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EDITORIAL.

THE PASSING OF ALBERT, KING OF THE BELGIANS.

"Who revered his Conscience as his King."

Never has greater honour been paid to a Sovereign at his passing than the world-wide reverence offered to Albert, King of the Belgians; and indeed no homage can be too deep and sincere for the splendid King who has passed with tragic suddenness to the life beyond, leaving to his country the priceless heritage of an example which all may emulate, if few attain; to his successor on the Throne, as the "noble father of her Kings to be" the inspiration to follow in the steps of one so honoured and beloved; and, to humanity at large, which ever appreciates true greatness, the desire to live more worthily, because it has before it in the simple, heroic figure of King Albert, a shining illustration of the height of splendour which has been achieved by him "who revered his Conscience as his King," and who instantly decided, when the choice lay before him at the declaration of War by Germany on France in the fateful days of 1914 that, "because right is right, to follow right were wisdom in the scorn of consequence," and, in so doing, saved alive his own soul and that of the country which he loved so ardently, ruled so wisely, and served so devotedly, to the end.

How his heart, and that of his Queen beside him, must have been wrung with anguish, as in spite of the heroic resistance of his soldiers, town after town fell, as indeed was inevitable, into the hands of the invaders. Yet resolute he stood, and Belgium contested every inch of her soil while all the world wondered, till there re-

mained only a small strip of Belgian soil which was not in possession of the enemy. That the King and Queen never left, and at long last their faith had its vindication and reward. With the victory of the Allies a free and undivided Belgium once more directed its thoughts to the promotion of peaceful arts, and the repair of its damaged land, and in his country, where

"gallant men were all," King Albert was acclaimed its saviour and deliverer. It had seemed an amazing thing that Belgium should resist the onrush of the German invasion, a foregone conclusion that she would lose everything, yet from the awful holocaust of the world war no country emerged with greater glory, because when the supreme test came the soul of her King, strong and radiant, shone forth, dominating his kingly personality, under his leadership the Belgian nation too found its soul, and in the strength of sacrifice performed deeds of valour, and heroism otherwise impossible.

The King's Message.

The message of sympathy sent by King George to King Leopold III voiced in a few words the feelings of the British people when the sad news of the death of King Albert became known:—

"It is with the most profound sorrow that I and my people have learnt of the tragic death of your illustrious father, and I hasten to offer our heartfelt sympathy to you and the people of Belgium.

"The British Empire can never forget the heroic figure whose courage was an inspiration to the Allies

throughout the dark years of war, and will join with the Belgian people in mourning the loss of a true friend and ally. GEORGE R.I."

The proclamation of the Belgian Government to the bereaved nation, which we print in part, anticipated



ALBERT, KING OF THE BELGIANS.
Saviour and Deliverer of his Country.

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