



The King and The Queen in their Coronation Robes.

Photographs by W. &amp; D. Downey, London.

## Marriage of King and Queen

By EMILY P. WEAVER

WHEN, as a youth of nineteen, King Edward (then Prince of Wales) visited Newfoundland, he was greeted by some of the simple fisher-folk with the exclamation "God bless his pretty face, and send him a good wife!"

This wish for him was soon to be fulfilled. Happier in this than many of his predecessors, the young prince chose his bride for love and not for reasons of statecraft. He was indeed scarcely out of boyhood when his parents (who believed in early marriages) began to con over anxiously the list of possible helpmates for the heir of England. They favoured, it is said, some German marriage, but the attention of the Prince himself was directed by a curious little accident to Alexandra of Denmark, "the Vikings' daughter."

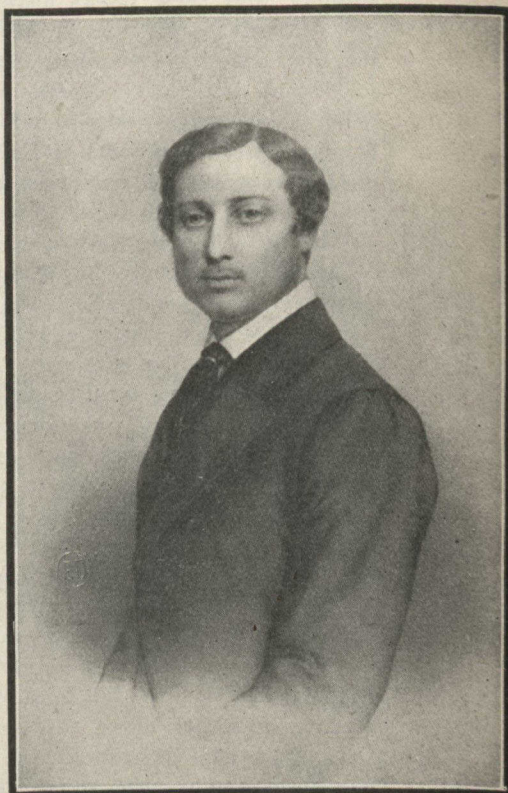
This is one version of the story, whether or not it is the correct one I cannot say. In the summer of 1861, when the Prince of Wales was studying at Cambridge, a young German officer of his acquaintance announced one day that he was going to be married and took from his pocket a photograph of a lovely girl dressed in white. "Your fiancée is a very beautiful girl," said the Prince as he handed back the photograph. Then the young officer exclaimed that he had made a mistake, and had shown the Prince the portrait, not of his fiancée, but of the Danish princess, Alexandra, "which had been coloured for him by the lady to whom he was engaged, when she painted her own." Upon this, "when he would have taken back the photograph, the Prince laughingly refused to give it up," saying that he would keep it till he met the original.

This he contrived to do before many months had gone by. Finding that Alexandra and her father, the Crown Prince of Denmark, were visiting some of the old churches and castles on the Rhine, Albert Edward followed them thither, and on a September day in 1861 met his future bride before the altar in the ancient Cathedral of Speyer. The next day he explored the old Castle of Heidelberg in company with the Danish princess, and it speedily became clear to all observers that, as the Prince Consort said, "the young people" had "taken a warm liking to each other."

Efforts were made to keep the matter secret, but it proved impossible. All Europe was interested in the royal love affair. It was not, however, till nearly a year later, after the death of the Prince Consort that the formal betrothal took place at Laeken Palace, near Brussels. The engagement ring was set with six jewels, of which the initial letters formed the name "Bertie," used by Queen Victoria for her son. The betrothal was followed by a week of excursions, beginning with a visit to the Field of Waterloo; then Alexandra returned for a short time to the home of her childhood.

Her father was not wealthy for a royal personage, and "Alix," as she was called at home, had been brought up very simply. She and her five brothers and sisters had passed much of their time at the country palace of Bernstorff, ten miles from Copenhagen, studying and amusing themselves, according to the season, by skating and dancing, riding and yachting.

The Danes were delighted with the English match, and loaded their fair princess with presents. Her trousseau

The State Coach leaving Buckingham Palace with the King and Queen on their way to open Parliament last month  
Photograph by Half-Tones, Limited

The King and the Queen at the time of their Marriage.

Photographs by E. Desmains, Paris



St. George's Chapel, Windsor—Altar and Queen's Gallery where their Majesties were married—March 10th, 1863

Louise, Maud, Princess Victoria  
Duchess of Fife, Queen of Norway  
The Daughters of the King

The Queen and Her Japanese Spaniel

seau (always an important matter to a bride) was made partly in Denmark, partly in England.

Her whole family accompanied her to England where she received a most enthusiastic welcome. "Since woman-kind existed," said Thackeray, "has any woman ever had such a greeting?" At sight of the cheering crowds at Gravesend the princess turned to her mother, exclaiming, "Is it possible that they mean all this for me?"

That was only the beginning. On that same memorable day, the young girl made her progress through London, and was greeted everywhere by mighty throngs adorned in her honour with bridal favours.

The marriage was solemnised in St. George's Chapel, Windsor, on March 10th, 1863, and was the first nuptial ceremony in that building since the marriage of Henry I. in 1122. The brilliant spectacle well befitted the occasion and gave full scope to the pencil of the artist. One of the historic pictures of the occasion was painted by W. P. Frith, R.A. There was an element of sadness mingled with an otherwise joyous event. The Prince Consort had passed away fifteen months before and was mourned by the Queen with rare devotion. But it was consoling to remember that he had given the proposed union his warmest fatherly approval.

A wedding, always an event of interest to the feminine world, is of unusual attraction when the bride is beautiful and the bridegroom is heir to a great kingdom. Worldwide was the interest in Albert Edward and Alexandra, while the accounts of the gorgeous spectacle in the Chapel were eagerly read in all corners of the world. Naturally, every detail concerning the wedding-gown was described with a gravity befitting the

event. It had been noticed in the days preceding the wedding that Princess Alexandra was fond of the old-fashioned lavender and violet, a preference that has been so remarked in later years. But the royal bridal robe was of the conventional white, and the sweet and gentle bearing of the Danish princess was the subject of universal admiration.

Dickens, who was present, thus describes the bride, "Her face was very pale, and full of a sort of awe and wonder; but the face of no ordinary bride; not simply a timid, shrinking girl, but one with character distinctive of her own, prepared to act a part greatly."

It was indeed a nationally popular alliance, for the sweetness and grace of the "daughter of the Vikings" had appealed to the London crowds, which in this case have refuted the charge of public fickleness, inasmuch as the Queen Alexandra of 1907 is even more highly esteemed than the girl of eighteen who, nearly half a century ago, received a royal welcome to her English bridegroom's home.

The Princess Alexandra was remarkable from the first for the tact with which she adapted herself to her new surroundings, never seeming to regard herself as a foreign royalty. She showed very early the sympathy with suffering that has made any movement to alleviate distress sure of her support. She showed also that womanly interest in affairs of the household, which, in spite of a variety of modern interests, remains part of the English ideal of woman. She has associated all the duties of royalty with the virtues and happiness of home life and has given to her daughters something of her own pride in the dairy and the garden. She has, in spite of English adoption, always shown a deep affection for her girlhood's home.