Queen Victoria, her girlhood and womanhood

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QUEEN VICTORIA.
HER GIRLHOOD AND WOMANHOOD.

BY GRACE GREENWOOD

A DEDICATORY LETTER

TO CAMILLA TOULMIN (MRS. NEWTON CROSLAND), LINTON LODGE, BLACKHEATH PARK:

Permit me, my dear friend, to inscribe to you this very imperfect Life of your beloved Queen, in remembrance of that dear old time when the world was brighter and more beautiful than it is now (or so it seemeth to me) and things in general were pleasanter;--when better books were written, especially biographies, and there were fewer of them;--when the "gentle reader" and the "indulgent critic" were extant;--when Realism had not shouldered his way into Art;--when there were great actors and actresses of the fine old school, like Macready and the elder Booth--Helen Faucit and Charlotte Cushman; and real orators, like Daniel O'Connell and Daniel Webster;--when there was more poetry and more romance in life than now;--when it took less silk to make a gown, but when a bonnet was a bonnet;--when there was less east-wind and fog, more moonlight to the month, and more sunlight to the acre;--when the scent of the blossoming hawthorn was sweeter in the morning, and the song of the nightingale more melodious in the twilight;--when, in short, you and I, and the glorious Victorian era, were young.

GRACE GREENWOOD.

PREFACE.

I send this book out to the world with many misgivings, feeling that it is not what I would like it to be--not what I could have made it with more time. I have found it especially difficult to procure facts and incidents of the early life of the Queen--just that period which I felt was of most interest to my younger readers. So much was I delayed that for the actual arrangement and culling of my material, and the writing of the volume, I have had less than three months, and during that time many interruptions in my work--the most discouraging caused by a serious trouble of the eyes.

I am aware that the book is written in a free and easy style, partly natural, and partly formed by many years of journalistic work--a style new for the grave business of biographical writing, and which may be startling in a royal biography,--to my English readers, at least. I aimed to make a pleasant, simple fireside story of the life and reign of Queen Victoria--and I hope I have not altogether failed. Unluckily, I had no friend near the throne to furnish me with reliable, unpublished personal anecdotes of Her Majesty.

I have made use of the labor of several English authors; first, of that

of the Queen herself, in the books entitled, "Leaves from the Journal of Our Life in the Highlands," and "The Early Years of His Royal Highness the Prince-Consort"; next, of that of Sir Theodore Martin, K.C.B., in his "Life of the Prince-Consort." For this last appropriation I have Sir Theodore Martin's gracious permission. I am much indebted to Hon. Justin McCarthy, in his "History of Our Own Times." I have also been aided by various compilations, and by Lord Ronald Gower's "Reminiscences."

I have long felt that the wonderful story of the life of the Queen of England--of her example as a daughter, wife and mother, and as the honored head of English society could but have, if told simply, yet sympathetically, a happy and ennobling influence on the hearts and minds of my young countrywomen. I have done my work, if lightly, with entire respect, though always as an American and a republican. I could not do otherwise; for, though it has made me in love with a few royal people, it has not made me in love with royalty. I cannot but think that, so far from its being a condition of itself ennobling to human character, those born into it have often to fight to maintain a native nobility,--as Queen Victoria has fought, as Prince Albert fought,--for I find the "blameless Prince" saying: "To my mind the exaltation of royalty is only possible through the personal character of the sovereign."

It suits England, however, "excellent well," in its restricted constitutional form; she has all the venerable, splendid accessories--and I hope "Albert the Good" may have founded a long race of good kings; but it would not do for us;--a race cradled in revolution, and nurtured on irreverence and unbelief, as regards the divine right of kings and the law of primogeniture. To us it seems, though a primitive, an unnatural institution. We find no analogies for it, even in the wildest venture of the New World. It is true the buffalo herd has its kingly commander, who goes plunging along ahead, like a flesh-and-blood locomotive; the drove of wild horses has its chieftain, tossing his long mane, like a banner, in advance of his fellows; even the migratory multitudes of wild-fowl, darkening the autumn heavens, have their general and engineer,--but none of these leaders was born, or hatched into his proud position. They are undoubtedly chosen, elected, or elect themselves by superior will or wisdom. Entomology does, indeed, furnish some analogies. The sagacious bees, the valiant wasps, are monarchists,--but then, they have only queens.

G. G.

LONDON, _October 20th_, 1883.

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PART I.

CHILDHOOD AND GIRLHOOD.

CHAPTER I.

Sketch of the Princess Charlotte--Her Love for her Mother--Anecdotes--Her Happy Girlhood--Her Marriage with Prince Leopold--Her Beautiful Life at Claremont--Baron Stockmar, the Coburg Mentor--Death of the Princess Charlotte.

It seems to me that the life of Queen Victoria cannot well be told without a prefacing sketch of her cousin, the Princess Charlotte, who, had she lived, would have been her Queen, and who was in many respects her prototype. It is certain, I think, that Charlotte Augusta of Wales, that lovely miracle-flower of a loveless marriage, blooming into a noble and gracious womanhood, amid the petty strifes and disgraceful intrigues of a corrupt Court, by her virtues and graces, by her high spirit and frank and fearless character, prepared the way in the loyal hearts of the British people, for the fair young kinswoman, who, twenty-one years after her own sad death, reigned in her stead.

Through all the bright life of the Princess Charlotte--from her beautiful childhood to her no less beautiful maturity--the English people had regarded her proudly and lovingly as their sovereign, who was to be; they had patience with the melancholy madness of the poor old King, her grandfather, and with the scandalous irregularities of the Prince Regent, her father, in looking forward to happier and better things under a good woman's reign; and after all those fair hopes had been coffined with her, and buried in darkness and silence, their hearts naturally turned to the royal little girl, who might possibly fill the place left so drearily vacant. England had always been happy and prosperous under Queens, and a Queen, please God, they would yet have.

The Princess Charlotte was the only child of the marriage of the Prince Regent, afterwards George IV., with the Princess Caroline of Brunswick, Her childhood was overshadowed by the hopeless estrangement of her parents. She seems to have especially loved her mother, and by the courage and independence she displayed in her championship of that good-

hearted but most eccentric and imprudent woman, endeared herself to the English people, who equally admired her pluck and her filial piety--on the maternal side. They took a fond delight in relating stories of rebellion against her august papa, and even against her awful grandmamma, Queen Charlotte. They told how once, when a mere slip of a girl, being forbidden to pay her usual visit to her poor mother, she insisted on going, and on the Queen undertaking to detain her by force, resisted, struggling right valiantly, and after damaging and setting comically awry the royal mob-cap, broke away, ran out of the palace, sprang into a hackney-coach, and promising the driver a guinea, was soon at her mother's house and in her mother's arms. There is another--a Court version of this hackney-coach story--which states that it was not the Queen, but the Prince Regent that the Princess ran away from--so that there could have been no assault on a mob-cap. But the common people of that day preferred the version I have given, as more piquant, especially as old Queen Charlotte was known to be the most solemnly grand of grandmammas, and a personage of such prodigious dignity that it was popularly supposed that only Kings and Queens, with their crowns actually on their heads, were permitted to sit in her presence.

As a young girl, the Princess Charlotte was by no means without faults of temper and manner. She was at times self-willed, passionate, capricious, and imperious, though ordinarily good-humored, kindly, and sympathetic. A Court lady of the time, speaking of her, says: "She is very clever, but at present has the manners of a hoyden school-girl. She talked all sorts of nonsense to me, but can put on dignity when she chooses." This writer also relates that the royal little lady loved to shock her attendants by running to fetch for herself articles she required--her hat, a book, or a chair--and that one summer, when she stayed at a country-house, she would even run to open the gate to visitors, curtsying to them like a country lassie. The Earl of Albemarle, who was her playmate in childhood, his grandmother being her governess, relates that one time when they had the Prince Regent to lunch, the chop came up spoiled, and it was found that Her Royal Highness had descended into the kitchen, and, to the dismay of the cook, insisted on broiling it. Albemarle adds that he, boy-like, taunted her with her culinary failure, saying: "_You_ would make a pretty Queen, wouldn't you?" At another time, some years later, she came in her carriage to make a morning-call at his grandmother's, and seeing a crowd gathered before the door, attracted by the royal liveries, she ran out a back-way, came round, and mingled with the curious throng unrecognized, and as eager to see the Princess as any of them.

Not being allowed the society of her mother, and that of her father not being considered wholesome for her, the Princess was early advised and urged to take a companion and counsellor in the shape of a husband. The Prince of Orange, afterwards King of the Netherlands, was fixed upon as a good _parti_ by her royal relatives, and he came courting to the English Court. But the Princess did hot altogether fancy this aspirant, so, after her independent fashion, she declined the alliance, and "the young man went away sorrowing."

One of the ladies of the Princess used to tell how for a few minutes after the Prince had called to make his sad _adieux_, she hoped that Her Royal Highness had relented because she walked thoughtfully to the window to see the last of him as he descended the palace steps and sprang into his carriage, looking very grand in his red uniform, with a tuft of green feathers in his hat. But when the Princess turned away with a gay laugh, saying, "How like a radish he looks," she knew that all was over. It is an odd little coincidence, that a later Prince of Orange,

afterwards King of the Netherlands, had the same bad luck as a suitor to the Princess or Queen Victoria.

Charlotte's next lover, Leopold, of Saxe-Coburg, an amiable and able Prince, was more fortunate. He won the light but constant heart of the Princess, inspiring her not only with tender love, but with profound respect. Her high spirit and imperious will were soon tamed to his firm but gentle hand; she herself became more gentle and reasonable, content to rule the kingdom of his heart at least, by her womanly charms, rather than by the power of her regal name and lofty position. This royal love-marriage took place in May, 1816, and soon after the Prince and Princess, who had little taste for Court gaieties, went to live at Claremont, the beautiful country residence now occupied by the young Duke of Albany, a namesake of Prince Leopold. Here the young couple lived a life of much domestic privacy and simplicity, practicing themselves in habits of study, methodical application to business, and wise economy. They were always together, spending happy hours in work and recreation, passing from law and politics to music and sketching, from the study of the British Constitution to horticulture. The Princess especially delighted in gardening, in watering with her own hands her favorite plants.

This happy pair had an invaluable aid and ally in the learned Baron Stockmar, early attached to Prince Leopold as private physician, a rare, good man on whom they both leaned much, as afterwards did Victoria and Albert and their children. Indeed the Baron seems to have been a permanent pillar for princes to lean upon. From youth to old age he was to two or three royal households the chief "guide, philosopher, and friend"--a Coburg mentor, a Guelphic oracle.

So these royal lovers of Claremont lived tranquilly on, winning the love and respect of all about them, and growing dearer and dearer to each other till the end came, the sudden death of the young wife and mother,--an event which, on a sad day in November, 1817, plunged the whole realm into mourning. The grief of the people, even those farthest removed from the Court, was real, intense, almost personal and passionate. It was a double tragedy, for the child too was dead. The accounts of the last moments of the Princess are exceedingly touching. When told that her baby boy was not living, she said: "I am grieved, for myself, for the English people, but O, above all, I feel it for my dear husband!" Taking an opportunity when the Prince was away from her bedside, she asked if she too must die. The physician did not directly reply, but said, "Pray be calm."

"I know what _that_ means," she replied, then added, "Tell it to my husband,--tell it with caution and tenderness, and be sure to say to him, from me, that I am still the happiest wife in England."

It seems, according to the Queen, that it was Stockmar that took this last message to the Prince, who lacked the fortitude to remain by the bedside of his dying wife--that it was Stockmar who held her hand till it grew pulseless and cold, till the light faded from her sweet blue eyes as her great life and her great love passed forever from the earth. Yet it seems that through a mystery of transmigration, that light and life and love were destined soon to be reincarnated in a baby cousin, born in May, 1819, called at first "the little May-flower," and through her earliest years watched and tended as a frail and delicate blossom of hope.

CHAPTER II.

Birth of the Princess Victoria--Character of her Father--Question of the Succession to the Throne--Death of the Duke of Kent--Baptism of Victoria --Removal to Woolbrook Glen--Her first Escape from Sudden Death--Picture of Domestic Life--Anecdotes.

After the loss of his wife, Prince Leopold left for a time his sad home of Claremont, and returned to the Continent, but came back some time in 1819, to visit a beloved sister, married since his own bereavement, and become the mother of a little English girl, and for the second time a widow. Lovingly, though with a pang at his heart, the Prince bent over the cradle of this eight-months-old baby, who in her unconscious orphanage smiled into his kindly face, and though he thought sorrowfully of the little one whose eyes had never smiled into his, had never even opened upon life, he vowed then and there to the child of his bereaved sister, the devoted love, the help, sympathy, and guidance which never failed her while he lived.

This baby girl was the daughter of the Duke of Kent and of the Princess Victoire Marie Louise of Saxe-Coburg Saalfield, widow of Prince Charles of Leiningen. Edward, Duke of Kent, was the fourth and altogether the best son of George III. Making all allowance for the exaggeration of loyal biographers, I should say he was an amiable, able, and upright man, generous and charitable to a remarkable degree, for a royal Prince of that time--perhaps too much so, for he kept himself poor and died poor. He was not a favorite with his royal parents, who seem to have denied him reasonable assistance, while lavishing large sums on his spendthrift brother, the Prince of Wales. George was like the prodigal son of Scripture, except that he never repented--Edward like the virtuous son, except that he never complained.

On the death of the Princess Charlotte the Duke of York had become heir-presumptive to the throne. He had no children, and the Duke of Clarence, third son of George III., was therefore next in succession. He married in the same year as his brother of Kent, and to him also a little daughter was born, who, had she lived, would have finally succeeded to the throne instead of Victoria. But the poor little Princess stayed but a little while to flatter or disappoint royal hopes. She looked timidly out upon life, with all its regal possibilities, and went away untempted. Still the Duchess of Clarence (afterwards Queen Adelaide) might yet be the happy mother of a Prince, or Princess Royal, and there were so many probabilities against the accession of the Duke of Kent's baby to the throne that people smiled when, holding her in his arms, the proud father would say, in a spirit of prophecy, "Look at her well!--she will yet be Queen of England."

One rainy afternoon the Duke stayed out late, walking in the grounds, and came in with wet feet. He was urged to change his boots and stockings, but his pretty baby, laughing and crowing on her mother's knee, was too much for him; he took her in his arms and played with her till the fatal chill struck him. He soon took to his bed, which he never left. He had inflammation of the lungs, and a country doctor, which last took from him one hundred and twenty ounces of blood. Then, as he grew no better, a great London physician was called in, but he said it was too late to save the illustrious patient; that if he had had charge of the case at first, he would have "bled more freely." Such was the medical system of sixty

years ago.

The Duke of Kent's death brought his unconscious baby's feet a step--just his grave's width--nearer the throne; but it was not till many years later--till after the death of her kindly uncle of York, and her "fine gentleman" uncle, George IV., and the accession of her rough sailor-uncle, the Duke of Clarence, William IV., an old man, and legally considered childless--that the Princess Victoria was confidently regarded as the coming sovereign, and that the momentous truth was revealed to her. She was twelve years old before any clear intimation had been allowed to reach her of the exceptional grandeur of her destiny. Till then she did not know that she was especially an object of national love and hope, or especially great or fortunate. She knew that she was a "Royal Highness," but she knew also, the wise child!--that since the Guelphs came over to rule the English, Royal Highnesses had been more plentiful than popular; she knew that she was obliged to wear, most of the time, very plain cotton gowns and straw hats, and to learn a lot of tiresome things, and that she was kept on short allowance of pin-money and ponies.

The wise Duchess of Kent certainly guarded her with the most jealous care from all premature realization of the splendid part she might have to play in the world's history, as a hope too intoxicating, or a responsibility too heavy, for the heart and mind of a sensitive child.

I wonder if her Serene Highness kept fond motherly records of the babyhood and childhood of the Queen? If so, what a rich mine it would be for a poor bewildered biographer like me, required to make my foundation bricks with only a few golden bits of straw. I have searched the chronicles of the writers of that time; I have questioned loyal old people, but have found or gained little that is novel, or peculiarly interesting.

Victoria was born in the sombre but picturesque old palace of Kensington, on May 24, 1819, and on the 24th of the following June was baptized with great pomp out of the splendid gold font, brought from the Tower, by the Archbishop of Canterbury, assisted by the Bishop of London. Her sponsors were the Prince Regent and the Emperor of Russia (the last represented by the Duke of York), the Queen Dowager of Wuertemburg (represented by the Princess Augusta) and the Duchess Dowager of Coburg (represented by the Duchess Dowager of Gloucester), and her names were _Alexandrina Victoria_, the first in honor of the Emperor Alexander of Russia. She came awfully near being Alexandrina Georgiana, but the Prince Regent, at the last moment, declared that the name of Georgiana should be second to no other; then added, "Give her her mother's name--after that of the Emperor." The Queen afterwards decided that her mother's name should be second to no other. Yet as a child she was often called "little Drina."

The baby's first move from her stately birthplace was to a lovely country residence called Woolbrook Glen, near Sidmouth. Here Victoria had the first of those remarkable narrow escapes from sudden and violent death which have almost seemed to prove that she bears a "charmed life." A boy was shooting sparrows in vicinity of the house, and a charge from his carelessly-handled gun pierced the window by which the nurse was sitting, with the little Princess in her arms. It is stated that the shot passed frightfully near the head of the child. But she was as happily unconscious of the deadly peril she had been in as, a few months later, she was of the sad loss she sustained in the death of her father, who was laid away with the other Guelphs in the Windsor Royal Vault, never again

to throne his little "Queen" in his loyal, loving arms.

The Princess Victoria seems to have been always ready for play, dearly loving a romp. One of the earliest mentions I find of her is in the correspondence of Bishop Wilberforce. After stating that he had been summoned to the presence of the Duchess of Kent, he says: "She received me with her fine, animated child on the floor by her side busy with its playthings, of which I soon became one."

This little domestic picture gives a glimpse of the tender intimacy, the constant companionship of this noble mother with her child. It is stated that, unlike most mothers in high life, the Duchess nursed this illustrious child at her own breast, and so mingled her life with its life that nothing thenceforth could divide them. The wee Princess passed happily through the perils of infantile ailments. She cut her teeth as easily as most children, with the help of her gold-mounted coral--and very nice teeth they were, though a little too prominent according to the early pictures. If the infant Prince Albert reminded his grandmamma of a "weasel," his "pretty cousin" might have suggested to her a squirrel by "a little something about the mouth."

An old newspaper writer gave a rather rapturous and pompous account of the Princess Victoria when she was about three years old. He says: "Passing through Kensington Gardens a few days since, I observed at some distance a party consisting of several ladies, a young child, and two men-servants, having in charge a donkey, gayly caparisoned with blue ribbons, and accoutred for the use of the infant." He soon ascertained that the party was the Duchess of Kent and her daughter, the Princess Feodore of Leiningen, and the Princess Alexandrina Victoria. On his approaching them the little one replied to his "respectful recognition" with a pleasant "good-morning," and he noted that she was equally polite to all who politely greeted her--truly one "to the manner born." This writer adds: "Her Royal Highness is remarkably beautiful, and her gay and animated countenance bespeaks perfect health and good temper. Her complexion is excessively fair, her eyes large and expressive, and her cheeks blooming. She bears a striking resemblance to her royal father."

A glimpse which Leigh Hunt gives of his little liege lady, as she appeared to him for the first time in Kensington Gardens, is interesting, as revealing the child's affectionate disposition. "She was coming up a cross-path from the Bayswater Gate, with a little girl of her own age by her side, whose hand she was holding as though she loved her." And why not, Mr. Poet? Princesses, especially Princesses of the bread-and-butter age, are as susceptible to joys of sympathy and companionship as any of us--untitled poets and title-contemning Republicans.

Lord Albemarle, in his autobiography, speaks of watching, in an idle hour, from the windows of the old palace, "the movements of a bright, pretty little girl, seven years of age, engaged in watering the plants immediately under the window. It was amusing to see how impartially she divided the contents of the watering-pot between the flowers and her own little feet. Her simple but becoming dress--a large straw hat and a white cotton gown--contrasted favorably with the gorgeous apparel now worn by the little damsels of the rising generation. A colored fichu round the neck was the only ornament she wore. The young lady I am describing was the Princess Victoria, now our Gracious Sovereign."

Queen Victoria dressed her own children in the same simple style, voted quaint and old-fashioned by a later generation. I heard long ago a story

of a fashionable lady from some provincial town taking a morning walk in Windsor Park, in the wild hope of a glimpse of royalty, and meeting a lady and gentleman, accompanied only by two or three children, and all so plainly dressed that she merely glanced at them as they passed. Some distance further she walked in her eager quest, when she met an old Scotch gardener, of whom she asked if there was any chance of her encountering the Queen anywhere on the domain. "Weel, ye maun, turn back and rin a good bit, for you've passed her _Mawjesty_, the Prince, and the Royal bairns."

Ah, wasn't she spited as she looked back and saw the joyous family party in the dim distance, and realized what she had lost in not indulging herself in a good long British stare, and what a sin she had committed in not making a loyal British obeisance.

CHAPTER III.

Victoria's early Education--Anecdote--Routine of Life at Kensington Palace--Character and Circumstances of the Duchess of Kent--Anecdote--Simple Mode of Life--Visits.

Queen Victoria tells little of her childhood, but speaks of it as rather "dull." It seems, however, to have never been empty or idle. All her moments were golden--for study, or for work, or healthful exercise and play. She was taught, and perhaps was inclined, to waste no time, and to be careful not to cause others to waste it. A dear English friend contributes the following anecdote, slight, but very significant, obtained long ago from a lady whose young daughters, then at school at Hammersmith, had the same writing-master as the Princess Victoria: "Of course," says my friend, "every incident connected with the little Princess was interesting to the school-girls, and all that this master (I think his name was Steward) had to tell went to prove her a kind-hearted and considerate child.

"She always mentioned to him in advance the days on which she would not require a lesson, saying: 'I thought, perhaps, you would like to know.' Sometimes she would say, 'We are going to Windsor to see Uncle King,' or she would name some other important engagement. By 'Uncle King' she meant George IV. Mr. Steward, of course, availed himself of the liberty suggested by the little Princess, then about eight years old, by whose thoughtful kindness he was saved much time and trouble."

Lord Campbell, speaking of the Princess as a little girl, says: "She seems in good health, and appears lively and good-humored." It may be that the good-humor was, in great part, the result of the good health.

The Princess was brought up after the wisest, because most simple, system of healthful living: perfect regularity in the hours of eating, sleeping, and exercise; much life in the open air, and the least possible excitement.

She was taught to respect her own constitution as well as that of the British Government, and to reverence the laws of health as the laws of God.

An account which I judge to be authoritative of the daily routine of the family life in Kensington, runs thus: "Breakfast at 8 o'clock in summer, the Princess Victoria having her bread and milk and fruit put on a little table by her mother's side. After breakfast the Princess Feodore studied with her governess, and the Princess Victoria went out for an hour's walk or drive. From 10 to 12 her mother instructed her, after which she could amuse herself by running through the suite of rooms which extended round two sides of the palace, and in which were many of her toys. At 2 a plain dinner, while her mother took her luncheon. Lessons again till 4; then would come a visit or drive, and after that a walk or donkey ride in the gardens. At the time of her mother's dinner the Princess had her supper, still at the side of the Duchess; then, after playing with her nurse (Mrs. Brock, whom she called 'dear, dear Boppy'), she would join the party at dessert, and at 9 she would retire to her bed, which was placed at the side of her mother's."

We see regular study, regular exercise, simple food, plenty of outdoor air, plenty of play, plenty of sleep. It seems that when this admirable mother laid her child away from her own breast, it was only to lay it on that of Nature, and very close has Victoria, with all her state and grandeur, kept to the heart of the great all-mother ever since.

The Duchess of Kent was left not only with very limited means for a lady of her station, but also burdened by her husband's debts, which, being a woman with a fine sense of honor, she felt herself obliged to discharge, or at least to reduce as far and fast as possible. Had it not been for help from her generous brother, Leopold, she could hardly have afforded for her daughter the full and fitting education she received. So, had not her taste and her sense of duty towards her child inclined her to a life of quiet and retirement, the lack of fortune would have constrained her to live simply and modestly. As it was, privacy was the rule in the life of the accomplished Duchess, still young and beautiful, and in that of her little shadow; very seldom did they appear at Court, or in any gay Court circle; so, at the time of her accession to the throne, Victoria might almost have been a fairy-princess, emerging from some enchanted dell in Windsor forest, or a water-nymph evoked from the Serpentine in Kensington Gardens by some modern Merlin, for all the world at large--the world beyond her kingdom at least--knew of her young years, of her character and disposition. Now few witnesses are left anywhere of her fair happy childhood, or even of her girlhood, which was like a silvery crescent, holding the dim promise of full-orbed womanhood and Queenhood.

As the Princess grew older, she found loving and helpful companionship in her half-brother and sister, Prince Charles and the Princess Feodore of Leiningen, the three children and their mother forming a close family union, which years and separations and changes of fortune never destroyed. They are all gone from her now; the Queen, as daughter and sister, stands alone.

A kind friend and a well-known English writer, F. Aiken Kortright, for many years a resident of Kensington, tells some pleasant little local stories of the Princess Victoria. She says: "In her childhood the Princess Victoria was frequently seen in a little carriage, drawn over the gravel-walks of the then rural Kensington Gardens, accompanied by her elder and half-sister, the Princess Feodore, and attended by a single servant. Many elderly people still remember the extreme simplicity of the child's attire, and the quiet and unpretentious appearance and manners of her sister, who was one day seen to stop the tiny carriage to indulge the fancy of an unknown little girl by allowing her to kiss her future

Queen."

That "unknown little girl" was an elder sister of Miss Kortright. My friend also says that the Duchess of Kent and her daughters frequently on summer afternoons took tea on the lawn, "in sight of admiring promenaders, with a degree of publicity which now sounds fabulous."

It was then safe and agreeable for that quiet, refined family, only because the London "Rough"--that ugly, unwholesome, fungous growth on the fine old oak of English character--had not made his unwelcome appearance in all the public parks of the metropolis. Our friend also states that so simple and little-girlish was the Princess in her ways that, later on, she was known to go with her mother or sister to a Kensington milliner's to buy a hat, stay to have it trimmed, and then carry it (or more likely the old one) home in her hand. I should like to see a little Miss Vanderbilt do a thing of that kind!

The Kents and Leiningens--if I may speak so familiarly of Royal and Serene Highnesses--when away from the quiet home in Kensington, spent much time at lovely Claremont as guests of the dear brother and Uncle Leopold. They seem also to have travelled a good deal in England, visiting watering-places and in houses of the nobility, but never to have gone over to the Continent. The Duchess probably felt that the precious life which she held in trust for the people of England might possibly be endangered by too long journeys, or by changes of climate; but what it cost to the true German woman to so long exile herself from her old home and her kindred none ever knew--at least none among her husband's unsympathetic family--for she was, as a Princess, too proud to complain; as a mother, cheerful in her devotion and self-abnegation.

CHAPTER IV.

Queen-making not a Light Task--Admirable Discipline of the Duchess of Kent--Foundation of the Character and Habits of the future Queen--Curious Extract from a Letter by her Grandmamma--A Children's Ball given by George IV. to the little Queen of Portugal--A Funny Mishap--Death of George IV.--Character of his Successor--Victoria's first appearance at a Drawing-room--Her absence from the Coronation of William IV.

Queen-making is not a light task. It is no fancywork for idle hours. It is the first difficult draft of a chapter, perhaps a whole volume, of national history.

No woman ever undertook a more important labor than did the widowed Duchess of Kent, or carried it out with more faithfulness, if we may judge by results.

The lack of fortune in the family was not an unmixed evil; perhaps it was even one of those disagreeable "blessings in disguise," which nobody welcomes, but which the wise profit by, as it caused the Duchess to impress upon her children, especially the child Victoria, the necessity of economy, and the safety and dignity which one always finds in living within one's income. Frugality, exactitude in business, faithfulness to all engagements, great or small, punctuality, that economy of time, are usually set down among the minor moralities of life, more humdrum than

heroic; but under how many circumstances and conditions do they reveal themselves as cardinal virtues, as things on which depend the comfort and dignity of life! It seems that these things were so impressed on the mind and heart of the young Victoria by her careful, methodical German mother, that they became a part of her conscience, entered so deeply into the rule of her life that no after-condition of wealth, or luxury, or sovereign independence; no natural desire for ease or pleasure; no passion of love or grief; no possible exigencies of imperial state have been able to overcome or set them aside. The danger is that such rigid principles, such systematic habits, adopted in youth, may in age become, from being the ministers of one's will, the tyrants of one's life.

It seems to be somewhat so in the case of the Queen, for I hear it said that the sun, the moon, and the tides are scarcely more punctual and regular in their rounds and mighty offices, in their coming and going, than she in the daily routine of her domestic and state duties and frequent journeyings; and that the laws of the Medes and Persians are as naught in inexorableness and inflexibility to the rules and regulations of Windsor and Balmoral.

But the English people, even those directly inconvenienced at times by those unbending habits and irrevocable rules, have no right to find fault, for these be the right royal results of the admirable but somewhat unyouthful qualities they adored in the young Queen. They have no right to sneer because a place of honor is given in Her Majesty's household to that meddlesome, old-fashioned German country cousin, Economy; for did not they all rejoice in the early years of the reign to hear of this same dame being introduced by those clever managers, Prince Albert and Baron Stockmar, into the royal palaces, wherein she had not been seen for many a year?

But to return to the little Princess. The Duchess, her mother, seems to have given her all needful change of air and scene, though always maintaining; habits of study, and an admirable system of mental and moral training; for the child's constitution seems to have strengthened year by year, and in spite of one or two serious attacks of illness, the foundation was laid of the robust health which, accompanied by rare courage and nerve, has since so marked and blessed her life. A writer of the time speaks of a visit paid by her and her mother to Windsor in 1829, when the child was about seven years old, and states that George IV., her "Uncle King," was delighted with her "charming manners."

It was about this visit that her maternal grandmamma at Coburg wrote to her mamma: "I see by the English papers that Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent went on Virginia water with His Majesty. The little monkey must have pleased and amused him, she is such a pretty, clever child."

To think of the great Victoria, Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, and Empress of India, being called "a little monkey"! Grandmammas will take such liberties. Three or four years later, according to that spicy and irreverent chronicler, Charles Greville, the little Princess was not pretty. But she was just entering on that ungracious period in which few little girls are comely to look upon, or comfortable to themselves. Greville saw her at a children's ball, given by the King in honor of his little guest, the child-Queen of Portugal, Donna Maria II., da Gloria, whom the King seated at his right hand, and was very attentive to. Greville says she was fine-looking and very finely dressed, "with a ribbon and order over her shoulder," and she must have seemed very grand

to the other children while she sat by the King, but when she came to dance she "fell down and hurt her face, was frightened and bruised, and went away." Then he adds: "Our little Princess is a short, plain child, not so good-looking as the Portuguese. However, if Nature has not done so much, Fortune is likely to do a great deal more for her."

Victoria did not know that, but like any other little girl she may, perhaps, have comforted herself by thinking, "Well, if I'm not so handsome and grand and smartly dressed as that Maria, I'm less awkward. I was able to keep my head and not lose my feet."

As for her small Majesty of Portugal, she was at that time a Queen without a crown and without a kingdom. She had come all the way from Brazil to take her grandfather's throne, a little present from her father, Dom Pedro I., the rightful heir, but only to find the place filled by a wicked uncle, Don Miguel. She had a long fight with the usurper, her father coming over to help her, and finally ousted Miguel and got into that big, uneasy arm-chair, called a throne, where she continued to sit, though much shaken and heaved up and about by political convulsions, for some dozen years, when she found it best to step down and out.

It is said she did not gain, but lost in beauty as she grew to womanhood; so finally the English Princess had the advantage of her in the matter of good looks even.

King George IV., though he was fond of his amusing little niece, did not like to think of her as destined to rule in his place. He is said to have been much offended when, as he was proposing to give that ball, his chief favorite, a gay, Court lady, exclaimed: "Oh, do! it will be so nice to see the _two little Queens_ dancing together." Yet he disliked the Duchess of Kent for keeping the child as much as possible away from his disreputable Court, and educating her after her own ideas, and often threatened to use his power as King to deprive her of the little girl. The country would not have stood this, yet the Duchess must have suffered cruelly from fear of having her darling child taken from her by this crowned ogre, and shut up in the gloomy keep of his Castle at Windsor. But it was the Ogre-King who was taken, a little more than a year after the children's ball--and not a day too soon for his country's good--and his brother, the Duke of Clarence, reigned in his stead.

William IV. had some heart, some frankness and honesty, but he was a bluff, rough sailor, and when excited, oaths of the hottest sort flew from his lips, like sparks from an anvil. Because of his roughness and profanity, and because, perhaps, of the fact of his surrounding himself with a lot of natural children, the Duchess was determined to persevere in her retirement from the Court circle, and in keeping her innocent little daughter out of its unwholesome atmosphere, as much as possible. She was, however, most friendly with Queen Adelaide, who, when her last child died, had written to her: "My children are dead, but yours lives, and she is mine too." The good woman meant this, and her fondness was returned by Victoria, who manifested for her to the last, filial affection and consideration.

The first Drawing-room which the Princess attended was one given in honor of Her Majesty's birthday. She went with her mother and a suite of ladies and gentlemen in State carriages, escorted by a party of Life Guards. The Princess was on that occasion dressed entirely in materials of British manufacture, her frock being of English blonde, very simple and becoming.

She stood at the left of her aunt, the Queen, and watched the splendid ceremony with great interest, while everybody watched her with greater interest. But if the presence of the "heir-presumptive to the throne" created a sensation at the Queen's Drawing-room, her absence from the King's coronation created more. Some said it was because a proper place in the procession--one next to the King and Queen--had not been assigned to her; others, that the Duchess had kept her away on account of her delicate health, and nobody knew exactly the truth of the matter. Perhaps the great state secret will be revealed some day with the identity of "Junius" and the "Man in the Iron Mask."

CHAPTER V.

King William jealous of Public Honors to Victoria--Anecdote--The unusual Studies of the Princess--Her Visits to the Isle of Wight--Laughable Incident at Wentworth House--Anecdote related by her Music-teacher--Unwholesome adulation of the Princess--Reflections upon the curious isolation of her Social Position--Extract from one of her later Letters.

The indifference of the Duchess of Kent to the heavy pomps and heavier gayeties of his Court so offended his unmajestic Majesty, that he finally became decidedly inimical to the Duchess. Though he insisted on seeing the little Princess often, he did not like the English people to see too much of her, or to pay her and her mother too much honor. He objected to their little journeys, calling them "royal progresses," and by a special order put a stop to the "poppings," in the way of salutes, to the vessel which bore them to and from the Isle of Wight--a small piece of state-business for a King and his Council to be engaged in. The King's unpopular brother, the Duke of Cumberland, was also supposed to be unfriendly to the widow of a brother whom he had not loved, and to the child whom, according to that brother, he regarded from the first as an "intruder," and who certainly at the last, stood between His Royal Grossness and the throne--the throne which would have gone down under him. Yet, in spite of enmity and opposition from high quarters, and jealousy and harsh criticism from Court ministers and minions, the Duchess of Kent, who seems to have been a woman of immense firmness and resolution, kept on her way, rearing her daughter as she thought best, coming and going as she felt inclined.

Victoria's governess was for many years the accomplished Baroness Lehzen, who had also been the chief instructress of her sister, Feodore. Until she was twelve years old, her masters were also German, and she is said to have spoken English with a German accent. After that time her teachers, in nearly all branches, were English. Miss Kortright tells me a little anecdote of the Princess when about twelve years old, related by one of these teachers. She had been reading in her classical history the story of Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi--how she proudly presented her sons to the ostentatious and much-bediamonded Roman dame, with the words, "These are _my_ jewels." "She should have said my _Cornelians_," said the quick-witted little girl.

Victoria was instructed in some things not in those days thought proper for young ladies to learn, but deemed necessary for a poor girl who was expected to do a man's work. She was well grounded in history, instructed in Latin--though she did not fancy it, and later, in the British

Constitution, and in law and politics. Nor were light accomplishments neglected: in modern languages, in painting and music, she finally became singularly proficient. Gifted with a remarkably sweet voice and a correct ear, she could not well help being a charming singer, under her great master, Lablache. She danced well, rode well, and excelled in archery.

As I said, the brave Duchess, as conscientious as independent, kept up the life of retirement from Court pomps and gayeties, and of alternate hard study and social recreation, which she thought best for her child.

She quietly persevered in the "progresses" which annoyed the irascible and unreasonable old King, even visiting the Isle of Wight, though the royal big guns were forbidden to "pop" at sight of the royal standard, which waved over her, and the young hope of England. Perhaps recollections of those pleasant visits with her mother at Norris Castle have helped to render so dear the Queen's own beautiful sea-side home, Osborne House. I remember a pretty little story, told by a tourist, who happened to be stopping at the village of Brading during one of those visits to the lovely island. One afternoon he strolled into the old church-yard to search out the grave of Elizabeth Wallbridge, the sweet heroine of Leigh Richmond's beautiful religious story, "The Dairyman's Daughter." He found seated beside the mound a lady and a young girl, the latter reading aloud, in a full, melodious voice, the touching tale of the Christian maiden. The tourist turned away, and soon after was told by the sexton that those pilgrims to that humble grave were the Duchess of Kent and the Princess Victoria.

I am told by a Yorkshire lady another story of the Princess, of not quite so serious a character. She was visiting with her mother, of course, at Wentworth House, the seat of Earl Fitzwilliam in Yorkshire, and while at that pleasant place delighted in running about by herself in the gardens and shrubberies. One wet morning, soon after her arrival, she was thus disporting herself, flitting from point to point, light-hearted and light-footed, when the old gardener, who did not then know her, seeing her about to descend a treacherous bit of ground from the terrace, called out, "Be careful, Miss; it's slape!"--a Yorkshire word for slippery. The incautious, but ever-curious Princess, turning her head, asked, "What's slape?" and the same instant her feet flew from under her, and she came down. The old gardener ran to lift her, saying, as he did so, "_That's_ slape, Miss."

There is nothing remarkable, much less incredible, in these stories of the young Victoria, nor in the one related by her music-teacher, of how she once rebelled against so much practice, and how, on his telling her that there was no "royal road" in art, and that only by much practice could she become "mistress of the piano," she closed and locked the obnoxious instrument and put the key in her pocket, saying playfully, "Now you see there _is_ a royal way of becoming `mistress of the piano.'" But not so simple and natural and girlish are all the things told of the Queen's young days. Loyal English people have said to me, "You will find few stories of Her Majesty's childhood, but those few will all be good."

Yes, too good. The chroniclers of forty and fifty years ago--the same in whose loyal eyes the fifteen children of George III. were all "children of light"--could find no words in which to paint their worship for this rising star of sovereignty. According to them, she was not only the pearl of Princesses for piety and propriety, for goodness and graciousness, but a marvel of unchildlike wisdom, a prodigy of cleverness and learning; in

short, a purely perfect creature, loved of the angels to a degree perilous to the succession. The simplest little events of her daily life were twisted into something unnaturally significant, or unhealthily virtuous. If she was taken through a cotton-mill at Manchester, and asked a score or two of questions about the machinery and the strange processes of spinning and weaving, it was not childish curiosity--it was a love of knowledge, and a patriotic desire to encourage British manufactures.

If she gave a few pennies to a blind beggar at Margate, the amiable act was heralded as one, of almost divine beneficence, and the beggar pitied, as never before, for his blindness. The poor man had not beheld the face of the "little angel" who dropped the coin into his greasy hat! If, full of "high spirits," she took long rides on a donkey at Ramsgate, and ran races with other children on the sands, it was a proof of the sweetest human condescension--the donkey's opinion not being taken.

Of course all this is false, unwholesome sentiment, quite incomprehensible to nineteenth century Americans, though our great-grandfathers understood this sort of personal loyalty very well, and gloried in it, till George the Third drove them to the wall; and our great-grandmothers cherished it as a sacred religious principle till their tea was taxed. I dare say that if the truth could be got at, we should find that little Victoria was at times trying enough to mother, masters, and attendants; that she was occasionally passionate, perverse, and "pestering," like all children who have any great and positive elements in them. I dare say she was disposed, like any other "only child," to be self-willed and selfish, and that she required a fair amount of wholesome discipline, and that she got it. Had she been the prim and pious little precocity which some biographers have painted her, she would have died young, like the "Dairyman's Daughter"; we might have had an edifying tract, and England a revolution.

One of her biographers speaks with a sort of ecstatic surprise of the fact that the Princess was "affable--even gay," and that she "laughed and chatted like other little girls." And yet she must early have perceived that she was not quite like other little girls, but set up and apart. Though reared with all the simplicity practicable for a Princess Royal, she must have been conscious of a magic circle drawn round her, of a barrier impalpable, but most real, which other children could not voluntarily overpass. She must have seen that they could not call out to her to "come and play!" that however shy she might feel, she must propose the game, or the romp, as later she had to propose marriage. She even was obliged to quarrel, if quarrel she did, all alone by herself. Any resistance on the part of her playmates would have been a small variety of high treason. She must sometimes, with her admirable good sense, have been wearied and disgusted by so much concession, conciliation, and consideration, and may have envied less fortunate or unfortunate mortals who can give and take hard knocks, for whom less is demanded, and of whom less is expected.

She may have tired of her very name, with its grand prefixes and no affix, and longed to be Victoria Kent, or _Something_--Jones, Brown, or Robinson.

She seems to have been a child of simple, homely tastes, for in 1842, when Queen, she writes to her Uncle Leopold from Claremont, where she is visiting, with her husband and little daughter: "This place brings back recollections of the happiest days of my otherwise dull childhood--days when I experienced such kindness from you, dearest uncle; Victoria plays

with my old bricks, and I see her running and jumping in the flower-garden, as old (though I feel still _little_) Victoria of former days used to do."

CHAPTER VI.

The Princess opens the Victoria Park at Bath--Becoming used to Public Curiosity--Secret of her Destiny revealed to her--Royal Ball on her Thirteenth Birthday--At the Ascot Races--Picture by N. P. Willis--Anecdotes--Painful Scene at the King's last Birthday Dinner.

When she was eleven years old, the Princess opened the Victoria Park at Bath. She began the opening business thus early, and has kept it up pretty diligently for fifty years--parks, expositions, colleges, exchanges, law courts, bridges, docks, art schools, and hospitals. Her sons and daughters are also kept busy at the same sort of work. Indeed these are almost the only openings for young men of the royal family for active service, now that crusades and invasions of France have gone out of fashion. It seems to me that the English people get up all sorts of opening and unveiling occasions in order to supply employment to their Princes and Princesses, who, I must say, never shirk such monotonous duties, however much they may be bothered and bored by them.

Occasionally the Duchess of Kent and her daughter visited Brighton, and stopped in that grotesque palace of George IV., called the Pavilion. I have seen a picture of the demure little Princess, walking on the esplanade, with her mother, governesses, and gentlemen attendants, the whole elegant party and the great crowd of Brightonians following and staring at them, wearing the absurd costumes of half a century ago--the ladies, big bonnets, big mutton-leg sleeves, big collars, heelless slippers, laced over the instep; the gentlemen, short-waisted coats, enormous collars, preposterous neckties, and indescribably clumsy hats.

By this time the Princess had learned to bear quietly and serenely, if not unconsciously, the gaze of hundreds of eyes, admiring or criticising. She knew that the time was probably coming when the hundreds would increase to thousands, and even millions--when the world would for her seem to be made up of eyes, like a peacock's tail. Small wonder that in her later years, especially since she has missed from her side the splendid figure which divided and justified the mighty multitudinous stare, this eternal observation, this insatiable curiosity has become infinitely wearisome to her.

Several accounts have been given of the manner in which the great secret of her destiny was revealed to the Princess Victoria, and the manner in which it was received, but only one has the Queen's indorsement. This was contained in a letter, written long afterwards to Her Majesty by her dear old governess, the Baroness Lehzen, who states that when the Regency Bill (an act naming the Duchess of Kent as Regent, in case of the King dying before his niece obtained her majority) was before Parliament, it was thought that the time had come to make known to the Princess her true position. So after consulting with the Duchess, the Baroness placed a genealogical table in a historical book, which her pupil was reading. When the Princess came upon this paper, she said: "Why, I never saw that before." "It was not thought necessary you should see it," the Baroness

replied. Then the young girl, examining the paper, said thoughtfully: "I see I am nearer the throne than I supposed." After some moments she resumed, with a sort of quaint solemnity: "Now many a child would boast, not knowing the difficulty. There is much splendor, but there is also much responsibility." "The Princess," says the Baroness, "having lifted up the forefinger of her right hand while she spoke, now gave me that little hand, saying: 'I will be good. I understand now why you urged me so much to learn, even Latin. My aunts, Augusta and Mary, never did, but you told me Latin was the foundation of English grammar, and all the elegant expressions, and I learned it, as you wished it; but I understand all better now,' and the Princess again gave me her hand, repeating, 'I will be good.'"

God heard the promise of the child of twelve years and held her to it, and has given her strength "as her day" to redeem it, all through the dazzling brightness and the depressing shadows, through the glory and the sorrow of her life, as a Queen and a woman.

The Queen says that she "cried much" over the magnificent but difficult problem of her destiny, but the tears must have been April showers, for in those days she was accounted a bright, care-free little damsel, and was ever welcome as a sunbeam in the noblest houses of England--such as Eaton Hall, the seat of the Duke of Westminster; Wentworth House, belonging to Earl Fitzwilliam; Alton Towers, the country house of the Earl of Shrewsbury; and Chatsworth, the palace of the Duke of Devonshire, where such royal loyal honors were paid to her that she had a foretaste of the "splendor," without the "responsibility," of Queenhood.

The King and Queen gave a brilliant ball in honor of "the thirteenth birthday of their beloved niece, the Princess Victoria," and somewhat later, the little royal lady appeared at a Drawing-room, when she is said to have charmed everybody by her sweet, childish dignity--a sort of quaint queenliness of manner and expression. She was likewise most satisfactory to the most religiously inclined of her subjects who were to be, in her mien and behavior when in the Royal Chapel of St. James, on the interesting occasion of her confirmation. She is said to have gone through the ceremony with "profound thoughtfulness and devout solemnity."

The next glimpse I have of her is at a very different scene--the Ascot races. A brilliant American author, N. P. Willis, who then saw her for the first time, wrote: "In one of the intervals, I walked under the King's stand, and saw Her Majesty the Queen, and the young Princess Victoria, very distinctly. They were leaning over the railing listening to a ballad-singer, and seeming as much interested and amused as any simple country-folk could be. The Queen is undoubtedly the plainest woman in her dominions, but the Princess is much better-looking than any picture of her in the shops, and for the heir to such a crown as that of England, quite unnecessarily, pretty and interesting. She will be sold, poor thing! bartered away by those great-dealers in royal hearts, whose grand calculations will not be much consolation to her if she happens to have a taste of her own."

Little did the wise American poet guess that, away in a little fairy principality of Deutschland, there was a beautiful young fairy prince, being reared by benevolent fairy godmother-grandmothers, especially to disprove all such doleful prophecies, and reverse the usual fate of pretty young Princesses in the case of the "little English mayflower."

Greville relates a little incident which shows that the Princess, when

between sixteen and seventeen, and almost in sight of the throne, was still amenable to discipline. He describes a reception of much pomp and ceremony, given to the Duchess and the Princess by the Mayor and other officers of the town of Burghley, followed by a great dinner, which "went off well," except that an awkward waiter, in a spasm of loyal excitement, emptied the contents of a pail of ice in the lap of the Duchess, which, though she took it coolly, "made a great bustle." I am afraid the Princess laughed. Then followed a magnificent ball, which was opened by the Princess, with Lord Exeter for a partner. After that one dance she "went to bed." Doubtless her good mother thought she had had fatigue and excitement enough for one day; but it must have been hard for such a dance-loving girl to take her quivering feet out of the ball-room so early, and for such a grand personage as she already was, just referred to in the Mayor's speech, as "destined to mount the throne of these realms," to be sent away like a child, to mount a solemn, beplumed four-poster, and to try to sleep, with that delicious dance-music still ringing in her ears.

Greville also relates a sad Court story connected with the young Princess, and describes a scene which would be too painful for me to reproduce, except that it reveals, in a striking manner, Victoria's tender love for and close sympathy with her mother. It seems that the King's jealous hostility to the Duchess of Kent had grown with his decay, and strengthened with his senility, till at last it culminated in a sort of declaration of war at his own table. The account is given by Greville _second-hand_, and so, very likely, over-colored, though doubtless true in the main. The King invited the Duchess and Princess to Windsor to join in the celebration of his birthday, which proved to be his last. There was a dinner-party, called "private," but a hundred guests sat down to the table. The Duchess of Kent was given a place of honor on one side of the King, and opposite her sat the Princess Victoria. After dinner Queen Adelaide proposed "His Majesty's health and long life to him," to which that amiable monarch replied by a very remarkable speech. He began by saying that he hoped in God he might live nine months longer, when the Princess would be of age, and he could leave the royal authority in her hands and not in those of a Regent, in the person of a lady sitting near him, etc. Afterwards he said: "I have particularly to complain of the manner in which that young lady (the Princess Victoria) has been kept from my Court. She has been repeatedly kept from my Drawing-rooms, at which she ought always to have been present, but I am resolved that this shall not happen again. I would have _her_ know that I am _King_, and am determined to make my authority respected, and for the future I shall insist and command that the Princess do, upon all occasions, appear at my Court, as it is her duty to do."

This pleasant and hospitable harangue, uttered in a loud voice and an excited manner, "produced a decided sensation." The whole company "were aghast." Queen Adelaide, who was amiable and well-bred, "looked in deep distress"; the young Princess burst into tears at the insult offered to her mother; but that mother sat calm and silent, very pale, but proud and erect--Duchess of Duchesses!

CHAPTER VII.

Victoria's first meeting with Prince Albert--She comes of Age--Ball in honor thereof--Illness of King William--His Death--His Habits and

Character--The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lord Chancellor inform Victoria that she is Queen--Her beautiful bearing under the ordeal.

In May, 1836, the Princess saw, for the first time, her cousins, Ernest and Albert, of Saxe-Coburg. These brothers, one eighteen and the other seventeen, are described as charming young fellows, well-bred and carefully educated, with high aims, good, true hearts, and frank, natural manners.

In personal appearance they were very prepossessing. Ernest was handsome, and Albert more than handsome. They were much beloved by their Uncle Leopold, then King of Belgium, and soon endeared themselves to their Aunt Kent and their Cousin Victoria. They spent three weeks at Kensington in daily intercourse with their relatives, and with their father, the Duke of Coburg, were much _feted_ by the royal family. They keenly enjoyed English society and sights, and learned something of English life and character, which to one of them, at least, proved afterwards useful. Indeed this admirable young Prince, Albert, seemed always learning and assimilating new facts and ideas. He had a soul athirst for knowledge.

On May 24, 1837, the Princess Victoria came of age. She was awakened early by a matutinal serenade--a band of musicians piping and harping merrily under her bedroom windows. She received many presents and congratulatory visits, and had the pleasure of knowing that the day was observed as a grand holiday in London and throughout England. Boys were let out of school, and M.P.'s out of Parliament. At night the metropolis was "brilliantly illuminated"--at least so thought those poor, benighted, ante-electrical-light Londoners--and a grand state ball was given in St. James' Palace. Here, for the first time, the Princess took precedence of her mother, and we may believe she felt shy and awkward at such a reversal of the laws of nature and the habits of years. But doubtless the stately Duchess fell back without a sigh, except it were one of joy and gratitude that she had brought her darling on so far safely.

This could hardly have been a very gay state ball, for their Majesties were both absent. The King had that very day been attacked with hayfever, and the Queen had dutifully stayed at home to nurse him. He rallied from this attack somewhat, but never was well again, and in the small hours of June 2d the sailor King died at Royal Windsor, royally enough, I believe, though he had never been a very royal figure or spirit. Of course after he was gone from his earthly kingdom, the most glowing eulogies were pronounced upon him in Parliament, in the newspapers, and in hundreds of pulpits. Even a year later, the Bishop of London, in his sermon at the Queen's coronation, lauded the late King for his "unfeigned religion," and exhorted his "youthful successor" to "follow in his footsteps." Ah, if she had done so, I should not now be writing Her Majesty's Life!

It must be that in a King a little religion goes a long way. The good Bishop and other loyal prelates must have known all about the Fitz-Clarences--those wild "olive branches about the table" of His Majesty; and they were doubtless aware of that little unfortunate habit of profanity, acquired on the high-seas, and scarcely becoming to the Head of the Church; but they, perhaps, considered that His Majesty swore as the sailor, not as the sovereign. He certainly made a good end, hearing many prayers, and joining in them as long as he was able, and devoutly receiving the communion; and what is better, manifesting some tender anxiety lest his faithful wife and patient nurse should do too much and grieve too much for him. When he saw her like to break down, he would

say: "Bear up; bear up, Adelaide!" just like any other good husband. William was not a bad King, as Kings went in those days; he was, doubtless, an orthodox churchman, and we may believe he was a good Christian, from his charge to the new Bishop of Ely when he came to "kiss hands" on his preferment: "My lord, I do not wish to interfere in any way with your vote in Parliament, except on one subject--the Jews. I trust I may depend on your always voting against them!"

When the solemn word went through the old Castle of Windsor, "The King is dead!" his most loyal ministers, civil and religious, added under their breath: "Long live the Queen!" and almost immediately the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lord Chamberlain left Windsor and travelled as fast as post-horses could carry them, to Kensington Palace, which they reached in the gray of the early dawn. Everybody was asleep, and they knocked and rang a long time before they could rouse the porter at the gate, who at last grumblingly admitted them. Then they had another siege in the court-yard; but at length the palace door yielded, and they were let into one of the lower rooms, "where," says Miss Wynn's account, "they seemed forgotten by everybody." They rang the bell, called a sleepy servant, and requested that the special attendant of the Princess Victoria should inform her Royal Highness that they desired an audience on "very important business." More delay, more ringing, more inquiries and directions. At last the attendant of the Princess came, and coolly stated that her Royal Mistress was "in such a sweet sleep she could not venture to disturb her." Then solemnly spoke up the Archbishop: "We are come on business of State, to _the Queen_, and even her sleep must give way." Lo it was out! The startled maid flew on her errand, and so effectually performed it, that Victoria, not daring to keep her visitors waiting longer, hurried into the room with only a shawl thrown over her night-gown, and her feet in slippers. She had flung off her night-cap (young ladies wore night-caps in those queer old times), and her long, light-brown hair was tumbling over her shoulders. So she came to receive the first homage of the Church and the State, and to be hailed "Queen!" and she was Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, of India and the mighty Colonies! It seems to me that the young girl must have believed herself at that moment only half awake, and still dreaming. The grand, new title, "Your Majesty," must have had a new sound, as addressed to her,--something strange and startling, though very likely she may have often said it over to herself, silently, to get used to it. The first kiss of absolute fealty on her little hand must have thrilled through her whole frame. Some accounts say that as full realization was forced upon her, she burst into tears; others dwell on her marvellous calm and self-possession. I prefer to believe in the tears, not only because the assumption of the "dangerous grandeur of sovereignty" was a solemn and tremendous matter for one so young, but because something of awe and sorrow on hearing of the eternal abdication of that sovereignty, by her rough but not to her unloving old uncle, was natural and womanly, and fitting. I believe that it has not been questioned that the first words of the QUEEN were addressed to the Primate, and that they were simply, "I beg your Grace to pray for me," which the Archbishop did, then and there. Doubtless, also, as related, the first act of her queenly life was the writing of a letter of condolence to Queen Adelaide, in which, after expressing her tender sympathy, she begged her "dear aunt" to remain at Windsor just as long as she might feel inclined. This letter she addressed to "Her Majesty, the Queen." Some one at hand reminded her that the King's widow was now only Queen Dowager. "I am quite aware of that," replied Victoria, "but I will not be the first person to remind her of it." I cannot say how much I like that. Wonderful is the story told by many witnesses of the calmness and gentle dignity of Her Majesty, when a

few hours later she met the high officers of the Church and State, Princes and Peers, received their oaths of allegiance and read her first speech from an improvised throne. The Royal Princes, the Dukes of Cumberland and Sussex, Her Majesty's uncles, were the first to be sworn, and Greville says: "As they knelt before her, swearing allegiance and kissing her hand, I saw her blush up to the eyes, as if she felt the contrast between their civil and their natural relations; and this was the only sign of emotion which she evinced."

When she first entered the room she had kissed these old uncles affectionately, walking toward the Duke of Sussex, who was very feeble.

Greville says that she seemed rather bewildered at the multitude of men who came to kiss her hand and kneel to her, among them the conqueror of Napoleon--soldier of soldiers--_the_ Duke!--but that she did not make any difference in her manner, or show any especial respect, or condescension in her countenance to any individual, not even to the Premier, Lord Melbourne, for whom she was known to have a great liking, and who was long her trusted friend and favorite Minister.

The Queen was also called upon to take an oath, which was for "the security of the Church of Scotland." This she has most faithfully kept; indeed, she has now and then been reproached by jealous champions of the English Establishment for undue graciousness towards the Kirk and its ministers.

For this grand but solemn ceremony at Kensington--rendered the more solemn by the fact that while it was going on the great bell of St. Paul's was tolling for the dead King,--the young Queen was dressed very simply, in mourning.

She seems to have thought of everything, for she sent for Lord Albemarle, and after reminding him that according to law and precedent she must be proclaimed the next morning at 10 o'clock, from a certain window of St. James' Palace, requested him to provide for her a suitable conveyance and escort. She then bowed gravely and graciously to the Princes, Archbishops and Cabinet Ministers, and left the room, as she had entered it--alone.

CHAPTER VIII.

The last day of Victoria's real girlhood--Proclaimed Queen from St. James' Palace--She holds her first Privy Council--Comments upon her deportment by eye-witnesses--Fruits of her mother's care and training.

It seems to me that the momentous day just described was the last of Victoria's real girlhood; that premature womanhood was thrust upon her with all the power, grandeur, and state of a Queen Regnant. I wonder if, weary and nervously exhausted as she must have been, she slept much, when at last she went to bed, probably no longer in her mother's room. I wonder if she did not think, with a sort of fearsome thrill that when the summer sun faded from her sight, it was only to travel all night, lighting her vast dominions and her uncounted millions of subjects; and that, like the splendor of that sun, had become her life--hers, the little maiden's, but just emerging from the shadow of seclusion, and from her mother's protecting care and wise authority, and stepping out into

the world by herself!

The next day she went in state to St. James Palace, accompanied by great lords and ladies, and escorted by squadrons of the Life Guards and Blues, and was formally proclaimed from the window of the Presence Chamber, looking out on the court-yard. A Court chronicle states that Her Majesty wore a black silk dress and a little black chip bonnet, and that she looked paler than usual. Miss Martineau, speaking of the scene, says: "There stood the young creature, in simplest mourning, her sleek bands of brown hair as plain as her dress. The tears ran down her cheeks, as Lord Melbourne, standing by her side, presented her to the people as their Sovereign. ... In the upper part of the face she is really pretty, and with an ingenuous, sincere air which seems full of promise."

After the ceremony of proclamation was over, the "little Queen" remained for a few moments at the window, bowing and smiling through her tears at that friendly and enthusiastic crowd of her subjects, and listening to the National Anthem played for the first time for her, then retired, with her mother, who had not been "prominent" during the scene, but who had been observed "to watch her daughter with great anxiety."

At noon the Queen held a Privy Council, at which it was said, "She presided with as much ease as though she had been doing nothing else all her life." At 1 P.M. she returned to Kensington Palace, there to remain in retirement till after the funeral of King William.

It is certain that the behavior of this girl-queen on these first two days of her reign "confounded the doctors" of the Church and State. Greville, who never praises except when praise is wrung out of him, can hardly say enough of her grace and graciousness, calmness and self-possession. He says, also, that her "agreeable expression, with her youth, inspire an excessive interest in all who approach her, and which," he is condescending enough to add, "I can't help feeling myself." He quotes Peel as saying he was "amazed at her manner and behavior; at her apparent deep sense of her situation, her modesty, and at the same time her firmness. She appeared to be awed, but not daunted."

The Duke of Wellington paid a similar tribute to her courage.

Now, if these great men did not greatly idealize her, under the double glamour of gallantry and loyalty, Victoria was a most extraordinary young woman. A few days before the death of the King, Greville wrote: "What renders speculation so easy and events so uncertain is the absolute ignorance of everybody of the character, disposition, and capacity of the Princess. She has been kept in such jealous seclusion by her mother (never having slept out of her bedroom, nor been alone with anybody but herself and, the Baroness Lehzen), that not one of her acquaintance, none of the attendants at Kensington, not even the Duchess of Northumberland, her governess, can have any idea what she is, or what she promises to be." The first day of Victoria's accession he writes: "She appears to act with every sort of good taste and good feeling, as well as good sense, and nothing can be more favorable than the impression she has made, and nothing can promise better than her manner and conduct do... William IV. coming to the throne at the mature age of sixty-five, was so excited by the exaltation that he nearly went mad... The young Queen, who might well be either dazzled or confounded with the grandeur and novelty of her situation, seems neither the one nor the other, and behaves with a propriety and decorum beyond her years."

Doubtless nature was kind to Victoria in the elements of character, but she must have owed very much of this courage, calmness, modesty, simplicity, candor, and sterling good sense to the peculiar, systematic training, the precept and example of her mother, the much-criticised Duchess of Kent, so unpopular at the Court of the late King, and whom Mr. Greville had by no means delighted to honor. Ah, the good, brave Duchess had her reward for all her years of patient exile, all her loving labor and watchful care, and rich compensation for all criticisms, misrepresentations, and fault-finding, that June afternoon, the day of the Proclamation, when she rode from the Palace of St. James to Kensington with her daughter, who had behaved so well--her daughter and her _Queen!_

PART II.

WOMANHOOD AND QUEENHOOD.

CHAPTER IX.

The sovereignty of England and Hanover severed forever--Funeral of King William IV. at Windsor--The Queen and her household remove to Buckingham Palace--She dissolves Parliament--Glowing account of the scene by a contemporary Journal--Charles Sumner a spectator--His eulogy of the Queen's reading.

Ever since the accession to the throne of Great Britain of the House of Brunswick, the Kings of England had also been Kings of Hanover. To carry on the two branches of the royal business simultaneously must have been a little difficult, at least perplexing. It was like riding a "two-horse act," with a wide space between the horses, and a wide difference in their size. But the Salic law prevailed in that little kingdom over there; so its Crown now gently devolved on the head of the male heir-apparent, the Duke of Cumberland, and the quaint old principality parted company with England forever. That is what Her Majesty, Victoria, got, or rather lost, by being a woman. A day or two after her accession, King Ernest called at Kensington Palace to take leave of the Queen, and she dutifully kissed her uncle and brother-sovereign, and wished him God-speed and the Hanoverians joy.

There is no King and no kingdom of Hanover now. When Kaiser William was consolidating so many German principalities into his grand empire, gaily singing the refrain of the song of the old sexton, "_I gather them in! I gather them in!_" he took Hanover, and it has remained under the wing of the great Prussian eagle ever since. It is said that the last King made a gallant resistance, riding into battle at the head of his troops, although he was blind--too blind, perhaps, to see his own weakness. When his throne was taken out from under him, he still clung to the royal title, but his son is known only as the Duke of Cumberland. This Prince, like other small German Princes, made a great outcry against the Kaiser's confiscations, but the inexorable old man still went on piecing an imperial table-cover out of pocket-handkerchiefs.

The young Queen's new Household was considered a very magnificent and unexceptionable one--principally for the rank and character and personal attractions of the ladies in attendance, chief among whom, for beauty and stateliness, was the famous Duchess of Sutherland--certainly one of the most superb women in England, or anywhere else, even at an age when most women are "falling off," and when she herself was a grandmother.

The funeral of King William took place at Windsor in due time, and with all due pomp and ceremony. After lying in state in the splendid Waterloo chamber, under a gorgeous purple pall, several crowns, and other royal insignia, he was borne to St. George's Chapel, followed by Prelates, Peers, and all the Ministers of State, and a solemn funeral service was performed. But what spoke better for him than all these things was the quiet weeping of a good woman up in the Royal Closet, half hidden by the sombre curtains, who looked and listened to the last, and saw her husband let down into the Royal Vault, where, in the darkness, his--their baby-girl awaited him, that Princess with the short life and the long name--poor little Elizabeth Georgina Adelando, whom the childless Queen once hoped to hear hailed "Elizabeth Second of England."

In midsummer the Queen, the Duchess of Kent, and their grand Household moved from Kensington to Buckingham Palace, then new, and an elegant and luxurious royal residence internally, but externally neither beautiful nor imposing. But with the exception of Windsor Castle, none of the English Royal Palaces can be pointed to as models of architectural beauty, or even sumptuous appointments. The palaces of some of our Railway Kings more than rival them in some respects, while those of many of the English nobility are richer in art-treasures and grander in appearance. Kensington Palace was not beautiful, but it was picturesque and historic, which was more than could be said of any of the Georgian structures; there was about it an odor of old royalty, of poetry and romance. The literature and the beauty of Queen Anne's reign were especially associated with it. Queen Victoria was, when she left it, at an age when memories count for little, and doubtless the flitting "_out of the old house into the new_" was effected merrily enough; but long afterwards her orphaned and widowed heart must often have gone back tenderly and yearningly to the scene of many tranquilly happy years with her mother, and of that first little season of companionship with her cousin Albert.

Hardly had she got unpacked and settled in her new home when she had to go through a great parade and ceremony. She went in state to dissolve Parliament. The weather was fine and the whole route from Buckingham Palace to the Parliament House was lined with people, shouting and cheering as the magnificent procession and that brilliant young figure passed slowly along. A London journal of the time gave the following glowing account of her as she appeared in the House of Lords: "At 20 minutes to 3 precisely, Her Majesty, preceded by the heralds and attended by the great officers of state, entered the House--all the Peers and Peeresses, who had risen at the flourish of the trumpets, remaining standing. Her Majesty was attired in a splendid white satin robe, with the ribbon of the Garter crossing her shoulder and a magnificent tiara of diamonds on her head, and wore a necklace and a stomacher of large and costly brilliants. Having ascended the throne, the royal mantle of crimson velvet was placed on Her Majesty's shoulders by the Lords in waiting." And this was the same little girl who, six years before, had bought her own straw hat and carried it home in her hand! I wonder if her own mother did not at that moment have difficulty in believing that radiant and royal creature was indeed her little Victoria!

The account continues: "Her Majesty, on taking her seat, appeared to be deeply moved at the novel and important position in which she was placed, the eyes of the assembled nobility, both male and female, being riveted on her person." I would have wagered a good deal that it was the 'female' eyes that she felt most piercingly. Then it goes on: "Her emotion was plainly discernible in the heavings of her bosom, and the brilliancy of her diamond stomacher, which sparkled out like the sun on the swell of the ocean as the billows rise and fall." So disconcerted was she, it seems, by all this silent, intense observation, that she forgot, nicely seated as she was, that all those Peers and Peeresses were standing, till she was reminded of it by Lord Melbourne, who stood close at her side. Then she graciously inclined her head, and said in rather a low tone, 'My Lords, be seated!' and they sat, and eke their wives and daughters.

"She had regained her self-possession when she came to read her speech, and her voice also, for it was heard all over the great chamber." And it is added: "Her demeanor was characterized by much grace and modest self-possession."

Among the spectators of this rare royal pageant was an American, and a stiff republican, a young man from Boston, called Charles Sumner. He was a scholar, and scholar-like, undazzled by diamonds, admired most Her Majesty's reading. In a letter to a friend he wrote: "I was astonished and delighted. Her voice is sweet and finely modulated, and she pronounced every word distinctly, and with a just regard to its meaning. I think I never heard anything better read in my life than her speech, and I could but respond to Lord Fitz-William's remark to me when the ceremony was over, 'How beautifully she performs!'" How strange it now seems to think of that slight girl of eighteen coming in upon that great assembly of legislators, many of them gray and bald, and pompous and portly, and gravely telling them that they might go home!

CHAPTER X.

Comments upon the young Queen by a contemporaneous writer in _Blackwood_--A new Throne erected for her in Buckingham Palace--A touching Anecdote related by the Duke of Wellington--The Queen insists on paying her Father's Debts--The romantic and passionate interest she evoked--Her mad lover--Attempts upon her life--She takes possession of Windsor Castle.

A writer in _Blackwood_, speaking of the Queen about this time, said: "She is 'winning golden opinions from all sorts of people' by her affability, the grace of her manners, and her prettiness. She is excessively like the Brunswicks and not like the Coburgs. So much the more in her favor. The memory of George III. is not yet passed away, and the people are glad to see his calm, honest, and English physiognomy renewed in his granddaughter."

Her Majesty's likeness to the obstinate but conscientious old king, whose honest face is fast fading quite away from old English half-crowns and golden guineas, has grown with her years.

The same writer, speaking of her personal appearance, says: "She is low

of stature, but well formed; her hair the darkest shade of flaxen, and her eyes large and light-blue." A friend who saw her frequently at the time of her accession, said to me the other day: "It is a great mistake to suppose that the Queen owed all the charming portraits which were drawn of her at this time, to the fortunate accident of her birth and destiny. She was really a very lovely girl, with a fine, delicate, rose-bloom complexion, large blue eyes, a fair, broad brow, and an expression of peculiar candor and innocence."

A few days later there was a sensation in Buckingham Palace, at the setting up in the Throne-room of a very magnificent new piece of furniture--a throne of the latest English fashion, but gorgeous enough to have served for the Queen of Sheba, Zenobia, Cleopatra, or Semiramis. It was all crimson velvet and silk, with any amount of gold embroideries, gold lace, gold fringe, ropes, and tassels. The gay young Queen tried it, and said it would do; that she had never sat on a more comfortable throne in all her life.

Two stories of the young Queen have touched me especially--one was related by the Duke of Wellington. A court-martial death sentence was presented by him to her, to be signed. She shrank from the dreadful task, and with tears in her eyes, asked: "Have you nothing to say in behalf of this man?"

"Nothing; he has deserted three times," replied the Iron Duke.

"O, your Grace, think again!"

"Well, your Majesty, he certainly is a bad soldier, but there was somebody who spoke as to his good character. He may be a good fellow in civil life."

"O, thank you!" exclaimed the Queen, as she dashed off the word, "Pardoned," on the awful parchment, and wrote beneath it her beautiful signature.

This was not her last act of the kind, and at length Parliament so arranged matters that this fatal signing business could be done by royal commission, ostensibly to "relieve Her Majesty of a painful duty," but really because they could not trust her soft heart. She might have sudden caprices of commiseration which would interfere with stern military discipline, and the honest trade of Mr. Marwood.

The other incident was told by Lord Melbourne. Soon after her accession, in all the dizzy whirl of the new life of splendor and excitement, the young Queen, in an interview with her Prime Minister, said: "I want to pay all that remain of my father's debts. I _must_ do it. I consider it a sacred duty." This was, of course, done--the Queen also sending valuable pieces of plate to the largest creditors, as a token of her gratitude. Lord Melbourne said that the childlike directness and earnestness of that good daughter's manner when she thus expressed her royal will and pleasure, brought the tears to his eyes. It seems to me it was almost mission enough for any young woman, to move the hearts of hard old soldiers like Wellington, and _blase_ statesmen like Melbourne--mighty dealers in death and diplomacy, and to bring something like a second youth of romance and chivalrous feeling into worn and worldly hearts everywhere.

I suppose it is impossible for young people of this day, especially

Americans, to realize the intense, enthusiastic interest felt forty-six years ago by all classes, and in nearly all countries, in the young English Queen. The old wondered and shook their heads over the mighty responsibility imposed upon her--the young dreamed of her. She almost made real to young girls the wildest romances of fairy lore. She called out such chivalrous feelings in young men that they longed to champion her on some field of battle, or in some perilous knightly adventure. She stirred the hearts and inspired the imaginations of orators and poets.--The great O'Connell, when there was some wild talk of deposing "the all but infant Queen," and putting the Duke of Cumberland in her place, said in his trumpet-like tones, which gave dignity to brogue: "If necessary, I can get 500,000 brave Irishmen to defend the life, the honor, and the person of the beloved young lady by whom England's throne is now filled." Ah, the difference between then and now. "Brave Irishmen" of this day, men who know not O'Connell, are more disposed to blow up the English Queen's palaces, throne and all.

Charles Dickens, who was then full of romance and fancy, was, it is said, possessed by such unresting, wondering thoughts of the fair maiden sovereign, and her magnificent destiny, that for a time his more prosaic friends regarded his enthusiasm as a sort of monomania. Other imaginative young men with heads less "level" (to use an American expression) than that of the great novelist, actually went mad--"clean daft"--the noble passion of loving loyalty ending in an infatuation as absurd as it was unhappy. Before the Queen left Kensington Palace she was much annoyed by the persistent attentions of a provincial admirer, a respectable gentleman, who labored under the hallucination that it was his destiny and his duty to espouse the Queen. He may have felt a preference for private life and rural pleasures, but as a loyal patriot he was ready to make the sacrifice. He drove in a stylish phaeton every morning to the Palace to inquire after Her Majesty's health; and on several days he bribed the men who had charge of the gardens to allow him to assist them in weeding about the piece of water opposite her apartments, in the fond hope of seeing her at the windows, and of her seeing him. Every evening, however, he put on the gentleman of fortune and phaetons, and followed the Queen and the Duchess in their airings. Drove they fast or drove they slow, he was just behind them. On their last drive before removing from Kensington, they alighted in the Harrow Road for a little walk, and were dismayed at seeing this Mr. ---- spring from his phaeton, and come eagerly forward. The Duchess sent a page to meet him and beg of him not to annoy Her Majesty by accosting her; but the page was "no let" to him--a whole volume of remonstrance would not have availed. He pressed on, and the august ladies were obliged to re-enter their carriage, and return to Kensington. When on the next morning they removed from the old home, Mr. ---- was at the gate in his phaeton, and drove before them to Buckingham Palace, and was there to give them a gracious welcome. He haunted Pimlico for a time, but his friends finally got possession of him and suppressed him, and so ended his "love's young dream."

It is likely that the merry young Queen laughed at the absurd demonstrations and amatory effusions of her demented admirers; but when, after her marriage, and her appearing always in public with the handsomest Prince in Christendom at her side, such monomaniacs grew desperate and took to shooting, the matter became serious. Then no more gentlemen in phaetons menaced her peace; her demented followers were poor wretches--so poor that sometimes, after investing in pistols, they had not a six-pence left for ammunition. One, a distraught Fenian, pointed at her a broken, harmless weapon, charged with a scrap of red rag. Another, a humpbacked lad, named Bean, loaded his with paper and a few bits of an

old clay pipe. Bean escaped for a time, and it is said that for several days there were "hard lines" for all the poor humpbacks of London. Scores of them were arrested. No unfortunate thus deformed, could appear in the streets without danger of a policeman smiting him on the shoulders, right in the tender spot, with a rough, "You are my prisoner." Life became a double burden to the poor fellows till Bean was caught. But to return to the young Queen, in her happy, untroubled days.

In August she took possession of Windsor Castle, amid great rejoicing. The Duchess, her mother, came also; this time not to be reproached or insulted. They soon had company--a lot of Kings and Queens, among them "Uncle Leopold" and his second wife, a daughter of Louis Philippe of France.

The royal young house-keeper seems keenly to have enjoyed showing to her visitors her new home, her little country place up the Thames. She conducted them everywhere,

"Up-stairs, down-stairs, and in my lady's chamber,"

peeping into china and silver closets, spicy store-rooms, and huge linen chests smelling of lavender.

Soon after came a triumphal progress to Brighton, during which the royal carriage passed under an endless succession of triumphal arches, and between ranks on ranks of schoolchildren, strewing roses and singing paeans. At Brighton there was an immense sacrifice of the then fashionable and costly flower, the dahlia, no fewer than twenty thousand being used for decorative purposes. But a sadder because a vain sacrifice on this occasion, was of flowers of rhetoric. An address, the result of much classical research and throes of poetic labor, and marked by the most effusive loyalty, was to have been presented to Her Majesty at the gates of the Pavilion, but by some mistake she passed in without waiting for it.

About this time the Lunatic Asylums began to fill up. Within one week two mad men were arrested, proved insane, and shut up for threatening the life of the Queen and the Duchess of Kent. So Victoria's life was not all arched over with dahlia-garlands, and strewn with roses, nor were her subjects all Sunday-school scholars.

CHAPTER XI.

Banquet in Guildhall--Victoria's first Christmas at Windsor Castle as Queen--Mrs. Newton Crosland's reminiscences--Coolness of Actors and Quakers amid the general enthusiasm--Issue of the first gold Sovereigns bearing Victoria's head.

On Lord Mayor's Day, the Queen went in state to dine with her brother-monarch, the King of "Great London Town." It was a memorable, magnificent occasion. The Queen was attended by all the great ladies and gentlemen of her Court, and followed by an immense train of members of the royal family, ambassadors, cabinet ministers and nobility generally--in all, two hundred carriages of them. The day was a general holiday, and the streets all along the line of the splendid procession were lined with

people half wild with loyal excitement, shouting and waving hats and handkerchiefs. It may have been on this day that Lord Albemarle got off his famous pun. On the Queen saying to him, "I wonder if my good people of London are as glad to see me as I am to see them?" he replied by pointing to the letters "V. R." "Your Majesty can see their loyal cockney answer-'_Ve are_.'"

One account states that, "the young sovereign was quite overcome by the enthusiastic outbursts of loyalty which greeted her all along the route," but a description of the scene sent me by a friend, Mrs. Newton Crosland, the charming English novelist and poet, paints her as perfectly composed. My friend says: "I well remember seeing the young Queen on her way to dine with the Lord Mayor, on the 9th of November, 1837, the year of her accession. The crowd was so great that there were constant stoppages, and, luckily for me, one of them occurred just under the window of a house in the Strand, where I was a spectator. I shall never forget the appearance of the maiden-sovereign. Youthful as she was, she looked every inch a Queen. Seated with their backs to the horses were a lady and gentleman, in full Court-dress--(the Duchess of Sutherland, Mistress of the Robes--and the Earl of Albemarle, Master of the Horse), and in the centre of the opposite seat, a little raised, was the Queen. All I saw of her dress was a mass of pink satin and swan's-down. I think she wore a large cape or wrap of these materials. The swan's-down encircled her throat, from which rose the fair young face--the blue eyes beaming with goodness and intelligence--the rose-bloom of girlhood on her cheeks, and her soft, light brown hair, on which gleamed a circlet of diamonds, braided as it is seen in the early portraits. Her small, white-gloved hands were reposing easily in her lap.

"On this occasion not only were the streets thronged, but every window in the long line of the procession was literally filled, while men and boys were seen in perilous positions on roofs and lamp-posts, trees and railings. Loud and hearty cheers, so unanimous they were like one immense multitudinous shout, heralded the royal carriage.

"A little before this date, a story was told of the lamentations of the Queen's coachman. He declared that he had driven Her Majesty for six weeks, without once being able to see her. Of course he could not turn his head or his eyes from his horses."

At Temple Bar--poor, old Temple Bar, now a thing of the past!--the Queen was met by the Lord Mayor, who handed her the city keys and sword, which she returned to his keeping--a little further on, the scholars of Christ's Hospital--the "Blue-Coat Boys," offered her an address of congratulation, saying how glad they were to have a woman to rule over them, which was a good deal for boys to say, and also sung the National Anthem with a will.

The drawing-room of Guildhall was fitted up most gorgeously. Here the address of the city magnates was read and replied to,--and here in the midst of Princes and nobles, Her Majesty performed a brave and memorable act. She knighted Sheriff Montefiore, the first man of his race to receive such an honor from a British sovereign, and Sir Moses Montefiore, now nearly a centenarian, has ever since, by a noble life and good works, reflected only honor on his Queen. But ah, what would her uncle, the late King, have said, had he seen her profaning a Christian sword by laying it on the shoulders of a Jew! He would rather have used it on the unbeliever's ears, after Peter's fashion.

After this ceremony, they all passed into the Great Hall, which had been marvellously metamorphosed, by hangings and gildings, and all sorts of magnificent decorations, by mirrors and lusters, and the display of vast quantities of gold and silver plate--much of it lent for the occasion by noblemen and private gentlemen, but rivalled in splendor and value by the plate of the Corporation and the City Companies. From the roof hung two immense chandeliers of stained glass and prisms, which with the flashing of innumerable gas-jets, lighting up gorgeous Court-dresses, and the most superb old diamonds of the realm, made up a scene of dazzling splendor, of enchantment, which people who were there go wild over to this day. Poets say it was like a vision of fairyland, among the highest circles of that most poetic kingdom--and they know. I think a poet must have managed the musical portion of the entertainment, for when Victoria appeared sweet voices sang--

"At Oriana's presence all things smile!"

and presently--

"Oh happy fair!
Your eyes are lode-stars and your tongue's sweet air,
More tunable than lark to shepherd's ear,
When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear."

There was a raised platform at the east end of the hall, and on it the throne, a beautiful state-chair, of dainty proportions, made expressly for that fairy Princess, who took her seat thereon amid the most joyous acclamations. On the platform before her, was placed the royal table, decorated with exquisite flowers, and covered with a costly, gold-fringed damask cloth, on which were served the most delicate viands and delicious fruits, in season and out of season. Ah, as the young Queen, seated up there, received the homage of the richly-robed Aldermen, and the resplendent Sheriffs, and that effulgent Lord Mayor, she must have fancied herself something more than a fairy Princess,--say, an Oriental goddess being adored and sacrificed to by gorgeous Oriental Princes, Sultans and Satraps, Pashas, Padishas, and the Grand-Panjandrum himself.

After the dinner, an imposing personage, called the Common Crier, strode into the middle of the hall, and solemnly cried out: "The Right Honorable the Lord Mayor gives the health of our Most Gracious Sovereign, Queen Victoria!" This, of course, was drunk with all the honors, and extra shouts that made the old hall ring. The Queen rose and bowed her thanks, and then the Common Crier announced--Her Majesty's toast: "The Lord Mayor, and prosperity to the City of London." The Queen, it is stated, honored this toast in sherry one hundred and twenty years old--liquid gold! Very gracious of her if she furnished the sherry. I hope, at all events, she drank it with reverence. Why, when that old wine was bottled, Her Majesty's grandfather lacked some twenty years of being born, and the American Colonies were as loyal as London;--then the trunk of the royal old Bourbon tree, whose last branch death lopped away but yesterday at Frohsdorf, seemed solid enough, though rotten at the core; and, the great French Revolution was undreamed of, except in the seething brain of some wild political theorist, or in some poor peasant's nightmare of starvation. When that old wine was bottled, Temple Bar, under the garlanded arch of which Her Majesty had just passed so smilingly, was often adorned with gory heads of traitors, and long after that old wine was bottled, men and women could be seen of a Friday, dangling from the front of Newgate prison, and swinging in the morning air, like so many ghastly pendulums.

This year 1837, Victoria spent her first Christmas as a Queen at Windsor, right royally I doubt not, and I think it probable she received a few presents. A few days before, she had gone in state to Parliament, to give her assent to the New Civil List Act-not a hard duty for her to perform, it would seem, as that act settled on her for life an annual income of L385,000. Let Americans who begrudge our President his $50,000, and wail over our taxation, just put that sum into dollars. The English people did not grumble at this grant, as they had grumbled over the large sums demanded by Her Majesty's immediate predecessors. They knew it would not be recklessly and wickedly squandered, and they liked to have their bonnie young Queen make a handsome appearance among crowned heads. She had not then revealed those strong and admirable traits of character which later won their respect and affection,--but they were fond of her, and took a sort of amused delight in her, as though they, were all children, and she a wonderful new doll, with new-fashioned talking and walking arrangements. The friend from whom I have quoted--Mrs. Crosland--writes me: "I consider that it would be impossible to exaggerate the enthusiasm of the English people on the accession of Queen Victoria to the throne. To be able at all to understand it, we must recollect the sovereigns she succeeded--the Sailor-King, a most commonplace old man, with 'a head like a pine-apple'; George IV., a most unkingly king, extremely unpopular, except with a small party, of High Tories; and poor George III., who by the generation Victoria followed, could only be remembered as a frail, afflicted, blind old man--for a long period shut up at Kew, and never seen by his people. It was not only that Victoria was a really lovely girl, but that she had the _prestige_ of having been brought up as a Liberal, and then she kept the hated Duke of Cumberland from the throne. Possibly he was not guilty of half the atrocious sins attributed to him, but I do not remember any royal personage so universally hated."

It was fear of this bogie of a Cumberland that made the English people anxious for the early marriage of the Queen, and yet caused them to dread it, for the fate of poor Princess Charlotte had not been forgotten. But I do not think that political or dynastic questions had much to do with the popularity of the young Queen. It was the resurrection of the dead dignity of the Royal House of Brunswick, in her fair person--the resuscitation of the half-dead principle of loyalty in the hearts of her people. Of her Majesty's subjects of the better class, actors and quakers alone seem to have taken her accession with all its splendid accessions, coolly,--the former, perhaps, because much mock royalty had somehow cheapened the real thing, and the latter because trained from infancy to disregard the pomps and show of this world. Macready jots down among the little matters in his "Diary," the fact of Her Majesty coming to his theatre, and waiting awhile after the play to see him and congratulate him. He speaks of her as "a pretty little girl," and does not seem particularly "set up" by her compliments. Joseph Sturge, the eminent and most lovable philanthropist of Birmingham,--a "Friend indeed" to all "in need,"--waited on Her Majesty, soon after her accession, as one of a delegation of the Society of Friends. Some years after, he related the circumstance to me, and simply described her to me as "a nice, pleasant, modest young woman,--graceful, though a little shy, and on the whole, comely."

"Did you kiss her hand?" I asked. "O yes, and found that act of homage no hardship, I assure thee. It was a fair, soft, delicate little hand."

I afterwards regretted that I had not asked him what he did with his

broad-brimmed hat when he was about to be presented, knowing that the principles of Fox and Penn forbade his removing that article in homage to any human creature; but I have just discovered in a volume of Court Records, that "the deputation from the Society of Friends, commonly called Quakers, were uncovered, according to custom, by the Yeoman of the Guard." As they were all non-resistants, they doubtless bore the indignity passively and placidly. Moreover, they all bowed, if they did not kneel, before the throne on which their Queen was seated, and as I said kissed her hand, in token of their friendly fealty.

In June, 1838, were issued the first gold sovereigns, bearing the head of the Queen--the same spirited young head that we see now on all the modern gold and silver pieces of the realm. That on the copper is a little different, but all are pretty--so pretty that Her Majesty's loyal subjects prefer them to all other likenesses, even poor men feeling that they cannot have too many of them.

CHAPTER XII.

The Coronation.

The coronation was fixed for June 28, 1838 a little more than a year from the accession.

The, Queen had been slightly troubled at the thought of some of the antiquated forms of that grand and complicated ceremony--for instance, the homage of the Peers, spiritual and temporal. As the rule stood, they were all required after kneeling to her, and pledging their allegiance, to rise and kiss her on the left cheek. She might be able to bear up under the salutes of those holy old gentlemen, the archbishops and bishops--but the anticipation of the kisses of all the temporal Peers, old and young, was enough to appall her--there were six hundred of them. So she issued a proclamation excusing the noble gentlemen from that onerous duty, and at the coronation only the Royal Dukes, Sussex and Cambridge, kissed the Queen's rosy cheek, by special kinship privilege. The others had to be content with her hand. The other omitted ceremony was one which formerly took place in Westminster Hall--consisting chiefly of the appearance of a knight armed, mailed and mounted, who as Royal Champion proceeded to challenge the enemies of the new Sovereign to mortal combat. This, which had appeared ridiculous in the case of the burly George IV., would have been something pretty and poetic in that of the young maiden-Queen, but she doubtless felt that as every Englishman was disposed to be her champion, the old form would be the idlest, melodramatic bravado.

The crown which had fitted George and William was too big and heavy for their niece--so it was taken to pieces, and the jewels re-set in a way to greatly reduce the size and weight. A description now before me, of the new crown is too dazzling for me to transcribe. I must keep my eyes for plainer work; but I can give the value of the bauble--L112,760!--and this was before the acquisition of the koh-i-noor.

Of the coronation I will try to give a clear, if not a full account.

It was a wonderful time in London when that day of days was ushered in,

by the roar of cannon from the grim old Tower, answered by a battery in St. James' Park. Such a world of people everywhere! All Great Britain and much of the Continent seemed to have emptied themselves into this metropolis, which overflowed with a surging, murmuring tide of humanity. Ah me, how much of that eager, noisy life is silent and forgotten now!

There may have before been coronations surpassing that of Victoria in scenic splendor, if not in solid magnificence-that of the first Napoleon and his Empress, perhaps-but there has been nothing so grand as a royal pageant seen since, until the crowning of the present Russian Emperor at Moscow, where the almost intolerable splendor was seen against a dark background of tragic possibilities. This English coronation was less brilliant, perhaps, but also less barbaric than that august, overpowering ceremony over which it seemed there might hover "perturbed spirits" of men slain in mad revolts against tyranny--of youths and women done to death on the red scaffold, in dungeons, in midnight mines, and Siberian snows; and about which there surely lurked the fiends of dynamite. But this pure young girl, trusting implicitly in the loving loyalty of her subjects--relying on Heaven for help and guidance, lifted to the throne by the Constitution and the will of a free people, as conquerors have been upborne on shields, what had she to fear? A very different and un-nihilistic "cloud of witnesses" was hers, we may believe. If ever there was a mortal state-occasion for the immortals to be abroad, it was this.

The great procession started from Buckingham Palace at about 10 o'clock. The first two state carriages, each drawn by six horses, held the Duchess of Kent and her attendants. The Queen's mother, regally attired, was enthusiastically cheered all along the way. The Queen was, of course, in the grand state coach, which is mostly gilding and glass--a prodigiously imposing affair. It was drawn by eight cream-colored horses--great stately creatures--with white flowing manes, and tails like mountain cascades. Many battalions and military bands were stationed along the line, presenting arms and playing the National Anthem, "And the People, O the People!" Every window, balcony, and door-step was swarming, every foot of standing room occupied--even on roofs and chimneys. Ladies and children waved handkerchiefs and dropped flowers from balconies, and the shouts from below and the shouts from above seemed to meet and break into joyous storm-bursts in the air. Accounts state that Her Majesty "looked exceedingly well, and that she seemed in excellent spirits, and highly delighted with the imposing scene and the enthusiasm of her subjects." One would think she might have been.

She had a great deal to go through with that day. She must have rehearsed well, or she would have been confused by the multiform ceremonials of that grand spectacular performance. The scene, as she entered Westminster Abbey, might well have startled her out of her serene calm, but it didn't. On each side of the nave, reaching from the western door to the organ screen, were the galleries, erected for the spectators. These were all covered with crimson cloth fringed with gold. Underneath them were lines of foot-guards, very martial-looking, fellows. The old stone floor, worn with the tread of Kings' coronations and funeral processions, was covered with matting, and purple and crimson cloth. Immediately under the central tower of the Abbey, inside the choir, five steps from the floor, on a carpet of purple and gold, was a platform covered with cloth of gold, and on it was the golden "Chair of Homage." Within the chancel, near the altar, stood the stiff, quaint old chair in I which all the sovereigns of England since Edward the Confessor have been crowned. Cloth of gold quite concealed the "chunk of old red sandstone," called the "stone of Scone," on which the ancient Scottish Kings were crowned, and

which the English seem to keep and use for luck. There were galleries on galleries upholstered in crimson cloth, and splendid tapestries, wherein sat members of Parliament and foreign Princes and Embassadors. In the organ loft were singers in white, and instrumental performers in scarlet --all looking very fine and festive; and up very high was a band of trumpeters, whose music, pealing over the heads of the people, produced, at times, a wonderful effect.

Fashionable people had got up early for once. Many were at the Abbey doors long before 5 o'clock, and when the Queen arrived at 11:30, hundreds of delicate ladies in full evening-dress, had been waiting for her for seven long hours. The foreign Princes and Embassadors were in gorgeous costumes; and there was the Lord Mayor in all his glory, blinding to behold. His most formidable rival was Prince Esterhazy, who sparkled with costly jewels from his head down to his boots-looking as though he had been snowed upon with pearls, and had also been caught out in a rain of diamonds, and had come in dripping. All these grand personages and the Peers and Peeresses were so placed as to have a perfect view of the part of the minster in which the coronation took place-called, in the programme, "the Theatre."

The Queen came in about the middle of the splendid procession. In her royal robe of crimson velvet, furred with ermine, and trimmed with gold lace, wearing the collars of her orders, and on her head a circlet of gold-her immense train borne by eight very noble young ladies, she is said to have looked "truly royal," though so young, and only four feet eight inches in height. As she entered the Abbey, the orchestra and choir broke out into the National Anthem. They performed bravely, but were scarcely heard for the mighty cheers which went up from the great assembly, making the old minster resound in all its aisles and arches and ancient chapels. Then, as she advanced slowly towards the choir, the anthem, "_I was glad_" was sung, and after that, the sweet-voiced choir-boys of Westminster chanted like so many white-gowned, sleek-headed angels, "_Vivat Victoria Regina!_" Ah, then she felt very solemnly that she was Queen; and moving softly to a chair placed between the Chair of Homage and the altar, she knelt down on the "faldstool" before it, and meekly said her prayers.

When the boys had finished their glad anthem, the Archbishop of Canterbury, with several high officers of state, moved to the east side of the theatre, when the Primate, in a loud voice, said: "I here present unto you Queen Victoria, the undoubted Queen of this realm, wherefore all you who are come this day to your homage, are you willing to do the same?"

It seems a little confused, but the people understood it, and shouted, "God save Queen Victoria!" This "recognition," as it was called, was repeated at the south, west, and north sides of the "theatre," and every time was answered by that joyous shout, and by the pealing of trumpets and the beating of drums. The Queen stood throughout this ceremony, each time turning her head towards the point from which the recognition came.

One may almost wonder if all those loyal shouts and triumphant trumpetings and drum-beatings did not trouble somewhat the long quiet of death in the dusky old chapels in which sleep the fair Queen Eleanor, and the gracious Philippa, and valiant Elizabeth, and hapless Mary Stuart.

Then followed a great many curious rites and ceremonies of receiving and presenting offerings; and many prayers and the reading of the Litany, and

the preaching of the sermon, in which the poor Queen was exhorted to "follow in the footsteps of her predecessor"--which would have been to walk "sailor-fashion" morally. Then came the administration of the oath. After having been catechised by the Archbishop in regard to the Established Church, Her Majesty was conducted to the altar, where kneeling, and laying her hand on the Gospels in the great Bible, she said, in clear tones, silvery yet solemn: "The things which I have here before promised, I will perform and keep. So help me God!"

She then kissed the book, and after that the hymn, "_Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire_" was sung by the choir, the Queen still kneeling.

I read the other day that the Duke of Connaught (Prince Arthur), on visiting Norwich Cathedral, was shown the very Bible on which his mother took her well-kept coronation oath, forty-five years ago. It was a most solemn pledge, and yet it was all comprehended in the little girl Victoria's promise to her governess, "I will be good."

Her Majesty next seated herself in St. Edward's chair; a rich cloth of gold was held over her head, and the Archbishop anointed her with holy oil, in the form of a cross. Then followed more prayers, more forms and ceremonies, the presentation of swords and spurs, and such like little feminine adornments, the investing with the Imperial robe, the sceptre and the ring, the consecration and blessing of the new crown, and at last the crowning. In this august ceremony three Archbishops, two Bishops, a Dean, and several other clergymen were somehow employed. The task was most religiously performed. It was the Primate of all England who reverently placed the crown on that reverent young head. The moment this was done all the Peers and Peeresses, who, with their coronets in their hands, or borne by pages at their sides, had been intently watching the proceedings, crowned themselves, shouting, "God save the Queen!" while again trumpets pealed forth, and drums sounded, and the far-off Tower and Park guns, fired by signal, boomed over the glad Capital.

It is stated that the most magically beautiful effect of all was produced by the Peeresses, in suddenly and simultaneously donning their coronets. It was as though the stars had somehow kept back their radiance till the young moon revealed herself in all her silver splendor.

Then came the exhortation, an anthem, and a benediction, and after a few more forms and pomps, the Queen was conducted to the Chair of Homage. Before the next long ceremony began, the Queen handed her two sceptres to two of the lords in attendance, to keep for her, as quietly as any other girl might hand over to a couple of dangling young gentlemen her fan and bouquet to hold for her, while she drew on her gloves.

The Lords Spiritual, headed by the Primate, began the homage by kneeling, and kissing the Queen's hand. Then came the Dukes of Sussex and Cambridge, who, removing their coronets, and touching them to the Crown, solemnly pledged their allegiance, and kissed their niece on the left cheek. Her manner to them was observed to be very affectionate. Then the other Dukes, and Peers on Peers did homage by kneeling, touching coronet to crown, and kissing that little white hand. When the turn of the Duke of Wellington came, the entire assembly broke into applause; and yet he was not the hero of the day, but an older and far more infirm Peer, Lord Rolle, who mounted the steps with difficulty, and stumbling at the top, fell, and rolled all the way back to the floor, where "he lay at the bottom of the steps, coiled up in his robes." At sight of the accident the Queen rose from her throne, and held out her hands as though to help

him. It was a pretty incident, not for the poor Peer, but as showing Her Majesty's impulsive kindness of heart. The old nobleman was not hurt, but quickly unwound himself, rose, mounted the steps, and tried again and again to touch the crown with the coronet in his weak, uncertain hand, every plucky effort being hailed with cheers. At length the Queen, smiling, gave him her hand to kiss, dispensing with the form of touching her crown. Miss Martineau, who witnessed the scene, states that a foreigner who was present was made to believe by a wag that this ludicrous tumble was a part of the regular programme, and that the Lords Rolle held their title on condition of performing that feat at every coronation, Rolle meaning roll.

This most tedious ceremony over, finishing up with more anthems, trumpets, drums, and shouts, the Sacrament was administered to the Queen --she discrowning herself, and kneeling while she partook of the holy elements. Then a re-crowning, a re-enthronement, more anthems, and the blessed release of the final benediction. Passing into King Edward's chapel, the Queen changed the Imperial for the Royal robe of purple velvet, and passed out of the Abbey, wearing her crown, bearing the sceptre in her right hand, and the orb in her left, and so got into her carriage, and drove home through the shouting multitude. It is stated that Her Majesty did not seem exhausted, though she was observed to put her hand to her head frequently, as though the crown was not, after all, a very comfortable fit.

After reigning more than a year, she had been obliged to spend nearly five fatiguing hours in being finished as a Queen. How strange it all seems to us American Republicans, who make and unmake our rulers with such expedition and scant ceremony.

CHAPTER XIII.

Pictures and descriptions of the Queen--Her love of pets--Her passion for horseback exercise--Her spirited behavior in the first change of her Ministers.

In the Hall of the St. George's Society of Philadelphia there is a very interesting picture by the late Mr. Sully of Queen Victoria in her coronation robes. It is life-size, and represents her as mounting the steps of the throne, her head slightly turned, and looking back over the left shoulder. It seems to me that Her Majesty should own this picture, for it is an exquisite specimen of Mr. Sully's peculiar coloring, and a very lovely portrait. Here is no rigidity, no constraint, no irksome state. There is a springy, exultant vitality in the bearing of the graceful figure, and the light poise of the head, while in the complexion there is a tender softness and a freshness of tints belonging only to the dewy morning of life. The princeliness of youth, the glow of joy and hope overtop and outshine the crown which she wears as lightly as though it were a May-queen's Coronal of roses; and the dignity of simple girlish purity envelops her more royally than velvet and ermine. The eyes have the softness of morning skies and spring violets, and the smile hovering about the red lips, a little parted, is that of an unworn heart and an eager, confident spirit. This was the first portrait of the young Queen I ever saw, and still seems to me the loveliest.

Another American artist, Mr. Leslie, painted a large picture of the coronation, which Her Majesty purchased. As he was to paint the scene, he was provided with a very good seat near the throne--so near that he said he could plainly see, when she came to sign her coronation oath, that she wrote a large, bold hand, doing credit to her old writing master, Mr. Steward.

In his recollections he says: "I don't know why, but the first sight of her in her robes of state brought tears into my eyes, and it had this effect upon many people; she looked almost like a child." Campbell, the poet, is related to have said to a friend: "I was at Her Majesty's coronation in Westminster Abbey, and she conducted herself so well during the long and fatiguing ceremony that I shed tears many times."

Carlyle said at the time, with a shake of his craggy, shaggy head: "Poor little Queen! she is at an age at which a girl can hardly be trusted to choose a bonnet for herself, yet a task is laid upon her from which an archangel might shrink.":

And yet, according to Earl Russell, this "poor little Queen," over whom the painters and poets wept, and the great critic "roared gently" his lofty commiseration, informed her anxious mother that she "ascended the throne without alarm." Victoria, if reminded of this in later years, might have said, "They who know nothing, fear nothing"; and yet the very vagueness, as well as vastness, of the untried life would have appalled many spirits.

The Queen was certainly a very valiant little woman, but there would have been something unnatural, almost uncanny, about her had the regal calm and religious seriousness which marked her mien during those imposing rites, continued indefinitely, and it is right pleasant to read in the reminiscences of Leslie, how the child in her broke out when all the magnificent but tiresome parade, all the grand stage-business with those heavy actors, was over. The painter says: "She is very fond of dogs, and has one favorite little spaniel, who is always on the lookout for her return when she is from home. She had, of course, been separated from him on that day longer than usual, and when the state-coach drove up to the Palace steps she heard him barking joyously in the hall, and exclaimed, 'There's Dash,' and was in a hurry to doff her crown and royal robe, and lay down the sceptre and the orb, which she carried in her hands, and go and give Dash his bath."

I hope this story is literally true, for I have a strong impression that it was this peculiar love of pets, this sense of companionship with intelligent, affectionate animals, especially dogs and horses, that with an ever-fresh delight in riding and dancing, healthful sports and merry games, was the salvation of the young Queen. Without such vents, the mighty responsibility of her dizzy position, the grandeur, the dignity, the decorum, the awful etiquette would have killed her--or at least, puffed her up with pride, or petrified her with formality. Sir John Campbell wrote of her at this time: "She is as merry and playful as a kitten."--I hope she loved kittens! Again he says: "The Queen was in great spirits, and danced with more than usual gaiety, a romping, country-dance, called the Tempest."

In addition to this girlish gaiety, Victoria seems always to have had a vein of un-Guelph-like humor, a keen sense of the ludicrous, a delicious enjoyment of fun, which are among Heaven's choicest blessings to poor mortals, royal or republican. Prince Albert's sympathy with her love of

innocent amusement, and her delight in the absurdities and drolleries of animal as well as of human life and character, was one and perhaps not the weakest of the ties which bound her to him.

With the young Queen equestrian exercise was more than a pastime, it was almost a passion. She rode remarkably well, and in her gratitude for this beautiful accomplishment,--rarer even in England than people think--she wished as soon as she came to the throne, to give her riding-master, Fozard, a suitable position near her person, something higher than that of a groom. She was told that there was no situation vacant that he could fill. "Then I will create one," she said, and dubbed him "Her Majesty's Stirrup holder." I would have done more for him--made him Master of the Horse, in place of Lord Albemarle, who always rolled along in the royal carriage, or created for him the office of Lord High Equerry of the Realm.

N. P. Willis, in his delightful "Pencilings By the Way," gives a bright glimpse of the Queen on horseback. It was in Hyde Park, and he saye the party from the Palace came on so fast that the scarlet-coated outriders had difficulty in clearing the track of the other equestrians. Her Majesty has always liked to go fast by horse or steam-power, as though determined not to let Time get ahead of her, for all his wings.

The poet then adds: "Her Majesty rides quite fearlessly and securely. I met her party full gallop near the centre of Rotten Row. On came the Queen, on a dun-colored, highly-groomed horse, with her Prime Minister on one side of her, and Lord Byron on the other; her _cortege_ of Maids of Honor, and Lords and Ladies of the Court checking their spirited horses, and preserving always a slight distance between themselves and Her Majesty. ... Victoria's round, plump figure looks exceedingly well in her dark green riding-dress. ... She rode with her mouth open, and seemed exhilarated with pleasure."

This was in 1839. Some years later, a young American writer, who shall be nameless, but who was as passionate a lover of horses as the Queen herself, wrote a sort of paean to horseback-riding. She began by telling her friends, all whom it might concern, that when she was observed to be low in her mind--when she seemed "weary of life," and to "shrink from its strife"--when, in short, things didn't go well with her generally, they were not to come to her with the soft tones or the tears of sympathy; then she went on thus, rather pluckily, I think:

"No counsel I ask, and no pity I need,
But bring me, O bring me, my gallant young steed,
With his high-arched neck and his nostril spread wide;
His eye full of fire, and his step full of pride.
As I spring to his back, as I seize the strong rein,
The strength to my spirit returneth again,
The bonds are all broken that fettered my mind,
And my cares borne away on the wings of the wind,--
My pride lifts its head, for a season, bowed down,
And the queen in my nature now puts on her crown."

Now if the simple American girl prepared for a lonely gallop through the woods, could so have thrilled with the fulness, joy, and strength of young life; could have felt so royal, mounted on a half-broken, roughly-groomed western colt (for that's what the "steed" really was), with few fine points and no pedigree to speak of--what must the glorious exercise have been to that great little Queen, re-enthroned on thoroughbred,

"highly-groomed," magnificent English horse-flesh?

Her Majesty has always been constant in her equine loves. Six of her saddle-horses, splendidly caparisoned, walked proudly, as so many Archbishops, in the coronation procession; and in the royal stables of London and Windsor, her old favorites have been most tenderly cared for. When she could no longer use them, she still petted them, and never reproached them for having "outlived their usefulness."

Another writer from America, James Gordon Bennett, sent home, this coronation year, some very pleasant descriptions of the Queen. At the opera he had his first sight of her. "About ten o'clock, when the opera was half through, the royal party entered. 'There! there! there!' exclaimed a young girl behind me--'there's the Queen!' looking eagerly up to the royal box. I looked too, and saw a fair, light-haired little girl, dressed with great simplicity, in white muslin, with hair plain, a blue ribbon at the back, enter the box and take her seat, half hid in the red drapery at the corner remote from the stage. The Queen is certainly very simple in her appearance; but I am not sure that this very simplicity does not set off to advantage her fair, pretty, pleasant, little round Dutch face. Her bust is extremely well-proportioned, and her complexion very fair. There is a slight parting of the rosy lips, between which you can see little nicks of something like very white teeth. The expression of her face is amiable and good-tempered. I could see nothing like that awful majesty, that mysterious something which doth hedge a Queen. ... During the performance, the Queen would now and then draw aside the curtain and gaze back at the audience, with that earnestness and curiosity which any young girl might show."

Mr. Bennett gave other descriptions of the Queen as he saw her driving in the Park. He wrote: "I had been taking a walk over the interior of the Park, gazing listlessly at the crowd of carriages as they rolled by. Just as I was entering the arched gateway to depart, a sensation spread through the crowd which filled that part of the promenade. 'The Queen! the Queen!' flew from lip to lip. In an instant two outriders shot through the gate; near Apsley House, followed by a barouche and four, carrying the Queen and three of her suite. She sat on the right hand of the back seat, leaning a good deal back. She was, as usual, dressed very simply, in white, with a plain straw, or Leghorn bonnet, and her veil was thrown aside. She carried a green parasol."

Ah, why _green_, O Queen? Later that afternoon he saw her again, going at a slower rate, holding up that green parasol, bowing right and left and smiling, as the crowd saluted and cheered. The Queen does not bow and smile so much nowadays, but then she no longer carries a green parasol.

N. P. Willis also saw the young sovereign at the opera, and dashes off a poet's vivid sketch of her:

"In her box to the left of me sat the Queen, keeping time with her fan to the singing of Pauline Garcia, her favorite Minister, Lord Melbourne, standing behind her chair, and her maids of honor grouped around her--herself the youthful, smiling, admired sovereign of the most powerful nation on earth. The Queen's face has thinned and grown more oval since I saw her four years ago as the Princess Victoria. She has been compelled to think since then, and such exigencies in all stations in life work out the expression of the face. She has now what I should pronounce a decidedly intellectual countenance, a little petulant withal when she turns to speak, but on the whole quite beautiful enough for a virgin

Queen. She was dressed less gaily than many others around her."

I have given much space to these personal descriptions of Queen Victoria as she appeared in those first two years of her Queenhood, because they are still to the world--the world of young people, at least--the most interesting years of all her glorious reign. There was great poetry about that time, and, it must be confessed, some peril.

Mrs. Oliphant, in her excellent little life of the Queen, says: "The immediate circle of friends around the young sovereign fed her with no flatteries."

It is difficult to believe such a statement of any mortal Court-circle. But if gross adulation was not offered--a sort of moral pabulum, which the Queen's admirable good sense would have rejected, there was profound homage in the very attitude of courtiers and in the etiquette of Court life. The incense of praise and admiration, "unuttered or exprest," was perpetually and inevitably rising up about her young footsteps wherever they strayed; it formed the very air she breathed--about as healthful an atmosphere to live and sleep in as would be that of a conservatory abounding in tuberoses, white lilies, and jessamine.

Still, that she did not grow either arrogant or artificial, seems proved by the pleasant accounts given of her simple and gracious ways by the painters of whom I have spoken--Thomas Sully and Charles Leslie. I remember particularly, hearing from a friend of Mr. Sully, of the generous interest she took in his portrait of her, which, I think, was painted at Windsor. She gave him all the sittings, or rather standings, her busy life would allow; giving him free use of all the splendid paraphernalia necessary for his work. Between whiles the painter's young daughter stood for the picture, being, of course, obliged to don the royal robes and even the tiara. One day, while thus engaged and arrayed, the Queen came suddenly into the room. Miss Sully much confused was about to descend from the steps of the throne, when the Queen exclaimed, laughing: "Pray stay as you are; I like to see how I look!"

Leslie, whose picture of the Coronation was painted at Windsor, gave a pleasant account of the Queen's kindly and easy ways. "She is now," he says, "so far satisfied with the likeness that she does not wish me to touch it again. She sat five times--not only for the face, but for as much as is seen of the figure, and for the hands, with the coronation-ring on the finger. Her hands, by the by, are very pretty--the backs dimpled and the fingers delicately shaped. She was particular to have her hair dressed exactly as she wore it at the ceremony every time she sat."

The Queen in her writings says very little of this portion of her "strange, eventful history,"--a time so filled with incident, so gilded with romance, so bathed in poetry, so altogether splendid in the eyes of all the world; for to her, life--or all which was most "happy and glorious" in life--began and ended with Prince Albert. She even speaks with regret of that period of single queenliness, and says: "A worse school for a young girl--one more detrimental to all natural feelings and affections--cannot well be imagined than the position of a Queen at eighteen without experience and without a husband to guide and support her. This the Queen can state from painful experience, and she thanks God that none of her own dear daughters are exposed to such danger."

Human nature is rash and young-woman-nature ambitious and ill-disposed to profit by the costly experience of eld, and I doubt not the clever

Princess Royal or the proud and fair Princess Louise would have mounted any throne in Christendom "without alarm." Most of Her Majesty's loyal subjects deny that any harm came to her from her unsupported position as Queen Regnant, or that she was capable of being thus harmed--but the Queen knows best.

The Princess Victoria was a proud, high-spirited girl, and it were no treason to suppose that at the first she had a sense of relief when the leading-strings, in which she had been so long held, were cut, though by the scissors of Atropos, and she was free to stand and go alone. Her good mother, becoming at once an object of political jealousy, removed herself from the old close companionship, though retaining in her heart the old tender solicitude--perhaps feeling herself more than ever necessary to her daughter. Mothers are so conceited. It is small wonder if after her life of studious and modest seclusion and filial subordination, the gaiety, the splendor, and the supremacy of the new existence intoxicated the young sovereign somewhat. The pleasures of her capital and the homage of the world captivated her imagination, while the consciousness of power and wealth and personal loveliness inclined her to be self-indulgent and self-willed. In spite of the good counsel of the family Mentor, Baron Stockmar, and of her sagacious uncle, Leopold, she must have committed some errors of judgment--fallen into some follies; she was so young and impulsive--so very human. Her first independent political act seems to have been a mistake, founded on a misunderstanding. It was at all events an act more Georgian than Victorian. The Whig party, to which she was attached, had by a series of blunders and by weak vacillation lost strength and popularity, and Lord Melbourne's Ministry found itself so hard-pressed that it struck colors and resigned. Then the Queen was advised by the Duke of Wellington to invite the Conservative leader, Sir Robert Peel, to form a new Ministry. She did so, but frankly told that gentleman that she was very sorry to lose Lord Melbourne and his colleagues, whom she liked and approved--which must have been pleasant talk to Sir Robert. However, he went to work, but soon found that objections were made by his colleagues to certain Whig ladies in personal attendance on the Queen, and likely to influence her. So it was proposed to Her Majesty to make an important change in her household. I believe that the Duchess of Sutherland and Lady Normandy--the first the sister and the second the wife of a prominent Liberal--were especially meant; but the Queen took it that she was called on to dismiss all her ladies, and flatly refused, saying that to do so would be "repugnant to her feelings"--forgetting that feeling was no constitutional argument. She had got used to those Ladies of the Bed-Chamber, and they to her. They knew just where everything was, what colors became her, and what gossip and games amused her. Doubtless she loved them, and doubtless also she loved her own way. Surely the right of her constitutional advisers to dictate to her must have a limit somewhere, and she drew the line at her bed-chamber door. Then, as Sir Robert would not yield the point, she recalled Melbourne and went on as before. The affair created immense excitement. Non-political people were amused at the little Queen's spirit of independence. Liberals applauded her patriotism and pluck in defeating the "wicked Bed-Chamber Plot," and for her loyalty to her friends; but the defeated Tories were very naturally incensed, and, manlike, paid Her Majesty back, when measures which she had much at heart came before Parliament a year or so later--as we shall see.

Many years later the Queen appears to have thought that she was beginning to drift on to rocks of serious political mistakes and misfortunes as well as into rapids of frivolity, when the good, wise Pilot came to take the helm of her life-craft.

This pilot was, of course, the "Prince Charming," selected and reared for her away in Saxe-Coburg--that handsome Cousin Albert, once in a letter to the good uncle Leopold tacitly accepted by her in girlish thoughtlessness, as she would have accepted a partner in a joyous country-dance, and afterwards nearly as thoughtlessly thrown over and himself sent adrift.

CHAPTER XIV.

Prince Albert.

If the Princess Charlotte was the prototype of her cousin Victoria, Prince Leopold was in some respects the prototype of his beloved nephew Albert, who was born in August, 1819, at Rosenau, a charming summer residence of his father, the reigning Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfield. The little Prince's grandmother, the Dowager-Duchess of Saxe-Coburg, in writing to her daughter, the Duchess of Kent, to announce the happy event, says: "The little boy is to be christened to-morrow, and to have the name of Albert."

When the christening came off it appeared that "Albert" was only one and the simplest of several names, but he was always known and always will be known by that name. It has been immortalized by his upright character, his rare intellectual gifts, his goodness and grace; by the affection of his countrymen and his noble life-work in England; by the genius of England's greatest living poet, and by the love and sorrow of England's Queen.

While the Prince was yet a baby, his mother wrote of him: "Albert is superb,--remarkably beautiful, with large blue eyes, a delicate mouth, a fine nose, and dimpled cheeks. He is lively and always gay."

Albert was the second son of the Duke and Duchess. Ernest, a year or two older, is thus described by his mother: "Ernest is very strong and robust, but not half so pretty as his brother. He is handsome, though; with black eyes."

Prince Leopold spent some time with his brother at Coburg when Albert was about two years old, and then began the tender, life-long mutual affection which led to such happy and important results. The young mother wrote: "Albert adores his uncle Leopold; never quits him for a moment; looks sweetly at him; is constantly embracing him; and is never happy except when near him."

The grandmother also wrote: "Leopold is very kind to the little boys. Bold _Albertinchen_ drags him constantly about by the hand. The little fellow is the pendant to the pretty cousin (Princess Victoria); very handsome, but too slight for a boy; lively, very funny, all good nature, and full of mischief. The other day he did not know how to make enough of me, because I took him with me in the carriage. He kept saying, 'Albert is going with grandmamma!' and gave me his little hand to kiss. 'There, grandmamma, kiss!'"

The little Princes were not long to enjoy the care and society of their

loving and lovely mother. An unhappy estrangement between their parents, followed by a separation and a divorce, left them at seven and five years old half-orphaned; for they never saw their mother again. She died at St. Wendel, in Switzerland, while still young and beautiful; but doubtless weary enough of life, which had brought her such happiness, only to take it away. Two words as holy as her prayers, were on her dying lips--"Ernest!" "Albert!"

But the boys were rich in grandmothers--having two of the very tenderest and dearest of Dowager-Duchesses to watch over them (watching each other, perhaps, the while) and to minister to them for many a year. According to these venerable ladies, Albert, who was certainly a delicate, nervous child, was one of those "little angels" who are destined not to survive the dimpled, golden-curled, lisping, and croupy period; being too good and sweet and exquisite for this wicked and rough world. But, according to certain entries in the Prince's own diary--his first, begun in his sixth year--he at that age happily revealed some hopeful signs of saving naughtiness and healthful "original sin."

"11th _February_, 1825.
"I was told to recite something, but did not wish to do so. That was not right--naughty!"

"20th _February_.
"I had left all my lesson books lying about in the room, and I had to put them away; then I cried."

"28th _February_.
"I cried at my lesson to-day because I could not find a verb, and the Rath (tutor) pinched me, to show me what a verb was. I cried about it."

"9th _April_.
"I got up well and happy; afterward I had a fight with my brother."

"10th _April_.
"I had another fight with my brother; that was not right."

This almost baby-prince seems to have been a valorous little fellow. When his blood was up he seems to have given little thought to the superior age or strength of his opponents, but to have been always ready to "pitch in"; or, to use the more refined and courtly language of his tutor, M. Florschuetz, "he was not, at times, indisposed to resort to force, if his wishes were not at once complied with."

For several years the young Princes, devoted to each other, passed studious, yet active and merry lives at the Coburg Palace, and in the dear country home of Rosenau. They seem to have corresponded with their cousin Victoria, whom, it seems, the lad Albert was led by his grandmamma Coburg to regard with an especially romantic and tender interest. That grandmamma, the mother of Prince Leopold and the Duchess of Kent, and who seems to have been a very able and noble woman, died when her darling Albert was about twelve years old; but the hope of her heart did not die with her, and without doubt Prince Albert was educated with special and constant reference to a far more important and brilliant destiny than often falls to the lot of the young sons of even Grand Ducal houses. He was well instructed in many branches of science, in languages, in music and literature, in politics, and what seems a contradiction, in ethics,--his moral development being most carefully watched over, while his physical training was a pendant to that which made his cousin Victoria

one of the healthiest and hardiest of modern Englishwomen. With a delicate constitution and a sensitive, nervous temperament, Prince Albert would scarcely have lived to manhood, except for that admirable physical training. As a child, he was braced up by much life in the open air, simple diet, a good deal of rough play--while as to sleep, he was allowed to help himself, which he did plentifully, being much given to somnolency. As a lad and youth, he hardened himself by all healthful manly sports and exercises; in short, made a boy of mamma's "angel," a man of grandmamma's golden-haired darling. Nor was that great element of a liberal education, travel, wanting. The brothers paid visits to their uncle Leopold, now King of Belgium, and after tours in Germany, Austria, and Holland, visited England, and their aunt Kent and their cousin Victoria, to whom they were most warmly commended by their uncle.

According to the Queen's books, with this visit of three weeks began the personal acquaintance of the cousins; yet old Kensingtonians have a legend which they obstinately cling to, that Prince Albert, when much younger, spent three years in the old brick palace with his aunt and cousin, in pursuance of the matrimonial plans of the Duchess of Kent and Prince Leopold; and I have seen in a quaint old juvenile book a wood-cut representing the little Victoria in a big hat, riding on a pony in the park, and little Albert in a visored cap and short jacket running along at her side. But, of course, it was all a mistake; there was no such period of childish courtship, and the boy in the queer Dutch cap was an optical illusion, or a "double," in German a _doppel-gaenger_. During the real visit, occurred the seventeenth birthday of the Princess, and there were public rejoicings and Court-festivities, preceded and followed for the cousins by days of pleasant companionship, in walking and riding, and evenings of music and dancing. But if the lad Albert, remembering the promise of his garrulous nurse, and the prophecy of his fond grandmamma, and the wish of his father and uncle Leopold, sought to read his destiny in the baffling blue eyes of the gay young girl, he seems to have failed, for he could only write home: "Our cousin is most amiable." Perhaps Victoria's own wonderful destiny, now drawing near, left little room in her heart or thought for lesser romances; perhaps the crown of England suspended over her head as by a single hair, the frail life of an old man, outdazzled even the graces and merits of her handsome but rather immature kinsman. Besides, "Prince Charming" at that time was short and stout, and he spoke our language too imperfectly to make love (which he would have pronounced _luf_) in the future Queen's English; and so he went away without any exchange of vows, or rings, or locks of fair hair or miniatures, and returned to his studies, principally at the University of Bonn. It is true that the Princess wrote to her "dearest uncle Leopold" soon after this visit, begging him to take special care of one now so dear to her, adding: "I hope and trust that all will go on prosperously and well on this subject now of so much importance to me." Yet King Leopold was a wise man, and did not build too securely on the fancy of a girl of seventeen, though he kept to work, he and the Baron, on their Prince-Consort making, in spite of the opposition of old King William, and all his brothers, and the candidates favored by them.

It was from quaint, quiet old Bonn that Prince Albert wrote, on his cousin's accession to the throne, his famous letter of congratulation, in which there appeared not one word of courtier-like adulation--not a thought calculated to stir the heart of the young girl suddenly raised to that giddy height overlooking the world, with a thrill of exultation or vain-gloriousness. Thus wrote this boy-man of eighteen: "Now you are Queen of the mightiest land of Europe; in your hand lies the happiness of millions. May Heaven assist you, and strengthen you with its strength in

the high, but difficult task."

After leaving the University Prince Albert traveled in Switzerland and Italy with Baron Stockmar--everywhere winning the admiration and respect of the best sort of people by the rare princeliness of his appearance, his refined taste, his thoughtful and singularly receptive mind. And so three years went by. They were three years of uncertainty in regard to the great projects formed for him, of happiness, and a noble and useful, if subordinate career. King Leopold, the good genius of the two families, had not suffered his cousin to forget him, but though she declared she cared for no one else, she was not disposed to enter into any positive engagement, even with Albert. She enjoyed intensely her proud, independent position as Queen Regnant. She was having such a glorious swing at life, and very naturally feared the possible restraints, and the inevitable subordination of marriage. She was "too young to marry," and Albert was still younger--full three months. She would remain as she was, the gay, untrammeled maiden-Queen of England, for at least three or four years longer, and then think about it. The Prince was made,

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