

### NOTED NOVELIST'S STORY OF THE BALL

Meredith Nicholson's Account of the Crowning of the Queen, as Seen at One of the Early Coronations.

By MEREDITH NICHOLSON. Condensed description of the coronation ball in one of his first novels, "The Main Chance," in which Omaha is designated as "Clarkson" and the Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben renamed "The Knights of Midas."

The Knights of Midas ball was not, it should be said, a cheap affair. Raridan and Saxton had taken a balcony box for the ball and they asked Evelyn's guests to share it with them.

When the two young women came in, Raridan's spirits brightened. Evelyn was, Miss Marshall declared, "perfectly adorable" in her gown; but the young men did not see her. She was to go later with her father.

They were early at the hall, whose bareness had been relieved by a gay show of hunting and flags.

"I will now give you a succinct running account of the first families of this community as they assemble," Raridan announced, when they had settled in their chairs. There were no seats on the main floor, as the ceremonial part of the entertainment was brief, and the greater number of the spectators stood until it was over. An aisle was kept down the middle of the hall and on each side the crowd gossiped, while a band high above played popular airs.

All Eyes to the Front. The other boxes and the gallery had filled, and the main floor was crowded, save where the broad aisle had been maintained down the center from the front door to the stage.

A buzz of talk floated over the hall. The band was silent while its leader peered down upon the floor waiting his signal. He turned suddenly and the trumpets broke forth into the notes of a dignified march. All eyes turned to the front of the hall, where the knights, in their robes, preceded by the grand senechal, bearing his staff of office, were emerging slowly from the outer door into the aisle.

When the stage was reached, the procession formed in long lines, facing inward on the steps, making a path through which the governors, who were distinguished by scarlet robes, came attending the person of the king. "All hail the king!" A crowd of knights in evening dress, who were honorary members of the organization and had no parts in costume, sent up the shout.

"Hail to Midas." "Isn't he noble and grand?" shouted Raridan in Miss Marshall's ear. A murmur ran through the hall as Wheaton was recognized; his name was passed to those who did not know him, and everybody applauded. He was really imposing in the robes of his kingship. He walked with a fitting deliberation among his escort. He was conscious of the lights, the applause, the music, and of the fact that he was the center of it all. The cheers were subsiding as the party neared the throne.

Is the Noble King Frightened? "I'll wager he's badly frightened," said Raridan to Saxton. "Don't you think it," declared Saxton. "He looks as cool as a cucumber." "Oh, he's cool enough," grumbled Raridan.

"You see what easy will do for a man," remarked Saxton to Miss Marshall. "Mr. Raridan's simple nervousness because he isn't there himself. But what's this?"

The king had reached his throne and faced the audience. All the knights bowed low; the king returned the salutation while the audience cheered.

"It's like a comic opera," said Miss Marshall. The supreme knight advanced and handed Wheaton the scepter and there was renewed applause and cheering.

"Only funnier," said Raridan. "Yell, Saxton, yell!" He rose to his feet and led his end of the house in cheering. "It makes me think of old times at foot ball," he declared, sinking back into his chair with an air of exhaustion, and wiping his face.

The king had seated himself, and expectancy again possessed the hall. The band struck up another air, and

### Gendarms, or Manhandlers, at the Den



H. Forbes, Harry Johnston, W. O. Larson, E. L. Potter.

### Former Ak-Sar-Ben Kings and Queens

E. M. Bartlett	1895	Meliora Woolworth (Mrs. E. M. Fairfield)
Casper E. Yost	1896	May Dundy (Mrs. E. W. Lee, New York)
Edward P. Peck	1897	Gertrude Kountze (Mrs. J. T. Stewart, 2d)
R. S. Wilcox	1898	Grace Allen (Mrs. H. T. Clarke, jr.)
W. D. McHugh	1899	Ethel Morse
F. A. Nash	1900	Mildred Lomax
H. J. Penfold	1901	Edith Smith (Mrs. C. R. Day, Washington)
T. A. Fry	1902	Ella Cotton (Mrs. Jerome Magee)
Fred Metz	1903	Elizabeth Brady (Mrs. T. L. Davis)
Charles H. Pickens	1904	Ada Kirkendall (Mrs. Glen Wheaton)
Gurdon W. Wattles	1905	Mary Lee McShane (Mrs. Willard Hosford)
Gould Dietz	1906	Margaret Wood (Mrs. W. H. Crammer, Denver)
V. B. Caldwell	1907	Natalie Merriam (Mrs. Barton Millard)
Will L. Yetter	1908	Jean Cudahy (Mrs. Frank Wilhelm, Chicago)
Arthur C. Smith	1909	Brownie Bess Baum (Mrs. John Rouse, Baltimore)
E. Buckingham	1910	Frances Nash
Joseph Barber	1911	Elizabeth Davis
Thomas C. Byrne	1912	Elizabeth Pickens (Mrs. Kenneth Paterson)
C. E. Black	1913	Elizabeth Congdon (Mrs. R. Forgan, Chicago)
Charles D. Beaton	1914	Frances Hochstetler (Mrs. Fred Daugherty)
Ward M. Burgess	1915	Marion Howe
John L. Webster	1916	Mary Megeath

a line of girls in filmy, trailing gowns was filing in.

"There are the foolish virgins who didn't fill their lamps," said Raridan; "that's why they have brought bouquets."

"But they ought to have got their gowns at the same place," said Miss Marshall, who was abetting Raridan in his comments. Miss Warren and Saxton, on the other side of her, were taking it all more seriously.

"It's really very pretty and impressive," Miss Warren declared, "and not at all silly as I feared it might be."

"Well, that is very pretty," replied Saxton.

### DANCES BEFORE THE HIGH MUCK AT THE DEN.



H. E. KREBBS.

The queen, following her ladies in waiting, had appeared at the door. There was a pause, a murmur, and then a great burst of applause as those who were in the secret identified the queen, and those who were not learned it as Evelyn's name passed from lip to lip. Whatever there was of absurdity in the scene was dispelled by Evelyn's loveliness and dignity. Her white gown intensified her fairness, and her long court train added an illusion of height. She carried her head high, with a serene air that was habitual. The charm that set her apart from other girls was in no wise lost in the mock splendor of this ceremony.

"She's as lovely as a bride," murmured Belle Marshall, so low that only Raridan heard her. Something caught in his throat and he looked steadily down upon the approaching queen and said nothing. The supreme knight descended to escort the queen to the dais. The king came down to meet her and led her to a place beside him, where they turned and faced the applauding crowd.

Crowning is the Crowning Feature. The grand chamberlain now stepped forward and read the proclamation of the Knights of Midas, announcing that the king had reached their city, and urging upon all subjects the duty of showing strict obedience. He read a formula to which Evelyn and Wheaton made responses. A page stood beside the queen holding a crown, which glittered with false brilliants upon a richly embroidered pillow, and when the king knelt before her, she placed it upon his head. At this there was more cheering and haddclapping. Saxton glanced toward Raridan as he beat his own hands together, expecting one of Raridan's gibes at the chamberlain's bombast; but there was a fierce light in Raridan's eyes that Saxton had never seen there before. He was staring before him at Evelyn Porter, as she now sat beside Wheaton on the dais; his face was white and his lips were

set. Saxton was struck with sorrow for him.

There was a stir throughout the hall. The king and queen were descending; the floor manager was already manifesting his authority.

"Let's stay here until the grand march is over," said Raridan. He had partly regained his spirits, and was again pointing out people of interest on the floor below.

"Now, wasn't it magnificent?" he demanded. "Wasn't Evelyn lovely?" exclaimed the girls in a breath.

"We didn't need this circus to prove it, did we?" asked Raridan cynically. "Aren't there any more exercises—is it all over?" cried Miss Marshall.

"Bless us, no!" replied Raridan. The evolutions of the grand march were now in progress and they stood watching it.

Marches Sometimes Awkward. "They didn't get enough rehearsals for this," said Raridan. "Look at that mix up!" One of the knights had tripped and stumbled over the skirt of his robe. "They ought to head him for that."

"Mr. Raridan's terribly severe," said Saxton. The king and queen, leading the march, were passing under the box.

"The king really looks scared," remarked Miss Warren. "Yes, he's rather conscious of his clothes," said Raridan. "His train rattles him." Evelyn glanced up at them and laughed and nodded.

Before the march broke up into dancing they went down from the gallery. On the floor the older people were resolving themselves into lay figures against the wall. They found Mr. Porter leaning against one of the rude supports of the gallery, wondering whether he might now escape to the retirement of the cloak-room to get his hat and cigar. The young people burst upon him with congratulations.

"You must be dying of pride," exclaimed Miss Marshall. "Evelyn never looked better," de-

clared Miss Warren. "It was splendid!" "We are proud to know you, sir," said Raridan, shaking hands. "I surely came to Clarkson in the right year," said Saxton.

### Municipal Tunnel Driven Through Twin Peaks

The Twin Peaks tunnel near San Francisco, the longest municipal tunnel in the world, as well as the longest to be used exclusively for street car traffic, has been bored through. In the forenoon the two gangs—

close to the end of three years' labor and each a mile from daylight—could hear each other's drills. When the morning shift went to work only ten feet of rock separated the east and west sides.

At 1:30 p. m., the shots fired by the east side crew brought the cool ocean breeze from the west into the heated air of the east side.

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every man in the big bore was jubilant as the crucial hour in the \$4,000,000 job arrived.

"My father acted like a kid," remarked young Bob Muir, himself one of the big bosses on the big job.

Sam Campbell, one of the drillers, was first to crawl through the narrow opening, which will soon be widened big enough for two municipal trolley cars. Everyone on the job wanted to go through—and most of them did.

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