The English monarch has been the subject of mountains of respectable prose, drama, and poetry. The histories of their reigns are stuffed with stirring pages, and here and there a speech or a poem from the monarch’s own hand deserves more than historical notes. It is a pity that such a rich storehouse has yielded so few poems to study “The Hollow Crown.”

The readings present the English monarchs as quite human, often all too human, and much too little of the magic of the ruler survives. More than a page, even of the glorious past, this tends more to be a chronicle of the decay and downfall of the idea of royalty.

This “entertainment” would be quite a successful party entertainment, should it flow spontaneously from the memories of a few scholars with theatrical deductions. As it progresses, however, with the unusual mystery sitting stiff and dutifully attentive about the stage, the atmosphere of carefully returned financial readings renews all the spontaneity at its inception.

The evening begins almost like a history lesson, with the plotting of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,” and struggles on through references to six or eight post-Norman kings, before the first real entertainment of the evening: the court and royal life of “History of England” by the fifteenth-century Jane Austen. After so much history, the “Partial, Preg- nant, and Ignorant Historian” is the breath of fresh air.

The human and comic side of kingship shows in a secret recommendation by Henry VII to his ambassadors, requesting thorough and intimate details of the Queen of Naples whom he intended to marry,... and the prophecy given to each liar is followed by the only real note of charity: a speech of Mary I declaring Wyatt’s Rebellion.

Very little attention is paid to what were the more successful rulers of England, Richard Goner- de-Leur’s “Ballad of Cappadocia” is sung; Henry VIII’s pro- cessional song to Anne Boleyn, and her last letter to him before her execution, are read; a poem recites Elizabeth I, and Henry V is merely mentioned in passing.

Perhaps it was intentional that the great body of commentary on royally written by Shakespeare was bypassed entirely. One tends too often to think of the British monarchs as speaking rich Espanol, and Elizabethan poetry, and a fresh outlook may have been desired. This realistic humanization, however, has devolved the concept of kingship quite a lot.

The last gag of true royal comedy is the only one to have been Elizabeth I, however, if the program was to be the only witness. The second half is memorable only when emotionally sung, Janets 1 “Cousinsright Against Panama” and Housewife’s satirical description of the burial of George II are in this category. The British- year-old Victoria, describing her coronation, is touching; but nothing of Mary I’s royal love affair.

We are spared God, any reference to monarchs after Victoria. No one needs to know that the speech of Elizabeth I will end the program.

The songs pastiche of the evening are delivered with a dressing room style. The four actors are well-dressed, but their biggest success is with the comic rather than the regal aspects of monarchy. “The Hollow Crown” is only occasionally entertaining.

At The Coffee Houses

Club Mt. Auburn 47
17 Mount Auburn St. Cambridge 47
1:00 P.M. - Breakfast; Bob, Fred & Bill
1:30 P.M. - Wally, Gravelly, and John Jr.
3:15 P.M. - Radio River Valley Boys
7:10 P.M. - Bob, Hal, Jim, and Duane
9:10 P.M. - John, Paul, and Mike
9:20 P.M. - Wally, Zentner, and Bo Diddley.
1:12 P.M. - Tuesday Nite Owl request program, Jim Kweskin, lead singer
1:22 P.M. - Boston Washington

Cafe Yana

Now thru Jan. 20
Dave Van Ronk
New York
Judy Collins
Jan. 21
Bob Dylan
Jan. 22
Judy Collins

The Unicorn

Unicorn St. near Copley Square
21-50 Cambridge St.
Jan. 20-26
Jan. 27-

WTBS Schedule

6:00 a.m. - WSN 6 a.m.
7:00 a.m. - "The Morning Program" with Tom St. John
9:00 a.m. - "Today" and " `{1266"
11:00 a.m. - "Library on the Air" with Librarian
2:00 p.m. - "Monitor Broadcast Preview" with Tom St. John
7:00 p.m. - "CBS PERSPECTIVES" with Howard K. Smith
8:00 p.m. - "Arts and Letters" with Judith Anderson and William F. Buckley Jr.
9:05 p.m. - "HN" with Host in the Blues

WTBS will leave the air following "HN" with "The Godfather" on Mon- day, February 18th at 4 a.m.