

WITH SO LARGE a wardrobe and so many possessions, the Windsors' twelve servants seem to be direly needed. According to Elsa Maxwell, some time ago the Duchess remarked that she has to have the servant situation well in hand, because "I married a bell-ringer." But the evidence available shows that the Duchess also is addicted to ringing the bell and issuing commands.

Her former French staff complained that, on returning at day-break from nightclubs, she would press all the bells, summoning the sleepy servants. In consequence they left her service. Nowadays, in France or anywhere else, it is not easy to replace a competent staff, a few of whom must at all times look after the Duchess's valuable effects.

Once a personal maid of Wallis's was asked about the secret of her famous mistress; what were the factors accounting for her allure and fascination? The maid replied, "Her Highness is a most orderly, down-right, pedantic person. There is no man who doesn't appreciate a lady's fastidiousness."

Her conversation, her quick repartee, her wit, and, most of all, her gift of concentrating wholly on the person to whom she is talking at any given time, were also listed by friends as tremendous assets, apart from her great flair for gastronomy, the last-named proverbially attractive to men. Wallis's conversation is breezy, setting the pace, tossing a subject up in the air lightly and letting someone catch it.



According to everyone who ever knew her, Wallis's talk and wit leave nothing to be desired. And according to the Duke, she is sparkling and exceedingly well-informed. These accomplishments, plus her impeccable looks and her desire to please the inner man, are sufficient explanation of any woman's ascendancy over any man. Her famous *bon mot* when playing bridge, "My King doesn't take any tricks—he just abdicates," is repeated in the newspapers every now and then, and justly so.

The Duke lives a rather different life. An hour or so with one of those American businessmen he ad-

those American businessmen he admires, following tips on the market, looking over the quotations in stocks and bonds, and he has nothing more to trouble about for the day—or the next month or so—until another empty hour obtrudes itself in the almost ceaseless round of “pleasure,” like a hole in time waiting to be plugged by something, anything.

If all the year were playing holidays,
To sport would be as tedious as to
work,

Shakespeare acidly observed. And how bitterly Windsor must feel the truth of these words! On the last page of *A King's Story*, he speaks of having become obsessed by a desire to take part in the chosen life in the “real world.”



What is this “real world”? Presumably, for the Duke, not the world of unremitting attention to duty, of continual consideration of plans involving the welfare of millions, of exactitude in

even minute details: the world of unfailing kindness, of rapturous attention to cathedrals and cornerstones, to cockneys and Cabinet ministers.

The “real” world into which the Duke has entered by his “own” free will is international café society, that glittering, gilded bubble floating above the stormy seas of history. It is the world in which the cause of Communism is helped, however unintentionally, by arrogant display, by festivals costing thousands of dollars, such as that party held in Venice where the gondoliers struggled with their heavy poles, upon the pretext of reviving international show and splendor in the threatened remnant of truncated Europe.

It is a world in which business magnates, who continue to ignore the claims of social justice and wise teachings, buy their fabulous toys of hotels and yachts, of glittering diamond necklaces and extravagant gowns, while the workers go home to their impoverished cramped rooms.

~ an excerpt from *Gone With the Windsors* by Iles Brody

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