

London Letter

LONDON, July 14, 1913.—In the city of Manchester, the most Lancastrian of Lancashire cities and towns, the king and queen brought to a climax the eighth day of their tour through urban Lancashire. Their Majesties' visit has been a boundless success.

The idea of the progress was a most happy one. Outside London and a few seaport and garrison towns, King George has not been known to his people, in person, as King Edward and Queen Victoria were, immensely to the increase of their popularity. King George has been, to most of his subjects, an idea, an image evoked by thought only, not a living man with concrete, individualizing little traits of his own, as all the great objects of popular affection are. Contact, at least the contact of eyes, was needed to warm a dutiful friendliness into something more. That measure of mutual contact has been given in one week to the king and several millions of English men, women, and children.

It is unlikely that any English king and queen have ever before been seen by so many of their people in so short a time, even in the week of a Coronation; for there are more persons living within fifty miles of Manchester town hall than within the same distance of Charing Cross, London, and the less populous southern area has never been the scene of such a sustained public appearance of the Crown. Inevitably, it must have had its fatigues for the king and for the queen, but if these fatigues have not been too great, the progress has, in the fullest sense, been steadily worth making.

When one hears of King George and Queen Mary entering the mills and seeing work done even, in some small way, participating in it; and hears of their entering some lowly cottage; or of their conversing with an artizan, or, again, taking the hand of an aged and worn labourer—then it is that we feel the force of the fact that royalty is resolved to understand democracy; and that democracy has a double reason for manifesting its loyalty. In these events we perceive history in the making; the dawning of a new era, when barriers once deemed unsurmountable are broken down, and when the sharp severances between class and class are being erased. Distinctions there will always be; divisions there need not be. The connecting link is sympathy, and sympathy proceeds from understanding. Centuries ago haughty monarchs might have deemed their honour in jeopardy if they met the commoners on level ground; now their honour is enhanced, not forfeited, when they mingle with their subjects and inspire them with increasing devotion, respect, and attachment.

TWO of the many pretty incidents which occurred in the course of the royal tour deserve narration. There is no doubt, e.g., that the domestic influence of Their Majesties mingling with their subjects has begun to spread. In every Lancashire home which is blessed by a new baby it is the proper thing now to call the lucky mite George if it is a boy, and Mary if it is a girl. The Lancastrian family of little Georges and little Marys is growing at an alarming rate, but Mrs. Morris's baby, for instance, will be the queen of all the Marys.

It happened this way. Mr. Joseph Morris, a young cashier at the Duxbury paper mills near Bury, Lancashire, was standing in his garden on the Saturday when the royal motor came in sight. His wife was with him nursing her baby girl, and they had been so busy lately decorating their front cottage and front garden with flags and flowers for the king's visit that they really hadn't found time to give the baby a name.

The king reached the outskirts of Bury a little before time and the motor slowed down. The queen was the first to notice Mrs. Morris. Then she saw the baby being rocked to and

fro in quite a fairy bower of flags and festoons.

"What a charmingly decorated garden!" said the queen, "I should like to see it," and immediately Their Majesties stepped out of the motor.

Addressing Mr. Morris, the queen said: "May we have a look at your cottage?" "Why certainly," said Mr. Morris. "We should be very 'appy." The queen passed through the garden into the front room, followed by the king and Lord Derby. It was a typical Lancashire home. It is a five-roomed cottage, with a rent of a dollar and a quarter. A horsehair sofa stood in one corner. On the wall hung the text, "Abide With Me." The weekly washing drooped from a line suspended across the room.

But it was Mrs. Morris's baby that interested the queen most, and she asked how old it was. "Six weeks," said Mrs. Morris, "and we were going to call it Freda," she added with a smile, but I think now we shall have to call it Mary." The queen laughed heartily. "How many children have you?" was the next question. "I have two other little girls. One of them goes to school, and she is among the school children to-day in the streets who are waiting to cheer Your Majesty."

After thoroughly inspecting the room the king and queen bade the cottagers good-bye, and the royal motor passed on, leaving Mr. and Mrs. Morris glad that they had forgotten to name the baby.

AN equally delightful little episode of the tour of inspection occurred in the speed and drawing frame department of the famous Platt Brothers, Oldham, a textile machine firm which finds employment for 12,000 people, where the king and queen watched the working of the firm's latest production, a magnificent intermediate frame. The machine was worked by Mrs. Elizabeth Jones, who had been selected for the honour of working it before royalty out of many applicants, and the workmen in the speed and drawing frame department rightly thought that the presentation of a little gift to her should signalize the occasion. Accordingly, they subscribed a sum of money and purchased a pretty gold pendant, jewelled with rubies and small pearls. The queen, having heard that it was the foreman's intention to present the pendant to Mrs. Jones after the departure of Their Majesties, thoughtfully offered to make the presentation. The men heartily concurred, and an eager crowd watched the queen hand the pendant to Mrs. Jones.

"I have a nice little present for you," Her Majesty said smilingly as she slipped the gift into the hands of the astonished cardroom operative. Mrs. Jones was too confused to reply. "It was very good of Her Majesty to give it to me. I never expected it, and can hardly think it is true," she added afterwards.

During the final days of this wonderful royal tour through the County Palatine, in the course of which Their Majesties visited nearly every part of it and nearly every town of any size within it, the youthful Prince Albert had the pleasure of joining his royal parents.

The prince's handsome appearance and engaging manners made him quite popular. His fair hair, clear skin, blue eyes, and well-knit figure caused a murmur of admiration whenever he mounted a platform. He is a little taller than the Prince of Wales and a little more self-possessed. He had an observant, sailor-like glance. He does not miss anything; there is a gleam in his eye and a quiver round the corner of his mouth which suggest that he sees the humorous side of things. Several times he and the queen enjoyed some little joke of their own, indicating a charming confidence and comradeship between mother and son. All those who shook hands with Their Majesties were greeted in the same way by the prince, and were captivated by his gracious bearing. He lifted his bowler hat to the ladies with an air of grave courtesy, and showed that he has already acquired the gift so useful to royalty of ap-

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