

KING EDWARD'S MUSIC

The late King's Favourite Hymn was the same as that of President McKinley.

THE Royal family of Great Britain have always been noted for their appreciation of really good music. It will be remembered that the Prince Consort father of the late King Edward was himself a composer of some note and an excellent player upon an instrument. Queen Victoria was herself fond of the best music of which she heard much. Indeed, for generations the monarchs of England have set a fashion for good listening to music of the better class, and many of the most notable composers of Europe have taken their big works to England for a first performance. King Edward, though by no means a higher critic in music, was quite as fond of simple, good things as his mother. Happens that his favourite hymn was precisely the one which President McKinley liked best and which was given in thousands of churches in America, including Canada, the Sunday before the funeral of the President.

In an unconsciously *apropos* article just the week before the King's death, *M. A. P.* had the following on the King's music:

"The entire direction of the music at the Royal Palaces lies in the hands of Sir Walter Parratt, whose position in the Royal Household is officially described as 'Master of the King's Music.' Primarily, Sir Walter Parratt is identified with the direction of the church music at Windsor, for he is the organist at St. George's Chapel Royal, and in this capacity has presided at the organ on the occasions of many Royal weddings, christenings, confirmations, and other religious ceremonies.

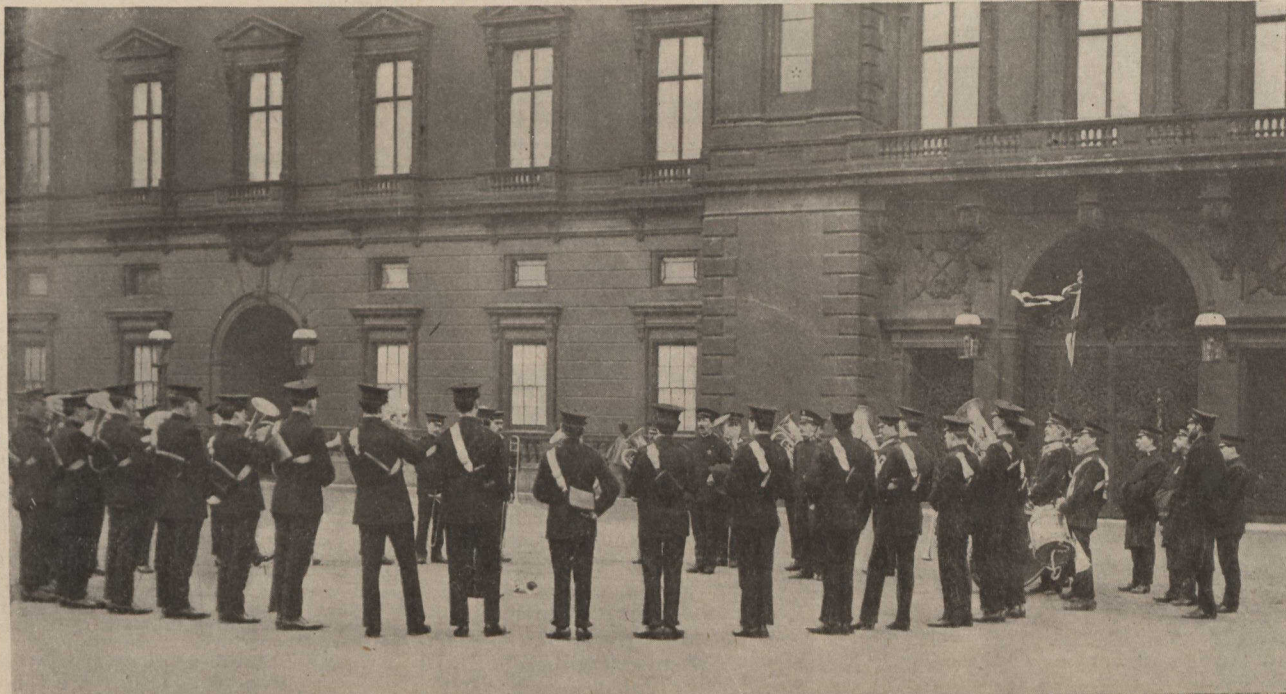
"On such occasions the King or Queen may possibly express a wish to have a certain anthem or hymn sung,

morning and they make any additions to it they please. An item suggested by a royal visitor is given precedence over all other items on the programme. The royal band nowadays is not called upon to perform as often as it used to be in the late reign, when practically no other band was ever heard at a royal residence.

"A great part of the music at Buckingham Palace is, as a matter of fact, supplied by various private bands selected by the King. There is one band of very high reputation which the King specially likes to hear, and it is frequently commanded to play at small dinner parties at the palace. When the King's band performs, the members wear the royal uniform of white, scarlet, and gold, which, of course, cannot be worn by any other bandmen.

"His Majesty, like all the members of the royal family, has a good ear for music, which has been well and carefully trained by listening to good music, so, though the King is not what might be called strictly speaking musical, His Majesty can thoroughly appreciate and understand good music, and has a great dislike to listening to an indifferent musical performance of any sort.

"On one occasion, a few years ago, a peer who was entertaining the King at dinner had hired the services of a band, the members of which were more energetic than skilled musicians. The peer in question was a first-rate sportsman and greatly liked by His Majesty, but he was a very poor judge of good music, and found no fault with the volume of often discordant sounds produced by the hired musicians. The King disliked the performance, but did not care to make any remark to his host on the subject, whom His Majesty perceived was rather pleased



Salvation Army Band playing the King's favourite Hymn: "Nearer my God to Thee," Outside Buckingham Palace.

but beyond this it is left entirely with Sir Walter Parratt to decide on the music to be performed. A favourite hymn, by the way, of the King is 'Nearer my God to Thee,' and His Majesty often asks for it to be sung at divine service.

"The dance and other light music at Buckingham Palace is provided usually by the King's band. Though nominally the direction of the music is in the hands of Sir Walter Parratt, the distinguished musician does not concern himself directly with this branch of the King's music unless some special point concerning it should arise which would be referred to him to decide, such as a question regarding the purchase of the exclusive rights of some music for the Royal band. There are thirty members of the band, including one lady, a Miss Timothy. They are not, of course, members of the household; they are simply professional musicians, and play in various bands and orchestras, but the King has the first call on their services, and they must attend at Buckingham Palace or any other of the royal residences.

"When the King or Queen desire the royal band to perform at a state ball, dinner, garden party, or any other entertainment, the bandmen are notified of their Majesties' wish by Mr. Alfred Mapleson, the secretary to the band, by whom the programme of the music is drawn up. It is submitted to their Majesties for approval, and there are always a large number of items performed by the special request of the King and Queen.

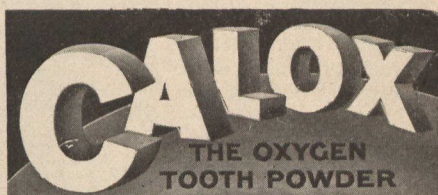
"When royal guests are at Buckingham Palace, the programme of the band music is submitted to them in the

than otherwise by the playing of the band. When, however, at the end of the dinner the peer asked the King if he would like the band to play a further selection of tunes, His Majesty said with a quiet laugh: 'I think, Lord —, we will give the men a rest.'

The King and the Barber

MR. FREDERIC VILLIERS, noted war artist, at present in Canada, told this reminiscence of King Edward to the Vancouver Canadian Club.

"I enjoyed His Majesty's hospitality many times, both at Marlborough and Balmoral, but I cannot give you my experiences, because they have been written down and will be published and given to the world later on. But I can tell you a remarkable story which I heard this morning while having my hair cut. The barber, in conversation, told me that he used to live at Windsor, near the castle. 'One day,' he said, 'my father took me to see a cricket match in which the Prince of Wales, as the King was then, was playing. There was a large crowd outside the enclosure, and as I was too small to see anything, my father took me on his shoulder and let me down inside. Presently a ball came my way, knocking me over and almost breaking my nose. Of course, I cried. One young man took hold of me. He looked in my face and saw that I was somewhat badly hurt. My father claimed me, and the man who handed me to my father was the Prince of Wales. He handed with me half a crown.'



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