

# THE CORONATION

..... OF .....  
ENGLAND'S KINGS & QUEENS.

AN HISTORICAL RETROSPECT.

Striking Features of the Ceremony from Earliest Days.

In the age of the Plantagenets and Tudors, and under the Stuarts, until the coronation of James II., it was customary for kings to reside in the Tower of London for some time previous to the coronation. On the Saturday before the coronation the sovereign went from Westminster to the Tower of London, attended by great numbers of the nobility and civic dignitaries, and by those squires who were to be knighted, and who watched their arms that night. Each squire had a chamber allotted him, and a bath in which he bathed. The ensuing day after mass the sovereign created them knights. After their investiture they were permitted to sit down in the King's presence, but during the whole time of dinner they were not allowed to partake of any part of the entertainment. The queens in their own right, Mary and Elizabeth, though they girded the swords on the knights with their own hands, did not give the accolade or blow, which is the determinate action that impresses the character of knighthood. At both coronations Henry, Earl of Arundel, performed this office. A copy of his appointment is to be found in Rymer.

## WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR.

After William had taken the coronation oath, to protect the church, prohibit oppression and execute judgment in mercy, Aldred put the question, "Will ye have this prince to be your king?" The people answered with loud shouts, and the noise gave so much alarm to the Norman garrison in the city that the soldiers, believing the English to have revolted, without waiting to make any investigation, immediately set the next houses on fire, which, spreading and giving a general alarm, most of the congregation rushed out of the church, the English hastening to stop the fire and the Normans to plunder. The Bishops, clergy and monks, who remained within the church, were in such confusion that they were scarce able to go through the office of crowning the King. William himself, who saw the tumult, and could not conjecture its cause, sat trembling at the foot of the altar, and, though no great mischief was done by the fire, it laid the foundation of a long and inveterate enmity between the English and the Normans.

## WILLIAM II. RUFUS.

William II. laid claim to the crown by virtue of a form of election, the nobles believing that he would be less inclined to control their usurped privileges than his elder brother, Robert. He was crowned at Westminster September 27, 1037, by Lafranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Archbishop of York. Besides swearing to observe justice, equity and mercy in all his conduct, and to maintain the peace, liberties and privileges of the church, he promised that he would follow the Archbishop's counsels in his administrations.

## HENRY I.

The coronation of Henry I. was performed in a hurried manner on the fourth day after the death of Rufus. In every respect the forms of his coronation were the same as those of the Saxon Kings.

## STEPHEN.

The coronation of Stephen after he had sworn allegiance to the Empress Matilda was viewed with much anxiety in an age when it was supposed that the punishment of perjury was immediate and visible. The ceremony was performed by William, Archbishop of Canterbury, and it is said that a dreadful storm arose which threw all the parties into such confusion that the consecrated water fell on the ground, the kiss of peace after the sacrament was omitted, and even the final benediction forgotten.

## HENRY II.

Henry was crowned at Westminster on the Sunday before Christmas Day, A.D. 1154, by Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury. Although his hereditary right was unquestionable, he was formally elected by the clergy and people. It is said that Henry was crowned again with his Queen, A.D. 1159, but this report arose from his having worn the crown during the ceremony.

## RICHARD I.

Duke Richard, having made all necessary preparations for his coronation, came to London, where he assembled the Archbishops of Canterbury, Rouen, and Tours, who had given him, absolute in Normandy for waging war against his father after he had taken the cross as a crusader. First, the Archbishops, Bishops, Abbots and clergy, wearing their square caps, and preceded by the cross and holy water bearers and deacons burning incense, went to the door of the royal bed-chamber and led the Duke in solemn procession to the great altar of the church of Westminster. When they reached the altar Richard swore, in the presence of the clergy and people, on the holy Gospel and the sacred relics, that he would observe peace, honour and respect all the days of his life to God, holy church and its ordinances. His attendants then stripped him to his trousers and shirt, the latter of which was left open between the shoulders on account of the anointing.

Baldwin, Archbishop of Canterbury, who wore rich buskins of cloth of gold, then anointed the King in three places, on the head, between the shoulders, and on the right arm. A consecrated linen coil and a cap of estate were then placed upon his head, and he was vested with the royal robes, the lamatic and the tunic. The Archbishop then delivered him a sword to restrain the enemies of the church. Two earls then buckled on his spurs, and invested him with the pall of state; after which Baldwin conjured him in the name of God not to forsake him to take the crown unless he were firmly resolved in his heart and soul to observe all the promises to which he had sworn.

## JOHN.

John ascended the throne, to the prejudice of the hereditary rights of his nephew, Arthur, by virtue of a form of election. The Archbishops, Bishops, Earls, Bishops and others, the estates of the realm, being assembled in the church of Westminster, May 27, 1199, Hubert, Archbishop of Canterbury, addressed them in these memorable words:—

"Hear all men! It is well known to your wisdom that no man hath any

right of succession to this crown unless he be elected for his own merits by the unanimous consent of the kingdom, with invocation of the Holy Ghost, after the manner and similitude of Saul, whom God set over his chosen people, though he was neither the son of a King nor sprung of a royal line; and in like manner after him David, the son of Jesse; the former because he was brave and suited to the royal dignity, the latter because he was humble and pious. So that he who surpasses all within the realm in fitness for royalty should preside over all in dignity and power. But if one of the family of the deceased sovereign should excel others, his election should be the more readily and cheerfully conceded. Wherefore, as our late sovereign, Richard, died without issue of his body, and his brother, Earl John, now present, is wise, brave and manifestly noble, we, having respect both to his merits and his royal blood, unanimously and with one accord elect him to be our sovereign."

This was the most decisive form of election since the Conquest.

## HENRY III.

After the death of John, London being in possession of the French Prince Louis, an assembly of the principal authorities was convened at Winchester under the presidency of Gualo, the papal legate. They unanimously resolved that the young King should be crowned on the 28th day of October, A.D. 1216. The ceremony was performed in the cathedral of Winchester. The Papal Legate compelled Henry to do homage to the holy Roman church and Pope Innocent for his kingdom of England and Ireland; he also made him swear that he would pay an annual tribute of one thousand marks to the papal see. The ceremony of coronation was repeated by Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury.

Early in the year 1236 Henry married the Lady Eleanor, daughter of the Earl of Provence, whose beauty is celebrated by all the chroniclers.

## EDWARD I.

On the 15th of August, 1274, Edward I. and his Queen, Eleanor, were crowned at Westminster by the Archbishop of Canterbury, aided by other prelates.

Holinshed adds some remarkable particulars of this coronation:—"At this coronation were present Alexander king of Scots, and John earl of Bretaine, with their wives that were sisters to King Edward. The king of Scots did homage unto King Edward for the realm of Scotland, in like manner as other the kings of Scotland before him had done to other kings of England, ancestors to this King Edward. At the solemnity of this coronation there were let go at libertie (catch them that catch might) five hundred great horses by the king of Scots, the earles of Cornwall, Gloucester, Pembroke, Warren and others, as they were alighted from their backs."

## EDWARD II.

Edward II. and his Queen were crowned at Westminster on the 24th of February. Holinshed informs us:—"There was such presse and throng at the coronation that a knight, called Sir John Bakewell, was thrust or crowded to death." The Bishops were incommoded and forced to hurry through the

service in a slovenly manner, and yet it was not concluded before 3 in the afternoon.

## EDWARD III.

On the deposition of Edward II. his son, Prince Edward, was brought to a general assembly of the nobles and clergy in the abbey church at Westminster, on the 20th January, 1327, and Walter Reynold exhorted all present to choose the young Prince as their sovereign. All assented, but the Prince himself declared that he would not accept the crown until it had been voluntarily resigned by his father.

A remarkable coronation medal was struck on this occasion; on one side the young Prince was represented crowned, laying his sceptre on a heap of hearts, with the motto, "Populo dat jura volenti" (He gives laws to a willing people); and on the other was a hand held out to save a falling crown, with the motto, "Non rapit, sed recipit" (He seizes not, but receives').

## RICHARD III.

The coronation of this king was more magnificent than any of the preceding. The procession of the King from the Tower of London is thus described by Holinshed:

"The city was adorned in all sorts most richly. The water conduits ran with wine for the space of three hours together. In the upper end of Cheape was a certain castell, made with four towers, out of which castell, on two sides of it, ran forth wine abundantly. In the towers were placed four beautiful virgins, in stature and age like to the king, apparelled in white vesture. In every tower one, the which blew in the king's face, at his approaching near to them, leaves of gold; and as he approached also they threw on him and his horse counterfeit florins of gold. When he was come before the castell they took cups of gold, and filling them with wine at the spouts of the castell, presented the same to the king and his nobles. On the top of the castell, betwixt the four towers, stood a golden angel, holding a crown in his hands, which was so contrived that when the king came he bowed down and offered to him the crowne. In the midst of the king's palace was a marble pillar, raised hollow upon steps, on the top whereof was a great gilt eagle placed under whose feet in the chapter of the pillar divers kinds of wine came gushing forth at four several places all the daie long; neither was any forbidden to receive the same, were he never so poor or abject."

## HENRY IV.

Henry IV. was crowned by Archbishop Fitzalan on the 13th of October, 1399, and on this occasion the ampulla was first employed. After Henry had gone to the Tower he created forty-six Knights of the Bath, among whom were three of his own sons. The procession from the Tower to Westminster was unusually splendid, no less than six thousand horses having been employed for the occasion.

Froissart gives the following account of Henry IV.'s procession:—"The duke of Lancaster left the Tower this Sunday after dinner on his return to Westminster. He was bare-headed and had round his neck the order of the king of France. The prince of Wales, six dukes, six earls, eighteen barons, accompanied him, and there were of knights and other nobility from eight to nine hundred horse in the procession. He passed through the streets of London, which were all handsomely decorated with tapestries and other rich hangings; there were nine fountains in Cheapside and other streets he passed through that ran perpetually with white and red wines. The whole cavalcade amounted to six thousand horse, that escorted the duke from the Tower to Westminster."

## HENRY V.

Henry V. was crowned on the 9th of April, 1413. Katherine of France, the Queen of Henry V., was crowned on the 24th of February, 1420. The account which Holinshed gives of the magnificence displayed upon this occasion is far too characteristic of the age to be omitted:

"After the great solemnization of the foresaid coronation in the church of St. Peter's, at Westminster, was ended, the queene was conveyed into the great Hall of Westminster, and there set to dinner. Upon whose right hand sat, at the end of the table, the Archbishop