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GOD SAVE THE QUEEN

A NEW page of history is about to be written. On Tuesday next, the second of June, Elizabeth II, Britain's young Queen, will be solemnly crowned in Westminster Abbey, the national shrine, with all the splendid ceremonial and rich pageantry sanctioned by centuries of custom and historical precedent.

This coronation is a momentous occasion. Under the brilliant trappings and outward magnificence there lies a fact of deep significance: the immutability and permanence of the British Monarchy, symbol of national unity. For in the turbulent sea of social and political upheavals and of international problems and embarrassments the British throne stands, firm as a rock, supported by the loyalty of a great people. This support consists, in fact, of something more than loyalty; it is a real and sincere affection and a deep respect for the reigning sovereign.

In this popular feeling there is nothing new. It existed in the reign of the first Queen Elizabeth who, despot though she was, and in spite of her parsimony, capriciousness and congenital violent temper, was yet greatly beloved by her subjects. Equally well-loved was Queen Victoria, particularly so in the latter part of her reign. Since then the love and devotion of the British people for their sovereign have grown in extent and intensity. Throughout the successive reigns of the House of Windsor, popularity of the Monarchy has been an outstanding feature of British national life.

Today this popularity has attained its apogee. The British people feel instinctively that their young Queen embodies the spirit and genius of their race. They love her for her charming simplicity, for her unobtrusive dignity, her sense of duty. They admire in her the sterling qualities she has inherited and they know that she can be depended upon to perform her royal functions conscientiously and with ability.

We all know how carefully and painstakingly the Princess has been trained for the exalted position that awaited her. And we recall the impressive and moving message she broadcast in the course of the royal South African tour when she solemnly dedicated herself to the service of the nation. The promise is now flowering to fulfilment.

It was not without significance, it was in fact a

refreshing and pleasing spectacle to see Parliament, in this streamlined and utilitarian age and at a time of financial stringency, unreservedly apportion large sums of money for the purpose of upholding the splendour of a traditional function. Exhausted by two world wars and crippled by her tremendous effort to prevent a third, Britain will not be gainsaid.

What are the portents for the newly-begun reign? Is it a coincidence that the glory of England shone brightest whenever a Queen occupied the throne?

Will history repeat itself and the reign of Elizabeth II be one of great achievement and prosperity as were the golden age of the first Elizabeth, the reign of Queen Anne in which Marlborough flourished and the Peace of Utrecht was signed, or the spacious Victorian era? That this may be so and that universal peace may crown it all is our sincere wish, our hope and our prayer.

To us who represent the Swiss Colony in Great Britain the Coronation may serve as a reminder — if reminder is needed — of the debt of gratitude we owe this friendly and hospitable land in which we have been allowed to settle, for the protection and security we enjoy, and for being permitted to carry on our trades and occupations and exercise our professions without let or hindrance. Our gratitude, shared by every thinking Swiss in his own country, must also extend to the immense service

Britain has rendered us by her firmness and fortitude in the darkest days of the war.

The Swiss people are well aware how much their own fate was bound up with the fortunes of Britain. They realize that their independence would have stood in grave jeopardy had Britain weakened or fallen. It is no exaggeration to say that Britain's determination to win the war saved Switzerland.

The Swiss form of Government is republican and no King has ever reigned over us. But the republican principles in which every Swiss for centuries past has been educated do not blind us to the merits of a constitutional monarchy. This is why we share the reverence in which Britain's Royal House is held and rejoice in the accession of the youthful and charming Queen whose crowning we are now privileged to witness.



Our two countries have, after all, much in common. Both cherish ideals of individual liberty, freedom of thought, expression and religion, respect for human rights. The Swiss people are glad to welcome British visitors, they like them and try to make them feel at home. Conversely, few British travellers have returned from Switzerland otherwise than satisfied and often delighted. Most of them are impressed by the similarity between the democratic Swiss way of life and theirs.

It may not be amiss to mention the curious historical fact that Switzerland is the only continental country which has never been at war with England. Our relations have always been permeated by friendship, understanding and mutual respect.

As for the Swiss who have made Britain their home, it can be said, in all modesty, that most of them have contributed, in some way or other, to the progress and prosperity of their adopted country. Many have acquired British nationality either by marriage or naturalisation and become useful citizens. It is fitting, on this occasion, to record that in time of war they have given their sons and daughters to serve in H.M. forces. It is with sorrow but also with pride that we think of those who have made the supreme sacrifice and laid down their lives for England.

If therefore we Swiss residing in Britain and we British nationals of Swiss descent take a keen interest in this coronation and participate in the rejoicings, we do so in a spirit of solidarity and genuine friendship and not as strangers within the gates.

May we be allowed to offer Her Majesty our respectful homage and our sincere wishes for health, long life and a happy, peaceful reign.

THE CROWNING OF QUEEN ELIZABETH II.

Your cheers we echo as with joyful voice
A young and gracious sovereign you acclaim,
Who nobly bears an honoured, ancient name
And wears the crown with dignity and poise.

Beloved by all, she is her people's choice,
To serve the nation she has made her aim,
Her simple charm, unspoilt by rank and fame,
Has won our hearts, and with you we rejoice.

Now as with solemn rites on hallowed ground
And glittering pageantry your queen is crowned,
We see this England, greatest when at bay,
Which fiercest trials could not overwhelm,
With newborn hope vibrating, for the day
Is bright with promise: Youth is at the Helm!

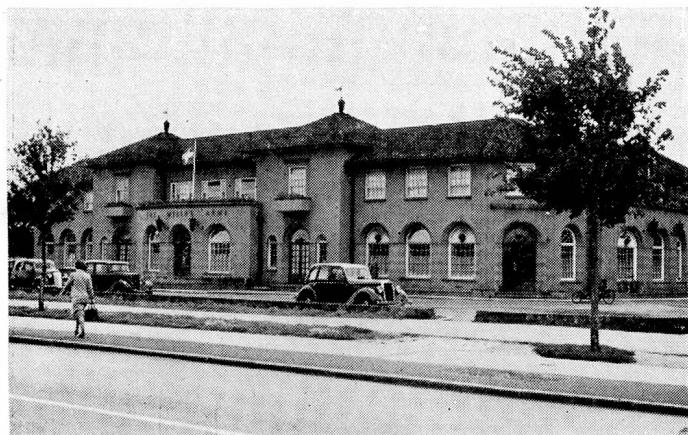
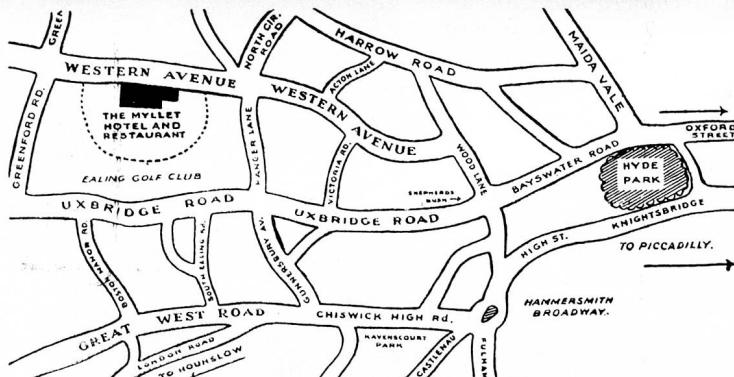
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