

THE LAST JOURNEY

From the Great Hall in the Palace of Westminster they bear George VI as the hour sounds for his last journey. In three days three hundred thousand of his people have made their pilgrimage. Now Britain buries her King and the nations come to pay their homage. On his coffin are the emblems of majesty - the crown; the cross-mounted orb, symbol of christianity over the world; and the sceptre, ensign of kingly power and justice; and with them his wife's wreath of lilies-of-the-valley and orchids.

Eragic in sombre black, the ladies of his house follow - the Queen, the Queen Mother and Princess Margaret, together in their grief. Out of Palace Yard for the last time passes George VI whom history will name The Good.

Behind the Queen's coach walk the four royal Dukes - Edinburgh, Gloucester, Windsor and Kent.

Along Whitehall representatives of foreign states, also remember those other dead who died for Britain.

Here, each year, on Horseguards Parade, the Guards honoured their sovereign on his birthday. Now they march with arms reversed in mourning. In the great pageantry of death march soldier, sailor, airman and civilian - the great and the unknown - and the waiting people mourn.

Behind the Dukes walk the Kings of Denmark, Greece and Sweden and the President of France. Elsewhere are the Kings of Norway and Iraq and the Queen of Holland. So do the living great honour one who was great among them and the world listens as history is broadcast.

Through Hyde Park and towards Marble Arch ... and along the three-and-a-half mile route ten thousand men who had taken the oath to guard the King, rest on their arms reversed, among them the Glorious Gloucesters.

Past Tyburn and along the Edgware Road, and so at length as far as Paddington, and the waiting train.

The Gentlemen-at-Arms (bodyguard to the Sovereign) mount guard. As the Queens and Princess watch, the royal coffin is brought to the train, and the King leaves London no more to return.

To royal Windsor, home of Kings for 900 years, he comes home. Through the old town and on towards the Castle the procession heads. Journey's end is near as they pass the statue of Queen Victoria, his great-grandmother.

The flag hangs low over the Castle, where the King, with his family, found happiness and rest from the many cares of state which he made his own. Now the pipes take up the lament.....

The King passes, decked as at his crowning with the panoply of state. The man we knew lies buried in our hearts. And with him ends the rule of the House of Windsor. Behind him he leaves two brothers, one of them we knew for a while as the uncrowned Edward VIII.

And so to the resting-place of Kings, the beautiful Chapel of St. George, built of Cotswold stone and Surrey oak 400 years ago.

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York wait to receive the King, and the Navy pipes the Admiral over the side.

The Queen gives place to the Queen Mother and with her sister follows behind her father's coffin.

At this moment life is stilled and there is silence in all the lands he held united in our Commonwealth; George VI passes into the keeping of the church. From Sandringham to Windsor the sad journey has run its course.

Within the Chapel the last rites draw to their end ... while without (regal in their splendour) lie mute tributes to the man so simple in his tastes.

The King is laid to rest and the majesty of death ends with a family beginning its life anew. A young Queen takes over the burden of monarchy. To the Queen Mother in this hour of sorrow goes the deep sympathy of all who honour the man now at rest in the Chapel of St. George at Windsor.