

The Duke and Duchess of Windsor

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He came running into the reception room. "Dolly! Dolly! I do hope you aren't taking cold."

This was the only time I ever heard him address the Duchess by the familiar, diminutive form of his usual "Darling," which indicates how disturbed he must have been. The Duke went from room to room banging down windows, seeing to it that a fire burned wherever she was likely to go.

The least indisposition on the Duchess' part sends him into quick action. Later in New York, my secretary answered the telephone and was startled to hear a clipped British voice announce: "This is the Duke of Windsor." The Duchess, he told the secretary, was running a slight temperature; would I postpone my appointment for a day or two? Remembering his concern when she had merely sneezed, I had no difficulty picturing the haste with which he had bounded to the telephone to call me.

The tea that was served when I visited the Mill was a fragrant China tea which J. Pierpont Morgan had introduced the Duke to many years ago. Now wherever the Duke goes, this tea goes, too. He keeps a canister at his golf club at Saint-Cloud so he may have a spot when he finishes playing.

The Duchess Continues Glamorous

That afternoon the Duchess certainly looked lovely. She wore a pink tweed suit, fashioned with the short jacket she favors. Her jewels were diamond earrings, a large square-cut solitaire and, fastened high on her lapel, a diamond and ruby brooch.

At luncheon we were served halves of avocados filled with rum and brown sugar. The Duke and Duchess looked at each other with amusement.

"Avocado Tahiti," she said, "came into our culinary repertoire during our stay in the Bahamas . . ."

The Duke interrupted, ". . . as an unfailing aid when guests were stuffy."

They have many running jokes like this over which they reminisce and laugh together. The Duke, for example, calls the Duchess' boudoir in the town house her "conning tower" where she observes everything that goes on around the grounds.

Only once did I see the Duchess give even a slight evidence of bitterness; and only then was the Duke admonishing.

The conversation which brought this about was concerned with the perquisites, such as special prices, that certain people enjoy. Someone said to the Duchess, "You get special prices, surely?"

She nodded. "Always! Windsor prices! They're higher!"

Their Paris home features an elegantly decorated salon.



The Windsors' country estate is 30 miles outside Paris.

The Duke, gently shaking his head at her, began to talk of his garden.

Sometimes, I suspect, both the Duke and Duchess have a sense of loneliness, like all who are logical prey for opportunists, whether they be industrial tycoons, members of royalty, or stars of the theater. Undoubtedly, too, they often have been hurt by those in whom they have put trust; the Duchess more frequently, perhaps, than the Duke who, at an early age, must have learned to accept people for what they had to offer and stand clear of their deficiencies.

I think the Duchess is a more understanding and relaxed woman today because of the Duke. And the Duke, I think, is a far better adjusted and more contented man because of the Duchess, the utter dependence she places on him, and the stimulating friends she brings into their ordered life.

Despite Critics, They Live with Zest

Houses have a way of reflecting those who live in them. Where a joy in living prevails, you find, as a rule, such things as good food, cheerful fires, dogs that are important members of the household, attractive arrangements of flowers and, in a house with a domestic staff, smiling servants with long tenures of service. At the Windsors', all these things are abundantly in evidence.

The Windsors have been criticized for the idleness of their lives, which is understandable when so much needs doing in the world today. However, remember that there are severe limitations as to what a royal duke and an ex-king is allowed to do.

The Windsors are even criticized for what they have done—for example, writing their memoirs, "A King's Story" and "The Heart Has Its Reasons." It unquestionably was less than royal of them to tell their side of the story—but it certainly was human.

The Duke is meticulous in his reticence where the Royal Family is concerned. Should they be mentioned, even in the most casual way, he slips quietly from the room. Nor does the Duchess comment; she smiles and talks of something else. I strongly suspect the Duchess is a "people watcher," and has her fun with it.

If the Duke visits England's royal houses, no one hears about it from him. But it seems likely he has seen something of Princess Margaret, who is reported to have given her son the name of David for her "favorite" uncle.

There are still those who are pro-Windsor and those who are anti-Windsor. Undoubtedly there always will be. But let it be said in the Windsors' favor that, after 25 years of marriage fraught with the gravest difficulties, they live with much more than the semblance of happiness to which they were committed.

They live with laughter.

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