

TRADITION AND THE CORONATION*

By ARCHIBALD G. B. RUSSELL, C.V.O.

Lancaster Herald,

College of Arms, Queen Victoria Street, London, E.C.4

THE solemnity of the coronation of kings and queens has from the earliest days taken a supreme place in the imagination of the people. How much more so is it the case to-day, since it has come to typify in a very real sense the unity of the British Commonwealth of Nations under the Crown.

Westminster has been the scene of the coronation since it was chosen by William the Conqueror as the place for his own coronation. The earliest Christian coronation of an Anglo-Saxon king of which record remains is that of Egfrith, whom his father, Offa, King of Mercia, had crowned as his successor in 785†.

In the tenth century it was usual for coronations to take place at Kingston-on-Thames. It was on the 'King's Stone', which is still treasured there, that kings were crowned. The use of a sacred stone for this purpose follows a very ancient tradition which was later carried on with the Stone of Scone down to the present day.

Westminster Abbey as it now stands was in greater part built under the direction of King Henry III in the middle of the thirteenth century. It replaced two previous churches on the same site. Its immediate predecessor was the church built by Edward the Confessor and consecrated in 1065, which replaced the original Saxon church and in which the Confessor himself was buried. It was in this church that William the Conqueror and his successors were crowned. It was part of the original plan that the church built by Henry III should be used for coronations, as is evidenced by the unusual feature of the space left between the Choir and the High Altar. It is upon a raised platform erected upon this space, known as the Theatre, that the greater part of the coronation ceremony takes place.

A manuscript of the life of King Edward the Confessor in the Cambridge University Library contains two beautiful drawings, in each of which the artist seeks to convey the impression of religious exaltation. In one of them the King is being anointed with the holy oil. It is this King who is venerated as a national saint, and to whose kingly virtues we owe the greatness of the Palace and Abbey of Westminster. The other drawing depicts the coronation of Queen Edith, his consort.

In the coronation scenes which decorate the exterior walls of the King's Chantry Chapel in Westminster Abbey there is a carved group representing the coronation of King Henry V. It is at once a historical document and a valuable work of art. The crown is being set upon the King's head by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Abbot of Westminster. The then Abbot was the famous William of Colchester, the 'grand conspirator' of Shakespeare's play. The monumental grandeur of the presentation and the noble pattern of the Royal Arms which accompanies it give it a place as a work of sculpture among the most moving of any produced

in Britain. The majestic stillness of the central figure of the King is superbly enhanced by the upward movement of the flanking figures.

The Banquet

Of the services referable to the banquet which formerly succeeded the coronation, in the Great Hall at Westminster, that done by the King's Champion surpasses all others in its romantic appeal.

This privilege has been in abeyance since the discontinuation of the banquet, which was last held on the occasion of the coronation of King George IV. The service is associated with the ownership of the Manor of Scrivelsby in Lincolnshire, which was held from very early times by the family of Dymoke. In lieu of this service, the Union Standard will be carried by Captain J. L. M. Dymoke at the forthcoming coronation.

A lively study of the Champion appears in a tinted drawing accompanying the pedigree of Dymoke in the original Visitation of Lincolnshire of 1564 at the College of Arms. It is the likeness of Sir Edward Dymoke of Scrivelsby, who was Champion at the coronations of King Edward VI, Queen Mary I and Queen Elizabeth I. His fancifully decorated armour of astonishing richness and the superb trappings of the horse are characteristic of the first Elizabethan Age. He is depicted at the dramatic moment when, after issuing his challenge and offering to combat with the "false traitor . . . who shall deny or gainsay our sovereign lord the King", he is about to fling down his gauntlet.

The Earl Marshal

The Duke of Norfolk, who holds the hereditary office of Earl Marshal of England, is responsible for the whole of the arrangements for the coronation, with the exception of the church liturgy, which is ordered by the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Duke holds hereditary office, granted to his family by King Charles II in 1674, who conferred it on Henry Howard, Earl of Norwich, afterwards Duke of Norfolk, and his heirs.

The office derives from that of Marshal of England, which was one of the five great offices of state. The earliest holder of the office of whom we have record was one, Gilbert, whose descendants adopted the surname Marshal in virtue of their office. Later it passed to the Bigods and to the Mowbrays and afterwards to the Howards, though it did not actually become hereditary in their family until 1674.

Charles II, in his declaration of the authority of the Earl Marshal, described him as "the next and immediate Officer under Us for determining and ordering all matters touching Arms, Ensigns of Nobility and chivalry", and the officers of arms as "Ministers subordinate to our said Earl Marshal".

The Officers of Arms

The Kings, Heralds and Pursuivants of Arms who assist the Earl Marshal in the coronation preparations

* Substance of a Friday Evening Discourse delivered at the Royal Institution on April 24.

† For certain of the historical data I am indebted to the several publications of Mr. Lawrence E. Tanner, keeper of the Muniments and Library, Westminster Abbey.

and who take part in the Abbey processions have also certain other duties to perform on the occasion. Among these are the handing over of the canopy to the Knights of the Garter who hold it over the Queen for the anointing, and the leading up of the senior peer of each degree to pay homage to Her Majesty. Scottish Heralds are also present, headed by Lyon King of Arms, and Ulster is now represented by Norroy and Ulster King of Arms.

Officers of Arms are known to have been in attendance at coronations from the time of that of King Henry IV, and it may, I think, be assumed that they did so at an earlier date.

The tabard which they wear on all state occasions is probably the most ancient ceremonial garment still in use, dating back to the second half of the fifteenth century and deriving from the court dress of that period. The tabards of the Kings of Arms are of velvet, those of Heralds satin, and those of Pursuivants damask silk.

On the death of the Sovereign the accession of the new Monarch is proclaimed by one of the Officers of Arms at four different centres in London. At a later date the coronation is proclaimed by the same four Officers at the same places.

The Officers of Arms are appointed by letters patent under the Great Seal of England. They are, under the Earl Marshal, responsible for the granting of arms, the marshalling of state ceremonies and other duties. The coronation is, of course, by far the most important of the state ceremonies with which they are concerned.

Sir Robert Vyner

Sir Robert Vyner, who was responsible for making nearly all the items of the present Regalia to replace those destroyed at the Commonwealth, began his career as a goldsmith as the apprentice of his uncle, Sir Thomas Vyner, who served the office of Prime-Warden of the Goldsmiths' Company. Sir Robert was born in Warwick in 1631, and in 1661 he received a grant of the office of 'King's Goldsmith'. Like his uncle, he served as Prime Warden of the Goldsmiths' Company. He was on intimate terms with Charles II, and made the Regalia for Charles's coronation at a cost of more than £30,000. He died at Windsor Castle in 1668 and was buried at St. Mary's Woolnoth, Lombard Street, London.

St. Edward's Staff

St. Edward's Staff was in early times delivered into the Sovereign's hands on entering the Abbey. It is now borne in the procession and this time will be carried by the Earl of Ancaster. The present Staff is part of the 1661 Regalia. The original, which was one of the relics of St. Edward, was a long iron-shod sceptre, and was reputed to contain a piece of the True Cross. The present Staff is surmounted by a golden orb, and the foot is tipped with steel.

The Maces

The two Maces were made by Sir Robert Vyner for the coronation of King Charles II. The heads are divided into four panels, each containing an emblem surmounted by a crown, and representing the constituent elements of the United Kingdom. Above is an arched crown, on the rim of which are alternate crosses and fleurs-de-lis. The crown is surmounted by an orb and cross. The Maces are carried by the Serjeants-at-Arms.

The Coronation Chair

The Coronation Chair was made for King Edward I, and was designed to hold the Stone of Scone which he removed from Scotland in 1296. The chair is of oak and was completed in 1300-1. It has been used for all coronations since that of King Edward II.

The back of the chair was originally painted with a seated king. Few traces of this now remain, and much of the original enrichment of gold and colours has perished. A superb early fourteenth century illuminated manuscript in the library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, portrays the Chair as it appeared not long after it was made. In this the four lions now supporting the Chair are absent, so presumably these were a later addition. The Chair, which has suffered much in the passage of time, is a rare example of the cabinet work of its day, and is probably to be regarded as the most venerable object associated with the coronation.

The Stone of Scone is first heard of in the thirteenth century, when it was preserved in the Abbey of Seone and was used in the consecration of Scottish kings. It is of reddish-grey sandstone, and was probably quarried in the neighbourhood of Seone. It has been identified in legend with the stone upon which Jacob rested at the time of his vision of the Ladder.

The Recognition

The coronation ceremony is initiated by the act of Recognition. This is a survival from the remote past when the choice of a sovereign rested upon an electoral basis.

The Oath

The Recognition is followed by the Oath. The form of the Oath has from time to time undergone revision from the fourteenth century onwards. The latest substantial alteration followed the reign of James II, who was a Roman Catholic, and at the coronation of King William and Queen Mary it was drastically changed with the view of ensuring the maintenance of the Protestant faith. A further innovation introduced at that time was the presentation to the Sovereign of the Bible as "the most valuable thing that this world affords".

The Anointing

In accordance with ancient tradition, it is with the anointing of a Sovereign with oil, rather than the actual crowning and the investiture with the Regalia, that the climax of the coronation ceremony is reached. The Monarch has been held in the past to assume a mixed personality of a semi-sacerdotal character. For Melchizedek, the priest-king, has remained through all time the type of kingly perfection; in fact, the name may mean 'kingly righteousness'. The antiquity of the rite of the anointing of kings is recalled in the anthem which is sung beginning "Zadok the Priest and Nathan the Prophet anointed Solomon the King".

During the Anointing a canopy is held over the Queen by four Knights of the Garter. She is thus nearly concealed from view during the rite in view of its secret and mystic character.

The Ampulla is an eagle of gold containing the holy oil with which the Sovereign is anointed, the oil being poured out through its beak. It has been suggested that the Ampulla may be in essentials an original work of the time of Henry IV, the engraved decoration and the pedestal upon which the eagle is

mounted being the work of Sir Robert Vyner. Against this view is the fact that descriptions of the medieval Ampulla speak of it as a "dove of gold set with pearls and stones", while the existing Ampulla is stated to show no signs of ever having been set with precious stones.

The anointing Spoon escaped destruction in 1649, and is the oldest piece of plate used at the coronation. The bowl may have been re-worked by Vyner; but the stem, which is of exquisite workmanship, dates from the twelfth or early part of the thirteenth century. The Spoon is of silver heavily gilt, and ornamented with elaborate gold chasing, enamels and pearls. The bowl is engraved and is divided with a central ridge.

The Spurs

The ceremony of the Spurs follows the Anointing. They are brought from the Altar, and the Queen touches them with her hand, for they are emblems of knightly chivalry. They are of gold, with straps of crimson velvet, and were made for the coronation of Charles II.

Swords

Five ceremonial swords are borne at the coronation. The two-handed Sword of State is the most imposing. It is also carried at state openings of Parliament. Two other swords are known as the Pointed Sword of Spiritual Justice, or Second Sword, and the Pointed Sword of Temporal Justice, or Third Sword. The Queen's personal sword is known as the Jewelled Sword.

But historically the most interesting sword is Curtana. This is the Pointless Sword of Mercy. It was first mentioned by name at the coronation in 1236 of Queen Eleanor, wife of Henry II. The earliest representation of this Sword that I know of occurs in the portrait belonging to the Society of Antiquaries. This portrait has long been regarded as the likeness of Richard III; but I find it difficult to endorse this identity. I suggest that the sitter may in fact have been Henry Percy, fourth Earl of Northumberland, who, at Richard's coronation in 1483, is recorded as carrying "the pointless Sword, naked in hand, which signified Mercy".

The word 'Curtana' is doubtless derived from the Latin *curtus*, meaning shortened or curtailed.

Armilla*

The coronation Stole, formerly known as the Armil, or Armilla, is not, strictly speaking, a stole. In religious ceremonies the Stole succeeds the Alb immediately; but in the coronation service it succeeds the Dalmatic, as it did in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and it is still worn by deacons of the Orthodox Church. Its assumption at the coronation accordingly preserves the medieval custom which the Western Church has lost. It is a strip of material worn about the neck, having depending ribbons at its extremities which were there for a very particular purpose. In length, this strip should be an ell, that is, forty-five inches. Now, such a strip cannot be a stole, which is a vestment as long again. (The stole is intended to remind its wearer of the halter put about Christ's neck when on His way to be crucified.)

The appellation 'Armil' may be explained in the following way. At former coronations extending to that of Queen Elizabeth I, the Sovereigns were invested with wristlets (or bracelets) or armlets.

* For the data relating to the Armilla I am indebted to Mr. Gerald Henderson.

Queen Elizabeth I is said to have worn 'garters' on the upper part of her arms. It is probable that this short strip of material placed about the neck of the Sovereign was not intended to be a stole but merely a means of preventing the slipping-down of the Armils which were attached to it by means of double ribbons at each extremity. Hence the name given to it, which either became confused in the course of time with the Stole or, after the Tudor period, made to serve both to restrain the armlets or bracelets or as a stole proper.

When the Regalia were made for Charles II in 1661 wristlets or bracelets were provided; but they have never been used. They may still be seen in the Jewel House in the Tower of London. It may be remarked that no words accompany the putting on of the Stole, which might support the view that it was only a means of restraining the armlets formerly worn. The last recorded occasion of the use of the Armilla was at the coronation of Edward VI. It is not known whether they were used at that of Queen Mary I. They are not mentioned in the ceremonials of Kings James I and Charles I, and the pair that were in the Regalia were, in all probability, destroyed when the rest of the royal ornaments were broken up during the interregnum. Another pair was produced in 1661 for the coronation of Charles II, though they were not used, and they have not been brought forward at any succeeding coronation.

Armilla were well known in the histories of ancient nations, and are mentioned in the Old Testament as having been worn by King Saul. They were the distinguishing marks of the king and warrior. At the forthcoming coronation, the Archbishop of Canterbury when investing the Queen with the Armilla will say the prayer beginning: "Receive the Bracelets of sincerity and wisdom". These words appear in the order of the service recorded in the *Liber Regalis* of the fourteenth century.

The Armilla, which were made in 1661, bear enamelled representations of roses, thistles, shamrocks and fleurs-de-lis. The pair that have just been made are of plain gold unadorned, except for a spiral floral design near the edges, and the snap, which is formed of a Tudor rose. They are the combined gift to the Queen of the Governments of Australia and of Southern Rhodesia.

The Orb

The Orb is a sphere of gold surmounted by a jewelled cross set upon an amethyst. It dates from King Charles II's coronation, and is a symbol of the sovereignty of Christ. A representation of the Orb appears upon a number of early Great Seals of British kings; but it is not mentioned in connexion with any medieval coronation.

The Ring

The Ring is put by the Archbishop on the fourth finger of the Queen's right hand. It is described as "the ensign of kingly dignity, and a defence of the Catholic Faith". It is set with a sapphire, with a cross in rubies on it. The ceremony of the investiture with the Ring goes back at least as early as the tenth century.

The Sceptre with the Cross

The Sceptre with the Cross, or Royal Sceptre, symbolizing power and justice, was made for the coronation of King Charles II. It is of gold, and is

three feet long. The largest portion of the Star of Africa, cut from the Cullinan diamond, was inset in the head in 1911. Above is an orb of amethyst surmounted by a diamond and enamelled cross. Sceptres as emblems of kingly power are, of course, of great antiquity.

Rod with the Dove

The Rod with the Dove is the symbol of equity and mercy, the Dove being the emblem of the Holy Ghost. It is part of the 1661 Regalia. The gold staff is decorated with jewelled bands. The Dove, which in medieval times was of gold, is now of white enamel.

St. Edward's Crown

St. Edward's Crown in its original form was his own Crown taken from his grave in 1269. This was ordered by Cromwell to be destroyed with the other Regalia in 1649. The new Crown, much in its present form, was made by Sir Robert Vyner for King Charles II. It has been suggested, however, by Mr. Martin Holmes, that the original crown of St. Edward's was not in fact destroyed, and that it formed the basis of that made by Vyner.

The circlet, or rim, of the Crown, which is of gold, bears alternate crosses and fleurs-de-lis, and from the crosses rise the intersecting arches with, at the top, a globe surmounted by another cross, the whole being richly encrusted with precious stones.

The Crown, after the anointing, and the successive stages of the Investiture, is set upon the Queen's head by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The Imperial State Crown

The Imperial State Crown was made for Queen Victoria, and has been slightly altered for subsequent coronations. In the front is the famous gem known as the Black Prince's Ruby. On the rim beneath it is another portion of the Cullinan Diamond. The sapphire in the cross surmounting the Orb at the top is traditionally believed to have come from the Confessor's ring; but it has been recut in modern times.

The Imperial State Crown replaces that of St. Edward shortly after the crowning has taken place.

SCIENCE AND THE SOVEREIGN

By SIR ARTHUR MACNALT, K.C.B.

AT this time of Her Majesty's Coronation, it is appropriate to remember the encouragement which the sovereigns of this realm have given to the progress of science and its teaching.

The Middle Ages were intolerant to science. Roger Bacon, who made discoveries in optics and chemistry, had his books banned and was imprisoned for "suspected novelties"; Bolingbroke, mathematician and astronomer, "the greatest clerk of his age", was hanged and quartered as a wizard.

Then came the great invention of printing which gave to letters and to science the precision and durability of the printed page. Edward IV bestowed his patronage on Caxton, and Richard III during his brief reign encouraged the new invention.

In the reign of Henry VII the light and wisdom of the Italian Renaissance was brought to England by the Oxford "Humanists", Grocyn, Colet and Linacre. Henry VIII, whom Erasmus termed the

"scholar king", was a highly accomplished monarch. He wrote excellent Latin, spoke French, Italian and Spanish, was musician, poet, naval architect, a master of ordnance, an amateur of medicine and a good mathematician. He delighted to converse with his learned subjects, appointed astronomers royal, and elevated medicine and surgery in status by founding the College of Physicians on Linacre's advice in 1518, and uniting the barbers and the surgeons as the Barber-Surgeons' Company in 1540, probably at the request of his serjeant-surgeon, Thomas Vicary. He also founded regius professorships of physic at Oxford and Cambridge. He first bestowed the honour of knighthood on two physicians, Sir Thomas Elyot and Sir William Butts. Edward VI knighted his surgeon, Sir John Ayleff. With royal approbation, Edward Wotton (1492-1555), of Padua and Oxford, and physician to Henry VIII, published the first systematic treatise on natural history, and William Turner, Dean of Wells, was the first Englishman to study plants scientifically. His "Herbal" of 1548 marks him as the father of English botany.

Queen Elizabeth I encouraged science. William Gilbert, president of the Royal College of Physicians, who founded the sciences of magnetism and electricity, was her physician and was awarded a pension by the Queen to enable him to conduct his researches, which Francis Bacon quoted in the "Novum Organum" as examples of the method of experiment. John Caius (1510-73), also a president of the Royal College of Physicians, the friend and pupil of Vesalius, was physician successively to Edward VI, Mary and Elizabeth. He wrote a treatise on the sweating sickness, and was a good classical scholar, anatomist and zoologist. Gesner, in a letter to Queen Elizabeth, termed him "the most learned physician of the age". She was a judge of scientific merit, and on her visits to Oxford and Cambridge was accustomed to preside over the disputes in the Physic Act for medical degrees. To James I, Francis Bacon dedicated his philosophy of inductive science which improved instructed thought and commended to the King the regeneration and restoration of the sciences.

The ill-fated Charles I was an enlightened patron of science as well as art and letters. William Harvey was his physician and the King showed the liveliest interest in his researches, being personally present, as Harvey records with pride, at a demonstration of the circulation of the blood and giving him facilities to use the deer in the royal parks for his pioneer work in embryology. King Charles also nominated Harvey as warden of Merton College, Oxford.

One of the greatest royal patrons of science was King Charles II. He founded the Royal Society in 1662, presented it with a silver-gilt mace, and presided at its inaugural banquet and at several meetings of the Society. He studied anatomy and chemistry, and his cousin, Prince Rupert, made several discoveries in chemistry. The King was always interested in new discoveries in the realm of science, as Pepys and John Evelyn tell us. King Charles "had yet skill to discover excellence and virtue to reward it", as is shown by the knighthoods he bestowed on Sir William Petty, the founder of the science of political economy, and the erudite Sir Thomas Browne.

The outstanding discoveries of Isaac Newton were recognized by William III, who appointed him master of the Mint in 1699, and by Queen Anne, who knighted him in 1702. All the four Georges encouraged science. George I is said to have boasted