

George I, 1714-1727.

George II, 1727-1760.

George III, 1760-1820.

George IV, 1820-1830.

KING GEORGE VI: A CHARACTER SKETCH

By Taylor Darbyshire

IF one were asked for the outstanding characteristic of King George the Sixth, the reply would undoubtedly be "thoroughness." Both his father and his grandfather had decided views as to the duties and the responsibilities of a king, and they both determined that the young sons of King George V should early be "entered to the game." All the childhood years of King George VI, as with his brothers and his sister, the Princess Royal, whether at Sandringham, at Balmoral, or in London, were carefully shaped to that end; and none of the sons answered the call more thoroughly than did the young Prince Albert.

The quiet existence that was his for the first years of his life changed when he was thirteen. Life for a naval officer began early in pre-war days, and Prince Albert found himself a naval cadet before he was fourteen. By the strict injunctions of his father no difference was made in his treatment at Dartmouth from that of the other cadets of his year. He "slept in a hammock and dressed at a chest" as did the sixty or more of his fellow cadets in his year. He was subject to the same discipline, enjoyed the same relaxations and learned the same lessons as they did. The fact that he was a king's son was never allowed to obtrude; he himself insisted always on being shown no favours. Thus when the King inspected H.M.S. *Cumberland* shortly after the war broke out, and the officers were presented after inspection, Midshipman Prince Albert, almost the last in the long line on the quarter-deck, clicked his heels and saluted smartly. No word passed between father and son.

The discipline of the gun-room and the stark realities of war culminated for the Prince at the Battle of Jutland, where the *Cumberland* was briskly engaged; for his coolness and courage under fire there was a mention in despatches for Midshipman Prince Albert. He suffered, however, at this time from a persistent gastric trouble, diagnosed eventually, and cured, as duodenal

ulcer. It kept him in hospital and in almost continual pain for many months. His keenness and diffidence alike had deterred him from revealing his condition long after he might with justice have done so.

A handicap which persisted even longer than the gastric trouble was his hesitancy of speech. Once the system was found which gave promise of effecting a cure of this, the Prince threw all his energy into the work. Nothing was allowed to interfere with the routine which had been mapped out for him. He would leave the hunting field rather than miss a lesson, and all through the exacting tour of Australia and New Zealand he always found time for his daily regimen. He had his reward. In the early years of his public career it must have been an abiding nightmare to him to have to make a speech; to-day this has become no more than a memory.

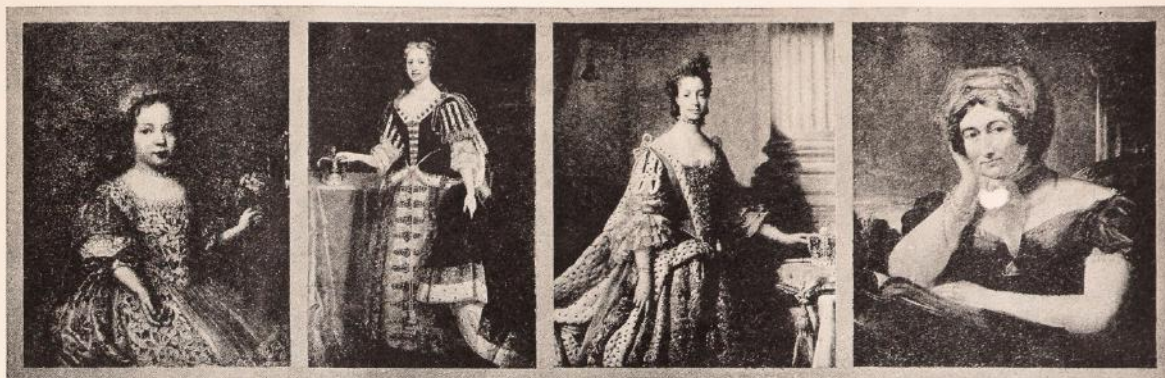
The War and the years of reconstruction over, the time had come for Prince Albert to enter on the duties involved in assisting King George V in the manifold public events which require the presence of Royalty. In the allocation of these duties it was obvious that the King's sons should divide among themselves, under some rough classification, the various ceremonies they were called upon to attend. To Prince Albert (who was created Duke of York in 1920) fell the industrial side, and he studied industrial questions with keen interest, beginning with his Cambridge courses. From the first he lent not only his patronage but his active participation to such organisations as the Society for Industrial Welfare, the National Playing Fields Association, the National Safety First Council, and the "Duke of York's Camp." In his many tours of the country, first and foremost in his mind was the welfare of the worker, not only in his shop or factory, but in his hours of leisure.

Finally there must be mentioned the love of home, of wife and of children, which has endeared him to the countless millions

of his subjects. In the Duke of Windsor's final message to the nation he referred to "the matchless blessing of wife and children" enjoyed by his brother. That matchless blessing is deeply interwoven with all that the King does. He is in essence the home-loving Englishman, content with his own fireside, with the many domestic interests which surround that home and hearth, with the love of wife and children. It will not be Buckingham Palace that he will call "home." It will rather be Sandringham or, nearer London, the Royal lodge at Windsor, where the more intimate surroundings appeal to him, to his Queen, and to the two young Princesses.

Some words spoken by the King himself may perhaps be used to end this article. He was talking about the recruitment of voluntary leaders in some welfare meeting, and he offered his hearers some ideas of his own as to the qualities required in a leader. "To my mind," he said, "he must possess three great qualities, personality, sympathy, and above all idealism. . . . The man who wins the trust and confidence of his fellow men, so that they will follow him anywhere, is the man who can combine in himself these three virtues. I do not think I need speak to you about personality; you all know what I mean by that. Of sympathy I will say just this: its keynote is personal contact and understanding. If you want to lead you must be able to understand and share the joys and troubles of those whom you are trying to help. . . . The third quality of the leader I have mentioned is idealism. Nobody can lead unless he has the gift of vision in his soul, and the desire to leave things in the world a little better than he found them. He will strive for something which may appear unattainable, but which he believes in his heart can one day be reached, if not by him, by his successors if he can help to pave the way."

Does not that paragraph sum up in the very words of the King the character of the King?



Sophia Dorothea of Zell, wife of George I.

Caroline of Anspacht, wife of George II.

Charlotte of Mecklenburg, wife of George III.

Caroline of Brunswick, wife of George IV.

THE QUEEN AND THE YOUNG PRINCESSES

MANY years ago I remember attending certain coming-of-age festivities at Glamis Castle. The Castle itself might have come straight from a Scott novel or a Border Ballad, with its hugely thick walls, its loopholed towers and high steep roofs. Running about among the guests was a bunch of little girls obviously enjoying the excitement and the long adjournment from lessons. One of them, small, dark and lively, was peeping under the arm of a guardian not much older than herself and biting the end of a lock of dark hair. Of all the possibilities of the scene the last that would have occurred to me was that I was contemplating a future Queen.

That castle, that home, the people of the district were the whole life of the little girl, and if beauty, romance and history are proper food for the young mind, where could more have been found than in this ancient country so steeped in legend?

BEFORE Princess Elizabeth was a day old, people were gathering in Bruton Street to look at the house where she was lying, and some of them who were there when the King and Queen arrived to visit their new grandchild were amused to see King George hasten to the door as if he could not restrain his impatience, while the Queen remembered to turn and smile at them before the door opened.

The nation took a special interest in the few months old baby when the Duchess had to leave her in order to accompany the Duke of York on his visit to Australia and New Zealand. It watched her progress and was relieved when immediately on her return the Duchess appeared on the balcony of Buckingham Palace with Elizabeth in her arms.

People used to stand peering through the Hamilton Place railings at the little garden behind 145 Piccadilly, hoping that she would appear. When she was able to run about Princess Elizabeth took an interest in these spectators. Once when she was playing with a smaller child she led her up

Her bringing up was Victorian; a governess living in the house taught her and her sisters. The life was homely and simple: friends in every cottage and games played for fun and not for sport, but behind the home was the history of a dynasty longer than many monarchies, and nearly as stormy. The Bowes-Lyons family have been at Glamis Castle for centuries and have had to fight for it.

Small, dainty, with a great capacity for enjoyment and that spontaneous charm that no training can give and no years will take away, it was no wonder she was a general favourite. In her own country she was something like a Princess already. It is hardly surprising that the glamour of royalty and the formal burdens it entails were a definite handicap to her royal suitor. It took her a long while—rumour has it nearly two years—before she could make up her mind to leave her home, although she was a friend of his sister and knew herself

liked by his family, a circumstance even more important than usual when that family lives in the isolation of royalty. When at last she accepted her devoted admirer, everyone knew that it was he who had won her and not the "glittering prizes" of his lot. With her own happy childhood in mind, it is said she is determined that her children shall have the same, with a private education in their home.

Whether the comparison is precise may be doubted. Even in a palace life may be lived well, but it can hardly be lived in the seclusion and quiet of that border castle. In the perplexities of educating a future monarch in a generation not kind to monarchies the "Little Duchess," now the little Queen, will receive the sympathy of her husband's subjects in as abundant a measure as her charm and tact have won their affection and goodwill.

L. B. M.

The Two Princesses

to the railings and presented her to the "Gallery." "This is Mabel," she said.

Three or four years ago people were interested to see that the two Princesses had invented a game of traffic control. Little Princess Margaret Rose on her small bicycle would come riding towards her sister on her small bicycle. Princess Elizabeth would hold out her arm, and the rider, obeying the signal, would stop. When she was very young Princess Margaret Rose was not such a public figure as her sister had been, nor did people hear much about her. Sir James Barrie was the first to present the public with a picture of her when he spoke of her as a most delightful lady, saying that he had been at her birthday party, and that when he admired her birthday cake, and asked, "Is that yours?" Princess Margaret Rose had replied with pretty courtesy, "No, it is yours."

Then someone quoted a story told by the Countess of Strathmore. "When Margaret Rose was still only a baby," her grandmother has said, "I was carrying her and she began to hum a tune. I realised that she was humming the 'Merry Widow' Waltz with perfect accuracy."

One of the best stories about Princess Elizabeth was told of her when she was eight years old. With King George and Queen Mary she had been to see the animals at Whipsnade and then went to tea in the Fellows' Pavilion. Because it was St. George's day the table had red roses. Princess Elizabeth was sitting beside the King, who, observing the red roses, chaffingly asked her why she was not wearing one. Sir Peter Chalmers Mitchell took a rose from the table and offered it to her. But the little Princess put it aside. "No thank you," she said, "I am of York."

Princess Margaret Rose's most important public appearance was at the wedding of the Duke of Kent, when she sat beside her mother on a stool that was too small for her comfort. She fidgetted a good deal and kept pulling her little coat over her knees. When the bridegroom and bride stood before the altar Princess Elizabeth, one of the trainbearers, stood stiff and straight as an arrow, but the congregation had a good idea of her elderly sense of responsibility for her sister when they saw how her head kept turning towards the uneasy child.

E. I.