

a charter. The ceremonies at the coronation of RICHARD I. were on a more generous and elaborate scale and set the fashion or precedent for similar functions for future generations: But the form of oath remained unchanged until the time of EDWARD II. Then, in 1308, it was for the first time drawn up in the form of question and answer, and so it remains to the present day. The original is in Norman-French. In English it runs as follows:—

'Sire,' says the Archbishop, 'will you grant and keep, and by your oath confirm to the people of England, the laws and customs to them granted by the ancient kings of England, your righteous and godly predecessors; and especially the laws, customs, and privileges granted to the clergy and people by the glorious King St. EDWARD, your predecessor?' The king replies: 'I grant them and promise.' 'Sire, will you keep towards God, the Holy Church, and the clergy and people, peace and accord in God, entirely after your power?' 'I will keep them.' 'Sire, will you cause to be done in all your judgments equal and right justice and discretion, in mercy and truth, to your power?' 'I will so do.' 'Sire, do you grant to hold and to keep the laws and righteous customs which the community of your realm shall have chosen, and will you defend and strengthen them to the honor of God, to the utmost of your power?' 'I grant and promise.'

A new spirit and form was introduced into the Coronation Oath by HENRY VIII. 'It is very remarkable,' says Father BRIDGETT in his publication, *The English Coronation Oath*, 'that, before his coronation, he manipulated the oath he was to take, softening the expressions about the rights of the people, and interpolating clauses regarding the rights of the crown.' There was a further change at the coronation of the boy-king, EDWARD VI. The customary acceptance of the king by the people was not asked, and the oath was changed by CRANMER, the Reformer, and bound the weedy young monarch, briefly

(1) To the people of England, to keep the laws and liberties of the realm. (2) To the Church and the people, to keep peace and concord. (3) To do in all his judgments equal justice. (4) To make no laws but to the honor of God and the good of the commonwealth, and by the consent of the people, as had been accustomed.

The ceremonies concluded with a Solemn High Mass. CRANMER himself, when about to take his oath of obedience to the Holy See, made a private declaration that he did not intend to be bound by his words. In like manner, immediately after EDWARD'S coronation was completed, he convinced the royal boy that he was in no way bound by oath towards the Church. And within a year or two the altars were demolished, the altar-stones broken or turned to common or vile uses, and the Sacrifice of the Mass, with which his short reign had begun, was abolished.

MARY TUDOR, the Catholic Queen, took the accustomed oaths and restored Catholic worship. From motives of policy Queen ELIZABETH had herself crowned according to the old Catholic rites. According to Miss STRICKLAND, the date of her coronation was fixed after consultation with a fortune-teller. She knelt before the high altar in Westminster Abbey and took the old Catholic oaths of the days of the Second EDWARD. She was anointed with holy oil—at which she privately mocked—and completed the melancholy travesty by hearing Mass and receiving Holy Communion! JAMES I., CHARLES I., CHARLES II., and JAMES II. (the Catholic king), all swore, at the coronations, in the words of the formula quoted above and used at the crowning of the Second EDWARD.

The most radical departure in the substance of the coronation oath was introduced after the Revolution of 1688, when WILLIAM of Orange and MARY came to the throne. For the first time in history the word 'Protestant' was introduced. The sovereigns promised to 'maintain the [reformed] Protestant religion established by law,' and all mention of the good St. EDWARD and his legislation was thenceforth omitted. By the Bill of Rights (enacted in October, 1689) it was provided, says MACAULAY, 'that every English Sovereign should in full Parliament and at the coronation repeat and subscribe the Declaration against Transubstantiation. This was drawn up by the Puritans in 1643; it was passed by Parliament in the days of CHARLES II., in 1673, in order to exclude Catholics from every office, both civil and military, under the crown; it was imposed, in an extended and virulently offensive form, upon Members of Parliament, for the same purpose, in 1678; and by the Bill of Rights it was imposed upon the wearer of the crown. It ran as follows:—

I, A.B., by the grace of God, King (or Queen) of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, do solemnly and sincerely, in the presence of GOD, profess, testify, and declare, that I do believe that in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper there is not any Transubstantiation of the elements of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of CHRIST at or after the consecration thereof by any person whatsoever; and that the invocation or adoration of the Virgin MARY or any other Saint, and the Sacrifice of the Mass, as they are now used in the Church of Rome, are superstitious and idolatrous. And I do solemnly in the presence of GOD profess, testify, and declare, that I do make this declaration, and every part thereof, in the plain and ordinary sense of the words read unto me, as they are commonly understood by English Protestants, without any evasion, equivocation, or mental reservation whatsoever, and without any dispensation already granted me for this purpose by the Pope, or any other authority or person whatsoever, or without any hope of any such dispensation from any person or authority whatsoever, or without thinking that I am or can be acquitted before GOD or man, or absolved of the declaration or any part thereof, although the Pope, or any other person or persons or power whatsoever, should dispense with or annul the same, or declare that it was null and void from the beginning.

This atrocious oath was the product of a period of boiling sectarian passion. It was, too, a period in which but little regard was paid to the sanctity of an oath, and in which even a solemn treaty (that of Limerick) was violated 'ere the ink wherewith 'twas writ could dry,' with as much *sung froid* as articles of capitulation were over and over again violated by the Puritan Parliament. Hence the word—even the oath—of the king was to be doubted, and he was obliged to 'multiply phrases that he was not equivocating, nor guilty of evasion, nor dispensed to lie, and the rest.' Queen ANNE was the first to take this barbarous oath. It has been imposed upon every British sovereign since her day. It was taken by King EDWARD VII. on his accession only. But the strong feeling manifested against this 'relic of barbarism' by Catholics and fair-minded Protestants, and by great public bodies, throughout the Empire led to its revision by a Select Committee last year. The following amended form, which was enacted by Parliament, was taken by EDWARD VII. at his coronation:—

'Will you solemnly promise and swear to govern the people of this United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and the Dominions thereto belonging, according to the statutes in Parliament agreed on, and the respective laws and customs of the same?' 'I solemnly promise so to do.' 'Will you to your power cause law and justice, in mercy, to be executed in all your judgments?' 'I will.' 'Will you, to the utmost of your power, maintain the laws of God, the true profession of the Gospel, and the Protestant Reformed religion, established by law? And will you maintain and preserve inviolably the settlement of the Church of England, and the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government thereof, as by law established in England? And will you preserve upon the bishops and clergy of England, and to the Church therein committed to their charge, all such rights and privileges as by law do or shall appertain to them or to any of them?' 'All this I promise to do.'

And this is, in brief, the story of the English coronation oath.

## Notes

### Wanted, a Spark Arrester.

Settlers who live alongside the railway lines and are in continual danger of being burnt out by fires caused from sparks emitted by passing engines, will derive little consolation from the attitude assumed by the Government in a recent debate on a petition presented by one James Wallace, a farmer in the Auckland district. The Minister of Railways stoutly contended that the law absolved the Government from liability in such cases, and the Hon. Mr McGowan, ironically asking the House to take a broad and practical view of the question, pointed out that the danger would be minimised if members would not insist on the use of local coal. But the public generally will refuse to endorse the callous view of the Railway Department, and will not even try to understand why it is that the Government should be free from a liability that law and justice alike impose on every private person. If, for example, the owner of a traction engine, travelling along a road, were to use inferior coal, and neglect to use the funnel covers that the law imposes upon private individuals, but permits Government engines to go without, and thereby cause the destruction of crops by the wayside, he would assuredly be made to pay the penalty. It is one of the canons of law that no one shall prosecute his business to the common hurt. It is equally canonical that the public business shall not be prosecuted to individual hurt. In the interests of common justice this principle should be applied to industries carried on by the Government on behalf of the public.

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