

Major
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Sovereignty

A most meritorious service would be rendered to the Nation and the Royal Family, by any member of that family, by any Peer or Privy Counsellor, or any other person, who should bring to the recollection of the King, when in a composed state of mind, how many wise sovereigns associated their successors with themselves in the government of their kingdoms and empires.

From the consciousness which his Majesty, in consequence of advanced age, of deprivation of sight, and of a terrifying infirmity must feel, of extremely precarious health, with increasing inability to sustain the weight of government, — and no less from his Majesty's religious anxiety to promote above all things in this life the good of his People, we may reasonably hope that a measure which without a diminution of royal dignity would remedy the inconveniences, and prevent repetitions of the humiliating exposures, incident to the present state of things, would, on its being brought under his Majesty's consideration, be most joyfully adopted; in which case, that tranquillity so essential to his Majesty's mental health and to his happiness would be secured; and the safety and welfare of the State would be provided for.

In England, the suggested measure would be no novelty. Precedents abound. If many of them are of considerable antiquity, they are not on that account the less valuable; in as much as among our Anglo-Saxon forefathers, to whom we are indebted for the English Constitution, which we do not the less prize for being ancient, the practice of joint occupations of the throne was frequent; that is to say, it was co-eval with the birth and infancy of our Constitution, and made a conspicuous part of the sound policy of the founders of our State.

In those times, exclusive of the case of Athelric in the year 586, in which merely because the King was "very old when he came to the throne, his son Adelfrid governed the kingdom "in his name, without the title of King," we find no fewer than eleven precedents of thrones being occupied by united Kings.

Not here to enumerate particulars, it may however be mentioned that Offa, a distinguished, warrior, statesman and legislator, and by historians styled the Great, "made his son Egfrid partner with him in the government."

In the empire of Rome, the policy of associating a successor in the throne grew quite into a custom, and on reasons the most solid.

But to return to the practice of England — when Philip of Spain married Mary of England he was associated in the throne, with the title of King, and the public coin bore the joint images of Philip and Mary.

A material part, however, of that precedent is this —

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that, although sharing in the throne, Philip shared not in the executive power, which, on reasons of true policy, was vested in Mary alone.

The precedent, however, which is most modern, rises above all others in value. Mary, wife of Philip, retained to herself, as we have seen, the whole sovereign power; whereas Mary, wife of the Prince of Orange, when, on the abdication of her father she was called to the throne, refused to partake of its active power; wisely thinking that, in the then state of the kingdom and of Europe, it had better be placed exclusively in the hands of her husband; in whom accordingly, at her express desire, it was so vested.

Now it is to be observed, that in no one of the instances either at home or abroad to which allusion has been made, was the ground and reason for a son and successor, or other personage, having been so associated with the reigning prince so strong and so urgent as in the case now under our own consideration, for tranquillizing the public mind, and providing for the public safety.

And, for the reason which every one must feel, a close adherence to the last precedent ought to be observed.

In the arrangement suggested, there would be every thing to favour the happiness and to prolong the life of the King. Freed from the arduous labours and anxieties of government, his mind would enjoy serenity when in mental health; and at such times all the fruit of his long experience might, through the medium of his son, be rendered beneficial to his People.

As the King's physicians must be most competent, to appreciate the importance of the suggested arrangement to His Majesty's future repose and health of mind, so one of them might be selected for breaking the matter to his Majesty.

Considering the weight of the suggested measure in a medical point of view, it should seem probable that His Majesty might receive the first intimation of it from one of his physicians with more complacency than from any other person; especially if introduced after its having been offered as a mature opinion, that, on his Majesty's own future care and attention for securing his repose and preserving his mental health, more than on any skill of his medical advisers, that mental health must depend.

But, should such a course be approved of, it should seem necessary to a beneficial result, that all the physicians should hold the same opinion, touching the efficacy of the measure in question.

Should indeed the King's physicians see what is suggested as a happy discovery in aid of their anxiety and skill, and far more likely to secure the object of their labours than ought which mere medical science can furnish, then in that case all the combined feelings of commiseration, of attachment, and of duty, to their royal patient must insure an exertion of their utmost address, influence and authority, in promoting its adoption.

And when they shall also reflect on the present unspeakable peril of their country, giving to their advice far more national importance than to that of any or of
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all the ministers united, they will become conscious that duty has thence a wider scope and additional force.

With regard to the King himself, confidence on the one hand in his physicians, and on the other hand in a beloved son every way qualified to do justice to his People, leave us nothing to anticipate but a joyful acquiescence on the part of His Majesty.

Should selfish statesmen attempt contrivance, the firmness of the physicians must put them to shame, and triumph over their insidious machinations.

Major Cartwright
received 12 March

a coadjutor in the
sovereignty -