

THE KING'S ILLNESS.

THE "LANCET'S" COMMENTS.

The solemn and magnificent rite at Westminster Abbey which was to set the symbol of sovereignty over a vast empire upon the brow of one whose career as Her Apparent had fully qualified him for the higher dignity and responsibility of kingship cannot, alas, at present be performed, for the central figure in the ritual lies upon a grievous bed of sickness. The deep anxiety of his subjects in the critical position in which their ruler is now placed is marked on every face. He has convinced his people of his zeal for their welfare and of his ability worthily to uphold the traditions of the throne. Throughout his life he has not only performed with exactness and willingness the duties that came in his way as the natural consequence of his position, but he has sought work and done it in many directions, for the good of those whom he was to reign over. This is known to all, and as we acknowledge the influence of the powerful and practical sympathy which has ever been displayed by His Majesty with sickness and suffering, our hearts go out to him on his bed of pain. We need hardly remind our readers of such recent incidents as his presiding at Marlborough House over the foundation of the National Association for the Prevention of Consumption in July, 1898, or of the keen interest which he has evinced in the investigation into the causes and possible prevention of the dreaded scourge of cancer. In such matters as these his has not been the perfunctory intervention of an exalted personage; his grasp of the subject has been real and his action judicious and effective. He has acted obviously upon deeply moved feelings and we may be sure that in his turn, now that he has been struck down by illness, he is receiving from his people no mere loyalty of lip-service, but the truest and most affectionate sympathy.

King Edward's fellow-invalids of all sorts and conditions have particular reason to bless his name and to pray earnestly for him in his hour of trouble. In 1897 Her Majesty Queen Victoria celebrated her Diamond Jubilee, when her eldest son found himself called upon to assist the decision of her subjects as to how they might best commemorate the occasion. On the sixth of February the newspapers contained a letter signed by His Royal Highness, which inaugurated the Prince of Wales' Hospital Fund for London. King Edward in that letter exhibited the warm-hearted feeling for the needs of his poor subjects, the appreciation of the demands of the occasion, and the business-like grasp of detail that have always been prominent in his actions and utterances. He showed that he knew well that the fittest object on earth for assistance of every sort—ungrudging, open-handed and immediate—is the sick man whose purse cannot command adequate medical attention,