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THE GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT.

The Coronation festival was looked forward to with eager anticipation by all classes, and in all parts of the Empire; the preparations were complete, the guests had arrived, the bonfires were ready to be lit, the warships were in position waiting for the signal to boom out their solemn salutation. The fact that the long miserable war was ended, and peace proclaimed gave new meaning to the great festival and stirred many hearts with thankful joy. Then suddenly sickness laid its hand on the chief actor in this great scene, there could be no Coronation without the King. The crowds were gathered in the street, foreign princes were assembled in the palaces, loyal representatives of British people beyond the sea were present in great numbers and all were shocked to hear that the King was prostrated on a bed of sickness, and that the solemn proceedings might soon have a tragic end. But there was nothing for it but to wait and hope. The old saying that there is many a slip between the cup and the lip received on this occasion a startling public illustration. To the people it was a great disappointment, even to the millions who had no financial interests at stake, and to the King it was a disappointment, if possible even more intense because besides the personal pain and delay of cherished plans, he had to enter into the disappointment of those whose expectations had been kindled to such a great height. One touch of nature makes the whole world kin, men of high position share the same pains and meet the same fate as the lowliest of their kind. In the hour when we are impressed by that commonplace truth we realise that we are all in the hands of the great and gracious God. Man proposes but God disposes. Our glory is in submission to His will. It is known that the King was bold, and determined up to the very last to persevere,

if will power could have conquered he would have carried it through but there are some things that Kings can not command. On the whole, the people also behaved well under the sudden strain. Some were furious because they were robbed of a magnificent holiday, others were annoyed by the break down of their speculations but the great body of the people realised that it was a matter beyond their control and that the sensible thing was to learn the lesson and not put too much trust in splendid shows. Many English people feel that they have in recent years been living too much in the public eye, they have had too many crises, too many sensations and after the turmoil of the last three years, a season of quiet, thoughtful life will be the most healthful thing. From this great disappointment there are lessons to be learned—which we trust will not be utterly lost.

CORONATION LITERATURE.

Its abundance is almost overwhelming, and its variety is bewildering. It covers the whole range from concerns of imperial magnitude, down to the most minute personal details. It is served up in prose and poetry, or at least verse, and in photographic in all its branches, in dramatic act and simple incident. It all shows how deep and wide were the interest in one supreme event towards which all eyes and minds have been turned for many months past. Expectation had been roused to the highest pitch by all this manifold activity, when lo, and alas! the same press which had itself been in a state of feverish excitement, and keeping the public mind in the same state, announced the serious illness of the king, and the postponement of the splendid pageant and the great day. Words fail to describe the keenness of the disappointment which fell upon millions of eager, excited hearts; and imagination itself fails to set forth how intensely the central figure of all, the king, must have felt it and with what bitter reluctance he at last yielded to the inevitable. When that had to be done and there was nothing else for it, we have all been told how bravely he bore his fate, and how anxious he was that others should be spared to the utmost, and the daily round of life be interfered with as little as possible. No bitterness was shown in any quarter, for all accepted the reason for the great disappointment as the visitation of God. In all that has come and gone in these feverish days, nothing is more striking, or, in its way more impressive, or suggestive, than the self possession, and strong self command of the million of citizens, and strangers who at the tragic moment made up London. This is one of the elemental master qualities which enter into the make up of the Anglo-Saxon people. In the dreary weeks, months and years to which the war in South Africa has extended, this quality has had ample opportunity for exercise and been splendidly displayed. It has been a discipline of the nation of a stern

but most salutary kind, it has been schooled in the exercise of it, and at this crisis it has nobly borne the strain. It means much, for, to a nation that has such mastery over itself, nothing conceivable almost in the way of bearing or daring is impossible. We have seen it stated by a foreign diplomat who was present in London at the time when the blow fell, that of all which he saw and heard, nothing so much impressed him as this grand self control.

The literature of the postponed coronation has shown, as perhaps nothing else could, the vast sweep of the interests affected by, centered in the life of one man. No class, no rank, no temperament was unreached and unmoved by it. Though the centre of interest was a royal palace, and the heir of a long line of illustrious sovereigns, it was the talk of the ragged urchins of London's slums, and it reached the lowliest cottage in the land, and the rude dwellers on distant shores and under strange skies. With potent spell this event was felt by humble toilers for daily bread and the great magnates of wealth; by eminent divines and choirboys; it was felt by the police, the army, the navy, the premier and members of the imperial cabinet, the premiers of great provinces, virtual rulers of allied kingdoms beyond sea; members of the parliaments of the nation, professional actors, singers in music halls, guests of royalty and guests of the mother country, by contingents of troops assembled from the four quarters of the globe, representatives of different subject yet contented and loyal races, arranged in strange, fantastic garb, or the priest fabrics of art and dazzling jewels; all were there and all felt the pang of disappointment. The advent of peace too had spread everywhere its genial influence, making an atmosphere of such kindly feeling and universal good that it all seemed like some glorious summer day. Everyone was basking in the radiance of this gay time, when suddenly all was changed to gloom by the portentous shadow cast by the king's illness. Such is the story, a story which will be told as long as history is written and read.

Imperial federation is the political topic and dream of the day. A loyal sentiment growing in the favouring soil of equal laws, rational liberty, and the traditions of a long and honoured history, is its very vital breath, but this touch of a great common sorrow and anxiety, and the sacred bond made by it, is one of those things that more than most others make for imperial federation. The whole empire has been so fully and so cordially let into the home life of the Royal household, that the enthronement of the King in Westminster Abbey, which was to have taken place, has been superseded by a more sacred enthronement in the hearts of his people over the whole empire. This is, it is often said, an age given up to materialism and commercialism, and no doubt the charge is too true. Yet, the events of these days have served to reveal that there is in what is apparently the gayest society, and at the gayest time, a deep fountain of sound religious feeling. The service held in St. Paul's on what was to have been the coronation day had more than usual significance.