



ALTHOUGH our specific object is to give a familiar account of the more or less remarkable events which have taken place at, or in connection with, the individual coronations of English sovereigns, it may be as well to preface it with a few remarks on the arrangements attending their coronations in general, as a little light will thereby be thrown on some of the expressions met with further on. During the times of the Plantagenets and the Tudors, and with the Stuarts until the coronation of James II., it was the custom for the sovereign to take up his residence in the Tower of London for a short period, previous to the day of the coronation. On the Saturday preceding that ceremony, he went in procession from Westminster to the Tower of London, on which occasion he was accompanied by large numbers of the nobility and civic dignitaries, and also by those squires upon whom the honour of knighthood was to be conferred. Each of the latter (who watched their arms that night) had a room assigned to him, and a bath in which to bathe, and knighthood followed the next day after mass. The queens who reigned in their own rights, Mary and Elizabeth, although they condescended to gird the swords on their knights with their own hands, did not give the actual *acolade* or blow (some authorities gather from the deriva-

tion of this word, *ad* and *collum*, that an embrace was originally given) which is the determinate action that impresses the character of knighthood. At both of these coronations this office was performed by Henry, Earl of Arundel, and a copy of his appointment may be found in Rymer's works.

Commencing with the reign of William the Conqueror, we will now proceed to note those coronations at which something out of the common has occurred, and the crowning of the Norman king furnishes us with the first anecdote. When William had taken the coronation oath to protect the Church, prohibit oppression, and execute judgment in mercy, Archbishop Aldred put the question to the people, "Will ye have this prince to be your king?" They replied with loud shouts of assent, and the uproar thus created led the Norman soldiery to believe that the English had revolted; whereupon, without waiting to make the least investigation into the matter, they immediately set the neighbouring houses on fire. The flames gave rise to a general alarm, and the greater part of the congregation hastened out of the church; the English endeavouring to stay the progress of the fire, and the Normans seizing the opportunity to plunder. The bishops and others taking part in the ceremony, who remained within the church, were thrown into such a state of confusion that they were barely able to go through the office of crowning the king. William, perceiving the tumult, and not being able to conjecture its cause, was naturally much perplexed, and sat trembling before the altar. No great amount of damage was done by the conflagration, but it sowed the seeds of a long and bitter enmity between the Normans and the English.

Stephen's coronation, seeing that he had previously sworn allegiance to the Empress Matilda, was viewed with a considerable amount of anxiety and curiosity; for in those days it was commonly believed that the punishment of perjury was visible and immediate. William, Archbishop of Canterbury, performed the ceremony, and it is stated that a violent storm arose, throwing the assembled party into such dire confusion that the consecrated wafer fell to the ground, the kiss of peace was omitted, and the final benediction of the archbishop altogether forgotten.

The coronation festivities of Richard I. indirectly gave rise to a sanguinary and disgraceful riot. A large number of Jews had come to England during the previous reign, where they were allowed to live in peace by that liberal and enlightened monarch, Henry II. Naturally grateful that such an unusual favour should be accorded them, they met together in London for the purpose of subscribing amongst themselves, in order to present Richard with a valuable gift on the occasion of his coronation. Unfortunately for them, Richard was weak enough to listen to some of the bigots by whom he was surrounded, who assured him that the Jews were in the habit of practising their magic arts on kings during the time of their coronation; and the result was the issue of an edict strictly prohibiting any Israelite from being present during the ceremony, or making an appearance at the royal

palace during the subsequent coronation banquet. However, more curious than prudent, a goodly number of Jews mingled with the crowd that gathered round the palace gates; and one of them, attempting to force his way in, received a blow in the face from an overzealous Christian. This was quite sufficient to arouse the fanaticism of the mob, and a general attack was at once commenced upon the Jews, who fled with all speed towards the City. Some miscreants, only too glad of the opportunity for plunder, spread a rumour that Richard had given orders that the unbelieving Jews should be exterminated, and as such an order was by no means unlikely when the king was a crusader, it was soon implicitly believed. The London mob, aided by the people who had arrived from the country, proceeded to attack the houses of the Jews; but the inmates defended their habitations with much courage, and the assault proved abortive. Finding that they could not gain admittance to the houses, the populace threw brands and torches through the windows and on to the roofs, with the result that conflagrations burst forth in all directions, consuming a large number of houses, both Jewish and Christian. The king ordered the apprehension of the ringleaders, and they were hanged, as a salutary warning to others; and after this the Jews were taken under royal protection.

The only memorable event attending the coronation of John was the speech of Hubert, Archbishop of Canterbury, which was as follows: "Hear all men! It is well known to your wisdom that no man hath any right of succession to this crown, unless he be elected for his own merits by the unanimous consent of the kingdom, with invocation of the Holy Ghost, after the manner and similitude of Saul, whom God set over His chosen people, though he was neither the son of a king, nor sprung of a royal line; and in like manner after him, David, the son of Jesse: the former because he was brave, and suited to the royal dignity, the latter because he was humble and pious. So that he who surpasses all within the realm in fitness for royalty should preside over all in dignity and power. But if any one of the family of the deceased sovereign should excel others, his election should be the more readily and cheerfully conceded. Wherefore, as our late sovereign Richard died without issue of his body, and as his brother Earl John, now present, is wise, brave, and manifestly noble, we, having respect both to his merits and his royal blood, unanimously and with one accord elect him to be our sovereign." Subsequent events proved that John was not quite such an estimable personage as this speech would lead us to believe.

Henry III. was crowned at Winchester in 1216, London being in the possession of the French Prince Louis. He was compelled by the Papal legate to do homage to the Holy Roman Church and Pope Innocent for his Kingdom of England and Ireland, and to bind himself by oath to pay an annual tribute of 1,000 marks to the Papal See. His queen Eleanor was crowned in 1236, and Holinshed gives the following account of the ceremony:—"At the solemnity of this

feast and coronation of the quene, all the high peeres of the realm both spiritual and temporall were present, there to exercise their offices as to them appertained. The citizens of London were there in great arraie, bearing afore hir in solemn wise three hundred and three score cups of gold and silver, in token that they ought to wait upon hir cup. Archbishop of Canturburie (according to his dutie) crowned hir, the Bishop of London assisting him as his deacon. The citizens of London served out wine to everie one in great plentie. The feast was plentiful, so that nothing wanted that could be wished. Moreover in Tothill-fields roiall justes were holden by the space of eight daies together."

Of the coronation of Edward I. the same chronicler remarks:—"At this coronation were present Alexander King of Scots, and John Earle of Britaine, with their wives that were sisters to King Edward. The King of Scots did homage unto King Edward for the realme of Scotland, in like manner as other the Kings of Scotland before him had doone to other Kings of England, ancestoures to this King Edward. At the solemnitie of this coronation there were let go at liberty (catch them that catch might) five hundred great horses by the King of Scots, the Earles of Cornwall, Gloucester, Pembroke, Warren, and others, as they were delighted fro their backs."

An enormous crowd gathered to witness the coronation of Edward II., and we are informed that "there was such presse and throp at this coronation, that a knight, called Sir John Bakewell, was thrust or crowded to death." The bishops did not fare much better, and they were forced to hurry through the service in a very slovenly and disorderly manner.

A very curious medal was struck on the occasion of the coronation of Edward III.: on one side it bore the effigy of the young prince, crowned, placing his sceptre on a heap of hearts, with the motto, *Populo dat jura volenti* (He gives laws to a willing people); and the reverse represented a hand held out to save a falling crown, with the motto, *Non rapit, sed recipit* (He seizes not, but receives).

The coronation of Richard II. surpassed in magnificence any of the preceding, and the usual procession from the Tower to Westminster is thus described: "The citie was adorned in all sorts most richlie. The water-conduits ran with wine for the space of three hours together. In the upper end of Cheape was a certain castell, made with foure towers; out of the which castell, on two sides of it, ran forth wine abundantly. In the towers were placed foure beautiful virgins, of stature and age like to the king, apparelled in white vestures, in every tower one, the which blew in the king's face, at his approaching neere to them, leaves of gold; and as he approached also, they threw on him and his horse counterfeit florens of gold. When he was come before the castell they tooke cups of gold, and, filling them with wine at the spouts of the castell, presented the same to the king and to his nobles. On the top of the castell, betwixt the foure towers, stood a golden anrell, holding a

crowne in his hands, which was so contrived that when the king came he bowed downe, and offered to him the crowne. In the midst of the king's pallee was a marble pillar, raised hollow upon steps, on the top whereof was a great gilt eagle placed, under whose feet in the chapter of the pillar, divers kinds of wines came gushing forth at foure several places all the daie long, neither was anie forbidden to receive the same, were he never so poor or abiest."

Henry IV. was crowned by Archbishop Fitzalan on the 13th of October, 1399, the ampulla being first employed on this occasion. The procession was unusually splendid, and Froissart gives the following interesting account of it:—"The Duke of Lancaster left the Tower this Sunday after dinner, on his return to Westminster; he was bare-headed, and had round his neck the Order of the King of France. The Prince of Wales, six dukes, six earls, eighteen barons, accompanied him, and there were of knights and other nobility from eight to nine hundred horse in the procession. He passed through the streets of London, which were all handsomely decorated with tapestries and other rich hangings: there were nine fountains in Cheapside and other streets he passed through, that ran perpetually with white and red wines. The whole cavalcade amounted to six thousand horse, that escorted the duke from the Tower to Westminster."

The coronation of Henry VII. was not characterised by anything special, but that of his queen Elizabeth, in 1487, was remarkable on account of the procession by water from the Palace of Greenwich to the Tower, instead of from Westminster as usual. One of the processional barges carried an extraordinary figure in the shape of a monstrous red dragon, from the mouth of which streams of fire gushed out into the river.

Bluff King Hal may be passed over with the remark that his coronation was celebrated with brilliant "justs and tournies," which that monarch and his queen viewed from "a faire house covered with tapestrie."

Of Edward VI., Holinshed informs us: "He rode through London into Westminster with as great roialtie as might be. . . . As he passed on the south part of Paule's Churchyard, an Argosine came from the battlements of Paule's Church upon a cable, being made fast to an anchor by the Deane's gate, lieing on his breast, aiding himself neither with hand nor foot, and after ascended to the midst of the cable, where he tumbled and plaid many pretty toies, whereat the king and the nobles had great pastime." When at the coronation the three swords typical of the three kingdoms were brought to be borne before him, Edward remarked that there was yet one wanting, and called for the Bible. "That," said he, "is the sword of the Spirit, and ought in all right to govern us, who use these for the people's safety by God's appointment. Without that sword we are nothing: we can do nothing. From that we are what we are this day . . . we receive whatsoever it is that we at this present do assume. Under that we ought to live, to fight, to govern the people, and to perform

all our affairs. From that alone we obtain all power, virtue, grace, salvation, and whatsoever we have of Divine strength."

Mary was the first female sovereign of this country, and she was crowned on the 1st October, 1553. The Archbishops of Canterbury and York both being prisoners in the Tower, the ceremony was performed by Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester. As usual, St. Paul's Cathedral made a considerable show on the day of the procession, and amongst the curious sights to be witnessed was "one Peter, a Dutchman, that stood on the weather-cock of Paule's steeple, holding a streamer in his hand of five yards long, and waiving thereof, stood sometimes on the one foot and shook the other, and then kneeled on his knees, to the great marvell of all people. He had made two scaffolds under him, one about the crosse, having torches and streamers set on it, and another over the ball of the crosse, likewise set with streamers and torches, which could not burn, the wind was so great. The said Peter had sixteen pounds, thirteen shillings, four pence for his costes, and paines, and all his stuffe."

It is said that Queen Elizabeth composed the following prayer as she went to her coronation:—"O Lord Almighty and everlasting God, I give Thee most hearty thanks that Thou hast beene so mercifull unto me as to spare me to behold this ioifull daie. And I acknowledge that Thou hast dealt wonderfullie, and as mercifullie with me, as Thou didst with Thy true and faithfull servant Daniell, Thy prophet, whom Thou deliveredst out the den from the crueltye of the greedy and roaring lions. Even so was I overwhelmed, and only by Thee delivered. To Thee, therefore, onelie be thanks, honor and praise, for ever. Amen."

James I. superintended the arrangements for his own coronation, wherein he displayed many marks of the pedantry and extravagance which formed so prominent a feature in his character. He created two earls, ten barons, sixty-two Knights of the Bath, and conferred the honour of knighthood on no less than four hundred gentlemen. His successor, the ill-fated Charles I., was crowned twice—in 1626 in England, and in 1633 in Scotland.

The Presbyterians having invited Charles II. to Scotland, he was crowned at Scone, January 1, 1651. A very extraordinary sermon was preached on this occasion by "Master Robert Dowglas, minister at Edinburgh, Moderator of the General Assembly, from ii. Kings xi., verses xii.—xvii." He delivered a bitter philippic against the parents of the young king, and went so far as to compare his mother to the wicked Athaliah. After the ceremony was concluded "the minister spoke to him a word of exhortation," being in fact an oration of considerable length.

The only incident worthy of note in connection with the coronation of James II. is that, on the king's return from the Abbey, the crown tottered upon his head, and would have fallen off had it not been for the timely aid of the Honourable Henry Sidney, who hastened to support it, saying, "This is not the first time our family have supported the crown!"

At the coronation of William and Mary, the Bishop of London officiated instead of the Archbishop of Canterbury; the latter objecting to place the crown upon the head of sovereigns who claimed it by a parliamentary title, and not by hereditary descent. This was the first occasion on which both king and queen were crowned as sovereigns.

Anne's coronation was a very prosaic affair, and the actual kiss of peace was only given by her Majesty to the archbishop and other prelates. George I. was not acquainted with the English language, and very few of those near him knew anything of German; the ceremonies attending his coronation had therefore to be explained to him, through the medium of such Latin as those around him could muster. This circumstance gave rise to a jest which was very popular for some time afterwards, to the effect that much *bad language* had passed between the king and his ministers on the day of the coronation.

Nothing occurred at the coronation of George II. and his queen Caroline to give any variety or interest to the scene; but a curious anecdote exists concerning that of his successor, George III. We give an extract from the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1764, which contains the copy of a letter addressed to the Duke of Devonshire:—"The Young Pretender himself was in Westminster Hall during the coronation, and in town two or three days before and after it, under the name of Mr. Brown. A gentleman told me so, who saw him there, and who whispered in his ear, 'Your Royal Highness is the last of all mortals whom I should expect to see here.' 'It was curiosity that led me,' said the other, 'but I assure you,' added he, 'that the person who is the cause of all this pomp and magnificence is the man I envy the least!'" When the gauntlet was cast down by the champion for the last time, a white glove fell from one of the spectators, who was in an elevated position. This was duly handed to the champion, who demanded to know "who was his fair foe?" It is said that the glove was thrown down by the Young Chevalier, who was present in feminine attire.

In concluding this paper there remains one wish to be uttered—it is that many years may pass away before the occasion arises for our chroniclers to busy themselves with the particulars of yet another crowning!

EDWARD OXFENFORD.

