

PRINCE GEORGE OF WALES.



THE birthday of George III. is still kept green in the memory of all Etonians by the celebration of the fourth of June. The birthday of Prince George of Wales, who in the ordinary course of events will become George V., falls on the preceding day. It happens thus to coincide with the anniversary of Lord Howe's great naval engagement that was protracted during three days of thick fog in the English Channel, though named the "glorious first of June."

George III. was born at Norfolk House, St. James's Square, in 1738; Prince George of Wales first saw the light within almost a stone's throw of the same place, at Marlborough House in 1865. As a boy he presented in nearly every respect a marked contrast to his elder brother the late Duke of Clarence, who was his senior by just seventeen months. In appearance the one was pale, pensive, retiring, but with a singular grace of manner and deportment that never afterwards forsook him; the other was ruddy of countenance, full of brightness and brusque vivacity. The features of the elder were finely cut, in close resemblance to those of his father at the same early age. Prince George, on the other hand, bore a striking likeness to the Princess of Wales's sister, the Princess Dagmar, the present Empress of Russia, not only in the general form and cast of countenance, but also in detail of feature and expression.

For the first eighteen years of his life he was the inseparable companion of his brother; and probably there have rarely, if ever, been two brothers that were more attached to each other than these two. Each seemed to find in the other the complement of his own individual characteristics. There is no doubt that the quick liveliness of Prince George acted as a constant and welcome stimulus both in work and play hours to the more lymphatic temperament of his brother. While that brother's quiet staidness often served as a counterpoise to the younger's impulsive decisiveness. Were they following the hounds together as boys, it was Prince George whose pony had to take the fence or hedge the first, and give Prince Eddy the lead; were they bathing together in the sea, it was Prince George who was the first to leap off the ship or yacht's side into the water, and not till he was swimming around and encouraging his brother to follow him did the elder take the inevitable plunge. In many ways the elder constantly leant upon the younger brother; and the younger reciprocated the confidence with warm-hearted manliness and devotion.

The brothers entered the Navy together as cadets on the 5th June, 1877. The regulation limit of age within which boys must enter is twelve years on the one side, and thirteen and a half years on the other. Prince Eddy was within three days of the maximum, and Prince George had only passed the minimum by two days. He was probably the youngest cadet that ever joined the *Britannia*. The late Professor Drew, of King's College, London (whose experience of boys and young men was perhaps as large as any teacher's), had previously superintended the mathematical instruction of the brothers, and often expressed himself as much struck by Prince George's ability and intelligence, and regretted that he would not be able to prosecute his mathematical studies at either of the Universities, and carry them beyond the standard exacted by naval requirements. The two years' life spent on board the training ship under the command of Captain (now Vice-Admiral) Fairfax at Dartmouth, admirably suited the two Princes, and conduced in every way to their healthy development in mind and body. While there Prince George won more than one prize for boat-sailing, and pulled in more than one victorious crew of cadets.

On the 15th July, 1879, the *Bacchante* was commissioned by Captain (now Rear-Admiral) Lord Charles Scott. In her the two Princes made their well-known three years' voyage about the globe. They were both rated as midshipmen on the elder Prince's sixteenth birthday, the 8th January, 1880. For the greater portion of the time the *Bacchante* was attached to the training squadron under the command of Admiral the Earl of Clanwilliam, which consisted besides of the *Inconstant*, the *Tourmaline*, the

Cleopatra, and the *Carysfort*. The two Princes under these auspices saw for the first time the West Indies, South America, the Cape, Australia, Fiji, Japan, China, Singapore and Ceylon. The *Bacchante* was then ordered through the Suez Canal into the Mediterranean, and a considerable period of time was spent by the Princes in Egypt, the Holy Land and Greece during the spring of 1882.

After returning to England about the beginning of August, Prince George went in the autumn along with his elder brother, under the care of his naval instructor Mr. Lawless, and the present French master at Eton, M. Hua, to Switzerland. They resided at Lausanne for six months, until on the first of May, 1883, Prince George was appointed midshipman to the *Canada*, which was then commissioned by Captain (now Rear-Admiral) Durrant for service on the North American and West Indian station, where she joined the squadron under the command of Admiral Sir Edmund Commerell. Besides visiting many other places in the Dominion and North America, he ascended the St. Lawrence in her, by Quebec as far as Montreal. Lord Lorne was at that time Governor-General of Canada, and Princess Louise was with him at Ottawa. There it was that Prince George made the acquaintance of Sir Francis de Winton, then secretary to his Excellency, who his Royal Highness has lately appointed his comptroller and treasurer.

During the ensuing winter the *Canada* cruised among the West Indian Islands, and visited Demerara and British Guiana. Shortly after this, Prince George became the senior midshipman in the service, and was waiting till his age allowed him to present himself for his examination as sub-lieutenant. This he did on the earliest day possible, namely his nineteenth birthday, 3rd June, 1884, when he obtained a first class in Seamanship. On coming home he at once joined, as all sub-lieutenants have to do, the Naval College at Greenwich for further instruction, and subsequently H.M.S. *Excellent* at Portsmouth. Naturally he went through the course exactly like anybody else. Every sub-lieutenant has to pass five examinations, one each in seamanship, in navigation, in torpedo, in gunnery, and in pilotage. In four of these Prince George achieved the unusual distinction of obtaining a first class, and thus won his promotion to lieutenant's rank, 8th October, 1885.

From his earliest days at sea he has ever been a thoroughly efficient and also a most popular officer, not only with his comrades in the gun-room or the ward-room, but also with all the men over whom he has had command. As a midshipman he was always keen to do all in his power to render the boat's crew or the gun entrusted to his charge the smartest and best-handled in the ship: as a lieutenant he was always alive to all the individual characters of the men of his division. Those who showed themselves neat, steady, smart, and eager to fulfil their duties and get on, he was ever ready to encourage by word and sympathy and helping hand. Because he knows his work thoroughly well, and is himself practically able to do each thing he requires of them, his men have thorough confidence in him, well aware that when need be he never spares himself; and thus when he calls upon them to put forth all their powers, they always cheerfully respond in a way that British blue-jackets alone can do. More than one of his captains has remarked that they never felt so secure, or could turn in with less concern at night, than when Prince George was officer of the watch.

On the 14th January, 1886, he was appointed to H.M.S. *Thunderer*, under the command of Captain (now Rear-Admiral) Stephenson on the Mediterranean station; but as that ship was detained three months in dock at Malta for repairs, he was temporarily transferred on the 2nd June to H.M.S. *Dreadnought*, under Captain (now Rear-Admiral) Bedford, with the Hon. Maurice A. Bourke as her Commander. Captain Stephenson succeeded Captain Bedford in command of the *Dreadnought* on the 17th August, 1886, and Prince George received his appointment as one of that ship's regular lieutenants 25th August, 1886. Prince Louis of Battenberg succeeded Captain the Hon. M. Bourke as her Commander on the 28th July, 1887, and Captain Digby succeeded Captain Stephenson 21st November, 1887. The *Dreadnought* was then held to be as smart a ship for drill as any in the fleet.

The Duke of Edinburgh was now Admiral Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean; and Prince George was next appointed to his flagship the *Alexandra*, 20th April, 1888. With the Duke he went on a state visit to the present Sultan at Constantinople; and during the three years that he served on the Mediterranean station he visited for a second or third time his uncle, the King of the Hellenes, at Athens, renewed his acquaintance with the late Khedive Tewfik at Cairo, besides

cruising at various times off the coast of Asia Minor, Syria, and the islands of the Ægean. The Mediterranean squadron is usually considered the best school for the training of young officers, inasmuch as there are always a larger number of first-rate men of war on that station than on any other, replete with the very latest improvements in gunnery and torpedoes. Since, too, the ships are constantly exercising in company under the admiral's eye, and liable to meet in friendly rivalry from time to time some of the model squadrons of the French and Italian navies, the natural consequence is that all are kept in the very highest state of drill, discipline, and efficiency.

At the end of three years of very successful service in the Mediterranean, which had been full of much instructive discipline for him, Prince George returned to England, and volunteered for another course of gunnery training on board H.M.S. *Excellent* at Portsmouth. Having undergone this, he was appointed 1st February, 1889, to the *Northumberland*, Captain Darwin, the flagship of the Channel Squadron under the command of Vice-Admiral Baird. He took an active part in the naval manœuvres that summer, and was placed in charge of one of the finest of the torpedo boats.

It happened that another of these craft disabled her screw off the coast of Ireland, and was in danger of drifting on to a lee shore. The sea was running high, and there was a stiff gale blowing. Prince George was sent to her assistance. The task was a most difficult one, owing to the delicate nature of the construction of such boats. He showed, however, such skill, judgment and nerve in approaching, securing with wire hawser after several hours' effort, and ultimately towing the disabled craft into safety, as won him high encomiums of praise to the Admiralty from Captain Fitzgerald and other senior officers who witnessed his conduct on that occasion. The achievement was perhaps all the more noteworthy as Prince George (like Nelson and many another distinguished naval officer) suffers terribly from sea-sickness; and the behaviour of a torpedo boat in rough weather is not the most conducive to quietness of nerve or for comfortably collecting the thoughts.

As he had now unmistakably given evidence of exceptional capability as a lieutenant, the Admiralty ordered him on 6th May, 1890, to commission the *Thrush*, a large gunboat of 805 tons burthen and 1200 horse-power, at Chatham for service on the North American and West Indian stations. Such independent commands are usually given to senior lieutenants only, but it was a distinction which Prince George had well earned. He had further the ticklish task assigned to him of towing a torpedo boat astern across the Atlantic to Bermuda. This too he successfully accomplished. His professional duties took him to various places in the Canadian Dominion and to one or two on the United States seaboard.

In the following autumn he was deputed by the Queen as her representative to open the Industrial Exhibition at Jamaica. This was his third visit to the West Indies, and his presence awakened among the inhabitants of every degree even more than the usual fervent demonstrations of loyalty to the Crown, and attachment to the United Kingdom. Except on state occasions, such as this visit to Jamaica, Prince George always deprecated the necessity of being received with royal honours.

It was with no desire to avoid performing any real portion of his duty that he requested the admiral in command of the station, Sir George Watson, that he might receive his sanction to be treated simply as an ordinary naval officer. As soon as this wish became generally known he was enabled to see both the people and the places to which his ship was despatched more naturally, and thus to obtain by direct personal intercourse a probably truer and more adequate knowledge of their real condition than if they had been exhibited to him in constant gala attire.

The *Thrush* was now required on the West Coast of Africa, and her place was to be taken on the North American station by a ship of greater power and tonnage. She was therefore ordered home to England. On arriving there Prince George was promoted to the rank of Commander on the 24th August, 1891. He was then in his twenty-seventh year, and the fifteenth of his naval service.

There are, among living naval officers, many, who when promoted to be commanders, were younger in years and had less length of service than Prince George. Sir Thomas Symonds was a commander before he was twenty-five, Sir Alexander Milne when he was twenty-four, Sir Geoffry Hornby when he was twenty-five, Admiral Hotham when he was twenty-three. The Duke of Edinburgh became an admiral when he was thirty-four. He was never a sub-lieutenant at all, but was promoted at

once from midshipman's rank to that of lieutenant. He also skipped over the rank of commander altogether, and went straight from lieutenant to post-captain before he was twenty-two.

It is believed that the Duke now regrets the rapidity of his early advance in the service; though those who know what an excellent officer he has ever shown himself, and how capable an organizer and tactician, must acknowledge that he has proved himself worthy of the honours conferred upon him. Other royal princes of former generations have been even more rapidly promoted. The Duke of York (the brother of George III.) was made a post-captain at twenty, and rear-admiral at twenty-two. He died before he was twenty-nine, admiral and commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean. The Duke of Clarence (son of George III.) was made lieutenant at twenty, a post-captain at twenty-one, and rear-admiral at twenty-five. In those days it is true the age for promotion even for ordinary officers was generally what would now be considered abnormally early. Lord Howe was a post-captain at twenty, Keppel at nineteen, Nelson at twenty-one, and rear-admiral at thirty-nine.

After his return to England, Prince George went in the autumn of 1891 to stay with the Duke of Clarence at Dublin; and the two brothers were once more happy in the mutual interchange of the fraternal affection of their olden days. It is believed that it was there that he contracted the typhoid fever from the effects of which he has only recently recovered.

The one brother was hardly convalescent when the other was attacked by the fatal pneumonia to which he succumbed. It can readily be imagined how the sudden loss of his only brother fell upon him under these circumstances with overwhelming force. Besides the blow to his affections, his whole future prospects were completely changed in a moment. Up to that time his naval career, to which he had strenuously applied himself as his profession for life, had been the chief thought that had filled his horizon.

Though he has since then assured several naval friends that he has no intention whatever of severing his connection with the service, his love for which is as sincere and intense as ever, yet other duties will now inevitably demand a large share of his time and attention.

At present all eyes are directed towards him, and curiosity is excited as to what he will do, and whom he will marry. It is probable, however, that like his brother he will through the exigences of his position come to be known by the people of these islands at large only gradually and slowly. But judging from the impression which he has made upon all who have had intercourse with him, what that appreciation will ultimately be there can be no manner of doubt at all.

In every single duty that has been hitherto entrusted to him he has acquitted himself with ability, and discharged it zealously and to the satisfaction of all concerned whether superiors or subordinates. Beyond the regulation attendance at public functions, the opening of buildings, laying of foundation stones, and making short speeches at charity dinners, his part for the next few years will be chiefly to "stand by," to observe, to study attentively from every possible point of view, all questions relating to the government and prosperity of these realms, and the social well being of their peoples, in order that he may thereby fit himself to discharge hereafter the office of head of the British Commonwealth. As he will naturally be brought into direct personal contact with all the leading men of each party in the state he will have unique opportunities for so qualifying himself. His acquaintance with all portions of the British Empire is already very wide. India is the only portion of the Queen's territories that he has not yet seen. His experience of men and of human character, both ashore and afloat, has been already very varied, and he has used it well.

The undoubted brain power that he possesses is inherited perhaps from the Prince Consort as well as from the Queen of Denmark. He is known to be a great reader, of active habits of mind and body, punctual in the discharge of the smallest appointments, warm and constant in his friendships, endowed with a large share of practical common sense, simple in his tastes, and like his late brother singularly free from any trace of self-esteem or conceit, most considerate for the feelings of others, willing to learn from all, generous and openhanded yet careful and frugal on his own account, for his private allowance has up to now been moderate and never large.

His fellow countrymen may patiently await and watch the further development of such a character with strong faith and with large hope.



George

ENGRAVED BY W. BISCOMBE GARDNER FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY RUSSELL AND SONS, 17 BAKER ST., W.