

ROYAL FAMILY HOME FROM AFRICA

On May 12th, King George VI, his Queen and the Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret come home after 100 days spent in South Africa. Ten years ago - on the same date - Albert Duke of York was crowned King George VI. He came to the throne when the traditional idea of monarchy was changing. As Vanguard brings him back to Portsmouth, the people wait to salute him.

As Nelson's "Victory" dresses the ship according to centuries-old custom, the Royal Family receives Portsmouth's civic welcome at the Guildhall. It was fitting that they should return to this city from which they sailed 3 months ago at what was regarded in informed circles as a vital period in the history of South Africa and the Commonwealth. This significance has not been lost to the British people - or to a watching world. In South Africa - they travelled 11,000 miles - they visited more than 50 places - they shook hands (estimates say) with no fewer than 25,000 people. And now - they are home.

From Portsmouth - to London. At Waterloo, waiting to welcome them back to the capital, was the Premier, Cabinet Ministers, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, and in the streets outside thousands of people.

Many who watched, had thronged London streets ten years ago to the day on the occasion of the Coronation. These ten years, which included a second world war, had brought the Crown and the people very close together. They began here in 1937 in Westminster Abbey, when the King and Queen accepted one of the most arduous tasks ever to fall upon two people. When Archbishop Lang performed the ancient ritual of the Coronation, for King George and Queen Elizabeth it was an act of dedication.

Here - and in the years between - the Royal Family have created a totally new conception of the modern meaning of the much word "Monarchy." In war and peace - in their public and private lives - they have personified in quiet unspectacular fashion the spirit of the British people.

The visit to South Africa, undertaken on the advice of the government of the day, is a further example of the practical value of the Crown. What it has done is to re-ferge the constitutional links between the members of the Commonwealth. The world believes that Britain can stay a great power only by remaining the hub of a great family of nations. These nations have become self-conscious and self-governing. Their chief remaining bond is their King.

So it was ten years ago. And, after the intervening years, thousands still wait, still acclaim and still feel the same affection for a hard working Royal Family. Here is the same scene again after 10 years. What country in the world could say as much?

The King and Queen and their daughters are home again. One more service has been completed. Their people welcome them back.