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COURT OF KING EDWARD

CEREMONIES REVIVED BY HIS MAJESTY WITH HISTORIC GLAMOUR.

Diagnosing London Home of the King and Queen Inside is More Wonderful Than the Palace of Aladdin—Receiving Debutantes At His Majesty's Court—The First of Society—King at Work.

Wherever the King is, there also is his court. It is, however, when King Edward is in London or at Windsor that the court may be considered in full swing.

Most interesting from the public point of view are the great ceremonies which, since His Majesty's accession, have been revived in all their old historic splendour, and with all their wonderful glamour. The afternoon drawing-rooms of Queen Victoria—all too few and far between for London society—were formerly the great events of the season. But the memory of these pales into insignificance before the crowning glories of the evening courts now held by King Edward and his Consort at Buckingham Palace.

That London home of the King and Queen so dingy-looking and unimposing from outside, is more wonderful than the Palace of Aladdin, to any one who has the privilege and may to one of those evening receptions. The noble staircases and spacious lofty rooms are ablaze with light, and decorated with rare flowers and ferns. The furniture is simple but splendid in gold and red, but the rooms are cleared in the centre, and before the assemblage arrives presents a seemingly endless floor of polished wood in which the beautiful candelabra are reflected as in a mirror.

On one of these evenings a guard of honor is drawn up in the quadrangle, and the stately old Yeoman of the Guard, in their rich Elizabethan costumes, are posted in the great hall and partly up the stairways, their lines being continued further up by the Honorable Corps of the Gentlemen-at-Arms, and on the first landing are in the ante-room by the Gold Sticks and the White Staves-in-waiting, and a little crowd of court officials in black velvet and gold.

Outside the palace the streets are thronged with Londoners, who never weary of waiting in the dark, in the cold, or in the rain, and watching the steady stream of carriages which dash up to the palace gates in one long tidal procession, revealing glimpses of women in wonderful white dresses and men in brilliant uniforms.

Receiving Debutantes.
But even these watchers in the roadway may form no real impression of the gorgeous color and rich pageantry to be seen within the palace as the guests to His Majesty's court make their way slowly up the grand staircase and take the positions on the right-hand side of the drawing-rooms.

All the great nobles of the land are here and the very cream of the society of three kingdoms, in military and naval uniforms glittering with stars and ribbons, with jeweled collars and orders of every rank and honorable distinction, or in ordinary court dress, with their velvet coats and knee breeches, with silver braid and silver-mounted swords. And all the beautiful and stately women of the British aristocracy vie with each other in wondrous dresses and jewels of almost blinding brilliancy which are perhaps literally worth a king's ransom.

But the most beautiful sight in this beautiful scene is the crowd of debutantes, the young girls who are to be presented for the first time, and in whose whole lives there will be only one day more memorable than this, and that their wedding day, which is generally not far distant. Many have been the hours spent in consultation with a court dressmaker over the white gown to be worn to-night; great excitement when it arrives in all its beauty, when white billows and long white train, a very dream-dress, get not so fitting by far as some of those sweet young faces with bright sparkling eyes and complexions still fresh and fragrant as summer's first rosebud, who stand trembling a little at the ordeal they are about to pass through.

Then the King comes, and the Queen. His Majesty wears the brilliant uniform of a Field Marshal, with the order of the Garter. Her Majesty is in a handsome gown of black and silver, with a little diadem of diamonds, her long train held by little page boys in scarlet coats, with the order of the Garter. Her Majesty is preceded by the Lord Chamberlain, the Gold Sticks-in-Waiting and the White Staves, and followed by other officials of the household. The little procession passes slowly through the Gold Drawing-Room, the White Drawing-Room, the Blue Drawing-Room, and the State Drawing-Room, to the Ball Room, through lines of tall women who sweep into low curtsies; past lines of men in uniform, who bow silent as Their Majesties pass with gracious smiles and acknowledgments, occasionally stopping to give a special greeting to some old friend, or to some distinguished official returned from active service, a high favor to be chronicled for ever in the families to whom they belong.

Then, taking their stand before two gold chairs on a square of soft carpet, the King and Queen receive the debutantes, one by one, by the order of the Garter. The Lord Chamberlain, kissing hands with that wonderful courtesy which is one of the most graceful and difficult things of a society woman's education, and retiring backwards amid the murmur of admiration which their loveliness stirs even in that decorous assembly.

Hardly less brilliant, save that no ladies are present, is one of the morning levees held by the King at the Palace of St. James'. Generally

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The choicest, sweetest, and
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the King comes from Windsor for the occasion, and drives to St. James' in the gorgeous state coach, with outriders in the royal livery, escorted by a cavalcade of the Household Cavalry.

The courtyard are mounted guards of honor, and His Majesty is received by the great officers of State and conducted to the Throne Room. All the diplomatic corps are here, the Ambassadors and attaches of every nation accredited to Great Britain, in the orders of their own country; the Cabinet Ministers of the Government in power, military and naval men of high rank, and young officers who are to receive the honor of a presentation to His Majesty. Generally there are many foreign visitors of distinction whom their Ambassadors are anxious to introduce to the King, and these are all ways received with the utmost courtesy which has gained for the King the admirable title of "The Peacemaker."

The court balls and State dinner parties at Buckingham Palace are equally brilliant and impressive, and these, together with the others already described, comprising the more formal ceremonies of King Edward's court.

Every day he rises at an early hour, generally at six o'clock, and spends at least two hours in the study and despatch of State documents. Then there is his private correspondence to personal friends at home and abroad, and the superintendence of his household, and the management of his private affairs, which is under his personal supervision and instructions.

In the morning he generally receives one or two Cabinet Ministers, and may be advised on matters of Imperial and national importance, the Ambassador of some powers with whom the nation is engaged in some diplomatic agreement or treaty, one or two Kings-at-Arms or heralds, who are busy with the arrangements for some State ceremony, and any foreigner of high distinction on a visit to London whom he may honor with an invitation.

The royal function has come to be a function of the highest importance to any subjects who have done good things in the service of the Empire, and many a distinguished young officer or colonial administrator, or a man of letters, or an inventor is astonished and delighted to receive a morning or two after his arrival in London from foreign parts, a summons to Buckingham Palace or Windsor Castle.

In the afternoon, perhaps the King presides at a meeting of his Privy Council, or of the Privy Council in the early hour at which he rises, he may be justly entitled to consider the business of the day at an end, and spends the rest of the afternoon in calling upon the Prince and Princess of Wales at Marlborough House, or the Princess Louise and the Duke of Argyll at Kensington Palace, or the Duke and Duchess of Fife in Portman Square, or the Duke and Duchess of Mecklenburg-Strelitz at Mecklenburg House, or any other members of his family or private circle of friends.

Almost every evening the King and Queen are in London they go either to the theatre or to the races. To those who do not live in the heart of the social whirligig, it is impossible to realize what the court means in London, but in general, in commercial prosperity, in friendliness between Great Britain and foreign powers, in patriotism and in the respectability of the person of King Edward's Court is of vast importance to the well-being and prosperity of the British Empire.

Princess Victoria.
Princess Victoria Alexandra Olga Mary, to give her full name, who has just been operated upon for appendicitis, is the second daughter of the King, and the only one of the three who is unmarried. The eldest daughter of His Majesty is the Princess Louise, who married the Duke of Fife in 1889, and the youngest is Princess Marie, since her marriage to Prince Charles of Denmark in 1896. This was said to be a love match from the first. Prince Charles and his handsome Princess reside in England, the Prince bearing a commission in the British navy. The British civil list makes a provision of £10,000 for the maintenance of the King's daughters, which gives each of them about \$30,000 per annum. Princess Victoria has not been at home for several years, though this malady was, of course, as unexpected as when it attacked the King, just prior to his coronation.

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Portland, Me., Feb. 16.—The hull of the vessel in which Explorer Robert E. Peary will make another attempt to reach the north pole, which was made at Burdett, was delivered here, to-day, to have the machinery installed. It is expected that the ship will be ready by the middle of April. It will cost \$100,000.
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