

# 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 PRINCE OF WALES VISITS AMERICA

-the second of five pages-

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 fulfill, 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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THE AMERICAN REVIEW OF REVIEWS

-the third of five pages-



THEIR ROYAL HIGHNESSES PRINCES ALBERT, HENRY AND GEORGE AND PRINCESS MARY

sened, 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

OldMagazineArticles.com

THE PRINCE OF WALES VISITS AMERICA

-the fourth of five pages-



THE THREE GENERATIONS

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

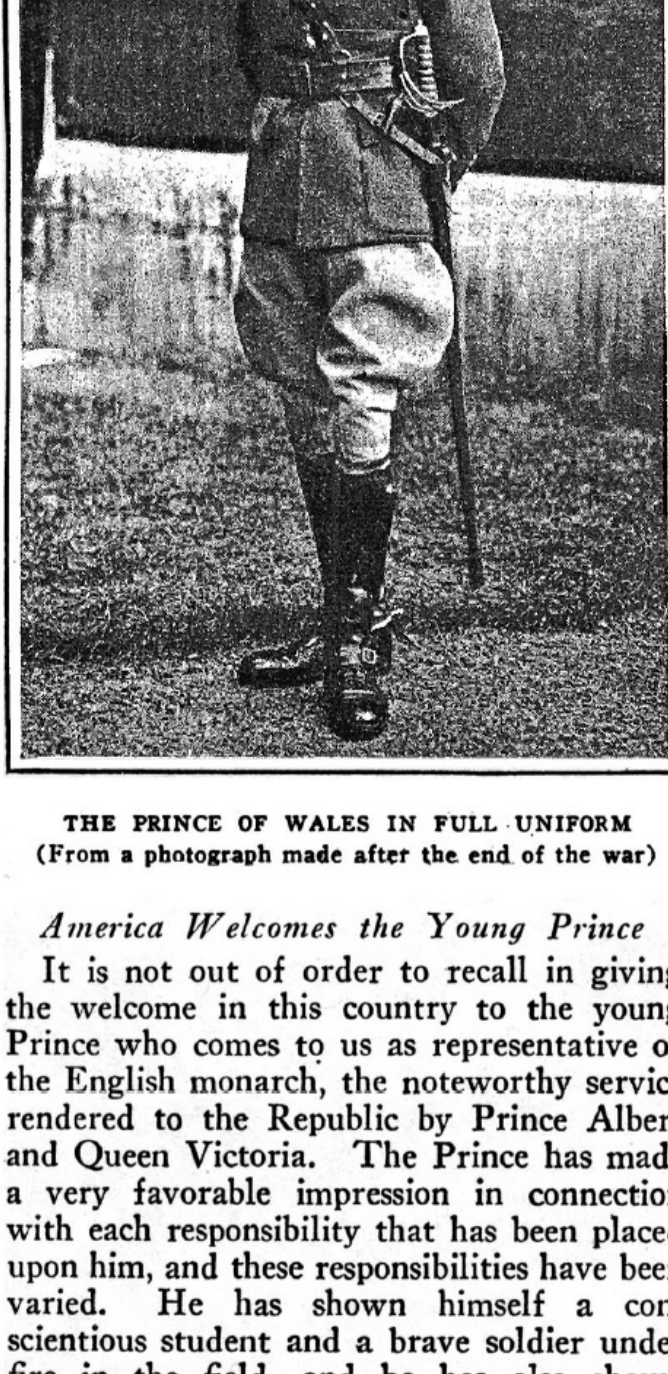
The insolent dispatch, which might very possibly have brought about such a result, was read by Queen Victoria to Prince Albert, who was already an invalid with the illness that proved to be final, but who was still acting as the Queen's secretary. Albert told the Queen that this dispatch meant war and 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 document 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 young Prince (Albert) was inter-

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THE AMERICAN REVIEW OF REVIEWS

-the last of five pages-



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

remember with interest that on one occasion at least this persistence of the Queen in keeping some personal supervision over the messages from the Foreign Secretary proved of inestimable service to our Republic.

At the time of the capture of the *Trent*, November, 1861, Palmerston and Russell, who had decided in concert with John Deane, of the *London Times*, and with Louis Napoleon, that the time had come to break up the American Republic, had put into shape a demand for the return of the commissioners whom Captain Wilkes had captured from the British steamer. This demand was worded in a form in which it could have been accepted by no self-respecting government. It was the intention of Palmerston and Russell that it should not be accepted, and that its presentation in Washington should result in the dismissal of the British Ambassador and in a declaration of war. Louis Napoleon was quite eager to cooperate with Great Britain in intervention, and intervention at that time would have meant the breaking up of the Republic. A personal experience of this general understanding of the position taken by Palmerston and his associates.

I met on an Atlantic steamer twenty-five years back, a man of my own generation who had, as a youngster of seventeen, been private secretary to his father, Judge Mann, the first Confederate Commissioner to London. My fellow passenger described to me how Palmerston, who could not receive the Commissioner officially, made frequent visits to the office in Pall Mall, East, in order to discuss with Judge Mann the best methods for England's cooperation in the cause of the Confederacy. He described one such visit made on the day of the arrival of the news of the capture of the *Trent*. He said: "My father, a conservative diplomat, had not permitted the youngster to be present at the previous conversations, but on this night he was so happy and so excited that he did not think to send me out of the room. I recall the two tall speakers standing before the map of the States (we did not call them the United States) and deciding where the British and French fleets should strike. The French fleet was to take possession of New York, while the British vessels were to sail up the Potomac with the plan of meeting General Johnson and his army in Washington where the terms of separation would be decided."

OldMagazineArticles.com

THE PRINCE OF WALES VISITS AMERICA

-the fourth of five pages-

fering with the national policy of Great Britain.

The man in the street in London was quite prepared in such a matter to give his sympathy to the British Minister. Groups of excited citizens surged up to Buckingham Palace and broke Albert's windows. They did not know (he probably did not know himself) how ill a man he was. He died a few weeks later, but his last act was one of great service to the Republic and to the world. Palmerston and Russell threatened to resign, but Victoria stood firm. They did not resign and the dispatch as finally received by Lincoln and Seward carried the text that had been dictated by Albert and written by Victoria. Lincoln was able to suggest to Seward the famous sentence in the wording of the American dispatch, agreeing to surrender the commissioners, "We are well pleased that Her Majesty's Government should have accepted the old-time contention that vessels of peace shall not be searched on the high seas by vessels of war."

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.

### 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.

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.

The Prince comes to this country, therefore, under the most favorable auspices. He is to be welcomed for his own sake as a fine-natured young Englishman who has done his duty in every task that has been given to him. He is to be welcomed as the son of a man who ranks with the wise and just rulers of the world, and as the grandson and great-grandson of monarchs who were good friends of America; and he is to be welcomed especially as the representative of the great Dominions of the British Commonwealth with which at this critical time and for the years to come are bound together the interests and the ideals of America.

