

MORE ANECDOTES OF KING EDWARD THE VII.

Showing His Kindness of Heart, His Traits, His Prejudices—His Likes and Dislikes—The Same to Duke and Coster—A Social Peacemaker—His Sense of Humor.

The following are a few of the innumerable anecdotes about the late King Edward VII., printed after his death in the English newspapers:

Dean Stanley, who was with him when he visited Egypt and Palestine, has recorded how "the Prince set his mind on my reading 'East Lynne' . . . It is impossible not to like him, and to be constantly with him brings out his astonishing memory of names and persons."

"That would be my own principal recollection of the King," writes G. W. E. Russell, "his amazing memory for faces and for promptly associating them with the occasion on which he had come across them."

"It has always seemed to me that the one social difference the King made after his accession, was in not frequenting his London clubs. Previous to that he had been quite a habitué of his clubs. The Marlborough was really made up of his then associates and his aristocratic acquaintances. In that, in the Guards' Club, in the Travellers, in White's, he was liable to walk as informally as any other member."

"It was noticeable that he never looked at a book or newspaper. His method of knowing everything was to get someone else to tell it to him in conversation, and his portentous memory retained it long after the other had forgotten all about the matter. If the topic tired the Prince, as it was then, his eye would rove around the room and fix on the next member he wanted to speak to; but he always cut short a conversation with some felicitous phrase that made the closure a compliment to even a bore."

"It was one of his unselfish traits always to shake hands with everybody in private life. He knew they liked it. At a levee he shook hands with anybody he knew, and many have been surprised as gratified at receiving this prompt recognition."

"He only three times entered a London club after his coronation, but he always landed at the Squadron steps at Cowes and used the Squadron (club) when he was living on the royal yacht in regatta week."

A Social Peacemaker.
A short time ago a young officer was brought before the King's Bench. The pressure from brother officers acting under a misconception forced him to send in his papers. The King, who had been told of the matter, called on the officer, and the result of the interview his majesty said:

"If your son went back to his regiment it would be as uncomfortable for him as for the others; but if I pose him for the Guards' Club, and my brother, the Duke of Connaught, seconds him, that will completely settle him."

"Thus tactfully did he save a delicate situation."

In another case in which he showed himself the peacemaker in private affairs, not less than international, a young wife, the daughter of a peeress, had eloped with another man. By the tactful intervention of the royal mediator, the wife was led to give up her elopement, the injured husband promised to forgive and forget, and the couple are now at this very moment living together in an ideal Darby and Joan existence.

Ways in Private Life.
Years ago there was a famous beauty in a moment of folly ventured to call him "Tum-tum," the nickname by which he was at that time known to all. The Prince instantly rose, bowed stiffly and walked out of the house. Nor did he ever speak to her again.

One of the once renowned society beauties was as poor as she was virtuous one Sunday afternoon in walked the Prince of Wales and said:

"I have come to tea."

"Well, sir," she replied, "I was going out for mine, for I have only in the house. The housemaid who opened the door to you."

"What does that matter?" he answered: "I'll bring up tea."

And this he literally did, rummaging in the pantry and cutting bread and butter, chuckling with amusement.

Likes and Dislikes.
The King had one political worship, Mr. Gladstone. No one more fervently admired the grand old man than the Prince of Wales. On the other hand, it has been no secret that he disliked both Lord Salisbury and Arthur Balfour. The latter had annoyed him by refusing to give a peerage to Sir Ernest Cassel.

The Prince did not share his mother's love for Disraeli, because he thought he was a toady. Oddly enough, Disraeli was the only one of our sovereigns he did not like. He was once told that he was called "the King of Jews," to which he replied:

"Then I am twice monarch of chosen races."

Of all his relatives the person he himself disliked was the late Prince Henry of Battenberg, "my mother's groom of the chamber," as he was called, and when they were children he seemed to extend this to the Battenberg children, but as they grew up this changed, and nothing could extort from his kindness to the Princess of Spain. Her talkativeness is proverbial, and when she was going to be married he said:

"Remember, Ena, two ears to hear and only one tongue with which to chatter."

Interested in the America's Cup Races.
It is one of the things in my life of which I am most proud," writes Sir Thomas Lipton, "that for a long period of years I had the privilege of the friendship of his majesty. Apart from his splendid qualities as a man and a statesman, I think of him perhaps most of all as a keen admirer of sport in all its forms."

"Throughout my efforts to win the America's Cup, his majesty displayed the keenest personal interest in all that was done to gain a victory. On various occasions he made suggestions in connection with the design of my ship, the 'Thetis,' which I endeavored to improve my chances of being successful."

"I cannot forget the day he did me the high honor of paying me his first visit after his accession to witness a trial race with Shamrock II. On that occasion unfortunately he had a very narrow escape from being seriously injured through the breaking of the mast in consequence of the severe weather that prevailed. Notwithstanding his miraculous escape, he was not in the slightest degree disconcerted, but treated the incident as a trivial matter, and desired his friends to be in no way alarmed."

The Same to Duke and Coster.
Will Crooks, a prominent labor leader, who lost his seat in Parliament at the last election, pays tribute to the dead King, whom he had frequently met.

"I can bear witness that he was always for the people. This it was and not his power that drew me to him. Supposing a poor man had to see him and felt ill at ease. It was quite natural. The poor fellow would go into the audience trembling. Perhaps he might be a man whose business was to bid a man to go to the gallows, and he would find him quite at home explaining the reason why a man should be hanged. It was just like one chap to another."

"There was an instant appeal about the personality of the late King. I can remember going to see him open the Boundary Road area, Shrewsbury, when he was still Prince of Wales. I was close by the side of a man whose name I would not care to mention, but it is a very well known name indeed, and stands for opinions which are certainly not monarchical, and I said to him: 'Well, what do you think?' He whispered: 'Put not your trust in princes, but this one'll do.'"

"Turn to the other side of the picture, and there is the same portrait. I spoke to a duke about it one day, asking him what was the secret of this strange success of the King with the coster. The duke laughed, and said: 'Well, you see, he replied, it is the same with us dukes.'"

"Drive me to Exeter. I shall be with you in time to meet with all men—with duke or coster."

At Oxford.
Edward was born in Buckingham Palace, where he was 66 years later he died.

"Is it a boy?" asked the Duke of Wellington of the nurse when he waited in the ante-room.

"Yes, a prince," she replied: "It is a prince, your grace."

His good sense as a young man was clearly demonstrated on the occasion of the celebration of his birthday at the royal residence. The jubilation terminated in a very serious "town and gown" row, which it was thought the Prince would look upon with the same degree of pleasure as did his great-niece, George V.

Not so, however, for Albert Edward visited his wrath on the young collegians in a way long remembered, and he was only 18 at the time. It must not be thought from this that the Prince was a dull fellow. He was by no means impeccable. Once he stole away from Oxford unrecognized, and came to London for a frolic. To his astonishment, on arriving at Paddington he was met by one of the royal carriages and a couple of footmen, who stopped him as he left the train and gravely asked where he wished to be driven. Despite his annoyance the Prince was equal to the occasion, and jumping into the carriage he said:

"Drive me to Exeter. I shall be with you in time to meet with all men—with duke or coster."

Why the King Chirked.
A royal birthday party was in progress at his country house, Sandringham, when the Prince and Princess of Wales had been busy cutting up the cake and bread and butter for the children on the estate who were coming in to tea in the royal gardens. Presently the royal couple spotted a group of little ones who were staring through the Norfolk gate with longing eyes. They had come from a part of Sandringham, not on the royal estate, and so had no right of admission to the tea. The King and Queen called to them, and, much abashed, the children trooped in. "Are you coming to tea?" asked the King.

"No," answered one, with Norfolk bluntness, "they don't work for the Prince."

"Who does your father do?" asked the King.

"Feather? Oh, 'e goes a pochum!"

"The poaching would, of course, take place on the Sandringham estate. The King chuckled with delight, and asking no further questions he took all the children in to the feast."

Sympathy for a Bereaved Mother.
Another brief story shows the King's kindness of heart. Prince Eddie's death had just left his august parent reeling from a terrible shock, when one day the King was walking in the Sandringham lanes. Presently he came across an old woman tottering under a load of packages, she was the village carrier, who made a scanty living by carrying groceries and other small parcels from the market town to her countryfolk. The King was moved at the sight.

"This is too heavy a burden for you at your age," he said.

"You're right, sir," she said, ignorant of the identity of her questioner. "I'll have to give it up, and if I give it up I shall starve. Jack carried 'em for me every boy, sir."

"And where is he now?"

"Jack? He's dead—oh, he's dead!" cried the woman wildly.

The King strove away, hurrying to stifle his emotion. A few days later a neat little cart and a trim donkey stood at the old carrier's door, a present from a bereaved King to his bereaved subject.

His Sense of Humor.
A story is told of the King when presiding at the festival dinner of the Cab Drivers' Benevolent Society.

"I believe," he said on that occasion, "that there is only one thing a cabman returns, and that is an umbrella. A gentleman having an umbrella may not want a cab, but without an umbrella he will be compelled to take a cab if the rain comes on. Under these conditions, therefore, I think the cabman is acting quite wisely."

A human incident sent the Prince at a later date into fits of laughter. It was in Madras during his great Indian tour in 1875, and the floral decorations and illuminations in some cases unique and superb.

Some were the opposite, as for instance the one set up by an enterprising importer of jams, marmalades and other potted commodities, whose ambiguous motto dwarfed everything in the near vicinity, and which ran:

"God preserve the Prince of Wales."

Another Side To His Character.
Few people know how keenly Edward VII. disliked unauthorized officiousness on the part of any person, however exalted in position. One day, when walking through the gardens at Sandringham, he noticed that alterations had been made in some of the flower beds.

"Who gave orders for this to be done?" he said, turning sharply to an attendant. The name of a very illustrious personage was mentioned.

"Have it altered back as it was before," he said with a frown.

The late Count Herbert Bismarck, who was a bit of a bully, and Edward VII. who was not, were never on very good terms, and they were once exceedingly bad terms after the death of the Emperor Frederick when King Edward took up the cudgels on his sister's behalf. Matters came to such a pass on one of his visits to Berlin that King Edward threatened, it is said, to throw the overbearing count out of the window.

When He Was Happiest.
"I am happiest," he wrote in the Duchess of Fife's album before he ascended the throne, "when I can forget that I am your royal highness, when I can smoke a real good cigar and read (must I confess it?) a good novel."

On the quiet, when I can, like plain Mr. Jones, go to a race meeting, without it being chronicled in the papers next day that 'his royal highness the Prince of Wales has taken to gambling very seriously, and yesterday lost more money than ever he can afford to pay'; when I can shake hands with and talk to Sir Edward Clarke without it being rumored that the Prince of Wales is violently opposed to the present war; when I can spend a quiet evening at home with the Princess and my family."

"I am unappetized," he wrote, "when I have to attend some social function where I must smile as pleasantly as though I never had a pain in my life."

The Queen of Peace, he thus described his pet aversion: "The most objectionable being in the world, in my opinion, is the man who will insist on pointing at you with his umbrella, and shouting out: 'There he is!'"

As a Speaker.
King Edward had a strong, compelling voice, almost unrivaled in the two Houses for clearness and penetration. Queen Victoria had him taught elocution when he was very young. One day she inquired how he was progressing.

"I regret to say," said the tutor, "that I cannot get rid of the Prince's German accent, but he is doing better."

And has to speak in public the people will not be pleased with it."

The Queen, therefore, ordered that the tutor should give a daily reading before her in pure English; but the King retained his marked German accent all his life.

As a Young Man King Edward attended classes at Edinburgh University, and played his first game of golf. Tom Erskine, a renowned caddie of those days, carried the Prince due to seeing one of the greens his employer give the ball a push instead of the legitimate put, he at once let the Prince know that he was not to do so.

The result was a reproach from the Prince's escort, Sir J. G. Baird, to which Tom, to his royal highness's amusement, at once retorted:

"But the Prince must learn, for if he had done that in a match he'd have lost the hole!"

The Cigars of the Host.
King Edward was a man to tolerate snobbery. He was a member once in the late '90s of a large house party in the Midlands. On the table of which cigars were two or three boxes of cigars, and the Prince was helping himself to one, when an ambitious fellow-guest approached him, and taking from his pocket a clear case, held it out to his royal highness, saying:

"I think, sir, you will find these better."

The Prince turned and regarded the other steadily for a moment, and then good enough for me, his cigars are good enough for me."

Next morning unexpected business called the snob to town.

A Patron of the Theatre.
Nowhere will the loss of Edward VII. be more severely felt than in the theatre world. Both as prince and sovereign he was a devoted playgoer. He saw all the great actors and actresses of his time, and made the perfect actor a real good friend. He forbade all ceremonial on his visits to the theatre, generally entered his box when the curtain had darkened and the curtain risen, and nearly always sat in the front row. Many a play had its fortune made by a timely visit from this royal patron.

A notable recent instance was "The Divorcee" at the third floor back, which did not draw very large audiences for the first three or four performances. Then the King returned to town from the continent, spent one night in London, and visited the Theatre. The next day all London discovered that Mr. Jerome's play was a thing to see, and it became a great success of the year. The King had done it.

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