

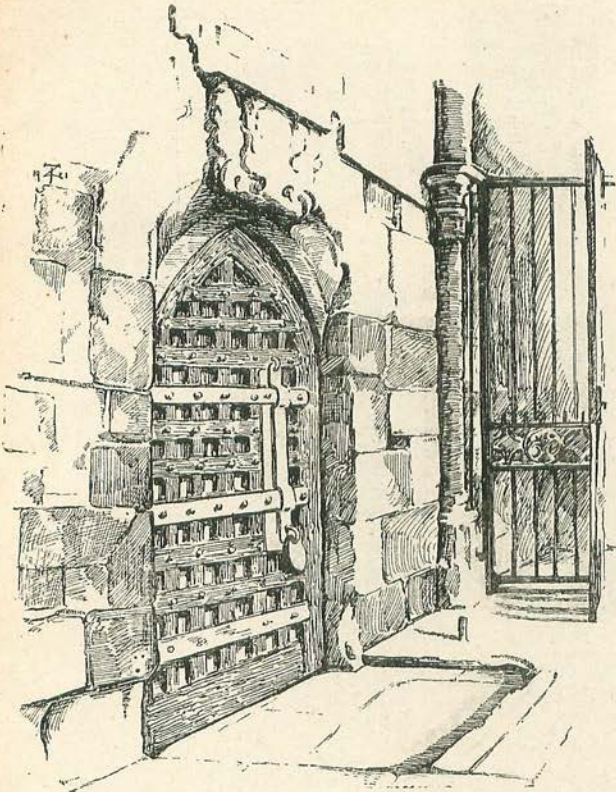
QUEEN VICTORIA'S IMPERIAL CROWN

By the Rev. J. H. T. Perkins, M.A., Sacrist of Westminster Abbey

IN the Eastern Cloister of Westminster Abbey stands a massive and aged door. The thickness of the adjoining walls and its own ponderous iron bands, alike indicate its superlative importance. Even to-day, that huge double door with its seven great locks can only be opened in the presence of certain high officials—successors of Hugolin, the Confessor's famous Treasurer, who, if tradition speaks truth, still sleeps within this gloomy chamber. This "Chapel of the Pyx," as it is termed, together with the adjoining Crypt beneath the Chapter-House, forms an abiding witness to that universal sentiment, which impelled our forefathers to store their most cherished possessions beneath the inviolable protection of the

Church's shadow. Where indeed could our Norman sovereigns have discovered a spot more fully in keeping with their own motives of worldly policy, as well as with the spirit of the age, than in the heart of the Abbey, consecrated by St. Peter himself, watched over with such tender care by Saxon Edward, and now still further hallowed by the presence of his loved remains?

To Westminster then were brought, so says the great Dean, "the Regalia of the Saxon monarchy, the Black Rood of St. Margaret from Scotland, the Cross of St. Neot from Wales, deposited by Edward I., the sceptre or rod of Moses, the Ampulla of Henry IV., the Sword with which King Athelstan cut through the rock at Dunbar, the Sword of



The Chapel of the Pyx in the Great Cloisters of Westminster Abbey, once the Monastic Treasury, subsequently used together with the Tower as a Storehouse for the English Regalia

Wayland Smith, by which Henry II. was knighted, the Sword of Tristan, presented to John by the Emperor, the Dagger which wounded Edward I. at Acre, and the iron gauntlet worn by John of France when taken prisoner at Poitiers."

Our English Regalia have, for over eight centuries, been stamped with the Confessor's mark. Neither the storms of the Reformation, nor even the profanity of the Commonwealth have wholly obliterated the bond existing between those Regalia and the Abbey, so dear to Edward's heart. The right of the Abbot and brethren to be the guardians of these National insignia was established by their foundation Charter, and confirmed by the authority of at least three Popes. Twice every year did the monks delight to exhibit the Coronation robe of

their sainted founder. Norman and Plantagenet, Tudor and Stuart alike, must be crowned with King Edward's crown, their consorts with that of Queen Edith. The ring, signifying the lifelong compact between king and people, was the identical jewel restored to Edward by the pilgrims, in proof of the special favour of the Apostle of love. The very "laws of the glorious Confessor," represented to each succeeding monarch the touchstone of his loyalty, the pledge of his own singleness of heart.

At Westminster, then, was the first Treasury of the Royal Wardrobe, and for many a long year did this great Benedictine house extend its shelter to these most dearly prized possessions of the nation. The daily life of the monastic brethren rolled on; few events occurred to interrupt its calm. An occasional coronation, the ravages of the Black Death, the steady growth of their glorious Church in the hands of great "builder Abbots" like Nicholas Litlington and John Islip, were the only prominent features in their commonplace, unenlightened existence.

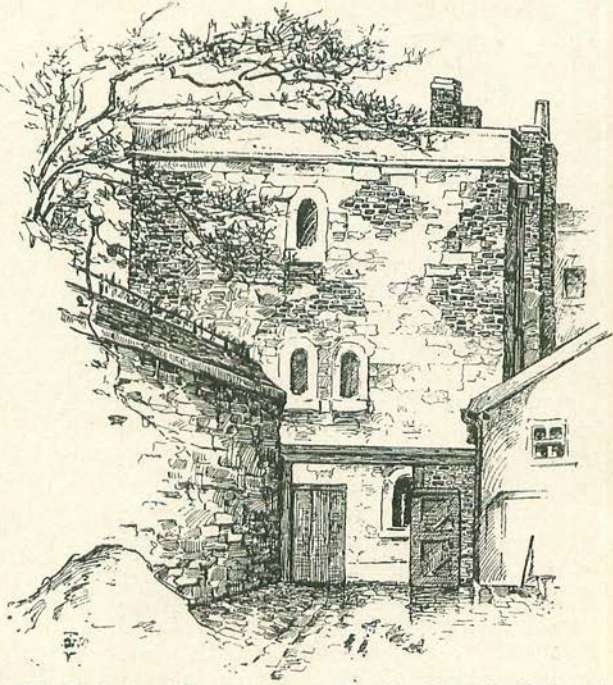
Once, however, that peaceful inner life was shaken to its very foundations. In the mighty crypt of the Chapter House, with its thick impenetrable walls, there were usually stored not only the relics and the Coronation Regalia, but the Royal plate and personal jewels of the Sovereign, articles of special value and rarity, and at times, vast masses of the public moneys also. Hence, in the year 1303 an enormous quantity of specie had been accumulated in view of the national emergency occasioned by the Scotch war. Edward Plantagenet was on the march with his grand army though the north. The adjoining palace was well-nigh deserted. Such an opportunity was too tempting for refusal. That spring the Royal Treasury was broken open and rifled. The thieves possessed sufficient common sense to leave

the crowns and sceptres severely alone, but the enormous store of valuables—jewels, spoons, dishes, rings, girdles, and cups of gold and silver, amounting, it is alleged, to two millions of money, were seized. The robbery was conducted throughout on the most scientific principles. A large quantity of hemp seed had been deliberately sown in the Monks' Cemetery, to the east of the Abbey. Here the treasure was hidden for the moment, and then carried away across the water by Richard de Podelicote, a travelling merchant, aided and abetted, alas! by Alexander de Pershore, and others of the monastic body. The news reached the King at Linlithgow, and his fury blazed forth in a manner truly regal. Down came writ after writ, which Edward's subjects knew better than to disobey. Then followed the formal investigation at the hands of the Lord Mayor and the Master of the Wardrobe. Imagine the horror of these functionaries when they beheld the floor strewn with broken boxes and scattered jewels, including the Privy Seal and the ring with which Henry III. was consecrated! Even the great Cross of St. Neot was lying there, despoiled of its jewelled case! In a brief space, therefore, Abbot Wenlock and forty-eight members of his community found their way to equally historic, though less attractive, quarters in the Tower. Here they experienced the lengthened discipline of a two-years sojourn. The guilt was at last driven home to Sub-prior and Sacrist, who, together with de Podelicote no doubt received their richly merited reward.

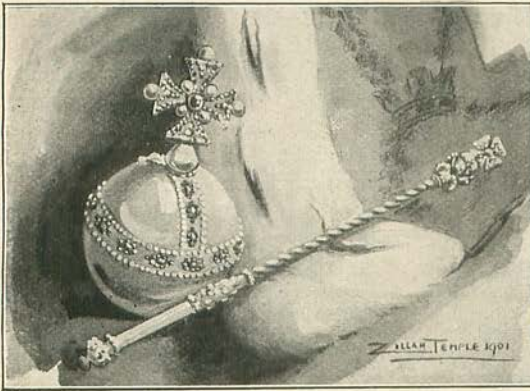
Clerical guardianship, then, had been tried and found wanting. The Regalia and relics still remained in their old home, though, at some subsequent period, they seem to have been removed from the Crypt to the Chapel of the Pyx, once the Monastic Treasury, which was considerably strengthened within and without. The remaining valuables were removed to the greater security of the

Tower; but, ere the conclusion of that century, a portion at least were lodged once again within the City of Westminster. In the last year of Edward III. an exchange was effected between king and convent, by which the latter surrendered a small corner of their precinct. Here, then, was erected "an ancient square tower," for the King's Jewel House, subsequently, and for many years, the depository of the Acts of Parliament. Unknown to Londoners, this old grey fortress, wearing the marks of Litlington's genius, still lifts its head among the trees of the Abbey Garden, overlooking the precinct of which once it formed a part—one of the few remaining memorials of the vanished palace of St. Stephen.

The Wars of the Roses came and went, leaving the Regalia still intact, and daily becoming more venerable in their honoured home. The privileges of the great Church continued as jealously guarded as ever. Then the storm-cloud of the Reformation burst. Down crashed the old abbeys of



The King's Jewel House, subsequently and until 1863 the Parliament offices. It is situated at the end of College Mews, Westminster. The wall on the left is the eastern boundary of the College Garden of Westminster Abbey



The Globe, or Orb, together with the King's Sceptre with the Cross

England. The monks of Westminster departed, some never to return, others to reappear as Canons of the new Collegiate Church of Tudor foundation. Many time-honoured privileges were henceforth abrogated. In defiance of tradition, in defiance of national and local right, these ancient emblems of English kingship were removed from their time-honoured resting-place, and deposited, like a private heirloom, in the Tower. Despite this sweeping change, however, the genius of the place long continued to assert its supremacy. For a whole century longer did the Abbey retain at least a portion of the Regalia. At length, the Great Rebellion broke forth. In the subsequent rule of the Commonwealth, the floodgates of disorder were flung open. It could hardly be expected that things wearing so significant a meaning as the English Regalia should escape the general downfall. To the Puritan fanatic they signified all that was hateful and detestable. When, in 1644, the proposal was made in the House that the Dean and Prebendaries should surrender the keys of the Treasury, the Lords gallantly withstood this attack. Five years later, however, their influence had dwindled to a vanishing-point, and the extremists in the Commons, though not without considerable opposition, succeeded in carrying their motion for the opening and rifling of the ancient Treasury.

The final scene was not far distant. To Henry Martin, the future regicide, was

entrusted the welcome duty of forcing the great doors, and with a hearty goodwill did he essay this task. The ancient iron chest was wrenched open, and the Regalia were rudely dragged forth. Their own intrinsic value, their unique character, their grand historical significance, alike failed to command one atom of reverence from Puritan bigotry. George Withers, a Republican poet, was arrayed in them, and afterwards, "with a thousand ridiculous and apish actions, exposed the sacred ornaments to contempt and laughter." A valuation was taken, and the doom of the Regalia was sealed. Willingly or unwillingly the Master of the Jewel House, Sir Henry Mildmay, delivered up these treasures—a transaction which earned him the title of "knave of diamonds." Ere long, the stones were sold for whatever they could fetch, while the sad remnants of these once glorious emblems were, by order of this enlightened Parliament, "totallie broken and defaced."

What, then, were the individual items of these Regalia, which had figured so prominently in English history for well nigh six centuries? We possess a catalogue, compiled about 1450 by one Sporley, a Westminster monk, now among the Cottonian MSS.; also a list of the various articles required for James I.'s coronation, presented to the Master of the Jewel House by Sir William Segar, Garter King at Arms; and lastly, the inventory compiled by the Parliamentary agents in 1649. A remarkable agreement exists between these several lists, the last named of which, as being the most complete, is here transcribed:

A TRUE AND PERFECT INVENTORY OF ALL THE PLATE AND JEWELS NOW BEING IN THE UPPER JEWELL HOUSE OF THE TOWER, IN THE CHARGE OF SIR HENRY MILD MAY, TOGETHER WITH AN APPRAISEMENT OF THEM MADE AND TAKEN THE 13TH, 14TH, AND 15TH DATES OF AUGUST 1649.

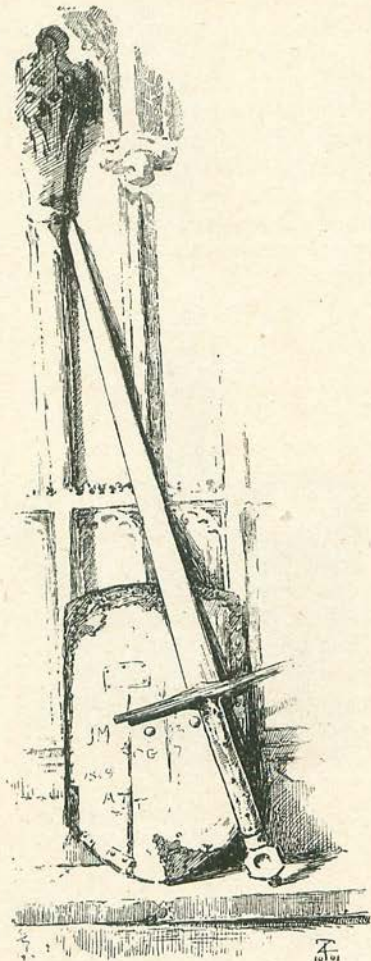
The Imperiall crowne of massy gold,	£	s.	d.
weighing 7 lb. 6 ounces, &c. valued			
at			1110 0 0
The queene's crowne of massy gold,			
weighing 3 lb. 10 ounces, &c.			338 3 4

A small crowne found in an iron chest, formerly in the lord Cottington's charge, &c, the gold . . . 73 16 8
 The diamonds, rubies, sapphires, &c. 355 0 0
 The globe, weighing 1 lb. 5½ oz. 57 10 0
 2 coronation bracelets weighing 7 oz. (with three rubies and twelve pearls) 36 0 0
 Two scepters, weighing 18 oz. . . 60 0 0
 A long rodd of silver gilt, 1 lb. 5 oz. 4 10 8
 The foremencion'd crownes, since ye inventorie was taken, are accordinge to ord^r of parliamt^t totallie broken and defaced.

THE INVENTORY OF THAT PART OF THE REGALIA WHICH ARE NOW REMOVED FROM WEST^R TO THE TOWER JEWEL HOUSE.

	£	s.	d.
Queen Edith's crowne, formerly thought to be of massy gould, but upon triall found to be of silver gilt, enriched with garnetts, foule pearle, sapphires, and some odd stones, p. oz. 50½ ounces, valued at	16	0	0
King Alfred's crowns, of gould wyerworke, sett with slight stones, and 2 little bells, p. oz. 79½ oz. at £3 per ounce	248	10	0
A gould plate dish, enamelled, &c.	77	11	0
One large glass cupp wrought in figures, &c.	102	15	0
A dove of gould, sett with stones and pearle, p. oz. 8½ ounces, in a box sett with studs of silver gilt.	26	0	0
The gould and stones belonging to a collar of crimson taffaty, &c.	18	15	0
One staff of black and white ivory, with a dove on the top, with binding and foote of gould.	4	10	0
A large staff with a dove on ye top, formerly thought to be all gould, but upon triall found to be the lower part wood and silver gilt without, weighing in all 27 ounces, valued at	35	0	0
One small staff with a floure de luce on the topp, formerly thought to be all of gould, but upon triall found to be iron within and silver gilt without	2	10	0
Two scepters, one sett with pearles and stones, the upper end gould, the lower end silver. The other silver gilt, with a dove, formerly thought gould	65	16	10½
One silver spoone gilt, p. oz. 3 ounces	0	16	0
The gould of the tassels of the liver cull ^d robe, weighing 4 oz. valued at £8, and the coat with the neck button of gould, £2, the robe having some pearls valued at £3, in all	13	0	0
All these, accordinge to order of parliamt, are broken and defaced			
One paire of silver gilt spurres, &c.	1	13	4

The Crown first demands our attention. This ornament has received a fanciful derivation from the rays of glory which played round Moses' head on his descent from the Mount and which were assumed to indicate sovereign power. The earliest Crowns were probably, simple irradiated fillets of gold, but by the time of the Athelstan this comparatively plain ornament acquired three raised points, each surmounted by a pearl. In Canute's crown the points are elaborated into trefoils which maintain the idea of symbolical irradiation. The addition of the



Shield and Sword of State used at Edward III.'s Coronation, now preserved in the Confessor's Chapel in Westminster Abbey

arch which usually characterises modern crowns, is first observed on the coins of the Confessor. With Stephen the well-known fleurs-de-lys appear, and with trifling modifications the Crown retains this form until Henry VI., in whose reign the centre trefoil develops into a cross-patée. The full dimensions of the English Crown were only attained in that of Henry VIII.—*e.g.*, a rim, adorned by alternate cross-patées and fleurs-de-lys, together with four arches above, the whole being surmounted by an orb with cross-patée. Such was the "Imperial Crowne" or crown of State. It was assumed at the conclusion of the Coronation Service, in St. Edward's Chapel behind the high altar of the Abbey. The early Norman and the Anjevin kings were accustomed to wear their crowns on feast days and all grand occasions, till Edward I. abandoned the practice, with the witty remark, that "crowns do onerate rather than honour princes." The Crown of State was usually made afresh or at any rate remodelled for each successive sovereign.



St. Edward's Crown. First used by Charles II, now in the Tower of London

It is practically certain, that the "small crowne found in an iron chest" was the state crown of Edward VI., for in a diary, taken from an interleaved copy of "Lilly's Merlini Anglici Emphemeris" for 1649, the

writer, who seems to have assisted Sir Henry Mildmay, distinctly states, that the crowns for the Queen and for Edward VI. were in the Tower and two others at Westminster.

But "King Alfred's crowne of gould



Queen Edith's Crown with which Queen Mary of Modena was crowned in 1685. Now broken up, the materials being used in other crowns

wyerworke" will doubtless attract wider interest than any other of these royal ornaments. With this crown the actual deed of Coronation was wont to be performed. Had it really adorned the brow of the great King himself? It seems more than probable. Robert of Gloucester (1350) in relating the connection between Alfred and Pope Leo IV. distinctly alludes to this crown. "The Pope Leo him blessed and the King's crowne of this land, that in this land yet is." Once more, Sir Henry Spelman (1569-1644) writes, "in the arched room in the Cloisters of Westminster Abbey where the antient regalia of this kingdom are kept, upon a box which is cabinet to the antientest crown, there is as I am informed, an inscription to this purpose—'haec est principalior corona cum qua coronabantur reges Ælfrედus, Edwardus,' etc." This almost sacred diadem must then have descended from the dim infancy of the nation, and though more generally styled St. Edward's crown, only received such appellation because the Confessor had worn

it, and then entrusted it to the monks of Westminster.

The royal sceptre, as is well known, furnished the original of the fool's bauble; can the curious bells on King Alfred's crown similarly have formed the prototype of the cap?

The "globe," or orb, was the emblem of independent sovereignty, as representing the earth, over a portion of which the sovereign's influence was to be directly exerted. On the great seal of the Confessor the orb is represented as a simple sphere, but from



The Crown of State worn by James II. on his return from the Abbey to Westminster Hall

William II. to Henry VIII. it is surmounted by a cross together with a stem of varying length. From that time onwards, the cross rests directly upon the orb, the stem disappearing. The orb is only placed in the hand of Kings and Queens regnant.

The bracelets were a most ancient emblem of royalty. Such was the veneration with which they were regarded by northern peoples, that they usually possessed enormous value, while the practice of swearing upon them was by no means infrequent. In England, they were employed to fasten the King's sleeves about his wrists, symbolising thus the firmness with which he undertakes to



The Circlet worn in 1685 by Queen Mary of Modena on her way to the Abbey. Now in the Tower of London

abide by his numerous obligations. They were expressly demanded at the Coronation of Mary, while in Elizabeth's case we learn that "two garters" were placed upon her arms!

The sceptre was the emblem of power. As the silver wand, so familiar in Cathedrals, was once hollow, containing the "virge" or rod with which chastisement was inflicted upon the choristers and younger members of the foundation, so the royal sceptre represented the right to inflict punishment. Hence the expression "to sway the sceptre" implied the holding of regal dignity. The sceptre with the dove possessed the additional signification of the Holy Ghost, as controlling the actions of the sovereign. The same idea was conveyed at Rheims by the beautiful ceremony of letting loose a number of doves at the Coronation of the French Kings. The development of the sceptre



Crown of State worn by Queen Mary of Modena and probably by Queen Mary II. after their Coronations. Now in the Tower of London



The Anointing Spoon and the Ampulla, or Golden Eagle, for containing the Consecrated Oil

exhibits almost as much diversity as that of the crown. The simplest form is that of Ethelred II.—a rod with three pearls at the top which developed under Canute into three trefoils. The Confessor's sceptre is shown on his great Seal as containing a cross-patée while he is also the first monarch who wields the sceptre with the dove. The sceptre-fleury—a triple leaf—appears on the sceptre of the Conqueror, but it does not attain its full development—the fleur-de-lys—until Henry IV. The orb is first seen under Henry II. Thus the sceptres of later years combine all these various elements—the cross of the Confessor, the sceptre fleury of William I. and the orb of Henry II.

The "long rodd of silver gilt" was a wand carried in front of the King, and usually called St. Edward's staff—the rod of justice and equity. It was alleged to contain a portion of the true cross. As among the ancient Britons the planting of a staff into the ground, surmounted by a garland, was the signal for holding a court, so, to take the staff into the hand implied the assumption of royal jurisdiction.

The "large glass cup" was doubtless

the great "stone" chalice of the Confessor mentioned by Sporley.

The spurs signified the fountain of honour. As the sceptre and crown symbolised the episcopal crozier and mitre, so the spurs together with the swords declared the military aspect of the coronation. The swords are not mentioned by Sporley: hence, they were probably added by subsequent monarchs. Being an instrument of chastisement, the sword indicated the fountain of justice, and also the King's headship over the army. The sword of St. Edward, also called "Curtana," represented, with its blunted edge, the attribute of mercy. At the coronation ceremony it was always borne by the Earl of Chester as Count-Palatine. The two remaining swords implied justice to the spirituality and to the temporality respectively.

It is melancholy to reflect that the Long Parliament while professing to take its stand upon the ancient principles of the English constitution, could, nevertheless, devise no better use for these venerable relics of a glorious past than their utter destruction.

A new epoch was inaugurated in the history of the Regalia by the Restoration. Before Charles II. had even sailed from the Hague, the House of Lords appointed Commissioners to recover his father's property, where practicable. A very cursory inspection revealed the hopelessness of the task. Accordingly, orders were given to the goldsmith, Sir Robert Vyner, afterwards Lord Mayor, to replace the old Regalia by others, "which should retain the old name and fashion." Twenty-four years later the Coronation of James II. and Mary of Modena necessitated the further addition of the Regalia peculiar to a Queen Consort, while according to a bill dated February 23, 1685, and recently discovered in the Exchequer Records, the remainder of the ornaments were considerably beautified and embellished. At the unique Coronation of William and Mary in 1689, a second orb and sceptre

were added, resembling those of the King, the Queen being crowned together with him, not as consort, but as joint sovereign.

The Regalia, as now exhibited in the Tower, are substantially identical with the ornaments used at the last-named coronation, having experienced but trifling modifications since the seventeenth century. The main exception is the State Crown of Queen Victoria, which will probably arouse the chief interest. It is a magnificent diadem containing 277 pearls, 2785 diamonds, 5 rubies, 17 sapphires, and 11 emeralds. Among them are found a sapphire, taken from the famous ring of the Confessor (supposed to give its owner the power of blessing cramp-rings), and recut for Charles II. in the form of a rose; a sapphire bequeathed to George III. by Cardinal York, the last descendant of James II.; and above all "the fair ruby, great like a rocket ball" given to the Black Prince after the battle of Najara by Pedro the Cruel, King of Castile, and worn on the helmet of Henry V. at Agincourt.

The Crowns of State belonging to previous monarchs have long since been broken up, but the upper portion of that used by George IV. still remains, a mound made of "one entire stone of sea-water green colour, known as an agmarine."

St. Edward's Crown is of simpler construction, but the fleurs-de-lys and cross-patées surrounding the rim are enriched in every direction by rows of pearls and rosettes of precious stones. The arches which rise from the rim are similarly adorned, while the cross-patée at the summit is surrounded with huge drop pearls.

The sceptres are five in number, the most noticeable being the King's sceptre with the Cross, the handle of which is wreathed with a mass of blazing gems and sprays of gold, while the top consists of an enormous amethyst orb, faceted all over with gold and diamonds, together

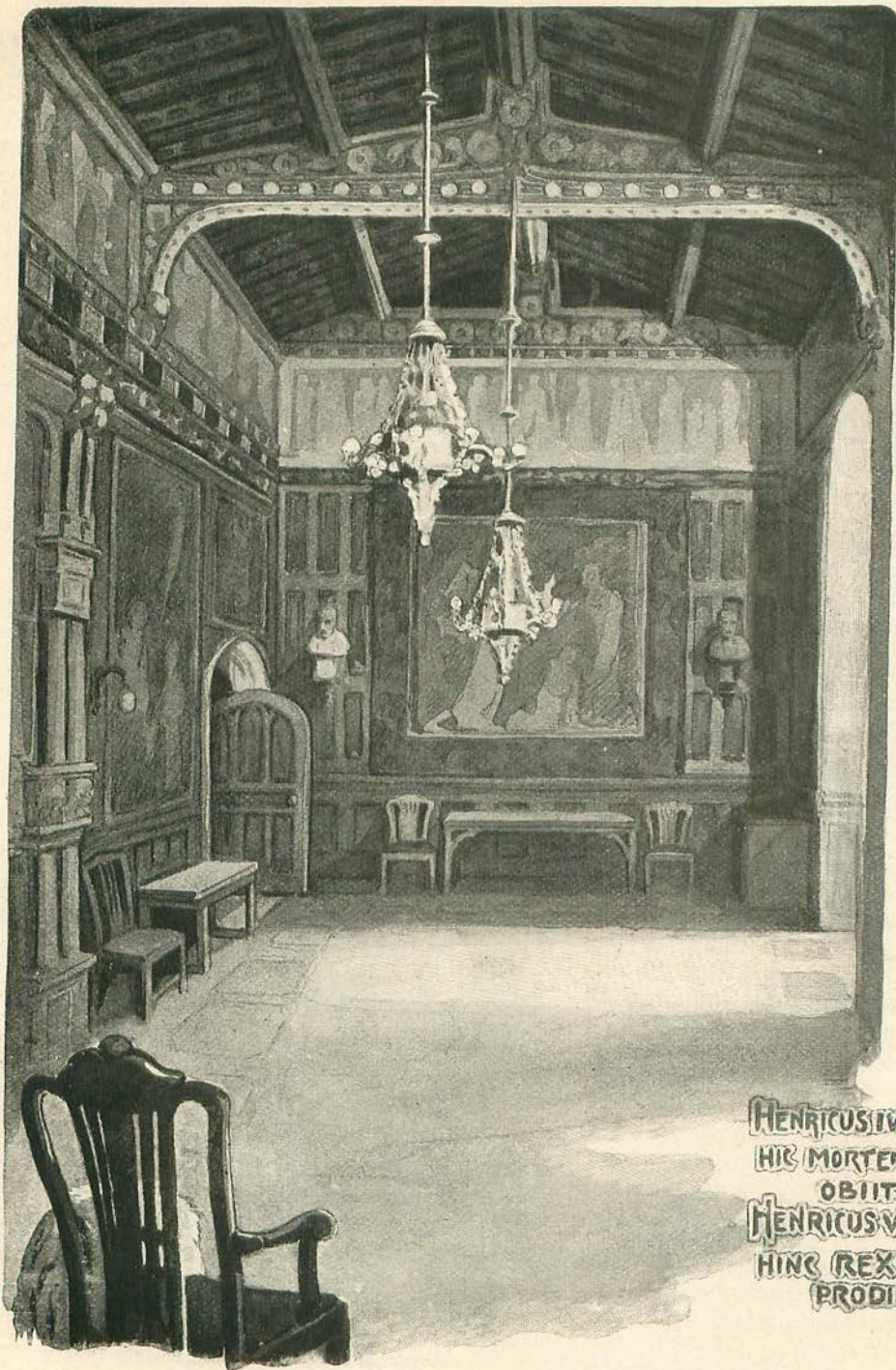
with a thickly jewelled arched crown; and secondly, the large gold sceptre with the dove, made presumably for Mary II. and subsequently hidden away at the back of a cupboard and forgotten till 1814!

One of the most interesting items among the Regalia is the golden Eagle or Ampulla, which, together with the spoon, are employed at the Anointing. It is possible that these ornaments actually belonged to the original Regalia. They were regarded as possessing a special sanctity, and seeing that the Ampulla was omitted from the Parliamentary inventory, it is conceivable that the Abbey authorities may have claimed them and subsequently secreted them. This view is distinctly expressed by Sandford, the historian of James II.'s Coronation, while it is further borne out by the undoubted marks of antiquity in the body of the eagle and on the handle of the spoon.

Such are the chief items among the Regalia of to-day, although there still remain a vast number besides—the two orbs, the bracelets, St. George's spurs, the beautiful circlet of Mary of Modena, the silver state trumpets with their embroidered falls, the huge silver maces borne by the Sergeants-



The courtyard of the Abbot's House, now the Deanery of Westminster, showing the entrance to the Jericho Parlour and Jerusalem Chamber; in which the Regalia are placed previous to the Coronation



HENRICUS IV
HIC MORTEM
OBIIT.
HENRICUS V
HINC REX
PRODIT.

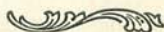
The Jerusalem Chamber

at-Arms before the King, together with the famous salt-cellar of Elizabeth and Charles II., and other ornaments used at Coronation banquets.

From the Restoration onward the Tower has been their unvarying home. Twice, however, has their existence been grievously imperilled. In 1671, an Irish desperado—Colonel Blood—after wounding the custodian, escaped with the crown and orb as far as the Tower wharf. Fortunately his progress was arrested, and the Regalia were recovered without suffering any material damage. In 1841 a terrible fire broke out in the Bowyer Tower, adjoining St. Martin's Tower, at that time the Jewel-House. The Regalia were within an ace of complete destruction. Only by dint of the most hazardous exertions, their very clothes being charred in the attempt, did the authorities succeed in removing them to a place of safety in the Governor's house.

With the Abbey we commenced, with the

Abbey let us conclude. The Confessor's Church has lost one of its chief glories, but thanks to the strength of tradition, the old connection still continues, although in a shadowy form. The Dean and Chapter are still recognised as Curators, for the time being, of the national Regalia. To their care are they entrusted on the coronation eve. During that night they occupy the historic Jerusalem chamber, whose very walls have witnessed the rise and fall of kings. From here, until recent times, they were conveyed in solemn procession, on the Coronation morning, through the Abbey to Westminster Hall, borne by Dean and Prebendaries and escorted by the entire collegiate body. At the conclusion of the stately service they are deposited beneath the Confessor's shrine, and once more entrusted to the keeping of their original guardians—the rulers of the great Abbey Church, so fittingly described, as "the Head and Crown and Diadem of the Kingdom."



The Wisdom of James the Just

Sunday Readings for February

By the Right Rev. W. Boyd Carpenter, D.D., Lord Bishop of Ripon

FIRST SUNDAY

OUR interest in man means our interest in life. It is one reply to the question—Is life worth living?—to realise how very full of interest, after all, life is. The story of the obscure may possess elements full of attractiveness. The conditions which brought about the obscurity of such a life are worthy of study. The conditions which led another life out of obscurity into the full light of fame, stimulate our interest. We may complain of life's monotony at times; but when we write down the epitaph of the unknown—He was born! he lived! he died!—we feel our curiosity stirred. The possibilities of man, and the

possibilities of life rise before our eyes. To this or that individual life may be dull; but on the whole life is interesting, and man's verdicts on life are interesting.

What is the verdict of the Apostle upon our life?

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

We have seen enough of him to realise that he looked out upon the world with observant eyes. He knew and saw men and things. He formed his own judgment, clearly and, as I think, promptly. If we can follow his thoughts and measure his judgments, we shall gain something from his experience. What is his general judgment on life?