

"Gifted with great good taste, Queen Alexandra during her career as Princess of Wales has given untold pleasure by that which she herself takes in the study and collection of water-colour drawings and other works of art. An accomplished musician, she could interpret and enjoy the best compositions of Wagner, Chopin, Schubert, and the other masters of melody and harmony.

"The Queen never had any sympathy with the extravagant ostentation which is the bane of so many families in these plutocratic days. Although at the head of Society and the centre of the Court, she has lived as simply as possible, and has always taught her daughters the same lessons which she learned in the frugal days of her youth. She is expert with her needle, and taught her daughters to cut out and make their own frocks, and is said to have excited the admiration of Sandringham cottagers by the skill with which she has heeled stockings. Her extravagances—for every one has extravagances—is in the direction of personal charity, and in giving away things. One who knew her well said, 'If you give her £10,000 a year to live upon, she will spend £2,000 a year upon herself and give the other £8,000 away.' It is the key-note of her disposition.

"Another note of the Queen's character is that of motherhood. She is quite as careful a mother as Queen Victoria, and quite as scrupulous in the care with which she brings up her daughters."

Few monarchs have ascended the throne so well equipped for the duties of rulership as King Edward. For in addition to an unrivalled knowledge of men and affairs, not only in England, but also abroad, he is well read to a degree that is generally ignored. Not a single new book of importance appears in either English, German, or French, that does not receive King Edward's attention, and every literary "primeur" is read and discussed at Marlborough House or Sandringham long before its review appears in the London press. I remember M. Gambetta expressing to me on one occasion the most unbounded surprise that Queen Victoria's eldest son should have read so much. On the occasion of the great French statesman's first meeting with King

Edward at a *dejeuner* at the Hotel Bristol, in Paris, literature constituted almost the sole and only theme discussed at table, and a work which no one present but Gambetta and his royal host happened to have read—namely, the memoirs of Nassau Senior—became the topic of most interesting conversation. To show how very catholic are the tastes of King Edward and of his consort in the matter of literature, I may mention that about the time of the assassination of Czar Alexander II., I had occasion to despatch to Sandringham, at their personal request, a large package of Nihilistic literature, which I had collected, including Tchernyshevsky's "What is to be Done?" and other equally revolutionary writings, in order that they might make themselves thoroughly acquainted with the ideas, the doctrines and the aims of the revolutionary party in Russia, about which little was known at the time.

King Edward has never posed for being a man of superlative intellect, or as a savant. Yet he possesses something more than a mere smattering of science, and I have often heard the late Lord Playfair declare that his former royal pupil knew a great deal about chemistry.

Aside from any question of studies which he may have pursued in days gone by, it must be borne in mind that for forty years past he has become personally acquainted with all the most distinguished men of the day, both at home and abroad. When presented to him their main object has almost invariably been to create a lasting impression upon his mind in connection with that particular science or craft in which they had achieved eminence, and they consequently may be said to have endeavoured to impart to him during the course of their interview the very pith and cream of all their learning. Thanks to this,