



"Our petty cares we see—to oft, alas!
Thro' morbid fancy's magnifying glass."

Coronation Fragments.

BY H. A. B.

For weeks past, and for weeks to come, hardly a newspaper, magazine or private letter from friends in the Old Land will come to Canada without some mention of the great event which marks another epoch in British history. To different minds the ceremony itself bears a different significance. To some it may seem a mere meaningless pageant, a vainglorious show, the vast expense of which might well have been spared. To others, that one jot or one tittle of the observance, or its cost, however lavish, should have been overlooked, would be an unpardonable omission. Some would feel this from their very reverence for the Sovereigns who have already both endeared themselves to their subjects; some because they would have no link even loosened from the unbroken record of the past, and some, again, because their practical minds recognize that this vast expenditure means not merely a display of wealth, but its diffusion. It may be remembered that when William IV. and Queen Adelaide were crowned, the whole nation was passing through a season of great excitement regarding the Reform Bill, and also of deep distress caused by the visitation of cholera. To the King and Queen alike it seemed expedient to have the coronation ceremony as simple as possible, the Queen even having her crown made out of her own private jewels. But the excellent intention of their Majesties to save expenditure failed to please the populace, who dubbed the ceremony "a half-crownation."

If ever there could be any occasion where, for harmony's sake—even if for no other reason—precedent should prevail, the coronation ceremony of King Edward VII. and Queen Alexandra has been that occasion. It would be well to take a few backward glances and try to learn the historical significance of each detail in connection therewith. Ample opportunity for doing this will assuredly be afforded every loyal British subject the wide world over, for of the writing of such books there will now be no end. Meanwhile, let us gather up a few stray threads for the readers of our Home Department to weave into the whole fabric of the completed story when it reaches Canada from the pens and lips of those who have been fortunate enough to be eye-witnesses of the great event. Their records will probably come in somewhat piecemeal fashion, one noticing what another wholly overlooks, and vice versa. Our Mollie, too, will have something to tell us, for

she writes that she means to be there, and we may be sure that very little will be allowed to escape her observant eyes. Meanwhile, what we write in this issue must be in the main retrospective, a little moss to fill up the chinks in this old edifice with a new face, a few reminders of a past without which the present would be shorn of half its meaning.

Whilst the crowning of monarchs is not obligatory in every country, and there are a few reigning monarchs who have never gone through any specific ceremony, yet in most countries it would be considered unlawful for the Sovereign not to be crowned, not to take publicly the oath of faithfulness to his subjects, not (as in Great Britain and Ireland) to swear that he will observe the laws by which those countries are governed, and to act within the limitations laid down for his guidance and direction. In this lies the crux of the whole matter. It is as a marriage vow between Sovereign and people, a sacred bond not to be dissolved except by death.

As a rule, the placing of the crown upon the royal head has been accompanied by the still more ancient form of anointing with oil, which has a holier meaning still, a rite of consecration to the service of God himself, before Whom "all nations bow." In this, as in numerous other interesting details, it will be observed that the present coronation ceremony has followed as nearly as possible the same lines as those laid down several hundreds of years ago.

It is pleasant to read in the columns of an American magazine, which gives its subscribers some beautiful illustrations of Westminster Abbey and other historic spots connected with the



THE CORONATION CHAIR.

O Lord," had just been granted, leaving no heart-aching anxiety to cause a jarring note or to mar the harmony of the voices which greeted the Sovereign as he was escorted to the sacrum. In the words of the fine old anthem, "I was glad when they said unto me, we will go into the house of the Lord!" Nor can either of the Royal pair fail to read a new meaning—one of assurance and encouragement—in the rejoicing shouts of "Vivat Rex Edwardus" and "Vivat Regina Alexandra," which, according to time-honored usage, the "King's Scholars" of the Old Abbey School are allowed to utter as their Majesties pass before the boys' own allotted gallery on their way to the choir. That new meaning must come to them as a promise and a prophecy that the Strength greater than her own, upon which,

through her long reign, Victoria the Good so trustfully relied, and for which she so earnestly prayed on the morning of her coronation, will assuredly never be denied them.

And so let the voices of the people of our Dominion henceforth join with those of our fellow subjects from Britain over the seas, that it may be granted to King Edward our King, and to Alexandra his sweet consort, each to bear, through a long tale of years, a stainless sceptre and to wear a spotless crown.

THE ABBEY.

It would take a volume to describe Westminster Abbey, with its close and vital connection of nearly nine centuries with the throne of England. Throughout all those long years one Sovereign after another has within those sacred walls, received the benediction of the Primate of the Church of England, been "hal-
lowed" with the same

unction, and been crowned with England's diadem as all his fathers have been before him." The Abbey church was built by Edward the Confessor, and was literally the joy of his heart, but at the very moment of its solemn consecration, Dec. 28th, 1065, he who for twenty years had watched its building was stricken unto death, and within one fortnight more his body was laid to rest before the high altar which he had himself erected. Behind this altar, enclosed by eight noble pillars, is Edward the Confessor's chapel, where the historic coronation chair and its consort are kept, except on the great occasion when they are in use. It is to this chapel that the King and Queen retired after they had been crowned, for the purpose of disposing of the various sacred



THE THRONE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND AND THE BRITISH DOMINIONS BEYOND THE SEAS.

great ceremonies in the past, the following expression of opinion:

"Let not the coronation of Edward VII. be called an empty pageant. There will be scoffers to deride it as such, but they will only show their ignorance of the trend of contemporary history in general and of Anglo-Saxon development in particular. The British Crown is to-day the symbol of the British Empire. Nay, more; it is the real bond of unity that holds together that great 'heterogeneous whole,' as it has been called, with all its vast masses of territories and populations, and its still vaster possibilities for the future. In 1837, Queen Victoria was crowned as the titular ruler of two little Islands in the Northern Seas. In 1902, statesmen and soldiers from Canada and Australia, from India, from colonies and dependencies in every quarter of the globe, are gathering at Westminster to hail her son as the Sovereign of a world-wide Empire."

For us, in Canada, this "gathering of the clans," so to speak, has a still deeper meaning than even the testimony it gives to the growth in power and influence of the dear old motherland. It speaks of the love and devotion of her sons, and of a happy, delighted recognition of the glorious share those sons have had in upholding the unity of the Empire upon which the sun never sets, and to which they are so proud to belong.

Perhaps never before has it fallen to the lot of any king or queen of England that their day of coronation should occur during a season of special national thanksgiving, when the gracious answer to their own prayers and to the prayers of their people, "Give peace in our time,



ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY,
Who crowned the King.

ARCHBISHOP OF YORK,
Who crowned the Queen.



THE STATE COACH OF HIS MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY KING EDWARD VII.