

Our King and Queen.

The popularity of King Edward began at his birth; and his baptism, performed with water brought from the River Jordan, was an occasion of public enthusiasm. Years afterwards a piece of the christening cake was sold by auction at twenty times its weight in gold.

Simplicity has been the keynote of the monarch's character, and he began life with a simple English name, which reflected the lights and shadows of our island history, added to that of his illustrious father, Albert the Good.

No such mourning had been known in England as that of 1861-2, when Albert the Good passed away; no such delight, since the Prince of Wales was born, as when the heir to the throne was married to the Princess Alexandra of Denmark. The young people met on the Continent, in 1861, when the Prince was nineteen and the Princess sixteen; the meeting resulted in a warm attachment for each other, which, in the spring of 1863, ripened into a wedding.

The nation spontaneously welcomed the union of its Prince with the Sea-Kings' daughter, who became 'Bride of the heir of the Kings of the Sea,' and of whom Dean Stanley enthusiastically declared, 'She is as charming and beautiful a creature as ever passed through a fairy tale.'

Queen Alexandra has from that time enjoyed such a record, as the best-beloved and most popular Princess of Wales in British history, that the loftier position of Queen-Consort can add nothing to her fame. For forty years she has occupied a high position, arising from our late revered Queen's retirement from society, which caused many duties pertaining to the Crown to devolve upon the Prince and Princess of Wales.

No Queen-Consort has ever entered upon the responsibilities of high office with such a complete acquaintance with the habits and life of her people. She is as much a daughter of Great Britain as of Denmark; and her loving devotion, through so many long years, to her august and beloved mother-in-law commends Queen Alexandra to the loving hearts of the subjects of His Majesty King Edward the Seventh.

The 22nd of January in the past year, the day upon which the ever-to-be-lamented Queen Victoria died, was the date of His Majesty's accession to the throne; for the throne is never vacant. No man has ever ruled over an empire so vast as King Edward's, of whose subjects only an eighth part are British. Queen Victoria ascended the throne of an empire which embraced eight million three hundred and twenty-nine thousand square miles; the King succeeds with three millions of square miles added thereto.

Reluctantly Queen Alexandra assumed the title of the beloved dead when Victoria passed away, and, so long as the late Queen remained unburied, her Majesty would not take the title.

The reign of the new King and Queen has begun with a new century. May all the blessings of past ages rest upon it!—'The Child's Companion.'

The Coronation and Some of its Lessons.

(By the Bishop of Ripon, in 'The Leisure Hour'.)

The coronation of the sovereign will be an event unique in the experience of the vast majority of the English-speaking people. By far the greater number of us have

known but one sovereign. We were born, we grew up, we began our career under the rule of Queen Victoria. Her name was a household word, a word moreover to conjure with, standing as it did for fidelity to duty, unsparing devotion to her people's good, unsullied purity and honor, a guileless character and a simple life. For sixty-three years the English people lived under her rule, and grew so accustomed to it that the thought of any change almost dropped out of mind. This need not cause wonder when we remember that Queen Victoria's reign exceeded the average length of the reigns of English monarchs by almost forty years. People who died in the early half of the nineteenth century might have seen three coronation pageants without being very old. The child born in the same year as Tennyson was eleven years old when George IV was crowned, was of age when William IV. ascended the throne, and was only twenty-eight at the time of the coronation of Queen Victoria. Taking the same age, ten or eleven years, as an age when a child could intelligently appreciate and readily remember the event, the child who was eleven when the queen was crowned, must have lived to be seventy-five in order to see King Edward VII. crowned; and to be eighty-four, if he had been eleven when William IV. was crowned. There is an old clergyman in the north of England who reached the ninety-seventh anniversary of his birth in March last, and who therefore was fourteen or fifteen when George III. died, and who lived under five sovereigns, and might have seen four coronations. But these figures and calculations only serve to show how unique the event of a coronation is in the experience of the bulk of our people. This is perhaps the reason why the significance of the ceremony is not very widely or clearly understood.

The people of these realms have often been twitted by their Continental neighbors as being a nation of shopkeepers, and as being illogical, because they are content to put up with certain political inconsistencies in the constitution of their country. The criticism of our neighbors has a measure of truth in it. We are a commercial people; and we therefore estimate things from a practical standpoint. We are not, therefore, greatly troubled by theoretical inconsistencies in the constitution, so long as no great principle is put in jeopardy, and the common weal is sufficiently safeguarded.

The sovereign of these realms is a constitutional monarch. He has rights, privileges and honors, but he has also sacred duties and high responsibilities. He is entrusted with power, and he is expected to protect the interests of the nation, and, as the most important of those interests, to maintain the great and salient principles of the constitution. This high duty of the throne is expressed in the 'National Anthem.'

'May he defend our laws,
And ever give us cause
To sing with heart and voice,
God save the King.'

The realization of the true and rightful position which the monarch holds in these realms is needful, if we are not to be perplexed by some of the apparent inconsistencies to which I have alluded, and if we are adequately to appreciate the religious character of the Coronation ceremony.

For it must be remembered that the Coronation is not a mere splendid pageant, but a religious service; and it is to be hoped that the people of this country will treat

the solemn function of June 26, as indeed a great religious gathering.

In Westminster Abbey the representatives of the Empire will be assembled. In their midst prayers will be offered up, when the crown is set upon the sovereign's brow. The nation will then, in acclaiming their sovereign, recognize the greater sovereignty of God, and they will acknowledge that without God nothing is strong, nothing is holy. 'God alone is great!' cried the great French preacher in the presence of the coffin where many hopes and affections were buried. 'God alone is great!' is the thought which underlies the solemn service in which the monarch is set apart for his high office.

This thought is capable of extension. The moment we realize the governing power and the governing wisdom of God, we recognize the sanctity of every office. It is with no superstitious meaning that we acknowledge that God's Divine Providence has appointed divers orders in his Church. It is an elementary religious truth that 'promotion comes neither from the east nor from the west; that God is Judge; he putteth down one and setteth up another.' This simple truth has indeed often been exaggerated or misunderstood. Men have thought of the rights, the dignity and splendor of high place; they have thought little of the high responsibilities, and noble opportunities for good, which are the accompanying duties of power.

'Duties, not rights,' was the motto of a great Italian patriot, and the lofty duties which devolve upon the sovereign are emphasized in the Coronation Service. The service is marked by certain significant ceremonies; but the prevailing thought in all of them is the one of which we have spoken, viz., that all power and authority are from God.

Let us briefly note some of these ceremonies.

THERE IS THE ANOINTING.

The sovereign has taken the oath to govern according to law, to show justice and mercy in all his judgments, and to maintain the laws of God, the true profession of the Gospel, and the Protestant Reformed religion, as well as the existing religious settlement, and the rights and privileges of the Church of England; the great hymn, 'Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,' has been sung, and the sovereign has been placed in the ancient and venerable chair which has been used since the days of Edward II. The ceremony of anointing then takes place. Usually the sovereign is anointed on the head, the hands and the breast, to signify that heart and hands and mind are to be used as in consecrated service. Thus the presence of the Spirit of God is invoked, and the significance of the oil used becomes clear. For rule and government men need the fitting spirit as well as the fitting gifts. All gifts are from God, and the highest and best gift of the Spirit, to use gifts rightly, is from God. The oil thus signifies man's need and man's faith, and our desire for the presence and help of the Spirit, or, as it is expressed in the prayer that follows the anointing, the blessing of the Holy Ghost.

THE SWORD.

The sword is handed to the sovereign; the sovereign gives it to the archbishop, who lays it on the altar, from which it is again brought to the sovereign. Here the thought that 'all power is from God, and that whatever authority or gift a man possesses by nature and right, he must