



KING EDWARD THE FIRST—CROWNED 1279

THE SEVEN EDWARDS

By A. H. U. Colquhoun

KINGS are not given their names through caprice or accident. When Henry III called his eldest son Edward it was to revive the memory of the Confessor, avowedly as a tribute to piety, more probably on grounds of policy. The Plantagenets desired to keep alive their claim of being the rightful successors of the Saxon monarchy. The oath taken by Edward II for example, at his coronation, confirmed to the English people their ancient liberties, "especially the laws and customs and franchises granted to the clergy and to the people by the glorious King, Saint Edward, your predecessor."

If the claim had been more than crafty pretence, the son of Henry would have been crowned Edward II, and the tradition descending to our own time would have made his present Majesty Edward VIII. The revival of the name now is, in many respects, a good stroke of state. The seven Edwards recall to the English some of the most noteworthy and glorious events in their annals. The Scotch, it is true, have no share in the retrospect, except such as their national pride might refuse to acknowledge. But you cannot please everybody, and the Scotch have the memory of Bannockburn to console them.