THE CROWN OF THORNS.

With Which the Czar of Russia was Scoretly Invested Recently,

Details of the Great Moscow Ceremony of Anti-Nihilist Days.

The Czar no Czar at all Until he has Been Crowned

Formation of the Procession and the Words Spoken at the Crowning.

N. Y. Times.

The ceremony of the coronation of the czars of Russia may in some respects be called the greatest ceremony in the world. It is impossible to conceive of anything that surpasses it in grandeur, splendor and richness. Nor is its political importance to be overlooked. The czar is utterly powerless as a monarch previous to being crowned; he cannot proclaim war or sign a treaty of peace, nor can he confer decorations of a higher order than the vladimir, nor can he enter the throne room. He is not styled by his sixteen titles, but is simply addressed as Alexander, son of Alexander, and, by courtesy only, emperor of all the Russias. Any document he might his seal to would be disregarded if not countersigned by two of the ministers of state. He is in every respect considered a minor or heir presumptive to the empire, in which he has no authority, and which is governed by a regency of ministers and hereditary noblemen. It can, therefore, be easily understood that the czars have always hastened their coronation, not wishing to be under tutelage, and in the majority of cases the coronation has occurred within two months of the death of the czar's predecessor. Where there has been a dispute about the throne, or even where the throne has been usurped, as in the case of Catherine the Great, the coronation has taken place immediately. Catherine left St. Petersburg secretly on the very day of the death of Peter, and hastened to Moscow, where she was crowned within a week. The Russians do not believe the Czar to be "the most powerful by the grace of God" until he has been anointed at Moscow. Peter III. was buried in the common burial ground of the little Church of St. Athanasius, instead of being laid among the Czars inside the the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, in the St. Petersburg citadel, because, although he was emperor, he had not been crowned.

Long before the day fixed for the coronation official invitations are sent to all friendly imperial and royal courts, and to presidents of republics, also to the diplomatic body. Commands, however, and not invitations, are sent to all members of the imperial family, the ministers, clergy, the nobles, commanding officers, governors of districts, the head of all the guilds, the judges, and other notables. At Moscow, from this immemorial, have been crowned the czars. The ceremony has been performed in the church of the Holy Assumption, within the Kremlin walls. Although some of the late emperors have wished their coronation to take place in St. Petersburg, the advisors of the crown, and especially the clergy, have declared that such a coronation would be illegal. For many days previous to this ceremony Moscow is in holiday attire and by an old law every house in Moscow must have received three coats of white paint. Such a law is now unnecessary, as the inhabitants not only willingly paint their house, but compete with each other in decorating them externally. Invited monarchs, princes, and diplomats are the guests of the Kremlin palace, but any Russian nobleman coming for the occasion goes straight to the house of a Moscow noble of his own rank, who, though not acquainted with him, is bound to give him accomodation, while other officials go as the guests of the city of Moscow, to the various hotels and other establishments, where their expenses are paid by the municipality.

The Kremlin is not one building, but an enormous octagon plat of land, surrounded by high walls and fortress, containing four crown palaces, the cathedrals of the Assumption, the Archangel, and the Annunciation; the governor's palace, the headquarters of the Guards regiment, and a number of monasteries and nunneries. All the walls are snow white, the fortresses emerald green, the principal entrances rose color, and the roofs of the cathedrals gilded, the whole forming a beautiful combination, the effect of which is very striking. With the exception of the cathedrals and their pretty bell towers, which are built in a cluster, there are large spaces between the other buildings, and with soldiers marching, carriages driving, priests, nuns and others walking about, the Kremlin has the appearance of a beautiful city. The procession does not form in the Kremlin, but at the cavalry barracks, four miles distant, to the north of the city. Here sixty heralds, mounted on cream-colored horses, form twenty abreast, and, commanded by the chief master of ceremonies, blow a salvo, and the officer commanding the cavalry appears with his staff and demands what they require of him, to which the master of ceremonies replies: "The czar commands thee follow me." The gates are then opened, and the regiment, which has been expecting the summons, marches out and follows the heralds. The next place visited is the university, where the same thing takes place; then the cathedral of Kazan, where all the clergy are congregated; then the law courts, where the judges join the procession; then the headquarters of the nobles; then the staff officers; then the various professions; then the governors; then the deputations from every quarter of the empire; then the trade guilds, and in every case the heralds blow the salvo. The chief of the clergy, of the nobles, of the guilds, or of any other body appears, as if he was surprised, and asks what is wanted of him, whereupon the master of ceremonies replies: "The czar commands thee follow me." Thus the procession goes on swelling. Arriving at the principal gates of the Kremlin and finding them closed, the heralds blow their trumpets, the commander of the garrison appears and asks what they want; the crowd replies: "The czar." "What for?" says the officer. "To crown him the most powerful of powerful!" replies the crowd, and the gates are then opened.

Here the procession is headed by the Metropolitans of Moscow, Kazan, Novgorod, and Kieff, and they proceed to the front of the palace, where deputations from every part of the empire, consisting of Russians, Mongolians, Roumanians, Calmucks, Afghans, Kirghees, Esquimaux, Turcomans, Bulgarians, Chinese, Tartars, Armenians, Mingrelians, Laplanders, Persians, Finns, Circassians, Baskhirs, Boukarras, Georgians, Coutzovlaks and Poles, all in their national costumes, leave the procession, and with the bishops advance to below the imperial balcony and call upon the czar to come forward. The emperor then appears at the entrance of the palace in the uniform of a colonel of the imperial guards, with the empress dressed as a Russian peasant on his arm, and followed by their suites, upon which the deputation kneels. He then asks of them what they require of him, and the Metropolitan of Moscow replies that they have been sent from every part of his majesty's dominions to see the crown put upon his head, so that they can assure those who sent them that the czar is verily the Lord's anointed, that they may obey none other than him. From here they all proceed to the Cathredal of the Holy Assumption, the ground being covered with bay leaves, where high mass is read. The emperor and empress occupy seats on the right hand side, near the bishops, where they remain until the second lesson, when they are conducted by the Metropolitans to the center of the church, where stands a large canopy of scarlet velvet embroidered in gold and surmounted by the Russian double-headed eagle. On a platform under this canopy is the famous historical throne of the Czar Vladimir Monomaque, beside which is an ordinary throne for the empress, and on a table facing the emperor's throne are a mantle of ermine and the ancient crown and sceptre of Constantinus Monomachus. As soon as he mounts the platform all the nobles surround him, and drawing their swords place them at his feet. The metropolitan now asks the emperor if he is a true believer, to which he replies by reading aloud the Apostles' creed, after which the Bishop of Kazan says: "If there be any of you here present knowing any impediment for which Alexander Alexandrovich (or as the case may be) should not be crowned emperor of all the Russias, Grand Duke of Waldemar, Grand Duke of Moscow, Lord and Great Duke of Novgorod, King of Kazan and Astrachan, commander of all Siberia, lord of Plesk, Smolensk, Iver, Krym, Novorossick and Armenia, and emperor of Finland and its dependencies, let him come forward now, in the name of the Holy Trinity, and show what the impediment is." This he repeats three times, and upon no answer being made he puts his hands upon the czar's head, upon which the latter kneels, and while in this position the metropolitan of Moscow takes the mantle of ermine with which he robes him, saying, "Cover and protect thy people as this robe covers and protects thee," the emperor replying, "I will, I will, I will," each time kissing the prelate's hand. Then the Metropolitan of Novgorod places the sceptre in his hand, and the Metropolitan of Kieff puts the crown upon his head. The empress then kneels beside the emperor, who holds the crown above her head without placing it upon the head, and they both remain in prayer for a few minutes.

Suddenly the heralds sound, guns are fired, the czar and czarina rise, and everybody present kneels to them and shouts, "Long live the czar." The nobles approach and swear allegiance, upon which each receives his sword back from the imperial hands. The mass continues, and after the emperor has been conducted to the altar of solid silver, where he partakes of the holy communion, the golden gates of the iconostasion are closed, and and he remains in the sanctuary, where the Metropolitan of Moscow anounts his head, temples, eyelids, lips, ears, nostrils, breast, and hands, saying, "Behold the seal of the Holy Ghost; may it keep thee ever holy." The gates of the iconostasion are reopened, and upon the czar appearing at the entrance, the people hail him, saying, "Thou art verily the Lord's anointed." The emperor now joins the czarina, who has been waiting for her lord at the entrance to the sanctuary, and they leave the cathedral arm in arm, escorted by a guard of all the nobles with drawn swords. They go first to the Cathedral of the Archangel, then to the cathedral of the Annunciation, where they remain in prayer for a few minutes, and on emerging from there they enter a gilded chariot drawn by twelve white horses. Other gilded chariots contain the members of the imperial family, and gala carriages belonging to the imperial stables are filled with foreign princes, prelates, ministers and the diplomatic corps. The procession then forms, as it did on approaching the Kremlin, and goes through the streets of Koscow, which are lined with troops. The imperial carriage, instead of being escorted by the nobles or by troops, is, according to an old custom, guarded by 100 maidens belonging to the best Russian families, who hold large, fragrant bouquets instead of swords. Immediately on his return to the palace the czar signs decrees, confirming those already in existence, which had become invalid by the coronation, and then confers a large number of decorations on those of the officials who took prominent parts in the ceremony.

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A HORRIBLE DRINK.

An Initiation Ordeal Among the Independent Rangers.

New York Times.

The Independent Order of Rangers is the title borne by a beneficiary organization—an offshot or split from the Ancient Order of Foresters—confined as yet to the state of New York and numbering about 45,000 members. The practical side of it, or reason for its existence, is that it is a sort of life insurance, the death of a member entitling the widow or other surviving heirs to the sum of $1,000. Beyond this, individual lodges—or "camps," as they are technically termed—have sick benefit systems of their own. Invalids, persons over fifty years of age, and men addicted to habits likely to shorten life, are not admitted as rangers, and all candidates for membership are required to pass a medical examination as rigid as is demanded by any life insurance company. Beyond this general requirement a common interest in the fund created for mutual insurance and subordination to a state organization controlled by a board of directors, there is a wide latitude of independence allowed to the individual camps in matters of offices, local laws and ritual. The leading camp at the present time is understood to be "Camp Theatrical, No. 10," of this city, which some 200 members, among whom are, as might be inferred from its name, a large proportion of actors, scenic artists, and stage machinists—persons skilled in the art of producing novel and startling realistic unreal effects. On the third Sunday of every month this camp meets in the Lawrence building, corner of Second avenue and First street. Some months ago this particular camp determined to have a new ritual, worthy of its name and membership, one which would give the widest possible scope to the inventive ingenuity and histrionic talent of its members, and Chief Ranger Sullivan appointed a committee to prepare such a "work.' The chairman of the committee of construction was Grand Marshal Henry H. Hadley, the moderationist, who is also one of the Rangers' state directors. With him in the task were associated Capt. William Fowler, of the "Thirteen" club, and a score of secret societies; John F. Collins, master of Howard lodge, F. and A. M; Tom Pixton, who wrote most of the Memphian rite; Dr. Walter M. Fleming, illustrious grand potentate of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine; Capt. Joe Aiken and Daniel Sickels, of the Masonic Guild, all high Masons and noted ritualists, each of whom belongs to at least a dozen different orders. The result of their labors is said by the initiated to be something astounding, overwhelming, far beyound the wildest endeavors of the Sons of Malta, Egyptian Monks, or the famous clan of Guinea Witches. It includes not only masks, costumes, coffins, real corpses, gallows tree, headsman's block, elaborate mechanical tricks, and scenic effects of the most startling character, but a great deal of theatrical work, in ornate and highflown language for the chief ranger, vice-chief ranger, grand marshal, heralds, warders, guides, and cohorts. After the committee had planned fully how the candidates should be obligated, killed, buried, and resurrected, and how by the sharpest tests his secrecy, fortitude, fidelity and staying powers generally should be tried, Capt. Fowler exclaimed: "There, there, boys, let's stop. If a candidate lives to get thus far consider him in, for to put him through more would kill him." "Yes, or leave him a pensioner on the order for life," said Sickles, with a laugh. "Well, at any rate, he would be pretty dry," suggested Pixton, and upon that hint the committee called off from labor to refreshment for a brief time. The exercises in which they then indulged suggested to Moderationist Hadley the happy thought of laying out for the candidate one more agonizing ordeal in the shape of a brief temperance lecture, with trimmings. It was accepted, and, with the rest of the ritual, put in practice. Up to the last meeting of "Camp Theatrical" it was worked regularly to the infinite dismay of the candidate and amusement of his tormentors, but they do not intend to play it on anybody any more. Their last experience gave them such a set-back that they promptly excised it from the ritual. This is the way the committee had it fixed up.

After the weary candidate had gone through all the other ordeals, the grand marshal—an awful being attired in flowing robes of fiery red, with maroon whiskers, turban, battle-axe, dirk and sword—acting as his conductor, would say to him:

"My brother, I congratulate you upon having passed the tests of endurance, secrecy, bravery, the inspection of the surgeon, and that you have given satisfactory evidences of confidence, fortitude, and heroism, and that now the laurel crown of our order rests upon your brow. Before being instructed, however, in the grips and passwords, let us turn aside for refreshments."

Here the grand marshal would take from behind an altar and hand to the candidate a glass filled apparently with port wine, but really with a horrible and fiendish compound of gall, bitter aloes, brine, and other abominable things, one teaspoonful of which would make the toughest candidate shiver, turn pale, and swear that he would rather die than take any more of it. The refusal would be reported to the chief ranger, who would appear to taste the contents of the glass, report the baverage correct, and order imperatively that the candidate must drink whether he would or not. Often force would have to be employed to get another drop into the victim's mouth, but when that was accomplished a smile of gratification would play upon his face, and without any more difficulty he would empty the glass, which was really now one filled with good port wine, deftly substituted for the other containing the awful mixture. Then the grand marshal would get in his little moral work, exclaiming:

"Ah! you appear to relish it. And yet the adder's tooth in this last is sharper than in the first. The first you could easily resist because it was offensive, but this, with subtle power to charm, is often man's strongest foe."

That all worked very well in practice up to a recent meeting, but an incident occurring then knocked the moral lesson higher than Gilderoy's kite. A scene-painter, familiarly known among his friends as "Windy" Murray, was being initiated. The success with which he had passed through all the preceding ordeals had given him an ill-advised confidence, and when the seductive looking beverage was offered him, he, being very tired, hot and thirsty, and eagerly seized the glass and with one greedy gulp swallowed its contents. Not until they were in his stomach did the flavor reach his palate. Then he shuddered, paled, and astonishment, horror, disgust and indignation were vividly depicted in his countenance, while he gasped, struggled and tore his laural crown to shreds, clutching at his hair. The grand marshal stood before him speechless with amazement and completely non-plussed, while a howl of laughter from the brethren—sounding unearthly as it came from beneath their masks—fairly shook the building.

But the camp physician—a doctor of high standing, under whose supervision the treacherous mixture had been prepared—did not laugh. Springing to his feet, he shouted to the senior Herald: "Run to my office for a stomach-pump as hard as you can go. The man has swallowed enough to kill a horse." Merriment instantly gave place to panic. Poor Murray's fright may be imagined. He could hardly breathe, but could hear, and gave himself up for lost. Masks and robes were instantly thrown off, fooling abandoned, the camp-fire put out, and all busied themselves doing what they could to relieve the sufferer. Before the man sent for the stomach pump could return with it a strong emetic was procured and administered with good results. An hour later Murray was sent home in a carriage in a wretched plight, and the doctor had to remain with him all night. He has sufficiently recovered to be up and about, but unless his appreciation of the Independent Order of Rangers is greatly increased from what it was at last accounts it is hardly probable that he will ever go back to get the passwords, grips and signs, which there was no opportunity to give him that night.

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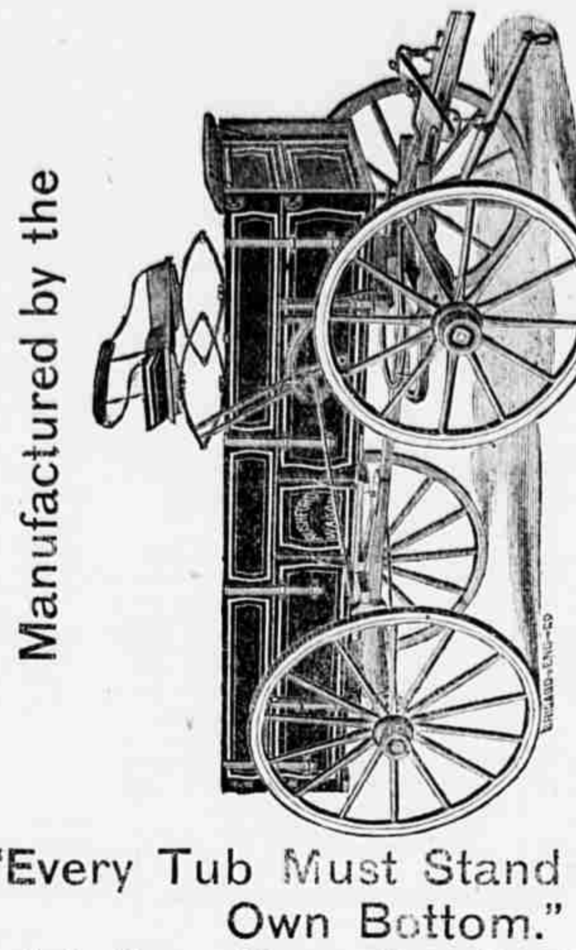

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