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ANOTHER BRITISH KING HALLOWED

To Rule a Vast Empire According to Unique Rite, With Time Honored Ceremony And State---Another Writer Tells About The Coronation.

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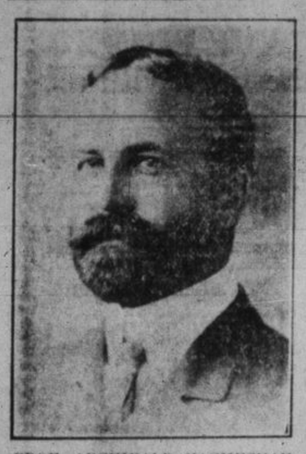
The large red card which the earl marshal sent your correspondent informed him that his seat was No. 48, row Z.1 in the north triforium. That did not sound very promising, but, on ascending the hundred steps that led to row Z.1 up a narrow winding stair he found that it was one of the best places in the whole edifice to view the great ceremony.

In the first place, the seat was in the very front row by the great pier that upholds the roof. Looking to the right, I could see the choir, the top of the choir screen with the musicians assembled, the whole of the aisle to



PROF ARCHIBALD MACMECHAN, Special coronation correspondent for the Whig.

the west door; looking in front, I could see all the south side of the choir and the seats above them reserved for the "corps diplomatique"; looking to the left, I could see almost the whole of the "theatre," the square space between the north and south transept, where the greatest part of the ceremony was to take place, the seats allotted to the peers of the realm, the side altar glittering with huge basons and cups and flagons of massy, shining gold from the chapel royal, and behind the favored places for the young princes of the blood. By standing up and leaning over, I could see the back of the famous throne in the seat of which is the stone of Scone on which the kings of England have been crowned for hundreds of years. Facing was the famous poets' corner.

There was another advantage. The triforium is as high above the floor of the abbey as the main-truck of a full-rigged ship is above her deck. It was almost perilous to look down; but the "coup d'oeil" was magnificent.

You are to imagine, then, an ancient Gothic church, pointed arches, stained glass windows, and stone walls brown with vast age. That is the background. The color-scheme for the floor, whither your eyes inevitably tend, and the seats and the fronts of the wooden stands ranges from a deep rich blue to dove-color and drab, a most restful and well-considered arrangement to show to greatest advantage the gorgeous pageantry of dress which was to sweep over it. In the "theatre" is a raised platform, ascended by five steps, covered with rich blue; by its side is another platform ascended by three steps. On them are two chairs of state, for the king and queen; they face the altar and have their backs to the choir. At right angles to them, immediately in front of the seats for the peers are three other mediæval-looking chairs. The central one has the back embroidered with a device of three white ostrich feathers on red. It is for the young Prince of Wales. To his right and left will sit the Duke of Connaught, our governor-general, and the Duke of Teck.

The congregation of seven thousand persons is assembling rapidly. Even before eight o'clock many of the peers' seats are occupied and the space allotted to the corps diplomatique is nearly filled. Already the scene is a feast of color. The peers wear long crimson velvet mantles edged with ermine and deep ermine capes. They carry their coronets in their hands. The ladies are in evening dress, usually in white though apple green, ultramarine blue, old rose and every color in Joseph's coat is to be seen. Instead of their ugly hats, they wear white ostrich plumes in their hair, which softens old faces, and transfigures young. The glitter, sparkle and flame of diamonds on white necks is literally dazzling. One lady in a chair stall wears a tight necklace, each stone of which looks as big as a hazel-nut, at this distance they give out green and blue fires as she moves. Another lady might seem to keep her breast warm with her diamonds; they are in three flat clusters, each as large as the palm of your hand. Every kind of uniform is to be seen in the gallery opposite, naval, military, diplomatic, court. There is a Chinaman in his silks and mandarin's cap. Near him is a Persian with a black fez. A row above is a Japanese in black and gold. Here is a Turkish admiral in blue and gold with a red fez. Beside him is a venerable looking man in a red doctor of divinity's gown, and in the front row a distinguished-looking diplomat, whose black coat has a broad green collar. Every man wears all his orders and medals. Even in the house of commons gallery, the Fourth Transept, plain clothes are the exception. Every member who has been presented wears his Windsor uniform; all ex-soldiers and sailors are in full regimentals.

But the choir stalls hold the chief interest for Canadians. This year the post of honor has always been given to our people. At the review the Canadian Boy Scouts were placed on the right; in the progress, the Canadian troops will march at the head of the line; and in the Abby to-day the premier of Canada has a foremost place. The family of the empire takes precedence over the foreign potentates. Sir Wilfrid looks very stately in the dark blue silk mantle of the order of St. Michael and St. George; on the left breast is a great round star. Immediately in front of him is General Botha; the whole front of his court dress is a bright mass of gold braid; no cloth is to be seen. Does he think, during this solemnity of the great open veldt and what he was doing only ten years ago? India is also well represented. There are two Indian queens sitting side by side. One is a large woman in light blue silk; she wears a veil with two slits for the eyes, and above that, a glittering crown. One of the many splendid ushers takes her up to the theatre and explains things to her. By her side is a beautiful little brown woman in pink silk. Her 'sari' is thrown over her head; the black hair is parted in the middle and brushed down smooth. She is much interested and in her movements the sari slips and discloses a bare brown arm. Across the aisle sits a magnificent bearded rajah with a light mauve turban glistening with jewels. He has ropes of jewels round his neck. These he is not above showing to a friendly Windsor uniform with a red baton; he even lets the ladies near examine his marvellous sabre. The pommel is one mass of diamonds.

Peers and peeresses are pouring in; the seats are filling everywhere. Gentlemen in waiting move briskly to and fro, escorting this and that notability to his place. One conspicuous figure is

CLERGY CARRYING THE REGALIA FROM THE JERUSALEM CHAMBER TO THE ABBEY. (Photo by Sir Benjamin Stone.)

the Duke of Norfolk, the earl marshal, in white breeches and stockings and a scarlet coat richly laced with gold. He is a stout, plain man with a beard. He walks awkwardly for his left leg is stiff from a hurt he received in South Africa. The great dames of the kingdom are arrayed like the peers with trailing crimson velvet mantles, trimmed with ermine. As these long trains sweep over the blue carpet, all the peeresses look most majestic. No other word expresses the fact. They do not wear capes; their dresses are cut low, and every one blazes with diamonds. One thinks of the theatre and similar spectacles, but in such things the perception of the make-believe is always uppermost, arithmetic and calculation fail lamentably to suggest the immense wealth assembled here for these few hours. Nowhere in dress, action or manner, is there the least suggestion pretence or the theatrical. Everyone seems to feel the greatness of the occasion. There is a subdued hum of talk and now and then the clink of swords on the steps.

At half-past nine exactly, there is a sound of silver trumpets. They herald a solemn procession of the clergy down the choir under the choir-screen, and out into the aisle, where they disappear and the music dies away. Red robes, richly embroidered copes, purple and scarlet, sacred symbols flow past. The white-vested choir filling the gallery to the left of the organ and the choir screen singing with deep feeling "Oh God, Our Help In Ages Past." From this time on to the end of the ceremony, the reader is to imagine music at intervals, thrilling all the auditory and giving the emotion of the moment. There are many violins at the command of Sir Frederic Bridge, directing in his Doctor of Music gown, and kettle drums as well. Every now and then, there is a blare, or flourish that makes one want to march.

A little after ten, there suddenly sweeps in through the arch of the choir-screen, a procession of fairy princesses, in long court trains, pink, blue, gold, white brocades, eclipsing everything that has appeared hitherto. They and their ladies, on the attentive uniforms help them to gather up these wondrous garments as they disappear on the peeresses' side. Splendid tall soldiers in red with plumed helmets and halberds follow them into the choir and range themselves on each side of the passage. At half-past ten, to the sound of music that will not permit you to keep your seat, the young Prince of Wales comes in with his following. He wears the long black mantle of the Garter, and a plumed head-dress. The other members of the royal family take their places behind the gold plate, under the emblems of the crown. To the outward eye, they are a young girl in short white skirts, a boy in a naval cadet's uniform and two other wee chaps in kilts. They were the most simply dressed persons on the floor of the abbey. The host of gallant little pages in steel gray, or white, or blue or scarlet with their fierce little swords outshone the royal children a hundred times.

But here comes the queen! Regal is her bearing; she moves in majesty Her long train of purple and gold and ermine is upborne by eight slim girls in glistening cloth of silver. A mistress of the robes carries the very end, and her train is in turn borne by another. The queen's attendants have no color or ornament on their dresses, and no jewels; their ornament is their beauty. The music is tumultuous full-throated, and the king's scholars from Westminster make the roof echo with their vivats. The queen seats herself on an antique chair in front of the royal children; her maidens arrange her train and stand behind her chair like tall white lilies. She looks down the choir and the aisle, as I for the king. He soon follows robed in state. His royal mantel is borne by eight shapely youths in scarlet, with white breeches, and stockings; each is grit with a courtly sword. They take their place in a row before the prince of Wales. The music and the shouts are almost frenzled.

The great office of consecrating the king now began. It was long and complicated, and it has been as often described that I will not attempt to give the details. But certain features stand out clearly above all the rest.

First came the recognition. This consisted in the archbishop conducting the king to the four sides of the theatre and saying "Sirs, I here present unto you King George, the undoubted king of this realm; wherefore all you who are come this day to do your homage and service, Are you willing to do the same?" To his challenge, at every repetition the Westminster boys replied with a splendid fierce shout of "God save King George!" prolonging the name magnificently. It must have been a luggish nature that could remain unthrilled by such an acclaim.

Next in order came the litany, and in the first out burst of the familiar words, the ancient service resumed its ancient spell upon the spirit. Now there was no suggestion of the theatre: this was a religious ceremony. The epistle and gospel for the day followed and then a brief but pointed sermon. The administration of the oath, the anointing, the presenting of the spurs and so on with all their chivalrous significance could not be seen or heard from the north triforium. The canopy of cloth of gold held over the king's head was visible in part.

It was thrilling also to see, as one could by craning round the corner, the crown actually set upon the king's head, to hear the unexpected shouts "God have the king!" and far away the muffled report of the tower guns beginning the salute. At the same moment all the peers standing put on their coronets, soft crimson caps with ermine borders and metal arrangements of balls on the end of spikes around the outside. Soon the king was lead to the throne on the central platform in plain view. Behind and at his back were the great officers of state in mantles and coronets, bearing various symbols of kingly rank and power. His gentlemen in scarlet stood in a row behind them.

The homage was a stately ceremony. First came the young Prince of Wales. For all his princedom, he is only a boy, a little shy and nervous, as several of his gestures testified, settling his collar which seemed too tight, and fingering his chain. His little bobs and bows with which he returned the obeisances of the grandees who defiled before him had the engaging awkwardness of a young boy. He was the most sympathetic figure, it seemed to me, in the royal family, so young and in such a great office. For the homage he came forward in all his bravery, knelt on the lowest step before his father, and took off his coronet; then he came up to the top, knelt again, declared himself the king's liege man, kissed him on both cheeks and then backed away to his own place. Other peers followed, doing the same, only kissing the king on the left cheek and touching the crown in sign of fealty. Perhaps a dozen performed this rite; all could not have got through with it in hours.

Much less complicated was the crowning of Queen Mary. It was soon done; she took her place beside the king, with her ladies ranged about her. And then came, what to many minds would be the most beautiful and touching part of the whole ceremony, the communion service. For, thereby the king and this queen ruling over one-fifth of the habitable globe, surrendered by all this splendor are reminded that they are just like other men and other women with the same spiritual needs and requiring the same spiritual aid.

A beautiful rendition of the "Te Deum", closed the great office, as is most meet and right. The three processions form in the reverse order the king going out first to the accompaniment of cheers and shouts and the national anthem. Cheers from the street come echoing in to the abbey. The fairy princesses belonging to the royal household re-appear with their marvellous raiment and pass from view. Then the queen departs in state, and after a long interval the young prince and the other members of the royal family. There is a little more haste, and also a little more delay than at the coming; but this is only natural. There is a good deal of passing to and fro of heralds in tabards, and soldiers and gentlemen with red batons; probably the carriages cannot be had as soon as desired. Up in the triforium, the fourth estate scatter quickly. Shifting my position I have a glimpse of England's judiciary in the richest scarlet and their portentous wigs. Royalty has departed, and there is a certain relaxation all round. The peers and peeresses stream out of their seats in the two transepts and mingle sociably in the centre. There is handshaking and conversation. Some noble lords gather up their flowing robes in a bunch; some walk over the rows of seats; and so do some noble ladies. After all, one is human.

The spectacle even in dissolving fragments holds the eye. It is almost impossible to tear oneself away. Such a sight comes only once in a lifetime.

And so one comes reluctantly back to earth again, down the long narrow winding stair and out into the crowded London street. The sky is overcast, an east wind is blowing with now and then a sprinkle of rain. Only by slow degrees does the magic color that has been dazzling my eyes for nearly eight hours fade away to take its place in limbo of things past. Slowly, slowly does the pageant dissolve slowly does the echoes of the rolling organ music die out in the air, and fierce acclamations to the king and the great wonder of the hundreds of banded voices, singing, softly or in stormy power. Then the mind begins to work upon the spectacle; and reflections rise unbidden and imperious. The first thought is, no other country on earth could produce a sight so rich and significant. The rank, power, might, majesty and dominion of a world-wide empire gathered together under one consecrated roof to assist in a national ceremony a thousand years old! Only in England could such a symbol of unity and continuity be found. And next, one thinks,—so should a king be crowned. In what better way could such an important event be marked in the mind and memory of the kindreds and peoples and tribes and tongues and nations over which our king rules? Pageantry, symbolism, religion, music, military display, each by itself and all combined intimate the dullest mind that a great event is in progress. Here is the very centre of things. Millions of hearts are turned towards this grey old church and what has taken place within its walls to-day. To anyone who has witnessed this most sole most solemn impressive and significant of national ceremonies, the questions arise, "How could it be bettered?" and "What could be substituted for it?" The criticism that uses terms like "mediæval" and "outworn" is mere affectation. All who have seen the wondrous sight to-day will have their minds cleared of that special cant for ever, and rejoice that one more English king has been hallowed to rule a vast empire according to to antique rite, with time-honored ceremony and state.

Prof. Archibald MacMechan.

THE KING AND QUEEN IN THEIR "CHAIRS OF RECOGNITION 'AT WESTMINSTER ABBEY JUST BEFORE BEING CROWNED. THE KING IS WEARING HIS STATE ROBES AND WHAT IS KNOWN AS THE "CAP OF MAINTENANCE." IN FRONT OF THE KING AND QUEEN ARE TWO FALDSTOOLS, AT WHICH THEY KNEEL IN PRAYER DURING THE CEREMONY. STANDING ARE THE CORONATION PEERS AND OFFICIALS, AND ABOVE IS THE ROYAL BOX, CONTAINING THE KING'S CHILDREN AND OTHER ROYAL RELATIVES. THIS PHOTOGRAPH WAS TAKEN BY SIR BENJAMIN STONE, AN AMATEUR WHO HAS MADE A HOBBY OF PARLIAMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY, AND WAS PURCHASED BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DAILY BRITISH WHIG IN LONDON.

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