

George V., the First Imperialist King of England.

A CONSTITUTIONAL ruler is not born, and any person sent forth to govern, but is made by training and environment. His career is not a period of novelty, so much as an orderly process of evolution. In place of the dual tradition of ruling by divine right is the living reality of the living of the people.

Queen Victoria, at the opening of her reign, was a girl of ordinary capacity with a persistent will and an indomitable love of truth. Such endowments and qualities as she possessed were developed by circumstances and directed by high-minded purpose and devotion to her country. Not by virtue of heredity, but in spite of it, did she succeed in making a great and noble thing of her life.

Edward VII. was not a man of the old-fashioned type of royalty, but an intensely human sovereign, who had served a long apprenticeship as Prince of Wales, and had touched the world on every side. When he ascended the throne, he had had a unique training in affairs, which enabled him to keep faith with men and nations, and to promote neighbourly feeling within and out in the British Empire.

Not in character but in personality, he was almost a real man, and his great reality proved himself a solid and endearing force in the world, and his confidence in his equipment for the best of his reign.

The time has passed when a British monarch can be regarded as a profligate as an alien. He has an enormous amount of work to do every day, and his increased social position makes considerable business, over small totals. The business of crown and court steadily grows, and he takes a keen interest in it. His democratic inclinations are high.

male partisans command the richest prizes of public life. The sovereign has the most careful preparation for his work, and the best chance of making a great name and of being shielded from adverse criticism at every stage.

A Hardworked Monarch.

In the character of the new king there is a strong Victorian strain of severity, conscientiousness, common sense, and domestic virtue. He was not an officer in the navy. He conducted imperial missions with thoughtfulness and painstaking care. He has never spared himself in the service of the crown. He has never taken his pleasures easily, but has laboured over his shooting, for example, until he is one of the best marksmen in the kingdom. In seriousness, in doing things, and capacity for work, he resembles his grandfather, the Duke of Connaught, who inherited so many of Queen Victoria's qualities.

King George has never been the lord of sport society, nor an enthusiastic patron of racing. He has made the sports of the country his own because he loves outdoor life, but he has been a horse, a fox-hunter, a golfer, a tennis player, and a swimmer, and has not been infatuated with sport. He has been in the forefront of the movement of his own times, where he is an affectionate husband and a devoted father. He is a strong, ardent worker and a genuine home body like his grandmother.

Strong has been the impress of the Victorian heritage upon a plastic nature, and yet the father's example is likely to be decisive in determining the course of a sovereign. The king has not grown up like George III., with narrow prejudices and enervated tastes, and with exaggerated ideas of the royal prerogative. Nor has he lived, like George

IV., in an atmosphere of intrigue, and been engrossed with petty details of court favouring and disfavouring. He has been well trained in the practical business of government.

As soon as the king settled down to regular work after the funeral of Edward VII. the court officials observed that there was no marked change in the method of routine. He was as punctual, as methodical, and as urbane as his father had been. If his knowledge was less precise and his memory less trustworthy, he knew his mind, reached a decision quickly, and was efficient in the dispatch of business. There was neither procrastination nor vacillation. Every question was approached with frank directness and settled with shrewd intelligence.

Every day morning, in London, he prepares himself for an arduous day's

work by an early start in Hyde Park with a pair of mounted companions. When he meets his secretaries, officials, and equerries there is ample employment for the large staff, for he insists upon keeping abreast with business and not allowing it to fall in arrears. He is a master of detail.

In a broader way, his father's example tends to make the sovereign a master of men. At first he was inclined to write too many letters, and in overweigh himself with drudgery in reading and revising documents, but before long he was substituting conferences with the right men for tedious correspondence, and protecting himself against chatter over minor details. While he lacks his father's tediousness of distinction and cordiality, he has flexibility and tact, is an attentive listener, and speaks pleasantly, but firmly withal.



GEORGE V. AT A FOOTBALL MATCH.

The King and Queen watching the final game for the Army Football Championship at Aldershot last winter.



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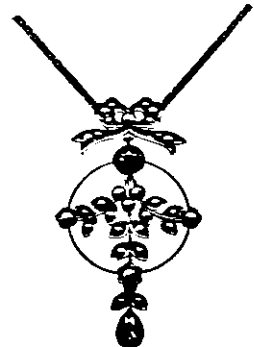
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