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Good

1st Prize

Date of Birth: [REDACTED]
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B. Describe the Main Features of the Coronation Ceremony and their Meaning.

"You saw the ceremony?"
That I did.
How was it?
Well worth seeing."

Henry VIII, Act IV, Scene 1.
(William Shakespeare)

"The King is dead. Long live the Queen." These words marked the end of the reign of George VI, and the beginning of the new era of Elizabeth II. Thus, on the second day of June, 1953, was performed in Westminster Abbey the solemn ceremony of Coronation, the elaborate ceremonial of which is inherited from Anglo-Saxon tribes and which passed through the Middle Ages to the present day. The word

itself derives from the Latin "corona," a crown. The Coronation was enacted in England as early as 973 A.D., the coronation of King Edgar containing Christian anointing, Roman crowning and Teutonic acclamation. For centuries the monarch was an important factor in the government of England, though his power became limited, until we reach the position of the Crown today, a single unit binding peoples of different races and creeds in a Commonwealth and Empire.

Since the Norman conquest, the Coronation has always taken place, when possible, in the Abbey of Westminster. The Archbishops of Canterbury and York, with assistant bishops, form in procession and await Her Majesty, who advances through the nave to the theatre. The Queen is acclaimed the rightful sovereign in the ceremony of Recognition. She takes the Oath and is presented with a Bible. The Communion Service is begun, in which the Queen is Anointed, Invested, Crowned and Enthroned. Finally, the bishops and peers do homage to their newly-crowned sovereign.

The first car, on the morning of

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Coronation Day, is to see that the Ampulla contains the Oil and that it is placed, with the spoon, upon the Altar. The Regalia is handed by the Dean and Chapter to those who are carrying it in the procession. The procession forms outside the west door of the Abbey, and, when the approach of the Queen is imminent, it begins to move back into the church. The choristers' voices begin the anthem, "I was glad when they said unto me, We will go into the House of the Lord."

The Coronation has commenced.

The boys of Westminster School acclaimed their Queen with cries of "Vivat Regina Elizabethae." These cheers have greeted the monarch since 1685, and represent the ancient approval of the people. The first act of the Coronation is the Recognition of the Ruler by the people. This ceremony shows that the sovereign rules not only by right of succession, but by choice of his subjects, for in centuries past our ancestors were accustomed to choose from amongst themselves the man whom they thought fit to be governor and leader. So far as is known

the abbey congregation never responded adversely to the Archbishop's request to acknowledge their ruler, but at the coronation of William I in 1066, the mixture of Norman and Saxon tongues caused such a noise, that the Normans on guard outside the Abbey attacked the Saxons, thinking the latter were rioting. At Charles I's coronation, the congregation had to be told to shout 'God Save King Charles.'

The Archbishop of Canterbury moves across the theatre to the east and says:

'Sir, I here present unto you Queen Elizabeth, your undoubted Queen. Wherefore, all you who are come this day to do your homage and service, are you willing to do the same?' The people reply, 'God save Queen Elizabeth,' and Her Majesty, who is standing and facing those in the east, bows. This procedure is repeated in the south, West and North sides of the theatre.

The Bible, paten and chalice are placed upon the altar, and the lords bring in the regalia - the crowns, swords, sceptres, orb, spurs, bracelets, ring and staff.

The Coronation Oath, which follows,

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expresses the king's relation to his subjects, particularly concerning law and justice. The Archbishop administers the Oath. He inquires if the Queen is willing to take the Oath, and on her reply in the positive, he says:

B. Wilkinson, M.A.
 (from "The Coronation
 in History")

"Will you solemnly swear to promise and swear to govern the People of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Union of South Africa, Pakistan and Ceylon, and of your Possessions and other Territories to any of them belonging or pertaining, according to their respective laws and customs?"

The Queen replies: "I solemnly promise so to do."
 "Will you to the utmost of your power cause Law and Justice, in Mercy, to be executed in all your judgements?"

The Queen replies: "I will."

"Will you to the utmost of your power maintain the Laws of God and the true profession of the Gospel? Will you to the utmost of your power maintain in the United Kingdom the Protestant Reformed Religion established by the Law? And will you

maintain in the United Kingdom the Protestant Reformed Religion established by the 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 unto the Bishops and Clergy of England, and to the Churches there committed to their charge, all such rights and privileges as by law do or shall appertain to them or any of them?"

The Queen replies, "All this I promise to do."

Thus, there is a threefold promise, as there was nearly a thousand years ago, in 973. This threefold oath remained for nearly two hundred and fifty years, but during the Middle Ages four and then five promises were forced upon the monarch, and these additions mirrored the question "whether the king of the realm was to be supreme in the state." The result - a rule by democracy - is shown in the Vath, which serves the modern Commonwealth as it once served Anglo-Saxon communities. The fourth part of the Vath is taken when the Queen places her right hand

B. Wilkinson.
from "The Coronation
in History")

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upon the Holy Gospel, on the Altar, saying:
 "The things which I have here before promised,
 I will perform and keep. So help me God."
 Having kissed the Book, and signed the
 Oath, she returns to her chair. At this point a
 new act was introduced into the service, for
 the Bible was presented to Her Majesty by
 the Moderator of the General Assembly of
 the Church of Scotland.

The Communion Service begins and
 after the Epistle, Gospel and Creed have been
 said, comes the Anointing, the most important
 and sacred part of the Coronation, for
 without being anointed a monarch cannot
 be crowned. Anointing makes the sovereign
 receive God's law to rule justly, but he is
 still subject to God and the law. Nor
 does unction make the Queen a priest, even
 though she is anointed 'as kings, priests and
 prophets were anointed' and as 'supreme
 head of the English church.' The custom of
 anointing the head with oil was prevalent
 amongst the ancient Egyptians. Some twelve
 hundred years ago Spanish kings were

anointed at their Coronations, and in 785
Egbert was anointed as successor to Offa of
Mercia.

While the anthem "Zadok the Priest"
is sung, the Queen, having been relieved of
her crimson robe, is seated in King Edward's
chair. She is anointed by the Archbishop
in the shape of a cross, under a gold
Canopy, held by Four Knights of the Garter.
He anoints her on the crown of the head,
saying:

"Be thy head anointed with holy oil, as
kings, priests, and prophets were anointed."
- on the breast, saying:

"Be thy breast anointed with holy oil"
- on the palms of both hands, saying:

"And as Solomon was anointed King by
Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet, so
be you anointed, blessed and consecrated Queen
over this People, whom the Lord your God
hath given you to rule and govern, in the
Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of
the Holy Ghost. Amen."

The Investiture of the Queen follows.
She is divested of her white garments, and puts
on the Colobium Sindonis, the little gown of linen

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and the Supertunica, a close pall of cloth of gold. The Queen's heels are touched with the Golden Spurs, to denote chivalry, and she is offered the Sword of State by the Lord Chamberlain. The sword is then presented on the altar by the Queen in the service of God, Lord Salisbury redeeming it from the altar for one hundred shillings, a custom that is six hundred years old, and the sword is carried naked before the monarch during the rest of the ceremony. The sovereign is next invested with the Stole Royal and Robe Royal, after having received the armills of sincerity and wisdom, given by the Commonwealth. The Imperial Robe is wrapped about the Queen; the wearing of robes is descended from the cloaks of Byzantine emperors.

The Regalia is delivered to the monarch. The Orb is given, a symbol of God's power over the world, but it is returned to the altar by the Dean, because Her Majesty has to receive the two sceptres. The sovereign is given the Ring, "The Wedding Ring of England." This circlet of ruby and diamonds is a token

representing the will of the ruler. The Queen then accepts the Sceptre with the Dove, which has its wings expanded, as an emblem of mercy. The Sceptre of Kingly Power and Justice is presented, the use of which in a present day Coronation can be traced back to the Anglo-Saxon custom of the delivery of a spear to a chief, representing his office.

The crown of England may go back to Edward the Confessor, but the greater part of the regalia was remade for Charles II, after the Commonwealth had destroyed it. St. Edward's Crown is worn only once by the ruler, since it is exchanged for the lighter Imperial State Crown. The crown is one of the oldest symbols of royalty and authority. Its origin can be traced back to the Egyptians, and perhaps they spread the idea through the East. It is the privilege of the Primate of All England to crown the monarch.

The moment of coronation has come. The Archbishop of Canterbury raises the Crown and places it upon the Queen's head. Immediately the people in the Abbey raise their great shout of "God save the Queen!" The peers put on their coronets, the trumpets sound,

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and the guns in the Park and the Tower boom.

Lewis Broad
 (from "Crowning the
 King")

The Enthroning follows, in which the sovereign is "lifted up into his throne by the Archbishop and Bishops and other peers of the Kingdom." This elevation symbolizes the ceremony of being lifted on the shoulders of his subjects, that all may see their ruler. Her Majesty is lifted into the throne, and the ceremony of Homage and Allegiance takes place. This is a survival of the age of feudalism and chivalry, and stresses the fact that the nobles and clergy did support the crown. The Archbishop of Canterbury speaks for the Bishops:

"I... will be faithful and true, and faith and truth will bear unto you our Sovereign Lady (or Lord)... And I will do, and truly acknowledge, the service of the lands which I claim to hold of you, as in right of the Church. So help me God."

Then the peers swear:

"I... do become your liege man of life and limb, and of earthly worship; and faith and truth I will bear unto you, to live and die, against all manner of folks. So help me God."

Thus the peers swear homage, not fealty, as do the Bishops. The peers of the blood royal ascend the throne, kneel, swear their homage, touch the Crown and kiss Her Majesty's cheek. They are followed by the Duke of Norfolk and the premier peer of each degree. After the Homage, the Queen removes her crown, and offers an altar cloth and an ingot of gold at the altar.

To the strains of 'Te Deum' the sovereign withdraws to Saint Edward's Chapel, and exchanges Saint Edward's Crown for the Imperial Crown, and carrying the Orb and Sceptre, she passes in procession to the great West Door of the Abbey.

The Banquet and The Challenge used to follow this. The climax of the Banquet was the appearance of the King's Champion, a member of the Dymoke family, who, if any person questioned the right of the monarch, would challenge the doubter to a duel. The Champion rode fully armed into the hall and threw down his gauntlet. This idea of ordeal by battle, arose out of the Anglo-Norman law of the verdict of God, yet this ceremony was not discontinued till the coronation of William IV in 1831.

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The Coronation has ended. Once again the ancient tradition has been observed. Once again England has a supreme ruler, crowned and anointed.

Throughout a world whose monarchies are rising and falling, may the peoples of Britain and her Commonwealth long cry, 'God save the Queen.'

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