

Musings by the Way.

(By "Sator")

Though yet many months must elapse before the coronation of King George or Queen Mary takes place, preliminary arrangements are already being made. The coronation of a sovereign is one of the few happy occasions on which Church and State can meet together and arrange a truly imposing ceremony. The whole service is one of great beauty and of deep spiritual significance, for it is the nation's witness before God and man, that we are essentially a Christian nation, that we revere God, are faithful to the best traditions of Holy Church, respect and obey His Holy Word, and acknowledge that "except the Lord build the house, their labour is but vain that build it."

And like most ceremonies of the Church of England, the coronation is one of what I may call "restrained splendour." Our northern minds have never run riot in colour and ceremony as the southerners have done; we are more staid, more conservative, more content to follow ancient precedent, and yet we leave out nothing which is truly Catholic. And as a rule, too, our pageants and ceremonies and accessories are in excellent taste. We are beginning to see more and more clearly that it is a good thing to "worship the King in the beauty of holiness"—not in Puritanical ugliness thereof, nor yet in the (to us) too ornate ritual of Rome.

Just now we are preparing for the great Festival of the Nativity of Jesus Christ, which means so much to us and all mankind. Some of our churches will be under-decorated, and some will be made like market gardens, but in none of them (in New Zealand at least) will there be a "crib." Yet this is a very ancient practice of the Church of England—the building up in a side chapel, or in a corner of the church, a representation of the Holy Manger. Why should it not be seen oftener in our churches? Many churches in England have revived the custom, and with the happiest results, and the children (and is not Christmas essentially the children's feast?) have been delighted and edified. The crib in the church brings home to their minds, as well as to ours, the truth and the reality of the Birth of Jesus Christ, in a way that no amount of hymn-singing can do. In our schools we are beginning to see

the usefulness of less theory and more practice, or rather, of theory fittingly illustrated so that the truth is conveyed and struck home in a manner old schoolmasters knew nothing of. Let the Church do the same. A simple "crib" erected in some convenient corner, will be a good object lesson, and with a little care may be made beautiful and reverent.

It always amazes me how some people can consent to have a church more highly decorated for a wedding than for a great Festival in honour of Jesus Christ. It seems right to make God's House beautiful for so holy a thing as a wedding, but it seems quite opposed to the eternal fitness of things to let it be more full of beautiful flowers, etc., than we allow for Christmas or Easter, whilst on Ascension Day we do nothing.

In the matter of church decoration, "restrained splendour" should be shown; particularly is this warning needed at weddings and Harvest Thanksgivings. At the latter too often are our churches disfigured with cabbages, carrots, turnips, etc., till a stranger might well be excused for thinking he had got into some sort of market fair. A restrained use of flowers, especially of heavily-scented ones, and the use of permanent decorations such as a beautiful white frontal for the altar and hangings to match for pulpit, lectern, prayer-desk and faldstool, and two or three good banners and illuminated texts—this would be far better than spoiling stone or woodwork by a multitude of wreaths and floral emblems. I have seen handsome carved pulpits absolutely ruined by nail marks; and I have seen fonts so littered with flowers and greenery that a baptism would have been an impossibility. Indeed, not many years ago I saw in one of our large churches, the Lord's Table so piled up with fruit at a Harvest Festival that the priest had to clear a little space before he could celebrate.

So that perhaps we need not too overly pride ourselves on "restraint" and shake our heads at the want of restraint in another portion of Christ's Church.

In the new Liverpool Cathedral, the Lady Chapel of which was dedicated the other day, one is struck with the beauty of thought embodied in the scheme. It is indeed a "Lady" chapel—a chapel of glorified, sanctified

womanhood: It is a thrilling conception and full of a deep reverence. The reredos over the altar is in blue and gold, whilst the window behind is filled with beautiful glass portraying the Virgin-mother with her Royal Son. The two next lights portray the adoration of the magi. Then the other windows are filled with holy women of all ages—Sarah, Hannah, Ruth, Elizabeth, Anna; various Christian queens, such as Bertha, Margaret of Scotland, Helena, Werberga, and so on. Then women saints of the Prayer-book Kalendar, beginning with St. Anne, St. Mary Magdalene, St. Perpetua, Faith, Lucy, and others. Next follow windows which bring the Magnificat into our own day, and these represent to us Mary Collett Christina Rossetti, Catherine Gladstone, Susannah Wesley, Grace Darling, Ann Clough, and many others, whilst the words of the Magnificat run along and through all the windows. It is a magnificent idea, and has been worthily carried out and in exquisite taste and beauty. It is said that two of the windows—the one of the Anunciation, and one portraying Ruth—are the two most beautiful windows in England, and Liverpool may well be proud of the first instalment of what will be, when finished, the most beautiful cathedral of modern times. Those who have seen that bare, white Church of S. Matthew in Auckland, which cost £30,000, will be able to realise what *might* have been.

The Church of England Men's Society.

Watchword: "Prayer and Service."

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Great Men's Mass Meeting.

In accordance with the wish of the Bishop, Synod opened with a mass meeting for men held in the Theatre Royal, Napier, under the auspices of the C.E.M.S., on the evening of Thursday, 27th October. In every respect the meeting was a pronounced success.