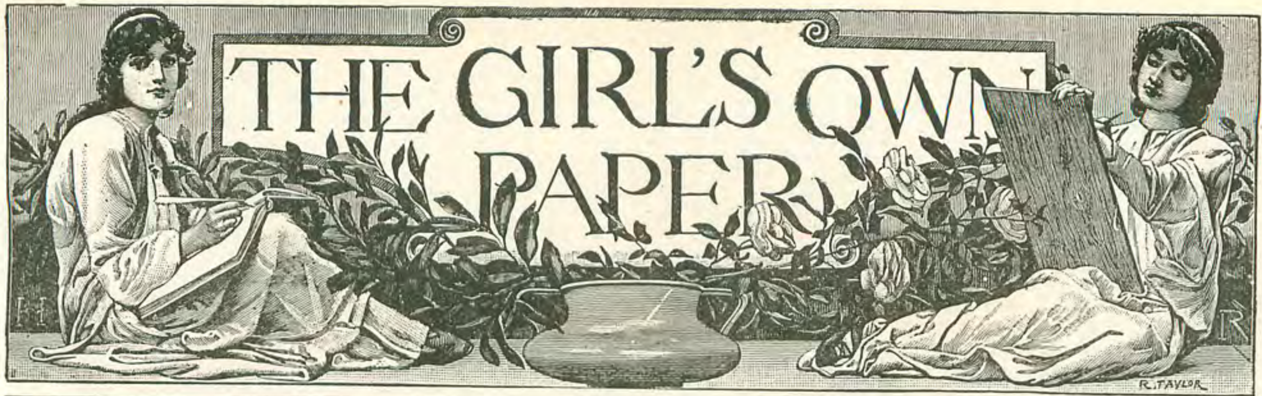

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THE CORONATION OF EDWARD I.

To those who love the records of the past, the coronation of Edward VII. and Queen Alexandra rouses curiosity as to the pageants and events when earlier Edwards began their reigns. It would be fortunate indeed if some chance should bring to light details of the crowning of Saxon Edwards, but such details cannot but be few and spare, whilst the great king who has always been called the first Edward belongs to an age of which some authentic records are extant.

There are many parallel circumstances in the coronations of the First and the Seventh Edwards.

The eager interest with which we await the coming solemnity is increased by the fact that sixty-four years have passed away since Archbishop Howley set the crown upon the head of the young Queen Victoria. The length of the reign of Henry III. is second only to that of George III. in the history of England, for fifty-six years intervened between the tumultuous crowning of the nine-year-old child Henry in Gloucester Cathedral, and that of his crusading son Edward on an August Sunday in Westminster Abbey.

Important as has been England's growth during the reign of Queen Victoria, the reign of Henry III. saw equally important stages in the nation's history. The constitution in which we take such pride was brought to maturity in Simon de Montfort's parliament at Westminster in 1265, to which were summoned representatives of the shires, cities, and boroughs. The great Abbey in which the King and Queen will be crowned in June was brought in this reign to its highest perfection. It is but fitting that when the coronation music rises to the lovely roof of the highest church in England some grateful thoughts should pass to the early Henry who spent so many years of his reign in rearing this marvellous shrine of English kings, and saints, and heroes. Edward I. and Eleanor were the first king and queen jointly

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CORONATION OF EDWARD I.
(*From an old print.*)

crowned in the Abbey as we now see it. The nave of the Confessor, in its bare severity, still stood to bring out by contrast the richness of the lofty Early English work, but in its main features the building we now see was there to delight the eyes of the Londoners, and the knights and burghers gathered from every corner of England.

But it was not only in the constitution and the architecture of the country that the long reign of Henry III. had seen great changes. When the boy-king was crowned at Gloucester in 1216 the nation had not grown the united England which hailed Edward as its king at the coronation of 1274. The reason why Gloucester and not Westminster saw Henry crowned, was that London was at that time besieged by the French prince Louis, whose wife was King John's niece, for the atrocities of the Angevin John had made many English barons prefer an unknown foreigner to the foreigner John, whose malice towards England was evident to all parties.

It is always darkest before the dawn, and after John Lackland lost his French dominions, the English barons stayed in their own island, and during the fifty-six years of Henry III.'s reign Saxon and Norman were welded into one. Just as a constant irritation develops the pearl in the oyster-shell, so the weak devotion of the young Henry to a succession of foreigners helped on the growth of English patriotism and solidarity. First it is his Bréton friends who win place and power from the boy-king. Then he showers benefits on the Savoyard relatives of his young wife Eleanor of Provence, and lastly the five Lusignan half-brothers, who grew up in the second home of the widowed Queen Isabella, roused the English nobles to the Barons' War by their insolence and greed.

It was across a sea of troubles that Edward I. had found his way to that August Sunday when a troop of loving citizens made holiday around him in Tothill Fields. In his youth the ferocity and malignity of the Angevins bid fair to drown the softer strains of culture and insight which he inherited from his Provençal mother. But the culture which in Eleanor was robbed of its charm by a selfish love of luxury, blended the character of her son to a rare mixture of strength and wisdom.

It was but ten years before the coronation that Prince Edward had pursued the Londoners under Thomas de Piwelesdun over the downs of Lewes, in revenge for the insults they had hurled at his mother when they called her witch, and flung mud and stones at her barge on its way through London Bridge.

In that fierce pursuit Prince Edward worked off the heavy grudge he bore the city, and in the ten years since the Battle of Lewes he had shown by many acts of valour and wisdom that he meant to make it his life's task to enrich England with what he had learned from the great-uncle Simon de Montfort whom he had defeated so completely in the Battle of Evesham.

We have known and loved Queen Alexandra for thirty-nine years, and in the same way the England of that day had loved the Castilian Eleanor for twenty years since the August day in 1254 when Prince Edward had married her in her childhood in the great cathedral of Burgos.

Then, as now, the Londoners delighted in courage and heroism, and we may fancy their enthusiasm over their new King and Queen who were fresh from the Crusade, where Edward had been stabbed by the emissaries of the Sultan Bibars. According to Professor Röhricht, the latest German authority on the Crusades, Eleanor did really suck the poison from the wound and so saved the life of her husband. These romantic circumstances must greatly have added to the enthusiasm for the young rulers on whom so many troubles had fallen since the last happy meeting in October, 1269, when the old King Henry had opened the great church over the shrine of the Confessor in the presence of his family, not forgetting to feast the London citizens who arrayed themselves for the event in silk and scarlet.

Of the guests assembled then many had passed away before the coronation in 1274. The old King Henry had doubtless felt as a heavy weight the guidance of his turbulent subjects during the absence on crusade of his sons Edward and Edmund. In an ancient history of the city of London,* we read how he wrote to the citizens commanding them to watch the gates of the city by day and by night, and to allow no citizen to possess a horse worth more than five pounds. Careful scrutiny was to be made so as to make sure that all citizens banished for their share in the Barons' War had not crept back to their old haunts, and in every way danger was to be averted. Yet, spite of these precautions, the eager burghers continued to quarrel as fiercely as ever about their rights and their liberties, and the last hours of the dying King were disturbed by tumultuous crowds of citizens who penetrated to Westminster Hall itself, shouting that they would not have William le Taylor as Mayor. "We are the commons of the State," they cried, "and we will have Walter Hervey." After King Henry was dead, the strong Earl Gilbert of Gloucester, who had himself once led the citizens in an armed rebellion, succeeded in restoring order and removing the turbulent demagogue Walter Hervey before the home-return of his cousin King Edward.

Besides the loss of his beloved father, King Edward had heard whilst in Sicily of the death of his eldest boy, the five-year-old Prince John. Small comfort, one fears, can have come to Queen Eleanor from her new-born son, Prince Alphonso, when the news was brought to her that she would never again see the John whom she had left behind. Moreover the brave old Crusading Uncle Richard, King of the Romans, in whose care the Prince had left his father, died in 1272, stricken to the ground by the frightful murder of his son, Henry of Almaine, who had been slaughtered by his cousin, Guy de Montfort, as he was praying in a church at Viterbo. The heart of the young Prince Henry had been brought to Westminster Abbey, and we cannot doubt that the thoughts of the King must have dwelt on this sad calamity as he passed through the long hours of the solemn services. Dante meets the soul of the murderer in Hell, and writes of him—

"Colui fesse in grembo a Dio,
Lo cor che 'n sul Tamigi ancor si cola."

which is, being interpreted—

"He in God's bosom smote the heart,
Which yet is honour'd on the bank of Thames."

Yet sad as is this list of bereavements, they were to be followed by others as sad. By December King Edward's second boy, the little child Prince Henry, was buried also, in spite of the sheepskins that had been applied to keep him warm, and the images of him in wax which had been burnt at many shrines to propitiate the saints. Before the spring of 1275 was over Edward's sister Queen Margaret of Scotland and his other sister Princess Beatrice of Bretagne had both died. Perhaps the hardships of the Crusade and the journey home through Greece had been too much for the Princess Beatrice, for we read in six-hundred-year-old family letters that she was *embonpoint*, and may have suffered in burning Eastern climates and on many a choppy sea voyage.

But we have examined the royal party with some minuteness, and will turn from the Spanish mother and her ten-year-old daughter Eleanora to try to collect some details concerning the crowds of knights and monks and citizens who are thronging the entries to the great white Abbey on this burning August Sunday. Merry we may depend upon it they are, for the conduit in Cheap has been running red and white wine all day, and though the country walk from Temple Bar has perhaps steadied the spirits of the crowd, yet generous hospitality awaits them, and no doubt the revelry runs high. We read in the old city history, written in the year of the coronation, that all the bare space near Westminster Palace was covered with handsome erections for the entertainment of gentle and simple, whilst tables were planted in the ground which groaned for fifteen days with delicacies lavished gratis on the poor as well as the rich. In the enclosure of the palace mighty kitchens were built, and outside the kitchens were great leaden coppers in which could be boiled the seethed flesh beloved of our

* *Liber de Antiquis Legibus.*

ancestors. The old book tells us that there was no roof at all to the kitchen where the tribes of feathered fowl were turned on the spit, so that all unpleasant smoke might rise up and disperse of itself. We may fancy the troops of kitchen boys turning the long spits so familiar in the old MSS. illuminations, and the vituperations of the chefs busy over the exceedingly complicated cooking of those days. The old scribe tells us that no head would avail to count the casks of wine provided, and that both the great and little hall at Westminster were freshly whitewashed and painted with bright new frescoes.

Our ancestors did not fail to enter life fully through the five gates of the senses, and rejoiced in the music and fancy of countless minstrels, who fed them with literature through the ear. The young city of London abounded in cunning craftsmen who could paint a fresco which rolled out literature before the eye, or who could fashion wonders of design in gold, such as the lately finished shrine of the Confessor, or finely-tempered iron-work, such as the grill over Queen Eleanor's tomb, capable of resisting the wear and tear of London mobs through more than six centuries.

We may judge of the wealth of these London citizens in their fair houses, lying in gardens and orchards, by the fine of twenty thousand marks which they had offered to pay so as to wipe from Henry III.'s mind their offences at the time of the Barons' War. Moreover the constant entries in the history of the city concerning the wills of wealthy citizens gives a striking impression of the growing treasures of London.

The charm of the lively crowd consists perhaps mainly in its motley character. Here is Bertrand de Croysores, a merchant living in London, but coming from Paris. We might cull from the Patent Rolls the old-world names of a hundred such, but a short search will tell us that merchants from Cologne such as John de Stesnete have settled in London through the influence of Henry III.'s brother Richard, King of the Romans, and merchants from Spain such as Nicholas de Garsie through the influence of the Spanish Eleanor, while Flanders, Normandy, Florence, Lucca, and many another far-off spot have rewarded England for her gift of freedom by bringing numberless delicate arts and crafts to enrich the sturdy capacities of her own native merchants, such as William Poxe, Geoffrey Monkey and William Frescheved.

King Edward himself and his young wife have just returned from a distant tour not unlike that of our own Prince of Wales. The wise head of the King is full of legal knowledge gained in a winter spent in Sicily in that court of Charles of Anjou, where French tyranny has not wholly eradicated the legal system of Frederick II., whom his contemporaries called "stupor mundi," the wonder of the world. Before starting for the crusade Prince Edward had conferred in Paris with the saintly Louis IX., and is said to have had intercourse with the great French jurist Philippe de Beaumanoir. After leaving Palestine Edward made a long stay in Rome, and had intercourse with Francesco Accursi, the great lawyer of Bologna. Last but not of least importance we may mention his visit to his wife's brother, Alfonso the Wise King of Castille, who had made it his life's work to enrich Spain with the "Siete Partidas," a code of laws almost too valuable to be appreciated by that age.

Need we wonder that Edward's great city of London, composed as it was of such conflicting elements, forgot the trials it had suffered from the caprice of Henry III., and welcomed with enthusiasm the king who knew how to think as well as how to fight.

Four of the good citizens we may fancy as priding themselves on some intimacy with the royal party, for the King had written a gracious letter in April from Bordeaux expressing satisfaction at the preparations the citizens were making for the coronation, and asking them to send four of their discreetest members to meet him at Paris. We gather from the Patent Rolls that Edward had excellent pecuniary reasons for the invitation, but to this the good citizens were well accustomed, and no doubt felt the honour in no way lessened by it. Luke de Lucca, the King's merchant, was to take two thousand pounds of the taxes levied on Jews to meet the King's wants in Paris. The four citizens chosen by the Londoners in the Guildhall were Henry le Waleis, the Mayor, Gregory de Rokesle, John Horn and Luke de Batencourt. Henry de Waleis had shown such zeal in preparing for the King that he had got into some trouble with the populace. The stalls of the butchers and the fishmongers in Westcheap appeared to him as ugly as the open butchers' shops in Aldgate High Street appear to us to-day. With a high hand he issued an order that they should all be swept away before the coming coronation, thereby entangling himself in a *verbosa contentio*, or lengthy slanging match with that daring champion of the people, the ex-Mayor Walter Hervey. But those troubled days are over, Walter is banished from his aldermanry, and is perhaps stirring up troubles in that old centre of disaffection, the island of Ely, where boats had to be sunk and ambushes laid, because rebels were said secretly to be gathering there in May last.

To-day all is happy festivity. The dark times of 1267 are passed, if not forgotten—the days when Gilbert the Red, Earl of Gloucester, held London for the disinherited and a white sea of tents covered an army hostile to Henry III. in Southwark and the ground between Aldgate and the Tower. The old history book tells us that all the chairs and furniture in Westminster Palace have been mended since those April days, when irrepressible bands left the camp round Southwark and went in boats to do damage to the King's dwelling. Before Richard King of the Romans died in his Berkhamsted castle he made a lasting friendship between his turbulent step-grandson Gilbert and his nephew Edward, and doubtless dangers shared abroad have cemented that alliance. Little does King Edward think now that in sixteen years he will be marrying to this headstrong subject his baby Joan of Acres, whom he has just left behind under the blue skies of Castile to be reared up by her Spanish grandmother Joanna of Ponthieu.

Yet out of no less conflicting elements did Edward make a lasting marriage between his two kingdoms of England and Wales.

We will not attempt to describe the complicated ceremonial of the coronation, but as the most interesting part of a pageant is the character of the great people who figure in it, it is worth while to glance at Robert Kilwardby, the Dominican Archbishop of Canterbury, whose mind was overflowing with all the deep scholastic thought of the day. His will be the most interesting figure to the Oxford scholars, rich and poor, who are to be seen probably in great numbers, since the frequent visits of the Court to the King's palace in Beaumont Fields has made the Royal Family an object of interest to the University.

To the great Hall of Westminster the people have free access, and minstrels, jugglers, monks, nuns and citizens may gaze to heart's content at the good fare provided. The wealthy Sir Robert Aguilun holds the manor of Addington in Surrey by the service of making "hastias" or hasty puddings for the coronation banquet, or else of furnishing a cook to make a mess of meat, which when stuffed is called, "Malpigernoun." Sir Robert is probably sitting at the High Table on the daïs, for his wife is Margaret de Redvers, widow of the great Earl of Devon and aunt of old Queen Eleanor. Yet though the guests are of such high rank there is little gravity or decorum observed. The great hall-gate stands wide open. Alexander King of Scotland rides in on horseback with one hundred knights. He is followed by Edmund Earl of Cornwall, the King's cousin, and other magnates; they leap from their horses and loosing the bridle abandon their steeds to the eager crowd with the cry of "Catch who can!" Yet spite of the scuffling among the rushes, you must fancy a scene of great splendour. Alard Lupi had sold the King one hundred pounds' worth of furs for the coronation as he passed through Bruges on the homeward journey, and the ladies' robes were heavy with the golden buttons used to adorn the long trains of the period. As we look our last at this scene of ancient revelry, I will remind you that the holiday-making was doubly grateful to the crowd, as they had been restricted this year in their favourite amusement of tournaments.

CLOTILDA MARSON.