

Edwin A. Abbey, the American Artist Who Will Paint King Edward VII.'s Coronation.

There is no denying the fact that in selecting Edwin Austin Abbey to paint the official picture of his coronation King Edward VII. of England did honor to the artist's native land. No one will have the temerity to combat this proposition, for it is universally recognized that an honor to any citizen of a country reflects credit upon all other citizens of that country. No man can live for or by himself. His individuality and attainments become the heritage of the land which gave him birth; hence the interest manifested in the recent arrival of the artist in question from England, whence he has come to fulfill a contract entered into with the Boston Library association for the completion of a work upon which he has been engaged during the greater portion of the past ten years. Five years ago he came over on a similar errand—the delivery to the Boston library of the pictures which he had finished up to that time, consisting of a motley only of the number he had agreed to paint. Now, after a decade has passed since the original conception of the great work, he returns with the fruits of his labor and wearing the laurels gained by his superlative proficiency in art.

It is only eleven years since Mr. Abbey exhibited his first picture in oils, "A Mayday Morning," which was hung on the walls of Burlington House. It obtained instant recognition of his talent. Until then he had been known as an artist in black and white and water colors only, but eight years later, in 1898, he won the coveted distinction of being elected to the full honors of a Royal Academician. He made his domicile in England just twenty years ago, and from that time to the present he may be said to have made a triumphal advance, first upon the outworks of British prejudice, then into the very citadel of England's artistic coterie.

It does not fall to the lot of many men to succeed in such full measure as Mr. Abbey has succeeded, and it is well worth the while to inquire into the methods and forces that have carried him to the pinnacle of his profession in so short a time, for, as measured by the advance he has made, twenty years, even in the span of an ordinary lifetime, is not reckoned a long period of probation. "Ars longa, vita brevis," indeed, and no one knows better than the artist that art is long and life is short, for the higher the aspiration and the greater the attainment so much the more precious will this life appear.

Born on the 1st of April, 1852, Mr. Abbey will only have attained his fiftieth birthday shortly before the event which he is to perpetuate—the coronation—is to take place, as it is scheduled for June, 1902. Like his celebrated predecessor, Benjamin West, who was such a favorite of King George III. and who succeeded Sir Joshua Reynolds, first president of the Royal academy, Abbey is a Pennsylvanian, and, like him also, he achieved his greatest and most distinct triumphs in England. More than this, he has received the ungrudging admiration and esteem of British artists and connoisseurs. In the interval between West and Abbey many American artists have been well received in England, but these two stand forth most conspicuously as royal favorites.

After a short sojourn in New York West went to England in 1765, where he married an American lady and settled down to painting, with George III. as patron for forty years. Abbey also tarried awhile in New York after leaving his native city of Philadelphia, then flitted to London and established himself so securely in the esteem of George III.'s great-grandson, Edward VII., as to receive the royal command to perpetuate on canvas the glories of his coming coronation. Whether or not the parallel may be further pursued and Abbey will have West's firmness to decline the honor of knighthood, which will probably be thrust upon him as a portion of his reward, remains to be seen. As, however, he lately announced himself as still an American citizen when "declaring" his paintings for entry at the port of New York he will have to "about face" rather sharply to qualify for that honor which, it is said, more than anything else, urged Sir Henry Stanley on.

For the past fifty years or more the British have been in the habit of asking, "Who reads an American book?" They ask it no longer, for American literature, especially fiction, has become very much the vogue in England. The same satirical question has often been asked with reference to American art, "Who patronizes it?" But, by the same token that our writers have raised this country in the esteem of the literary world, so also our painters, with Abbey and Sargent in the van, are about to correct a long lived misapprehension regarding American art. All of which shows that whatever one does to elevate himself in public esteem reflects luster upon his native land.

So long ago as 1875 Mr. Abbey was recognized as a master of technique and in the front rank as a black and white artist and water colorist. In exquisite pen drawings he had few rivals, as exemplified in his illustrations of Shakespeare's comedies and Herrick's poems. His handling of old English subjects with pastoral settings was inimitable, for he combined the result of faithful study with an idealism sufficient to invest his people and scenes with the artistic glamour which is as much the painter's prerogative as the poet's license.

Mr. Abbey has been a close student of history, is well versed in ancient traditions and also informed as to archeology, ancient armor, etc., all of which, together with his inimitable skill at handling large subjects and the grouping of figures on broad canvases, caused him to be selected by the Boston library committee to paint the great mural panels which he has just brought to this country. The space allotted him covers 150 feet by 8, divided into five panels. These pictures he has patiently painted, one after the other, and at last they are ready to be placed on the library walls, where they will constitute, as a whole, one of the grandest artistic conceptions of modern times—some say of any age. The subject selected by Mr. Abbey was "The Quest of the Holy Grail," and, as elaborated, it comprises "Sir Galahad as an Infant," "The Knighting of Sir Galahad by Lancelot," "Sir Galahad Brought to the Court of King Arthur by Joseph of Arimathea," "The Benediction of the Knights Who Go Forth on the Sacred Quest" and "Sir Galahad at the Sleepdown Castle."

The two sets of panel pictures, that which was finished five years ago and the one just brought over, have been on exhibition in London, where they won the unqualified commendation of art critics. "They are on a large scale, and their breadth and power of treatment, the colors and poetic sentiment show their painter to be a man of altogether exceptional powers," says one of the leading London painters. Mr. Abbey has exhibited at Burlington House, owned by the Royal academy, his "Richard III. and the Lady Anne," an immense canvas depicting "The Trial of Queen Katherine" and "The Penance of Eleanor, Duchess of Gloucester."

In these paintings as well as in his treatment of the Holy Grail panels and his "Crusader Catching the First Glimpse of the Holy City" he showed such singular skill in massing and arranging on canvas large numbers of figures as to first attract attention, then to fix the opinion and ultimate conclusion that he of all others would be the right man to depict the coming coronation. In this scene there will be introduced as central figures King Edward



EDWIN A. ABBEY, R.A.

and Queen Alexandra, with their children, particularly prominent being the Prince and Princess of Wales. All the foreign royalties present will be shown, as well as ambassadors, lords and ladies in waiting, prime ministers, etc., probably swelling the number to about 200 in all. Each personage will be a portrait, of course, and the magnitude of such a scheme, to be carried out upon a canvas probably 50 or 40 feet by 90 or 100, can only be imagined. It will probably take the artist five or six years to complete his work after all preliminary sketches and studies have been made.

Mr. Abbey's English home is at Morgan Hall, an old manor house in Fairfield, Gloucestershire, where he has resided since his marriage in 1890. The house itself is a perfect museum of arms, costumes, etc., of the middle ages, so useful in building up pictures of that period. At this country seat Mr. Abbey erected a spacious studio 75 by 42 feet specially for the Holy Grail canvases. There in all probability he will put on canvas the great coronation scene, upon which he is expected to begin work on his return to England after a much needed vacation.

At home and socially Mr. Abbey is noted for his geniality and his devotion to outdoor athletics, particularly cricket, at which he excels. He and his friend Sargent, another noted American artist also commissioned by the library committee, interchange visits and cycle in company about the beautiful country adjacent to their English homes.

The paintings which Mr. Abbey has brought with him to this country will be on exhibition for a short time in New York before being taken to Boston to be set up as mural panels in the public library.

THURMAN L. ELTON.

TALK OF THE DAY.

The horse meat butcher shops of Vienna, of which there are no fewer than 135, present a clean and attractive appearance and are in no way distinguishable from the shops where the usual kinds of meat are sold save by the sign announcing their specialty. Restaurant keepers who serve horse meat must designate this fact in a special column on the bill of fare offered to patrons. The first section of the Damascus-Mecca railway has been formally inaugurated with religious ceremonial, augmented with religious ceremonial, calculated to appeal to the Moslem sentiment, by which the funds have been obtained. There were sacrifices of numerous oxen, of which the flesh was afterward distributed to the poor. Fire losses in England amount to 62½ per cent of all premiums paid. A story is told of Sir John Tenniel, the famous cartoonist. He was asked why he had never married. "Well," he replied, "if I had married a girl she would always have wanted to be going about all over the place, and that would not have suited me, while, on the other hand, if I had married an elderly lady she would have worn a shawl, and that I could not have stood."

THE COMING OF SANTA CLAUS

By JOE LINCOLN

[Copyright, 1901, by Joe Lincoln]

Hark! From the street
A rhythmic beat,
The hurrying tread of scurrying feet!
A swift advance—
A rush—a glance
At antlered heads and hoofs that prance;
A loaded sleigh,
Fur bobbed and gay,
A jump old driver, blithe and gray;
A flight—a drop—
A sudden stop—
A shadow at the chimney top;
A wait of ten
Short seconds—then,
A leap, a shout, they're off again!
Fleet shapes that soar—
A whiz—'tis o'er,
And Santa's come and gone once more.

MAGNIFICENT MEMORIAL TO THE LATE QUEEN VICTORIA.

EVER since the death of England's queen the late sovereign's subjects have been agitating the erecting of a memorial that shall be adequate to her greatness as a ruler and her nobility as a woman, wife and mother. There are those, who demur at ascribing to Victoria all the greatness of that reign, but there are many more who see in her the concrete embodiment of all the grand and remarkable happenings while she sat on the throne. That a memorial should be raised to her and her times has been long looked upon as settled, the only difficulty being to find something that should express the popular appreciation. At last, however, there seems to be a consensus of opinion that the worthy memorial has been discovered in the plans submitted by a British architect, Ashton Webb, A. R. A., which are now on exhibition in the banquet hall of St. James' palace, London. Five sets of drawings were prepared by the competing architects, and as the set particularized has received not only their approval, but that of his majesty, King Edward, the matter may be looked upon as settled, the only desideratum at present being the funds for the forthcoming memorial.

The competing architects were instructed to observe as the central feature of the memorial the great statuary group designed by Thomas Brock, R. A., a sculptor of established fame, who furnished the designs for England's recent coinage and whose initials are already stamped upon the latest pennies of the realm. He is now at work upon a heroic figure of the queen to adorn the monument, which is to be surrounded by a beautiful conception of Victory.

The architects were directed not only to supply an adequate architectural setting for the Victorian group, but also to take into consideration a public plaza, drives and processional avenues leading up to and forming a magnificent approach to Buckingham palace, the official town house of King Edward. The artist-architects had very difficult conditions to adapt in this scheme for adorning the palace as well as furnishing a frame for the sculptor's creation, for Buckingham, as is well known to all Britisners, is one of the ugliest palaces in the world. But the existing entrances to the hideous old pile will be greatly altered, and, though the conservative English speak of such an innovation with bated breath, the entire front of the palace may be remodelled to conform so far as possible to its new environment. If the plan submitted by Mr. Webb is carried out in its entirety, this will be done, and the whole length of the present mall also will be remodelled.

The designs of the architects from Ireland and Scotland—Sir Thomas Drew and Dr. Rowland Anderson—had many creditable features, the latter flanking his semicircular curves around the statuary group with small gardens within low parapets, garnished with statuary representing all the sovereigns of England and Scotland from remote times to the present, while an arched gateway had surmounting it a colossal equestrian statue of the Duke of Wellington. Sir Thomas Drew's scheme calls for the elimination of the present architectural weakness of the palace by composing a new front entirely in decorated renaissance, besides throwing forward the wings and grand central entrance. Pedestals bound together by ornamental railings, each pedestal carrying a statue of some great personage, enclosed the whole design. In fact, there is great similarity in the different designs submitted, and it is probable that, while the Webb plans will be accepted in the main, all the good points of the others will be incorporated.

All the designs, in accordance with stipulations, place the statue group in the center of a semicircular plaza surrounded exteriorly by a curving colonnade with two gateways, one to the north and the other to the south. In addition to the main entrance facing the court of honor or the so called processional highway. The old railings at present surrounding the palace courtyard are to be replaced by a colonnade of masonry and on either hand are to be fountains within borders, which will also hold flowers and statuary. The processional road will cover the way at present known as the mall and is to be a grand boulevard, with statuary and balustrading on either side. Providing the stock of British worthies, defunct and existent, does not suffice for the numerous statues projected, there are to be emblematic representations of the British colonies, such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, etc., space for India and Africa being left at the foot of Waterloo place. The new roadway will encroach a little upon one side of St. James' park and run along or near the lake therein.

As at present existing the immediate environment of Buckingham palace is not so attractive as it might be, and the proposition to embellish it in the manner narrated is hailed with delight by all who take pride in old England's historic monuments and parks. While the palace itself cost a large sum of money, contributed by British taxpayers of a former generation, it presents, as already mentioned, one of the least satisfactory structures ever erected by English royalty. It is totally devoid of style and is a typical architectural monstrosity of the period in which it was erected, about seventy years ago. It has not even the flavor of antiquity to recommend it and was built by one of the least popular of the famous Georges, he who by ingenious sarcasm was called the "first gentleman of Europe."

Within the ample gardens at present attached to the palace John Sheffield, duke of Buckingham, built a mansion suited to his needs in 1703, and this was the original "palace" which has since become so conspicuous, if not famous. It came into the possession of the redoubtable George III., that crazy king of unsavory memory, about 1761. He presented it to his consort, Queen Charlotte, the very year our Declaration of Independence was declared. When it passed into the hands of George IV., he pulled it down and laid on its site the foundations for the existing edifice, which, completed when he died, was finished the year that Queen Victoria came to the throne, in 1837. The "maiden queen" installed herself there in July of that year, and there she and the prince consort lived a life of peaceful domesticity. The death of Prince Albert rendered the old palace so repugnant to his relict that she could not bear to live there, and it has ever since been in a sense abandoned to solitude. There are so many more attractive places at the command of British royalty, at Sandringham, Balmoral, Isle of Wight, etc., that relatively little time is passed in gloomy old Buckingham.

And yet, considering its contiguity to smoky, foggy old London and its nasty streets, Buckingham has a beauty of its own in its lovely gardens, which extend on all sides. Like many another palace in the possession of royalty, Buckingham gives no hint exteriorly of the precious treasures it contains. Taking advantage of France's necessities when hard pressed by financial difficulties, the "first gentleman," who was something of a connoisseur, picked up beautiful bronzes and furniture of the times of Louis Quatorze and Quinze and precious porcelains of Sevres, some of the pieces costing at that time only 5,000 francs being now worth at least 5,000,000. Then there are costly tapestries from the Lyons looms, Italian furniture incriminated with gems and countless other treasures, of which, by the way, the common people of England never gain a glimpse.

CHANNING A. BARTOW.

HIS OLD PAINTS.

M. Meissonier, who was one of the most gifted of painters, gave one of his little granddaughters a white fan for a birthday present and offered to paint a little picture upon it. The ten-year-old maiden was highly indignant. "I just guess you won't do any such thing, grandpa!" she exclaimed. "I don't want my nice fan dirtied up with your old paints!" "Thus," said the great artist, "the child scorned what the empress would have prized. Which is right, I wonder, the child or the empress? Most persons would say the empress. I presume though I am not sure that the little one was not the better judge."

THE EARLY BIRD.

A Tiverton (England) schoolmaster has concluded that it is not safe to teach proverbs to very young children. "Now, boys, always remember," said he one day, "that it is the early bird that catches the worm."

Next morning a small boy toed the line, with tear stained cheeks. "What's the matter, Tommy?" asked the master. "Please, sir, you said it was the early bird that catches the worm."

"Yes."

"Well, my father's thrashed me."

"What for, my boy?"

"Cos, sir, I let our canary out early this morning, and it's never come back with the worm."

The wasp and the fly are irreconcilable enemies. The presence of a wasp's nest is a guarantee to the whole neighborhood of the absence of flies.

One million miles is the "length" of an American locomotive's life.

Only four in 1,000 British people go into hospitals in the course of a year.

twelve out of 1,000 French people and fifteen per 1,000 Spaniards are admitted to hospitals in a year.

ELBERT O. WOODSON.

THE TROUBLE BETWEEN CHILE AND ARGENTINA.

It might as well be one thing as another, for the South American republics seem nearly always to be on the verge of war and only happy when they have one another by the ears. Just now it is a question of boundary line between Chile and the Argentine Republic. On a war footing Chile has a slightly larger army than Argentina, or 98,250, which is about 10,000 more than her



PRESIDENT HIESCO OF CHILE.

neighbor, but the latter can show a reserve or national guard of about 400,000 men.

Before active operations were threatened and the purchase of new ships began their respective naval status was as follows:

Argentina.—One first class battleship, 21 cruisers and gunboats, 4 destroyers, 27 torpedo boats, 20 transports and dispatch boats, 65 heavy guns, 574 secondary and machine guns.

Chile.—Three first class battleships, 10 cruisers and gunboats, 6 destroyers, 24 torpedo boats, 20 transports and dispatch boats, 6 miscellaneous vessels, 35 heavy guns, 540 secondary and machine guns.

To this equipment add whatever has been acquired within the past few weeks, and the naval strength of the two countries will be accurately shown.

At a glance the two republics are not evenly balanced as to area, population and natural resources, but their armies, though there is some difference as to numbers, are about as well matched as they could be. The Argentine Republic, for instance, has an area, including her portion of Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego, of about 1,212,000 square miles as against Chile's 231,750. As to population, Argentina has about 4,500,000 opposed to Chile's 2,500,000.

It is perhaps fortunate that a vast and rugged mountain range separates the enraged belligerents and that, whatever mode of warfare is adopted, whether naval or land, it will be rather difficult for them to get at each other. Chile, as is well known, has long borne the reputation of being fiery and insolent to all her neighbors. We need go no further than ten years back to find the "South American Yankees," as the Chileans are called, getting ready to fight Uncle Sam as the outcome of the Baltimore affair, when several of our sailors were killed in a riot.

Going back to the time when the American colonies of Spain were striving to free themselves, we find that after Argentina had driven out the Spaniards and established her independence she sent a small army to assist Chile,

who, as it was, only acquired her freedom in 1818. With her back up against the Andean mountain range and the ocean to the west of her, Chile was compelled to expand north and south. So she fought Peru and Bolivia from 1879 to 1883, even though Chile and Peru had together striven against Spain from 1808 to 1809. With her head turned by the successes of the Chile-Peruvian war, it is not strange that Chile should have considered herself cock of the walk and in due time have offered insult to peaceful Uncle Sam himself.

The present complication grew out of the treaty of 1881, by which Chile and Argentina agreed to consider the crest of the Andes as the dividing line between their respective governments.

All east of the crest, including the greater part of Patagonia and a portion of Tierra del Fuego, was granted to Argentina, while Chile took all between the Andean crest and the Pacific ocean. That agreement was provisionally entered into twenty years ago, but there have been frequent bickerings since, as the trouble is somewhat similar to that existing in the case of the Alaskan boundary. It is a question of watershed merely and involves the possession of about a thousand square miles only of uninhabited lands.

ELBERT O. WOODSON.

PRESIDENT ROCA OF THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC.



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