

ALL THE WORLD WILL BE LISTENING

By Airmail — Special to
"The Listener" by
IAN COSTER

TWO little girls in white socks and white tulle dresses, their sleeves butterflying out, stood steady as Guardsmen, holding the 15-foot train of the bride at the last Royal wedding in Westminster Abbey.

One of them was the Princess Elizabeth. The other was Lady Mary Cambridge. The Princess arrived, a small, confident figure in white, fur-trimmed coat at the west door of the Abbey on that bleak November day in 1934 and was cheered by Westminster schoolboys, massed deep in the triangle of the Sanctuary.

Her behaviour on that impressive occasion, the marriage of her uncle, the late Duke of Kent, to Princess Marina of Greece was perfect. So was that of her tiny sister, the four-year-old Princess Margaret, who crouched at her mother's feet, sat patiently through the long service until, towards the end, she yawned at length and without any attempt at concealment in all that company of kings and queens, princes and princesses, lords and ladies.

And afterwards, when enthusiastic crowds surged in front of the scarlet-and-gold hanging of the balcony of Buckingham Palace, little Margaret Rose had to be held up by Queen Mary, but Elizabeth's pretty head, just high enough to appear above the scarlet-and-gold, looked over unassisted and a chubby hand waved response to the cheering.

The years have swung by . . . Little "Lillybet," grown into a slim, graceful woman of 21, prepares for her own wedding in the Abbey to the man of her choice, Philip Mountbatten, former prince of Greece and now lieutenant of the Royal Navy. And one of her bridesmaids will be Lady Mary Cambridge, train-bearer on that former occasion when grey London forgot the winter in a day's burst of colour and music.

THE winter will be harder to forget this time. But battle-scarred old London, shackled by austerity, will do its best to give a proper send-off to the heir-presumptive to the Commonwealth. The Guards will not be wearing their scarlet tunics and their bold, black bearskins, but their drill will be clockwork. The Household Cavalry, the Life Guards, and the Blues will not ride in shining breastplates and plumed helmets, but their horses will be polished ebony, and their swords of silver. No stands, gay with bunting, will line the Mall, but there will be flags on all the Government offices in Whitehall and cheering crowds all the way from the Palace to the Abbey.

The King's command has made it a plain wedding, in keeping with this winter of our deepest discontent. Battledress and medal ribbons is the order for the troops on parade. For the first time in history lounge suits may be worn by gentlemen attending a

royal wedding. The Lord Chamberlain has laid it down: "Ladies, morning dress with hats; gentlemen, morning dress, lounge suits or service dress." Well, the black-and-gold of the Navy—the most becoming uniform for a well-made man ever invented—will sit well on the bridegroom, sailor and grandson of sailor Prince Louis of Battenberg.

Even the wedding breakfast at the Palace will be comparatively austere, a running buffet for about one hundred guests. King George insists on strict rationing for his family. When he was inspecting paratroops a few days before they flew to Arnhem, he was asked if he would like some refreshments which were laid on at 11.0 a.m. He said "Yes," and then sent his chauffeur for a packet of tea, milk, and sugar. "I'm not going to eat your rations," he said, and didn't. The breakfast will be no lavish meal, probably not nearly as rich as the spread of chicken-in-aspic and champagne put on the other night at a London hotel by a film company to celebrate a new moving picture.

BUT public and

Press are determined to make as much fuss over the occasion as regulations and red tape will allow. Two furriers flew over from Canada with sample mink skins and Princess Elizabeth chose the style of the coat which is to be Canada's present and then the furriers flew back again, having been thoroughly interviewed. The Princess has had fittings for her wedding dress made for her by Norman Hartnell, the Cambridge man who became a *grand couturier*. And what a fuss there has been about the secrecy of its design. Hartnell's instructions were to stop publication of the design until the wedding day, and his effort to get reporters and photographers to obey this decree made one London evening paper so incensed that it had the temerity to call him a "dress-maker."

Fashion writers have made desperate efforts to get behind the veil of secrecy and they have made all sorts of guesses, the most absurd being the American report that the dress would use 120 yards of material. This would mean asking the Princess to carry a dress three times as heavy as a soldier's kit. On the same day two rival newspapers spoke authoritatively. Said one: "The wedding dress is being made of creamy white satin, like plain lingerie satin." Said the other: "The satin is pure white and has a very high sheen." Well, cream or white, it is certain that she will look delightful in it. Whether or not the silk-worms of Britain's only silk farm, at Lullingstone Castle, Kent, did really apply themselves to the patriotic duty of producing the silk for the gown will have to remain a mystery until after the ceremony.

WHAT is certain is that the Princess will follow the form prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer and vow "to love, cherish and obey" her husband. The inclusion of the word "obey" has made feminists angry. Marian Reeves, vice-chairman of the Suffragette Fellowship, has protested, saying that she considers it "absolutely appalling." It is also certain that, whatever the wording of the troth, the Princess has a mind of her own. She has already shown that by deciding that she will not have Wagner's well-worn *Lohengrin*

bridal music at the ceremony but the unfamiliar march by Sir Hubert Parry.

And the eight bells of the Abbey will ring out in uncontrolled exultation as bride and groom step into their glass coach, drawn by stalwart greys. Old Russ, the one-and-a-half ton tenor bell, will set the pace, like a drum, and the clangour will rise above the cheers of the Londoners. Austerity cannot curb the ardour of those sturdy shirt-sleeved bellringers nor the vociferance of the subjects.



"Two little girls in white tulle dresses"—Princess Elizabeth and Lady Mary Cambridge—on the balcony of Buckingham Palace after the wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Kent

How the Story Will be Told

Here are the broadcasting plans for November 20, as detailed by Broadcasting House, London, in an airmail despatch received as we go to press: Elaborate arrangements have been made so that radio listeners throughout the world will be able to hear broadcasts of the ceremony and eyewitness accounts of the scenes in London. Television viewers in England will have a "grandstand view."

The processions from Buckingham Palace to Westminster Abbey, the arrivals at the Abbey, the marriage service itself, and the return processions to the Palace, will be followed by listeners throughout the Commonwealth and the world in the course of a two-hour broadcast—from 11.0 to 13.00 GMT (11.0 p.m. to 1.0 a.m. N.Z. time)—in the overseas service of the BBC.

Afterwards, recordings of the broadcast, edited to one hour in length, will be reproduced for those who have not been able to hear the original broadcasts, as follows: On November 20: African Service, 18.15; General Overseas Service, 22.00; North American Service, 01.30. On November 21: General Overseas Service, 04.30, and Pacific Service, 08.30 (8.30 p.m. N.Z. time).

The BBC's normal wavelength schedules may have to be modified on November 20 from 10.45 GMT until the end of the broadcast at 13.00 GMT so that the broadcasts of the wedding

and processions may be heard over the widest possible area. All areas normally served by the General Overseas Service between those hours will be able to
(continued on next page)



BBC Photograph

RICHARD DIMBLEBY
Opposite the West Door of the Abbey