

Recollections of The Royal Tour

It was the 15th of September, 1901. I was in the city of Quebec, as a special newspaper artist on the Tour Through Canada of Their Royal Highnesses The Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York, the present King George and Queen Mary. They were expected to arrive the next day, and the city was putting the last touches to its decorations for the welcome to the Royal visitors.

I was seated on a wharf belonging to the Department of Marine, adjoining that on which the Duke and Duchess were to land. From my vantage point I had a comprehensive view of the scene of their arrival, and I was taking time by the forelock by drawing carefully the setting of the spectacle, which included the King's wharf, the rocky cliffside and the terrace above, and the silhouette of the citadel against the sky. All this, sketched in the day before, would leave for the morrow only the relative placing of the figures taking part ~~in~~ in the ceremony. Such was the procedure before the days of instantaneous press photography or the news reel.

The Royal landing place was busy with workmen, draping bunting, hoisting flags, arranging seats. I was well along with my drawing when I became aware of a ~~man~~ figure strongly contrasting with the shirt-sleeved and overalled laborers on the wharf. It was that of a stocky, silk-hatted man, correctly dressed in a closely buttoned frock coat, grey gloves, greyish striped trousers, spats, and brightly polished shoes; he carried a tightly rolled umbrella, he wore reddish grey side whiskers, and I caught the gleam of spectacles. Altogether he conveyed the impression of the conventional elderly stage Englishman, such as one saw in the comedies of the day. Presently his inquisitive eye caught sight of me at work; he took in my occupation immediately and turned

his back on me to look at the view I was sketching, cocking his head and moving to and fro in a way that told me plainly that he too was looking for the setting for a picture. After awhile he disappeared, leaving me puzzled with a faint recollection of having seen his figure before. Then I remembered. A few days earlier I had seen in one of the illustrated papers a full-length photograph of Mr. Melton ~~W~~ Prior, the well-known war correspondent and artist of the Illustrated London News, who was following the Tour for that journal. A few moments later I caught sight of him out of the corner of my eye on my wharf, picking his way toward me ~~among~~ among the metal buoy, iron rails, barrels and other marine gear with which it was encumbered, — an incongruous figure in its dapper neatness, much more suggestive of Bond Street ~~London~~ than the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Within a few ^{steps} feet of me he stopped, and as I turned to him, he said, with a lovely English intonation, "Pardon me, but would you have any objection if I chose the same point of view as yourself?" Duly impressed, as a younger artist in face of a veteran and desirous of showing that a Colonial could match his own courtesy, I replied with somewhat labored politeness, "I shall be honored to have you take it, Mr. Prior." I was particularly proud of the finesse that I put into the recognition of his identity in my concluding words. It did not entirely misfire. He beamed at me benevolently over his glasses for a moment, and suddenly as though in consequence of his survey, he shot out his neatly gloved thumb and drove it into my midriff, saying, "Stow that, stow that, my boy. Let's see your sketch. A glance at it, and "Good, d — a good, that's the place to choose. But — too much work in it for me. When you're as old as I am you won't give yourself as much work as that. But, it's a good drawing, a cracking good drawing." All this in quick, bird-like staccato. Then, "You're going along on the Tour, I hope. What's your

paper? Where are you staying? Come up and see me ^{and} 5
have a drink. I'm at the Chateau, here's my card," and
he scribbled the number of his room on it. Another look
at the sketch, and, shaking his head, he trotted off, mur-
muring, "Cracking good, — too much work in it, — I'll
try something easier."

The early days of the Tour were shadowed by the news
of the assassination of President McKinley. All social
functions, in consequence, were cancelled, and the cer-
emonies confined to purely official receptions. Post-
ponement of the Tour was even considered. The weather,
too, was decidedly unpleasant, and this, combined with
the curtailment of the programme, took off much of the
eclat of the royal visit to Quebec and Montreal. The
Duke and Duchess had already endured, for several
months a succession of similar festivities in Australia,
New Zealand and South Africa. They must have been wear-
y of such affairs; but they gallantly faced the bombardment
of addresses and speeches of welcome that awaited them
in Canada. It was an ordeal, and the Duke, in partic-
ular, at times showed traces of physical strain, for he
was suffering from a cold which he ~~had~~ caught at the
review of the troops on the Plains of Abraham. It was a
day of pouring rain, and His Royal Highness, with true
soldierly devotion, refused to wear the overcoat which was
urged upon him, and shared in the soaking which the
men received.

It was not until Ottawa was reached that the clouds
lifted somewhat, and Canada showed how beautiful
and exhilarating her autumn can be. The Laurentian
landscape which encircles the Capital was in the first
flush of gorgeous fall colour, the air was weather clear,
the sunlight brilliant, and everyone's spirits seemed to
rise correspondingly.

And it was here perhaps that we began to realize something of the attractive human personalities of those whom we had thought of hitherto as ~~the~~ remote and stately figures, ~~royal~~ the heirs-apparent of the British throne. We all know them better now, as King and Queen, after twenty-five years; difficult years alike for royalties and for peoples.

The Ottawa celebration was a happy mixture of dignified ceremonial and friendly intimacy. There was an investiture of the Orders of the Bath, and of St. Michael and St. George, the unveiling of a statue to the late Queen Victoria, the presentation of medals to South African war veterans. There were glimpses of characteristic features of Canadian life: — a lacrosse match, canoe races, log rolling by river drivers, a visit to an improvised lumber camp at Rockcliffe.

Some incidents stand out in my memory. The ceremony on Parliament Hill attracted a great crowd, most of whom could see what was going on only ^{from a} ~~at~~ distance. The space in front of the Royal party was to have been kept clear to give those farther off a view of the proceedings. Gradually, however, some of the ^{and} ~~some of~~ ^{newspaper} men, closer up, began to encroach upon this open space and blocked the view. The Duchess saw ~~what~~ what was happening, (and by the way, very little happened that she didn't see), and ^{directed} ~~turned to~~ one of the aides to request the intruders to step back to the sides. This was quickly and quietly done, and a cheer went up from the people massed on the street and the slope of the hill. I doubt whether many of them knew who was responsible for giving them the clear view. Equally characteristic were the sympathy, tact and efficiency shown by the Duchess when Trooper Mulloy, blinded in the South African war was led up to receive his medal. As the Duke pinned the decoration upon his tunic, she stepped forward with a sudden

instinctive movement, and taking the soldier's hand, said ⁵ that her sister-in-law, the Duchess of Teck, had spoken of having seen him in hospital in South Africa, and after ~~then~~ expressing her sympathy with his calamity, assured him that she when she went home, she would remember him to her. To those who saw the incident there was no doubt of the sincerity of her feelings.

My work, on this and several other occasions, placed me in a position within a few feet of the Duke and Duchess, and gave me an opportunity of observing numerous little occurrences, unseen by those farther off. Undistracted by the necessity of taking any part ~~in~~ however small, in the ceremonies, I was able to concentrate my attention upon characteristic expression and gesture, the revealing glimpses of the human nature that lies beneath the uniform, the ritual, and the robe of office. It required no great penetration to perceive that Their Royal Highnesses were first and foremost sympathetic, friendly and understanding human beings. They carried their royalty easily, and more than once they brushed aside the screen of official etiquette to reach a closer touch with people; — sometimes to the perturbation of fussy functionaries.

The Duke had a sense of humor, a perception of ridiculous situations, always tempered by kindness, and restrained, sometimes, I fancy, with difficulty, by the necessities of public decorum. Its existence seemed to me to be revealed by the expression of his eyes, winning, friendly, with a touch of mischief, as though he wished to share the joke with you, and a little wistful. With the years, to judge from his photographs, the wistful look seems more apparent. One of the Canadian correspondents said, "when he looks at you, he wins you over; you don't think of his royalty, you feel that he's a man you've known all your life." That was much