

Current Topics

The Coronation

It seems to be in the nature of things that rulers should have some emblem of authority, that this should be placed upon the head or brain-box, which is the seat of intellect and will-power, and that the assumption of power should be accompanied by public ceremonies of a more or less typical or appropriate kind. Fillets, crowns, feathers, more or less intricate tattooing (as in the case of the Maoris), and the gorgeous or barbaric architectural head-adornments of South Sea Island and Siamese royalties, are all separate conceptions of what constitutes a suitable emblem of the rights and duties of king-ship. Among civilised peoples a simple fillet or band was the earliest symbol of rule. Like the chest of Auburn it contrived a double debt to pay—to point out the bearer of the kingly office and to confine the straying locks of his hair at a time when it was the fashion to leave it to grow like the locks of Absalom. The next advance upon the plain linen or woollen band was a fillet of gold. Such was the shape of the crown worn by Alexander the Great—the first Greek who bore this symbol of royal rank. The Jewish kings at least of later times, wore golden crowns. One of them, Joas, was crowned in the temple of Joiada in the days when the cruel Athalia reigned in the land. And David had the crown taken from the defeated Rabbah and placed on his own head, just as in a later day the Irish king 'Malachi wore the collar of gold which he won from the proud invader.' The crown or head-dress of the high-priest consisted of a linen band adorned with a plate of gold upon the part which surmounted the forehead of the wearer.

In the historic times of the Roman Republic military decorations took the form, not of medals, but of crowns of a more or less perishable nature. There was a golden crown for the soldier who first scaled the walls of a besieged city held by the enemy, and other crowns for those who first crossed an entrenchment, for the naval officer who won a notable victory at sea, and for the military leader who delivered a Roman garrison from blockade by an enemy. When the Republic gave way to the Empire, the rulers at first used a plain band of gold as an emblem of their state and dignity. This underwent various modifications until it attained its utmost degree of complication and exaggerated significance in the radiated crown—a sort of golden aureole which indicated that the wearer claimed divine honors—

Assumes the god,
Affects to nod,
And seems to shake the spheres.

The Anointing Ceremony

'Theodosius,' says a recognised authority on the subject, 'was the first Christian emperor to receive the blessing of the Church.' This was in the fourth century. The Gothic king Wamba was anointed with holy oil at Toledo, in Spain, in the year 672. Fleury, writing of this incident, says: 'This is the first example that I find of the unction of kings.' The Catholic Church adopted from the Jewish the ancient ceremony of anointing sovereigns to their office, and this custom has been retained to the present day, and, as is shown elsewhere in our columns, has even been practised at the coronation services of English sovereigns to the present time.

King George's Crown

The English royal crown is a slow and gradual evolution from the Anglo-Saxon fillet of gold set with pearls. The first Norman king wore a crown from the band of which there rose four trefoils. The idea has been gradually elaborated till it found its highest development in the tall and costly crown, studded with gems, surmounted by a cross, and set over a cap of ermine, made for the coronation of the late Queen Victoria. It was valued at £113,000. The present King, however, following the example of his father, has reverted to the plainer and less ornate Tudor crown.

Other Crowns

The most remarkable crown in Europe at the present time is the historic Iron Crown of Lombardy (Italy). It is preserved in the treasury of the famous old fourteenth-century Church of Monza, and consists of a handsome gold diadem, within which is a ribbon of iron, which is said to have been forged from a nail of the Cross on which the Saviour of the world hung on Calvary. It was used at the coronation of Charlemagne, and many of his successors. It was also with this notable relic of the far-past day that Napoleon I. was crowned King of Italy at Milan in 1805.

'The Pope,' says Alzog, 'wears a triple crown to symbolise the Church militant, the Church suffering, and the Church triumphant.' The use of a crown by the Popes is probably as ancient as the temporal power itself. 'The whole history of the Papal tiara, or triple crown,' says another writer, 'is uncertain. Nicholas I. (858-867) is said by some to have been the first to unite the princely crown with the mitre, though the Bollandists think that this was done before his time. The common statement that Boniface VIII (about 1300) added the second crown is false, for Hefele shows that Innocent III. is represented wearing a second crown in a painting older than the time of Boniface. Urban V. (1362-1370) is supposed to have added the third crown. The tiara is placed on the Pope's head, at his coronation, by the second Cardinal-deacon, in the *loggia* of St. Peter's, with the words: 'Receive the tiara adorned with three crowns, and know that thou art Father of princes and kings, ruler of the World, Vicar of our Saviour Jesus Christ.' At ceremonies of a purely spiritual character, the Pope wears the mitre, not the tiara.

Other Royal Titles

The title 'Defender of the Faith'—to which reference was made in last week's issue—is not the only one which the Popes have conferred upon Christian monarchs as a reward for services rendered to the cause of religion. France, for instance, was long known in the heyday of her religious enthusiasm and zeal as the 'eldest daughter of the Church,' and it was consonant with the fitness of things that her king should be styled by the Pope the 'Most Christian King' and the 'Elders Son of the Church.' The Spanish monarch was known as 'the Most Catholic King'; the former Portuguese Emperors of Brazil were called 'Perpetual Defenders'; and Austria's sovereign is addressed as 'His Apostolic Majesty'—the full title of his office runs as follows: 'His Imperial and Royal Apostolic Majesty the Emperor of Austria, King of Bohemia, and Apostolic King of Hungary.'

A Lesson in Manners

According to Pope, 'An honest man's the noblest work of God.' A later poet defines a gentleman as he

Who claims no honor from descent of blood,
But that which makes him noble, makes him good.

While a third thus describes the superiority of 'Nature's gentleman':

But Nature with a matchless hand
Sends forth her nobly born,
And laughs the paltry attributes
Of wealth and rank to scorn.
She moulds with care a spirit rare,
Half human, half divine,
And cries exultant, 'Who can make
A gentleman like mine?'

We have been reminded of these eulogies on the true gentleman by a story quoted in the current *Are Maria*, which is too good to be lost in these days of increasing boorishness and unmannerliness. 'Referring,' says our contemporary, 'to the decay of good manners, now apparent on all sides, and most strikingly shown by the lack of courtesy, even of ordinary civility, toward women, R. C. Gleaner, of the *Catholic Columbian-Record*, quotes a capital story, told in a recent article by Mr. Thomas Nelson Page, of an old gentleman of his acquaintance who, on a journey to Niagara Falls, in a crowded car, noticed with no less indignation than surprise that many men remained seated while women, young and old, were standing in the aisle. Presently an Irish workman, who had evidently been expecting a general movement on the part of his sex, stood up and offered his seat to a lady near him, saying: "I always rise for the ladies,—my mother was a lady."—"Yes," added Mr. Page's friend, "and her son is a gentleman!" It would be pleasant to know," adds the *Are Maria*, 'that these remarks were overheard by all who should have been on their feet, and that the Irishman's rebuke was not lost on a single one of them.'

'School Room Humor'

The trouble with most of the school-boy 'howlers' that are served up for our delectation is that they are either as venerable as an archdeacon—to quote Dean Hole's expressive phrase—or they are quite obviously 'faked.' The current issue of our live contemporary, the *Triad*, contains, however, a selection of children's witticisms which are alleged to be both new and true. Our contemporary draws chiefly on the recent volume on *School-room Humor* by Dr. Macnamara, M.P.; and that author himself vouches