavalry subaltern he fought in Queen Victoria’s wars. He served both Edward VII and George V as a minister of the Crown. He was one of my counsellors during my personal crisis in 1936 and as prime minister during the Second World War he was my brother’s constant adviser. Under his leadership the British have abandoned all thoughts of discouragement and disillusion which immediately after the war weighed so heavily on their spirit, stifling trade, deadening initiative and undermining the ambition and resourcefulness which had made them great. A young queen named Elizabeth could not find in her realm a more authentic representative of Elizabethan

audacity and imagination than her venerable Prime Minister.

The history of the British monarchy over the last two hundred years is a curious study of rhythmic alteration in the character and personality of the successive occupants of the throne. George III, though he knew his hours of unpopularity, was pitied for his profligate sons and eventually for his own physical infirmities; yet he was himself a simple upright man who left his mark as "Farmer George." George IV, his eldest son, had rejoiced as Prince of Wales in the soubriquet of "First Gentleman of Europe"; but by the time he became king little survived of that elegant reputation. William IV had been in action against the Spanish fleet early in his naval career; from having been a somewhat dissolute prince he became a dull and colourless king.

Victoria, in her turn, lifted from the Crown the moral stigma of what she used to call "my wicked uncles." Then Edward VII, who enjoyed the society of witty men and beautiful women, who relished foreign travel and the savour of high diplomacy, restored to the monarchy the magnificence, the colour and the variety that had disappeared during his mother's reign. By contrast George V's reign reverted in tone to that of Victoria's, becoming almost an echo of that era. Had mine run its full course, it is possible that its mood and texture would have followed more that of Edward VII. That of my brother Bertie who followed me as George VI was almost a faithful reflection of my father's.

It was natural that this should be. My brother was

very much like my father. He was another family man with a happy home and children; he had the same zest for shooting and found the same abiding contentment in Sandringham and Balmoral. He collected stamps as had my father, and also made a hobby of collecting rare plants for his garden at Royal Lodge in Windsor Great Park; there was the same disinterestedness in foreign ideas and the same disinclination for foreign travel. "This old country of ours is quite good enough for me," I have heard my father declare; I am sure my brother would have said the same.

The parallelism of their natures was extended even to the major events of their reigns. My brother's first years as King were over-shadowed, as had been my father's, by the resurgence of German aggression; the Second World War overtook his reign even more swiftly than the first had overtaken my father's. He and my sister-in-law Elizabeth shared with the people of London the dangers and strain of the blitzes—and Buckingham Palace was not spared. Much sooner than my father had been, he was confronted by a Socialist government.

The constant strain to which King George VI was subjected by his constitutional and representative duties was augmented towards the end of his reign by the pain and anguish of failing health and two major operations. And I am not insensible of the fact that through a decision of mine he was projected into sovereign responsibilities that may at first have weighed heavily upon him—it fell to him to carry the monarchy successfully through the most difficult

phase of the social revolution which began in my grandfather's time. His end was untimely and greatly mourned, but he lived long enough to see that totalitarianism in any form is not congenial to the British national character. But what must have been equally satisfying to him was to see his eldest child grow into womanly maturity; to see her married to a young man of resolute character and endowed with a modern mind, and to see the succession firmly assured by the birth of two grandchildren.

Now by the will of God his daughter, my niece Elizabeth, has gone to Westminster and has sat, as all British sovereigns have done since the fourteenth century, in King Edward's chair to be crowned; there she has received the homage of her subjects, and there has dedicated herself to their service.

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