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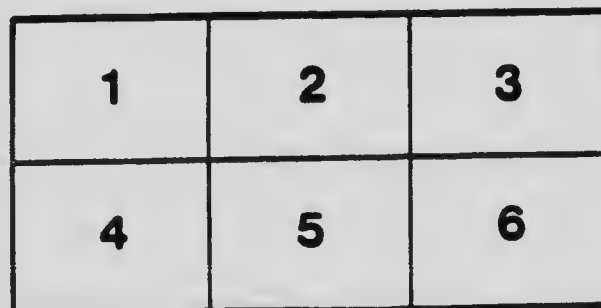
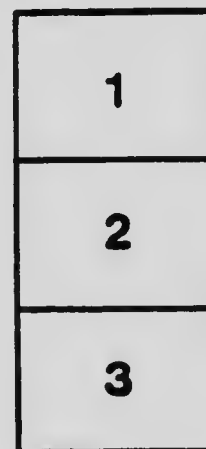
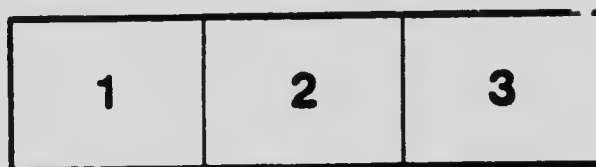
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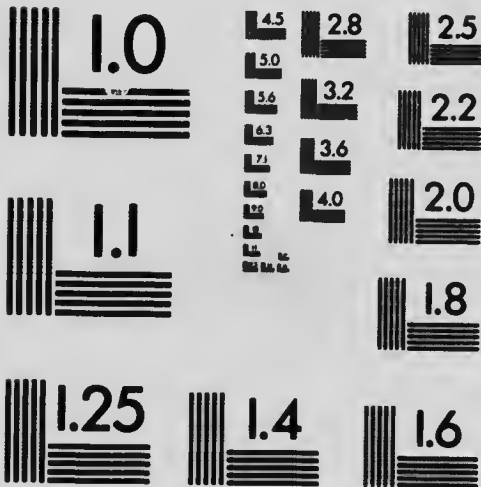
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The Dead Queen.



Sermon

Preached in St. Peter's, Brockville,
On Sunday Morning, Jan. 27th,
The Sunday after the death of Her Most Gracious Majesty
Queen Victoria,
on January 22nd,

By the

Ven. T. Bedford-Jones, D.C.L., LL.D.,
Archdeacon of Ontario.

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**“Thus saith the Lord God, Remove the diadem
and take off the Crown.”**

Ezekiel xxi. 26.

IT is not easy in a few words to express all that is in one's heart to-day. And yet, so much has been said, and so well said, by all our public men,—men eminent as Divines and Legislators, Judges and Statesmen, high officials and national representatives; by great men of various races in all quarters of the world, as well from all quarters of our own world-wide British Empire, that I feel that only these few words are necessary.

Brethren, I am sure that we all have a strange sensation that a *great change* has come over us since last Sunday. We are keenly sensible that this change—a mysterious but real change—is to-day affecting our lives, all our surroundings, our homes, our country. Do we not feel to-day that the world is not the same world to us that it was a week ago:—that since last Sunday something has happened that has broken in upon all our domestic and social affairs, our conversations, our dealings with one another, as well as on the whole of the character of what we call our Empire; and that the future for us on earth—for all of us at least who have grown old during the last half century—the future for

us on earth, be it long or short, can never be quite as the past ?

What has happened to effect this wonderful mysterious change ?—this universal difference in our sensations of life,—this distressing shock to the minds of men everywhere ? My Brethren, it is in one word,

DEATH.

But it is the death of no common mortal. The inheritor of the throne of over a thousand years, whose words and deeds, comings and goings, have day by day been minutely recorded in our newspapers, as far as they could be possibly known, and at times only imagined,—this Monarch descended from King Alfred, and who had become during 64 years almost a part of our daily lives has passed away to her fathers !

Death busy as usual with mankind, reading his lessons hourly to living men, has proved his terrible power with the very highest Personage in the world. He shows how true is the statement that he is indeed "*the last enemy that shall be destroyed,*" and that no Rule, no Authority, no Dominion on earth, (however widely recognized) shall interfere with his supremacy,—save and except that of the Omnipotent One, "*Who through death hath destroyed him that had the power of death.*"

Alas, Brethren, of what avail was it that our great and gracious Monarch, the Queen of all our hearts as well as of our institutions political and religious ;—of what avail was it that by the Constitution of our Country She sat on the very apex of the summit of the first social system in this world,—with no recognized dignity

between herself and the beings of a higher world:— herself the very SOURCE of all the innumerable streams of honour, rank, and distinctions, which mark out the divisions of society, and yet (like other streams) which really unite these divisions in the vast complicated social surface of our Empire? All worthless—worthless! All at once vanished like the mist of morning, or as a dream when one awaketh, when from the secret throne whereon sits the Almighty Governor of all worlds came the sentence, in the words of the Text:—

“ REMOVE THE DIADEM AND TAKE OFF THE CROWN.”

Then, like the lowliest of earth, like the poorest of the poor, *like one of ourselves*, she had to strip off all her robes of State, and to take with her naked soul to the other world but one possession, one gift of her people.

My Brethren, we are paying it here to-day for a new monarch. At this moment all over the world millions are paying it for King Edward VII. We have been paying it, most of us, all our lives for Queen Victoria. It is the tribute of PRAYER. Yes. She for whom year after year, week after week, day after day, for these past 64 years, prayers have risen to the throne of Heaven,— She for whose temporal and eternal welfare, Sunday by Sunday, ten thousand ministers of Christ have offered the incense of their own and their peoples' supplication —She is no longer the subject of prayer in our churches. But let us hope and believe that She has taken with her the fruits of all those prayers. It was just at the beginning of her long and glorious reign (I cannot forbear reminding you) that the long disused and neglected “Daily Morning” and “Daily Evening” Prayer of the

Church of England, as ordered in the Prayer Book, began to be restored to use. The Church of England just then under the splendid spiritual Revival of what is called the "Oxford Movement," reminded men of the power of prayer and the duty of prayer for all in authority, and especially the Sovereign. Is it a mere coincidence, a mere accident, that we have seen these daily prayers answered, and that the Almighty Hearer of prayer granted the daily intercession of the Church, that "*in health and wealth she should long live, and vanquish and overcome all her enemies*"? And can we doubt that when He before our eyes did so replenish our most gracious Sovereign with the grace of His Holy Spirit that She always inclined to His Will and walked in His Way,—in answer to the Church's daily supplication;—can we doubt that now, when this earthly life has been ended, the final petition will receive its accomplishment, and that in the other life beyond the grave the fruits of those prayers may also be found in the "*attainment of everlasting joy and felicity*?" To my mind for many a day, when with only the two or three gathered together in the Name of Christ—alas, that there should be so sadly few professing Churchmen and Churchwomen coming to join us—it has seemed, that, if in naught else, we have had an answer given us in the beautiful, pure, unselfish, womanly character of our Queen,—in that noble example for good that She was ever setting to all her subjects, especially to our women, the mothers of our children.

And now, when we are called on to repeat the same petitions for a new Monarch, may I not ask you, my Church of England Brethren, to learn a lesson from the the past? Should your loyalty to the Throne end in

mere sentiment, in the hoisting of a flag, or the singing of the so-called *National Anthem*! Should not loyalty to your Sovereign, as well as loyalty to your own souls, still more, loyalty to the King of Kings, (whose orders you but obey), bring you to acceptance of your Church's invitations and prompt you to unite your daily prayers with ours on behalf of the King and all His Royal surroundings! We all know how the monarch—every monarch—is open to exceptional temptations and perils spiritual and temporal, and how few of those monarchs of the past have escaped them. Is it not our bounden duty, as King Edward's loyal Christian subjects, to make at once a daily practice of praying for Him as our Church enjoins:—if only for the sake of our nation and national righteousness? And then we may expect that the same blessed answer will be vouchsafed, as, thank God, has been given us in regard to His revered and beloved Predecessor on the Throne.

Brethren, believe me prayers are never fruitless. They bring true and permanent blessings, and it has been well remarked, "the loyalty of prayer is the support of monarchs when all other supports fail." "There is no king," says the Psalmist, "who can be saved *by the multitude of an host.* * * * Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy." But the prayer of faith can and does save. Prayer moves God, Who moves the world, watching over all His creatures, from Kings and Queens on their exalted thrones to the little sparrows, not one of whom falls to the ground without His will. And in this happy relationship of prayer rich and poor meet together and become invisibly but closely united. Highest and lowest

can kneel on the same level and join heart with heart before the God and Father of all. It is amazing that this truth, this blessedness, seems to be unknown or forgotten by so many Church people—the people who have Prayer Books in their hands and are scrupulous enough about its rules when it suits them. Looking back to the past 64 years there have doubtless been thousands who could aid and benefit their Sovereign in her trials, her sorrows, her bereavements, her perils, her anxieties national as well as domestic, in no other way but by prayer. But day after day, “*O Lord, save the Queen*”—“*Keep and strengthen her in the true worshipping of Thee in righteousness and holiness of life,*”—“*Rule her heart in Thy faith, fear, and love, that she may evermore have affiance in Thee, and ever seek Thy honour and glory*”—such prayers have been going up from Christian hearts and have been heard; and we may be assured that the devotional piety of some lowly soul kneeling in the House of Prayer, by its interest with Christ, has helped the Ruler of millions, the Queen and Empress, in obtaining favour with the Ruler of the Universe.

My Brethren, this week again impresses on our hearts with awful force the lesson of Death and Eternity. Sunday after Sunday we, the ministers of Christ, preach to you of Death and Eternity, on whose threshold we are all standing. This is the perpetual burden of our discourse. It may seem monstrous. This cannot be helped. The Sin that brought death into the world is responsible. The Sin which we see abounding and surrounding us is responsible. When we find men and women so holy, so good, so pure, that they are glad to hail death as a pathway to Eternity, then we may cease

the strain. Not until then. But you know full well how with all our reiterations and variations, aye, and ornamentations, of the tremendous theme, how seldom we can bring it home to men and women's hearts,—how seldom we can fix a thought that will pass beyond the doors of the Church; how impossible to press home to any real effect the tremendous facts and realities of the inevitable Future—to rouse people to a sense of the value of Church and Bible, of Prayer and Sacrament,—yes, and to *some work for God*, before the night cometh when no man can work.

To-day, a great National Event, a great Event of History, preaches more eloquently than any pulpit declamation or any eloquence of speech. Not merely is there an appeal to the understanding, and the conscience, there is *one object* presented to the eye and the heart of each one of us. Look across the ocean to the Isle of Wight and Osborne House. There behold the perishing remnants of departed Royalty. The dignity of the Monarch still surrounds the lifeless form. See those adjuncts, those gorgeous trappings of woe so befitting the high condition of the Dead, and themselves all the more impressive instructors of the spectators. By a just and noble instinct we venerate the body for the sake of the soul, even when the soul has departed. It has been well remarked, "We honor the Temple even when the God has fled." But see over there, night after night, and during the days of this week more melancholy in their gloom than the nights, are held stately vigils. The body lies in a magnificent chamber prepared and darkened to the likeness of a mortuary chapel. It is dimly lighted by tall candelabra on either side. Silent sentinel soldiers stand on guard hour after hour; and

mourning watchers come and kneel through the day and night—most loving weeping mourners—and over that rich splendid purple pall there seems to rest a thick cloud of sadness and gloom—covered and surrounded as it is with beautiful wreaths of fragrant flowers. But not alone there. In the thousands of England's churches and the grand Cathedrals are crowds of praying men and women clad in mourning garb, all evidencing their Christian faith and love in the fervent supplications offered on behalf of the beloved departed Sovereign, Her Successor to the Throne, and all the Royal Family. These are object lessons for us all. They tell us, more impressively than any sermons, that the

“The glories of our Blood and State
Are shadows, not substantial things ;
There is no armour against fate :
Death lays his icy hand on Kings ;
Sceptre and Crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.”

Yes indeed, tumble down, whenever the Lord God issues the command, “*Remove the sceptre, and take off the Crown!*”

Yes. But oh, how unspeakably precious the well-founded hope, that the earthly crown taken off is to be exchanged for a crown of everlasting glory, that crown laid up for every Christian man and woman who has been faithful to God and to Duty by the grace of Jesus Christ.

And yet, my Brethren, as we take the solemn lesson away with us, I cannot let you go without reminding you of something taught us all by the dead Queen, that has

a most practical and personal interest for every Christian man and woman.

The spectacle on which we are gazing has, like the dark cloud, its silver lining. It is the imperishable and splendid EXAMPLE left us by the noble woman for whom we mourn. Perhaps the good Queen never thought of anything but doing her duty to God and her people. As the years rolled on with all their vicissitudes, their joys and their sorrows, she performed the multifold duties of the day and hour conscientiously, quietly, unboastingly. In the family circle, the political circle, the court circle, the Queen always tried to *do what was right* without fear or favour. As her great Quaker statesman has said, "*She was the honestest woman he had ever known.*" She knew nothing of intrigue or subterfuge or underhand diplomacy. So her example has had, without parade or self-consciousness, its wonderful effect on every household of the Nation. It has won for her the whole world's admiration. It has made that whole world a better world than it was 64 years ago. Brethren, each one of you in your degree and station may go and do likewise. Every one of us, you know, must leave some character behind, and that character will have made the world better or worse for our lives. No one can estimate the blessing, or the curse, of the example left behind. In the past 19th century the example of Queen Victoria has been worth to Christianity and to the spread of Christ's Gospel as much as thousands of preachers. By her purity and her piety, her Bible-reading and her prayers, she has been a Missionary to mankind. So may, so ought each one of you to be. It is "*by our well doing we can best of all put to silence the ignorance of foolish men*" This is a practical lesson we

may take with us from the life and death of the great Queen—her EXAMPLE FOR GOOD. Let us try to follow it. Let us try to be ourselves living fruits of our Christian religion, and so let the world see that however our divine faith may be scorned or our prayers despised and neglected, we are loyal and true not only to the earthly monarch to whom we owe allegiance, but no less to that “King, Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, the only Wise God,—to Whom be Honor and Glory for ever and ever.” Amen.

