

THE PRINCE OF WALES VISITS AMERICA

BY GEORGE HAVEN PUTNAM

ON the Fourth of July, 1918, a meeting was held in London, under English direction, to commemorate the national holiday of the United States. It was presided over by Lord Bryce, the Briton who has shown himself of the greatest value as a connecting link between the two countries. Bryce knows more than almost any American, about the character and the history of American institutions, and it is through his influence and the service of his great book on the government of our Republic that these institutions are coming to be understood by the constitutional students of Great Britain.

The address given by Bryce as chairman, presented a forcible and eloquent statement of the relations of the two countries as they had been and as they ought to be. Bryce's address was followed by that of Winston Churchill, who was present at the meeting as the official representative of His Majesty's Government, and whose speech was a carefully studied historic summary. For the earlier period of the relations between America and England, Churchill followed the lines of Trevelyan's "History of the American Revolution." He emphasized the fact that the Colonials were fighting not against the people of England, but against the King's government.



Central News Photo Service

A RECENT PICTURE OF THE PRINCE OF WALES

George III. had succeeded, for the time at least, in imposing upon Great Britain a government based upon Prussian principles. His attempt to institute a similar Prussianized government for the British Colonies in America failed, and it was, as Trevelyan had pointed out and as Churchill emphasized, because of the success of the Colonies in withstanding the theories of George III. and his advisers for government by divine right, that the establishment of liberal government in England was advanced by a generation.

George III. was the last of the English kings who attempted to retain the absolute control of the foreign policy and the foreign relations of Great Britain. Both Bryce and Churchill naturally laid emphasis upon the part that America and England were taking together in the great European war, a war on behalf of representative government against government by divine right, and they both laid stress upon the importance of the work that the two commonwealths had to do together in securing and maintaining representative government throughout the world.

Our Ambassador, the late Walter Hines Page, was prevented by illness from being present at this gathering, and I had the privilege of speaking for America in response.

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the utterances of Bryce and of Churchill took the ground that the sympathetic commemoration by Great Britain of the one hundred and forty-second anniversary of the declaration of independence, the act which had separated the American colonies from the British Empire, was a fitting time for a new declaration to be made on the part of both the countries, a declaration of interdependence.

The purpose of such a declaration would be to make clear that the two great commonwealths had need of each other and belonged together, not only in the fight that was at that time being carried on in France, but in the further issues that were to be determined after the great war had been brought to an end.

I took the ground that such a meeting was in itself an event of historic importance, an event for which there was in fact no precedent in history.

I said that, to use a slang term from our side of the Atlantic, my American forefathers had had no use for George III. with his Prussian theories of government which he had endeavored to impose upon Americans with the aid of Hessian troops; but that we were quite prepared in this great fight for civilization to accept the lead of England, which was fighting under the kingship of George V. I spoke of His Majesty as a fine-natured English gentleman whose years of service to his country gave evidence that he thoroughly understood, and was prepared loyally to fulfil, the obligations of an English constitutional monarch.

The Place of Royalty in the Modern British System

It is not easy for American citizens, however much they may be interested in English conditions, to understand just what part is played in Great Britain by the constitutional monarch of to-day. There is temptation, on the one hand, to assume that the monarch, remaining permanently in office, is still a power in the land, and that his will has got to be consulted, or at least considered, in the decision of all great issues, domestic and foreign. On the other hand, the opinion is not infrequently expressed that the monarch is a mere figurehead, whose absence could make no possible difference in the action taken at one time or the other in the general direction of the affairs of Great Britain and of the commonwealth. The truth lies, of course, between these views.

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KING GEORGE AND QUEEN MARY OF ENGLAND

It is true that while the signature of George, R. I., is affixed to certain documents and while appointments continue to be made in the name of His Majesty, the King has but a very small direct part to play either in the decision which gives the force of law to a Parliamentary enactment or in the selection of the men who are to fill the offices known as Crown appointments. The bills which have passed the Commons and have secured, as after a little delay it is now inevitable that they must secure, the consent of the House of Lords, are approved by the King, under the advice of the Prime Minister of the day, as a matter of routine. It is many years since a King of England has ventured to place his authority against that of Parliament and to refuse to approve what comes to him with the vote of the two Houses.

The men selected as Bishops, Viceroys, Colonial Governors, etc., take their posts under the authority of the King, but the selection is in ninety-nine cases out of one hundred made either directly by the Prime Ministers, or in the name of the Prime Minister by the head of the department having personal knowledge of the work to be done and of the men assumed to be best fitted for the purpose. The official powers of the King have, from decade to decade, been lessened, attenuated, so to speak; but there still remains a large opportunity for personal influence, legitimate influence, an influence that can be made to count, and that has counted, in framing the general policy followed by any one ministry in the management of international affairs, and often in the selection of officials for work within the Kingdom. Ministers, ministries and majorities pass, but the King remains; he is, of course, a permanent member of the Privy Council, and he is in a position, therefore, to retain in his memory the continuity of the work and of the decisions of such Council.

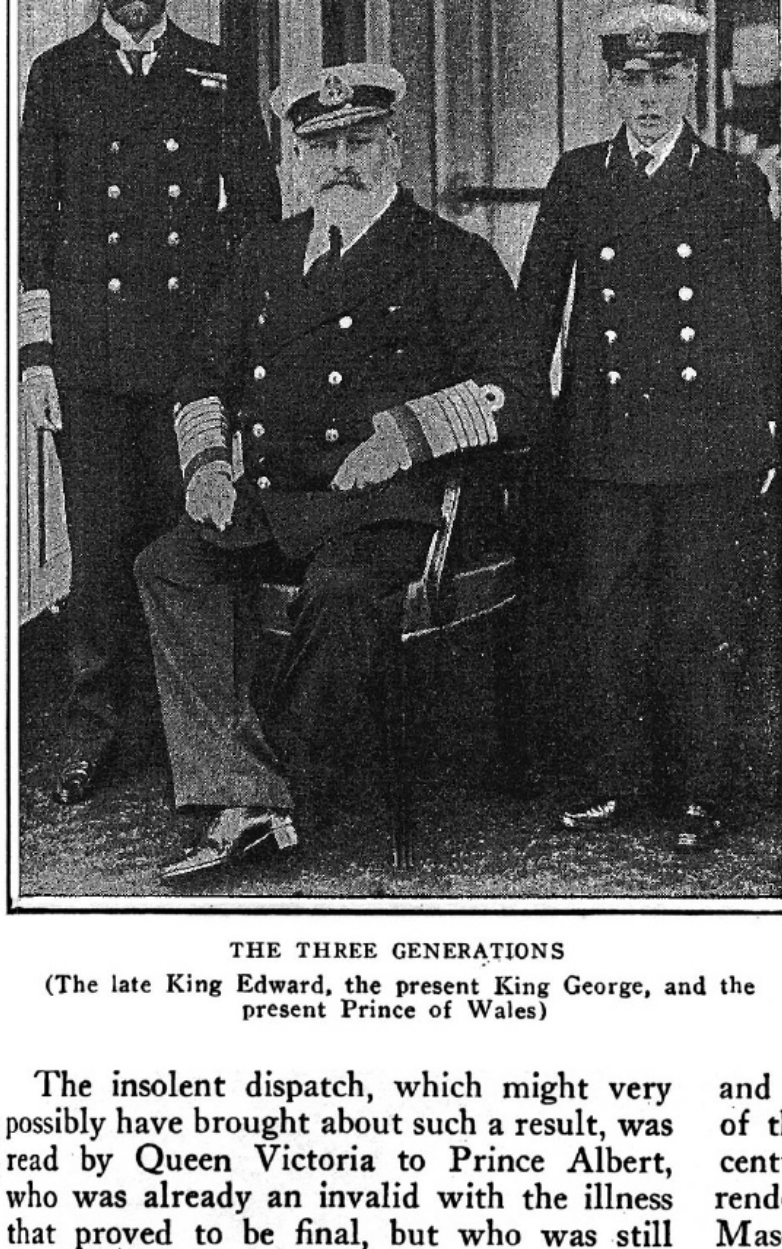
Queen Victoria and the "Trent" Incident

Queen Victoria was a monarch ruling under modern ideas, but with some inheritance of the kingly theories of her grandfather, George III. She was keenly interested in retaining in her own hands as far as possible some measure of influence on England's foreign affairs. She insisted that no document of importance should go out from the foreign office until the draft of the same had been passed upon by herself and her approval had been indicated by the addition of her initial, "V." Americans have reason to

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THE THREE GENERATIONS

(The late King Edward, the present King George, and the present Prince of Wales)

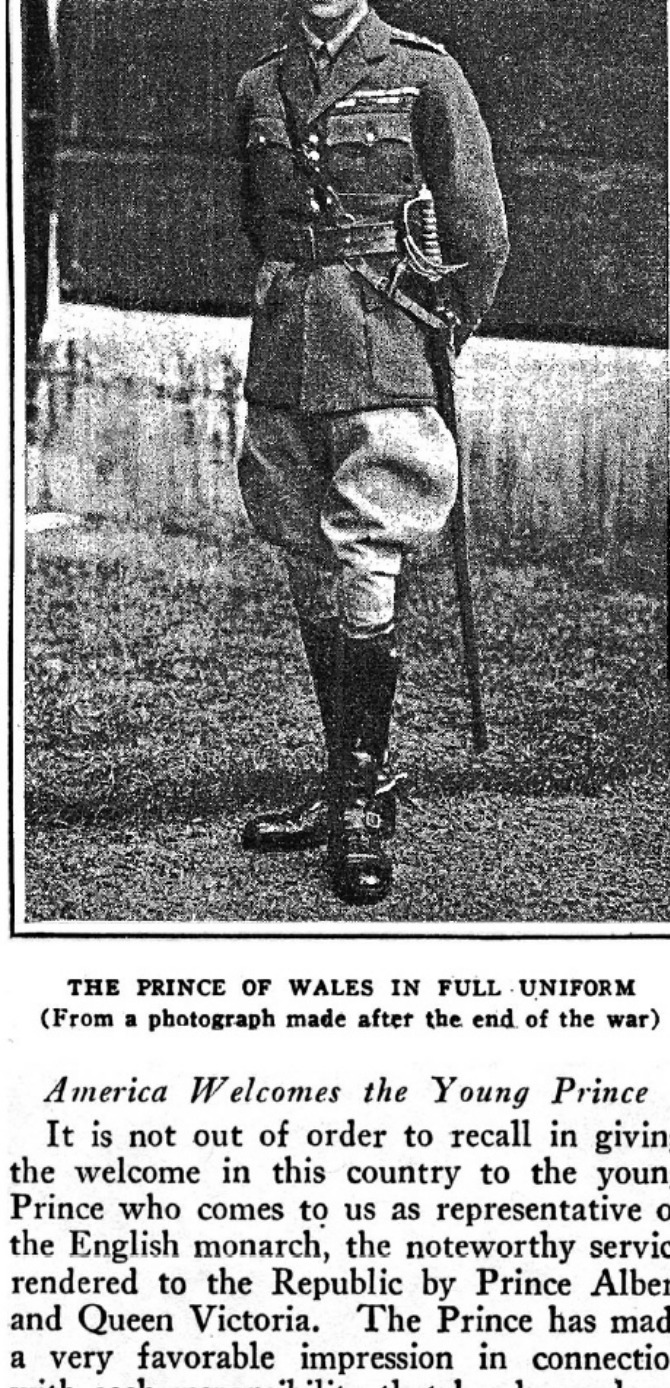
The insolent dispatch, which might very possibly have brought about such a result, was read by Queen Victoria to Prince Albert, who was already an invalid with the illness that proved to be fatal, but who was still acting as the Queen's secretary. Albert told the Queen that this dispatch meant war and the cooperation of England in the establishment of a nation founded on slavery. He refused to believe that the Queen would approve of any such action, and he was certain that the British people would not. Victoria was quite ready to take Albert's counsel in the matter. The offending dispatch was cancelled and Albert dictated to the Queen (he was too weak to write) the dispatch that finally came. The cancelled document and the new draft went back to Lord John Russell with the report that the Queen could not approve of the message as first worded. Palmerston and Russell were very indignant and permitted the word to leak out to Fleet Street and the Strand that, not for the first time, a foreign Prince (Albert) was interfering with the national policy of Great Britain.

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THE PRINCE OF WALES IN FULL UNIFORM

(From a photograph made after the end of the war)

America Welcomes the Young Prince

It is not out of order to recall in giving the welcome in this country to the young Prince who comes to us as representative of the English monarch, the noteworthy service rendered to the Republic by Prince Albert and Queen Victoria. The Prince has made a very favorable impression in connection with each responsibility that has been placed upon him, and these responsibilities have been varied. He has shown himself a conscientious student and a brave soldier under fire in the field, and he has also shown patience and sympathy in fulfilling the long series of functions of one kind and another which belong to the duties of the Prince of Wales. He has been modest and reticent in his utterances, and English youngsters, at

best, develop somewhat more slowly than do the young men from this side. We do not yet know whether he will give evidence of the possession of the humor and of the social faculties that characterized his grandfather, King Edward. We do know that he has given evidence of the devotion to conscientious duty, which is eminently characteristic of his father, George V.

At no time in the 143 years since the United States was accepted as one of the nations of the world have our relations with Great Britain, or rather with the British Commonwealth, been so important or in so satisfactory a condition.

Our Yankee boys have been fighting shoulder to shoulder with the men from Great Britain and from the far off British Dominions. America was two years late in coming into the struggle, but she had the privilege of being the decisive factor in bringing about the victory. The representatives of America and of Great Britain have found themselves in substantial accord in what they have attempted to bring about in the settlement in Paris. They have spoken with authority on behalf of representative government and they were prepared to do their part in protecting the smaller states from aggression. They realize that representative government in England and in the States is safe only when despotic government has been brought to an end in other states. The world must be made safe for democracy and the responsibility rests upon Englishmen and Americans of showing that democracy can secure a safe, wise and just rule for the world.

King Edward's Tact in Diplomacy

King Edward VII. avoided raising any such contention as that which had been maintained by his mother in regard to the right to supervise the character and wording of documents on foreign affairs. His personal relations, however, constituted a very important influence during the years of his reign on the foreign affairs of Great Britain. It is now pretty well understood by the historians that it was through Edward's tact and prescience in bringing about the understanding with France that the foundations were laid for the alliance of the two states which have fought this bitter war through together and have, through their own substantial entente, saved representative government for Europe.

This American contention had been one of the causes of the war of 1812-15, but no reference to it had been made in the Treaty of Ghent, and the first formal acceptance by England of the American doctrine was given half a century later in the demand for the surrender of the Confederate Commissioners Mason and Slidell.

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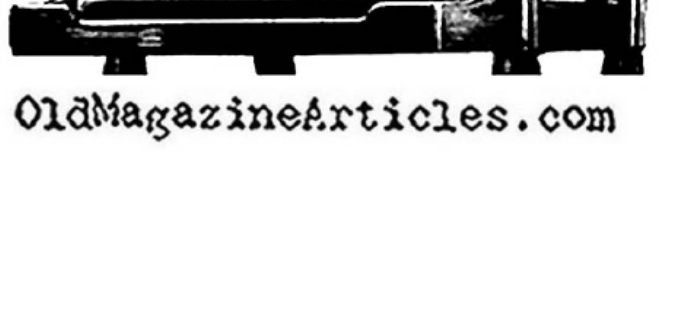
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