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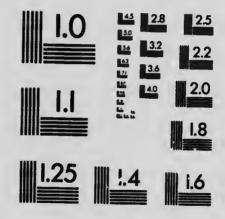
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ODE

ON THE CORONATION OF KING EDWARD VII.

BY GEORGE W. GROTE.

I.

The summer night is past, th' inviolate vault, Gem-flashing, waits Britannia's waking world Wherein the sweet solemnity of prayer, Ere yet the glamour of the dewdrop gleams, Upsprings on the ethereal wings of morn. The circling Phæbus binds about his brow A pale corona in the orient arch, Presentient of another glorious reign, Unfolds the veil of England's wakeful night And flames aloft a new historic day. The burnished hills and lamp-lit mountain tops Reflect the gladness of his ruddy face, And, shafting wide from out his laughing eyes, His morning messengers of living light Sparkle along the glittering, dancing sea; They merrily wake the waving forests of June, Unshadow the lake, the meadow and the moor, Regale, with solar fire, the thirsty flowers, Lend lambent lustre to the purpling bloom And, in the voices where the wild thyme grows, Blend all the music of the heavenly spheres; While joy leaps forth from each cathedral bell.

II.

And not with Phæbus, or the dancing sea Alone, shall gladness be, and not alone To all the lucent orbs of waning night, The glowing hill-tops or the waking flowers, Or to the matins in the leafy lute, Or the soft sighing in the forest glade, Shall all the music of this day be known;

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E'en to the sighs and dancing, shall be joined The music of the happy memories
Awakened by the linnet and the thrush,
The wren, the robin and th' entrancing lark,
As once again each throbbing voice of theirs
Thrills in the thicket or the greenwood copse,
Or hovers over England's free, fair homes.
And now, the morning flashes broad and clear;
From beetling cliff to cliff the sea-mew calls,
Where the sea-diver, fearless, cleaves the foam;
And, soul to soul, and voice to voice, the choirs
Of nature whistle to the murmuring caves
Where the waves break upon the sounding shore.

III.

And so, the voices blend, whereto we build The linand music of this crowning day: And, as the music of the memories Lives in the voluntary bond of love, In retrospection of some duty done, Or of the winning of some soul's reward. So, at each dawn of day, or sunset hour, Or when the song-bird sings or pine tree sighs, Or the wild curlew challenges the storm, Love lives anew, life leaps to high resolve, And courage knows less peril in the deep. Yet music is not all in memories; The voices of each day new songs awake, To higher hopes inspire, and higher aims; The pattering, pelting rain upon the roof— One moment free from fondest memory— Laughs with the rippling rattle of the hail; The softly falling snowflake tempers the blast; Loud though his voice, the lion's imperious roar Mars not the gentle voice of the nightingale; The shining pathway of our cannon-voiced Leviathan widens toward the rising sun And, resting where our "ship of pearl" unfurls, "On the sweet summer wind, its purpled wings," Inhales the peaceful spirit of repose; The zephyr, into flowing billows, bends The ripening field of molten golden grain, And, whispering low to the prevailing gale,

Finds a safe haven for the stately craft. So shall th' hesperian breezes of this day, Swaying the mighty current of events, And blending all our voices as we sing, Breathe toward the zenith of the golden age Of Truth and Knowledge of Divine intent, When fa th and science shall, convergent, build, And hold the helm of England's ship of state.

IV.

And thus the murmur, flowing sweet and low, Inspires a patriot flame within the fires Aglow and flashing on the outer walls; Ben Ledi sings an Himalayan hymn; The ripple of the black tarn lightly rules The matchless waves of broad Superior; The meeting waters of Killarney charm The dreamers of the slumbering Windermere; The Continental Island Commonwealth Wafts gentle breezes to the Isle of Wight; And Britons of undying name and fame, Victorious in death, as were the great Epaminondas and Pelopidas, Or marching to the songs of victory, Reclaim the Rand and veldt beyond the Vaal. What power shall know, or stay the steady flow When Cam and Isis, and the Liffey join The Fraser and the whelming avalanche. Tumbling and roaring down the Columbian peaks, And surging forward for one common goal, One government, one fatherland, one flag! The noisy torrents to the corries leap, Join forces, dauntless, where the Corra falls, And measure voices with Niagara Whose deafening pillars, plunging, rise, and set, Precipitous, above the brink, the Bow Of Promise—emblem of Divine good will, And arch of universal amity— Here shall Britannia, peace-compelling, rest, When e rhythmic voices from the summer clouds, And prismic hostages shall peace restore, Or ever Eng and's squadrons of the air, Swift-sailing, speak, and shake the solid ground.

Nor are the summer mountains of the sky Mere arbiters or witnesses for peace; Who shall explore their vaulted palaces Or tell their towers or battlements, or spell The story of their ivory monuments! Look where he may on this exultant day. A Briton shall but read of kingly power; Then, for a day, these towering clouds are ours: They lend themselves to forms majestical; To lore of legends and mythologies; Temples and triremes and Olympian games, Deities, oracles and Iliads, Kings and agoras of the Heroic age. And Britons of Britannia's calendar: And thereby, widely, on their Alpine heights, They join the deeds of Theocratic days To Richard Cœur de Lion's brave crusades, The glorious enterprises of our arms, Our battleships and ever-expanding realin. Thus, where the clouds take form and character. There, to the joy of Britain's Argonauts, Jason, adored by fair Medea, flaunts The Golden Fleece, victorious, at the prow; In honour of Spartan valour, Leonidas, With famed Lycurgus, in Laconia, stands, And Pyrrha, with Deucalion, dexterous, climbs To high Parnassus, from the o'erflowing flood. These giant clouds along the fore-front range; As might the mighty men of Ashtaroth. Along the shadowy valleys of Lebanon Or where the Arnon flows, or Tabor stands, Down from the wooded heights of Hermon wind: O rightful home of Zeus, where the clouds. Pelion on Ossa-like, piled hugely up, Enthrone great Alfred in an imperial place High as ' heavens, in vastness infinite! Lo, where ne calls his princes and his court And an array of horsemen, helmed and plumed, And bids Antiquity rejoice with us! What god-like forms from out the clouds appear! Mark where the lithesome Ganymede attends, From silvery crest, vaulting to silvery crest,

Lightly o'erleaping every unfathomed cave. Flashing a heliac ray around each cup. But, now, King Alfred's court dissolves and forms Anew! The panoramic summer page Of history, slowly slipping from crag to crag. Blends Alfred's throne into a triple throne, Whereto, behold what king, in armour, comes! Now heaven's artillery wreath a welcomes, while The first great Edward greet his royal peer! Up to this triple throne the our own kings. The founder of Hellenic liberty, And at their call, resplendent, Theseus comes. And clustering courtiers mingle in the clouds: Homer meets Milton on a celestial plain. And i ricles, in Cromwell, finds a friend: The soul of Juliet lives within the soul Of Sophocles, where immortality Enthrones and crowns the melancholy Dane, And Shakespeare crowns, in turn, Antigone. And, now, the men of old and older days Exchange, from their commutual realm of thought, Euphonic phrases and fair compliments: But lo, where, on you broad Acropolis, Dazzling Pentelic marble columns rise! Whose daring chisel incites to majesty This temple of Athers, Parthenos! Whence comes this in .. neible God and of War! Let the clouds answer, 'Phidias onnore waves, As if o'er Attica, his magic wand!' The power of Pericles was to propose, But, to dispose, lived only with the gods, With Phidias, and th' supreme Olympian Jove. Panathenaeaic fustivals we see, We sing of Theseus, and of liberty, Bays, to the brow of Aristotle, bind, Build temples to Minerva, in the clouds, Loitering, linger on legendary lore And the divinity and power of Jove That we may lift our eyes to higher Light, And, so await the coming of the King.

Now praise be given to God, the King of kings, And anthems to the Lord of lords be sung In loud hosannas! Let the bells proclaim The day a joyous holiday for all! A day for thankfulness and prayer to Him In whom the king and queen and people trust; A day for happiness! For, on this day, A seventh Edward comes to England's throne, And with him, Alexandra, Consort Queen-A regal complement of kingly rule— A rule wherein the king and parliament, Within the laws unwritten, enact the laws And guard the realm; a lasting rule, wherein Security and right for all—is all! And this is Britain's highest heritage— Her birthright—and the purchase of her blood; For, what availed great Alfred's reign, or what, The great Confessor's? Or the heroic field Where Harold fought, and William, conquering, came, If mighty deeds and glorious death were all? Who shall deny Britannia's ardent youth The joy, the pride, the patriot fire he feels, As, over flood and field, he fights once more— And wins—the battles, by his fathers won! But, is not victory, but a bubble, burst— A shifting sand-bar on the shore of time— If valour be all? What's in a vast array Of fields well fought against a foreign foe, If, to the victor, government be nought? To govern well! As well as well to fight! Shall yet be England's praise, as in the past! Prestige of arms—to foreign policy—conjoined, Regard for justice, international, And for our well-tried form of government, Withal, a holding fast to "what we have"-Shall form a tangible prop, rock-like, secure! And "Peace with honour" shall with power abound! So shall the nations learn rather to love England than fear the foes of liberty! And all that's best in either hemisphere, In every continent, in every land, Shall wield a power invincible for peace.

And mongrel peoples and untutored tongues, Daring to hurl hatred and insolence Broadcast against a treaty-keeping power, Wisdom shall find in dire adversity.

VII.

Now rest we at the topmost arch of day,
And while, aloft along the sculptured clouds,
Alfred's high throne centres Antiquity
And all the valour of England's feudal reigns,
The flashing fires along the grim sea-walls
And bulwarks of Britannia's broadening zone
Send up a sacred flame around the towers
Of old Westminster. Here King Edward comes!
And Alexandra, queenly as when first
The magic of her charms captured the heart
Of England and turned every Saxon, Celt,
And even the Normans of us, into Danes.
Now they that may, shall to the Abbey go,
That they may say they saw King Edward crowned.

VIII.

Not always, worthily, has the crown been worn In England; and not always has its light Shone as a lode-star to the people's will; But, from the sacred fane of Winchester And Wessex, and the time of Ethelred, And of Canute the Dane, to where the good Saint Edward, the Confessor King—the great Restorer of the Saxon line-laid well The deep foundations of the Abbey walls, The golden shaft of light from Alfred's crown Held steady course; and Westminster became The pledge of him who wrought rather for Church Than State, yet builded better than he thought; And here his canonized bones found fitting rest. Here, Harold and the Norman kings were crowned; Here, Edward brought the Coronation Stone; And, whether from Scone or Egypt, came the light Thereof, the sun-light of King Alfred's crown, And of the crown of the Victorian Age, Shall great magnificence and glory bring

To England on this Coronation Day. Here shall the time-worn vaulted roof resound With anthems wafted from the choirs above; And here the Seventh Edward shall be crowned, And, at King Edward's chair, the emblems take Of pre-existent knight-conferring power. And on his head the man of God shall pour, From the ampulla and the golden bowl, A reverent blessing in the holy oil. The king shall cause the consecrated sword Of state to be unscabbarded and drawn For him as the Defender of the Faith, Bound by his conscience and bound by his oath. Here heralded, a world of beauty waits; And honour on honour waits, and rank on rank; And Mediæval rites and colour-schemes And all the glory and pomp of Chivalry Challenge the graces of heraldic art, And blend the Roman and the Grecian arch Where dim-lit banners lend historic light. And now behold the king his crown puts on, And binds a glittering crown about the brow Of Alexandra, sharer of his care, Soul of his soul—Incomparable Queen. And, from the vaults of England's deathless dead, Voices of heroes, kings and ministers, Voices from our imperishable past, Rustling on wings of approbation, float Up and along the transept and the nave, Up to the chance' and the very dome Over the altar ar King Edward's chair. Now solemnly, the benediction falls; And loud, without the Abbey walls, a shout, Rending the air, proclaims the king is crowned. Cannons add roar to roar, boom upon boom; All round the realm, sound blends in sound, Music in the air, music in the soul. And, flaming to his purple shadowy couch, The fiery Phæbus, finishing his task, Proclaims the king is crowned! Long live the king!

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