

KING EDWARD'S \$1,000,000 CHRISTMAS

THIS YEAR'S CELEBRATION TO BE THE FINEST ENGLAND HAS KNOWN IN THE PRESENT GENERATION.

LONDON, Dec. 9.—Christmas is going to cost the King a little over \$1,000,000, and that isn't the only reason His Majesty is said to wish that Santa Claus would go away somewhere and take the merry Yuletide with him. The other reason is that, contrary to much that has been said about him, he is hurried and worried and doesn't get time to have a 20th part of the fun that came his way when he was Prince of Wales.

But in these times of public discontent and diminishing trade, monarchs have to be particularly careful to omit no ceremonial that will conduce to popularity and will scatter shekels among the people. So Christmas is to be a wonderful affair in the royal family this year—the biggest thing of the kind for a century at least. It will be the first real festival of the present King and Queen, and will be celebrated as such, although the period of court mourning for the late Queen is not quite over yet.

A million dollars seems like a fancy figure for a King's Christmas, but it is not arrived at by guesswork. The average cost of Christmas to the late Queen, through presents to the family and friends, gifts to charity, and general expenses of entertainment at Windsor, used to run to an average of \$500,000 each year, but the Queen's celebrations were comparatively modest family affairs, whereas the King is called upon to celebrate his first Christmas as a monarch by sending out invitations to half the crowned heads of Europe.

Crowned Heads for Guests.

Even the aged King Christian of Denmark will come if his health will permit, bringing most of the members of the Danish royal house of compliment to his daughter, Queen Alexandra. It was hoped that Emperor William of Germany would come over to give further prestige to his uncle's party, but he is said to have decided that it would be impossible to get away. Just now, when the Fatherland is boiling with bitterness against England, it would not be politically healthful for the Kaiser to come over, anyway. It is expected, however, that he will send the Crown Prince. Foreign Ambassadors, great officers of state and personal friends of the King and Queen are also to be invited. An entertainment of so many elaborate personages means a big expenditure.

Gifts, however, will cut the largest slice out of His Majesty's million. I am told that the King has just left an order with a high-priced toy house in Holborn or Oxford street for two tons of toys to be distributed among the children of the various orphanages in London and the provinces, and for which the bill will be about \$50,000.

The royal grandchildren will fare better this year than they ever did before. I learned yesterday that a firm of jewelers in Bond street is preparing a miniature crown, set in diamonds, which will be the King's present to little Prince Edward. The Prince's present to his august grandfather, by the way, will be a gold cigar case with a portrait of the Prince painted on the back.

A \$500,000 Tree.

The royal Christmas tree usually comes from Windsor, but the Sandringham woods provide it this year, and a renowned landscape artist has been engaged to trim its branches, provide its setting and suggest its decoration. Aside from the fess of this artist, and from the cost of the presents, \$500,000 will be spent in making this tree attractive.

The royal Christmas celebration this year will be a far different affair from any that was held in Queen Victoria's reign. Then the family always used to gather at Osborne. But this year the King's country residence at Sandringham will be the scene of the festivities. Her late majesty respected old-fashioned ways with a consistency that was sometimes called idolatry, and which, during the closing years of her reign, made some of the family festivities rather monotonous. She was an inflexible autocrat in her own home at Osborne, and those who could not appreciate her methods could not but admire her pertinacity in demanding obedience. But King Edward has a taste for variety, display and ceremony, and spends his money with a lavish hand.

As British as Possible.

The King is rather more militantly British than any other member of the English royal family, and to emphasize the fact he has given instructions that everything, as far as it is possible, that is supplied for the festivities, must be of a thoroughly British character. The King's own tenants on the Sandringham estate are charged with the responsibility of supplying all the poultry, eggs, butter, vegetables and cheese, and a special staff of butchers will be laid on to provide meat.

Foreign markets have, of course, to be drawn upon to supply wheat, and the cellars, usually well filled, are being packed with the products of the finest vineyards of Europe. This item alone will cover some thousands of pounds. Furthermore, the \$100,000 chef at Sandringham is supplementing his staff for the occasion with a number of noted Continental artists in cuisine. The same clubs will be selected from His Majesty's favorite clubs. Many of these men are of gentle birth and education. It wouldn't be quite accurate to call it hard luck that landed them in the position of waiters, for some of them take in over \$500 a year, and it frequently happens that they scornfully decline invitations to wait at fashionable functions organized by the snobocracy of English society. The same clubs will be drawn upon for cooks and carvers, so that the regular club habitue who will not have the good fortune of being one of His Majesty's invited guests will have to put up for a time with the mediocrity of the profession.

Bringing Out the Prince of Wales.

Although political considerations at home compel the King to make this Christmas celebration as unostentatious as possible, it is said that he will figure in the festivities personally as little as he possibly can, partly because he is so driven at present with affairs of state, partly because Queen Alexandra dislikes the idea of much merry-making during the continuance of a war over which she shows increasing distress, and partly, it is said, because the King wants the Prince of Wales to take a more responsible part in the entertainment of visiting royalties than he has done hitherto. The King, although he claims no distinction as an orator, is a ready speaker. He knows what he wants to say, and says it concisely and distinctly. The Prince of Wales, however, despite all the practice he has had on his recent tour, is not a success at impromptu speaking. His sentences are disjointed and he stumbles over his syllables. Off his feet, however, he is an agreeable talker and fond of funny little stories. In entertaining the visiting royalties he will have the assistance of his handsome cousin and brother-in-law, Prince Charles of Denmark, who has the savoir faire that the Prince of Wales rather lacks.

While the Prince and Princess of Wales are busy entertaining the grown-up royalties, Queen Alexandra, whose increasing deafness makes her rather disinclined to play the hostess except in small family



PRINCE EDWARD OF YORK AT SANDRINGHAM HOUSE.

parties, will give most of her attention to the juvenile guests. In the afternoon, before the great state dinner, graced by the inevitable baron of beef and the vast Christmas pudding from the kitchens at Windsor, will come the children's hour around the Christmas tree, at which the Prince of Wales is expected to preside, delivering the presents and making with each a nice little humorous speech, at which every one is to laugh. There will be no Santa Claus and no hanging up of stockings.

Gifts That Are Passed On.

There is always one queer feature of the royal Christmas that applies to the children, as well as to the grown-up—and that is the passing on of presents. Out of the hundreds, and perhaps thousands of presents that the royal children will receive, they keep only a small proportion, turning over the rest to relatives on the Continent and sending all others that are suitable for such purposes to hospitals and orphan asylums. This is true in an even larger degree of the gifts received by the King and Queen. It is estimated that this year gifts representing from a million and a half to two million dollars will be delivered at the various houses of the King and Queen, judging by the fact that the gifts to Queen Victoria used to make a total of something like \$1,500,000. Of these gifts, such as are of a personal nature are carefully put away as mementoes of the occasion, but a great number of them are in the form of money or orders for food and clothing, presented with the express understanding that they are to be turned over by the King and Queen to any charities they may designate.

And not even this sort of gift may be presented by any one who wants to win royal favor. A few days hence a special staff will be put on duty receiving and tabulating the presents that may be sent

in. The list of donors will be submitted to the King's private secretary, and through him to the King, who will decide on which presents are to be accepted. This is the course that was adopted by Queen Victoria as a precaution against receiving presents from undesirable persons. These precautions were redoubled after the bankruptcy proceedings a few years ago, which revealed the efforts of the enterprising Ernest Terah Hooley to get a foothold in royal favor by means of extravagant gifts to be distributed to the poor by the royal hand. Since then a good many thousand dollars' worth of presents have been returned every year to would-be donors; or else, humble requests for permission to present them have been declined.

There is gloom in the Isle of Wight in the vicinity of Osborne, because the poor of the neighborhood used to profit largely by the royal Christmas at the Queen's country home. They will not be forgotten this year, but it will be the poor in the immediate neighborhood of Sandringham who will get the rich crumbs that fall from the royal Christmas table this year. It is hinted that as this royal Christmas is going to cost such an unprecedented sum, an appeal may be made to Parliament to reimburse the King for part of it. Christmas has usually come out of the privy purse hitherto, but Queen Victoria had only her family parties to entertain, whereas a large part of the King's outlay for the coming Christmas will be an entertainment of foreign royalties for political reasons, and not because His Majesty has the least hankering for their society. It was hoped that Buckingham Palace would be ready in time for the celebration. An army of workmen has been invading the great brown barn of a place every morning since last summer, trying to make it a reasonably cheerful dwelling, which it never was in Queen Victoria's

day. She abominated the place, and always scuttled away as fast as she could to glorious old Windsor whenever she had duties that required her to be near town, but did not make it absolutely necessary to inhabit Buckingham Palace. The workmen are nearly finished now, but with all the plastering and painting and decorating the palace is damp and the King refuses to move in until it is thoroughly dry.

If it were possible for a royal and imperial majesty to be anything so ungrateful, the King would be an unmitigated crank on the subject of sanitation, and in consequence Sandringham has been undergoing an overhauling as well as Buckingham Palace and Windsor. He has been running out there every little while to see that the builders and contractors have followed his ideas to the letter. And heaven help the plumber at Sandringham who should be found abusing the principles of drainage as approved by the King! He had a mighty poor opinion of the condition of Buckingham Palace in Queen Victoria's time, and once observed

that he would rather sleep on a seat in Green Park beside the palace than in the most luxurious bed within the place. Sandringham being his own property was always kept in better condition, but in preparation for the royal guests who will be present at Christmas time, and for the use of the place next summer as a royal family's principal country residence it is being put into such repair now that it ought to take as many prizes at an exhibition as the King's cattle do. The King has always felt himself to be strong, too, in the matter of decoration. Distinguished artists have been busy on the place for months, and the controller of the King's household has had instructions that no money was to be spared in making Sandringham the equal, from an art point of view, of the finest country residences of the Kaiser and the Czar. But whatever may have been the practical knowledge, or the admitted taste of an artist in decoration, the King is not at all abashed in insisting on his own way when his views happen to differ from theirs.

CURTIS BROWN.



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