

When Glory Is Gone —What the Year Has Brought to a Woman Who Loved a King

BY ADELA ROGERS ST. JOHNS



She must carry much sadness in her heart under the bright mood of cheer she gives him.

THERE is a small unpretentious house on Biddle Street in Baltimore, now open to the public at fifty cents a head. It is the "shrine" dedicated to the public curiosity concerning an American woman who once lived there and who is now the Duchess of Windsor.

When you have paid your fifty cents, you are conducted through the simple rooms where Wallis Warfield lived as a child. This so-called "shrine," displaying such intimacies as the tub where the child Wallis took her baths, is the height of bad taste and is bound to create antagonism in the minds of most people. But we must remember that Wallis Warfield had nothing to do with this cheap thing and could not have prevented it.

To the Duchess that house must be filled with memories both sweet and bitter, memories of her mother, the beautiful Alice Montague Warfield, whose death she felt so deeply. Between them was a bond which sometimes comes to a mother and only daughter when the child is sturdier in intelligence and character—almost a reversal of relationship. To Wallis, strong, self-disciplined, her gay charming mother was always a dear companion, to be idolized and protected.

And that understanding and sympathy must have been in her heart when, in those first days of their long separation, when the world still trembled before the abdication of Edward VIII, Wallis Simpson at Cannes read, as you and I read at the time, the appeal of Queen Mother Mary of England on behalf of her sons:

"The sympathy and affection which have sustained me in my great sorrow of less than a year ago have not failed me now and are once more my strength and stay. I need not speak to you of the distress which fills a mother's heart when I think that my dear son has deemed it his duty to lay down his charge and that the reign begun with so much hope and promise has so suddenly ended. . . ."

"I commend to you his brother, summoned so unexpectedly and under circumstances so painful to take his place. With him, I commend my dear daughter-in-law, who will be his Queen. . . ."

Not easy reading for the woman at Cannes, who had adored her own mother and who loved the man she and Queen Mary both knew as David. And she couldn't tell his mother that she had never wanted that reign to end; she couldn't reassure his mother with promises that she would do her best to make Edward happy and continue to care for his well-being as she had always done. The two women had met once, at the Duke of Kent's wedding,

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but it was unlikely that they would meet again.

"I commend to you his brother. With him, I commend to you my dear daughter-in-law, who will be his Queen."

Wallis Simpson could never be "my dear daughter-in-law." Far from it. No matter how high her sense of justice and her motherly understanding, Queen Mary of England must always regard Wallis Simpson as the cause, directly or indirectly, of the sudden end of that reign "begun with so much hope and promise."

As she read these words of Queen Mary, it seems to me inevitable that she would have contrasted her own lot with that of the new Queen Elizabeth, of whom George VI could say, "It will be my constant endeavor, with God's help, and supported as I shall be by my dear wife, to uphold the honor of the realm and promote the happiness of my people."

That, of course, was all the ideal for Edward VIII as well. In her heart, Wallis Simpson must have felt that, had circumstances been different, she might have been as true a wife to the man who actually belonged first on England's throne, as Elizabeth was to his brother.

Some of us have probably had what is known in the vernacular as "in-law trouble." The Duchess of Windsor has and possibly always must have "in-law trouble" of the strangest kind upon record. She is the cause of the inevitable separation of the Duke from his family. Consistent reports have been published that "the Duchess is still unwelcome in England, but the Duke can come home if he comes alone." I do not know that those reports are true in fact, but they are true to some extent in essence.

The Windsors were a close-knit family, deeply devoted to one another. The Princess Mary, Edward's only sister, visited him before his marriage, but she has not seen him since. The Duke of Kent was Edward's closest "pal" as well as his youngest brother. But soon after the famous wedding at the Chateau de Cande, Kent and his wife, the former Marina of Greece, passed within a few miles of the Castle Wasserleonburg where the Windsors were honeymooning, and did not visit them. Mutual respect and admiration always existed between the Prince of Wales and his brother, the Duke of York. But the time came, on May 29, 1937, five days before Edward's marriage, when by Letters Patent under the Great Seal of the Realm, the King, George VI, had been pleased to declare that the right to the title of Royal Highness, borne by Edward, Duke of Windsor, was limited to him personally and that his wife and his descendants, if any, should not hold said title.



Now, this was not merely King George VI speaking to the Duke of Windsor. It was Albert speaking to his older brother David.

Perhaps the title "Her Royal Highness" wasn't so important. But the denial of the title to Wallis Warfield was vastly important in what it signified as to her standing in England on their possible return there, and it undoubtedly angered her husband greatly.

Said the Daily Express, "The Government of this great country have given the Duke of Windsor a wedding gift. They have forbidden the Prince's bride to bear the rank of Princess. Well, it makes no odds, after all. She will still be the wife of the man who sat on England's Royal Throne and nothing can ever write that down."

No, nothing can ever write that down. But these are among the many things that the Duchess of Windsor must face with courage, cheer, and constant thought.

There is over her head daily the sword "Can love alone be enough?"

She herself cost Edward nothing. Let us remember that. But *his* love for her, which inspired him to try to marry her and make her Queen of England, cost him his throne, his country, his work, and his family.

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Envy, exile, royal snubs . . Are heartache and disillusionment still in store?

Against this he has—herself and her companionship.

And so we come to another problem which every woman faces but which in her case is again magnified by those tremendous events.

Wallis, Duchess of Windsor, is forty-one years old. A woman of forty-one must look well to her beauty, her clothes, her personality in any circumstances. The Duchess of Windsor, under the magnifying glass of curiosity, stared at, has that problem at its *n*th degree.

She is called the world's best-dressed woman. But until she met the Prince of Wales she had no great flair for clothes. He did. It was he who encouraged her to buy smart models, who even helped her choose them.

She was never a beauty. Her eyes and eyebrows are lovely. Her hair, worn so simply, gives her a unique personality. But the strong line of her jaw, the aristocratic nose, the steady, controlled mouth are not according to most standards of beauty. It is and always has been her personality, her gaiety, her intelligent understanding and companionship that have made Wallis attractive. It was, surely, those qualities that won the love of the Prince of Wales. He had known many women more beautiful. The fact that only this one woman could win his love is proof that it was not beauty that won him but something deeper, something that will not fade or wither with age, but rather mellow and increase.

But all women dread age, the look of age, the fading of their physical charms. I don't think this troubles the Duchess of Windsor a great deal. She has acquired something of the European viewpoint, and youth is no longer essential, in her estimation, to great charm.

Only as the world sees Edward's wife must she desire to remain forever as charming in appearance as she is now. Those who meet her all, it seems, find her kindly, charming, gracious, and intelligent. But there are the millions who only see her pictures, and for them she must be lovely, because she realizes their importance to those things her husband hopes to do.

It was, doubtless, the attitude necessarily taken by Edward's family that led to the fiasco with Charles Bedaux.

Mrs. Simpson was in the Rogers small villa at Cannes. The place had little privacy. The Duke was in Austria, and as they awaited her divorce they had to remain separated. She had to find a place that was large enough to give her some protection from the curious world.

She looked about for some place which she might rent temporarily, but nothing offered. And then came Charles Bedaux and his wife, the former Fern Lombard of Cleveland. They were friends of the Rogerses. They were quiet, pleasant Americans. No one knew a great deal about them, except that they were very rich and kind.

"We are going to America," said Mr. Bedaux to Mr. Rogers. "Why don't you bring Mrs. Simpson to the Chateau de Cande? It's absolutely private. We should be delighted to offer it to Mrs. Simpson and hope she will use it as she sees fit."

SO Wallis Simpson went to the Chateau de Cande. But the Bedauxs didn't go back to America. They were more than kind, helpful, and they took everything off Mrs. Simpson's shoulders. She needed complete rest and relaxation and freedom from any worry. In the Chateau de Cande, under the efficient direction of Charles Bedaux and his wife, she found these.

And there, as protected as it was possible for them to be, these two lovers who had made history met

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Mrs. Simpson bowed before Edward's mother at the brilliant wedding reception of the Duke of Kent.

once more. They met in great happiness, in a glow of romance, both looking well and rested, both looking forward to their marriage and their life together, trying in every possible way to put the past behind them.

There are events surrounding the famous wedding that cannot be overlooked in any record of this astounding year of the Duchess of Windsor's life.

The former King had agreed to postpone his marriage until after the coronation. He didn't want to steal his brother's show.

Warre Bradley Wells, who has as complete a grasp of this situation as any writer today, says in *Why Edward Went*, "In return, King George VI agreed to the Royal Family being represented at Edward's wedding to Mrs. Simpson. It was understood that Princess Mary and the Duke of Kent would attend it."

But no member of the royal family *did* attend. Nor did the friends of his boyhood, the members of his personal staff, his private friends attend. The prohibition in England was complete—and I think unwise and unnecessary.

There is something incredibly pathetic about that wedding, for all the two romantic and glamorous figures who were its stars. The Duke was in a foreign land, without one single member of his family at his side. Only two friends, one of them his lawyer, had been permitted to attend. He had listened, with Wallis at his side, to the coronation, knowing he might have been in that great position. Whether or not there were any regrets in his mind, there must certainly have been much sadness and many mingled uncertainties.

At this difficult time, Mr. and Mrs. Bedaux had offered a temporary home, a haven. No wonder the Duke and Wallis Warfield felt that the American couple were very good friends indeed. No wonder, knowing nothing of the "Bedaux hour," they counted Charles Bedaux as a trusted adviser and later allowed him to arrange their American tour.

It all seems quite humanly understandable. If they believed, as they probably did, that their visit under his guidance would be of value to him in his standing with captains

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of American industry, they also probably felt that they owed him that return for his hospitality and care.

Let us, in these closing pages, regard the situation as it is today and consider for a moment the real and great new sorrow of the Duchess of Windsor.

As these words go to press, there are rumors that the Duke and Duchess may arrive in America early in February. At present they are spending the holidays on the Riviera, still homeless and without a country.

WHAT is to be the future of this man who is rightly described by many as the greatest personality of our times? Is he to find work to do, a place to use his gifts? Or is this strange misunderstanding of his Duchess and of his simple, mistaken actions to make him a drifting wanderer, condemned to a life of frivolous amusement?

That question must be ever present with his wife.

There is one thing utterly essential. Nothing must be allowed to cheapen this dramatic momentous piece of history, and that, it seems to me, must be of all things the heaviest cross the Duchess carries.

Regard for a moment the abdication of Edward VIII.

He abdicated voluntarily and with great personal dignity, and he has done everything in his power to avoid stirring up any differences around the Crown.

Prime Minister Baldwin said, "Let us conduct ourselves with that dignity which His Majesty is showing in this hour of his trial. We have, as guardians of democracy in this little island, to see that we do our work to maintain the integrity of that democracy and the Monarchy, which is now *the sole link of our whole Empire and the guardian of our freedom--*"

When the Prime Minister moved in the House of Commons that King Edward's announcement of his abdication should be considered, Major Clement R. Attlee, leader of the Labor Opposition, had this to say: ". . . No British monarch has been so well known to his subjects. We on this bench (Laborite) can never forget how he felt for the miners in their time of trial, and how he showed his deep human interest in the unemployed and the people of the distressed areas."

And here are a few brief sentences from the pen of the late John Drinkwater, one of the greatest of English authors:

"When he came to the Throne, he was accomplished to a degree that has rarely, if ever, been possible to a British Sovereign. Born to another inheritance at the age of forty he would certainly have risen to eminence in any calling of his choice. From the first, as King, he displayed that intellectual courage by which, and by which alone, the character could achieve full expression. His advisers were at once aware of his determination to see, to know, to examine everything for himself. . . .

"Whenever his mind was occupied with his poorer or distressed subjects, it became possessed of an evangelical passion. This was noble work for a King, and Edward VIII

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applied himself to it with absolute honesty of purpose. In everything he took any short cut that this honesty might suggest. On his holiday cruise he sacrificed much of his greatly needed rest in order to make unofficial diplomatic contacts that did his country unquestionable good.

"Wishing to marry a lady for the venerable reason that he loved her, he said so without equivocation."

That is the man who once sat upon England's throne, to whom Wallis Warfield is now married. Those are the burdens, the responsibilities, the great works which he openly said he could not carry without her help and support.

Does not that fact give us a clue to the sort of woman she must be?

"We are very happy," the Duke told newspapermen in Paris. "We are always happy."

But Her Highness the Duchess of Windsor must carry many things in her heart under that gay, bright good cheer which she gives him; and above all must be that fear of the future, of his future, of what place he may find in the world for his great personality, his "evangelical passion" to help humanity to better things.

Will the opportunity be denied him? Or, at long last, will he find that place to which his long service to the world in the cause of peace and good will between nations entitles him, and a new and greater chance to carry on that service with his experience and his personality and his courage, helped and supported by "the woman I love"?

It is not knowing the answer to those questions that must be the great new sorrow of the Duchess of Windsor, beside which all other petty sorrows pale.



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