

kneeling before the king, paid their homage and swore fealty to their sovereign lord.

At this part of the service would follow the coronation of a queen consort. The ceremony was of a shorter and simpler kind than that for the king. The anointing was imparted to head and breast only; crowning and enthronisation concluded the rite.

The Introit of the Mass then began, the solemn tones of the *Protector noster* echoing and rechoing along the vaulted roof of the magnificent abbey church of Westminster. The Collect chanted by the celebrant was the prayer English Catholics are accustomed to hear for their present sovereign on Sundays. One of the assisting bishops sang the Epistle, and another bishop sang the Gospel. The king was privileged to kiss the sacred Text of the Gospel in the same way as a bishop does when assisting at High Mass. A striking part of the Offertory ceremonial consisted in the king's oblation. His Majesty, attended by prelates and nobles, came down from the throne and presented at the altar a mark of gold, and bread and wine for the Holy Sacrifice. The wine was poured into the great stone chalice of St. Edward. Another peculiarity of the Mass was the blessing inserted before the *Agnus Dei*, a rite which was usual in England and France on grand occasions.

When the Time for Communion Arrived, the king, having previously received the kiss of peace, approached the Holy Table and laid aside his crown. After the reception of the Sacred Host, the Abbot of Westminster ministered an ablution of wine to the king from St. Edward's chalice, and the Mass concluded in the usual manner.

Preparations were then made for the departure. A procession of thurifers, acolytes, prelates, and nobles escorted the king to St. Edward's shrine, where the primate removed the crown. Within a traverse, or pavilion, the Lord Chancellor assisted the king to unvest, and at the same time an opportunity was afforded him of breaking the prolonged fast. Prolonged it certainly had been; for in several instances we are informed that this gorgeous service did not finally terminate till three o'clock in the afternoon. The king, having been revested in a silken tunic and robe of state, received from the hands of the primate a lighter crown. Thus arrayed, and bearing his

sceptre in his hand, the king and his numerous suite returned 'with great glory' to the Palace of Westminster for the coronation banquet.

A Pleasing Diversion

occurred during the subsequent proceedings. The king's champion, mounted on his charger, entered the hall and challenged to defend in single combat the king's right to the throne against all comers. On the occasion of the coronation of Richard II. it is related that the banquet was so crowded with guests that it would have been well-nigh impossible for the waiters to serve the multitude, had not royal princes and newly-created earls, mounted upon their war-horses, kept riding up and down between the tables in order to keep the passage clear. We are also told that in the centre of the hall stood a marble column, and on its summit was a golden eagle, from the feet of which flowed continuously four streams of four different wines; and everyone, no matter how poor, was allowed to drink freely that day. This flowing stream must have been a source of considerable attraction, and explains, perhaps, the drastic measures taken to preserve order during the royal banquet. Festivities of this kind may have passed off without mishap in the fourteenth century; but one shrinks from contemplating the results of similar kingly largess, should it be granted in the century that now is.

In modern times it has become customary for the sovereign to modify the several adjuncts to the coronation outside the abbey.

The Catholic and Latin form of the coronation service was used for the last time when Elizabeth became queen. On the accession of James I., in 1603, the authorities were satisfied with an English translation of the ancient rite. As time went on, several modifications were introduced into the ancient Catholic ceremonial. These modifications include changes in the prayers, reduction of the number of anointings, abolition of the blessing of material objects, placing the crown on the king after the delivery of all the other ornaments, introduction of the presentation of a Bible, and discontinuance of the use of a communion cloth.

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