

The Young King of Spain.

Our cables some little time ago gave a brief account of the crowning of Alfonso XIII., the young King of Spain, and further particulars of the ceremony are now to hand by the mail. From all accounts it seems to have been a most brilliant affair.

Magnificent sunshine afforded every opportunity for a grand display, which was used to the utmost. Madrid was magically transformed into a dream of colour by means of tapestries and cloths, which covered balconies and housetops.

Amid the acclamations of his subjects and surrounded by princes of the blood of every Court in Europe, the youthful Sovereign of this ancient monarchy took the simple oath with less ceremony than does the President of France or of America.

The only crown in evidence was the enormous emblem on the top of Alfonso's coach.

The day's proceedings began with the movements of the troops who marched out to line the kerbs of the streets along the route. General Weyler, who is directly responsible for the safety of the young King, took extraordinary precautions to guard against accident.

He stationed 20,000 men in a double line along both sides of the route, and held 20,000 more in reserve for any unexpected eventuality. A thousand police were posted round the Palace, and several hundred more near the Chamber of Deputies and the Cathedral. Artillery was held ready in the Madrid armouries, and in the side streets were squadrons of cavalry prepared to disperse any mob that might temporarily get beyond the control of the infantry. Weyler personally supervised the distribution of the soldiers, and practically formed a trocha of bayonets five miles long for Alfonso's safety.

Three hundred thousand persons saw the procession, and at least half as many more tried unsuccessfully to catch a glimpse of the cortege as it passed through the streets.

At one o'clock a salvo of artillery fired from the Palace grounds announced that the royal procession had started. It was a long line of mediæval uniforms, gaily caparisoned horses, and golden coaches, more brilliant than the most gorgeous Lord Mayor's Show London ever saw.

The soldiers and attendants wore costumes of the time of Charles V. as a reminder of the period when Spain was mistress of most of Europe. The gold lace worn by twenty-five servants that waited on the King alone cost £6000.

At the head of the procession rode two trumpeters dressed in red silk, with the arms of Castille and Aragon emblazoned on their breasts. From their trumpets hung banners with the Spanish standard on them, and their horses were covered with a mass of gold cloth.

Following them came twelve riderless horses covered in trappings of cloth of gold belonging to the royal-

ties. After these came the Cuirassiers.

Their horses were decorated in old Moorish style, the harness studded all over with shining metal and long silk tassels, and the saddles and stirrups inlaid with gold. They were followed by more courtiers in scarlet and by a company of Palace Grenadiers, the special guardians of the King. The Grenadiers wore loose silk blouses embroidered with the royal arms, red knee breeches and silk stockings, with big white pom-poms in their hats.

Immediately preceding the King's coach was a gorgeous carriage. This was empty, as is the custom in these regal processions, to be available in case of accident to that in which the King rode.

Alfonso wore for the first time a field-marshal's uniform with the Order of the Golden Fleece on his coat. As the sign of his rank he carried a marshal's baton, the same one that belonged to Ferdinand VI. a century and a-half ago, the last monarch who brought prosperity to Spain.

The King was greeted with a swelling volume of cheers by the people. He leaped from the window and waved his arm in a friendly boyish fashion.

It took an hour for the procession to reach the Congress building. There were no decorations; only the uniforms of the military and officials converted the sombre chamber into a brilliant scene.

The president received and conducted the King and Queen, amid tumultuous cheers, to chairs on the platform. He then read an address, and Alfonso replied briefly. The oath was taken by the King in a loud, clear voice. His bearing was distinguished by ease and self-possession, and he won general admiration.

The party then re-entered the coaches, and proceeded amid the clangour of the bells to the Church of San Francisco. Here there was a

most brilliant assemblage of princes and bishops of the Church in their gorgeous robes of scarlet, of attendants in showy uniforms, palace guards in the ancient costume of halberdiers, wearers of foreign uniforms, and gaily-dressed women wearing the national mantilla fastened over a high comb, and caught with jewels gleaming in the dim church. Thirty bishops, headed by the Primate in a golden mitre, received Alfonso at the portico, and conducted the King and Queen, under a canopy of cloth of gold, to the chancel.

After the Benediction, the Queen-mother bowed low to her son, who returned the bow. She was then escorted to the portico, the King remaining till the last. The Court functionaries and the ladies in waiting had already preceded their Majesties in order to be at the palace to receive them.

As the King left the church there was more ringing of bells, and salvos of artillery boomed and crowds cheered madly.

On the return to the palace his Majesty held a reception of the foreign envoys and other high personages.



H.M. THE KING OF SPAIN.