

Lord Mayors' Shows—Past and Present.

BY HARRY HOW.



THE LORD MAYOR'S STATE COACH.



BY the time these lines appear in print another Lord Mayor's Show will have been added to a long line of civic pageants, for from the days when Henry Fitz-Alwyn was first appointed by the Crown, in 1189, and continued in office for twenty-four years, London has had no fewer than 516 different Lord Mayors. With but few exceptions, all of these have kept up the time-honoured custom, and presented an appreciative and admiring public with a "Show," or, at any rate, something resembling one.

The Corporation of London has always been famous for its great love of show, and as far back as 1453 the annual civic pageant has been held with unmistakable ceremony and *éclat*. This was Sir John Norman's year, when he proceeded in a barge, with considerable state, to be sworn in at Westminster. Previous to this year it was customary to do the journey on foot by road, or in a boat by the river without any great following, or much attempt at display; but it is due to the memory of Sir John to record the fact that he it was who introduced the ceremony which is not likely to die out, in spite of an annual agitation of which the war-cry is, "Down with the Lord Mayor's Show."

It appears that the first public account of a Lord Mayor's Show was that written by George Peele, on the occasion of the inauguration of Sir Wolstane Dixie, on October 29th, 1585. This little pamphlet consists of only four leaves and cost £20, and it is preserved in the Guildhall Library.

Successive Lord Mayors' Shows sought to vie, the one with the other, as to who could make "the annual" grander and more impressive than that which went before; and amongst these may be mentioned that of Sir Thomas Middleton, in 1613, in particular. It is recorded as being unparalleled in its splendour and artistic aspirations.

In 1616 Sir John Leman, of the Fishmongers' Company, also produced a very striking show; and especially remarkable were the pageants, which were placed on huge trollies, the wheels of which were hidden by drapery and drawn along the streets. Sir John Leman being a member of the Fishmongers' Company, particular prominence was given to the inhabitants of the sea.

In 1698, a magnificent chariot of justice was introduced into the procession. Beneath a canopy, on the top of which were two angels, sat the goddess of all things good and just. The chariot was drawn by two horses got up to represent unicorns, and ridden by negroes.

It was for a long time the custom for the Lord Mayor to ride on horseback in the procession, the last of the equestrian Lord Mayors being, according to one authority, Sir Gilbert Heathcote, in the time of Queen Anne. There has always been considerable speculation as to why the Lord Mayor ceased to accompany the civic procession on horseback. Some chroniclers are of the opinion that it was owing to the fact that a certain Lord Mayor on one occasion lost his equilibrium and was thrown into the mud.

One can hardly imagine a more undignified position than that of a Lord Mayor in the gutter, and it is said that steps were at once taken to prevent the recurrence of such a deplorable accident. At any rate, in the year 1712 a coach was provided for the use of the first magistrate, and the present magnificent conveyance was built in 1757 at a cost of £10,065.

The small column illustrations reproduced in these pages formed a portion of either a programme, menu, or invitation card to the Lord Mayor's Show of 1742. It is a curiosity in its way, and really a very clever bit of engraving, and tends to show that, even after a State carriage had been placed at the disposal of the yearly tenant of the Mansion House, one at least preferred to make the official journey on horseback. Arranged round the four sides of the card is the Lord Mayor's procession, showing his lordship astride a good-looking mare, with his attendant aldermen. The different companies are well to the front with their warders and clerks, the leather-sellers, coopers, salters, etc., all of which are depicted, together with men in armour, the military, to say nothing of the King's trumpeter, with a drummer beating drums, which were carried on a man's back.

The illustration of the view in Cheapside, after J. June, published in 1761, will give a

very good idea of what the shows were like a year or two after the great coach was built. Balconies ran alongside the houses, and a remarkable-looking orchestra occupied a position evidently outside a tavern. The coach is in the centre of the picture. It is followed by a noisy crowd, one of whom has upset the wares of an old apple-woman under the very nose of an individual who is evidently—to judge by his stern expression and easy way of taking things—a custodian of the law. Apart from the fact of its being a picture depicting a Lord Mayor's Show of this period, a very excellent idea may be obtained of the various wigs which were in wearing at that time, whilst the reproduction of the fine picture, by W. Millar, of swearing in Alderman Newnham at the Guildhall, in 1782, conveys an admirable impression of civic costume in the 18th century.

No less interesting are the contemporary illustrations, published as reminiscences of the Show of 1784, depicting the procession by water and the cavalcade by land. It is not possible to judge what particular part of the river the procession is at this moment passing, or from which wharf or disused piece of land the salvos of artillery are booming forth to greet the new Lord Mayor; but the spot at which the Show is passing by land can easily be localized as Ludgate Hill. There are no

crowds, save at the windows. Mr. Blades, Messrs. Richardson and Goodridge, Mr. Rich, the pastry-cook, and Mr. Griffin, the colourman, have shut up their shops, and turned the windows of the first floor into admirable private boxes, in order that the Lord Mayor and his retinue may be the more easily viewed by their respective admiring families.

Hogarth has left on record probably one of the best notions of the annual civic pageant of a by-gone period. The



THE CHARIOT OF JUSTICE, 1698.



illustration given is one of the series of "The Industrious and Idle Apprentice," a picture too well known to call for any detailed account; but it is worthy of note that the locality chosen by this very faithful, though grotesque, painter is the west end of Cheapside, and that the balcony projecting from the house at the end of Paternoster Row provides accommodation for Frederick Prince of Wales and the Princess Augusta.

Coming down to the present century, the Lord Mayor's Show of 1827 had in it two colossal figures, representing the well-known statues of Gog and Magog. These giants were constructed of wicker-work, gaily attired in the costume of their prototypes, and

similarly armed. A man was placed inside each giant, bearing the wicker-work upon him as he struggled along. The giants were 14ft. high, and their heads were level with the first-floor windows throughout the line of route, and doubtless they came in for the customary amount of chaff and chucking under the chins on the part of the delighted spectators. The *Times* of the following day, in its account of the Show, remarks: "They were extremely well contrived, and appeared to call forth more admiration and applause than fell to the share of any of the other personages who formed part of the procession. Whatever some fastidious critics may say as to taste and refinement in the present day, we think the appearance of these figures argues well for the future conduct of the new Lord Mayor, and some of his other brother magistrates would, we make no doubt, be well content if, in the whole course, or at the close of their official career, they could come in for a little of the plaudits which were yesterday bestowed on the two representatives of Gog and Magog."

The illustrations showing the Lord Mayor's Shows of 1847, by T. H. Nicholson, and 1844, by David Robert, R.A., together with the companion picture by the same artist of the State barge at Westminster, are sufficiently graphic without any descriptive account.

It will be noticed, however, in many of the pictures reproduced, that men in armour occupy a prominent position. These somewhat heavily, not to say uncomfortably, clothed individuals appear to have been in high favour with the corporation, and it must certainly be admitted that they always present an air of originality, notwithstanding the fact that they have taken part in the Show for some centuries back. The



THE LORD MAYOR'S SHOW OF 1742.



THE LORD MAYOR'S SHOW.
From the "Industrious and Idle Apprentices," after Hogarth.

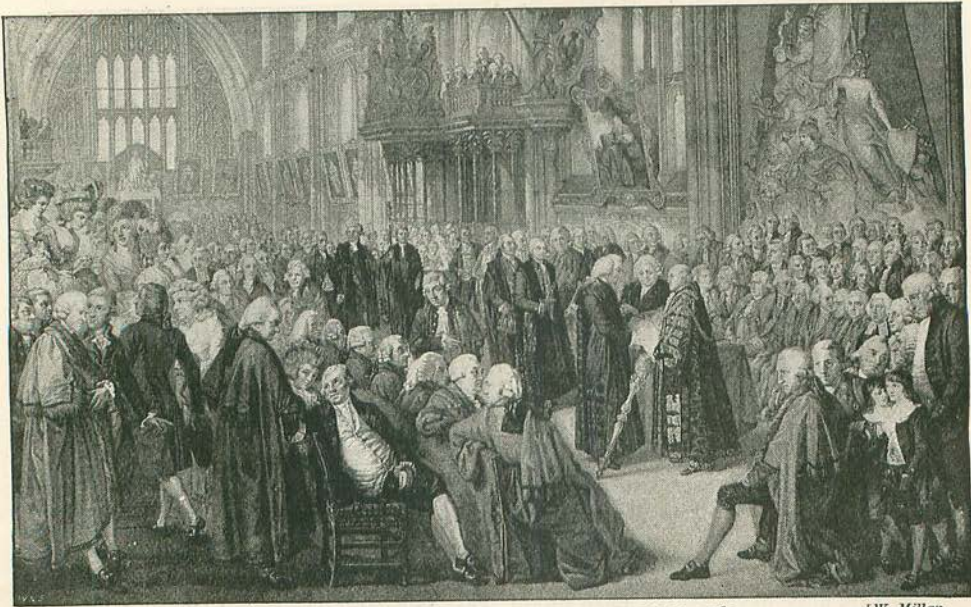
allegorical cars also have always been found in the civic procession, and as a rule have been depictive of the particular companies of which the Lord Mayor for the time being is a member. They are frequently very beautiful in design, though it is to be feared that the human figures which assist in decorating the cars by their personal

presence along the whole line of route often suffer severely if the 9th of November prove to be a wet, or even a foggy, day.

Some twenty years ago elephants were introduced into the procession, and it must be chronicled that, although their attendants had black faces, their dusky appearance was even less than skin deep. The writer



A VIEW OF CHEAPSIDE, AS IT APPEARED ON LORD MAYOR'S DAY 1761.
From a Painting by] THE LORD MAYOR'S SHOW, 1761. [J. June.



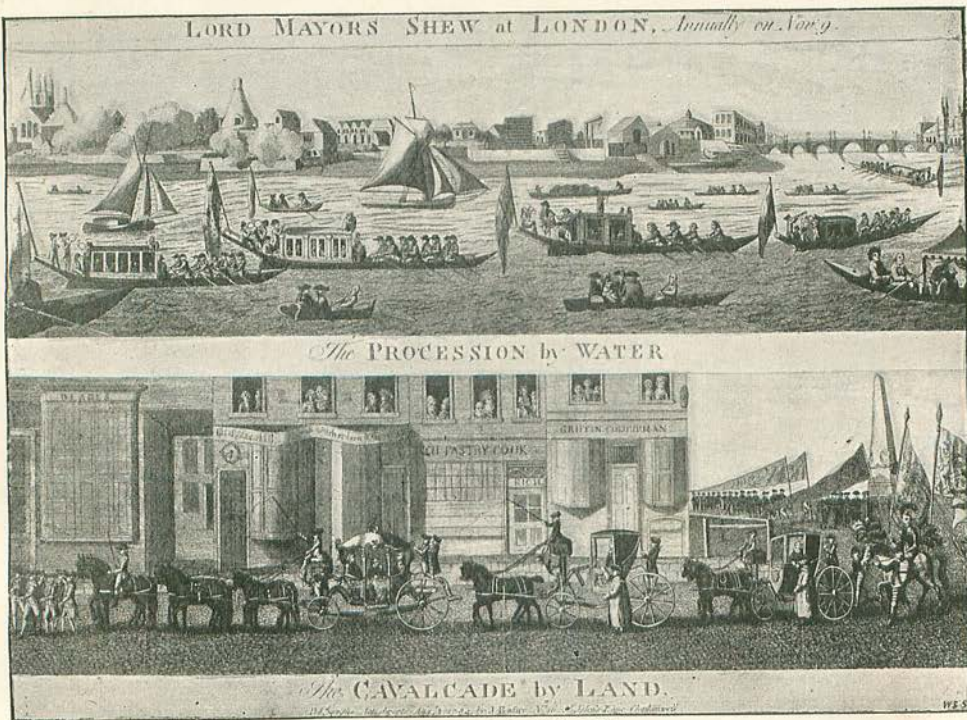
From a Painting by

SWEARING IN ALDERMAN NEWNHAM AT THE GUILDHALL, 1782.

[W. Miller.

remembers one poor little fellow perched on an elephant. His face was blackened, and he was very nervous, and held on to the great animal with both hands. It was a bitterly cold day, and the little boy had a

very bad cold. His nose gave him considerable trouble—he was unable to give it the attention it demanded, for fear of tumbling off. The result was that all the black from the lower part of his face was obliterated.



THE LORD MAYOR'S SHOW, 1784.



From a Painting by]

THE LORD MAYOR'S SHOW OF 1844.

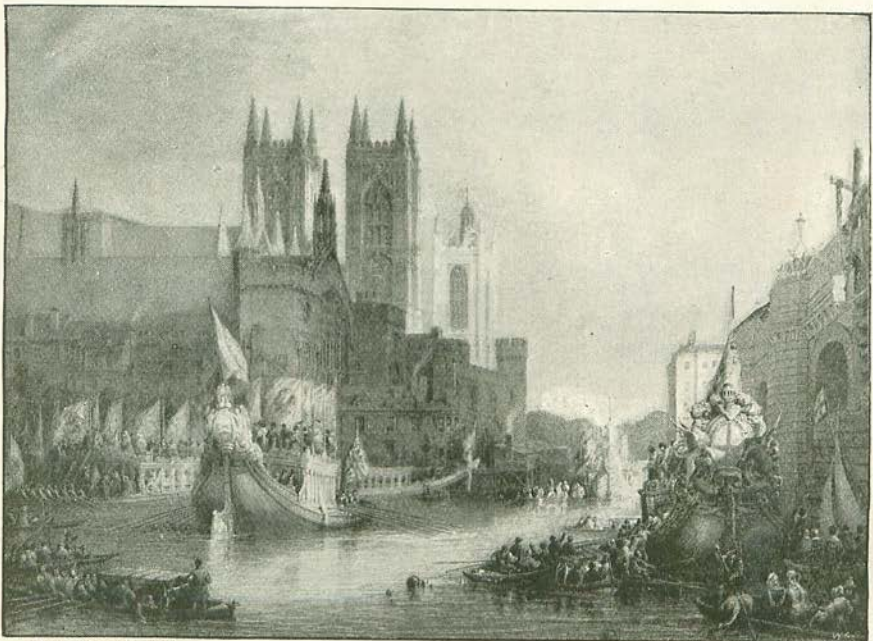
[David Robert, R.A.

This caused the lad to appear as miserable as he unquestionably looked ridiculous.

The cost of the present-day Lord Mayor's Show is about £2,000, whilst the banquet, which, after all, is the great event of "the 9th," must cost at least between £2,000 and £3,000, one half of the amount being con-

tributed by the Lord Mayor, and the other half divided between the two sheriffs.

Originally the Lord Mayors' feasts were kept at the Merchant Taylors' and the Grocers' Halls; but when the kitchens and other offices were added to the Guildhall, they were utilized for the purpose of these



From a Painting by]

THE LORD MAYOR'S SHOW OF 1844.

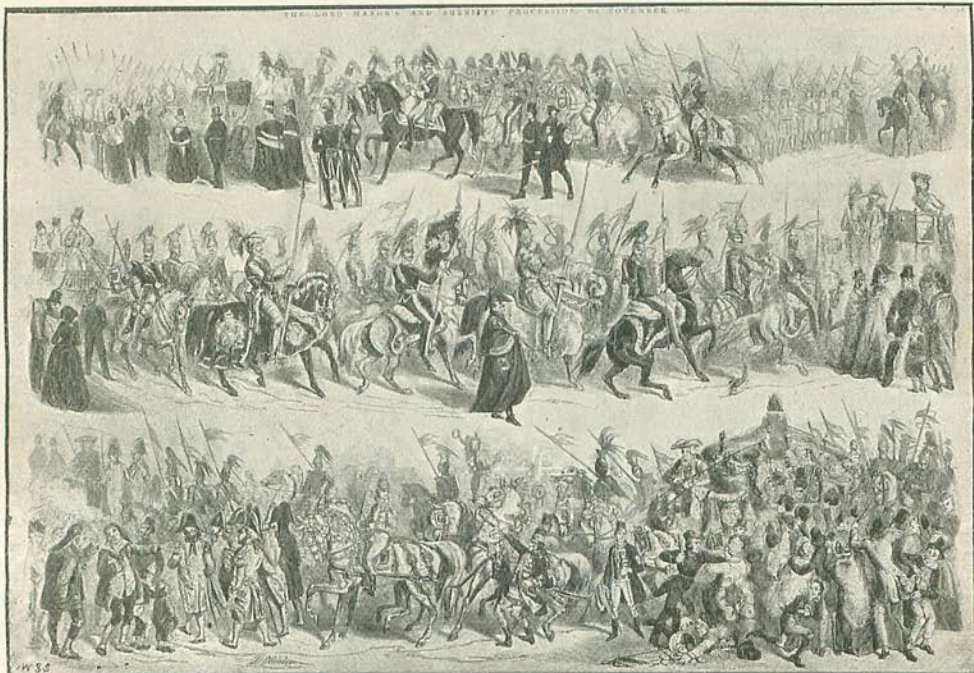
[David Robert, R.A.



VIEW OF LORD MAYOR'S SHOW FROM ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL.

annual sumptuous "spreads." Sir John Shaw's mayoralty banquet was held there in 1501, and it is on record that he was the first who kept his feast there.

On Lord Mayor's Day something like 800 to 1,000 people sit down at the heavily-laden tables at the principal seat of the Corporation of London. For days before the feast and for days afterwards the odour of cooking permeates the atmosphere, and no wonder, for something like 400 quarts of turtle soup, 140 dishes of game, 85 turkeys, 36 hams, 160 lobster salads, 400 chickens and capons, 600 meat pies, 120 quart jellies, and 200 dishes of pastry will have been prepared; whilst the strength of the side-board will be tested to its utmost capacity by two great barons of beef, each weighing over 150lb. It is a pleasure to record the fact that all that remains of this magnificent banquet is distributed the next morning amongst the poor who may be the fortunate possessors of tickets entitling them to partake of their share of the Lord Mayor's banquet.



From a Drawing by]

THE LORD MAYOR'S SHOW, 1847.

[T. H. Nicholson.