

Life of Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen V.1.

Sarah Tytler

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LIFE OF HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY
THE QUEEN

BY SARAH TYTLER
EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION, BY
LORD RONALD GOWER, F.S.A.

IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. I.

Entered according to Act of Parliament of Canada, in the year Eighteen
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of Agriculture.

PREFACE.

I have been asked to write a few words of preface to this work.

If the life-long friendship of my mother with her Majesty, which gained for me the honour of often seeing the Queen, or a deep feeling of loyalty and affection for our sovereign, which is shared by all her subjects, be accepted as a qualification, I gratefully respond to the call, but I feel that no written words of mine can add value to the following pages.

Looking over some papers lately, I found the following note on a sketch which I had accidentally met with in Windsor Castle--a coloured chalk drawing, a mere study of one of the Queen's hands, by Sir David Wilkie, probably made for his picture now in the corridor of the Castle, representing the first council of Victoria. Of this sketch I wrote as follows:--

"I was looking in one of the private rooms at Windsor Castle at a chalk sketch, by Sir David Wilkie, of a fair, soft, long-fingered, dimpled hand, with a graceful wrist attached to a rounded arm. 'Only a woman's hand,' might Swift, had he seen that sketch, have written below. Only a sketch of a woman's hand; but what memories that sketch recalls! How many years ago Wilkie drew it I know not: that great artist died in the month of June, 1841, so that more than forty years have passed, at least, since he made that drawing. The hand that limned this work has long ago suffered 'a sea change.' And the hand which he portrayed? That is still among the living--still occupied with dispensing aid and comfort to the suffering and the afflicted, for the original is that of a Queen, beloved as widely as her realms extend--the best of sovereigns, the kindest-hearted of women."

To write the life of Queen Victoria is a task which many authors might well have felt incompetent to undertake. To succeed in writing it is an honour of which any author may well be proud. This honour I humbly think has been realised in the work of which these poor lines may form the preface.

RONALD GOWER.

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CHAPTER I.

SIXTY-THREE YEARS SINCE.

The 24th of May, 1819, was a memorable and happy day for England, though like many such days, it was little noticed at the time. Sixty-three years since! Do many of us quite realise what England was like then; how much it differed from the England of to-day, even though some of us have lived as many years? It is worth while devoting a chapter to an attempt to recall that England.

A famous novel had for its second heading, "'Tis sixty years since." That novel--"Waverley"--was published anonymously just five years before 1819, and, we need not say, proved an era in literature. The sixty years behind him to which Walter Scott--a man of forty-three--looked over his shoulder, carried him as far back as the landing of Prince Charlie in Moidart, and the brief romantic campaign of the '45, with the Jacobite songs which embalmed it and kept it fresh in Scotch memories.

The wounds dealt at Waterloo still throbbed and burnt on occasions in 1819. Many a scarred veteran and limping subaltern continued the heroes of remote towns and villages, or starred it at Bath or Tunbridge. The warlike fever, which had so long raged in the country, even when ruined manufacturers and starving mechanics were praying for peace or leading bread-riots, had but partially abated; because whatever wrong to trade, and misery to the poor, closed ports and war prices might have meant, the people still depended upon their armed defenders, and in the hardest adversity found the heart to share their triumphs, to illuminate cities, light bonfires, cheer lustily, and not grudge parliamentary grants to the country's protectors. The "Eagle" was caged on his rock in the ocean, to eat his heart out in less than half-a-dozen years. Still there was no saying what might happen, and the sight of a red coat and a sword remained cheering--especially to soft hearts.

The commercial world was slowly recovering from its dire distress, but its weavers and mechanics were blazing up into fierce, futile struggle with the powers by which masses of the people believed themselves oppressed. If the men of war had no longer anything to do abroad, there was great fear that work might be found for them at home. All Europe was looking on in the expectation that England was about to follow the example of France, and indulge in a revolution on its own account--not bloodless this time.

Rarely since the wars of the Commonwealth had high treason been so much in men's mouths as it was in Great Britain during this and the following year. Sedition smouldered and burst into flame--not in one place alone, but at every point of the compass. The mischief was not confined to a single class; it prevailed mostly among the starving operatives, but it also fired minds of quite another calibre. Rash, generous spirits in every rank became affected, especially after an encounter between the blinded, maddened mobs and the military, when dragoons and yeomanry charged with drawn swords, and women and children went down under the horses' hoofs. Great riotous meetings were dispersed by force at Manchester, Birmingham, Paisley. Political trials went on at every assize. Bands of men lay in York, Lancaster, and Warwick gaols. At Stockport Sir Charles Wolseley told a crowd armed with bludgeons that he had been in Paris at the beginning of the French Revolution, that he was the first man who made a kick at the Bastille, and that he hoped he should be present at the demolition of another Bastille.

On the 22nd of August, 1819, Sir Francis Burdett wrote to his electors at Westminster: "...It seems our fathers were not such fools as some would make us believe in opposing the establishment of a standing army and sending King William's Dutch guards out of the country. Yet would to heaven they had been Dutchmen, or Switzers, or Russians, or Hanoverians, or anything rather than Englishmen who have done such deeds. What! kill men unarmed, unresisting; and, gracious God! women too, disfigured, maimed, cut down, and trampled on by dragoons! Is this England? This a Christian land--a land of freedom?"

For this, and a great deal more, Sir Francis, after a protracted trial, was sentenced to pay a fine of two thousand pounds and to be imprisoned for three months in the Marshalsea of the Court. In the Cato Street conspiracy the notorious Arthur Thistlewood and his fellow-conspirators planned to assassinate the whole of the Cabinet Ministers when they were dining at Lord Harrowby's house, in Grosvenor Square. Forgery and sheep-stealing were still punishable by death. Truly these were times of trouble in England.

In London a serious difficulty presented itself when Queen Charlotte grew old and ailing, and there was no royal lady, not merely to hold a Drawing-room, but to lend the necessary touch of dignity and decorum to the gaieties of the season. The exigency lent a new impetus to the famous balls at Almack's. An anonymous novel of the day, full of society scandal and satire, described the despotic sway of the lady patronesses, the struggles and intrigues for vouchers, and the distinguished crowd when the object was obtained. The earlier hours, alas! only gave longer time for the drinking habits of the Regency.

It is a little difficult to understand what young people did with themselves in the country when lawn-tennis and croquet were not. There was archery for the few, and a good deal more amateur gardening and walking, with field-sports, of course, for the lads.

The theatre in 1819 was more popular than it showed itself twenty years later. Every country town of any pretensions, in addition to its assembly rooms had its theatre, which reared good actors, to which provincial tours brought London stars. Genteel comedy was not past its perfection. Adaptations of the Waverley novels, with musical dramas and melodramas, drew great houses. Miss O'Neill had just retired, but Ellen Tree was making a success, and Macready was already distinguished in his profession. Still the excellence and prestige of the stage had declined incontestably since the days of Mrs. Siddons and John Kemble. Edmund Kean, though he did much for tragedy, had a short time to do it in, and was not equal in his passion of genius to the sustained majesty of the sister and brother.

In the same way, the painters' art hovered on the borders of a brilliant epoch. For Lawrence, with his courtly brush, which preferred flattery to truth and cloying suavity to noble simplicity, was not worthy to be named in the same breath with Reynolds. Raeburn came nearer, but his reputation was Scotch. Blake in his inspiration was regarded, not without reason, as a madman. Flaxman called for classic taste to appreciate him; and the fame of English art would have suffered both at home and abroad if a simple, manly lad had not quitted a Scotch manse and sailed from Leith to London, bringing with him indelible memories of the humour and the pathos of peasant life, and reproducing them with such graphic fidelity, power, and tenderness that the whole world has heard of David Wilkie.

The pause between sunset and sunrise, the interregnum which signifies that a phase in some department of the world's history has passed away as a day is done, and a new development of human experience is about to present itself, was over in literature. The romantic period had succeeded the classic. Scott, Coleridge, Southey (Wordsworth stands alone), Byron, Shelley, Keats, Campbell, Moore, were all in the field as poets, carrying the young world with them, and replacing their immediate predecessors, Cowper, Thompson, Young, Beattie, and others of less note.

Sir Walter Scott had also risen high above the horizon as a poet, and still higher as a novelist.

A great start in periodical literature was made in 1802 by the establishment of The Edinburgh Review, under Jeffrey and Sydney Smith, and again in 1817 by the publication of Blackmoods Magazine, with Christopher North for its editor, and Lockhart, De Quincey, Hogg, and Delta among its earlier contributors. The people's friend, Charles Knight, was still editing The Windsor and Eton Express.

In 1819 Sir Humphry Davy was the most popular exponent of science, Sir James Mackintosh of philosophy. In politics, above the thunderstorm of discontent, there was again the pause which anticipates a fresh advance. The great Whig and Tory statesmen, Charles James Fox and William Pitt, were dead in 1806, and their mantles did not fall immediately on fit successors. The abolition of the slave-trade, for which Wilberforce, Zachary Macaulay, and Clarkson had fought gallantly and devotedly, was accomplished. But the Catholic Emancipation Bill was still to work its way in the teeth of bitter "No Popery" traditions, and Earl Grey's Reform Bill had not yet seen the light.

George III.'s long reign was drawing to a close. What changes it had seen from the War of American Independence to Waterloo! What woeful personal contrasts since the honest, kindly, comely lad, in his simple kingliness, rode out in the summer sunshine past Holland House, where lady Sarah Lennox was making hay on the lawn, to the days when the blind, mad old king sat in bodily and mental darkness, isolated from the wife and children he had loved so well, immured in his distant palace-rooms in royal Windsor.

His silver beard o'er a bosom spread
Unvexed by life's commotion,
Like a yearly lengthening snow-drift shed
On the calm of a frozen ocean:

Still o'er him oblivion's waters lay,
Though the stream of time kept flowing
When they spoke of our King, 'twas but to say
That the old man's strength was going.

At intervals thus the waves disgorge,
By weakness rent asunder,
A piece of the wreck of the _Royal George_
For the people's pity and wonder.

Lady Sarah, too, became blind in her age, and, alas! she had trodden darker paths than any prepared for her feet by the visitation of God.

Queen Charlotte had come with her sense and spirit, and ruled for more than fifty years over a pure Court in England. The German princess of sixteen, with her spare little person and large mouth which prevented her from being comely, and her solitary accomplishment of playing on the harpsichord with as much correctness and taste as if she had been taught by Mr. Handel himself, had identified herself with the nation, so that no suspicion of foreign proclivities ever attached to her. Queen Charlotte bore her trials gravely; while those who came nearest to her could tell that she was not only a fierce little dragon of virtue, as she has been described, but a loving woman, full of love's wounds and scars.

The family of George III. and Queen Charlotte consisted of seven sons and his daughters, besides two sons who died in infancy.

George, Prince of Wales, married, 1795, his cousin, Princess Caroline of Brunswick, daughter of the reigning Duke and of Princess Augusta, sister of George III. The Prince and Princess of Wales separated soon after their marriage. Their only child was Princess Charlotte of Wales.

Frederick, Duke of York, married, 1791, Princess Frederica, daughter of

the reigning King of Prussia. The couple were childless.

William, Duke of Clarence, married, 1818, Princess Adelaide, of Saxe-Meiningen. Two daughters were born to them, but both died in infancy.

Edward, Duke of Kent, married, 1818, Princess Victoria of Saxe-Coburg, widow of the Prince of Leiningen. Their only child is QUEEN VICTORIA.

Ernest, Duke of Cumberland, married, 1815, Princess Frederica of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, widow, first of Prince Frederick Louis of Prussia, and second, of the Prince of Saliris-Braunfels. Their only child was George V., King of Hanover.

Augustus, Duke of Sussex, married morganatically.

Adolphus, Duke of Cambridge, married, 1818, Princess Augusta of Hesse-Cassel, daughter of the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel. They had three children--George, Duke of Cambridge; Princess Augusta, Duchess of Mecklenburg-Strelitz; and Princess Mary, Duchess of Teck.

The daughters of King George and Queen Charlotte were:--

The Princess Royal, married, 1797, the Prince, afterwards King, of Wurtemberg. Childless.

Princess Augusta, unmarried.

Princess Elizabeth, married, 1818, the Landgrave of Hesse-Homburg. Childless.

Princess Mary, married, 1816, her cousin, William, Duke of Gloucester. Childless.

Princess Sophia, unmarried.

Princess Amelia, unmarried.

In 1817 the pathetic idyl, wrought out amidst harsh discord, had found its earthly close in the family vault at Windsor, amidst the lamentations of the whole nation. Princess Charlotte, the candid, fearless, affectionate girl, whose youth had been clouded by the sins and follies of others, but to whom the country had turned as to a stay for the future--fragile, indeed, yet still full of hope--had wedded well, known a year of blissful companionship, and then died in giving birth to a dead heir. It is sixty-five years since that November day, when the bonfires, ready to be lit at every town "cross," on every hill-side, remained dark and cold. Men looked at each other in blank dismay; women wept for the blushing, smiling bride, who had driven with her grandmother through the park on her way to be married not so many months before. There are comparatively few people alive who had come to man's or woman's estate when the shock was experienced; but we have all heard from our predecessors the story which has lent to Claremont a tender, pensive grace, especially for royal young pairs.

Old Queen Charlotte nerved herself to make a last public appearance on the 11th of July, 1818, four months before her death. It was in her presence, at Kew, that a royal marriage and re-marriage were celebrated that day. The Duke of Clarence was married to Princess Adelaide of Saxe-Meiningen, and the Duke of Kent was re-married, in strict accordance

with the English Royal Marriage Act, to Princess Victoria of Saxe-Coburg, the widowed Princess of Leiningen. The last couple had been already united at Coburg in the month of May. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London officiated at the double ceremony. The brides were given away by the Prince Regent. The Queen retired immediately afterwards. But a grand banquet, at which the Prince Regent presided, was given at six o'clock in the evening. An hour later the Duke and Duchess of Kent drove off in her brother, Prince Leopold's, carriage to Claremont.

Of the two bridegrooms we have glimpses from Baron Stockmar, a shrewd observer, who was no flatterer.

The Duke of Clarence, at fifty-three years of age, was the "smallest and least good-looking of the brothers, decidedly like his mother, as talkative as the rest;" and we may add that he was also endowed with a sailor-like frankness, cordiality, and good humour, which did not, however, prevent stormy ebullitions of temper, that recommended him to the nation of that day as a specimen of a princely blue-jacket. Since the navy was not considered a school of manners, he was excused for the absence of much culture or refinement.

"The Duke of Kent, at fifty-one, was a tall, stately man, of soldierlike bearing, already inclined to great corpulence.... He had seen much of the world, and of men. His manner in society was pleasant and easy. He was not without ability and culture, and he possessed great activity. His dependents complained of his strictness and pedantic love of order.... The Duke was well aware that his influence was but small, but this did not prevent him from forwarding the petitions he received whenever it was possible, with his own recommendation, to the public departments.... Liberal political principles were at that time in the minority in England, and as the Duke professed them, it can be imagined how he was hated by the powerful party then dominant. He was on most unfriendly terms with his brothers.... The Duke proved an amiable and courteous, even chivalrous, husband."

Judiciously, in the circumstances, neither of the brides was in her first youth, the future Queen Adelaide having been, at twenty-six, the younger of the two. The Duchess of Kent, a little over thirty, had been already married, in 1803, when she was seventeen, to Prince Erich Charles of Leiningen. Eleven years afterwards, in 1814, she was left a widow with a son and daughter. Four years later she married the Duke of Kent. The brides were very different in looks and outward attractions. The Duchess of Clarence, with hair of a peculiar colour approaching to a lemon tint, weak eyes, and a bad complexion, was plain. She was also quiet, reserved, and a little stiff, while she appears to have had no special accomplishments, beyond a great capacity for carpet-work. The Duchess of Kent, with a fine figure, good features, brown hair and eyes, a pretty pink colour, winning manners, and graceful accomplishments--particularly music, formed a handsome, agreeable woman, "altogether most charming and attractive."

But both Duchesses were possessed of qualities in comparison with which beauty is deceitful and favour is vain--qualities which are calculated to wear well. Queen Adelaide's goodness and kindness, her unselfish, unassuming womanliness and devout resignation to sorrow and suffering, did more than gain and keep the heart of her bluff, eccentric sailor-prince. They secured for her the respectful regard of the nation among whom she dwelt, whether as Queen or Queen-dowager. The Archbishop

of Canterbury could say of her, after her husband's death, "For three weeks prior to his (King William's) dissolution, the Queen sat by his bedside, performing for him every office which a sick man could require, and depriving herself of all manner of rest and refectation. She underwent labours which I thought no ordinary woman could endure. No language can do justice to the meekness and to the calmness of mind which she sought to keep up before the King, while sorrow was pressing on her heart. Such constancy of affection, I think, was one of the most interesting spectacles that could be presented to a mind desirous of being gratified with the sight of human excellence." [Footnote: Dr. Doran] Such graces, great enough to resist the temptations of the highest rank, might well be singled out as worthy of all imitation.

The Duchess of Kent proved herself the best of mothers--as she was the best of wives, during her short time of wedlock--in the self-renunciation and self-devotion with which, through all difficulties, and in spite of every opposition and misconception, she pursued the even tenor of her way. Not for two or ten, but for well-nigh twenty years, she gave herself up unreservedly, turning her back on her country with all its strong early ties, to rearing a good queen, worthy of her high destiny. England owes much to the memories of Queen Adelaide and the Duchess of Kent, who succeeded Queen Charlotte, the one as Queen Consort, the other as mother of the future sovereign, and not only served as the salt to savour their royal circles, but kept up nobly the tradition of honourable women among the queens and princesses of England, handing down the high obligation to younger generations.

The Duke and Duchess of Kent withdrew to Germany after their re-marriage, and resided at the castle of Amorbach, in Bavaria, part of the inheritance of her young son. The couple returned to England that their child might be born there. The Duke had a strong impression that, notwithstanding his three elder brothers, the Crown would come to him and his children. The persuasion, if they knew it, was not likely to be acceptable to the other Princes. Certainly, in the face of the Duke's money embarrassments, his kinsmen granted no assistance to enable the future Queen of England to be born in her own dominions. It was by the help of private friends that the Duke gratified his natural and wise wish.

Apartments in Kensington Palace were assigned to the couple. The old queen had died at Kew, surrounded by such of her daughters as were in the country, and by several of her sons, in the month of November, 1818. George III. was dragging out his days at Windsor. The Prince Regent occupied Carlton House.

The Kensington of 1819 was not the Kensington of today. In spite of the palace and gardens, which are comparatively little altered, the great crowded quarter, with its Museum and Albert Hall, is as unlike as possible to the courtly village to which the Duke and Duchess of Kent came, and where the Queen spent her youth. That Kensington consisted mainly of a fine old square, built in the time of James II., in which the foreign ambassadors and the bishops in attendance at Court congregated in the days of William and Mary, and Anne, and of a few terraces and blocks of buildings scattered along the Great Western Road, where coaches passed several times a day. Other centres round which smaller buildings clustered were Kensington House--which had lately been a school for the sons of French _emigres_ of rank--the old church, and Holland House, the fine seat of the Riches and the Foxes. The High Street extended a very little way on each side of the church and was best known by its

Charity School, and its pastrycook's shop, at the sign of the "Pineapple," to which Queen Caroline had graciously given her own recipe for royal Dutch gingerbread. David Wilkie's apartments represented the solitary studio. Nightingales sang in Holland Lane; blackbirds and thrushes haunted the nurseries and orchards. Great vegetable-gardens met the fields. Here and there stood an old country house in its own grounds. Green lanes led but to more rural villages, farms and manor-houses. Notting Barns was a farmhouse on the site of Notting Hill. In the tea-gardens at Bayswater Sir John Hill cultivated medicinal plants, and prepared his "water-dock essence" and "balm of honey." Invalids frequented Kensington Gravel pits for the benefit of "the sweet country air."

Kensington Palace had been bought by William III. from Daniel Finch, second Earl of Nottingham. His father, the first Earl, had built and named the pile of brick-building Nottingham House. It was comparatively a new, trim house, though Evelyn called it "patched up" when it passed into the hands of King William, and as such might please his Dutch taste better than the beautiful Elizabethan Holland House--in spite of the name, at which he is said to have looked, with the intention of making it his residence.

The Duke of Sussex, as well as the Duke and Duchess of Kent, had apartments in the palace. He dwelt in the portion of the southern front understood to belong to the original building. His brother and sister-in-law were lodged not far off, but their apartments formed part of an addition made by King William, who employed Sir Christopher Wren as his architect.

The clumsy, homely structure, with its three courts--the Clock Court, the Princes' Court, and the Princesses' Court--had many interesting associations in addition to its air of venerable respectability. William and Mary resided frequently in the palace which they had chosen; and both died under its roof. Mary sat up in one of these rooms, on a dreary December night in 1694, after she felt herself stricken with small-pox, seeking out and burning all the papers in her possession which might compromise others. The silent, asthmatic, indomitable little man was carried back here after his fall from his horse eight years later, to draw his last breath where Mary had laid down her crown. Here Anne sat, with her fan in her mouth, speaking in monosyllables to her circle. George I.'s chief connection with Kensington Palace was building the cupola and the great staircase. But his successors, George II. and Queen Caroline, atoned for the deficiency. They gave much of their time to the palace so identified with the Protestant and Hanoverian line of succession. Queen Caroline especially showed her regard for the spot by exercising her taste in beautifying it according to the notions of the period. It was she who caused the string of ponds to be united so as to form the Serpentine; and he modified the Dutch style of the gardens, abolishing the clipped monsters in yew and box, and introducing wildernesses and groves to relieve the stiffness and monotony of straight walks and hedges. The shades of her beautiful maids of honour, "sweet Molly Lepell," Mary Bellenden, and Sophy Howe, still haunt the Broad Walk. Molly Lepell's husband, Lord Hervey (the "Lord Fanny" of lampoons and songs), composed and read in these rooms, for the diversion of his royal mistress and the princesses, with their ladies and gentlemen, the false account of his own death, caused by an encounter with footpads on the dangerous road between London and the country palace. He added an audacious description of the manner in which the news was received at Court, and of the behaviour of the principal persons in the circle.

With George II. and Queen Caroline the first glory of the palace departed, for the early Court of George III. and Queen Charlotte took its country pleasures at Kew. Then followed the selection of Windsor for the chief residence of the sovereigns. The promenades in the gardens, to which the great world of London flocked, remained for a season as a vestige of former grandeur. In George II.'s time the gardens were only thrown open on Saturdays, when the Court went to Richmond. Afterwards the public were admitted every day, under certain restrictions. So late as 1820 these promenades were still a feature on Sunday mornings.

Kensington Palace has not yet changed its outward aspect. It still stands, with its forcing-houses, and Queen Anne's banqueting-room--converted into an orangery--in its small private grounds, fenced off by a slight railing and an occasional hedge from the public gardens. The principal entrance, under the clock-tower, leads to a plain, square, red courtyard, which has a curious foreign aspect in its quiet simplicity, as if the Brunswick princes had brought a bit of Germany along with them when they came to reign here; and there are other red courtyards, equally unpretentious, with more or less old-fashioned doors and windows. Within, the building has sustained many alterations. Since it ceased to be a seat of the Court, the palace has furnished residences for various members of the royal family, and for different officials. Accordingly, the interior has been divided and partitioned off to suit the requirements of separate households. But the great staircase, imposing in its broad, shallow steps of black marble and its faded frescoes, still conducts to a succession of dismantled Presence-chambers and State-rooms. The pictures and tapestry have been taken from the walls, the old panelling is bare. The distinctions which remain are the fine proportions of the apartments--the marble pillars and niches of one; the remains of a richly-carved chimneypiece in another; the highly-wrought ceilings, to which ancient history and allegory have supplied grandiose figures--their deep colours unfaded, the ruddy burnish of their gilding as splendid as ever. Here and there great black-and-gold court-stools, raised at the sides, and finished off with bullet heads of dogs, arouse a recollection of Versailles or Fontainebleau, and look as if they had offered seats to Court ladies in hoops and brocades, and gentlemen-in-waiting in velvet coats and breeches and lace cravats. One seat is more capacious than the others, with a round back, and in its heavy black-and-gold has the look of an informal throne. It might easily have borne the gallant William, or even the extensive proportions of Anne.

There is a word dropped of "old kings" having died in the closed rooms behind these doors. George II., in his old age? or William, worn out in his prime? or it may be heavy, pacific George of Denmark, raised to the kingly rank by the courtesy of vague tradition? The old chapel was in this part of the house. Leigh Hunt tells us it was in this chapel George I. asked the bishops to have good short sermons, because he was an old man, and when he was kept long, he fell asleep and caught cold. It must have been a curious old chapel, with a round window admitting scanty light. The household and servants sat below, while a winding staircase led round and up to a closed gallery in near proximity to the pulpit. It was only a man's conscience, or a sense of what was due to his physical well-being, which could convict him of slumbering in such a peaceful retreat. It is said that her late Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent objected to the obscurity of this place of worship, and, to meet her objections, the present little chapel was fitted up.

The Duchess of Kent's rooms were in an adjacent wing; spacious rooms

enough, and only looking the more habitable and comfortable for the moderate height of the ceilings. In a room with three windows on one side, looking out on the private grounds, the Queen was born. It was thinking of it and its occupants that the warm-hearted, quick-witted Duchess-mother, in Coburg, wrote: "I cannot express how happy I am to know you, dearest, dearest Vickel, safe in your bed, with a little one.... Again a Charlotte--destined, perhaps, to play a great part one day, if a brother is not born to take it out of her hands. The English like queens; and the niece (by marriage) of the ever-lamented, beloved Charlotte, will be most dear to them."

In another wide, low room, with white pillars, some eighteen years later, the baby Princess, become a maiden Queen, held her first Council, surrounded by kindred who had stood at her font--hoary heads wise in statecraft, great prelates, great lawyers, a great soldier, and she an innocent girl at their head. No relic could leave such an impression as this room, with its wonderfully pathetic scene. But, indeed, there are few other traces of the life that budded into dawning womanhood here, which will be always linked with the memories of Kensington Palace. An upper room, sunny and cheerful, even on a winter's day, having a pleasant view out on the open gardens, with their straight walks and great pond, where a child might forget sometimes that she had lessons to learn, was a princess's school-room. Here the good Baroness who played the part of governess so sagaciously and faithfully may have slipped into the book of history the genealogical table which was to tell so startling a tale. In another room is a quaint little doll's-house, with the different rooms, which an active-minded child loved to arrange. The small frying-pans and plates still hang above the kitchen dresser; the cook stands unwearied by the range; the chairs are placed round the tables; the tiny tea-service, which tiny fingers delighted to handle, is set out ready for company. But the owner has long done with make-believes, has worked in earnest, discharged great tasks, and borne the burden and heat of the day, in reigning over a great empire.

CHAPTER II CHILDHOOD.

In the months of March and May, 1819, the following announcements of royal births appeared in succession in the newspapers of the day, no doubt to the satisfaction alike of anxious statesmen and village politicians beginning to grow anxious over the chances of the succession:--

"At Hanover, March 26, her Royal Highness the Duchess of Cambridge, of a son; and on March 27, her Royal Highness the Duchess of Clarence, of a daughter, the latter only surviving a few hours."

"24th May, at Kensington Palace, her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent, of a daughter."

"27th May, at her hotel in Berlin, her Royal Highness the Duchess of Cumberland, of a son."

Thus her Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria first saw the light in Kensington Palace on the 24th of May, 1819, one in a group of cousins, all, save herself, born out of England.

The Duke of Sussex, the Duke of Wellington, and other officers of State were in attendance on the occasion, though the probability of her succession to the throne was then very doubtful. The Prince Regent had already made overtures towards procuring a divorce from the Princess of Wales. If he were to revive them, and prove successful, he might marry again and have heirs. The Duchess of Clarence, who had just given birth to an infant that had only survived a few hours, might yet be the joyful mother of living children. The little Princess herself might be the predecessor of a troop of princes of the Kent branch. Still, both at Kensington and in the depths of rural Coburg, there was a little flutter, not only of gladness, but of subdued expectation. The Duke of Kent, on showing his baby to his friends, was wont to say, "Look at her well, for she will be Queen of England." Her christening was therefore an event of more than ordinary importance in the household. The ceremony took place a month afterwards, on the 24th of June, and doubtless the good German nurse, Madame Siebold, who was about to return to the Duchess of Kent's old home to officiate on an equally interesting occasion in the family of the Duchess's brother, the reigning Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld, carried with her flaming accounts of the splendour of the ceremonial, as well as pretty tales of the "dear little love" destined to mate with the coming baby, whose big blue eyes were soon looking about in the lovely little hunting-seat of Rosenau. The gold font was brought down from the Tower, where for some time it had been out of request. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London officiated, as they had done the year before at the re-marriage of the Duke and Duchess. The godfathers were the Prince Regent, present in person, and Alexander, Emperor of Russia, then at the height of his popularity in England, represented by the Duke of York. The godmothers were the Queen-dowager of Wurtemberg (the Princess Royal), represented by Princess Augusta, and the Duchess-dowager of Coburg (mother of the Duchess of Kent, and grandmother of both the Queen and the Prince Consort), represented by the Duchess of Gloucester (Princess Mary).

It is said there had been a proposal to name the little princess Georgiana also, after her grandfather and uncle, George III. and George, Prince Regent; but the idea was dropped because the latter would not permit his name to stand second on the list.

Among the other privileged guests at the christening was Prince Leopold, destined to be the child's second father, one of her kindest and wisest friends. It is not difficult to comprehend what the scene must have been to the young man whose cup had been so full two years before, who was how a widower and childless. We have his own reference to his feelings in a letter to one of the late Princess Charlotte's friends. It had been hard for him to be present, but he had felt it to be his duty, and he had made the effort. This was a man who was always facing what was hard, always struggling and overcoming in the name of right. The consequence was that, even in his youth, all connected with him turned to him as to a natural stay. We have a still better idea of what the victory cost him when we read, in the "Life of the Prince Consort," it was not till a great misfortune happened to her that Prince Leopold "had the courage to look into the blooming face of his infant niece." With what manly pity and tenderness he overcame his reluctance, and how he was rewarded, we all know.

In December, 1819, the Duke and Duchess of Kent went for sea-air to Woolbrook Cottage, Sidmouth, Devonshire.

The first baby is always of consequence in a household, but of how much consequence this baby was may be gleaned by the circumstance that a

startling little incident concerning the child made sufficient mark to survive and be registered by a future chronicler. A boy shooting sparrows fired unwittingly so near the house that the shot shattered one of the windows of the nursery, and passed close to the head of the child in the nurse's arms. Precious baby-head, that was one day to wear, with honour, a venerable crown, to be thus lightly threatened at the very outset! One can fancy the terror of the nurse, the distress of the Duchess, the fright and ire of the Duke, the horror and humiliation of the unhappy offender, with the gradual cooling down into magnanimous amnesty--or at most dignified rebuke, mollified by penitent tears into reassuring kindness, and just a little quiver of half-affronted, half-nervous laughter.

But there was no more room for laughter at false alarms at Woolbrook Cottage. Within a month the Duke was seized with the illness which ended his life in a few days. The particulars are simple and touching. He had taken a long walk with his equerry and great friend, Captain Conroy, and came in heated, tired, and with his feet so wet that his companion suggested the propriety of immediately changing his boots. But the baby of whom he was so fond and proud came in his way. She was eight months old, able to stretch out her little arms and laugh back to him. He stayed to play with her. In the evening it was evident he had caught a chill; he was hoarse, and showed symptoms of fever. The complaint settled at once on his lungs, and ran its course with great rapidity. We hardly need to be told that the Duchess was his devoted nurse, concealing her anxiety and grief to minister to him in everything.

There is a pathetic little reference to the last illness of the Duke of Kent in one of the Princess Hohenlohe's letters to the Queen. This elder sister (Princess Feodora of Leiningen) was then a little girl of nine or ten years of age, residing with her mother and stepfather. "Indeed, I well remember that dreadful time at Sidmouth. I recollect praying on my knees that God would not let your dear father die. I loved him dearly; he always was so kind to me."

On the afternoon of the 22nd his case was hopeless, and it became a question whether he had sufficient consciousness to sign his will. His old friend, General Wetherall, was brought up to the bed. At the sound of the familiar voice which had always been welcome to him, the sick man, drifting away from all familiar sounds, raised himself, collected his thoughts for the last time, and mentioned several places and people intelligently. The poor Duke had never been negligent in doing what he saw to be his duty. He had been forward in helping others, even when they were not of his flesh and blood. He heard the will read over, and with a great effort wrote the word "Edward," looking at every letter after he wrote it, and asking anxiously if the signature was legible.

In this will, which left the Duchess guardian to the child, and appointed General Wetherall and Captain Conroy trustees of his estate for the benefit of his widow and daughter, it is noticeable that the name in each case is given in the French version, "Victoire." Indeed so rare was the term in England at this date, that it is probable the English equivalent had scarcely been used before the christening of the Queen.

The Duke died on the following day, the 23rd of January, 1820. Only six days later, on the 29th, good old King George expired at Windsor. The son was cut down by violent disease while yet a man in middle life, just after he had become the head of a little household full of domestic promise, and with what might still have been a great public career opening out before him. The father sank in what was, in his case, the merciful decay of age,

after he had been unable for ten years to fulfil the duties and charities of life, and after surviving his faithful Queen a year. The language of the official announcement of the physicians was unusually appropriate: "It has pleased the Almighty to release his Majesty from all further suffering." To complete the disasters of the royal family this month, the new King, George IV., who had been labouring under a cold when his father died, was seized immediately after his proclamation with dangerous inflammation of the lungs, the illness that had proved fatal to the Duke of Kent, and could not be present at his brother's or father's funerals; in fact, he was in a precarious state for some days.

The Duke of Kent was buried, according to the custom of the time, by torchlight, on the night of the 12th of February, at Windsor. As an example of the difference which distance made then, it took nearly a week's dreary travelling to convey the Duke's body from Woolbrook Cottage, where it lay in State for some days, to Cumberland Lodge, from which the funeral train walked to Windsor. The procession of mourning-coaches, hearse, and carriages set out from Sidmouth on Monday morning, halting on successive nights at Bridport, Blandford, Salisbury, and Basingstoke, the coffin being deposited in the principal church of each town, under a military guard, till on Friday night Cumberland Lodge was reached. The same night a detachment of the Royal Horse Guards, every third man bearing a flambeau, escorted a carriage containing the urn with the heart to St. George's Chapel, where in the presence of the Dean, the officers of the chapel, and several gentlemen appointed for the duty, urn and heart were deposited in the niche in which the coffin was afterwards to be placed. The body lay in State on the following day, that it might be seen by the inhabitants of Windsor, his old military friends, and the multitude who came down from London for the two mournful ceremonies. At eight o'clock at night the final procession was formed, consisting of Poor Knights, pages, pursuivants, heralds, the coronet on a black velvet cushion, the body under pall and canopy, the supporters of the pall and canopy field-marshal and generals, the chief mourner the Duke of York, the Dukes of Clarence, Sussex, Gloucester, and Prince Leopold in long black cloaks, their trains borne by gentlemen in attendance.

These torchlight funeral processions formed a singular remnant of mediaeval pageantry. How the natural solemnity of night in itself increased the awe and sadness of the scene to all simple minds, we can well understand. Children far away from Windsor remembered after they were grown men and women the vague terror with which they had listened in the dim lamplight of their nurseries to the dismal tolling of the bell out in the invisible church tower, which proclaimed that a royal duke was being carried to his last resting-place. We can easily believe that thousands would flock to look and listen, and be thrilled by the imposing spectacle. The show must have been weirdly picturesque when wild wintry weather, as in this case, added to the effect, "viewed for the distance of three miles, through the spacious Long Walk, amidst a double row of lofty trees, whilst at intervals the glittering of the flambeaux and the sound of martial music were distinctly seen and heard."

The Duke's funeral only anticipated by a few days the still more magnificent ceremonial with which a king was laid in the tomb.

But the real mourning was down in Devonshire, in the Sidmouth cottage. It would be difficult to conceive more trying circumstances for a woman in her station than those in which the young Duchess--she was but little over thirty--found herself left. She had lost a kind husband, her child would miss a doting father. She was a foreigner in a strange country. She had

entered into a divided family, with which her connection was in a measure broken by the death of the Duke, while the bond that remained, however precious to all, was too likely to prove a bone of contention. The Duke had died poor. The Duchess had previously relinquished her German jointure, and the English settlement on her was inadequate, especially if it were to be cumbered with the discharge of any of her husband's personal debts. It was not realised then that the Duchess of Kent, in marrying the Duke and becoming his widow and the guardian of their child, had given up not only independence, but what was affluence in her own country, with its modest ways of living--even where princes were concerned--for the mortification and worry of narrow means, the strain of a heavy responsibility, the pain of much unjustifiable and undeserved interference, misconception, and censure, until she lived to vindicate the good sense, good feeling, and good taste with which she had always acted.

But the Duchess was not altogether desolate. Prince Leopold hurried to her and supported her then, and on many another hard day, by brotherly kindness, sympathy, and generous help. It was in his company that she came back with her child to Kensington.

One element of the Coburg character has been described as the sound judgment and quiet reasonableness associated with the temperate blood of the race. Accordingly, we find the Duchess not only submitting with gentle resignation to misfortune, but rousing herself, as her brother might have done in her circumstances--as doubtless he urged her to do--to the active discharge of the duties of her position. On the 23rd of February, before the first month of her widowhood was well by, she received Viscount Morpeth and Viscount Clive, the deputation bearing to her the address of condolence from the House of Commons. She met them with the infant Princess in her arms. The child was not only the sign that she fully appreciated and acknowledged the nature of the tie which united her to the country, it was the intimation of the close inseparable union with her daughter which continued through all the years of the Queen's childhood and youth, till the office of sovereign forced its holder into a separate existence; till she found another fitting protector, when the generous, ungrudging mother gave way to the worthy husband, who became the dutiful, affectionate son of the Duchess's declining years.

Five months after these events the Duchess, at her own request, had an interview with William Wilberforce, then living in the house at Kensington Gore which was occupied later by the Countess of Blessington and Count D'Orsay. "She received me," the good man wrote to Hannah More, "with her fine, animated child on the floor by her side, with its playthings, of which I soon became one. She was very civil, but, as she did not sit down, I did not think it right to stop above a quarter of an hour; and there being but a female attendant and a footman present, I could not well get up any topic so as to carry on a continual discourse. _She apologised for not speaking English well enough to talk it_; intimated a hope that she might talk it better and longer with me at some future time. She spoke of her situation, and her manner was quite delightful."

The sentence in italics opens our eyes to one of the difficulties of the Duchess to which we might not otherwise have given much consideration. We are apt to take it for granted that, though there is no royal road to mathematics, the power of speaking foreign languages comes to royal personages, if not by nature, at least by inheritance and by force of circumstances. There is some truth in this when there is a foreign father or mother; when royal babies are brought up, like Queen Victoria, to speak several languages from infancy, and when constant contact with foreigners

confirms and maintains the useful faculty. Even when a prince or a princess is destined from his or her early youth to share a foreign throne, and is brought up with that end, a provision may be made for an adopted tongue to become second nature. But the Duchess of Kent was not brought up with any such prospect, and during her eleven years of married life in Germany she must have had comparatively little occasion to practise what English she knew; while, at the date of her coming to England, she was beyond the age when one learns a new language with facility. Any one of us who has experienced the fettered, perturbed, bewildered condition which results from being reduced to express ourselves at an important crisis in our history through a medium of speech with which we are but imperfectly acquainted, will know how to estimate this unthought-of obstacle in the Duchess of Kent's path, at the beginning of her widowhood.

This was the year (1820) of the greatest eclipse of the sun which had been seen for more than a century, when Venus and Mars were both visible, with the naked eye, for a few minutes in the middle of the day. Whatever the portents in the sky might mean, the signs on the earth were not reassuring. When the Bourbon monarchy had seemed fairly restored in France, all the world was shocked by the assassination of the Duc de Berri at the door of the Opera-house in Paris. Three kingdoms which had but recently been delivered from the clutch of the usurper were in revolt against the constituted authorities--Portugal, Spain, and Naples. Of these, the two former were on the brink of wars of succession, when the royal uncles, Don Miguel and Don Carlos, fought against their royal nieces, Donna Maria and Donna Isabella. At home the summer had been a sad one to the royal family and the country. The ferment of discontent was kept up by the very measures--executions and imprisonments--taken to repress anarchy, and by the continuance of crushed trade, want of work, and high prices. The Duchess of York died, making the third member of the royal family dead since the new year; yet she, poor lady, was but a unit in the sum, a single foreign princess who, however, kind she might have been to the few who came near her, was nothing to the mass of the people.

The name of another foreign princess was in every man's mind and on every man's tongue. However, there were many reasons for the anomaly. Caroline of Brunswick was the Queen until she should be proved unworthy to bear the title. Her quarrel with the King had long made her notorious. Though the story reflected little credit on her, it was so utterly discreditable to him that it raised up friends for her where they might have been least expected. His unpopularity rendered her popular. Her name became the rallying-cry for a great political faction. The mob, with its usual headlong, unreasoning appropriation of a cause and a person, elevated her into a heroine, cheered frantically, and was ready to commit any outbreak in her honour.

After six years' absence from England Queen Caroline had come back on the death of George III. to demand her rights. She had landed at Dover and been welcomed by applauding crowds. She had been escorted through Kent by uproarious partisans, who removed the horses from her carriage and dragged her in triumph through the towns. London, in its middle and lower classes, had poured out to meet her and come back in her train, till she was safely lodged in South Audley Street, in the house of her champion, Alderman Wood.

The King had instructed his ministers to lay before the House of Lords a bill of Pains and Penalties against the Queen which, if sustained, would deprive her of every claim to share his rank and would annul the marriage. The Queen was prepared with her defence, and furnished with two of the

ablest advocates in the kingdom, Mr. Brougham and Mr. Denman. In the earlier stages of the proceedings she was present almost every day in the House of Lords. She entered in her puce or black sarcenet pelisse and black velvet hat, a large, not uncomely woman, a little over fifty, and took the chair of State provided for her, the House rising to receive the Queen whom it was trying. The trial, in its miserable details of gross folly well-nigh incredible, lasted from July to November--four months of burning excitement--when it collapsed from the smallness of the majority (nine) that voted for the second reading of the bill. The animus of the prosecution and the unworthy means taken to accomplish its purpose, defeated the end in view. It is said that had it been otherwise the country would have broken out into widespread insurrection.

The Queen's supporters, of all classes, sects, and shades, indulged in a perfect frenzy of rejoicing. Festivals, illuminations, every token of triumph for her and condemnation for him accompanied what was equivalent to her acquittal. She went in something like State, with her queer, motley household--Bohemian, English and Italians--and her great ally, Alderman Wood, to offer up thanksgiving in St. Paul's, where, at the same time, she found her name omitted from the Church service. She wore white velvet and ermine, and was surrounded by thousands of shouting followers, as if she had been the most discreet of queens and best of women. The poor passionate, wayward nature, which after all had been cruelly dealt with, was touched as well as elated.

On the very day after Queen Caroline's arrival in London in June, she had dispatched Alderman Wood to Kensington, to condole with the Duchess of Kent on her recent widowhood, and inquire after the health of the infant princess. The message was innocent in itself, but alarming by implication; for Queen Caroline was not a woman to be kept at a distance, or to hesitate in expressing her sentiments if she fancied her overtures slighted by the embarrassed Duchess. In the month of August Queen Caroline had established herself at Brandenburg House--the Margravine of Anspach's house, by the river at Hammersmith--near enough to Kensington Palace, to judge from human nature, to disconcert and provoke a smile against the smiler's will--for Caroline's extravagances would have disturbed the gravity of a judge--in the womanly Princess at the head of the little household soberly settled there. Never were princesses and women more unlike than Caroline of Brunswick and Victoria of Coburg; But poor Queen Caroline was not destined to remain long an awkward enigma--a queen and yet no queen, an aunt and yet no aunt, a scandal and a torment in everybody's path.

In the summer of the following year, when the country was drawn away and dazzled by the magnificent ceremonial of the coronation of George IV., she exercised her last disturbing influence. She demanded to be crowned along with her husband; but her demand was refused by the Privy Council. She appeared at the door of Westminster Abbey, but the way was barred to her. A fortnight afterwards, when King George had gone to Ireland to arouse the nation's loyalty, his wife had passed where Privy Council ushers and yeomen of the guard were powerless, where the enmity of man had no voice in the judgment of God. She had been attacked by severe illness, and in the course of five days she died, in the middle of a wild storm of thunder, wind, and rain. The night before, a boatful of Methodists had rowed up the Thames, within sound of the open windows of her sick-room, and sung hymns to comfort her in her extremity. The heart of a large part of the nation still clung to her because of her misfortunes and the insults heaped upon her. The late Queen's body was conveyed back to Brunswick. The funeral passed through Kensington, escorted by a mighty

mob, in addition to companies of soldiers. The last were instructed to conduct the _cortege_ by the outskirts of London to Harwich, where a frigate and two sloops of war were waiting for the coffin. The mob were resolute that their Queen's funeral should pass through the city. The first struggle between the crowd and the military took place at the corner of Church Street, Kensington. The strange, unseemly, contention was renewed farther on more than once; but as bloodshed had been forbidden, the people had their way, and the swaying mass surged in grim determination straight towards the Strand and Temple Bar. The captain of the frigate into whose keeping the coffin was committed in order to be conveyed back to Brunswick had been, by a curious, sorrowful coincidence, the midshipman who, "more than a quarter of a century before, handed the rope to the royal bride whereby to help her on board the _Jupiter_, " which was to bring her to England.

One can fancy that, when that sorry tragedy was ended, and its perpetual noisy ebullitions had sunk into silence, a sense of relief stole over the palace-home at Kensington.

Round the childhood and youth of sovereigns, especially popular sovereigns, a growth of stories will gather like the myths which attend on the infancy of a nation. Such stories or myths are chiefly valuable as showing the later tendency of the individual or people, the character and history of the monarch or of the subjects, in accordance with which, in reversal of the adage that makes the child father to the man, the man is, in a new sense, father to the child, by stamping on his infancy and nonage traits borrowed from his mature years. Mingled with the species of legendary lore attaching to every generation, there is a foundation more or less of authentic annals. It is as affording an example of this human patchwork of fancy and fact, and as illustrating the impression deeply engraved on the popular mind, that the following incidents of the Queen's childhood and youth are given.

First, the people have loved to dwell on the close union between mother and child. The Duchess nursed her baby--would see it washed and dressed. As soon as the little creature could sit alone, her small table was placed by her mother's at meals, though the child was only allowed the food fit for her years. The Princess slept in her mother's room all through her childhood and girlhood. In the entries in the Queen's diary at the time of the Duchess of Kent's death, her Majesty refers to an old repeater striking every quarter of an hour in the sick-room on the last night of the Duchess's life--"a large watch in a tortoiseshell case, which had belonged to my poor father, the sound of which brought back to me all the recollections of my childhood, for I had always used to hear it at night, but had not heard it for now twenty-three years."

When the Princess was a little older, and lessons and play alternated with each other, she was taught to attend to the thing in hand, and finish what she had begun, both in her studies and games. One day she was amusing herself making a little haycock when some other mimic occupation caught her volatile fancy, and she flung down her small rake ready to rush off to the fresh attraction. "No, no, Princess; you must always complete what you have commenced," said her governess, and the small haymaker had to conclude her haymaking before she was at liberty to follow another pursuit.

From the Princess's fifth year Dr. Davys, afterwards Bishop of Peterborough, was her tutor. When it became clear that the little girl would, if she lived, be Queen of England, a prelate high in the Church was

proposed to the Duchess of Kent as the successor of Dr. Davys in his office. But the Duchess, with the mild firmness and conscientious fidelity which ruled her conduct, declared that as she was perfectly satisfied with the tutor who had originally been appointed (when the appointment was less calculated to offer temptations to personal ambition and political intrigue), she did not see that any change was advisable. If a clergyman of higher rank was necessary, there was room for the promotion of Dr. Davys. Accordingly he was named Dean of Chester.

The Baroness Lehzen was another of the Queen's earliest guardians who remained at her post throughout her Majesty's youth. Louise Lehzen, daughter of a Hanoverian clergyman, came to England as governess to Princess Feodora Leiningen and remained as governess to Princess Victoria, entering on her duties in 1824. In 1827 she was raised to the rank of a Hanoverian Baroness, by George IV., at the request of Princess Sophia. From that time Baroness Lehzen acted also as lady in attendance. On her death, so late as 1870, her old pupil recorded of her, in a passage in the Queen's journal, which is given in the "Life of the Prince Consort," "My dearest, kindest friend, old Lehzen, expired on the 9th quite gently and peaceably.... She knew me from six months old, and from my fifth to my eighteenth year devoted all her care and energies to me with the most wonderful abnegation of self, never even taking one day's holiday. I adored, though I was greatly in awe of her. She really seemed to have no thought but for me.... She was in her eighty-seventh year." This constancy and permanency in the family relations were in themselves inestimable boons to the child, who thus grew up in an atmosphere of familiar affection and unshaken trust, for the absence of which nothing in the world could have compensated. Another lady of higher rank was of necessity appointed governess to the Queen in 1831, when she became next heir to the throne. This lady, the Dowager Duchess of Northumberland, appears also as the Queen's friend in after life.

The late Bishop Wilberforce was told by Dr. Davys an interesting anecdote of his former pupil. "The Queen always had from my first knowing her a most striking regard to truth. I remember when I had been teaching her one day, she was very impatient for the lesson to be over--once or twice rather refractory. The Duchess of Kent came in, and asked how she had behaved. Lehzen said, 'Oh, once she was rather troublesome.' The Princess touched her and said, 'No, Lehzen, twice, don't you remember?' The Duchess of Kent, too, was a woman of great truth."

It had been judged meet that the future Queen should not be made aware of her coming greatness, which, for that matter, continued doubtful in her earlier years. She was to grow up free from the impending care and responsibility, happy and healthful in her unconscious girlhood--above all, unassailed by the pernicious attempts to bespeak her favour, the crafty flattery, the undermining insinuations which have proved the bane of the youth of so many sovereigns. In order to preserve this reticence, unslumbering care and many precautions were absolutely necessary. It is said the Princess was constantly under the eye either of the Duchess of Kent or the Baroness Lehzen. The guard proved sufficient; yet it was difficult to evade the lively intelligence of an observant sensible child.

"Why do all the gentlemen take off their hats to me and not to my sister Feodora?" the little girl is said to have asked wonderingly on her return from a drive in the park, referring to her elder half-sister, who became Princess of Hohenlohe, between whom and the questioner there always existed the strong sweet affection of true sisters. Perhaps the little lady felt indignant as well as mystified at the strange preference thus

given to her, in spite of her sister's superiority in age and wisdom. We do not know what reply was made to this puzzling inquiry, though it would have been easy enough to say that the little Princess was the daughter of an English royal Duke, therefore an English Princess, and the big Princess was German on both sides of the house, while these were English gentlemen who had saluted their young countrywoman. We all know from the best authority that Sir Walter Scott was wrong when he fancied some bird of the air must have conveyed the important secret to the little fair-haired maiden to whom he was presented in 1828. The mystery was not disclosed for years to come.

The child, though brought up in retirement, was by no means secluded from observation, or deprived of the change and variety so advantageous to human growth and development. From her babyhood in the sad visit to Sidmouth in 1820, and from 1821, when she was at that pretentious combination of fantasticalness and gorgeousness, the Pavilion, Brighton, she was carried every year, like any other well-cared-for child, either to the seaside or to some other invigorating region, so that she became betimes acquainted with different aspects of sea and shore in her island. Ramsgate was a favourite resort of the Duchess's. The little Thanet watering-place, with its white chalk cliffs, its inland basin of a harbour, its upper and lower town, connected by "Jacob's Ladder," its pure air and sparkling water, with only a tiny fringe of bathing-machines, was in its blooming time of fresh rural peace and beauty when it was the cradle by the sea of the little Princess.

When she was five she was at Claremont, making music and motion in the quiet house with her gleeful laughter and pattering feet, so happy in being with her uncle that she could look back on this visit as the brightest of her early holidays. "This place," the Queen wrote to the King of the Belgians long afterwards, "has a peculiar charm for us both, and to me it brings back recollections of the happiest days of my otherwise dull childhood,—when I experienced such kindness from you, dearest uncle, kindness which has ever since continued.... 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." In the autumn of 1825 the Queen's grandmother, the Dowager Duchess of Coburg, visited England, and the whole family were together at Claremont.

In 1826, "the warm summer," when the Princess was seven years of age, she was invited to Windsor to see another uncle, George IV. That was a more formidable ordeal, but her innocent frank brightness carried her through it successfully. It is not easy for many men to contemplate with satisfaction their heirs, when those heirs are no offspring of theirs. It must have been doubly difficult for the King to welcome the little girl who had replaced his daughter, the child of his wronged brother and of a Princess whom King George persistently slighted and deprived of her due. But we are told his Majesty was delighted with his little niece's liveliness and intelligence.

In the following year, 1827, the Duke of York died, and the Princess, was a step nearer to the throne, but she did not know it. So far from being reared in an atmosphere of self-indulgence, the invaluable lesson was early taught to her that if she were to be honourable and independent in any rank, she must not buy what she could not pay for; if she were to be a good woman she must learn to deny herself. An incident in illustration, which made a small stir in its locality at the time, is often quoted. The Duchess and her daughter were at Tunbridge Wells, dwelling in the

neighbourhood of Sir Philip Sidney's Penshurst, retracing the vanished glories of the Pantiles, and conferring on the old pump-woman the never-to-be-forgotten honour of being permitted to present a glass of water from the marble basin to the Princess. The little girl made purchases at the bazaar, buying presents, like any other young visitor, for her absent friends, when she found her money all spent, and at the same time saw a box which would suit an absent cousin. "The shop-people of course placed the box with the other purchases, but the little lady's governess admonished them by saying, 'No. You see the Princess has not got the money; therefore, of course, she cannot buy the box.'" This being perceived, the next offer was to lay by the box till it could be purchased, and the answer was, "Oh, well, if you will be so good as to do that." On quarter-day, before seven in the morning, the Princess appeared on her donkey to claim her purchase.

In the reverence, peace, and love of her pure, refined, if saddened home, everything went well with Princess Victoria, of whom we can only tell that we know the old brick palace where she dwelt, the playground that was hers, the walks she must have taken. We have sat in the later chapel where she said her prayers, a little consecrated room with high pews shutting in the worshippers, a royal gallery, open this time, and an elderly gentleman speaking with a measured, melodious voice. We can guess with tolerable certainty what was the Princess's child-world of books, though from the circumstance that in the light of the future she was made to learn more than was usual then for English girls of the highest rank, she had less time than her companions for reading books which were not study, but the most charming blending of instruction and amusement. That was still the age of Mrs. Barbauld and Miss Edgeworth. "Evenings at Home," "Harry and Lucy," and "Frank and Rosamond," were in every well-conducted school-room. All little girls read with prickings of tender consciences about the lady with the bent bonnet and the scar on her hand, and came under the fascination of the "Purple Jar." A few years later, Harriet Martineau's bristling independence did not prevent her from feeling gratified by the persuasion that the young Princess was reading through her tales on political economy, and that Princess Victoria's favourite character was Ella of the far north.

In the Princess's Roman history one day she came to the passage where the noble matron, Cornelia, in answer to a question as to her precious things, pointed to her sons, and declared, "These are my jewels." "Why," cried the ready-witted little pupil, with a twinkle in her blue eyes, "they must have been cornelians."

When the Princess's lessons took the form of later English history, she was on the very spot for the study. Did her teacher tell her, we wonder, the pretty story of "Bucky," who interrupted grave, saturnine King William at his statescraft in one of yonder rooms? How the small dauntless applicant wiled his father's master, great Louis's rival, into playing at horses in the corridor? Or that sadder story of another less fortunate boy, poor heavy-headed William of Gloucester? Tutors crammed and doctors shook him up, with the best intentions, in vain. In his happier moments he drilled his regiment of little soldiers on that Palace Green before his uncle, King William.

Was the childish passion for exploring old garrets and lumber-rooms excited in this royal little woman by the narrative of the wonderful discovery which Queen Caroline had made in a forgotten bureau in this very palace? Did the little Princess roam about too, in her privileged moments, with a grand vision of finding more and greater art-treasures, other

drawings by Holbein or Vandyke, fresh cartoons by Raphael?

All the more valuable paintings had been removed long ago to Windsor, but many curious pictures still remained on the walls of presence chambers and galleries, kings' and queens' great dining-rooms and drawing-rooms, staircases and closets. Did the pictures serve as illustrations to the history lessons? Was the inspection made the recreation of rainy days, when the great suites of State-rooms in which Courts were no longer held or banquets celebrated, but which still echoed with the remembered tread of kings' and courtiers' feet, must have appeared doubly deserted and forlorn?

What was known as the King's Great Drawing-room was not far from the Duchess of Kent's rooms, and was, in fact, put at her disposal in its dismantled, ghostly condition. Among its pictures--freely attributed to many schools and masters--including several battle-pieces and many portraits, there were three representations of English palaces: old Greenwich, where Elizabeth was born; old Hampton, dear to William and Mary; and Windsor, the Windsor of George III. and Queen Charlotte, the Princess's grandfather and grandmother. In the next room, amidst classic and scriptural subjects, and endless examples of "ladies with ruffs," "heads in turbans," &c., there were occasionally family portraits--the old King and Queen more than once; William, Duke of Gloucester; the Queen of Wurtemberg as the girl-Princess Royal, with a dog. (She died in Wurtemberg about this time, 1828. She had quitted England on her marriage in 1797, and in the thirty-one years of her married life only once came back, as an aging and ailing woman. She proved a good wife and stepmother.) A youthful family group of an earlier generation was sure to attract a child--George III. and his brother, Edward, Duke of York, when young, shooting at a target, the Duke of Gloucester in petticoats, Princess Augusta (Duchess of Brunswick, and mother of Caroline, Princess of Wales) nursing the Duke of Cumberland, and Princess Louisa sitting in a chaise drawn by a favourite dog, the scene in Kew Gardens, painted in 1746. Queen Elizabeth was there as a child aged seven, A.D. 1540--three-quarters, with a feather-fan in her hand. Did the guide of the little unconscious Princess pause inadvertently, with a little catch of the breath, by words arrested on the tip of the tongue, before that picture? And was he or she inevitably arrested again before another picture of Queen Elizabeth in her prime, returning from her palace, wearing her crown and holding the sceptre and the globe; Juno, Pallas, and Venus flying before her, Juno dropping her sceptre, Venus her roses, and the little boy Cupid flinging away his bow and arrows, and clinging in discomfiture to his mother because good Queen Bess had conquered all the three in power, wisdom, and beauty? We know the Princess must have loved to look at the pictures. More curious than beautiful as they were, they may have been sufficient to foster in her that love of art which has been the delight of the Queen's maturer years.

English princesses, even though they were not queens in perspective, were not so plentiful in Queen Victoria's young days as to leave any doubt of their hands and hearts proving in great request when the proper time came. Therefore there was no necessity to hold before the little girl, as an incentive to good penmanship, the example of her excellent grandmother, Queen Charlotte, who wrote so fair a letter, expressed with such correctness and judiciousness, at the early age of fifteen, that when the said letter fell, by an extraordinary train of circumstances, into the hands of young King George, he determined there and then to make that painstaking and sensible Princess, and no other, a happy wife and great Queen. There was no strict need for the story, and yet as a gentle stimulant it may have been administered.

Queen Victoria was educated, as far as possible, in the simple habits and familiarity with nature which belongs to the best and happiest training of any child, whatever her rank. There is a pleasant picture in Knight's "Passages of a Working Life": "I delighted to walk in Kensington Gardens in the early summer, on my way to town.... In such a season, when the sun was scarcely high enough to have dried up the dews of Kensington's green alleys, as I passed along the broad central walk I saw a group on the lawn before the palace, which, to my mind, was a vision of exquisite loveliness. The Duchess of Kent and her daughter, whose years then numbered nine, are breakfasting in the open air, a single page attending on them at a respectful distance, the mother looking on with eyes of love, while the fair, soft, English face is bright with smiles. The world of fashion is not yet astir. Clerks and mechanics passing onwards to their occupations are few, and they exhibit nothing of vulgar curiosity."

We have another charming description, by Leigh Hunt, of a glimpse which he had of Princess Victoria in these gardens: "We remember well the peculiar kind of personal pleasure which it gave us to see the future Queen, the first time we ever did see her, coming up a cross-path from the Bayswater Gate, with a girl of her own age by her side, whose hand she was holding as if she loved her. It brought to our minds the warmth of our own juvenile friendships, and made us fancy that she loved everything else that we had loved in like measure--books, trees, verses, Arabian tales, and the good mother who had helped to make her so affectionate. A magnificent footman in scarlet came behind her, with the splendidest pair of calves, in white stockings, that we ever beheld. He looked somehow like a gigantic fairy, personating for his little lady's sake the grandest kind of footman he could think of; and his calves he seemed to have made out of a couple of the biggest chaise-lamps in the possession of the godmother of Cinderella. With or without her big footman, the little Princess could have rambled safely in the grounds which her predecessors had made for her, could have fed the ducks which swam in the round pond before her palace windows, could have drunk from the curious little mineral well, where, in Miss Thackeray's 'Old Kensington,' Frank Raban met Dolly Vanburgh, or peeped out of the little side gate where the same Dolly came face to face with the culprits George and Rhoda. The future owner of all could have easily strayed down the alleys among the Dutch elms which King William brought, perhaps saplings, from the Boomjees, as far as the oak that tradition says King Charles set in the form of an acorn taken from his leafy refuge at Boscobel."

The Duke of Kent had brought an old soldier-servant, called Stillman, and established him, with his wife and family, in a cottage in one of the Kensington lanes. It is said the Duke had recommended this former retainer to the care of the Duchess, and that she and her daughter were in the habit of visiting and caring for the family, in which there were a sickly little boy and girl.

An event happened in 1828 to the household in Kensington Palace which was of importance to all. It was a joyful event, and the preparations for the royal wedding, with the gala in which the preliminaries culminated, must have formed an era in the quiet young life into which a startling announcement and its fulfilment had broken, filling the hours of the short winter days with wonder, admiration, and interest.

Yet all the pleasant stir and excitement; the new member of the family prominent for a brief space; the gifts, the trousseau, the wedding-cake, the wedding guests, were but the deceptive herald of change and loss to

the family, whose members were so few that each became deeply precious. The closely united circle was to be broken, and a dear face permanently withdrawn from the group. The Duchess of Kent's elder daughter, Princess Victoria's only sister, was about to marry. It was the most natural and the happiest course, above all when the Princess Feodora wedded worthily--how worthily let the subsequent testimony of the Queen and the Prince Consort prove. It was given at the time of the Prince of Hohenlohe's death, thirty-two years afterwards, in 1860.

The Queen wrote to her own and her sister's uncle, the King of the Belgians, in reference to the Prince of Hohenlohe: "A better, more thoroughly straightforward, upright, and excellent man, with a more unblemished character, or a more really devoted and faithful husband, never existed."

The Prince Consort's opinion of his brother-in-law is to be found in a letter to the Princess William of Prussia: "Poor Ernest Hohenlohe is a great loss. Though he was not a man of great powers of mind, capable of taking comprehensive views of the world, still he was a great character --that is to say, a thoroughly good, noble, spotless, and honourable man, which in these days forms a better title to be recognised as great than do craftiness, Machiavellism, and grasping ambition."

At the time of his marriage the Prince of Hohenlohe was in the prime of manhood, thirty-two years of age.

But the marriage meant the Princess Feodora's return to Germany and her separation from the other members of her family, with the exception of her brother, brought up in his own country. The bride, whom we hear of afterwards as a true and tender woman, was then a sweet maiden of twenty, whose absence must have made a great blank to her mother and sister. Happily for the latter, she was too young to realise in the agreeable excitement of the moment what a deprivation remained in store for her. There were eleven years between the sisters. This was enough difference to mingle a motherly, protecting element with the elder sister's pride and fondness, and to lead the younger, whose fortunes were so much higher, but who was unaware of the fact, to look up with affectionate faith and trust to the grown-up companion, in one sense on a level with the child, in another with so much more knowledge and independence.

It was a German marriage, both bride and bridegroom being German, though the bride had been nine years--the difference between a child and a woman--in England, and though the event occurred in an English household. Whether the myrtle was worn for the orange-blossoms, or any of the other pretty German wedding customs imported, we cannot tell. Anyhow, the ordinary peaceful simplicity of the palace was replaced by much bustle and grandeur on that February morning, the modest forerunner of another February morning in another palace, when a young Queen plighted her troth.

The royal family in England, with two exceptions, were at Kensington Palace to do honour to the marriage. The absent members were the King and Princess Augusta--the latter of whom was at Brighton. The company arrived soon after two o'clock, and consisted of the Duke and Duchess of Clarence, the Duke of Sussex, the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, the Princess Sophia, the Princess Sophia Matilda of Gloucester, and Prince Leopold.

At three o'clock the party walked in procession to the great saloon adjoining the vestibule, in which a temporary altar had been fitted up. The bride was given away by the Duke of Clarence. The ceremony was performed in

the simple Lutheran fashion by a simple Lutheran pastor, Dr. Kuper, "the chaplain of the Royal German Chapel."

Then came the parting, and the quiet palace-home was stiller and shadier than ever, when the gracious maidenly presence had gone, when the opening rose was plucked from the parent stem, and only the bud left.

In 1830 George IV. died, and William, Duke of Clarence, succeeded to the throne as King William IV. That summer was the last of the Princess's ignorance of her prospects; until then not even the shadow of a throne had been projected across the sunshiny path of the happy girl of eleven. She was with her mother in one of the fairest scenes in England--Malvern. The little town with its old Priory among the Worcester hills, looks down on the plain of Worcester, the field of a great English battle.

A dim recollection of the Duchess and the Princess is still preserved at Malvern--how pleasant and kind they were to all, how good to the poor; how the future Queen rode on a donkey like any other young girl at Malvern--like poor Marie Antoinette in the forest glades of Compiègne and Fontainebleau half a century earlier, when she was only four years older, although already Dauphiness of France. The shadowy records do not tell us much more; we are left to form our own conclusions whether the Queen anticipated her later ascents of Scotch and Swiss mountains by juvenile scrambles amongst the Worcester hills; whether she stood on the top of the Worcester or Hereford Beacon; or whether these were considered too dangerous and masculine exploits for a princess of tender years, growing up to inherit a throne? She could hardly fail to enter the Wytche, the strange natural gap between Worcestershire and Herefordshire, by which, at one step, the wayfarer leaves wooded England behind, and stands face to face with a pastoral corner of Wales; or to drive along the mile-long common of Barnard's Green, with the geese, and the hay-stacks, and the little cottages on either side, and always in front the steep ridge of hills with the grey Priory where Piers Plowman saw his vision, nestling at their feet; or to pull the heather and the wild strawberries in Cowleigh Park, from which every vestige of its great house has departed. She might have been a privileged visitor at Madresfield, where some say Charles II. slept the night before the battle of Worcester, and where there is a relic that would better become Kensington, in a quilt which Queen Anne and Duchess Sarah embroidered together in silks in the days of their fast friendship.

As it was part of the Princess's good education to be enlightened, as far as possible, with regard to the how and why of arts and manufactures, we make no question she was carried to Worcester, not only to see the cathedral, but to have the potteries exhibited to her. There was a great deal for the ingenuous mind of a royal pupil to see, learn, and enjoy in Worcester and Warwickshire--for she was also at Guy's Cliff and Kenilworth.

It had become clear to the world without that the succession rested with the Duke of Kent's daughter. Long before, the Duchess of Clarence had written to her sister-in-law in a tender, generous struggle with her sorrow: "My children are dead, but yours lives, and she is mine too." As the direct heir to the crown, the Princess Victoria became a person of great importance, a source of serious consideration alike to the Government and to her future subjects. The result, in 1830, was a well-deserved if somewhat long-delayed testimony to the merits of the Duchess of Kent, which must have given honest satisfaction not only at Kensington, but at Claremont--to whose master the Belgian Revolution was opening up the prospect of a kingdom more stable than that of Greece, for which Prince Leopold had been mentioned. Away in the Duchess's native Coburg, too, the

congratulations were sincere and hearty.

The English Parliament had not only formally recognised the Princess as the next heir and increased the Duchess's income to ten thousand a year, so relieving her from some of her difficulties; it had, with express and flattering reference to the admirable manner in which she had until then discharged the trust that her husband had confided to her, appointed her Regent in the event of King William's death while the Princess was still a minor. In this appointment the Duchess was preferred to the Duke of Cumberland. He had become the next royal Duke in the order of descent, but had failed to inspire confidence in his countrymen. In fact he was in England the most uniformly and universally unpopular of all George III.'s sons. There was even a wild rumour that he was seeking, against right and reason, to form a party which should attempt to revive the Salic law and aim at setting aside the Princess and placing Prince George of Cumberland on the throne of England as well as on that of Hanover.

The Princess had reached the age of twelve, and it was judged advisable, after her position had been thus acknowledged, that she herself should be made acquainted with it. The story--the authenticity of which is established beyond question--is preserved in a letter from the Queen's former governess, Baroness Lehzen, which her Majesty has, given to the world.

"I ask your Majesty's leave to cite some remarkable words of your Majesty when only twelve years old, while the Regency Bill was in progress. I then said to the Duchess of Kent, that now, for the first time, your Majesty ought to know your place in the succession. Her Royal Highness agreed with me, and I put the genealogical table into the historical book. When Mr. Davys (the Queen's instructor, afterwards Bishop of Peterborough) was gone, the Princess Victoria opened the book again, as usual, and seeing the additional paper, said, 'I never saw that before.' 'It was not thought necessary you should, Princess,' I answered. 'I see I am nearer the throne than I thought.' 'So it is, madam,' I said. After some moments the Princess answered, 'Now, many a child would boast, but they don't know the difficulty. There is much splendour, but there is more responsibility.' The Princess having lifted up the forefinger of her right hand while she spoke, 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 is the foundation of English grammar and of all the elegant expressions, and I learned it as you wished it, but I understand all better now;' and the Princess gave me her hand, repeating, 'I will be good.' I then said, 'But your aunt Adelaide is still young, and may have children, and of course they would ascend the throne after their father, William IV., and not you, Princess.' The Princess answered, 'And if it was so, I should never feel disappointed, for I know by the love aunt Adelaide bears me how fond she is of children.'"

No words can illustrate better what is striking and touching in this episode than those with which Mrs. Oliphant refers to it in her sketch of the Queen. "It is seldom that an early scene like this stands out so distinctly in the early story even of a life destined to greatness. The hush of awe upon the child; the childish application of this great secret to the abstruse study of Latin, which was not required from the others; the immediate resolution, so simple, yet containing all the wisest sage could have counselled, or the greatest hero vowed, 'I will be good,' makes a perfect little picture. It is the clearest appearance of the future Queen in her own person that we get through the soft obscurity of those childish years." The Duchess of Kent remained far from a rich woman for her station,

and the young Princess had been sooner told of her mother's straitened income than of the great inheritance in store for herself. She continued to be brought up in unassuming, inexpensive habits.

In February, 1831, when Princess Victoria was twelve, she made her first appearance in state at "the most magnificent Drawing-room which, had been seen since that which had taken place on the presentation of Princess Charlotte of Wales upon the occasion of her marriage." The Drawing-room was held by Queen Adelaide, and it was to do honour to the new Queen no less than to commemorate the approaching completion of the Princess's twelfth year that the heiress to the throne was present in a prominent position, an object of the greatest interest to the splendid company. She came along with the Duchess her mother, attended by an appropriate suite, including the Duchess of Northumberland, Lady Charlotte St. Maur, Lady Catherine Parkinson, the Hon. Mrs. Cust, the Baroness Lehzen, and the Princess's father's old friends, General Wetherall and Captain (now Sir John) Conroy, with his wife, Lady Conroy. The Princess's dress was made, as the Queen's often was afterwards, entirely of articles manufactured in the United Kingdom. She wore a frock of English blonde, "simple, modest, and becoming." She stood on the left of her Majesty on the throne, and "contemplated all that passed with much dignity, but with evident interest." We are further told, what we can well believe, that she excited general admiration as well as interest. We can without difficulty call up before us the girlish figure in its pure, white dress, the soft, open face, the fair hair, the candid blue eyes, the frank lips slightly apart, showing the white pearly teeth. The intelligent observation, the remarkable absence of self-consciousness and consequent power of self-control and of thought for others, which struck all who approached her in the great crisis of her history six years afterwards, were already conspicuous in the young girl. No doubt it was for her advantage, in consideration of what lay before her, that while brought up in wholesome privacy, she was at the same time inured, so far, to appear in public, to bear the brunt of many eyes--some critical, though for the most part kind--touched by her youth and innocence, by the circumstance that she was fatherless, and by the crown she must one day wear. She had to learn to conduct herself with the mingled self-respect and ease which became her station. Impulsiveness, shyness, nervousness, are more serious defects in kings and queens than in ordinary mortals. To use a homely phrase, "to have all their wits about them" is very necessary in their case. If in addition they can have all their hearts--hearts warm and considerate, nobly mindful of their own obligations and of the claims of others--so much the better for the sovereigns and for all who come under their influence. A certain amount of familiarity with being the observed of all observers, with treading alone a conspicuous path demanding great circumspection, was wanted beforehand, in order that the young head might remain steady in the time of sudden, tremendous elevation.

Nevertheless, the Princess was not present at the coronation of King William and Queen Adelaide, and her absence, as the heir-presumptive to the throne, caused much remark and speculation, and gave rise to not a few newspaper paragraphs. Various causes were assigned for the singular omission. The Times openly accused the Duchess of Kent of proving the obstacle. Other newspapers followed suit, asserting that the grounds for the Duchess's refusal were to be found in the circumstance that in the coronation procession, marshalled by Lord A. Fitzclarence, the place appointed for the Princess Victoria, instead of being next to the King and Queen, according to her right, was after the remaining members of the royal family. Conflicting authorities declared that the Prime Minister, Earl Grey, for some occult reason, opposed the Princess's receiving an

invitation to be present at a ceremony which had so much interest for her; or that the Duchess of Northumberland, the governess of the Princess, took the same extraordinary course from political motives. Finally, *The Globe* gave, on authority, an explanation that had been offered all along in the midst of more sensational rumours. The Princess's health was rather delicate, and the Duchess of Kent had, on that account, got the King's sanction to her daughter's not being exposed to unusual excitement and fatigue. The statement on authority was unanswerable, but while it stilled one cause of apprehension it awakened another. After the untimely death of Princess Charlotte, the nation was particularly sensitive with regard to the health of the heir to the crown. Whispers began to spread abroad, happily without much foundation, of pale cheeks, and a constitution unfit for the burden which was to be laid upon it.

CHAPTER III. YOUTH.

In the month of August, 1831, the Princess went with her mother to profit by the soft, sweet breezes of the Isle of Wight. The Duchess and her daughter occupied Norris Castle for three months, and the ladies of the family were often on the shore watching the white sails and chatting with the sailors. Carisbrooke and King Charles the Martyr were brought more vividly home to his descendant, with the pathetic little tale of the girl-Princess Elizabeth. We do not know whether the Queen then learnt to feel a special love for the fair little island with which she has long been familiar, but of this we are certain, that she could then have had little idea that her chief home would be within its bounds. Even in 1831 transport and communication by land and water continued a tedious and troublesome business. However, the visit to the Isle of Wight was repeated in 1833. Perhaps to dissipate the gossip and calm the little irritation which had been created by the Princess's absence from the coronation, she made her appearance twice in public, on the completion of her thirteenth year, in 1832. That was a year in which there was much call for oil to be cast on the troubled waters: never since 1819, the date of the Queen's birth had there been greater restlessness and turmoil throughout the country. For some time public feeling had been kept at the boiling-point by the question of the Reform Bill--groaned over by some as the first step to democracy and destruction; eagerly hailed by others as a new dawn of freedom, peace, and prosperity. The delay in passing the Bill had rendered the King unpopular, and brought unmerited blame on Queen Adelaide, for having gone beyond her prerogative in lending herself to overthrow the King's Whig principles. The ferment had converted the old enthusiastic homage to the Iron Duke as a soldier into fierce detestation of him as a statesman. The carrying of the measure on which the people had set their hearts did not immediately allay the tempest--a disappointing result, which was inevitable when the universal panacea failed to work at once like a charm in relieving all the woes in the kingdom. Men were not only rude, and spoke their minds, the ringleaders broke out again into riots, the most formidable and alarming of which were those in Bristol, that left a deep impression on more than one chance spectator who witnessed them. But the girl Princess--praised for her proficiency in Horace and Virgil, and her progress in mathematics--could only hear far off the mutterings of the storm that was passing; and King William and Queen Adelaide sought to put aside what was perplexing and harassing them; and tried to forget that when they had shown themselves to their people lately they had been met--here with indifference--and there with hootings. The times were waxing more and more evil, as it seemed, to

uneasy, vexed wearers of crowns, unlike those in which old King George and Queen Charlotte had been received with fervent acclamation wherever they went, whatever wars were being waged or taxes imposed. The manners of the Commons were not improving with the extension of their rights. But the King and Queen would do their duty, which was far from disagreeable to them, in paying proper respect to their niece and successor. Accordingly their Majesties gave a ball on the Princess's thirteenth birthday, 24th May, 1832, at which the heroine of the day figured; and four days later, on the 28th of May, she was present for the second time at a Drawing-room.

All the same, it is an open secret that William, living, for the most part, in that noblest palace of Windsor, considered the Princess led too retired a life, so far as not appearing often enough at his Court was concerned, and that he complained of her absence and resented it as a slight to himself. It is an equally well-established fact that, in spite of the King's kindness of heart and Queen Adelaide's goodness, King William's Court was not in all respects a desirable place for a Princess to grow up in, in addition to the objection that any Court in itself formed an unsuitable schoolroom for a young girl.

It is doubtful, since even the most magnanimous men have jealous instincts, whether the King's displeasure on one point would be appeased by what was otherwise a very natural and judicious step taken by the Duchess of Kent this year. She made an autumn tour with her daughter through several counties of England and Wales, in the course of which the royal mother and daughter paid a succession of visits to seats of different noblemen, taking Oxford on the way. If there was a place in England which deserved the notice of its future Queen, it was one of the two great universities--the cradles of learning, and, in the case of "the most loyal city of Oxford," the bulwark of the throne. The party proceeded early in October through the beautiful scenery of North Wales--the Princess's first experience of mountains--to Eaton Hall, the home of the Grosvenor family. From Eaton the travellers drove to the ancient city of Chester, with its quaint arcades and double streets, its God's Providence House and its cathedral. At Chester the Princess named the new bridge which was opened on the occasion. By the wise moderation and self-repression of those around her, the name bestowed was not the "Victoria," but simply the "Grosvenor Bridge."

From Eaton the Princess was taken to Chatsworth, the magnificent seat of the Cavendishes. She stayed long enough to see and hear something of romantic Derbyshire. She visited Hardwick, associated with Building Bess, whose granddaughter, the unfortunate "Lady Arbell," had been a remote cousin of this happy young Princess, and she went, like everybody else, to Matlock. At Belper the party, in diligent search after all legitimate knowledge, examined the great cotton-mills of the Messrs. Strutt, and the senior partner had the honour of showing to her Royal Highness, by means of a model, how cotton was spun.

From Chatsworth the Duchess and her daughter repaired to Alton Abbey, where the "Talbot tykes" still kept watch and ward; thence to Shugborough, the seat of the Earl of Lichfield, which enabled the visitors to see another fine cathedral and to breathe the air which is full of "the great Dr. Johnson."

At each of the towns the strangers were met by addresses--of course made to the Duchess and replied to by her. How original these formal compliments must have sounded to Princess Victoria! On the 27th of October their Royal Highnesses were at Pitchford Hall, the residence of the Earl of Liverpool, from which they visited Shrewsbury--another Chester--with a word of its own

for the old fateful battle in which "Percy was slain and Douglas taken prisoner," and the Welsh power broken in Owen Glendower. After getting a glimpse of the most picturesque portion of Shropshire, halting at more noble seats, and passing through a succession of Worcester towns, the royal party reached Woodstock on the 7th of November, and the same evening rested at Wytham House, belonging to the Earl of Abingdon. There was hardly time to realise that the memories of Alice Lee, the old knight Sir Henry, and the faithful dog Bevis, rivalled successfully the grisly story of Queen Eleanor and Fair Rosamond. Nay, the magician was still dogging the travellers' steps; for had he not made the little town of Abingdon his own by choosing it for the meeting-place of Mike Lambourne and Tressillian, and rebuilding in its neighbourhood the ruins of Cumnor Hall, on which the dews fell softly? Alas! the wizard would weave no more spells. A month before that princely "progress" Sir Walter Scott, after Herculean labours to pay his debts like an honest man had wrecked even his robust frame and healthful genius, lay dead at Abbotsford.

On the 8th of November the future Queen entered Oxford with something like State, in proper form escorted by a detachment of Yeomanry. There is no need to tell that she was received by the Vice-Chancellor of the University, and the dons and doctors of the various colleges, in full array. And she was told of former royal visitors: of Charles in his tribulation; of her grandfather and grandmother, King George and Queen Charlotte, when little Miss Barney was there to describe the festivities. The Princess went the usual round: to superb Christ Church, at which her sons were to graduate; to the Bodleian and Radclyffe libraries; to All Souls, New College, &c. She proceeded to view other buildings, which, unless in a local guide-book, are not usually included among the lions of Oxford. But this young lady of the land was bound to encourage town as well as gown; therefore she visited duly the Town Hall and Council Chamber. From Oxford the tourists returned to Kensington.

There are no greater contrasts than those which are to be found in royal lives. When the Princess Victoria was about to set out on her pleasant journey in peace and prosperity, the news came of the arrest of the Duchesse de Berri, at Nantes. It was the sequel to her gallant but unsuccessful attempt to raise La Vendee in the name of her young son, Henri de Bordeaux, and the end to the months in which she had lain in hiding. She was discovered in the chimney of a house in the Rue Haute-du-Chateau, where she was concealed with three other conspirators against the Government of her cousin, Louis Philippe. The search had lasted for several hours, during which these unfortunate persons were penned in a small space and exposed to almost intolerable heat. A mantelpiece had been contrived so as to turn on a swivel and form an opening into a suffocating recess. When the Duchesse and her companions were found their hands were scorched and part of their clothes burnt. She was taken to the fortress of Nantes, and thence transferred to the Castle of Blaye, where she suffered a term of imprisonment. She had acted entirely on her own responsibility, her wild enterprise having being disapproved alike by her father-in-law, Charles X., and her brother and sister-in-law, the Duc and Duchesse d'Angouleme.

In 1833, we are told, the Duchess of Kent and the fourteen years old Princess stopped on their way to Weymouth--the old favourite watering-place of King George and Queen Charlotte--and visited the young Queen of Portugal, at Portsmouth. Donna Maria da Gloria had been sent from Brazil to England by her father, Don Pedro, partly for her safety, partly under the impression, which proved false, that the English Government would take an active part in her cause against the usurpation of her uncle, Don Miguel. The Government did nothing. The royal family paid the stranger some courtly

and kindly attentions. One of the least exceptional passages in the late Charles Greville's *Memoirs* is the description of the ball given by the King, at which the two young queens--to be--were present. The chronicle describes the girls, who were of an age--having been born in the same year: the sensible face of the fair-haired English Princess, and the extreme dignity--especially after she had sustained an accidental fall--of the Portuguese royal maiden, inured to the hot sun of the tropics. Don Miguel was routed in the course of the following year (1834), and his niece was established in her kingdom. Within the same twelve months she lost a father and gained and lost a husband; for among the first news that reached her English acquaintances was her marriage, before she was sixteen, and her widowhood within three months. She had married, in January, the Duc de Leuchtenberg, a brother of her stepmother and a son of Eugene Beauharnais. He died, after a short illness, in the following March. She married again in the next year, her re-marriage having been earnestly desired by her subjects. The second husband was Prince Ferdinand of Coburg, belonging to the Roman Catholic branch of the Coburgs, and cousin both to the Queen and the Prince Consort. He was a worthy and, ultimately, a popular prince. Donna Maria was grand-niece to Queen Amelie of France, and showed much attachment to the house of Orleans. There is said to have been a project formed by Louis Philippe, which was frustrated by the English Government, that she should marry one of his sons, the Duc de Nemours.

In addition to the English tours which the Princess Victoria made with her mother, the Duchess of Kent was careful that as soon as her daughter had grown old enough to profit by the association, she should meet the most distinguished men of the day--whether statesmen, travellers, men of science, letters, or art. Kensington had one well-known intellectual centre in Holland House, presided over by the famous Lady Holland, and was soon to have another in Gore House, occupied by Lady Blessington and Count D'Orsay; but even if the fourteen years old Princess had been of sufficient age and had gone into society, such salons were not for her. The Duchess must "entertain" for her daughter. In 1833 Lord Campbell mentions dining at Kensington Palace. The company found the Princess in the drawing-room on their arrival, and again on their return from the dining-room. He records her bright, pleasant intelligence, perfect manners, and happy liveliness.

In July, 1834, when the Princess was fifteen, she was confirmed in the Chapel Royal, St. James's, by the Archbishop of Canterbury, in the presence of the King and Queen and the Duchess of Kent. She was advancing with rapid steps to the point at which the girl leaves the child for ever behind her, and stretches forward to her crown of young womanhood. She had in her own name confirmed the baptismal vow which consecrated her as a responsible being to the service of the King of kings. Still she was a young creature, suffered to grow up according to a gracious natural growth, not forced into premature expansion, permitted to preserve to the last the sweet girlish trust and confidence, the mingled coyness and fearlessness, pensive dreams and merry laughter, which constitute the ineffable freshness and tender grace of youth.

If the earlier story of the purchase, or non-purchase, of the box at Tunbridge Wells reads "like an incident out of 'Sandford and Merton,'" there is another anecdote fitting into this time which has still more of the good-fairy ring in it, while it sounds like a general endorsement of youthful wisdom. Yet it may have had its origin in some eager, youthful fancy of astonishing another girl, and giving her "the very thing she wanted" as a reward for her exemplary behaviour. The Princess was visiting a jeweller's shop incognito (a little in the fashion of Haroun-al-Raschid) when she saw another young lady hang long over some gold chains, lay down

reluctantly the one which she evidently preferred, and at last content herself with buying a cheaper chain. The interested on-looker waited till the purchaser was gone, made some inquiries, directed that both chains should be tied up and sent together, along with the Princess Victoria's card, on which a few words were pencilled to the effect that the Princess had been pleased to see prudence prevail, while she desired the young lady to accept her original choice, in the hope that she would always persevere in her laudable self-denial.

In the autumn of 1835 the Duchess of Kent and the Princess went as far north as York, visiting the Archbishop at Bishopsthorpe, studying the minster--second only to Westminster among English abbeys--and gracing with the presence of royalty the great York Musical Festival. On the travellers' homeward route they were the guests of the Earl of Harewood, at Harewood House, Earl Fitzwilliam at Wentworth, and the Duke of Rutland at Belvoir. At Burghley House the Duchess and the Princess visited the Marquis of Exeter. The late Charles Greville met them there, and gives a few particulars of their visit. "They arrived from Belvoir at three o'clock, in a heavy rain, the civic authorities having turned out at Stamford to escort them and a procession of different people, all very loyal. When they had lunched, and the Mayor and his brethren had got dry, the Duchess received the Address, which was read by Lord Exeter, as Recorder. It talked of the Princess as 'destined to mount the throne of these realms.' Conroy handed the answer just as the Prime Minister does to the King. They are splendidly lodged, and great preparations have been made for their reception. The dinner at Burghley was very handsome; hall well lit, and all went off well, except that a pail of ice was landed in the Duchess's lap, which made a great bustle. Three hundred people at the ball, which was opened by Lord Exeter and the Princess, who, after dancing one dance, went to bed. They appeared at breakfast next morning at nine o'clock, and at ten set off to Holkham."

Romance was not much in Mr. Greville's way, but Burghley, apart from the statesman Cecil and his weighty nod, had been the scene of such a romance as might well have captivated the imagination of a young princess, though its heroine was but a village maiden--she who married the landscape-painter, and was brought by him to Burghley, bidden look around at its splendour, and told

"All of this is thine and mine."

Tennyson has sung it--how she grew a noble lady, and yet died of the honour to which she was not born, and how the Lord of Burghley, deeply mourning, bid her attendants

"Bring the dress and put it on her
Which she wore when we were wed."

In one of those autumns which the Duchess of Kent and her daughter spent at Ramsgate--not so rural as it had been a dozen years before, but still a quiet enough retreat--they received a visit from the King and Queen of the Belgians. Prince Leopold was securely established on the throne which he filled so well and so long, keeping it when many other European sovereigns were unseated. He was accompanied by his second wife, Princess Louise of France, daughter of Louis Philippe. She was a good woman, like all the daughters of Queen Amelie, while Princess Marie, in addition to goodness, had the perilous gift of genius. The following is Baron Stockmar's opinion of the Queen of the Belgians. "From the moment that the (Queen Louise) entered that circle in which I for so many years have had a place, I have

revered her as a pattern of her sex. We say and believe that men can be noble and good; of her we know with certainty that she was so. We saw in her daily a truthfulness, a faithful fulfilment of duty, which makes us believe in the possible though but seldom evident nobleness of the human heart. In characters such as the Queen's, I see a guarantee of the perfection of the Being who has created human nature." We ought to add that Stockmar had not only the highest opinion of the character of Queen Louise, but also of her insight and judgment, and he often expressed his opinion that if anything were to happen to King Leopold the Regency might be entrusted to the Queen with perfect confidence.

How much the Queen valued Queen Louise, how she became Queen Victoria's dearest friend, is fully shown at a later date by the extracts from the Queen's journal, and letters in the "Life of the Prince Consort"

About this time the Duchess of Kent and Princess Victoria paid a visit to the Duke of Wellington at Walmer Castle--the old tower with fruit-trees growing in the dry moat, and a slip from the weeping-willow which hung over the grave in St. Helena flourishing in its garden, where the Warden of the Cinque Ports could look across the roadstead of the Downs and count the ships' masts like trees in a forest, and watch the waves breaking twenty feet high on the Goodwin Sands. "The cut-throat town of Deal" which poor Lucy Hutchinson so abhorred, pranked its quaint red houses for so illustrious and dainty a visitor. The Duke had stood by her font, and if he had "no small talk," he was a courteous gentleman and gentle warrior when he fought his battles over again for the benefit of the young Princess.

A winter was spent by the Duchess and the Princess at St. Leonard's, not far from Battle Abbey, where the last Saxon king of England bit the dust, and William of Normandy fought and won the great battle which rendered his invasion a conquest.

1836 was an eventful year in the Queen's life. We read that the Duchess of Kent and her daughter remained at Kensington till the month of September. There was a good reason for staying at home in the early summer. The family entertained friends: not merely valued, kinsfolk, but visitors who might change the whole current of a life's history and deeply influence a destiny on which the hopes of many hearts were fixed, that concerned the well-being of millions of the human race. Princess Victoria had not grown up solitary in her high estate. It has been already pointed out that she was one in a group of cousins with whom she had cordial relations. But the time was drawing near when nature and policy alike pointed to the advisability of forming a closer tie, which would provide the Princess with companionship and support stretching beyond those of her mother, and, if it were well and wisely chosen, afford the people further assurance that the first household in the kingdom should be such as they could revere. The royal maiden who had been educated so wisely and grown up so simply and healthfully, was approaching her seventeenth birthday. Already there were suitors in store for her hand; as many as six had been seriously thought of--among them, Prince Alexander of the Netherlands, whose suit was greatly favoured by King William; Duke Ernest of Wurtemberg; Prince Adalbert of Prussia; and Prince George of Cambridge. Prince George of Cumberland was *hors de combat*, apart from the Duke of Cumberland's pretensions and the alienation caused by them. Prince George, when a baby, had lost the sight of one eye, a misfortune which his father shared. A few years later in the son's boyhood, as he was at play in the gardens of Windsor Castle, he began to amuse himself with flinging into the air and catching a long silk purse with heavy gold tassels, when the purse fell on the seeing eye, inflicting such an injury as to threaten him with total blindness. The last

catastrophe was brought about by the blunder of a famous German oculist after Prince George had become Crown Prince of Hanover.

How much the Princess knew or guessed of those matrimonial prospects, how far they fluttered her innocent heart, we cannot tell; but as of all the candidates mentioned there was only one with whom she had any acquaintance to speak of, it may be supposed that the generality of the proposed wooers passed like vague shadows before her imagination.

In the meantime the devoted friends of her whole life had naturally not left this question--the most important of all--entirely unapproached. Her English cousins stood to her somewhat in the room of contemporary brothers and sisters; for her own brother and sister, however united to her in affection, were removed from her by age, by other ties, and by residence in a foreign country, to which in 1833 there was still no highway well trodden by the feet of kings and queens and their heirs-presumptive, as well as by meaner people, such as we find to-day. But there were other cousins of whom much had been said and heard, though they had remained unseen and personally unknown. For that very reason they were more capable of being idealised and surrounded by a halo of romance.

At the little ducal Court of Coburg there was the perfect young prince of all knightly legends and lays, whom fate seemed to have mated with his English cousin from their births within a few months of each other. When he was a charming baby of three years the common nurse of the pair would talk to him of his little far-away royal bride. The common grandmother of the two, a wise and witty old lady, dwelt fondly on the future union of her youngest charge with the "Mayflower" across the seas.

In all human probability these grandmotherly predictions would have come to nothing had it not been for a more potent arbiter of the fortunes of his family. King Leopold had once filled the very post which was now vacant, for which there were so many eager aspirants. None could know as he knew the manifold and difficult requirements for the office; none could care as he cared that it should be worthily filled. His interest in England had never wavered, though he had renounced his English annuity of fifty thousand a year on his accession to the throne of Belgium. He was deeply attached to the niece who stood nearly in the same position which Princess Charlotte had occupied twenty years before. Away in Coburg there was a princely lad whom he loved as a son, and who held the precise relation to the ducal house which he himself had once filled. What was there to hinder King Leopold from following out the comparison? Who could blame him for seeking to rebuild, in the interest of all, the fair edifice of love and happiness and loyal service which had been shattered before the dawn of those lives--that were like the lives of his children--had arisen? Besides, look where he might, and study character and chances with whatever forethought, he could not find such another promising bridegroom for the future Queen of England. Young, handsome, clever, good, endowed with all winning attributes; with wise, well-balanced judgment in advance of his years; with earnest, steadfast purpose, gentle, sympathetic temper, and merry humour.

King Leopold's instinct was not at fault, as the result proved; but it was not without the most careful consideration and many anxious consultations, especially with his trusty old friend, Baron Stockmar, that the King allowed himself to take the initiatory step in the matter. If the young couple were to love and wed it was certainly necessary that they should meet, that "the favourable impression" might be made, as the two honourable conspirators put it delicately. For this there was no more time to be lost,

when so many suitors had already entered the lists, and the maiden only wanted a year of the time fixed for her majority. But with conscientious heedfulness for the feelings of the youthful pair, and for their power of forming separately an unbiassed opinion, it was settled that when an opportunity of becoming acquainted should be given them, the underlying motive must be kept secret from the Princess as well as the Prince, that they might be "perfectly at their ease with each other." This secrecy could not, however, extinguish the previous knowledge which the Prince at least possessed, that a marriage between the cousins had been mooted by some of those most interested in their welfare.

In spite of the obstacles which King William raised, an invitation was sent by the Duchess of Kent to her brother, the reigning Duke of Saxe-Coburg, to pay her a visit, accompanied by his two sons, in the spring of 1836. Accordingly, in the month which is the sweetest of the year, in spite of inconstant skies and chill east winds, when Kensington Gardens were bowery and fair with the tender green foliage--the chestnut and hawthorn blossoms--the lilac and laburnum plumes of early summer, the goodly company arrived, and made the old brick palace gay with the fresh and fitting gaiety of youth.

We may never know how the royal cousins met--whether the frank, kind, unconscious Princess came down under the wing of the Duchess as far as their entrance into the Clock Court; whether there was a little dimness of agitation and laughing confusion, in spite of the partial secrecy, in two pairs of blue eyes which then encountered each other for the first time; whether the courtly company ascended in well-arranged file, or in a little friendly disorder. It was fortunate that there were more doors and halls and staircases than one, for it goes without saying that nobody could have had time and attention to spare for the wonderfully elaborate staircase, the representation in *chiaroscuro* of horses and warlike weapons, the frieze with heads of unicorns and masks of lions. It must have been on another day that young heads looked up in jest or earnest at Hercules, Diana, Apollo, and Minerva, and stopped to pick out the heterogeneous figures in the colonnade--"ladies, yeomen of the guard, pages, a quaker, two Turks, a Highlander, and Peter the Wild Boy," which testified to the liberal imagination of Kent, who executed not only the architecture, but the painting, in the reign of George I.

The guests remained at Kensington for a month, the only drawback to their pleasure being a little attack of bilious fever, from which Prince Albert suffered for a few days. There is a published letter to his stepmother in which the Prince tells his doings in the most unaffected, kindly fashion. There were the King's levee, "long and fatiguing, but very interesting;" the dinner at Court, and the "beautiful concert" which followed, at which the guests had to stand till two o'clock; the King's birthday, with the Drawing-room at St. James's Palace, where three thousand eight hundred people passed before the King and Queen, and another great dinner and concert in the evening. There was also the "brilliant ball" at Kensington Palace, at which the gentlemen were in uniform and the ladies in fancy dresses. Duke William of Brunswick, the Prince of Orange and his sons, and the Duke of Wellington, were among the guests, and the Princes of Coburg helped to keep up the ball till four o'clock. They spent a day with the Duke of Northumberland at Sion House, they went to Claremont, and they were so constantly engaged that they had to make the most of their time in order to see at least some of the sights of London. To one of the sights the Queen referred afterwards. The Duke of Coburg and the two Princes accompanied the Duchess of Kent and the Princess to the wonderful gathering of the children of the different charity schools in St. Paul's Cathedral,

where Prince Albert listened intently to the sermon. We hardly need to be told that he was full of interest in everything, paid the greatest attention to all he saw, and was constantly occupied. Among his pleasant occupations were the two favourite pursuits--which the cousins shared--music and drawing. He accompanied the Princess on the piano, and he drew with and for her. It was a happy, busy time, though some of the late dinners, at which, the Prince drank only water, were doubtless dull enough of the young people, and Prince Albert, accustomed to the early hours and simple habits of Germany, felt the change trying. He confessed that it was sometimes with the greatest difficulty he could keep awake. The Princess's birthday came round during her kinsman's visit. The Prince alluded to the event and to his stay at Kensington in writing to the Duchess of Kent three years later, when he was the proud and happy bridegroom of his cousin. He made no note of the date as having had an effect on their relations to each other, neither did he dwell on any good wish or gift [Footnote: Lady Bloomfield mentions among the Queen's rings "a small enamel with a tiny diamond in the centre, the Prince's gift when he first came to England, a lad of seventeen."] on his part; but in compliance with a motherly request from his aunt, the Duchess, that he would send her something he had worn, he returned to her a ring that she had given him on that May morning. The ring had never left his finger since then. The very shape proclaimed that it had been squeezed in the grasp of many a manly hand. The ring had her name upon it, but the name was "Victoria" too, and he begged her to wear it in remembrance of his bride and himself.

The favourable impression had been made in spite of the perversity of fortune and the vagaries of human hearts, which, amidst other casualties, might have led the Princess to accord her preference to the elder brother, Prince Ernest, who was also "a fine young fellow," though not so well suited to become prince-consort to the Queen of England. But for once destiny was propitious, and neither that nor any other mischance befell the bright prospects of the principal actors in the scene. When the King of the Belgians could no longer refrain from expressing his hopes, he had the most satisfactory answer from his royal niece.

"I have only now to beg you, my dearest uncle," she wrote, "to take care of the health of one now so dear to me, and to take him under your special protection. I hope and trust that all will now go on prosperously and well on this subject, now of so much importance to me."

At the same time, though an affectionate correspondence was started and maintained for a year, no further communication passed which could tend to enlighten the Prince as to the feelings he had excited. He went away to complete his education, to study diligently, along with his brother, at Brussels and Bonn; to feel in full the gladness of opening life and opening powers of no ordinary description; to rejoice, as few young men have the same warrant to rejoice, in the days of his unstained, noble youth.

On the King's birthday, the 21st August, the Duchess of Kent and Princess Victoria were at Windsor Castle on a visit. In spite of some soreness over the old grievance, the King proposed the Princess Victoria's health very kindly at the dinner. After he had drunk the Princess Augusta's health he said, "And now, having given the health of the oldest I will give that of the youngest member of the royal family. I know the interest which the public feel about her, and although I have not seen so much of her as I could have wished, I take no less interest in her, and the more I do see of her, both in public and private, the greater pleasure it will give me." The whole thing was so civil and gracious that it could hardly be taken ill, but, says Greville, "the young Princess sat opposite and hung her head with

not unnatural modesty at being thus talked of in so large a company."

In the September of that year the Duchess and the Princess went again to Ramsgate, and stayed there till December. It was their last visit to the quiet little resort within a short pilgrimage of Canterbury--the great English shrine, not so much of Thomas a Becket, slain before the altar, as of Edward the Black Prince, with his sword and gauntlets hung up for ever, and the inscription round the effigy which does not speak of Cressy and Poitiers, but of the vanity of human pride and ambition. It was the last seaside holiday which the mother and daughter spent together untrammelled by State obligations and momentous duties, with none to come between the two who had been all in all with each other. In their absence a storm of wind passed over London, and wrought great damage in Kensington Gardens. About a hundred and thirty of the larger trees were destroyed. In the forenoon of the 29th of November "a tremendous crash was heard in one of the plantations near the Black Pond, between Kensington Palace and the Mount Gate, and on several persons running to the spot twenty-five limes were found tumbled to the earth by a single blast, their roots reaching high into the air, with a great quantity of earth and turf adhering, while deep chasms of several yards in diameter showed the force with which they had been torn up.... On the Palace Green, Kensington, near the forcing-garden, two large elms and a very fine sycamore were also laid prostrate."

In the following summer (1837) the Princess came of age, as princesses do, at eighteen, and it was meet that the day should be celebrated with, all honour and gladness. But the rejoicings were damped by the manifestly failing health of the aged King, then seventy-one years of age. He had been attacked by hay fever--to which he had been liable every spring at an earlier period of his life, but the complaint was more formidable in the case of an old and infirm man, while he still struggled manfully to transact business and discharge the duties of his position. At the Levee and Drawing-room of the 21st May he sat while receiving the company. By the 24th he was confined to his rooms, and the Queen did not leave him.

At six o'clock in the morning the Union Jack was hoisted on the summit of the old church, Kensington, and on the flagstaff at Palace Green. In the last instance the national ensign was surmounted by a white silk flag on which was inscribed in sky-blue letters "Victoria." The little town adorned itself to the best of its ability. "From the houses of the principal inhabitants of the High Street were also displayed the Royal Standard, Union Jack, and other flags and colours, some of them of extraordinary dimensions." Soon after six o'clock the gates of Kensington Gardens were thrown open for the admission of the public to be present at the serenade which was to be performed at seven o'clock under the Palace windows, with the double purpose of awaking the Princess in the most agreeable manner, and of reminding her that at the same place and hour, eighteen years ago, she had opened her eyes on the May world. The sleep of youth is light as well as sound, and it may well be that the Princess, knowing all that was in store for her on the happy day that could not be too long, the many goodly tokens of her friends' love and gladness--not the least precious those from Germany awaiting her acceptance--the innumerable congratulations to be offered to her, was wide awake before the first violin or voice led the choir.

The bells rang out merry peals, carriages dashed by full of fine company. Kensington Square must have thought it was the old days of William and Mary, and Anne, or of George II and Queen Caroline at the latest, come back again. The last French dwellers in Edwardes Square must have talked volubly

of what their predecessors had told them of Paris before the flood, Paris before the Orleanists, and the Bonapartists, and the Republic--Paris when the high-walled, green-gardened hotels of the Faubourg St. Germain were full of their ancient occupants; when Marie Antoinette was the daughter of the Caesars at the Tuileries, and the _bergere_ Queen at le Petit Trianon. Before the sun went down many a bumper was drunk in honour of Kensington's own Princess, who should that day leave her girlhood all too soon behind her.

But London as well as Kensington rejoiced, and the festivities were wound up with a ball given at St. James's Palace by order of the poor King and Queen, over whose heads the cloud of sorrow and parting was hanging heavily. We are told that the ball opened with a quadrille, the Princess being "led off" by Lord Fitzalan, eldest son of the Earl of Surrey and grandson of the Duke of Norfolk, Premier Duke and Earl, Hereditary Earl Marshal and Chief Butler of England. Her Royal Highness danced afterwards with Prince Nicholas Esterhazy, son of the Austrian Ambassador. Prince Nicholas made a brilliant figure in contemporary annals--not because of his own merits, not because he married one of the fairest of England's noble daughters, whose gracious English hospitalities were long remembered in Vienna, but because of the lustre of the diamonds in his Court suit. He was said to sparkle from head to heel. There was a legend that he could not wear this splendid costume without a hundred pounds' worth of diamonds dropping from him, whether he would or not, in minor gems, just as jewels fell at every word from the mouth of the enchanted Princess. We have heard of men and women behind whose steps flowers sprang into birth, but Prince Nicholas left a more glittering, if a colder, harder track.

CHAPTER IV. THE ACCESSION.

On the day after that on which Princess Victoria celebrated her majority. Baron Stockmar arrived at Kensington. He came from the King of the Belgians to assist King Leopold's niece in what was likely to be the great crisis of her life. During Baron Stockmar's former stay in England he had been in the character first of Physician in Ordinary to Prince Leopold, and afterwards of Private Secretary and Comptroller of his household. In those offices he had spent the greater part of his time in this country from 1816 to 1834. He had accompanied his master on his ascending the Belgian throne, but had returned to England in a few years in order to serve him better there. Baron Stockmar was thus an old and early friend of the Princess's. In addition he had a large acquaintance with the English political world, and was therefore well qualified to advise her with the force of a disinterested adviser in her difficult position. In the view of her becoming Queen, although her three predecessors, including George III after he became blind, had appointed and retained private secretaries, the office was not popular in the eyes of the Government and country, and it was not considered advisable that the future Queen should possess such a servant, notwithstanding the weight of business--enormous in the matter of signatures alone--which would fall on the Sovereign. Without any recognised position, Stockmar was destined to share with the Prime Minister one portion of the duties which ought to have devolved on a private secretary. He was also to act as confidential adviser.

Baron Stockmar, [Footnote: "An active, decided, slender, rather little man, with a compact head, brown hair streaked with grey, a bold, short nose,

firm yet full mouth, and what gave a peculiar air of animation to his face, with two youthful, flashing brown eyes, full of roguish intelligence and fiery provocation. With this exterior, the style of his demeanour and conversation corresponded; bold, bright, pungent, eager, full of thought, so that amid all the bubbling copiousness and easy vivacity of his talk, a certain purpose was never lost sight of in his remarks and illustrations."--_Friedrich Carl Meyer_] who was at this time a man of fifty, was no ordinary character. He was sagacious, warm-hearted, honest, straightforward to bluntness, painstaking, just, benevolent to a remarkable degree; the friend of princes, without forfeiting his independence, he won and kept their perfect confidence to the end. He loved them heartily in return, without seeking anything from them; on the contrary, he showed himself reluctant to accept tokens of their favour. While lavishing his services on others, and readily lending his help to those who needed it, he would seem to have wanted comfort himself. An affectionate family man, he consented to constantly recurring separation from his wife and children in order to discharge the peculiar functions which were entrusted to him. For he played in the background--contented, nay, resolute to remain there--by the lawful exercise of influence alone, no small part in the destinies of several of the reigning houses in Europe, and through them, of their kingdoms. Like Carlyle, he suffered during his whole life from dyspepsia; like Carlyle, too, he was a victim to hypochondria, the result of his physical state. To these two last causes may be attributed some whimsicalities and eccentricities which were readily forgiven in the excellent Baron.

Baron Stockmar did not come too soon; in less than a month, on the 20th of June, 1837, after an illness which he had borne, patiently and reverently, King William died peacefully, his hand resting where it had lain for hours, on the shoulder of his faithful Queen.

The death took place at Windsor, at a little after two o'clock in the morning. Immediately afterwards the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Howley, and the Lord Chamberlain, the Marquis of Conyngham, together with the Earl of Albemarle, the Master of the Horse, and Sir Henry Hallford, the late King's physician, started from Windsor for Kensington. All through the rest of the summer night these solemn and stately gentlemen drove, nodding with fatigue, hailing the early dawn, speaking at intervals to pronounce sentence on the past reign and utter prognostications, of the reign which was to come. Shortly before five, when the birds were already in full chorus in Kensington Gardens, the party stood at the main door, demanding admission. This was another and ruder summons than the musical serenade which had been planned to wile the gentle sleeper sweetly from her slumbers and to hail her natal day not a month before. That had been a graceful, sentimental recognition of a glad event; this was an unvarnished, well-nigh stern arousal to the world of grave business and anxious care, following the mournful announcement of a death--not a birth. From this day the Queen's heavy responsibilities and stringent obligations were to begin. That untimely, peremptory challenge sounded the first knell to the light heart and careless freedom of youth.

Though it had been well known that the King lay on his death-bed, and Kensington without, as well as Kensington within, must have been in a high state of expectation, it does not appear that there were any watchers on the alert to rush together at the roll of the three royal carriages. Instead of the eager, respectful crowd, hurrying into the early-opened gates of the park to secure good places for all that was to be seen and heard on the day of the Princess's coming of age, Palace Green seems to have been a solitude on this momentous June morning, and the individual the

most interested in the event, after the new-made Queen, instead of being there to pay his homage first, as he had offered his congratulations on the birthday a year before, was far away, quietly studying at the little university town on the Rhine.

"They knocked, they rang, they thumped for a considerable time before they could rouse the porter at the gate," says Miss Wynn, in the "Diary of a Lady of Quality," of these importunate new-comers. "They were again kept waiting in the courtyard, then turned into one of the lower rooms, where they seemed forgotten by everybody. They rang the bell and desired that the attendant of the Princess Victoria might be sent to inform Her Royal Highness that they requested an audience on business of importance. After another delay and another ringing to inquire the cause, the attendant was summoned, who stated that the Princess was in such a sweet sleep that she could not venture to disturb her. Then they said, 'We are come on business of State to the QUEEN, and even her sleep must give way to that.' It did; and, to prove that she did not keep them waiting, in a few minutes she came into the room in a loose white nightgown and shawl, her nightcap thrown off, and her hair falling upon her shoulders, her feet in slippers, tears in her eyes, but perfectly collected and dignified."

In those days, when news did not travel very fast, and was not always delivered with strict accuracy, a rumour got abroad that the Queen was walking in the Palace Garden when the messengers came to tell her she had succeeded to the Crown. A great deal was made of the poetic simplicity of the surroundings of the interesting central figure--the girl in her tender bloom among the lilies and roses, which she resembled. We can remember a brilliant novel of the time which had a famous chapter beginning with an impassioned apostrophe to the maiden who met her high destiny "in a palace, in a garden." Another account asserted that the Queen saw the Archbishop of Canterbury alone in her ante-room, and that her first request was for his prayers.

The Marquis of Conyngham was the bearer to the Queen of a request from the Queen-dowager that she might be permitted to remain at Windsor till after the funeral. In reply, her Majesty wrote an affectionate letter of condolence to her aunt, begging her to consult nothing but her own health and convenience, and to stay at Windsor just as long as she pleased. The writer was observed to address this as usual "To the Queen of England." A bystander interposed, "Your Majesty, you are Queen of England." "Yes," answered the unelated, considerate girl-Queen, "but the widowed Queen is not to be reminded of the fact first by me."

Their message delivered, the messengers returned to London, and the next arrival was that of the Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne, who appeared at nine o'clock, had an interview with the Queen, which lasted for half an hour, when he also took his leave to issue summonses for a Privy Council, to be held in the course of the next two hours at Kensington Palace, and not at St. James's, as had been anticipated.

The little town of Kensington must now have been up and about, for, perhaps, never had there been such a day in its annals, as far transcending the birthday celebration as a great reality surpasses the brightest promise; and Kensington might hug the day with all its might, for it was to be nearly the last of its kingly, queenly experience. The temporary Court was to pass away presently, never to come back. No more kings and queens were likely to be born or to die at the quiet spot, soon to become a great noisy suburb of great London. No later Sovereign would quit the red-brick palace of Mary and Anne, and the First George, to reign at Buckingham or

Windsor; no other Council be held in the low-browed, white-pillared room to dispute the interests of the unique Council which was to be held there this day.

The first Council of any Sovereign must awaken many speculations, while the bearing of the principal figure in the assumption of new powers and duties is sure to be watched with critical curiosity; but in the case of Queen Victoria the natural interest reached its utmost bounds. The public imagination was impressed in the most lively manner by the strong contrast between the tender youth and utter inexperience of the maiden Queen and the weighty and serious functions she was about to assume--an anomaly best indicated by the characteristic speech of Carlyle, that a girl at an age when, in ordinary circumstances, she would hardly be trusted to choose a bonnet for herself, was called upon to undertake responsibilities from which an archangel might have shrunk. More than this, the retirement in which the young Queen had grown up left her nature a hidden secret to those well-trained, grey-bearded men in authority, who now came to bid her rule over them. Thus, in addition to every other doubt to be solved, there was the pressing question as to how a girl would behave under such a tremendous test; for, although there had been queens-regnant, popular and unpopular before, Mary and Elizabeth had been full-grown women, and Anne had attained still more mature years, before the crown and sceptre were committed to the safe keeping of each in turn. Above all, how would this royal girl, on whose conduct so much depended, demean herself on this crucial occasion? Surely if she were overcome by timidity and apprehension, if she were goaded into some foolish demonstration of pride or levity, allowance must be made, and a good deal forgiven, because of the cruel strain to which she was subjected.

Shortly after eleven o'clock, the royal Dukes and a great number of Privy Councillors, amongst whom were all the Cabinet Ministers and the great officers of State and the Household, arrived at Kensington Palace, and were ushered into the State apartments. A later arrival consisted of the Lord Mayor, attended by the City Marshals in full uniform, on horseback, with crape on their left arms; the Chamberlain, Sword-bearer, Comptroller, Town Clerk, and Deputy Town Clerk, &c., accompanied by six aldermen. These City magnates appeared at the Palace to pay their homage to her Majesty. The Lord Mayor attended the Council.

We have various accounts--one from an eye-witness wont to be cool and critical enough--of what passed. "The first thing to be done," writes Greville, "was to teach her her lesson, which, for this purpose, Melbourne had himself to learn. I gave him the Council papers and explained all that was to be done, and he went and explained all this to her. He asked her if she would enter the room accompanied by the great officers of State, but she said she would come in alone. When the Lords were assembled, the Lord President (Lord Lansdowne) informed them of the King's death, and suggested, as they were so numerous, that a few of them should repair to the presence of the Queen, and inform her of the event, and that their lordships were assembled in consequence; and accordingly the two royal Dukes (the Duke of Cumberland, by the death of William, King of Hanover, and the Duke of Sussex--the Duke of Cambridge was absent in Hanover), the two Archbishops, the Chancellor, and Melbourne went with him. The Queen received them in the adjoining room alone."

It was the first time she had to act for herself. Until then she had been well supported by her mother, and by the precedence which the Duchess of Kent took as her Majesty's guardian. But the guardianship was over and the reign begun. There could be no more sheltering from responsibility, or

becoming deference to, and reliance on, the wisdom of another and a much older person. In one sense the stay was of necessity removed. The Duchess of Kent, from this day "treated her daughter with respectful observance as well as affection." The time was past for advice, instruction, or suggestion, unless in private, and even then it would be charily and warily given by the sensible, modest mother of a Queen. Well for her Majesty that there was no more than truth in what one of the historians of the reign has said, in just and temperate language, of her character: "She was well brought up. Both as regards her intellect and her character her training was excellent. She was taught to be self-reliant, brave, and systematical."

As soon as the deputation had returned, the proclamation was read; "Whereas it has pleased Almighty God to call to His mercy our late Sovereign Lord, King William the Fourth, of blessed and glorious memory, by whose decease the imperial Crown of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland is solely and rightfully come to the high and mighty Princess Alexandrina Victoria, saving the rights of any issue of his late majesty, King William the Fourth, which may be born of his late Majesty's consort; we, therefore, the lords spiritual and temporal of this realm, being here assisted with these of his late Majesty's Privy Council, with numbers of others, principal gentlemen of quality, with the Lord Mayor, aldermen and citizens of London, do now hereby, with one voice and consent of tongue and heart, publish and proclaim that the high and mighty Princess Alexandrina Victoria is now, by the death of our late Sovereign, of happy memory, become our only lawful and rightful liege Lady, Victoria, by the grace of God Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, saving, as aforesaid: To whom, saving as aforesaid, we do acknowledge all faith and constant obedience, with all hearty and humble affection, beseeching God, by whom kings and queens do reign, to bless the royal Princess Victoria with long and happy years to reign over us.

"Given at the Court of Kensington this 20th day of June, 1837. (Signed by all the Lords of the Privy Council present). God Save the Queen."

"Then," resuming Mr. Greville's narrative, "the doors were thrown open, and the Queen entered, accompanied by her two uncles, who advanced to meet her. She bowed to the Lords, took her seat (an arm-chair improvised into a throne, with a footstool), and then read her speech in a clear, distinct, and audible voice, and without any appearance of fear or embarrassment:--

"The severe and afflicting loss which the nation has sustained by the death of his Majesty, my beloved uncle, has devolved upon me the duty of administering the Government of this empire. This awful responsibility is imposed upon me so suddenly, and at so early a period of my life, that I should feel myself utterly oppressed by the burden were I not sustained by the hope that Divine Providence, which has called me to this work, will give me strength for the performance of it, and that I shall find in the purity of my intentions, and in my zeal for the public welfare, that support and those resources which usually belong to a more mature age and to longer experience.

"I place my firm reliance upon the wisdom of Parliament and upon the loyalty and affection of my people. I esteem it also a peculiar advantage that I succeed to a Sovereign whose constant regard for the rights and liberties of his subjects, and whose desire to promote the amelioration of the laws and institutions of the country, have rendered his name the object of general attachment and veneration.

"Educated in England, under the tender and enlightened care of a most

affectionate mother, I have learned from my infancy to respect and love the Constitution of my native country.

"It will be my unceasing study to maintain the reformed religion as by law established, securing at the same time to all the full enjoyment of religious liberty; and I shall steadily protect the rights and promote, to the utmost of my power, the happiness and welfare of all classes of my subjects."

Her Majesty's speech was after the model of English royal speeches; but one can feel at this day it was spoken in all ingenuousness and sincerity, and that the utterance--remarkable already for clearness and distinctness--for the first time, of the set words, ending in the solemn promise to do a Sovereign's duty, must have thrilled the hearts both of speaker and hearers.

A critical listener was not wanting, according to the testimony of the witness who, on his own account, certainly did not object to chronicle detraction of every kind. "The speech was admired, except by Brougham, who appeared in a considerable state of excitement. He said to Peel (whom he was standing near, and with whom he was not in the habit of communicating), "amelioration;" that is not English. You might perhaps say "melioration," but "improvement" is the proper word.'

"Oh!' said Peel, 'I see no harm in the word; it is generally used.'

"You object,' said Brougham, 'to the sentiment; I object to the grammar.'

"No,' said Peel, 'I don't object to the sentiment.'

"Well, then, she pledges herself to the policy of our Government,' said Brougham.

"She was quite plainly dressed, and in mourning. After she had read her speech, and taken and signed the oath (administered by the Archbishop of Canterbury) for the security of the Church of Scotland, the Privy Councillors were sworn, the two royal Dukes first by themselves."

The days of violence were ended, and whatever private hopes he might once have entertained, Ernest, Duke of Cumberland, was the first to hail his niece as the high and mighty Princess Alexandrina Victoria, to whom the imperial Crown of Great Britain and Ireland had solely and rightfully come--the first to proclaim her, with one voice and consent of tongue and heart, on the part of himself and his peers, his only lawful and rightful liege Lady Victoria, to whom he acknowledged all faith and rightful obedience, with all hearty and humble affection. It may be, the fact that he had succeeded to the throne of Hanover rendered the step less difficult. His name was also the first in the signatures of princes, Privy Councillors, peers, and gentlemen affixed in the next room to the proclamation. His brother, the Duke of Sussex, followed. They were both elderly men, with the younger older in infirmities than in years. The King of Hanover was sixty-six, the Duke of Sussex sixty-four years of age.

"And as these two old men, her uncles, knelt before her, swearing allegiance and kissing her hand," Greville went on, with a sense of pathos, curious for him, in the scene, "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. Her manner to them was very graceful and engaging; she kissed them both, and rose from her chair and

moved towards the Duke of Sussex, who was farthest from her, and too infirm to reach her. She seemed rather bewildered at the multitude of men who were sworn, and who came one after another to kiss her hand, but she did not speak to anybody, nor did she make the slightest difference in her manner, or show any in her countenance, to any individual of any rank, station, or party. I particularly watched her when Melbourne and the Ministers, and the Duke of Wellington and Peel approached her. She went through the whole ceremony, occasionally looking at Melbourne for instruction when she had any doubt what to do, which hardly ever occurred, and with perfect coolness and self-possession, but at the same time with a graceful modesty and propriety particularly interesting and ingratiating. When the business was done she retired as she had entered, and I could see that nobody was in the adjoining room."

Mr. Greville's comment on the scene was singularly enthusiastic from such a man. "Never was anything like the first impression she produced, or the chorus of praise and admiration which is raised about her manner and behaviour, and certainly not without justice. It was something very extraordinary, and something far beyond what was looked for." He quoted Sir Robert Peel's and the Duke of Wellington's opinions in accordance with his own. "He (Sir Robert) likewise said how amazed he was at the manner and behaviour, at her apparent deep sense of her situation, her modesty, and at the same time her firmness. She appeared, in fact, to be awed, but not daunted; and afterwards, the Duke of Wellington told me the same thing, and added, that if she had been his own daughter he could not have desired to see her perform her part better."

We can understand the fatherly reference of the Duke, and the sort of personal pride he took in his young Queen. He had been present at her birth in this very Palace of Kensington; he had known her at every stage of her life hitherto. She was doing credit not only to herself and her mother, but to every friend she had, by her perfect fulfilment of what was required of her. Lord Campbell was equally eulogistic. "As soon as I heard that King William had expired I hurried to Kensington, to be present at the first Council of the new Sovereign. This, I think, was the most interesting scene I have ever witnessed.... I am quite in raptures with the deportment of the young Queen. Nothing could be more exquisitely proper. She looked modest, sorrowful, dejected, diffident, but at the same time she was quite cool and collected, and composed and firm. Her childish appearance was gone. She was an intelligent and graceful young woman, capable of acting and thinking for herself. Considering that she was the only female in the room, and that she had no one about her with whom she was familiar, no human being was ever placed in a more trying situation."

What was most conspicuous in the Queen had been already remarked upon and admired in the young girl at Queen Adelaide's Drawing-room. Here were the same entire simplicity, with its innate dignity only further developed; the power of being herself and no other, which left her thoughtful of what she ought to do--not of how she should look and strike others--and rendered her free to consider her neighbours; the docility to fit guidance, and yet the ability to judge for herself; the quick sense all the time of her high calling.

That first Council at Kensington has become an episode in history--a very significant one. It has been painted, engraved, written about many a time, without losing its fascination. Sir David Wilkie made a famous picture of it, which hangs in a corridor at Windsor. In this picture the artist used certain artistic liberties, such as representing the Queen in a white muslin robe instead of a black gown, and the Privy Councillors in the

various costumes of their different callings--uniforms with stars and ribands, lawyers' gowns and full-bottomed wigs, bishops' lawn, instead of the ordinary morning dress of the gentlemen of their generation. It must have tickled Wilkie as he worked to come to an old acquaintance of his boyhood and youth in John, Lord Campbell, and to recognise how bewilderingly far removed from the bleak little parish of Cults and the quiet little town of Cupar was the coincidence which summoned him, the distinguished painter, in the execution of a royal commission, to draw the familiar features of his early playmate in those of the Attorney-General, who appeared as a privileged member of the illustrious throng.

We still turn back wistfully to that bright dawn of a beneficent reign. We see the slight girlish figure in her simple mourning filling her place sedately at the head of the Council table. At the foot, facing her Majesty, sits the Duke of Sussex, almost venerable in his stiffness and lameness, wearing the black velvet skull-cap by which he was distinguished in those days. We look at the well-known faces, and think of the famous names among the crowd of mature men, each of whom was hanging on the words and looks of his mistress. There is Copley the painter's son, sagacious Lyndhurst, who lived to be the Nestor of the bench and the peerage; there is his great opponent, Robertson the historian's grand-nephew, Brougham, a tyrant of freedom, an illustrious Jack-of-all-trades, the most impassioned, most public-spirited, most egotistical of men. He was a contradiction to himself as well as to his neighbours. His strongly-marked face, with its shaggy brows, high cheek-bones, aggressive nose, mouth drooping at the corners, had not lost its mobility. He was restless and fault-finding in this presence as in any other. The Duke of Wellington's Roman nose lent something of the eagle to his aspect. It was a more patrician attribute than Sir Robert Peel's long upper lip, with its shy, nervous compression, which men mistook for impassive coldness, just as the wits blundered in calling his strong, serviceable capacity, noble uprightness, and patient labour "sublime mediocrity." William Lamb, Viscount Melbourne, was the type of an aristocrat, with brains and heart. He was still a very handsome man at fifty-eight, as he was also "perhaps the most graceful and agreeable gentleman of the generation." His colleague--destined to marry Lord Melbourne's sister, the most charming woman who ever presided in turn over two Ministerial _salons_, Lord Palmerston, in spite of his early achievements in waltzing at Almack's, was less personally and mentally gifted. He had rather an indiarubber-like elasticity and jauntiness than stateliness, or dignity, or grace. His irregular-featured face was comical, but he bore the bell in exhaustless spirits, which won him, late in life, the reputation of perennial juvenility, and the enviable if not altogether respectful sobriquet of "the evergreen Palm." Lord John Russell, with his large head and little body, of which Punch made stock, with his friendship for Moore and his literary turn, as well as his ambition to serve his country like a true Russell, was at this date wooing and wedding the fair young widow, Lady Ribblesdale, his devotion to whom had drawn from the wags a profane pun. They called the gifted little lord "the widow's mite." When the marriage ceremony was being performed between him and Lady Ribblesdale the wedding-ring fell from the bride's finger--an evil omen soon fulfilled for the marriage tie was speedily broken by her early death. "Plain John Campbell" was a very different man. The son of a minister of the Church of Scotland, in a presbytery which included among its members the father of Sir David Wilkie, his Scotch tongue, Scotch shrewdness, healthy appetite for work, and invulnerable satisfaction with himself and his surroundings, caused themselves to be felt in another sphere than that to which he was born.

"The Cabinet Ministers tendered to the Queen the seals of their respective

offices, which her Majesty was most graciously pleased to return, and they severally kissed hands on their reappointment." The last business done was to arrange for the public proclamation of the Queen, and to take her pleasure with regard to the time, which she fixed for the day following, Wednesday, the 21st of June, at ten o'clock. When Lord Albemarle, for whom she had sent, went to her and told her he was come to take her orders, she said, "I have no orders to give. You must know this so much better than I do, that I leave it all to you. I am to be at St. James's at ten to-morrow, and must beg you to find me a conveyance proper for the occasion." We are further informed that the Queen, in the course of the morning, received a great many noble and distinguished personages. So finished a busy and exciting day; the herald of many other days crowded with engagements and excitement.

The Palace of St. James's, where the proclamation was to take place, had been for a long time the theatre of all the principal events in the lives of the kings and queens of England. Even the young Queen already viewed it in this light, for though she had been baptized at Kensington, she had been confirmed at St. James's. She had attended her first Drawing-rooms, and celebrated her coming-of-age ball there. St. James's is a brick building, like Kensington Palace, but is far older, and full of more stirring and tragic associations. It has an air of antiquity about it, if it has few architectural claims on the world's interest; but at least one front, that which includes the turreted gateway into St. James's Street, is not without picturesque beauty. The situation of the palace, considering that it is in the middle of a great city, is agreeable. It has its park, with a stretch of pleasant water on one side, and commands the leafy avenue of the Mall and the sweep of Constitution Hill. As a royal residence it dates as far back as Henry VIII., whose daughter Mary ended her sad life here. Both of the sons of James I. received it as a dwelling, and were connected with it in troubled days. Prince Henry fell into his pining sickness and died here. Charles, after bringing Henrietta Maria under its roof, and owning its shelter till three of his children were born, was carried to St. James's as a prisoner. He was taken from it in a sedan-chair to undergo his trial at his new palace of Whitehall. He was conveyed back under sentence of death. Here Bishop Juxon preached the last sermon to which the King listened, and administered to him the Sacrament; and here Charles took leave of his children--the little Duke of Gloucester and the girl-Princess Elizabeth. From St. James's the King went to the scaffold on the bitter January morning, followed by the snowy night in which "the white King" was borne to his dishonoured burial. Other and less tragic scenes were enacted within its bounds. A familiar figure in connection with Kensington Palace--Caroline of Anspach, wife of George II.--died like herself here. Her King had fallen into a stupor of sorrow across the bed where she lay in her last agony, and she forbade his being disturbed. She told those who were praying to pray aloud, that she might hear them; then raising herself up and uttering the single German word of acquiescence, "_So_" her brave spirit passed away.

When the Queen arrived, accompanied by her mother and her ladies, and attended by an escort, on the June morning of her proclamation, she was received by the other members of the royal family, the Household, and the Cabinet Ministers. Already every avenue to the Palace and every balcony and window within sight were crowded to excess. In the quadrangle opposite the window where her Majesty was to appear a mass of loyal ladies and gentlemen was tightly wedged. The parapets above were filled with people, conspicuous among them the big figure of Daniel O'Connell, the agitator, waving his hat and cheering with Irish effusion.

"At ten o'clock," says the Annual Register, "the guns in the park fired a salute, and immediately afterwards the Queen made her appearance at the window of the tapestried ante-room adjoining the ante-chamber, and was received with deafening cheers. She stood between Lords Melbourne and Lansdowne, in their State dresses and their ribands, who were also cheered, as was likewise her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent. At this and the two other windows we recognised the King of Hanover, the Dukes of Sussex, Wellington, and Argyle; Lords Hill, Combermere, Denbigh, Duncannon, Albemarle, and Winchester; Sir E. Codrington, Sir William Houston, and a number of other lords and gentlemen, with several ladies.

"Her Majesty looked extremely fatigued and pale, but returned the repeated cheers with which she was greeted with remarkable ease and dignity. She was dressed in deep mourning, with a white tippet, white cuffs, and a border of white lace under a small black bonnet, which was placed far back on her head, exhibiting her light hair in front simply parted over the forehead. Her Majesty seemed to view the proceedings with considerable interest. Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent was similarly dressed to the Queen."

"In the courtyard were Garter-King-at-Arms with heralds and pursuivants in their robes of office, and eight officers of arms on horseback bearing massive silver maces; sergeants-at-arms with their maces and collars; the serjeant-trumpeter with his mace and collar; the trumpets, drum-major and drums, and knights'-marshal and men."

"On Her Majesty showing herself at the Presence Chamber window, Garter-Principal-King-at-Arms having taken his station in the courtyard under the window, accompanied by the Duke of Norfolk as Earl-Marshal of England, read the proclamation containing the formal and official announcement of the demise of King William IV., and of the consequent accession of Queen Alexandrina Victoria to the throne of these realms ... 'to whom we acknowledge all faith and constant obedience, with all humble and hearty affection, beseeching God, by whom kings and queens do reign, to bless the Royal Princess Alexandrina Victoria with long and happy years to reign. God save the Queen.' At the termination of this proclamation the band struck up the National Anthem, and a signal was given for the Park and Tower guns to fire in order to announce the fact of the proclamation being made. During the reading of the proclamation her Majesty stood at the Presence Chamber window, and immediately upon its conclusion the air was rent with the loudest acclamations by those within the area, which were responded to by the thousands without."

The scene drew from Elizabeth Barrett Browning the following popular verses:--

O, maiden, heir of kings,
A king has left his place;
The majesty of death has swept
All other from his face;
And thou upon thy mother's breast
No longer lean adown,
But take the glory for the rest,
And rule the land that loves thee best.
The maiden wept,
She wept to wear a crown.

* * * * *

God bless thee, weeping Queen,

With blessings more divine,
And fill with better love than earth
That tender heart of thine;
That when the thrones of earth shall be
As low as graves brought down,
A pierced hand may give to thee
The crown which angels shout to see.
Thou wilt not weep
To wear that heavenly crown.

A maiden Queen in her first youth, wearing the crown and wielding the sceptre, had become un fait accompli and the news spread over the length and breadth of the land. We have seen how it touched the oldest statesmen, to whom State ceremonials had become hackneyed--who were perhaps a little sceptical of virtue in high places. It may be imagined, then, how the knowledge, with each striking and picturesque detail, thrilled and engrossed all the sensitive, romantic young hearts in the Queen's dominions. It seemed as if womanhood and girlhood were exalted in one woman and girl's person--as if a new era must be inaugurated with such a reign, and every man worthy of the name would rally round this Una on the throne.

The prosaic side of the question was that the country was torn by the factions of Whig and Tory, which were then in the full bloom of party spirit and narrow rancorous animosity. The close of the life of William IV. had presented the singular and disastrous contradiction of a King in something like open opposition to his Ministers. William had begun by being a liberal in politics, but alarmed by the progress of reform, he had hung back resisted, and ended by being dragged along an unwilling tolerator of a Whig regime. The Duke of Kent had been liberal in his opinions when liberality was not the fashion. The Duchess was understood to be on the same side; her brother and counsellor, the King of the Belgians, was decidedly so. Accordingly, the Whigs hailed the accession of Queen Victoria as their triumph, likely to secure and prolong their tenure of office. They claimed her as their Queen, with a boasting exultation calculated to wound and exasperate every Tory in the kingdom. Lord Campbell, who, though a zealous Whig, was comparatively cool and cautious, wrote in his journal, after the Queen's first Council, "We basked in the full glare of royal sunshine;" and this tone was generally adopted by his party. They met with some amount of success in their loud assertion, and the consequence was a strain of indignant bitterness in the Tory rejoinder. A clever partisan inscribed on the window-pane of an inn at Huddersfield:

"The Queen is with us," Whigs insulting say,
"For when she found us in, she let us stay."
It may be so; but give me leave to doubt
How long she'll keep you when she finds you out.

There was even some cooling of Tory loyalty to the new Queen. Chroniclers tell us of the ostentatious difference in enthusiasm with which, at Tory dinners, the toasts of the Queen, and the Queen-dowager were received.

As a matter of course, Lord Melbourne became the Queen's instructor in the duties of her position, and as she had no private secretary, he had to be in constant attendance upon her--to see her, not only daily, but sometimes three or four times a day. The Queen has given her testimony to the unwearied kindness and pleasantness, the disinterested regard for her welfare, even the generous fairness to political opponents, with which her Prime Minister discharged his task. It seems as if the great trust imposed on him drew out all that was most manly and chivalrous in a character

which, along with much that was fine and attractive, that won to him all who came in close contact with him, was not without the faults of the typical aristocrat, correctly or incorrectly defined by the popular imagination. Lord Melbourne, with his sense and spirit, honesty and good-nature, could be haughtily, indifferent, lazily self-indulgent, scornfully careless even to affectation, of the opinions of his social inferiors, as when he appeared to amuse himself with "idly blowing a feather or nursing a sofa-cushion while receiving an important and perhaps highly sensitive deputation from this or that commercial interest." The time has come when it is fully recognised that whatever might have been Lord Melbourne's defects, he never brought them into his relations with the Queen. To her he was the frank, sincere, devoted adviser of all that it was wisest and best for her to do. "He does not appear to have been greedy of power, or to have used any unfair means of getting or keeping it. The character of the young Sovereign seems to have impressed him deeply. His real or affected levity gave way to a genuine and lasting desire to make her life as happy and her reign as successful as he could. The Queen always felt the warmest affection and gratitude for him, and showed it long after the public had given up the suspicion that she could be a puppet in the hands of a Minister. "But men--especially Lord Melbourne's political adversaries--were not sufficiently large-minded and large-hearted to put this confidence in him beforehand. They remembered with wrath and disgust that, even in the language of men of the world, "his morals were not supposed to be very strict." He had been unhappy in his family life. The eccentricities and follies of Lady Caroline Lamb had formed the gossip of several London seasons long years before. Other scandals had gathered round his name, and though they had been to some extent disproven, it was indignantly asked, could there be a more unsuitable and undesirable guide for an innocent royal girl of eighteen than this accomplished, bland _roue_ of threescore? Should he be permitted to soil--were it but in thought--the lily of whose stainlessness the nation was so proud? The result proved that Lord Melbourne could be a blameless, worthy servant to his Sovereign.

In the meantime the great news of Queen Victoria's accession had travelled to the princely student at Bonn, who responded to it in a manly, modest letter, in which he made no claim to share the greatness, while he referred to its noble, solemn side. Prince Albert wrote on the 26th of June: "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 that high but difficult task. I hope that your reign may be long, happy, and glorious, and that your efforts may be rewarded by the thankfulness and love of your subjects." To others he expressed his satisfaction at what he heard of his cousin's astonishing self-possession, and of the high praise bestowed on her by all parties, "which seemed to promise so auspiciously for her reign." But so far from putting himself forward or being thrust forward by their common friends as an aspirant for her hand, while she was yet only on the edge of that strong tide and giddy whirl of imposing power and dazzling adulation which was too likely to sweep her beyond his grasp, it was resolved by King Leopold and the kindred who were most concerned in the relations of the couple, that, to give time for matters to settle down, for the young Queen to know her own mind--above all, to dissipate the premature rumour of a formal engagement between the cousins which had taken persistent hold of the public mind ever since the visit of the Saxe-Coburg princes to Kensington Palace in the previous year, Prince Albert should travel for several months. Accordingly, he set out, in company with his brother, to make an enjoyable tour, on foot, through Switzerland and the north of Italy. To a nature like his, such an experience was full of keen delight; but in the midst of his intoxication

he never forgot his cousin. The correspondence between them had been suffered to drop, but that she continued present to his thoughts was sufficiently indicated by the souvenirs he collected specially for her: the views of the scenes he visited, the *Alpenrosen* he gathered for her in its native home, Voltaire's autograph.

The Queen left Kensington, within a month of her uncle's death, we do not need to be told "greatly to the regret of the inhabitants." She went on the 13th of July to take up her residence at Buckingham Palace. "Shortly after one o'clock an escort of Lancers took up a position on the Palace Green, long previous to which an immense concourse of respectable persons had thronged the avenue and every open space near the Palace." About half-past one an open carriage drawn by four greys, preceded by two outriders, and followed by an open barouche, drawn by four bays, drove up from her Majesty's mews, Pimlico, and stopped before the grand entrance to the Duchess of Kent's apartments. The Queen, accompanied by the Duchess of Kent and Baroness Lehzen, almost immediately got into the first carriage. There was a tumult of cheering, frankly acknowledged. It is said the young Queen looked "pale and a little sad" at the parting moment. Then with a dash the carriages vanished in a cloud of July dust, and the familiar Palace Green, with its spreading trees and the red chimneys beyond--the High Street--Kensington Gore, were left behind. Kensington's last brief dream of a Court was brought to an abrupt conclusion. What was worse, Kensington's Princess was gone, never to return to the changed scene save for the most fleeting of visits.

We should like to give here one more story of her Majesty's stay at Kensington--a story that refers to these last days. We have already spoken of an old soldier-servant of the Duke of Kent's, said to have been named Stillman, who was quartered with his family--two of them sickly--in a Kensington cottage of the period, visited by the Duchess of Kent and the Princess Victoria. The little boy had died; the ailing girl still lived. The girl's clergyman, a gentleman named Vaughan, went to see her some days after the Queen had quitted the Palace, and found the invalid looking unusually bright. He inquired the reason. "Look there!" said the girl, and drew a book of Psalms from under her pillow, "look what the new Queen has sent me to-day by one of her ladies, with the message that, though now, as Queen of England, she had to leave Kensington, she did not forget me." The lady who had brought the book had said the lines and figures in the margin were the dates of the days on which the Queen herself had been accustomed to read the Psalms, and that the marker, with the little peacock on it, was worked by the Princess's own hand. The sick girl cried, and asked if this act was not beautiful?

CHAPTER V.

THE PROROGUING OF PARLIAMENT, THE VISIT TO GUILDHALL, AND THE CORONATION.

Buckingham Palace had been a seat of the Duke of Buckingham's, which was bought by George II., and in the next reign was settled on Queen Charlotte instead of Somerset House, and called the "Queen's House." It was rebuilt by George IV. but not occupied by him, and had been rarely used by King William. Besides its gardens, which are of some extent, it shares with St. James's, which it is near, the advantage of St. James's Park, one of the most agreeable in London, and full of historic memories. Though it, too, was modernised by George IV., its features have still much interest. It was by its canal, which has been twisted into the Serpentine, that the

Merry Monarch strolled alone, lazily playing with his dogs, feeding his ducks, and by his easy confidence flattering and touching his good citizens of London. On the same water his gay courtiers practised their foreign accomplishment of skating, which they had brought back with them from the Low Countries. In the Mall both Charles and his brother, the Duke of York, joined in the Court game of *Palle Malle*, when a ball was struck with a mallet through an iron ring down a walk strewn with powdered cockle-shells. At a later period the Mall was the most fashionable promenade in London. While dinners were still early on Sunday afternoons, the fashionable world walked for an hour or two after dinner in the Mall. An eyewitness declared that he had seen "in one moving mass, extending the whole length of the Mall, five thousand of the most lovely women in this country of female beauty, all splendidly attired, and accompanied by as many well-dressed men." For, as Mr. Hare, in his "Walks in London," points out, the frequenters of the Mall were very different in one respect from the company in the Row: "The ladies were in full dress and gentlemen carried their hats under their arms."

One relic of the past survives intact in the park--that is, the cow-stalls, which formerly helped to constitute "Milk Fair." Mr. Hare tells us "the vendors are proud of the number of generations through which the stalls have been held in their families."

From Buckingham Palace the Queen went in State on the 17th of July to close Parliament. The carriage, with the eight cream-coloured horses, was used. As far as we can judge, this was the first appearance in her Majesty's reign of "the creams," so dear to the London populace. The carriage was preceded by the Marshalsmen, a party of the Yeomen of the Guard in State costumes, and runners. The fourth carriage, drawn by six black horses, contained the Marchioness of Lansdowne, the Duchess of Sutherland, the Duke of Argyle, Lord Steward and Gold Stick in Waiting. The Queen was accompanied by the Earl of Albemarle, Master of the Horse, and the Countess of Mulgrave, the Lady-in-Waiting. The procession, escorted by a squadron of the Horse Guards, moved into Whitehall, and was cheered in Parliament Street by deafening shouts from a mass of spectators lining the streets and covering the house-tops. On arriving opposite the entrance of the House of Lords her Majesty was received by a battalion of the Grenadier Guards, whose splendid band, when she alighted, played the National Anthem.

Thus heralded, the young Queen entered the old Houses of Parliament, seated herself on the throne of her ancestors, and accorded her maiden reception to her loyal Lords and faithful Commons. This was the first occasion in a great assembly that people remarked the natural gift which has proved a valuable possession to her Majesty, and has never failed to awaken the admiration of the hearers. We allude to the peculiar silvery clearness, as well as sweetness, of a voice which can be heard in its most delicate modulations through the whole House. In reply to the Speaker of the House of Commons' assurance of the Commons' cordial participation in that strong and universal feeling of dutiful and affectionate attachment which prevailed among the free and loyal people of which they were the representatives, the Queen read her speech in an unfaltering voice, thanking the Parliament for its condolence upon the death of his late Majesty, and for its expressions of attachment and affection to herself, announcing her determination to preserve all the rights, spiritual and civil, of her subjects, touching on the usual topics in a royal speech in its relation to home and foreign affairs, and making the solemn assertion: "I ascend the throne with a deep sense of the responsibility which is imposed upon me, but I am supported by the consciousness of my own right intentions and by my dependence on the protection of Almighty God." Fanny

Kemble was present at this memorable scene, and has given her impression of it. Her testimony, as a public speaker, is valuable. "The Queen was not handsome, but very pretty, and the singularity of her great position lent a sentimental and poetical charm to her youthful face and figure. The serene, serious sweetness of her candid brow and clear soft eyes gave dignity to the girlish countenance, while the want of height only added to the effect of extreme youth of the round but slender person, and gracefully moulded hands and arms. The Queen's voice was exquisite, nor have I ever heard any spoken words more musical in their gentle distinctness than "My Lords and Gentlemen," which broke the breathless silence of the illustrious assembly whose gaze was riveted on that fair flower of royalty. The enunciation was as perfect as the intonation was melodious, and I think it is impossible to hear a more excellent utterance than that of the Queen's English by the English Queen."

The accession of Queen Victoria almost coincided with a new era in English history, art and letters, new relations in politics at home and abroad, new social movements undreamt of when she was born. In spite of the strong party spirit, the country was at peace within and without. France, the foreign neighbour of most importance to England, was also at peace under a so-called "citizen-king." The "Tractarian" movement at Oxford was startling the world with a proposed return to the practices of the primitive Church, while it laid the foundation of the High Church and Ritualistic parties in the modern Church of England. The names of Newman and Pusey especially were in many mouths, spoken in various terms of reprobation and alarm, or approval and exultation. Next to Tractarianism, Chartism--the people's demand for a charter which should meet their wants--was a rising force, though it had not reached its full development. Arnold was doing his noble work, accomplishing a moral revolution in the public schools of England. Milman and Grote had arisen as historians. Faraday was one of the chief lights of science. Sir John Herschel occupied his father's post among the stars. Beautiful modest Mary Somerville showed what a woman might do with the Differential Calculus; Brewster had taken the place of Sir Humphry Davy. Murchison was anticipating Robert Dick and Hugh Miller in geology. Alfred Tennyson had already published two volumes of poems; Browning had given to the world his "Paracelsus," and this very year (1837) his Strafford had been performed at Covent Garden, while it was still on the cards that his calling might be that of a great dramatist. Dickens, the Scott of the English lower-middle classes, was bringing out his "Pickwick Papers." Disraeli had got into the House of Commons at last, and his "Vivian Grey" was fully ten years old. So was Bulwer's "Pelbam"--the author of which also aided in forming the literary element of the House of Commons in the Queen's first Parliament. Mrs. Gore, Mrs. Trollope, Miss Mitford, Mrs. S. C. Hail, and Harriet Martineau represented under very different aspects the feminine side of fiction. Macready remained the stage king, but he shared his royalty with the younger Kean. A younger Kemble had also played Juliet well, but the stage queen was Helen Faucit. In painting, Turner was working in his last style; Stanfield's sea-pieces were famous. Mulready and Leslie were in the front as genre painters. Maclise was making his reputation; Etty had struggled into renown, while poor Haydon was sinking into despair. Landseer was already the great animal painter. Sir C. Eastlake had court commissions. Wilkie, too, still had royal commissions, but his best work was done, and he was soon to set out on his last travels in a vain search after health and strength.

Withal the world was a light-hearted world enough--not so hurried as it is to-day, though railways were well established, and the electric telegraph had been hit upon in this same 1837. Young blood continued hot, and play was apt to be riotous. Witness the fantastic frolics of the Marquis of

Waterford--public property in those years. He had inherited the eccentricities of the whole Delaval race, and not content with tickling his peers in England, carried his whims and pranks into Scotland and Ireland and across the Channel. Various versions of his grotesque feats circulated and scintillated through all classes, provoking laughter, and tempting to clumsy imitation, till the gentleman may be said to have had a species of world-wide reputation in a madly merry way.

The Queen held a review at Windsor on the 28th of September, 1837. She had dwelt at Windsor before as a cherished guest; but what must it not have been to her to enter these gates as the Queen? The rough hunting-seat of William Rufus had long been the proudest and fairest palace in England. St. George's Tower and battlements are the most royal in these realms. St. George's Hall and St. George's Chapel are the best examples of ancient and modern chivalry. The stately terrace commanding the red turrets of Eton and the silvery reaches of the Thames, where George III. and Queen Charlotte, with their large family and household, were wont to promenade on Sunday afternoons for the benefit of their Majesties' loyal subjects, where the blind old King used to totter along supported by two of his faithful Princesses; the green alleys and glades of the ancient forest, with the great boles of the venerable oaks--Queen Elizabeth's among them; Virginia Water sparkling in the sunshine or glimmering in the moonlight, all make up such a kingly residence, as in many respects cannot be surpassed. What must it not have been to enter the little Court town, another Versailles or

Fontainebleau, as its liege Lady, to be hailed and welcomed by the goodly throng of Eton lads--those gay and gallant attendants on royal Windsor pageants--to pass through these halls as their mistress, and fairly recognise that all the noble surroundings were hers, with all England, all Britain and many a great dependency and colony on which the sun never sets--hers to rule over, hers to bless if she would?

At the review, in compliment to her soldiers whom she saw marshalled in their disciplined masses, and saluting her as the Captain of their Captains--even of Wellington himself--the Queen wore a half-military dress--a tight jacket with deep lappels, the blue riband of the Garter across one shoulder, and its jewelled star upon her breast, a stocklike black neckerchief in stiff folds holding up the round throat, and on the head--hiding nearly all the fair hair--a round, high, flatcap with a broad black "snout"; beneath it the soft, open, girlish face, with its single-hearted dignity.

In this month of September the Queen heard that her sister-queen and girl friend, Donna Maria da Gloria, had received consolation for the troubles of her kingdom in becoming the youthful mother of a son and heir, Prince Ferdinand of Portugal.

By November the Court was back at Buckingham Palace, and on the 9th the Queen paid her first visit to the City of London, which received her with magnificent hospitality.

Long before the hour appointed for her Majesty's departure for Guildhall, all the approaches to the palace and the park itself presented dense crowds of holiday folks. At two o'clock the first carriage of the procession emerged from the triumphal arch, and in due time came the royal State carriage, in which sat the Queen, attended by the Mistress of the Robes and the Master of the Horse. Her Majesty's full-dress was a "splendid pink satin shot with silver." She wore a queenly diamond tiara, and, as we are told, looked remarkably well. Her approach was the signal for enthusiastic

cheering, which increased as she advanced, while the bells of the city churches rang out merry peals. The fronts of the houses were decorated with bright-coloured cloth, green boughs, and such flowers as November had spared. Devices in coloured lamps waited for the evening illumination to bring them out in perfection. Venetian masts had not been hoisted then in England, but "rows of national flags and heraldic banners were stretched across the Strand at several points, and busts and portraits of her Majesty were placed in conspicuous positions." The only person in the Queen's train who excited much interest was the Duke of Wellington, and he heard himself loudly cheered. The mob was rapidly condoning what they had considered his errors as a statesman, and restoring him to his old eminence, in their estimation, as the hero of the long wars, the conqueror of Bonaparte. Applause or reprobation the veteran met with almost equal coolness. When he had been besieged by raging, threatening crowds, calling upon him to do justice to Queen Caroline, as he rode to Westminster during the wild days of her trial, he had answered "Yes, yes," without a muscle of his face moving, and pushed on straight to his destination. For many a year he was to receive every contrite huzza, as he had received every fierce hiss, with no more than the twinkling of an eyelid or the raising of two fingers.

The gathering at Temple Bar--real, grim old Temple Bar, which had borne traitors' heads in former days--was so great that a detachment of Life Guards, as well as a strong body of police, had work to do in clearing a way for the carriages. The aldermen had to be accommodated with a room in Child's old banking-house, founded by the typical industrious apprentice who married his master's daughter. It sported the quaint old sign of the "Marigold," and was supposed to hold sheaves of papers containing noble, nay, royal secrets, as well as bushels of family jewels, in its strong boxes. It had even a family romance of its own, for did not the great Child of his day pursue his heiress in her flight to Gretna with the heir of the Villiers, who, leaning, pistol in hand, from his postchaise in front, sent a bullet into the near horse of the chaise behind, and escaped with his prize?

Undisturbed by these exciting stories, the aldermen waited in the dim interior--charged with other than money-lending mysteries, till the worthy gentlemen were joined by the Lord Mayor and sheriffs, when they proceeded to mount their chargers in Temple Yard--perhaps the most disturbing proceeding of any, with the riders' minds a little soothed by the circumstance that the horses had been brought from the Artillery barracks at Woolwich, and each was led by the soldier to which it belonged, in the capacity of groom.

"A few minutes before three the approach of the Queen was announced. The Lord Mayor dismounted, and, taking the City sword in his hand, stood on the south side of Temple Bar. As soon as the Queen's carriage arrived within the gateway it stopped, and then, unfortunately, it began to rain." The Queen's weather, which has become proverbial, of which we are given to boast, did not attend her on this occasion. Perhaps it would have been too much to expect of the clouds when the date was the 9th of November. Regardless of the weather, "the Lord Mayor delivered the keys of the City to the Queen, which her Majesty restored in the most gracious manner." At this time the multitude above, around, and below, from windows, scaffolding, roofs, and parapets, cheered long and loud. The Lord Mayor remounted, and, holding the City sword aloft, took his place immediately before the royal carriage, after which the aldermen, members of the Common Council, and civic authorities formed in procession.

Rather a curious ceremony was celebrated in front of St. Paul's. Booths and

hustings had been erected in the enclosure for the accommodation of members of the different City companies and the boys of Christ's Hospital. "The royal carriage having stopped in the middle of the road, opposite the cathedral gate, a platform was wheeled out, on which were Mr. Frederick Gifford Nash, senior scholar of Christ's Hospital, and the head master and treasurer. The scholar, in conformity with an old usage, delivered an address of congratulation to her Majesty, concluding with an earnest prayer for her welfare. 'God Save the Queen' was then sung by the scholars and a great part of the multitude."

But already the dreariness and discomfort of a dark and wet November afternoon had been too much even for the staunchest loyalty, and had dispersed the feebler spirits among the onlookers. The Lord Mayor assisted her Majesty to alight at the door of the Guildhall, where the Lady Mayoress was waiting to be presented by her husband. We have a full description of the Council-room and retiring-room, with their draperies of crimson and gold, including the toilet-table, covered with white satin, and embroidered with the initials V. R., a crown and wreath in gold, at which the maiden Queen was understood to receive the last touches to her toilet, while she was attended by such distinguished matrons as the Duchess of Kent, the Duchess of Gloucester, and the Duchess of Cambridge. In the drawing-room the address of the City of London was read by the Recorder, and replied to by the Queen. At twenty minutes past five dinner was announced, and the Queen, preceded by the Lord Mayor and the Lady Mayoress, and conducted by the Lord Chamberlain, in "respectful silence," descended into the hall where the banquet was prepared. The great old hall, with its "glorious timber roof," could hardly have known itself. Gog and Magog--compared by Nathaniel Hawthorne to "playthings for the children of giants"--must have looked down with goggle eyes at the transformation. These were different days from the time when Anne Ascue, of Kelsey, was tried there for heresy, and the brave, keen-witted lady told her judges, when examined on the doctrine of transubstantiation, she had heard that God made man, but that man made God she had never heard; or when gallant Surrey encountered his enemies; or melodious Waller was called to account. It was on the raised platform at the east end of the hall that the Common Council had expended its strength of ornament and lavished its wealth. Here London outdid itself. The throne was placed there. "It was surmounted by an entablature, with the letters V. R. supporting the royal crown and cushion. In the front was an external valance of crimson velvet, richly laced and trimmed with tassels. The back-fluting was composed of white satin, relieved with the royal arms in gold. The curtains were of crimson velvet, trimmed with lace and lined with crimson silk. The canopy was composed of crimson velvet, with radiated centre of white satin enamelled with gold, forming a gold ray from which the centre of velvet diverged; a valance of crimson velvet, laced with gold, depended from the canopy, which was intersected with cornucopia, introducing the rose, thistle, and shamrock, in white velvet. Beneath this splendid canopy was placed the State-chair, which was richly carved and gilt, and ornamented with the royal arms and crown, including the rose, thistle, and shamrock, in crimson velvet. Its proportions were tastefully and judiciously diminished to a size that should in some sort correspond with the slight and elegant figure of the young Sovereign for whom it was provided. The platform on which the throne stood was covered with ermine and gold carpeting of the richest description." ... In front of the throne was placed the royal table, extending the whole width of the platform. It was thirty-four feet long and eight wide, and was covered with a cloth of the most exquisite damask, trimmed with gold lace and fringe. The sides and front of the platform were decked with a profusion of the rarest plants and shrubs. The royal table was on a dais above the level of the hall. A large mirror at each side of the throne reflected the gorgeous

scene. From the impromptu dais four long tables extended nearly half-way down the hall, where the Lord and Lady Mayoress presided over the company of foreign ambassadors, Cabinet Ministers, nobility, aldermen, and members of the Common Council. The "royal avenue" led up the middle of the hall to the throne, with the tables on each side. The Queen took her seat on the throne; the Lord and Lady Mayoress stood on either side of her Majesty, but were almost immediately bidden be seated at their table.

The company had now time to study the central figure, the cause and culmination of the assembly. Over her pink and silver she wore the riband and order of the Garter, with the George appended. Besides her diamond tiara she had a stomacher of brilliants, and diamond ear-rings. She sat in the middle of a regal company, only two of the others young like herself. To the rest she must have been the child of yesterday; while to each and all she preserved in full the natural relations, and was as much the daughter, niece, and cousin as of old; yet, at the same time, she was every inch the Queen. What a marvel it must have seemed--still more to those who sat near than to those who stood afar. The Queen was supported by the Dukes of Sussex and Cambridge, the Duchesses of Kent, Gloucester, Cambridge, and Sutherland; and there were present her two cousins, Prince George and Princess Augusta Of Cambridge.

After dinner, *Non Nobis Domine* was sung; and then, preceded by a flourish of trumpets, the common crier advanced to the middle of the hall and said, "The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor gives the health of our most gracious Sovereign, Queen Victoria."

The company simultaneously rose and drank the toast with enthusiasm. "God Save the Queen" was sung, after which her Majesty rose and bowed repeatedly with marked goodwill.... The common crier then shouted, "Her Majesty gives the Lord Mayor and Prosperity to the City of London." Bishop's "When the Wind Blows" was sung. The only other toast was, "The Royal Family," given by the Lord Mayor.

At half-past eight her Majesty's carriage was announced. The weather was unpleasant, the streets were unusually dirty, but a vast crowd once more greeted her. On arriving at the end of Cheapside, she was hailed out of the glimmering illumination and foggy lamplight by "God Save the Queen," again sung by many hundred voices, accompanied by a band of wind instruments, the performance of the Harmonic Society, and the music was followed all the way by enthusiastic cheering. The Baroness Bunsen remarked of such a scene long afterwards, "I was at a loss to conceive how any woman's sides can 'bear the beating of so strong a throb' as must attend the consciousness of being the object of all that excitement, and the centre of attraction for all those eyes. But the Queen has royal strength of nerve." Not so much strength of nerve, we should say, as strength of single-heartedness and simple sense of duty which are their own reward, together with the comparative immunity produced by long habit.

Still it is a little relief to turn from so much State and strain to a brief glimpse of the girl-Queen in something like the privacy of domestic life. In the month of November, 1837, the Attorney-General, Lord Campbell, with his wife, Lady Stratheden, received an invitation to Buckingham Palace, to dine with her Majesty at seven, and one of the guests wrote thus of the entertainment: "I went, and found it exceedingly agreeable, although by no means so grand as dining at Tarvit with Mrs. Rigg. The little Queen was exceedingly kind to me, and said she had heard from the Duchess of Gloucester that I had the most beautiful children in the world. She asked me how many we had, and when she heard *seven*, seemed rather

appalled, considering this a number which she would never be able to reach. She seems in perfect health, and is as merry and playful as a kitten."

Amongst the other innumerable engagements which engrossed every moment of the Queen from the time of her accession, she had been called on to sit for her portrait to many eager artists--among them Hayter and Sir David Wilkie. The last has recorded his impression of her in his manly, unaffected, half-homely words. "Having been accustomed to see the Queen from a child, my reception had a little the air of that of an early acquaintance. She is eminently beautiful, her features nicely formed, her skin smooth, her hair worn close to her face in a most simple way, glossy and clean-looking. Her manner, though trained to act the Sovereign, is yet simple and natural. She has all the decision, thought, and self-possession of a queen of older years, has all the buoyancy of youth, and from the smile to the unrestrained laugh, is a perfect child. While I was there she was sitting to Pistrucci for her coin, and to Hayter for a picture for King Leopold."

The mention of the coin recalls the "image and superscription" on the gold, silver, and copper that passes through our hands daily, which we almost forget to identify with the likeness of the young Queen. About this time also commenced the royal patronage of Landseer, which resulted later in many a family group, in which numerous four-footed favourites had their place. At the exhibition of Landseer's works after his death, the sight of these groups recalled to elderly men and women who had been his early neighbours, the days when a goodly cavalcade of ladies and gentlemen, with their grooms, on horseback, used to sweep past the windows, and the word went that the young Queen was honouring the painter by a visit to his studio.

On the 20th of November the Queen went in State to the House of Lords to open Parliament for the first time, with as great a crowd of members and strangers present as had flocked to witness the prorogation in July. In the course of the month of December the bills were passed which fixed the Queen's income at three hundred and eighty-five thousand pounds a year, and further raised the Duchess of Kent's annuity from twenty-two thousand, which it had been latterly, to thirty thousand a year. On the 23rd of December the Queen went to give her assent to the bills, and thank her Parliament personally, according to old custom on such an occasion. On presenting the bill the Speaker observed that it had been framed in "a liberal and confiding spirit." The Queen simply bowed her acknowledgement.

Lord Melbourne, "with the tears in his eyes," told Lord Campbell that in one of his first interviews with the Queen she had said to him, "My father's debts must be paid." Accordingly the late Duke of Kent's debts were paid by his daughter, in the name of herself and her mother, in the first year of Queen Victoria's reign. In the second year she discharged the debts which the Duchess of Kent had incurred in meeting the innumerable heavy calls made upon her, not only as the widow of one of the Royal Dukes, but as the mother of the future Sovereign.

The summer of 1838 was gay with the preparations for the Queen's coronation. All classes took the greatest interest in it, so that splenetic people pronounced the nation "coronation mad." Long before the event coronation medals were being struck, coronation songs and hymns written, coronation ribands woven. Every ingenious method by which the world could commemorate the joyful season was put in practice. The sentiment was not confined to the inhabitants of the United Kingdom. "Foreigners of various conditions, and from all quarters of Europe, flocked in to behold the inauguration of the maiden monarch of the British Empire. In the Metropolis

for some weeks anterior to the event the excitement was extreme. The thousand equipages which thronged the streets, the plumed retainers of the ambassadors, the streams of swarthy strangers, and the incessant din of preparation, which resounded by night as well as by day, along the intended line of the procession, constituted by themselves a scene of no ordinary animation and interest, and sustained the public mind in an unceasing stretch of expectation."

Some disappointment was experienced on the knowledge that the ancient custom of a royal banquet in Westminster Hall on the coronation day was to be dispensed with. But the loss was compensated by a procession--a modification of the old street pageant--on the occasion.

On the morning of the 28th of June the weather was not promising. It was cold for the season, and some rain fell; but the shower ceased, and the day proved fresh and bright, with sunshine gilding the darkest cloud. The Tower artillery awoke the heaviest City sleepers. It is needless to say a great concourse, in every variety of vehicle and on foot, streamed from east to west through the "gravelled" streets, lined with soldiers and policemen, before the barriers were put up. "The earth was alive with men," wrote an enthusiastic spectator; "the habitations in the line of march cast forth their occupants to the balconies or the house-tops; the windows were lifted out of their frames, and the asylum of private life, that sanctuary which our countrymen guard with such traditional jealousy, was on this occasion made accessible to the gaze of the entire world."

At ten o'clock the Queen left Buckingham Palace in the State coach, to the music of the National Anthem and a salute of guns, and passed beneath the Royal Standard hoisted on the marble arch. A marked feature of the procession was the magnificent carriages and escorts of the foreign ambassadors: the splendid uniform of the German Jagers delighted the populace. A deeper and subtler feeling was produced by the sight of one of Napoleon's marshals, Soult, Wellington's great adversary, rearing his white head in a coach the framework of which had belonged to the State carriage of the Prince de Conde, and figured in the *beaux jours* of Louis XVI. The consciousness that this worthy foe had come to do honour to the young Queen awoke a generous response from the crowd. Soult was cheered lustily along the whole route, and in the Abbey itself, so that he returned to France not only full of personal gratification at the welcome he had received, but strongly convinced of the goodwill of John Bull to Frenchmen in general. How the balls of destiny roll! Soult feted in London, Ney dead by a traitor's death, filling his nameless grave in Pere la Chaise. The procession, beginning with trumpeters and Life Guards, wound its way in relays of foreign ambassadors, members of the royal family and their suites--the Duchess of Kent first--the band of the Household Brigade, the Queen's bargemaster and her forty-eight watermen--honorary servants for many a day--twelve carriages with her Majesty's suite, a squadron of Life Guards, equerries, gentlemen riders and military officials, the royal huntsmen, yeomen-prickers, and foresters, six of her Majesty's horses, with rich trappings, each horse led by two grooms; the Knight-Marshal, marshalsmen, Yeomen of the Guard, the State coach--drawn by eight cream-coloured horses, attended by a Yeoman of the Guard at each wheel, and two footmen at each door--the Gold Stick, Viscount Combermere, and the Captain of the Yeomen of the Guard, the Earl of Ilchester, riding on either side. In the coach sat the Queen, the Mistress of the Robes (the Duchess of Sutherland), the Master of the Horse (the Earl of Albemarle), and the Captain-General of the Royal Archers (the Duke of Buccleugh). The whole was wound up by a squadron of Life Guards. In this order of stately march, under the June sky, emerging from the green avenues of the park, the

procession turned up Constitution Hill, traversed Piccadilly, St. James's Street, Pall Mall, Cockspur Street, and by Charing Cross, Whitehall, and Parliament Street, reached the west door of Westminster Abbey--

Where royal heads receive the sacred gold.

At the Abbey door, at half-past eleven, the Queen was received by the great officers of State, the noblemen bearing the regalia, the bishops carrying the patina, the chalice, and the Bible. Her Majesty proceeded to the robing-room, and there was a hush of expectation in the thronged interior, where the great persons who were to play a part in the ceremony and the privileged ticket-holders had been waiting patiently for long hours.

Underneath the galleries and below the platform were ranged lines of Foot Guards. The platform (under the central tower) was the most conspicuous object. It was covered with cloth of gold, and bore the chair of homage, or throne, facing the altar. Farther on, within the altar-rails, was "St. Edward's Chair," or the chair decorated by "William the Painter" for Edward. Enclosed within it is the "Stone of Destiny," or Fatal Stone of Scone--a sandy stone, supposed to have formed the pillow on which Jacob slept at Bethel, and long used in the coronation of the Scotch kings. In this chair all the kings of England, since the time of Edward I., have been crowned. The altar was covered with massive gold plate.

The galleries of the Abbey were arranged for the members of the House of Commons, the foreign ambassadors, the judges, Knights of the Bath, members of the Corporation, &c. &c. The floor of the transepts was occupied by benches for the peers and peeresses, who may be said to be in their glory at a coronation; the space behind them was for the ticket-holders.

Harriet Martineau has preserved some of the splendours and "humours" of the coronation with her usual clever power of observation and occasional caustic commentary. "The maids called me at half-past two that June morning, mistaking the clock. I slept no more, and rose at half-past three. As I began to dress the twenty-one guns were fired, which must have awakened all the sleepers in London. When the maid came to dress me she said numbers of ladies were already hurrying to the Abbey. I saw the grey old Abbey from the window as I dressed, and thought what would have gone forward within it before the sun set upon it. My mother had laid out her pearl ornaments for me. The feeling was very strange of dressing in crape, blonde, and pearls at five in the morning.... The sight of the rapidly filling Abbey was enough to go for. The stone architecture contrasted finely with the gay colours of the multitude. From my high seat I commanded the whole north transept, the area with the throne, and many portions of galleries, and the balconies which were called the vaultings. Except a mere sprinkling of oddities, everybody was in full dress. In the whole assemblage I counted six bonnets. The scarlet of the military officers mixed in well, and the groups of the clergy were dignified; but to an unaccustomed eye the prevalence of Court dresses had a curious effect. I was perpetually taking whole groups of gentlemen for Quakers till I recollected myself. The Earl-Marshall's assistants, called Gold Sticks, looked well from above, lightly fluttering about in white breeches, silk stockings, blue laced frocks, and white sashes. The throne--an arm-chair with a round back, covered, as was its footstool, with cloth of gold--stood on an elevation of four steps in the centre of the area. The first peeress took her seat in the north transept opposite, at a quarter before seven, and three of the bishops came next. From that time the peers and their ladies arrived faster and faster. Each peeress was conducted by two Gold Sticks, one of whom handed her to her seat, and the other bore and arranged

her train on her lap, and saw that her coronet, footstool, and book were comfortably placed. I never saw anywhere so remarkable a contrast between youth and age as in these noble ladies." Miss Martineau proceeds to remark in the strongest and plainest terms on the unbecoming effect of full dress, with "hair drawn to the top of the head, to allow the putting on of the coronet" on these venerable matrons. She goes on to express her admiration of a later generation of peeresses. "The younger were as lovely as the aged were haggard.... About nine the first gleams of the sun slanted into the Abbey and presently travelled down to the peeresses. I had never before seen the full effect of diamonds. As the light travelled each peeress shone like a rainbow. The brightness, vastness, and dreamy magnificence of the scene produced a strange effect of exhaustion and sleepiness.... The great guns told when the Queen had set forth, and there was renewed animation. The Gold Sticks flitted about, there was tuning in the orchestra, and the foreign ambassadors and their suites arrived in quick succession. Prince Esterhazy crossing a bar of sunshine was the most prodigious rainbow of all. He was covered with diamonds and pearls, and as he dangled his hat it cast a dancing radiance all round.

"At half-past eleven the guns told that the Queen had arrived, but as there was much to be done in the robing-room, there was a long pause before she appeared."

A little after twelve the grand procession of the day entered the choir. The Prebendaries and Dean of Westminster and Officers-at-Arms, the Comptroller, Treasurer, Vice-Chamberlain, and Lord Steward of her Majesty's Household, the Lord Privy Seal, the Lord President, the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, came first. When these gentlemen were peers their coronets were carried by pages. The Treasurer bore the crimson bag with the medals; the Vice-Chancellor was attended by an officer from the Jewel Office, conveying, on a cushion, the ruby ring and the sword for the offering. Then followed the Archbishops of Canterbury, York, and Armagh, with the Lord Chancellor, each archbishop in his rochet, with his cap in his hand; the princesses of the blood royal, all in "robes of estate" of purple velvet and wearing circlets of gold; the Duchess of Cambridge, her train borne by Lady Caroline Campbell and a gentleman of her household, her coronet by Viscount Villiers; the Duchess of Kent, her train borne by Lady Flora Hastings, and her coronet by Viscount Morpeth; the Duchess of Gloucester, her train borne by Lady Caroline Legge, and her coronet by Viscount Evelyn. (The royal generation next that of George III. was fast dwindling away when these three ladies represented the six daughters and the wives of six of the sons of the old King and Queen. But there were other survivors, though they were not present to-day. The Queen-dowager; Princess Augusta, an aged woman of seventy; Princess Elizabeth, Landgravine of Hesse-Homburg, nearly as old, and absent in Germany; the Queen as well as the King of Hanover, who had figured formerly as Duke and Duchess of Cumberland; and Princess Sophia, who was ten years younger than Princess Augusta, and resident in England, but who was an invalid.) The regalia came next, St. Edward's staff, borne by the Duke of Roxburgh, the golden spurs borne by Lord Byron, the sceptre with the cross borne by the Duke of Cleveland, the third sword borne by the Marquis of Westminster, Curtana borne by the Duke of Devonshire, the second sword borne by the Duke of Sutherland, each nobleman's coronet carried by a page, Black Rod and Deputy-Garter walking before Lord Willoughby d'Eresby, Lord Great Chamberlain of England, with page and coronet.

The princes of the blood royal were reduced to two. The Duke of Cambridge, in his robe of estate, carrying his baton as Field-Marshal, his coronet borne by the Marquis of Granby, his train by Sir William Gomm; the Duke of

Sussex, his coronet carried by Viscount Anson, his train by the Honourable Edward Gore.

The High Constable of Ireland, the Duke of Leinster; the High Constable of Scotland, the Earl of Errol, with their pages and coronets. The Earl-Marshal of England, the Duke of Norfolk, with his staff, attended by two pages; the sword of State, borne by Viscount Melbourne, with his page and coronet; the Lord High Constable of England, the Duke of Wellington, with his staff and baton as Field-Marshal, attended by two pages. The sceptre with the dove, borne by the Duke of Richmond, page and coronet; St. Edward's crown, borne by the Lord High Steward, the Duke of Hamilton, attended by two pages; the orb, borne by the Duke of Somerset, page and coronet. The patina, borne by the Bishop of Bangor; the Bible, borne by the Bishop of Winchester; the chalice, borne by the Bishop of London.

At last the Queen entered, walking between the Bishops of Bath and Wells and Durham, with Gentlemen-at-Arms on each side. She was now a royal maiden of nineteen, with a fair, pleasant face, a slight figure, rather small in stature, but showing a queenly carriage, especially in the pose of the throat and head. She wore a royal robe of crimson velvet furred with ermine and bordered with gold lace. She had on the collars of her orders. Like the other princesses, she wore a gold circlet on her head. Her train was borne by eight "beautiful young ladies," as Sir David Wilkie called them, all dressed alike, some of them destined to officiate again as the Queen's bridesmaids, when the loveliness of the group attracted general attention and admiration. These noble damsels were Lady Adelaide Paget, Lady Fanny Cowper, Lady Anne Wentworth Fitzwilliam, Lady Mary Grimston, Lady Caroline Gordon Lennox, Lady Mary Talbot, Lady Catherine Stanhope, Lady Louisa Jenkinson. The Ladies of her Majesty's Household came next in order, the Duchess of Sutherland, the Mistress of the Robes, walking first, followed by Lady Lansdowne as first Lady of the Bed-chamber. Other ladies of the Bed-chamber, whose names were long familiar in association with that of the Queen, included Ladies Charlemont, Lyttelton, Portman, Tavistock, Mulgrave, and Barham. The Maids of Honour bore names once equally well known in the Court Circular, while the office brought with it visions of old historic Maids prominent in Court gossip, and revealed to this day possibilities of sprightliness reined in by Court etiquette, and innocent little scrapes condoned by royal graciousness and kindness. The Maids of Honour at the Queen's coronation were the Honourable Misses Margaret Dillon, Cavendish, Lister, Spring Rice, Harriet Pitt, Caroline Cocks, Matilda Paget, and Murray. One has heard and read less of the Women of the Bed-chamber, noble ladies also, no doubt, but by the time the superb procession reached them, with the gathering up of the whole in Goldsticks, Captains of the Royal Archers, of the Yeomen of the Guard, of the Gentlemen-at-Arms, though pages and coronets still abounded, the strained attention could take in no more accessories, but was fain to return to the principal figure in the pageant, and dwell with all eyes on her.

"The Queen looked extremely well, and had an animated countenance." The scene within the choir on her entrance was so gorgeous, that, it is said, even the Turkish Ambassador, accustomed we should say to gorgeousness, stopped short in astonishment. As the Queen advanced slowly toward the centre of the choir, she was received with hearty plaudits, everybody rising, the anthem, "I was glad," sung by the musicians, ringing through the Abbey. "At the close of the anthem, the Westminster boys (who occupied seats at the extremity of the lower galleries on the northern and southern sides of the choir) chanted Vivat Victoria Regina." The Queen moved towards a chair placed midway between the chair of homage and the altar, on the carpeted space before described, which is called the theatre." Here she

knelt down on a faldstool set for her before her chair, and used some private prayers. She then took her seat in the chair and the ceremonial proceeded.

First came "the Recognition" by the Archbishop of Canterbury, who advanced to the Queen, accompanied by the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Chamberlain, the Lord High Constable, and the Earl-Marshal, preceded by the Deputy-Garter, and repeated these words: "Sirs, I here present unto you Queen Victoria, the undoubted Queen of this realm, wherefore all you who are come this day to do your homage, are you willing to do the same?" Then burst forth the universal cry from the portion of her Majesty's subjects present, "God save Queen Victoria." The Archbishop, turning to the north, south, and west sides of the Abbey, repeated, "God save Queen Victoria," the Queen turning at the same time in the same direction.

"The Bishops who bore the patina, Bible, and chalice in the procession, placed the same on the altar. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishops who were to read the Litany put on their copes. The Queen, attended by the Bishops of Durham and Bath and Wells, and the Dean of Westminster, with the great officers of State and noblemen bearing the regalia, advanced to the altar, and, kneeling upon the crimson velvet cushion, made her first offering, being a pall or altar-cloth of gold, which was delivered by an officer of the Wardrobe to the Lord Chamberlain, by his lordship to the Lord Great Chamberlain, and by him to the Queen, who delivered it to the Archbishop of Canterbury, by whom it was placed on the altar. The Treasurer of the Household then delivered an ingot of gold, of one pound weight, to the Lord Great Chamberlain, who having presented the same to the Queen, her Majesty delivered it to the Archbishop, by whom it was put into the oblation basin.

"The Archbishop delivered a prayer in the prescribed form. The regalia were laid on the altar by the Archbishop. The great officers of State, except the Lord Chamberlain, retired to their respective places, and the Bishops of Worcester and St. David's read the Litany. Then followed the Communion service, read by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishops of Rochester and Carlisle. The Bishop of London preached the sermon from the following text, in the Second Book of Chronicles, chapter xxxiv. verse 31: 'And the king stood in his place, and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book.'

"In the course of his sermon from this text, the Bishop praised the late king for his unfeigned religion, and exhorted his youthful successor to follow in his footsteps. At the conclusion of the sermon 'the oath' was administered to the Queen by the Archbishop of Canterbury. The form of swearing was as follows: The Archbishop put certain questions, which the Queen answered in the affirmative, relative to the maintenance of the law and the established religion; and then her Majesty, with the Lord Chamberlain and other officers, the sword of State being carried before her, went to the altar, and laying her right hand upon the Gospels in the Bible carried in the procession, and now brought to her by the Archbishop of Canterbury, said, kneeling:

"The things which I have here before promised I will perform and keep. So help me God.'

"The Queen kissed the book and signed a transcript of the oath presented to her by the Archbishop. She then kneeled upon her faldstool, and the choir

sang ' _Veni, Creator, Spiritus._ '

"The Anointing' was the next part of the ceremony. The Queen sat in King Edward's chair; four Knights of the Garter--the Dukes of Buccleugh and Rutland, and the Marquesses of Anglesea and Exeter--held a rich cloth of gold over her head; the Dean of Westminster took the ampulla from the altar, and poured some of the oil it contained into the anointing spoon, then the Archbishop anointed the head and hands of the Queen, marking them in the form of a cross, and pronouncing the words, 'Be thou anointed with holy oil, as kings, priests, and prophets were anointed; and as Solomon was anointed king by Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, so be you anointed, blessed, and consecrated Queen over this people, whom the Lord your God hath given you to rule and govern, in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.'

"The Archbishop then said the blessing over her.

"The spurs were presented by the Lord Chamberlain, and the sword of State by Viscount Melbourne, who, however, according to custom, redeemed it with a hundred shillings, and carried it during the rest of the ceremony. Then followed the investing with the 'royal robes and the delivery of the orb,' and the 'investiture _per annulum et baculum,_' by the ring and sceptre.

"The Coronation followed. The Archbishop of Canterbury offered a prayer to God to bless her Majesty and crown her with all princely virtues. The Dean of Westminster took the crown from the altar, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, with the Archbishops of York and Armagh, the Bishops of London, Durham, and other Prelates, advanced towards the Queen, and the Archbishop taking the crown from the Dean reverently placed it on the Queen's head. This was no sooner done than from every part of the crowded edifice arose a loud and enthusiastic cry of 'God save the Queen,' mingled with lusty cheers, and accompanied by the waving of hats and handkerchiefs. At this moment, too, the Peers and Peeresses present put on their coronets, the Bishops their caps, and the Kings-of-Arms their crowns; the trumpets sounding, the drums beating, and the Tower and park guns firing by signal."

Harriet Martineau, who, like most of the mere spectators, failed to see and hear a good deal of the ceremony, was decidedly impressed at this point. "The acclamation when the crown was put on her head was very animating; and in the midst of it, in an instant of time, the Peeresses were all coroneted--all but the fair creature already described." The writer refers to an earlier paragraph in which she had detailed a small catastrophe that broke in upon the harmonious perfection of the scene. "One beautiful creature, with transcendent complexion and form, and coils upon coils of light hair, was terribly embarrassed about her coronet; she had apparently forgotten that her hair must be disposed with a view to it, and the large braids at the back would in no way permit the coronet to keep on. She and her neighbours tugged vehemently at her braids, and at last the thing was done after a manner, but so as to spoil the wonderful effect of the self-coroneting of the Peeresses."

To see "the Enthronement," the energetic Norwich woman stood on the rail behind her seat, holding on by another rail. But first "the Bible was presented by the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Queen, who delivered it again to the Archbishop, and it was replaced on the altar by the Dean of Westminster.

"The Benediction was delivered by the Archbishop, and the _Te Deum_

sung by the choir. At the commencement of the *Te Deum* the Queen went to the chair which she first occupied, supported by two Bishops; she was then 'enthroned,' or 'lifted,' as the formulary states, into the chair of homage by the Archbishops, Bishops, and Peers surrounding her Majesty. The Queen delivered the sceptre with the cross to the Lord of the Manor of Worksop (the Duke of Norfolk), and the sceptre with the stone to the Duke of Richmond, to hold during the performance of the ceremony of homage. The Archbishop of Canterbury knelt and did homage for himself and other Lords Spiritual, who all kissed the Queen's hand. The Dukes of Sussex and Cambridge, removing their coronets, did homage in these words:--

"I do become your liege man of life and limb, and of earthly worship; and faith and truth I will bear unto you, to live and die, against all manner of folks, so help me God.'

"They touched the crown on the Queen's head, kissed her left cheek, and then retired. It was observed that her Majesty's bearing towards her uncles was very kind and affectionate. The Dukes and other Peers then performed their homage, the senior of each rank pronouncing the words; as they retired each Peer kissed her Majesty's hand. The Duke of Wellington, Earl Grey, and Lord Melbourne were loudly cheered as they ascended the steps to the throne. Lord Rolle, "who was upwards of eighty, stumbled and fell on going up the steps. The Queen immediately stepped forward and held out her hand to assist him, amidst the loudly expressed admiration of the entire assembly."

"While the Lords were doing homage, the Earl of Surrey, Treasurer of the Household, threw coronation medals, in silver, about the choir and lower galleries, which were scrambled for with great eagerness.

"At the conclusion of the homage the choir sang the anthem, 'This is the day which the Lord hath made.' The Queen received the two sceptres from the Dukes of Norfolk and Richmond; the drums beat, the trumpets sounded, and the assembly cried out--'God save Queen Victoria!'" [Footnote: Annual Register.]

Harriet Martineau, from her elevated perch, says, "Her small dark crown looked pretty, and her mantle of cloth of gold very regal; she, herself, looked so small as to appear puny." (At a later stage of the proceedings the same keen critic notes that the enormous train borne by her ladies made the figure of the Queen look still less than it really was.) "The homage was as pretty a sight as any: trains of Peers touching her crown, and then kissing her hand. It was in the midst of that process that poor Lord Rolle's disaster sent a shock through the whole assemblage. It turned me very sick. The large infirm old man was held up by two Peers, and had nearly reached the royal footstool when he slipped through the hands of his supporters, and rolled over and over down the steps, lying at the bottom coiled up in his robes. He was instantly lifted up, and he tried again and again, amidst shouts of admiration of his valour. The Queen at length spoke to Lord Melbourne, who stood at her shoulder, and he bowed approval; on which she rose, leaned forward, and held out her hand to the old man, dispensing with his touching the crown. He was not hurt, and his self-quizzing on his misadventure was as brave as his behaviour at the time. A foreigner in London gravely reported to his own countrymen, what he entirely believed on the word of a wag, that the Lords Rolle held their title on the condition of performing the feat at every coronation."

Sir David Wilkie, who was present at the coronation, wrote simply, "The Queen looked most interesting, calm, and unexcited; and as she sat upon the

chair with the crown on, the sun shone from one of the windows bright upon her."

Leslie, another painter who witnessed the scene, remarked, "I was very near the altar, and the chair on which the Queen was crowned, when she signed the coronation oath. I could see that she wrote a large, bold hand.... I don't know why, but the first sight of her in her robes brought tears into my eyes, and it had this effect on many people; she looked almost like a child."

"The Archbishop of Canterbury then went to the altar. The Queen followed him, and giving the Lord Chamberlain her crown to hold, knelt down at the altar. The Gospel and Epistle of the Communion service having been read by the Bishops, the Queen made her offering of the chalice and patina, and a purse of gold, which were laid on the altar. Her Majesty received the sacrament kneeling on her faldstool by the chair."

Leslie afterwards painted this part of the ceremony for her Majesty. In his picture are several details which are not given elsewhere. The Peers and Peeresses who had crowned themselves simultaneously with the coronation of the Queen, removed their crowns when she laid aside hers. Among the gentlemen of the royal family was the Duc de Nemours.

After receiving the communion, the Queen put on her crown, "and with her sceptres in her hands, took her seat again upon the throne. The Archbishop of Canterbury proceeded with the Communion service and pronounced the final blessing. The choir sang the anthem, 'Hallelujah! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.' The Queen then left the throne, and attended by two Bishops and noblemen bearing the regalia and swords of State, passed into King Edward's chapel, the organ playing. The Queen delivered the sceptre with the dove to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who laid it on the altar. She was then disrobed of her imperial robe of State and arrayed in her royal robe of purple velvet by the Lord Chamberlain. The Archbishop placed the orb in her left hand. The gold spurs and St. Edward's staff were delivered by the noblemen who bore them to the Dean of Westminster, who placed them on the altar. The Queen then went to the west door of the Abbey wearing her crown, the sceptre with the cross being in the right and the orb in the left hand.... It was about a quarter to four o'clock when the royal procession passed through the nave, in the same order as before, at the conclusion of the ceremony in the Abbey."

The coronation lasted three hours, and must have been attended with great fatigue of mind and body to the young girl who bore the burden of the honours. Even the mere spectators, who, to be sure, had been in their places from dawn of day, the moment the stimulus of excitement was removed, awoke to their desperate weariness. "I watched her (the Queen) out at the doors," said Harriet Martineau, "and then became aware how fearfully fatigued I was. I never remember anything like it. While waiting in the passages and between the barriers, several ladies sat or lay down on the ground. I did not like to sink down in dust half a foot deep, to the spoiling of my dress and the loss of my self-respect, but it was really a terrible waiting till my brothers appeared at the end of the barrier."

But the day's business was not ended for the great world, high and low. The return of the procession, though the line was broken, had the special attraction that the Queen wore her crown, and the Peers and Peeresses their coronets. The Queen's crown was a mass of brilliants, relieved here and there by a large ruby or emerald, encircling a purple velvet cap. Among the stories told of the coronation, foremost and favourite of which was the

misadventure of poor Lord Rolle, and the pretty gentle way in which the young Queen did her best to help the sufferer; an incident was reported which might have had its foundation in the difficulties described by Miss Martineau as besetting the fair Peeress in the Abbey. It was said that the Queen's crown was too cumbrous, and disturbed the arrangement of those soft braids of hair, the simple, modest fashion of which called forth Sir David Wilkie's praise, and that as her Majesty drove along in her State carriage, she was seen laughingly submitting to the good offices of her beautiful companion seeking with soft hands to loop up afresh the rebellious locks which had broken loose. Leslie, from whom we have already quoted, gives an anecdote of the Queen on her coronation-day, which serves at least to show how deeply the youthfulness of their sovereign was impressed on the public mind. He had been informed that she was very fond of dogs, and that she possessed a favourite little spaniel which was always on the look-out for her. She had been away from him longer than usual on this particular day. When the State coach drove up to the palace on her return, she heard his bark of joy in the hall. She cried, "There's Dash!" and seemed to forget crown and sceptre in her girlish eagerness to greet her small friend. [Footnote: In the list of Sir Edwin Landseer's pictures there is one, the property of the Queen, which was painted in 1838. It includes "Hector," "Nero," "Dash," and "Lorey" (dogs and parrot).]

In spite of the ordeal her Majesty had undergone, she entertained a party of a hundred to dinner, and witnessed from the roof of Buckingham Palace the grand display of fireworks in the Green Park and the general illumination of London. The Duke of Wellington gave a ball at Apsley House, followed next day by official dinners on the part of the Cabinet ministers. The festivities lasted for more than a week in the metropolis. Prominent among them was a fancy fair held for the space of four days in Hyde Park, and visited by the Queen in person. On the 9th of July, a fine, hot day there was a review in Hyde Park. The Queen appeared soon after eleven in an open barouche, with her aides-de-camp in full uniform. The Dukes of Cambridge and Wellington, the Duc de Nemours, Marshal Soult, Prince Esterhazy, Prince Schwartzenburg, Count Stragonoff, were present amidst a great crowd. The Queen was much cheered. The country's old gallant foe, Soult, was again hailed with enthusiasm, though there was just a shade of being exultingly equal to the situation, in the readiness with which, on his having the misfortune to break a stirrup, a worthy firm of saddlers came forward with a supply of the stirrups which Napoleon had used in one of his campaigns. And there might have been something significant to the visitor, in the rapturous greeting which was bestowed on the Iron Duke, round whose erect, impassive figure the multitude pressed, the nearest men and women defying his horse's hoofs and stretching up to shake hands with "the Conquering Hero" amidst a thunder of applause.

The rejoicings pervaded every part of the country from John o' Groat's to Land's End, from the Scilly Isles to Sark. There was merry-making among the English residents in every foreign place, as far as the great colonies in the still remote continents.

To many simple people the Queen did not seem to reign, hardly to exist, till she had put on her crown and taken up her sceptre. It was to do the first honour to their youthful liege lady that June garlands were swung over every village street, bonfires gleamed like carbuncles on mountain cairns, frightening the hill foxes, or lit up the coast-line and were flung back in broken reflections from the tossing waves, scaring the very fish in the depths of the sea, where hardy islanders had kindled the token on some rock of the ocean.

Pen and pencil were soon busy with the great event of the season. Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote later:--

The Minster was alight that day, but not with fire, I ween,
And long-drawn glitterings swept adown that mighty aisled scene;
The priests stood stoled in their pomp, the sworded chiefs in theirs,
And so the collared knights--and so the civil ministers;
And so the waiting lords and dames--and little pages best
At holding trains--and legates so, from countries east and west;
So alien princes, native peers, and high-born ladies bright
Along whose brows the Queen's new crown'd, flashed coronets to light.
And so, the people at the gates, with priestly hands on high,
Which bring the first anointing to all legal majesty;
And so, the Dead--who lay in rows beneath the Minster floor,
There verily an awful state maintaining evermore--
The statesman, with no Burleigh nod, whate'er court tricks may be;
The courtier, who, for no fair Queen, will rise up to his knee;
The court-dame, who for no court tire will leave her shroud behind;
The laureate, who no courtier rhymes than "dust to dust" can find;
The kings and queens who having ta'en that vow and worn that crown,
Descended unto lower thrones and darker, deeper adown;
"Dieu et mon Droit," what is't to them? what meaning can it have?
The king of kings, the dust of dust--God's judgment and the grave.
And when betwixt the quick and dead the young fair Queen had vowed,
The living shouted, "May she live! Victoria, live!" aloud,
And as these loyal shouts went up, true spirits prayed between,
The blessings happy monarchs have, be thine, O Crowned Queen!

In the autumn and winter of 1838 Leslie went down to Windsor to get sittings for his picture of the coronation. He had been presented to the Queen on her first visit to the Academy after her accession, as he mentions in one of his pleasant letters to his kindred in America. He was now to come into nearer contact with royalty. He slept at the Castle Inn, Windsor, and went up daily to the Castle. If he found her Majesty and any other sitter engaged, he improved the occasion by copying two of the Queen's fine Dutch pictures, a De Hooghe and a Nicholas Maas. He wrote his experience to his wife in London, and his sister in America. To the latter he said, "I came here on the 29th of last month by appointment to have a sitting of the Queen, and with little expectation of having more than one.... I have been here ever since, with the exception of a day or two in town (I perform the journey in an hour by the railroad), and the Queen has sat five times. She is now so far satisfied with the likeness, that she does not wish me to touch it again. She sat not only for the face, but for as much as is seen of the figure, and for the hands with the coronation-ring on her finger. Her hands, by-the-bye, are very pretty, the backs dimpled, and the fingers delicately shaped. She was particular also in having her hair dressed exactly as she wore it at the ceremony, every time she sat. She has suggested an alteration in the composition of the picture, and I suppose she thinks it like the scene, for she asked me where I sat, and said, 'I suppose you made a sketch on the spot.'

"The Duchess of Kent and Lord Melbourne are now sitting to me, and last week I had sittings of Lord Conyngham and Lady Fanny Cowper [Footnote: Daughter of a beautiful and popular mother, Lady Palmerston, by her first husband, Earl Cowper.] (a very beautiful girl, and one of the Queen's train-bearers), who was here for a few days on a visit to her Majesty. Every day lunch is sent to me, which, as it is always very plentiful and good, I generally make my dinner. The best of wine is sent in a beautiful little decanter, with a V.R. and the crown engraved on it, and the

table-cloth and napkins have the royal arms and other insignia on them as a pattern.

"I have two very good friends at the Castle--one of the pages, and a little man who lights the fires. The Queen's pages are not little boys in green, but tall and _stout gentlemen_ from forty to fifty years of age. My friend (Mr. Batchelor) was a page in the time of George III, and was then twenty years old; George IV died in his arms, he says, in a room adjoining the one I am painting in. Mr. Batchelor comes into the room whenever there is nobody there, and admires the picture to my heart's content. My other friend, the fire-lighter, is extremely like Peter Powell, only a size larger. He also greatly admires the picture; he confesses he knows nothing about the robes, and can't say whether they are like or not, but he pronounces the Queen's likeness excellent." [Footnote: Leslie's Autobiography.]

CHAPTER VI. THE MAIDEN QUEEN.

When the great event of the coronation was over the Queen was left to fulfil the heavy demands of business and the concluding gaieties of the season. It comes upon us with a little pathetic shock, to think of one whom we have long known chiefly in the chastened light of the devoted unflagging worker at her high calling, of our lady of sorrows, as a merry girl--girl-like in her fondness, in spite of her noble nature and the serious claims she did not neglect, of a racket of perpetual excitement. We read of her as going everywhere, as the blithest and most indefatigable dancer in her ball-room, dancing out a pair of slippers before the night was over; we hear how reluctant she was to leave town, how eager to return to it.

Inevitably the old and dear friends most interested in her welfare were now regarding this critical period in the Queen's career with anxious eyes. In looking back upon it in after life, she has frankly and gravely acknowledged its pitfalls; "a worse school for a young girl, or one more detrimental to all natural feeling and affection, 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 dear daughters are exposed to such danger."

The King of the Belgians sought to abridge the period of probation by renewing the project of the worthy marriage to which his niece had been well inclined two years before. But either from the natural coyness and the strain of perversity which are the privilege and the danger of girlhood, or simply because, as she has, stated, "the sudden change from the secluded life at Kensington to the independence of her position as Queen Regnant, at the age of eighteen, put all ideas of marriage out of her head," the bride in prospect demurred. She declared, with the unhesitating decision of her age, that she had no thought of marriage for years to come. She objected, with some show of reason, that both she and Prince Albert were too young, and that it would be better for him to have a little more time to perfect his English education.

The princely cousin who had won her first girlish affections, and the tender sweetness of love in the bud, were by no means forgotten. The idea

of marriage never crossed the Queen's mind without his image presenting itself, she has said, and she never thought of herself as wedded to any other man. But every woman, be she Queen or beggar-maid, craves to exercise one species of power at one era of her life. It is her prerogative, and though the ruth of love may live to regret it, and to grudge every passing pang inflicted, half wilfully half unwittingly, on the true heart, it may be questioned whether love would flourish better, whether it would attain its perfect stature, without the test of the brief check and combat for mastery.

But if a woman desires to prove her power, a man cannot be expected to welcome the soft tyranny; the more manly, the more sensitive he is, the more it vexes and wounds him. Here the circumstances were specially trying, and while we have ample sympathy with the young Queen--standing out as much in archness as in imperiousness for a prolonged wooing--we have also sympathy to spare for the young Prince, with manly dignity and a little indignant pain, resisting alike girlish volatility and womanly despotism, asserting what was only right and reasonable, that he could not wait much longer for her to make up her mind--great queen and dear cousin though she might be. It was neither just nor generous that he should be kept hanging on in a condition of mortifying uncertainty, with the risk of his whole life being spoilt, after it was too late to guard against it, by a final refusal on her part. That the Queen had in substance made up her mind is proved by the circumstance that it was by her wish, and in accordance with her written instructions--of which, however, Prince Albert seems to have been ignorant--that Baron Stockmar, on quitting England in 1838, joined the Prince, who had just endured the trial of being separated from his elder brother, with whom he had been brought up in the closest and most brotherly relations, so that the two had never been a day apart during the whole of their previous lives. Prince Albert was to travel in Italy, and Baron Stockmar and Sir Francis (then Lieutenant) Seymour were appointed his travelling companions, visiting with him, during what proved a happy tour, Rome and Naples.

At home, where Baroness Lehzen retained the care of purely personal matters and played her part in non-political affairs and non-political correspondence, Lord Melbourne, with his tact and kindness, discharged the remaining offices of a private secretary. But things did not go altogether well. Party feeling was stronger than ever. The Queen's household was mainly of Whig materials, but there were exceptions, and the lady who had borne the train of the Duchess of Kent at the coronation belonged to a family which had become Tory in politics.

Lady Flora Hastings was a daughter of the Marquis of Hastings and of Flora, Countess of Loudoun, in her own right. The Countess of Loudoun in her youth chose for her husband Earl Moira, one of the plainest-looking and most gallant officers in the British army. The parting shortly after their marriage, in order that he might rejoin his regiment on active service, was the occasion of the popular Scotch song, by Tannahill, "Bonnie Loudoun's woods and braes." Earl Moira, created Marquis of Hastings, had a distinguished career as a soldier and statesman, especially as Governor-General of India. When he was Governor-General of Malta he died far from Loudoun's woods and braes, and was buried in the little island; but in compliance with an old promise to his wife, who long survived him, that their dust should rest together, he directed that after death his right hand should be cut off, enclosed in a casket, and conveyed to the family vault beneath the church of Loudoun, where the mortal remains of his widow would lie.

Lady Flora Hastings was good, clever and accomplished, dearly loved by her family and friends. But whether she, nevertheless, possessed capabilities of offending her companions in office at Court; whether her conduct in any respect rebuked theirs, and provoked dislike, suspicion, and a desire to find her in the wrong; whether the calamity was sheerly due to that mortal meanness in human nature, which tempts people not otherwise unworthy to receive the most unlikely and injurious evil report of their neighbour, on the merest presumptive evidence, the unhappy sequel remains the same. Lady Flora had been attacked by an illness which caused so great a change in her personal appearance, as to lend colour to a whispered charge that she had been secretly guilty of worse than levity of conduct. The cruel whisper once breathed, it certainly became the duty of every person in authority round a young and maiden Queen to guard her Court jealously from the faintest suspicion of such a reproach. The fault lay with those who uttered the shameful charge on slight and, as it proved, totally mistaken inferences.

When the accusation reached the ears of Lady Flora--last of all, no doubt--the brave daughter of a brave man welcomed such a medical examination as must prove her innocence beyond dispute. Her name and fame were triumphantly cleared, but the distress and humiliation she had suffered accelerated the progress of her malady, and she died shortly afterwards, passionately lamented by her friends. They sought fruitlessly to bring punishment on the accusers, which could not be done since there was no evidence of deliberate insincerity and malice on the part of the circulators of the scandal. The blame of the disastrous gossip fell on two of the Whig Ladies of the Bed-chamber; and just before the sad climax, the other event, which angry Tory eyes magnified to the dignity of a conspiracy, drew double attention to both catastrophes.

In May, 1839, the Whig Government had been defeated in a crucial measure, and the ministry under the leadership of Lord Melbourne resigned office. The Queen sent for the Duke of Wellington, and he recommended that Sir Robert Peel should be called upon to form a new Cabinet. It was the first time that the Queen had experienced a change of Ministers, and she was naturally dismayed at the necessity, and reluctant to part with the friend who had lent her such aid on her accession, whom she trusted implicitly, who in the requirements of his office had been in daily communication with her for the last two years. In her interview with Sir Robert Peel, who in his shyness and constraint appeared to have far fewer personal recommendations for a young Queen's counsellor, she told him with a simple and girlish frankness that she was sorry to have to part with her late Minister, of whose conduct she entirely approved, but that she bowed to constitutional usage. [Footnote: Justin Macarthy.] Sir Robert took the impulsive speech in the straightforward spirit in which it was spoken, while time was to show such a good understanding and cordial regard established between the Queen and her future servant, as has rarely been surpassed in the relations of sovereigns and their advisers. But in the meanwhile a *contretemps*, which was more than half a blunder, occurred. "The negotiations went on very smoothly as to the colleagues Peel meant to recommend to her Majesty, until he happened to notice the composition of the royal household, as regarded the ladies most closely in attendance on the Queen. For example, he found that the wife of Lord Normanby and the sister of Lord Morpeth were the two ladies in closest attendance on her Majesty. Now it has to be borne in mind--it was proclaimed again and again during the negotiations--that the chief difficulty of the Conservatives would necessarily be in Ireland, where their policy would be altogether opposed to that of the Whigs. Lord Normanby had been Lord Lieutenant of Ireland under the Whigs, and Lord

Morpeth, whom we can all remember as the amiable and accomplished Lord Carlisle of later time, Irish Secretary. It certainly would not be satisfactory for Peel to try to work a new Irish policy, whilst the closest household companions of the Queen were the wife and sister of the displaced statesmen, who directly represented the policy he had to supersede. Had this point of view been made clear to the sovereign at first, it is hardly possible that any serious difficulty could have arisen. The Queen must have seen the obvious reasonableness of Peel's request, nor is it to be supposed that the two ladies in question could have desired to hold their places under such circumstances. But unluckily some misunderstanding took place at the very beginning of the conversations on this point. Peel only desired to press for the retirement of the ladies holding the higher offices, [Footnote: This has been the rule in subsequent changes of Ministry.] he did not intend to ask for any change affecting a place lower in official rank than that of Lady of the Bed-chamber. But somehow or other he conveyed to the mind of the Queen a different idea. She thought he meant to insist as a matter of principle upon the removal of all her familiar attendants and household associates. Under this impression she consulted Lord John Russell, who advised her on what he understood to be the facts. On his advice the Queen stated in reply, that she could not "consent to a course which she conceives to be contrary to usage, and is repugnant to her feelings." Sir Robert Peel held firm to his stipulation, and the chance of his then forming a Ministry was at an end. Lord Melbourne and his colleagues had to be recalled, and at a Cabinet meeting they adopted a minute declaring it "reasonable, that the great offices of the Court, and situations in the household held by members of Parliament, should be included in the political arrangements made on a change in the Administration; but they are not of opinion that a similar principle should be applied or extended to the offices held by ladies in her Majesty's household."

As an instance of the garbled impression received, and the unhesitating exultation manifested by some of the Whig leaders, we quote from Lord Campbell: "House of Commons, Friday, May 10, 1839. What do you think? Peel has quarrelled with the Queen, and for the present we are all in again. He insisted on her removing all her ladies, which she peremptorily refused. Peel sent his final answer yesterday evening, which she received at dinner, saying that on consulting his colleagues they could not yield, and that his commission was at an end. She then sent for Melbourne, who had not seen her since his resignation. At eleven a meeting of the old Cabinet was called. To-day Melbourne has been with her, and, Bear Ellis says, agreed to go on with the government. Reports differ as to the exact conditions. Our people say that she was willing to give up the wives of Peers; Sir George Clerk asserts she insisted on keeping all, *inter alias* the Marchioness of Normanby. There never was such excitement in London. I came with hundreds of others to the House of Lords, which met to-day, in the expectation that something would be said, but all passing off in silence." [Footnote: The explanation was made later.]

"Brooks's, Saturday, May 11, 1839. The Cabinet is still sitting, and we know nothing more to-day.... I was several hours at the Queen's ball last night, a scene never to be forgotten. The Queen was in great spirits, and danced with more than usual gaiety. She received Peel with great civility; but after dancing with the Russian Bear, took for her partner Lady Normanby's son. The Tories looked inconceivably foolish--such whimsical groups."

Calm onlookers, including Stockmar, condemned Lord Melbourne for the position, in which he had allowed the young Queen to be placed, and

considered that he had brought discredit on his Government by the circumstances in which he and his colleagues had resumed office. The melancholy death of Lady Flora Hastings following on this overthrow of the ordinary arrangements, intensified the wrath of the Tories, and helped to arouse a sense of general dissatisfaction and doubt.

In the month of July, 1839, an Act of Parliament was passed which was of great consequence to the mass of the people. In 1837 Sir Rowland Hill published his post-office reform pamphlet, and in 1839 the penny-post scheme was embodied in an Act of Parliament.

What stories clustered round the early miniature "heads" of her Majesty in the little dull red stamp! These myths ranged from the panic that the adhesive gum caused cancer in the tongue, to the romance that a desperate young lady was collecting a huge supply of used stamps for the purpose of papering a room of untold dimensions. This feat was the single stipulation on the part of a tyrannical parent, on compliance with which the hapless maiden would be allowed to marry her faithful lover.

CHAPTER VII. THE BETROTHAL.

The Queen's remaining unmarried was becoming the source of innumerable disturbing rumours and private intrigues for the bestowal of her hand. To show the extent to which the public discussed the question in every light, a serious publication like the *Annual Register* found space in its pages for a ponderous joke on the subject which was employing all tongues. Its chronicle professes to report an interview between her Majesty the Queen and Lord Melbourne, in which the Premier gravely represents to his sovereign the advisability of her marriage, and ventures to press her to say whether there is any man for whom she might entertain a preference. Her Majesty condescends to acknowledge there is one man for whom she could conceive a regard. His name is "Arthur, Duke of Wellington."

Altogether, King Leopold was warranted in renewing his efforts to accomplish the union which would best secure the happiness of his niece and the welfare of a kingdom. He adopted a simple, and at the same time, a masterly line of policy. He sent the Prince, whose majority had been celebrated along with his brother's a few months before, over again to England in the autumn of 1839; Prince Ernest of Saxe-Coburg went once more with Prince Albert, in order to show that this was not a bridegroom come to plead his suit in person; this was a mere cousinly visit of which nothing need come. Indeed, the good king rather overdid his caution, for it seems he led the Prince to believe that the earlier tacit understanding between him and his cousin had come to an end, so that Prince Albert arrived more resolved to relinquish his claims than to urge his rights. In his honest pride there was hardly room for the thought of binding more closely and indissolubly the silken cord of love, which had got loosened and warped in the course of the three years since the pair had parted--a long interval at the age of twenty. All the same, one of the most notably and deservedly attractive young men of his generation was to be brought for the second time, without the compulsory strain of an ulterior motive--declared or unjustifiably implied--into new contact with a royal maiden, whom a qualified judge described as possessing "a keen and quick apprehension, being straightforward, singularly pure-hearted, and free from all vanity and pretension." In the estimation of this sagacious well-wisher, she was

fitted beforehand "to do ample justice both to the head and heart of the Prince."

It was at half-past seven on the evening of Thursday, the 10th of October, that the princely brothers entered again on the scene, no longer young lads under the guidance of their father, come to make the acquaintance of a girl-princess, their cousin, who though she might be the heir to a mighty kingdom, was still entirely under the wing of the Duchess, their aunt and her mother, in the homely old Palace of Kensington. These were two young men in the flower of their early manhood, who alighted in due form under the gateway of one of the stateliest of castles that could ever have visited their dreams, and found a young Queen as well as a kinswoman standing first among her ladies, awaiting them at the top of the grand staircase. However cordial and affectionate, and like herself, she might be, it had become her part, and she played it well, to take the initiative, to give directions instead of receiving them, to command where she had obeyed. It was she, and not the mother she loved and honoured, who was the mistress of this castle; and it was for her to come forward, welcome her guests, and graciously conduct them to the Duchess.

King Leopold had furnished the brothers with credentials in the shape of a letter, recommending them, in studiously moderate terms, as "good, honest creatures," deserving her kindness, "not pedantic, but really sensible and trustworthy," whom he had told that her great wish was they should be at ease with her.

Both of these simply summed-up guests were fine young men, tall, manly, intelligent, and accomplished. Prince Albert was very handsome and winning, as all his contemporaries must remember him, with a mixture of thought and gentleness in his broad forehead, deep-blue eyes, and sweet smile.

The first incident of the visit was a trifle disconcerting, but not more so than happy, privileged people may be permitted to surmount with a laughing apology; even to draw additional light-hearted jests from the misadventure. The baggage of the Princes by some chance was not forthcoming; they could not appear at a Court dinner in their morning dress, but etiquette was relaxed for the strangers to the extent that later in the evening they joined the circle, which included Lord Melbourne, Lord Clanricarde, Lord and Lady Granville, Baron Brunnow and Lord Normanby, as visitors at Windsor at the time. The pleasant old courtier, Lord Melbourne, immediately told the Queen that he was struck with the resemblance between Prince Albert and herself.

"The way of life at Windsor during the stay of the Princes was much as follows:--the Queen breakfasting at this time in her own room, they afterwards paid her a visit there; and at two o'clock had luncheon with her and the Duchess of Kent. In the afternoon they all rode--the Queen and Duchess and the two Princes, with Lord Melbourne and most of the ladies and gentlemen in attendance, forming a large cavalcade. There was a great dinner every evening, with a dance after it, three times a week."
[Footnote: "Early Years of the Prince Consort."] Surely an ideal palace life for the young--born to the Stately conditions, bright with all the freshness of body and sparkle of spirit, unexhausted, undimmed by years and care. Surely a fair field for true love to cast off its wilful shackles, and be rid of its half-cherished misunderstandings, to assert itself master of the situation. And so in five days, while King Leopold was still writing wary recommendations and temperate praise, the prize which had been deemed lost was won, and the Queen who had foredoomed herself to years of maidenly toying with happiness and fruitless waiting, was ready to announce her

speedy marriage, with loyal satisfaction and innocent fearlessness, to her servants in council.

At the time, and for long afterwards, there were many wonderful little stories, doubtless fanciful enough, but all taking colour from the one charming fact of the royal lovers. How the Queen, whose place it was to choose, had with maidenly grace made known her worthy choice at one of these palace "dances," in which she had waltzed with her Prince, and subsided from the liege lady into the loving woman. She had presented him with her bouquet in a most marked and significant manner. He had accepted it with the fullest and most becoming sense of the distinction conferred upon him, and had sought to bestow her token in a manner which should prove his devotion and gratitude. But his tight-fitting foreign uniform had threatened to baffle his desire, till, in the exigency of the moment, he took out a pocket-knife (or was it his sword from its sheath?) and cut a slit in the breast of his coat on the left side, over the heart, where he put the flowers. Was this at the end of that second day after the brothers' arrival, on which, as the Prince mentions, in detailing to a friend the turn of the tide, "the most friendly demonstrations were directed towards me?"

On the 14th of October, the Queen told her fatherly adviser, Lord Melbourne, that she had made her choice; at which he expressed great satisfaction, and said to her (as her Majesty has stated in one of the published portions of her Journal), "I think it will be very well received, for I hear that there is an anxiety now that it should be, and I am very glad of it;" adding, in quite a paternal tone, "you will be much more comfortable, for a woman cannot stand alone for any time in whatever position she may be."

In the circumstances, the ordinary role was of necessity strangely reversed, and the ordeal of the declaration fell to the maiden and not to the young man. But the trial could not have come to a better pair. Innate good sense and dignity, and single-hearted affection on the one hand, and manly, delicate-minded tenderness on the other, made all things possible, nay, easy. An intimation was conveyed to the Prince through an old friend, who was in the suite of the brothers on this visit to England, Baron Alvensleben, Master of the Horse to the Duke of Coburg, that the Queen wished to speak to Prince Albert next day. Doubtless, the formality and comparative length of the invitation had its significant importance to the receiver of the message, and brought with it a tumult and thrill of anticipation. But he was called on to show that he had outgrown youthful impetuosity and impatience, and to prove himself worthy of trust and honour by perfect self-restraint and composure. So far as the world knows, he awaited his lady's will without a sign of restlessness or disturbance. If blissful dreams drove away sleep from the pillows on which two young heads rested in Royal Windsor that night, none save the couple needed to know of it. It was not by any means the first time that queenly and princely heads had courted oblivion in vain beneath the tower of St. George, and under the banner of England, but never in more natural, lawful, happy wakefulness.

On the morning of the 15th, behaving himself as if nothing had happened, or was going to happen, according to the code of Saxon Englishmen, Prince Albert went out early, hunting with his brother, but came back by noon, and "half an hour afterwards obeyed the Queen's summons to her room, where he found her alone. After a few minutes' conversation on other subjects, the Queen told him why she had sent for him."

The Prince wrote afterwards to the oldest of his relations: "The Queen sent

for me alone to her room a few days ago, and declared to me, in a genuine outburst of love and affection, that I had gained her whole heart, and would make her intensely happy if I would make her the sacrifice of sharing her life with her, for she said she looked on it as a sacrifice; the only thing that troubled her was, that she did not think she was worthy of me. The joyous openness of manner with which she told me this quite enchanted me, and I was quite carried away by it."

"The Prince answered by the warmest demonstration of kindness and affection."

The affair had been settled by love itself in less time than it has taken to tell it.

There is an entry in her Majesty's Journal of this date, which she has, with noble and tender confidence, in the best feelings of humanity, permitted her people to read.

"How I will strive to make him feel, as little as possible, the great sacrifices he has made! I told him it was a great sacrifice on his part, but he would not allow it."

This record has been enthusiastically dwelt upon for its thorough womanliness; and so it is truly womanly, royally womanly. But it seems to us that less weight has been put on the fine sympathetic intuition of the Queen which enabled her to look beyond herself, beyond mere outward appearance and worldly advantages, and see the fact of the sacrifice on the part of such a man as Prince Albert, which he made with all his heart, cheerfully, refusing so much as to acknowledge it, for her dear sake. For the Queen was wisely right, and the Prince lovingly wrong. He not only gave back in full measure what he got, but, looking at the contract in the light of the knowledge which the Queen has granted to us of a rare nature, we recognise that for such a man--so simple, noble, purely scholarly and artistic; so capable of undying attachment; so fond of peaceful household charities and the quiet of domestic life; so indifferent to pomp and show; so wearied and worried in his patience by formality, parade, and the vulgar strife and noise, glare and blare of the lower, commoner ambitions--it was a sacrifice to forsake his fatherland, his father's house, the brother whom he loved as his own soul, the plain living and high thinking, healthful early hours and refined leisure--busy enough in good thoughts and deeds--of Germany, for the great shackled responsibility which should rest on the Queen's husband, for the artificial, crowded, high-pressure life of an England which did not know him, did not understand him, for many a day. If Baron Stockmar was right, that the physical constitution of the Prince in his youth rendered strain and effort unwelcome, and that he was rather deficient in interest in the ordinary work of the world, and in the broad questions which concern the welfare of men and nations, than overendowed with a passion for mastering and controlling them, then the sacrifice was all the greater.

But he made it, led by what was, in him, an overruling sense of right, and by the sweetest compelling motive, for highest duty and for her his Queen. Having put his hand to the plough he never looked back. What his hand found to do, that he did with all his might, and he became one of the hardest workers of his age. In seeing what he resigned, we also see that the fullness of his life was rendered complete by the resignation. He was called to do a grand, costly service, and he did well, at whatever price, to obey the call. Without the sacrifice his life would have been less honourable as an example, less full, less perfect, and so, in the end, less

satisfying.

When the troth was plighted, the Queen adds, "I then told him to fetch Ernest, who congratulated us both and seemed very happy. He told me how perfect his brother was."

There were other kind friends to rejoice in the best solution of the problem and settlement of the vexed question. The good mother and aunt, the Duchess of Kent, rendered as secure as mortal mother could be of the future contentment and prosperity of her child; the attached kinsman beyond the Channel; the father of the bridegroom; his female relations; trusty Baron Stockmar; an early comrade, were all to be told and made happy, and in some cases sorry also, for the promotion of Prince Albert to be the Queen's husband meant exile from Germany.

The passages given from the Queen's and Prince's letters to King Leopold and Baron Stockmar are not only very characteristic, the words express what those who loved the writers best would have most wished them to say. The respective utterances are radiant with delight softened by the modest, firm resolves, the humble hearty conscientiousness which made the proposed marriage so auspicious of all it was destined to prove.

The King of the Belgians was still in a state of doubt, writing his earnest but studiously measured praise of his nephews to the Queen. "I am sure you will like them the more, the longer you see them. They are young men of merit, and without that puppy-like affectation which is so often found with young gentlemen of rank; and though remarkably well informed, they are very free from pedantry.

"Albert is a very agreeable companion. His manners are so quiet and harmonious that one likes to have him near one's self. I always found him so when I had him with me, and I think his travels have still improved him. He is full of talent and fun, and draws cleverly."

At last there is a plainer insinuation. "I trust they will enliven your sejour in the old castle, and may Albert be able to strew roses without thorns on the pathway of life of our good Victoria. He is well qualified to do so...."

On the very day this letter was written, the Queen was addressing her uncle. "My dearest uncle, this letter will I am sure give you pleasure, for you have always shown and taken so warm an interest in all that concerns me. My mind is quite made up, and I told Albert this morning of it. The warm affection he showed me on learning this, gave me great pleasure. He seems perfection, and I think I have the prospect of very great happiness before me. I love him more than I can say, and shall do everything in my power to render this sacrifice (for such is my opinion it is) as small as I can.... It is absolutely necessary that this determination of mine should be known to no one but yourself and to Uncle Ernest, until after the meeting of Parliament, as it would be considered, otherwise, neglectful on my part not to have assembled Parliament at once to inform them of it.... Lord Melbourne has acted in this business as he has always done towards me, with the greatest kindness and affection. We also think it better, and Albert quite approves of it, that we should be married very soon after Parliament meets, about the beginning of February."

The King's reply from Wiesbaden is like the man, and is pathetic in the depth of its gratification. "My dearest Victoria, nothing could have given me greater pleasure than your dear letter. I had, when I learnt your

decision, almost the feeling of Old Simeon: 'Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.' Your choice has been for these last years my conviction of what might and would be best for your happiness; and just because I was convinced of it, and knew how strangely fate often changes what one tries to bring about as being the best plan one could fix upon--the maximum of a good arrangement--I feared that it would not happen."

In Prince Albert's letter to Baron Stockmar, written without delay, as he says, "on one of the happiest days of my life to give you the most welcome news possible," he goes on to declare that he is often at a loss to believe that such affection should be shown to him. He quotes as applicable to himself from Schiller's "Song of the Bell," of which the Prince was very fond--

Das Auge sieht den Himmel offen,
Es schwimmt das Herz in seligkeit.

The passage from which these lines are taken is the very beautiful one thus rendered in English by the late Lord Lytton:--

And, lo! as some sweet vision breaks
Out from its native morning skies,
With rosy shame on downcast cheeks,
The virgin stands before his eyes:
A nameless longing seizes him!
From all his wild companions flown;
Tears, strange till then, his eyes bedim,
He wanders all alone.
Blushing he glides where'er she moves,
Her greeting can transport him;
To every mead to deck his love,
The happy wild-flowers court him.
Sweet hope--and tender longing--ye
The growth of life's first age of gold,
When the heart, swelling, seems to see
The gates of heaven unfold.
Oh, were it ever green! oh, stay!
Linger, young Love, Life's blooming may.

In a later letter to Stockmar the Prince writes: "An individuality, a character which shall win the respect, the love, and the confidence of the Queen and of the nation, must be the groundwork of my position.... If therefore I prove a 'noble' Prince in the true sense of the word, as you call upon me to be, wise and prudent conduct will become easier to me, and its results more rich in blessings;" and to his stepmother he makes the thoughtful comment, "With the exception of my relation to her (the Queen), my future position will have its dark sides, and the sky will not always be blue and unclouded. But life has its thorns in every position, and the consciousness of having used one's powers and endeavours for an object so great as that of promoting the good of so many will surely be sufficient to support me."

The brothers remained at Windsor for a happy month, [Footnote: Lady Bloomfield describes a beautiful emerald serpent ring which the Prince gave the Queen when they were engaged.] when the royal lovers saw much of each other, and as a matter of course often discussed the future, particularly with reference to the Prince's position in his new country, and what his title was to be. One can easily fancy how interesting and engrossing such talks would become, especially when they were enlivened by the bright

humour, and controlled by the singular unselfishness, of the object of so many hopes and plans. It was already blustering wintry weather, but there was little room to feel the depressing influence of the grey cloudy sky or the chill of the shrilly whistling wind and driving rain. Prince Ernest had the misfortune to suffer from an attack of jaundice, but it was a passing evil, sure to be lightened by ample sympathy, and it did not prevent the friend of the bridegroom from rejoicing greatly at the sound of the bridegroom's voice.

Perhaps the fact that a form of secrecy had to be kept up till her Majesty should announce her marriage to the Council only added an additional piquant flavour to the general satisfaction. But this did not cause the Queen to fail in confidence towards the members of her family, for she wrote herself to the Queen-dowager and to the rest of her kindred announcing her intended marriage, and receiving their congratulations.

On the 2nd of November there was a review of the battalion of the Rifle Brigade quartered at Windsor under Colonel, afterwards Sir George Brown, of Crimean fame, in the Home Park. The Queen was present, accompanied by Prince Albert, in the green uniform of the Coburg troops. What a picture, full of joyful content, independent of all accidents of weather, survives of the scene! "At ten minutes to twelve I set off in my Windsor uniform and cap (already described) on my old charger 'Leopold,' with my beloved Albert looking so handsome in his uniform on my right, and Sir John Macdonald, the Adjutant-General, on my left, Colonel Grey and Colonel Wemyss preceding me, a guard of honour, my other gentlemen, my cousin's gentlemen, Lady Caroline Barrington, &c., for the ground.

"A horrid day. Cold, dreadfully blowing, and, in addition, raining hard when we had been out a few minutes. It, however, ceased when we: came to the ground. I rode alone down the ranks, and then took my place as usual, with dearest Albert on my right and Sir John Macdonald on my left, and saw the troops march past. They afterwards manoeuvred. The Rifles looked beautiful. It was piercingly cold, and I had my cape on, which dearest Albert settled comfortably for me. He was so cold, being 'EN GRANDE TENUE,' with high boots. We cantered home again, and went in to show ourselves to poor Ernest, who had seen all from a window."

The Princes left Windsor on the 14th of November, visiting the King of the Belgians on their way home, so that King Leopold could write to his niece, "I find them looking well, particularly Albert. It proves that happiness is an excellent remedy to keep people in better health than any other. He is much attached to you, and modest when speaking of you. He is besides in great spirits, full of gaiety and fun."

The bridegroom also sent kind words to his aunt and future mother-in-law, as well as tender words to his cousin and bride. "Dearest aunt, a thousand thanks for your two kind letters just received. I see from them that you are in close sympathy with your nephew--your son-in-law soon to be--which gratifies me very, very much.... What you say about my poor little bride sitting all alone in her room, silent and sad, has touched me to the heart. Oh, that I might fly to her side to cheer her!"

"For 'the poor little bride' there was no lack of those sweet words, touched with the grateful humility of a manly love, to receive which was a precious foretaste to her of the happiness of the years to come." "That I am the object of so much love and devotion often comes over me as something I can hardly realise," wrote the Prince. "My prevailing feeling is, What am I that such happiness should be mine? For excess of happiness it is to me

to know that I am so dear to you." Again, in referring to his grandmother's regret at his departure he added, "Still she hopes, what I am convinced will be the case, that I may find in you, my dear Victoria, all the happiness I could possibly desire. And so I SHALL, I can truly tell her for her comfort." And once more he wrote from "dear old Coburg," brimming over with loyal joy, "How often are my thoughts with you! The hours I was privileged to pass with you in your dear little room are the radiant points of my life, and I cannot even yet clearly picture to myself that I am to be indeed so happy as to be always near you, always your protector." Last and most touching assurance of all, touching as it was solemn, when he mentioned to the Queen that in an hour he was to take the sacrament in church at Coburg, and went on, "God will not take it amiss, if in that serious act, even at the altar, I think of you, for I will pray to Him for you and for your soul's health, and He will not refuse us His blessing."

In the meantime there was much to do in England. On the 20th of November the Queen, with the Duchess of Kent, left Windsor for Buckingham Palace. On the 23rd, the Council assembled there in the Bow-room on the ground floor. The ceremony of declaring her proposed marriage was a mere form, but a very trying form to a young and modest woman called to face alone a gathering of eighty-three elderly gentlemen, and to make to them the announcement which concerned herself so nearly. Of the Privy Councillors some, like the Duke of Wellington, had known the Queen all her life, some had only served her since she came to the throne, but all were accustomed to discuss very different matters with her. How difficult the task was to the Queen we may judge from the significant note. The Queen always wore a bracelet with the Prince's picture, "and it seemed," she wrote in her Journal, "to give me courage at the Council." Her own further account of the scene is as follows: "Precisely at two I went in. The room was full, but I hardly knew who was there. Lord Melbourne I saw looking kindly at me with tears in his eyes, but he was not near me. I then read my short declaration. I felt my hands shook, but I did not make one mistake. I felt most happy and thankful when it was over. Lord Lansdowne then rose, and in the name of the Privy Council asked that this most gracious and most welcome communication might be printed. I then left the room, the whole thing not lasting above two or three minutes. The Duke of Cambridge came into the small library where I was standing and wished me joy."

The Queen's declaration was to this effect: "I have caused you to be summoned at the present time in order that I may acquaint you with my resolution in a matter which deeply concerns the welfare of my people and the happiness of my future life.

"It is my intention to ally myself in marriage with the Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. Deeply impressed with the solemnity of the engagement which I am about to contract, I have not come to this decision without mature consideration, nor without feeling a strong assurance that, with the blessing of Almighty God, it will at once secure my domestic felicity and serve the interests of my country.

"I have thought fit to make this resolution known to you at the earliest period, in order that you may be apprised of a matter so highly important to me and to my kingdom, and which, I persuade myself, will be most acceptable to all my loving subjects."

The Queen returned to Windsor with the Duchess of Kent the same evening.

On the 16th of January, 1840, the Queen opened Parliament in person, and made a similar statement. "Since you were last assembled I have declared my

intention of allying myself in marriage with the Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. I humbly implore that the Divine blessing may prosper this union, and render it conducive to the interests of my people as well as to my own domestic happiness, and it will be to me a source of the most lively satisfaction to find the resolution I have taken approved by my Parliament. The constant proofs which I have received of your attachment to my person and family persuade me that you will enable me to provide for such an establishment as may appear suitable to the rank of the Prince and the dignity of the Crown."

To see and hear the young Queen, still only in her twenty-first year, when she went to tell her people of her purpose, multitudes lined the streets and cheered her on her way that wintry day, and every seat in the House "was filled with the noblest and fairest of the land" ready to give her quieter but not less heartfelt support. It is no mere courtly compliment to say that Queen Victoria's marriage afforded the greatest satisfaction to the nation at large. Not only was it a very desirable measure on political grounds, but it appealed to the far deeper and wider feelings of humanity. It had that touch of nature which makes the whole world kin. Sir Robert Peel's words, when he claimed the right of the Opposition to join with the Government in its felicitations to both sovereign and country, were not required to convince the people that their Queen was not only making a suitable alliance, but was marrying "for love," according to the oldest, wisest, best plan. They knew the glad truth as if by instinct, and how heartily high and low entered into her happiness and wished her joy! It is said there is one spectacle which, whether the spectators own it or not, hardly ever palls entirely even on the most hardened and worldly, the most weary and wayworn, the poorest and most wretched--perhaps, least of all on the last. It is a bridegroom rejoicing to leave his chamber, and a bride blushing in her sweet bliss. There are after all only three great events in human history which, projected forward or reflected backward, colour all the rest--birth, marriage, and death. The most sordid or sullen population will collect in knots, brighten a little, forget hard fate or mortal wrongs for a moment, in the interest of seeing a wedding company go by. The surliest, the most whining of the onlookers will spare a little relenting, a happier thought, for "two lunatics," "a couple of young fools whose eyes will soon be opened," "a pore delooded lad," "a soft silly of a gal;" who are still so enviable in their brief bright day.

What was it then to know of a pair of royal lovers--a great Queen and her chosen Prince--well mated! It softened all hearts, it made the old young again, with a renewing breath of late romance and tenderness. And, oh! how the young, who are old now, gloried in that ideal marriage! What tales they told of it, what wonderful fancies they had about it! How it knit the hearts of the Queen and her subjects together more strongly than anything else save common sorrow could do! for when it comes to that, sorrow is more universal than joy, sinks deeper, and in this world lasts longer.

Indeed, at this stage, as at every other, it was soon necessary to descend from heaven to earth; and for the royal couple, as for the meanest of the people, there were difficulties in connection with the arrangements, troubles that proved both perplexing and vexatious. It may be said here that the times were not very propitious for asking even the most just and reasonable Parliamentary grants. The usual recurring sufferings from insufficient harvests and from stagnation of trade were depressing the mind of the country. Parliament was called on to act on the occasion of the Queen's marriage, and the House was not only divided into two hostile parties, the hostility had been envenomed by recent contretemps, notably that which prevented Sir Robert Peel and the Tories from taking

office and kept in the Whig Government. The unpalatable fruits of the embroilment had to be eaten and digested at the present crisis. Accordingly there were carping faultfinding, and resistance--even defeat--on every measure concerning the Prince brought before the Lords and Commons.

The accusation of disloyal retaliation was made against the Tories. On the other hand the Whigs in power showed such a defiant attitude, in the absence of any attempt to conciliate their antagonists, even when the welfare of the Government's motions, and the interests and feelings of the Queen and the Prince demanded the first consideration, that Lord Melbourne's party were suspected of a crafty determination to let matters take their course for the express purpose of prejudicing Prince Albert against the Tories, and alienating him from them in the very beginning.

Lord Melbourne at least did not deserve this accusation. Whatever share he had in the injudicious attitude of the Government, or in the blunders it committed, must be attributed to the sort of high-handed carelessness which distinguished the man. His singular fairness in the business is thus recorded by Baron Stockmar. "As I was leaving the Palace, I met Melbourne on the staircase. He took me aside and used the following remarkable and true words, strongly characteristic of his great impartiality: 'The Prince will doubtless be very much irritated against the Tories. But it is not the Tories alone whom the Prince has to thank for the curtailment of his appanage. It is the Tories, the Radicals, and _a good many of our own people_.' I pressed his hand in approbation of his remarkable frankness. I said, 'There's an honest man! I hope you will yourself say that to the Prince.'" [Footnote: Lord Melbourne and Baron Stockmar were always on excellent terms. At the same time the English Prime Minister was not without a little jealousy of any suspicion of his Government being dictated to by King Leopold.]

Umbrage was taken by the Duke of Wellington at no mention being made of Prince Albert's Protestantism on the notification of the marriage. With regard to the income and position to be secured to the Prince, the nearest precedent which could be found to guide the discussion was that of Prince George of Denmark, husband to Queen Anne. It was halting in many respects, such as the fact that he had married the Princess long before she was Queen, nay, while her succession to the throne was problematical. Besides, his character and position in the country were only respectable for their harmlessness, and did not recommend him by way of example of any kind, either to Queen or people. Statesmen turned rather to the settlement and dignity accorded to Prince Leopold, when he married Princess Charlotte; but neither was that quite a case in point. The fittest reference, so far as income was concerned, seemed to be to the private purses allowed to the Queen Consorts of the reigning sovereigns of England. To the three last Queens--Caroline, Charlotte, and Adelaide, the sum of fifty thousand pounds a year had been granted. This also was the annuity settled on Prince Leopold. Therefore fifty thousand was the amount confidently asked by the Government.

After a good deal of wrangling and angry debate, in which, however, the Queen's name was studiously respected, she and the Prince had the mortification to learn that the country, by its representatives, had refused the usual allowance, and voted only thirty thousand a year to the Queen's husband.

The same ill-fortune attended an attempt to introduce into the bill for the naturalisation of the Prince, before the House of Lords, a clause which should secure his taking precedence of all save the Queen. The Duke of

Sussex opposed the clause, in the interest of the King of Hanover, and so many jealous objections were urged that it was judged better to let the provision drop than risk a defeat in the House of Lords similar to that in the House of Commons. The awkward alternative remained that Prince Albert's position, so far as it had to do with the Lord Chamberlain and the Heralds' Office, was left undecided and ambiguous. It was only by the issue of letters patent on the Queen's part, at a later date, that any certainty on this point could be attained even in England.

The formation of the Prince's household, which one would think might have been left to his own good feeling and discretion, or at least to the Queen's judgment in acting for him, proved another bone of contention calling forth many applications and implied claims.

Baron Stockmar came to England in January, to see to this important element in the Prince's independence and comfort, as well as to the signing of the marriage contract. But in spite of the able representative, the Prince's written wishes, judicious and liberal-minded as might have been expected, and the Queen's desire to carry them out, at least one of the offices was filled up in a manner which caused Prince Albert anxiety and pain. The gentleman who had been private secretary to Lord Melbourne was appointed private secretary to the Prince, without regard to the circumstance that the step would appear compromising in Tory eyes--the very result which Prince Albert had striven to avoid, and that the official would be forced, as it were, on the Prince's intimacy without such previous acquaintance as might have justified confidence. It was only the sterling qualities of both Prince and secretary which obviated the natural consequences of such an ill-judged proceeding, and ended by producing the genuine liking and honest friendship which ought to have preceded the connection. The grudging, suspicions, selfish spirit thus manifested on all hands, was liable to wound the Queen in the tenderest point, and the disappointment came upon her with a shock, since she had been rashly assured by Lord Melbourne that there would be no difficulty either as regarded income or precedence. The indications were not encouraging to the stranger thus met on the threshold. But his mission was to disarm adverse criticism, to shame want of confidence and pettiness of jealousy, to confer benefits totally irrespective of the spirit in which they might be taken. And even by the irritated party-men as well as by the body of the people, the Prince was to be well received for the Queen's sake, with his merits taken for granted, so far as that went, since the heart of the country was all right, though its Whig and Tory temper might be at fault.

On the 10th of January, 1840, a death instead of a marriage took place in the royal family, but it was that of an aged member long expatriated. Princess Elizabeth, Landgravine of Hesse Homburg, died at Frankfort. It was twenty-two years since she had married and quitted England, shortly before the old Queen's death, a year before the birth of Queen Victoria. The Landgravine had returned once, a widow of sixty-four, and then had gone back to her adopted country. She had survived her husband eleven years, and her sister, resident like herself in Germany, the Princess Royal, Queen of Wurtemberg, twelve years. The Landgravine as Princess Elizabeth showed artistic talent. She was famous in her middle age for her great embonpoint; as she was also tall she waxed enormous. Baroness Bunsen, when Miss Waddington, saw Princess Elizabeth, while she was still unmarried, dressed for a Drawing-room, with five or six yellow feathers towering above her head, and refers to her huge dimensions then. It was alleged afterwards that it required a chain of her husband's faithful subjects in Homburg to encompass his consort. She accommodated herself wonderfully, though she was an elderly woman before she had ever been out

of England, to the curious quaint mixture of State and homeliness in the little German town in which she was held in much respect and regard. The Landgravine was seventy years of age at the time of her death. After her widowhood she resided in Hanover, where her brother, King William, gave her a palace, and then at Frankfort, where she died. Out of her English income of ten thousand a year, it was said she spared six thousand for the needs of Hesse Homburg. Its castle and English garden still retain memories of the English princess who made her quiet home there and loved the place.

The marriage of the Queen was fixed for the 10th of February, and many eager, aspiring young couples throughout the country elected that it should be their wedding-day, also. They wished that the gala of their lives should fit in with hers, and that all future "happy returns of the day" might have a well-known date to go by, and a State celebration to do them honour.

Lord Torrington and Colonel--afterwards General--Grey set out for Gotha to escort the bridegroom to England. They carried with them the Order of the Garter, with which Prince Albert was invested by his father, himself a Knight of the Order, amidst much ceremony.

All the world knows that the Order of the Garter is the highest knightly order of England, dating back to the time of Edward III., and associated by a gay and gallant tradition with the beautiful Countess of Salisbury. The first Chapter of the Order was held in 1340, when twenty-five knights, headed by the King, walked in solemn procession to St. George's Chapel, founded for their use, and for the maintenance of poor knightly brethren to pray for the souls of the Knights-Companions--hence "the Poor Knights of Windsor." The first Knights-Companions dedicated their arms to God and St. George, and held a high festival and tournament in commemoration of the act in presence of Queen Philippa and her ladies. The habit of the knights was always distinguished by its colour, blue. Various details were added at different times by different kings. Henry VIII. gave the collar and the greater and lesser medallions of St. George slaying the dragon. Charles II. introduced the blue riband. It is scarcely necessary to say that the full dress of the knights is very magnificent. "There are the blue velvet mantle, with its dignified sweep, the hood of crimson velvet, the heron and ostrich-plumed cap, the gold medallion, the blazing star, the gold-lettered garter, to all which may be added the accessories that rank and wealth have it in their power to display; as, for example, the diamonds worn by the Marquis of Westminster, at a recent installation, on his sword and badge alone were Worth the price of a small kingdom; or richer still her present Majesty's jewels, that seem to have been showered by some Eastern fairy over her habit of the Order, among, which the most beautiful and striking feature is, perhaps, the ruby cross in the centre of the dazzling star of St. George." [Footnote: Knight's "Old England."]

The whole court of Gotha was assembled to see Prince Albert get the Garter; a hundred and one guns were fired to commemorate the auspicious occasion. The younger Perthes, under whom the Prince had studied at Bonn, wrote of the event, "The Grand-ducal papa bound the Garter round his boy's knee amidst the roar of a hundred and one cannon" (the attaching of the Garter, however, was done, not by Prince Albert's father, but by the Queen's brother, the Prince of Leiningen, another Knight of the Order). "The earnestness and gravity with which the Prince has obeyed this early call to take a European position, give him dignity and standing in spite of his youth, and increase the charm of his whole aspect."

The investiture was followed by a grand dinner, when the Duke proposed the Queen's health, which was drunk by all the company standing, accompanied by

several distinct flourishes of trumpets, the band playing "God save the Queen," and the artillery outside firing a royal salute. Already the Prince had written to the Queen, when the marriage was officially declared at Coburg, that the day had affected him very much, so many emotions had filled his heart. Her health had been drunk at dinner "with a tempest of huzzas." The joy of the people had been so great that they had gone on firing in the streets, with guns and pistols, during the whole night, so that one might have imagined a battle was going on. This was a repetition of that earlier festival, only rendered more emphatic and with a touch of pathos added to it by the impending departure of Prince Albert, to lay hold of his high destiny. The leave-takings were earnest and prolonged, with many pretty slightly fantastic German ceremonies, and must have been hard upon a man whose affections were so tender and tenacious. Especially painful was the farewell to his mother's mother, the Dowager Duchess of Gotha, who had partly reared the princely lad. She was much attached to him, and naturally saw him go with little hope of their meeting again in this world.

The Prince was accompanied by his father and brother, with various friends in their train, who, after the celebration of the marriage, were to return to Germany. But Prince Albert carried with him--to remain in his near neighbourhood--two old allies, whose familiar faces would be doubly welcome in a foreign country. The one was his Swiss valet, Cart, a faithful, devoted servant, "the best of nurses," who, had waited on his master since the latter was a boy of seven years of age. The other was the beautiful greyhound, Eos, jet black with the exception of a narrow white streak on the nose and a white foot. Her master had got her as a puppy of six weeks old, when he was a boy in his fourteenth year, and had trained the loving, graceful creature in all imaginable canine, sagacity and cleverness. She had been the constant companion of his youth. She had already come to England with him, on the decisive visit of the previous autumn, and was known and dear to his royal mistress.

It was severe wintry weather when the great cavalcade, in eight travelling carriages, set out for England, and took its way across Germany, Belgium, and the north of France, to the coast. The whole journey assumed much of the character of a festive procession. At each halting-place crowds turned out to do the princes honour. Every court and governing body welcomed them with demonstrations of respect and rejoicing. But at Aix-la-Chapelle, in a newspaper which he came across, Prince Albert read the debates and votes in the Houses of Parliament that cut down the ordinary annuity of the English sovereign's consort, and left unsettled the question of his position in the country. The first disappointment told in two ways. Young and sensitive--though he was also resolute and cheerful-minded--he had been a little nervous beforehand about the reception which might be accorded to him in England; he now received a painful impression that the marriage was not popular with the people. He had indulged in generous dreams of the assistance and encouragement which he would be able to bestow on men of letters and artists, when he suddenly found his resources curtailed to nearly half the amount he had been warranted in counting upon. However, at Brussels, the next halting-place, in writing to the Queen, and frankly admitting his mortification at the words and acts of the majority of the members of both English Houses of Parliament, he could add with perfect sincerity, "All I have time to say is, that while I possess your love they cannot make me unhappy."

And King Leopold was there with his sensible, calming counsel, while Baron Stockmar had been careful to have a letter awaiting the Prince, which explained the undercurrent of political, not personal, motives that had

influenced the debates.

In fact, so far from being unpopular, the Prince, who was the Queen's choice, was really the most acceptable of all her suitors in the eyes of her people. The sole serious objection urged against him in those days was that of his youth, a fault which was not only daily lessening, but was speedily forgotten in the conviction of the manly and serious attention to duty on his part which he quickly inspired.

On the 5th of February the party arrived at Calais. Lord Clarence Paget had been sent over with the Firebrand to await their arrival, but the usual difficulties of an adverse tide and an insufficient French harbour presented themselves, and the company had to sail on the morning of the 6th in one of the ordinary Dover packet-boats, under a strong gale from the south-east, with a heavy sea, which rendered the horrors of the Channel crossing, at the worst, what only those who have experienced them can realise.

The Prince, like most natives of inland Germany, had been little inured to sailing, and his constitution rendered him specially liable to sea-sickness. As a lad of seventeen, facing the insidious and repulsive foe for the first time, he had expressed his own and his brother's dread of the unequal encounter. Now he was doomed to feel its ignoble clutch to the last moment. "The Duke had gone below, and on either side of the cabin staircase lay the two princes in an almost helpless state."

It was in such unpropitious circumstances that Prince Albert had to rise, pull himself together, and bow his acknowledgements to the crowds on the pier ready to greet him. Who that has rebelled against the calm superiority of the comfortable; amused onlookers at the haggard, giddy sufferers reeling on shore from the disastrous crossing of a stormy ferry, cannot comprehend the ordeal!

The Prince surmounted it gallantly, anticipating the time when, at the call of work or duty, he was known to rise to any effort, to shake off fatigue and indisposition as if he had been the most muscular of giants, and to make a brave fight to the last against deadly illness. He had his reward. The raw inclement day, the disabling, discomfiting malady--which had appeared in themselves a bad beginning, an inhospitable introduction to his future life--the recent misgivings he had entertained, were all forgotten in the enthusiastic reception he received before he put foot on land. A kind heart responds readily to kindness, and the Prince felt, in spite of parliamentary votes, the people were glad to see him, with an overflowing gladness.

It had been fixed that the Prince should not arrive at Buckingham Palace till the 8th. Accordingly there was time for the much-needed rest and refreshment, and for a leisurely conclusion of the long journey. The travellers stayed that night at Dover, the next at Canterbury, the Prince beginning the long list of fatiguing ceremonials which he was to undergo in the days to come, by receiving addresses, holding a reception, and showing himself on the balcony, as well as by the quieter, more congenial interlude of attending afternoon service in Canterbury Cathedral with his brother. The weather was still bad; pouring rain had set in, but it could not damp the spirit of the holiday-makers. As for the hero of the holiday, he was chafing, lover-like, at the formal delay which was all that interposed between him and a blissful reunion. He wrote to the Queen before starting for Canterbury, "Now I am once more in the same country with you. What a delightful thought for me. It will be hard for me to have to wait till

to-morrow evening. Still, our long parting has flown by so quickly, and to-morrow's dawn will soon be here.... Our reception has been most satisfactory. There were thousands of people on the quays, and they saluted us with loud and uninterrupted cheers."

From Canterbury Prince Albert sent on his valet, Cart, with the greyhound Eos. "Little Dash," if Dash still lived, was to have a formidable rival, and the Queen speaks in her Journal of the pleasure which the sight of "dear Eos," the evening before the arrival of the Prince, gave her." [Footnote: Early Years of the Prince Consort.] Words are not wanted to picture the bright little scene, the light interruption to "affairs of the State," always weighty, often harassing, the gay reaction, the hearty unceremonious recognition on both sides, the warm welcome to the gentle avant courier. This was not a great queen, but a gleeful girl at the height of her happiness, who stroked with white taper hand the sleek black head, looked eagerly into the fond eyes, perhaps went so far as to hug the humble friend, stretching up fleet shapely paws, wildly wagging a slender tail, uttering sharp little yelps of delight to greet her. What wealth of cherished associations, of thrice happy realisation, the mere presence there, once more of "only a dog," brought to the mistress of the palace, the lady of the land!

On Saturday, the 8th of the month, Prince Albert proceeded to London, being cordially greeted along the whole road by multitudes flocking from every town and village to see him and shout their approval. At half-past four, in the pale light of a February afternoon, the travellers arrived at Buckingham Palace, "and were received at the hall door by the Queen and the Duchess of Kent, attended by the whole household," to whom a worthy master had come. The fullness of satisfaction and perfect joy of the meeting to two in the company are sacred.

An hour after his arrival the oath of naturalisation was administered to the Prince, "and the day ended with a great State dinner. Sunday was a rest day. Divine service was performed by the Bishop of London in the Bow-room on the ground floor--the same room in which the Queen had met her assembled Council in the course of the previous November, and announced to them her intended marriage. Afterwards the Prince drove out and paid the visits required of him to the different members of the royal family. In spite of the season and weather, throngs of Londoners surrounded the Palace, and watched and cheered him as he went and came. That day the Queen and Prince exchanged their wedding gifts. She gave him the star and badge of the Garter and the Garter set in diamonds, and he gave her a sapphire and diamond brooch.

CHAPTER VIII. THE MARRIAGE.

The 10th of February rose dark and foggy, with a lowering sky discharging at frequent intervals heavy showers. But to many a loyal heart far beyond the sound of Bow bells the date brought a thrill of glad consciousness which was quite independent of the weather. What mattered dreary skies or stinging sleet! This was the day on which the young Queen was to wed the lover of her youth, the man of her choice.

The marriage was to take place at noon, not in the evening, like former royal weddings, and the change was a great boon to the London public.

During the busy morning, Prince Albert found time for a small act, which was nevertheless full of manly reverence for age and weakness, of mindful, affectionate gratitude for old and tender cares which had often made his childhood and youth happy. He wrote a few lines to the loving, venerable kinswoman who had performed the part of second mother to him, who had grieved so sorely over their parting.

"In less than three hours I shall stand before the altar with my dear bride. In these solemn moments I must once more ask your blessing, which I am well assured I shall receive, and which will be my safeguard and my future joy. I must end. God help me (or, rather, God be my stay!), your faithful Grandson." The Prince wrote a similar letter, showing how faithfully he recollected her on the crowning day of his life, to his good stepmother, the Duchess of Coburg.

Among the innumerable discussions on the merits or demerits of the Prince when he was first proposed as the husband for the Queen of England, there had not been wanting in a country where religion is generally granted to be a vital question, and where religious feuds, like other feuds, rage high, sundry probings as to the Prince's Christianity--what form he held, whether he might not be a Roman Catholic, whether he were a Christian at all, and might not rather be an infidel? Seeing that the Prince belonged to a Christian and to one of the most Protestant royal families in Europe, that he had been regularly trained in Christian and Lutheran doctrines, and had made a public profession of his belief in the same--a profession which his practice had in no way contradicted--these suppositions were, to say the least, uncalled for, and not remarkable for liberality or charity. It is easy to answer them substantially. The Prince, reserving his Protestant right of private judgment on all points of his belief, was a deeply religious man, as indicated throughout his career, at every stage, in every event of his life. It is hardly possible even for an irreligious man to conceive that Prince Albert could have been what he was without faith and discipline. His biographer has with reason quoted the "God be my stay!" in the light of the sincerity of the man, in a letter written in the flush of his joy and the very fruition of his desires, as one of the innumerable proofs that the Prince lived consciously and constantly under the all-seeing eye of an Almighty Father.

There were two main points from which out-of-door London could gaze its fill on the gala. The one was St. James's Park, from which the people could see the bride and bridegroom drive from Buckingham Palace to St. James's, where the marriage was to take place, according to old usage, and back again to Buckingham Palace for the wedding breakfast; the other was the Green Park, Constitution Hill, Hyde Park, and Piccadilly, by which most of the guests were to arrive to the wedding. The last point also commanded the route which the young couple would take to Windsor.

It was said that, never since the allied sovereigns visited London in 1814 had such a concourse of human beings made the parks alive, as on this wet February morning, when a dismal solitude was changed to an animated scene, full of life and motion. The Times described the mass of spectators wedged in at the back of Carlton Terrace and the foot of Constitution Hill, and the multitude of chairs, tables, benches, even casks, pressed into the service, and affording vantage-ground to those who could pay for the accommodation. The dripping trees were also rendered available, and had their branches so laden with human fruit, that brittle boughs gave way, while single specimens and small clusters of men and boys came rattling down on the heads and shoulders of confiding fellow-creatures; but such misadventures were without serious accident, and simply afforded additional

entertainment to the self-invited, light-hearted wedding guests.

Parties of cavalry and infantry taking their places, with "orderlies dashing to and fro," lent colour and livelier action to the panorama. At the same time the military were not a very prominent feature in the picture, and the State element was also to some extent wanting. Some state was inevitable, but after all the marriage of the sovereign was not so much a public ceremonial as a private event in her life. As early as eight o'clock in the morning the comparatively limited number of invited guests began to contribute to the satisfaction of the great uninvited by driving up beneath the triumphal arch, and presenting their pink or white cards for inspection. A body of Foot Guards marched forwards, followed by a detachment of the Horse Guards Blue, with their band discoursing wedding music appropriate to the occasion, cheering the hearts of the cold, soaked crowd, and awaking an enthusiastic response from it. Then appeared various members of the nobility, including the Duke of Norfolk, coming always to the front as Grand Marshal, wearing his robe and carrying his staff of office, when the rest of the world were in comparative undress, as more or less private individuals. But this gentleman summed up in his own person "all the blood of all the Howards," and recalled his ancestors great and small--the poet Earl of Surrey, those Norfolks to whom Mary Tudor and Mary Stuart were alike fatal, and that Dicky or Dickon of Norfolk who lent a humorous strain to the tragic tendency of the race.

The Ministers and Foreign Ambassadors came singly or in groups. The Ministers, with one or two exceptions, wore the Windsor uniform, blue turned up with an oak-leaf edging in gold. Viscount Morpeth, Lord John Russell, the Marquis of Normanby, Lord Palmerston, Lord Holland, Lord Melbourne, were well-known figures. The good-natured Duke of Cambridge arrived with his family and suite in three royal carriages. He wore the Orders of the Garter, and the Bath, and carried his baton as Field-Marshal. The Duke of Sussex was in the uniform of Captain-General of the Artillery Company, and wore the Orders of the Garter, the Bath, and St. Andrew. He had on his black skull-cap as usual, and drove up in a single carriage. He had opposed the clause relating to Prince Albert's taking precedence of all, save the Queen, in the Naturalisation Bill. He was to make further objection to the husband's occupying his natural place by the side of his wife when the Queen opened and prorogued Parliament, and to the Prince's rights in the Regency Bill. All the same, by right of birth and years, the Duke of Sussex was to give away his royal niece.

Before eleven o'clock, the Gentlemen and Ladies of the Household were in readiness at Buckingham Palace. The Ladies started first for St. James's. The Gentlemen of the foreign suites--Prince Albert's, and his father's, and brother's--in their dark-blue and dark-green uniforms, mustered in the hall, and dispatched a detachment to receive the Prince on his arrival at the other palace. At a quarter to twelve notice was sent to Prince Albert in his private apartments, and he came forth "like a bridegroom," between his royal supporters, traversed the State-rooms, and descended the grand staircase, preceded by the Chamberlain and Vice-Chamberlain, Comptroller of the Household, equerries and ushers. He was received with eager clappings of hands and wavings of handkerchiefs. The Prince was dressed in the uniform of a British Field-Marshal, and wore only one decoration, that of the Garter, with the collar surmounted by two white rosettes, and his bride's gifts of the previous day, the George and Star set in diamonds, on his breast, and the diamond-embroidered Garter round his knee. His pale, handsome face, with its slight brown moustache, his slender yet manly figure would have become any dress. Indeed, his general appearance, full of "thoughtful grace and quiet dignity," impressed every honest observer most

favourably. We can imagine Baron Stockmar watching keenly in the background to catch every furtive glance and remark, permitting himself to rub his hands and exclaim, with sober exultation, "He is liked!"

Prince Albert's father and brother, his dearest friends hitherto, walked beside him. The Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, with his fatherly heart swelling high, must have looked like one of the quaint stately figures out of old German prints in his long, military boots, the same as those of the Life Guards, and his dark-green uniform turned up with red. He, too, wore the collar and star of the Garter, and the star of his own Order of Coburg Gotha. On the other side of the bridegroom walked Prince Ernest. The wedding was next in importance to him to what it was to his brother, while to the elder playing the secondary part of the couple so long united in every act of their young lives, the marriage ceremony of his other self, which was to deal the decisive blow in the cleaving asunder of the old double existence, must have been full of very mingled feelings of joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain. Prince Ernest was a fine young man, in whose face, possibly a little stern in its repressed emotion, *The Times* reporter imagined he saw more determination than could be found in the milder aspect of Prince Albert, not guessing how much strength of will and patient steadfastness might be bound up with gentle courtesy. Prince Ernest was in a gay light-blue and silver uniform, and carried his helmet in his hand.

When the group came down the stairs, some privileged company, including a few ladies, stationed behind the Yeoman Guard and about the entrance, clapped their hands and waved their congratulations, and as Prince Albert entered the carriage which was to take him and his father and brother to St. James's, he received for the first time all the honours paid to the Queen. Trumpets sounded, colours were lowered, and arms presented. A squadron of Life Guards attended the party, but as the carriage was closed its occupants were not generally recognised.

As soon as the Lord Chamberlain had returned from escorting the Prince, six royal carriages, each with two horses, were drawn up before the entrance to Buckingham Palace, and his Lordship informed the Queen that all was ready for her. Accordingly, her Majesty left her room leaning on the arm of Lord Uxbridge, the Lord Chamberlain. She was supported by her mother, the Duchess of Kent, and followed by a page of honour. The various officers of the Household--the Earl of Belfast, Vice-Chamberlain; the Earl of Albemarle, Master of the Horse; Lord Torrington, Comptroller and Treasurer, &c., walked in advance.

The Queen wore a bride's white satin and orange blossoms, a simple wreath of orange blossoms on her fair hair. Her magnificent veil of Honiton lace did not cover the pale face, but fell on each side of the bent head. Her ornaments were the diamond brooch which had been the gift of the bridegroom, diamond earrings and necklace, and the collar and insignia of the Garter. She looked well in her natural agitation, for, indeed, she was a true woman at such a moment. She was shy and a little shrinking as became a bride, and her eyes were swollen with recent tears--an illustration of the wise old Scotch proverb, "A greetin' (weeping) bride's a happy bride." Here were no haughty indifference, no bold assurance, no thoughtless, heartless gaiety,

A creature breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveller 'twixt life and death.

A maiden leaving one stage of her life, with all its past treasures of

affection and happiness, for ever behind her, and going forward, in loving hope and trust, no doubt, yet still in uncertainty of what the hidden future held in store for her of weal and woe, to meet her wifely destiny. As she came down into her great hall she was welcomed with fervent acclamations, but for once she was absorbed in herself, and the usual frank, gracious response was not accorded to the tribute. Her eyes were fixed on the ground; "a hurried glance round, and a slight inclination of the head," were all the signs she gave.

The Duchess of Kent, the good mother who had opened her heart to her nephew as to a son, from the May-day when he came to Kensington, who had every reason to rejoice in the marriage, still shared faithfully in her daughter's perturbation. However glad the Duchess might be, it was still a troubled gladness, for she had long experience. She knew that this day closed the morning glory of a life, brought change, a greater fullness of being, but with the fullness increased duties and obligations, more to dread, as well as more to hope, a heavier burden, though there was a true friend to share it. Illusions would vanish, and though reality is better than illusion to all honest hearts, who would not spare a sigh to the bright dreams of youth--too bright with a rainbow-hued radiance and a golden mist of grand expectations, dim in their grandeur, ever to be fulfilled in this work-a-day world? And the Duchess was conscious that the mother who gives a daughter away, even to the best of sons, resigns the first place in that daughter's heart, the first right to her time, thoughts, and confidence. Queen Victoria belonged to her people, but after that great solemn claim she had till now belonged chiefly to her mother. Little wonder that the kind Duchess looked "disconsolate" in the middle of her content!

The Duchess of Kent and the Duchess of Sutherland drove in the carriage with her Majesty "at a slow pace," for the royal bride, even on her bridal-day, owed herself to her subjects, while a strong escort of Household cavalry prevented the pressure of the shouting throng from becoming overpowering.

On the arrival of the Queen at St. James's Palace she proceeded to her closet behind the Throne-room, where she remained, attended by her maids of honour and train-bearers, until the Lord Chamberlain announced that all was ready for the procession to the chapel.

Old St. James's had been the scene of many a royal wedding. Besides that of Queen Mary, daughter of James II. and Anne Hyde, who was married to William of Orange at eleven o'clock at night in her bedchamber, Anne and George of Denmark were married, in more ordinary fashion, in the chapel. Following their example, the daughters of George II. and Queen Caroline--another Anne, the third English princess who was given to a Prince of Orange, and who was so ready to consent to the contract that she declared she would have him though he were a baboon, and her sister Mary, who was united to the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, were both married here; so was their brother, Frederick, Prince of Wales, to Princess Augusta of Saxe-Coburg. Prince Albert was the third of the Coburg line who wedded with the royal house of England. Already there were two strains of Saxe-Coburg blood in the veins of the sovereign of these realms. The last, and probably the most disastrous, marriage which had been celebrated in St. James's was that of George Frederick, Prince of Wales, and Caroline of Brunswick.

The portions of the palace in use for the marriage included the Presence Chamber, Queen Anne's Drawing-room, the Guard-room, the Grand Staircase, with the Colonnade, the Chapel Royal, and the Throne-room. On the Queen's

marriage-day, rooms, staircase, and colonnade were lined with larger and smaller galleries for the accommodation of privileged spectators. The seats had crimson cushions with gold-coloured fringe, warming up the cold light and shade of a February day, while the white and gay-coloured dresses of the ladies and the number of wedding favours contributed to the gaiety of the scene. A Queen's wedding favours were not greatly different from those of humbler persons, and consisted of the stereotyped white riband, silver lace, and orange blossoms, except where loyalty indulged in immense bouquets of riband, and "massive silver bullion, having in the centre what might almost be termed branches of orange blossoms." The most eccentrically disposed favours seem to have been those of the mace-bearers, whose white "knots" were employed to tie up on the wearers' shoulders the large gold chains worn with the black dress of the officials. The uniformity of the gathering was broken by "burly Yeomen of the Guard, with their massive halberts, slim Gentlemen-at-Arms with their lighter 'partisans,' elderly pages of State, almost infantile pages of honour, officers of the Lord Chamberlain's Office, officers of the Woods and Forests, embroidered heralds and shielded cuirassiers, robed prelates, stoled priests, and surpliced singing-boys."

Among the guests, though not in the procession, loudly cheered as on other occasions, was the Duke of Wellington, who had seen the bride christened. People thought they noticed him bending under his load of years, tottering to the last step of all, but the old soldier was still to grace many a peaceful ceremony. In his company, far removed this day from the smoke of cannon and the din of battle, walked more than one gallant brother-in-arms, the Marquis of Anglesey, Lord Hill, &c.

The chapel was also made sumptuous for the occasion. Its carved and painted roof was picked out anew. The space within the chancel was lined and hung with crimson velvet, the communion-table covered with magnificent gold plate.

The Queen's procession began with drums and trumpets, and continued with pursuivants, heralds, pages, equeries, and the different officers of the Household till it reached the members of the Royal Family. These ranged from the farthest removed in relationship, Princess Sophia of Gloucester, through the Queen's young cousins in the Cambridge family, with much admiration bestowed on the beautiful child, Princess Mary, and the exceedingly attractive young girl, Princess Augusta, to another and a venerable Princess Augusta--one of the elder daughters of George III., an aged lady upwards of seventy, who then made her final appearance in public. Doubtless she had been among the company who were present at the last royal marriage in St. James's, on the night of the 8th of April, 1795, forty-five years before, a marriage so widely removed in every particular from this happy wedding. The two royal Dukes of Cambridge and Sussex walked next, the Lord Chamberlain and Vice-Chamberlain, with Lord Melbourne between, bearing the Sword of State before the Queen.

Her Majesty's train was carried by twelve unmarried ladies, her bridesmaids. Five of these, Lady Fanny Cowper, Lady Mary Grimston, Lady Adelaide Paget, Lady Caroline Gordon Lennox, and Lady Catherine Stanhope, had been among her Majesty's train-bearers at the coronation. Of the three other fair train-bearers on that occasion, one at least, Lady Anne Wentworth Fitzwilliam, was already a wedded wife. The remaining seven bridesmaids were Lady Elizabeth West, Lady Eleanor Paget, Lady Elizabeth Howard, Lady Ida Hay, Lady Jane Bouverie, Lady Mary Howard, and Lady Sarah Villiers. These noble maidens were in white satin like their royal mistress, but for her orange blossoms they wore white roses. Still more

than on their former appearance together, the high-bred English loveliness of the party attracted universal admiration.

The Master of the Horse and the Mistress of the Robes, the Ladies of the Bedchamber, Maids of Honour, and Women of the Bedchamber followed, closed in by Yeomen of the Guard and Gentlemen-at-Arms.

In the chapel there had been a crowd of English nobility and foreign ambassadors awaiting the arrival of Prince Albert, when at twenty minutes past twelve he walked up the aisle, carrying a prayer-book covered with green velvet. He advanced, bowing to each side, followed by his supporters to the altar-rail, before which stood four chairs of State, provided for the Queen, the Prince, and, to right and left of them, Queen Adelaide and the Duchess of Kent. The Queen-dowager was in her place, wearing a dress of purple velvet and ermine; the bridegroom kissed her hand and entered into conversation with her, while his father and brother took their seats near him.

The Queen entered the chapel at twenty-five minutes to one, and immediately proceeded to her chair in front of the altar-rails. She knelt down and prayed, and then seated herself. Her mother was on her left side. Behind her stood her bridesmaids and train-bearers. On stools to right and left sat the members of the Royal Family. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London were already at the altar. In a few minutes the Queen and the Prince advanced to the communion-table. The service was the beautiful, simple service of the Church of England, unchanged in any respect. In reply to the question, "Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?" the Duke of Sussex presented himself. The Christian-names "Albert" and "Victoria" were all the names used. Both Queen and Prince answered distinctly and audibly. The Prince undertook to love, comfort, and honour his wife, to have and to hold her for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer; the Queen promised to obey as well as to love and cherish her husband till death them did part, like any other pair plighting their troth. When the ring was put on the finger, at a concerted signal the Park and Tower guns fired a royal salute and all London knew that her Majesty was a married woman.

The usual congratulations were exchanged amongst the family party before they re-formed themselves into the order of procession. The Duke of Sussex in his character of father kissed his niece heartily on the cheek besides shaking her by the hand. The Queen stepped quickly across and kissed her aunt, Queen Adelaide, whose hand Prince Albert saluted again. The procession returned in the same order, except that the bride and bridegroom walked side by side and hand in hand, the wedding-ring being seen on the ungloved hand. Her Majesty spoke once or twice to Lord Uxbridge, the Lord Chamberlain, as if expressing her wishes with regard to the procession. Her paleness had been succeeded by a little flush, and she was smiling brightly. On the appearance of the couple they were received with clapping of hands and waving of handkerchiefs. In the Throne-room the marriage was attested and the register signed "on a splendid table prepared for the purpose."

The whole company then repaired to Buckingham Palace, Prince Albert driving in the carriage with the Queen. The sight of the pair was hailed everywhere along the short route with loud cheering, to the joyous sound of which "the Queen walked up the grand staircase, in the presence of her court, leaning on her husband's arm."

An eye-witness--the Dowager Lady Lyttelton, who, both as a Lady of the

Bedchamber and Governess to the royal children, knew the Queen and Prince well--has recorded her impression of the chief actor in the scene. "The Queen's look and manner were very pleasing, her eyes much swollen with tears, but great happiness in her countenance, and her look of confidence and comfort at the Prince when they walked away as man and wife was very pleasing to see. I understand she is in extremely high spirits since; such a new thing to her to dare to be unguarded in conversation with anybody, and, with her frank and fearless nature, the restraints she has hitherto been under from one reason or another with everybody must have been most painful." The wedding-breakfast with the toast of the day followed, then the departure for Windsor, on which the skies smiled, for the clouds suddenly cleared away and the sun shone out on the journey and the many thousand spectators on the way.

The Queen and Prince drove in one of the five carriages--four of which contained the suite inseparable from a couple of such rank. The first carriage conveyed the Ladies in Waiting, succeeded by a party of cavalry. The travelling chariot came next in order, and was enthusiastically hailed, bride and bridegroom responding graciously to the acclamations. Her Majesty's travelling dress was bridal-like: a pelisse of white satin trimmed with swans' down, a white satin bonnet and feather. The Prince was in dark clothes. The party left before four, but did not arrive at Windsor till nearly seven--long after darkness had descended on the landscape. Eton and Windsor were in the height of excitement, in a very frenzy of rejoicing. The travellers wended their way through a living mass in brilliantly illuminated streets, amidst the sending up of showers of rockets, the ringing of bells, the huzzaing of the people, the glad shouting of the Eton boys. Her Majesty was handed from the carriage by the Prince, she took his arm and the two entered the castle after a right royal welcome home.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning celebrated this event also in her eloquent fashion.

"She vows to love who vowed to rule, the chosen at her side,
Let none say 'God preserve the Queen,' but rather 'Bless the Bride.'
None blow the trump, none bend the knee, none violate the dream
Wherein no monarch but a wife, she to herself may seem;
Or if you say, 'Preserve the Queen,' oh, breathe it inward, low--
She is a woman and beloved, and 'tis enough but so.
Count it enough, thou noble Prince, who tak'st her by the hand,
And claimest for thy lady-love our Lady of the land.
And since, Prince Albert, men have called thy spirit high and rare,
And true to truth and brave for truth as some at Augsburg were,
We charge thee by thy lofty thoughts and by thy poet-mind,
Which not by glory and degree takes measure of mankind,
Esteem that wedded hand less dear for sceptre than for ring,
And hold her uncrowned womanhood to be the royal thing."

Up in London and all over the country there were feasts and galas for rich and poor. There was a State banquet, attended by very high and mighty company, in the Banqueting-room at St. James's. Grand dinners were given by the members of the Cabinet; the theatres were free for the night to great and small; at each the National Anthem was sung amidst deafening applause; at Drury Lane there was a curious emblematical ballet--like a revival of the old masques, ending with a representation of the Queen and Prince surrounded by fireworks, which no doubt afforded immense satisfaction to the audience.

The Queen's wedding-cake was three hundred pounds in weight, three yards in circumference, and fourteen inches in depth. In recognition of the national interest of the wedding, the figure of Hymen, on the top, was replaced by Britannia in the act of blessing the royal pair, who, as a critic observed, were represented somewhat incongruously in the costume of ancient Rome. At the feet of the image of Prince Albert, several inches high, lay a dog, the emblem of fidelity. At the feet of the image of her Majesty nestled a pair of turtle-doves, the token of love and felicity. A Cupid wrote in a volume, spread open on his knees, for the edification of the capering Cupids around, the auspicious "10th of February, 1840," the date of the marriage; and there were the usual bouquets of white flowers, tied with true lovers' knots of white riband, to be distributed to the guests at the wedding breakfast and kept as mementoes of the event.

There were other trophies certain to be cherished and preserved among family treasures, and perhaps shown to future generations, as we sometimes see, turning up in museums and art collections, relics of the marriages of Mary Tudor and Catharine of Aragon. These were the bridesmaids' brooches. They were the royal gift to the noble maidens, several of whom had, two years before, received rings from the same source to commemorate the services of the train-bearers at the Coronation. These brooches were in the shape of a bird, the body being formed entirely of turquoises, the eyes were rubies, and the beak a diamond, the claws were of pure gold, and rested on pearls of great size and value. The design and workmanship were according to the Queen's directions.

The twelve beautiful girls who received the gifts have since fulfilled their various destinies--each has "dreed her weird," according to the solemn, sad old Scotch phrase. Some, perhaps the happiest, have passed betimes into the silent land; the survivors are elderly women, with granddaughters as lovely as they themselves were in their opening day. One became a princess--Lady Sarah Villiers married Prince Nicholas Esterhazy. Two are duchesses--Lady Elizabeth Sackville-West, Duchess of Bedford; and Lady Catherine Stanhope, married first to Lord Dalmeny, eldest son of the Earl of Rosebery, and secondly to the Duke of Cleveland. Three are countesses--Lady Caroline Gordon Lennox, Countess of Bessborough; Lady Mary Grimston, Countess of Radnor; and Lady Ida Hay, Countess of Gainsborough. Lady Fanny Cowper, whose beauty was much admired by Leslie, the painter, married Lord Jocelyn, eldest son of the Earl of Roden. Lord Jocelyn was one of the victims to cholera in 1854. He was seized while on duty at Buckingham Palace, and died after two hours' illness in Lady Palmerston's drawing-room. Lady Mary Howard became the wife of Baron Foley. One bridesmaid, Lady Jane Bouverie, married a simple country gentleman, Mr. Ellis, of Glenaquoich.

CHAPTER IX. A ROYAL PAIR.

The Queen and the Prince were only one whole day holding state by themselves at Windsor. It is not given to a royal couple to flee away into the wilds or to shut themselves up from their friends and the world like meaner people; whether a prolonged interval of retirement be spent in smiling or in sulking, according to cynical bachelors and spinsters, it is not granted to kings and queens. On the single day of grace which her Majesty claimed she wrote to Baron Stockmar the emphatic estimate of the man of her choice. "There cannot exist a dearer, purer, nobler being in the

world than the Prince." A young bride's fond judgment; but to her was given the deep joy of finding that time only confirmed the proud and glad conviction of that first day of wedlock.

On Wednesday, the 12th, the royal couple at Windsor were rejoined by the Duchess of Kent, the Duke of Coburg, the hereditary Prince, and the whole Court. Then two more days of holiday were spent with something of the heartiness of old times, when brides and bridegrooms did not seem either as if they were ashamed of their happiness or too selfish to share it with their friends. No doubt there were feasting and toasting, and there was merry dancing each night.

On Friday, the 14th, the Court returned to London, that the principal person might gratify the people by appearing in public and that she might take up once more the burden of a sovereign's duties. Addresses were received from the Houses of Parliament. The theatres were visited in state. On the 19th of the month the Queen held her first levee after her marriage, when the Prince took his place at her left hand. On Sunday, the 20th, the newly-married couple attended divine service together in the Chapel Royal, St. James's, and were loudly cheered on their way through the Park.

Buckingham Palace was to continue the Queen's town residence, but St. James's, by virtue of its seniority in age and priority in historical associations, remained for a considerable time the theatre of all the State ceremonials which were celebrated in town until gradually modifications of the rule were established. A chapel was fitted up in Buckingham Palace, which accommodated the household in comparative privacy, and prevented the inconvenience of driving in all states of the health and the weather for public worship at the neighbouring palace chapel. It was found that there was better accommodation for holding Drawing-rooms, and less crowding and inconvenience to the ladies attending them, when the Drawing-rooms were held at Buckingham Palace instead of St. James's. The levees are nearly all that is left to St. James's, in addition to the fact that it contains the offices of the Lord Chamberlain, &c. But the place where her Majesty was proclaimed Queen and wedded deserves a parting word.

The visitor to St. James's passes up the great staircase, which has been trodden by the feet of so many generations, bound on such different errands. Here and there, from a picture-frame high up on the wall, a painted face looks down immovably on the comings and goings below. The Guard-room has a few stands of glittering arms and one or two women's portraits; altogether a different Guard-room from what it must have been when it received its name. Beyond is the Armoury, where arms bristle in sheaves and piles, surmounted by hauberks and casques, smooth and polished as if they had never been dented in battle or rusted with blood. Queen Anne's Drawing-room, spacious and stately, is resplendent in yellow satin. Old St. James's has sustained a recent renovation, its faded gorgeousness has been renewed, not without a difficult compromise between the unhesitating magnificence of the past and the subdued taste of the present day. The compromise is honourable to the taste of the decorator, for there is no stinting of rich effect, stinting which would have been out of place, in the great doors, picked out and embossed, the elaborately devised and wrought walls and ceilings, the huge chandeliers, &c. But warm, deep crimson is relieved by cool pale green, and sage wainscot meets the dull red of feathery leaves on other walls. The Queen's Closet, which misses its meaning when it is called a boudoir, with the steel-like embroidery on its walls, matching the grey blue of its cut velvet hangings, recalls the natural pauses in a busy life, when the Queen awaits the call of public

duty, or withdraws for a breathing space from the pressure of fatiguing obligations.

In more than one of the principal rooms there are low brass screens or railings drawn across the room, to be used as barricades; and the uninitiated hears with due respect that behind those the ambassadors are supposed to congregate, while these fence the approach to the throne.

In spite of such precautions, large Drawing-rooms became latterly hard-pressed crowds struggling to make their way, and the State-rooms of Buckingham Palace were put in request as affording better facilities for these ceremonies.

There is a picture gallery where a long row of Kings and Queens, in their full-length portraits, stand like Banquo's descendants. The portraits begin with that of bluff King Hal, very bluff and strident. According to Mr. Hare's account, which he has taken from Holinshed, Henry VIII. got St. James's when it was an hospital for "fourteen maidens that were leprous," and having pensioned off the sisters, "reared a fine mansion and park" in the room of the hospital. The picture of his young son is a quaint, slim edition of his father. There is a sad and stiff Mary Tudor, who laid down her embittered and brokenhearted life in this palace, and by her side, as she seldom was in the flesh, a high-ruffed, yellow-haired, peaked-chinned Elizabeth--a noble shrew. The British Solomon has the sword-proof padding of his doublet and trunk hose very conspicuous. A wide contrast is a romantic, tragic King Charles, with a melancholy remembrance in his long face and drooping eyes of the day when he bade farewell to the world at St. James's and left it for the scaffold at Whitehall. His swarthy periwigged sons balance the sister queens, Mary and Anne. St. James's, like Kensington and Hampton Court, seems somehow peculiarly associated with them. Though other and more striking royal figures dwelt there both before and after the two last of the reigning Stuarts, they have left a distinct impression of themselves, together with a Sir Peter Lely and a Sir Godfrey Kneller flavour about all the more prominent quarters of the palace. The likenesses of Mary and Anne occur as they must have appeared before they lost the comeliness of youth, when St. James's was their home, the house of their father, the Duke of York and Anne his Duchess, where the two sisters wedded in turn a princely hero and a princely nobody.

In the Throne-room, amidst the portraits of later sovereigns to which royal robes and the painter's art have supplied an adventitious dignity, there are fine likenesses of the Queen and Prince Albert, which must have been taken soon after their marriage, when they were in the first bloom of their youth and happiness. Her Majesty wears a royal mantle and the riband of the Garter, like her compeers; behind her rise the towers of Windsor.

In the double corridor, along which two streams of company flow different ways to and from the Presence-chamber, as the blood flows in the veins and arteries, are more pictures--those of some charming children. A stout little Prince Rupert before he ever smelt the smoke of battle or put pencil to paper. Representations of almost equally old-world-looking children of the Georgian era by their royal mother's knee, one child bearing such a bow as figures often in the hands of children in the portraits of the period; a princely boy in miniature robes of State, with a queen's hand on his shoulder; a little solitary flaxen-haired child with a tambourine. The bow has long been unbent, the royal mother and child are together again, the music of the tambourine is mute.

In the Banqueting-room there are great battle-pieces by land and sea from

Tourney to Trafalgar, like a memory of the Hall of Battles at Versailles.

The Chapel Royal, where the Queen was made a wife, has ceased in a measure to be a royal place of worship. Still within its narrow bounds and plain walls a highly aristocratic congregation have, if they choose, a right to the services of the dean and sub-dean and the five-and-thirty chaplains--not to say of the bishops duly appointed to officiate on special occasions. Not only is the royal closet still in readiness furnished with its chairs of State, there are other closets or small galleries for the Household, peeresses and their daughters, &c. The simplest pew below belongs to the Lord Chamberlain, the Lord Steward, peers and their sons, or members of Parliament, &c. The Chapel Royal, like the State-rooms, is fresh and spruce from renewal. It has, however, wisely avoided all departure from the original character of the building, which has nothing but the carved roof and the great square window to distinguish it from any other chapel of the same size and style. It is difficult to realise that it was here Queen Mary listened attentively to Bishop Burnet, and Queen Caroline was guilty of talking, while Princess Emily brought her little dog under her arm. Nor is it easy to fancy the brilliance of the scene in the quiet place when it was lined from floor to ceiling with tier upon tier of seats for the noblest in the land, when every inch of standing-room had its fit occupant, and a princely gathering was grouped before the glittering altar to hear a Queen plight her troth.

St. James's has still a royal resident in the sole surviving member of the great family of George III., the venerable Duchess of Cambridge, who lives in the north wing of the palace. Marlborough House and Clarence House are in the immediate vicinity, indeed the last is so near that it is reached by a covered way. And as if to make the sense of the neighbourhood of a cluster of royal establishments more vivid, and the thought of the younger generation of the Royal Family more present in the old place, as the visitor passes through its corridors the cannon in the park peals forth the announcement of the birth of the last of her Majesty's grandchildren.

On the 28th of February, a little more than a fortnight after the marriage, came the Prince's first practical experience of its cost to him. His father left on his return to Coburg. "He said to me," the Queen wrote in her Journal, "that I had never known a father, and could not therefore feel what he did. His childhood had been very happy. Ernest, he said, was now the only one remaining here of all his earliest ties and recollections; but if I continued to love him as I did now, I could make up for all.... Oh! how I did feel for my dearest, precious husband at this moment! Father, brother, friends, country, all has he left, and all for me. God grant that I may be the happy person, the most happy person to make this dearest, blessed being happy and contented. What is in my power to make him happy I will do."

Prince Ernest remained in England nearly three months after his father had left.

Early in March a step was taken to render the Prince's position clearer and more secure. Letters patent were issued conferring on him precedence next to the Queen. How necessary the step was, even in this country, towards a conclusion which appears to us to-day so natural as to be beyond dispute, may be gathered from the circumstance that, even after the marriage, objections were made to the Prince's sitting by the Queen's side in the State carriage on State occasions, and to his occupying a chair of State next the throne when she opened and prorogued Parliament.

Prince Albert proposed for himself a wise and generous course, which he afterwards embodied in fitting words--"to sink his own individual existence in that of his wife, to aim at no power by himself or for himself, to shun all ostentation, to assume no separate responsibility before the public; continually and anxiously to watch every part of the public business in order to be able to advise and assist her at any moment, in any of the multifarious and difficult questions brought before her--sometimes political, or social, or personal--as the natural head of the family, superintendent of her household, manager of her private affairs, her sole confidential adviser in politics and only assistant in her communications with the affairs of the Government." In fact, the Prince was the Queen's private secretary in all save the name, uniting the two departments, political and social, of such an office which had hitherto been held separately by Lord Melbourne and Baroness Lehzen.

Prince Albert discharged the double duty with the authority of his rank and character, and especially of his relations to the Queen. He expressed his object very modestly in writing to his father: "I endeavour quietly to be of as much use to Victoria in her position as I can." The post was a most delicate and difficult one, and would have been absolutely untenable, had it not been for the perfect confidence and good understanding always existing between the Queen and the Prince, and for his remarkable command of temper, and manly forbearance and courtesy, under every provocation, to all who approached him. Perhaps a still more potent agent was a quality which was dimly felt from the beginning, and is fully recognised to-day--his sincerity of nature and honesty of purpose. In the painful revelations which, alas! time is apt to bring of double-dealing and self-seeking on the part of men in power, no public character of his day stands out more honourably in the strong light which posterity is already concentrating on the words and actions of the past, than does Prince Albert for undeniable truthfulness and disinterestedness. Men may still cavil at his conclusions, and maintain that he theorised and systematised and was tempted to interfere too much, but they have long ceased to question his perfect integrity and single-heartedness, his rooted aversion to all trickery and to deceit in every form. "He was an honest man and a noble prince who did good work," is now said universally of the Queen's husband; and honesty is not only the highest praise, it is a great power in dealing with one's fellows.

But it was not in a day or without many struggles that anything approaching to his aim was achieved. The inevitable irritation caused by the transfer of power and the disturbance of existing arrangements on the part of a new comer, the sensitive jealousy which even the Prince's foreign birth occasioned, had to be overcome before the first approach to success could be attained.

We can remember that some of the old Scotch Jacobite songs--very sarcastic where German royal houses were concerned--experienced a temporary revival, certainly more in jest than in earnest, and with a far higher appreciation of the fun than of the malice of the sentiment. The favourite was "The wee, wee German Lairdie," and began in this fashion:--

Wha the Diel hae we gotten for a King,
But a wee, wee German Lairdie?
And when they gaed to bring him hame
He was delvin' in his little kail-yardie.

The last verse declared:--

He'a pu'ed the rose o'English blooms,
He's broken the harp o'Irish, clowns,
But Scotia's thistle will jag his thoomba,
The wee, wee German Lairdie.

A prophecy honoured in its entire breach.

Even tried and trusty friends grown old in Court service could not make up their minds at once to the changed order of affairs, or resign, without an effort to retain it, their rule when it came into collision with the wishes of the new head of the household; Prince Albert, in writing frankly to his old comrade Prince Lowenstein, said he was very happy and contented, but the difficulty in filling his place with proper dignity was that he was only the husband and not the master of the house. The Queen had to assert, like a true woman, when appealed to on the subject, that she had solemnly engaged at the altar to obey as well as to love and honour her husband, and "this sacred obligation she could consent neither to limit nor define."

It may be stated that, in spite of the fidelity and devotion of those who surrounded the Queen, the old system under which the arrangements of the palaces were conducted stood in great need of reform. Anything more cumbrous, complicated, and inconvenient than the plan adopted cannot easily be conceived. The great establishments were not subject to one independent, responsible rule, they were divided into various departments under as many different controlling bodies. Rights and privileges, sinecures and perquisites, bristled on all sides, and he who would reform them must face the unpopularity which is almost always the first experience of every reformer. There is a graphic account of the situation in the "Life of the Prince Consort," and "Baron Stockmar's Memoirs." "The three great Officers of State, the Lord Steward, the Lord Chamberlain, and the Master of the Horse, all of them officials who varied with each change of the Ministry, and were appointed without regard to any special qualifications for their office, had each a governing voice in the regulation of the household.... Thus one section of the palace was supposed to be under the Lord Chamberlain's charge, another under that of the Lord Steward, while as to a third it was uncertain whose business it was to look after it. These officials were responsible for all that concerned the interior of the building, but the outside had to be taken care of by the office of Woods and Forests. The consequence was, that as the inside cleaning of the windows belonged to the Lord Chamberlain's department, the degree of light to be admitted into the palace depended proportionably on the well-timed and good understanding between the Lord Chamberlain's Office and that of Woods and Forests. One portion of the _personnel_ of the establishment again was under the authority of the Lord Chamberlain, another under that of the Master of the Horse, and a third under the jurisdiction of the Lord Steward." "The Lord Steward," writes Baron Stockmar, "finds the fuel and lays the fire, and the Lord Chamberlain lights it.... In the same manner the Lord Chamberlain provides all the lamps, and the Lord Steward must clean, trim, and light them. Before a pane of glass or a cupboard door could be mended, the sanction of so many officials had to be obtained, that often months elapsed before the repairs were made."

One is irresistibly reminded of the dilemma of the unfortunate King of Spain, who died from a feverish attack brought on by a prolonged exposure to a great fire, because it was not etiquette for the monarch to rise, and the grandee whose prerogative it was to move the royal chair happened to be out of the way.

"As neither the Lord Chamberlain nor the Master of the Horse has a regular deputy residing in the palace, more than two-thirds of all the male and female servants are left without a master in the house. They can come on and go off duty as they choose, they can remain absent hours and hours on their days of waiting, or they may commit any excess or irregularity; there is nobody to observe, to correct, or to reprimand them. The various details of internal arrangement whereon depend the well-being and comfort of the whole establishment, no one is cognisant of, or responsible for. There is no officer responsible for the cleanliness, order, and security of the rooms and offices throughout the palace."

Doubtless, it was under this remarkable condition of the royal household that a considerable robbery of silver plate from an attic in which it was stored took place at Windsor Castle in 1841. Massive silver encasings of tables, borders of mirrors, fire-dogs and candelabra, together with the silver ornaments of Tippoo Saib's tent, disappeared in this way.

It took years to remedy such a state of matters, and it was only by the exercise of the greatest tact, which, to be sure, was comparatively easy to the Prince, that the improvement was effected. The necessary reforms were made to proceed from the officers of State themselves, and the enforcement of the new regulations was carried out by a Master of the Household, who resided permanently in the palace which the Queen occupied. Eventually each royal establishment was brought to a high average of order and efficiency. If possible, still greater caution had to be practised in the Prince's dealing with political affairs, for here the jealousy of foreign influence was national, and among the most deeply rooted of insular prejudices. In the beginning of their married life the Prince was rarely with the Queen at her Cabinet Councils, though no objection had been made to his presence, and he did not take much share in business, though Lord Melbourne, especially, urged his being made acquainted with it in all its details. Both in its public and private relations, the path at starting was not an easy one, while the Prince and the Queen shared its anxieties and worries. Happily for all, the two, who were alike in sense, good feeling, and trusting affection, stood firm, and gradually surmounted the contradictions in their brilliant lot. But it was probably under these influences that Baron Stockmar, always exacting in the best interests of those he loved, fancied--even while he had no hesitation in recording the Prince behaved in his difficult position very well--that a friend had reason to dread in the young man not yet twenty-one, the old defects of dislike to intellectual exertion and indifference to politics. No efforts were wanting on the part of the good old mentor, who in his absence kept up a constant correspondence with the Prince, to preserve the latter's "ideal aspirations." Sometimes, the keen observer feared that the object of his dreams and cares was losing courage for his self-imposed Herculean labours, but the brave will and loyal heart proved triumphant.

That spring and the next two springs and summers were gay seasons in London--and London life meant then to the Queen and the Prince an overwhelming amount of engagements, besides the actual part in the government of the country. "Levees, Drawing-rooms, presentations of addresses, great dinners, State visits to the theatre" swelled the long list. The Prince, like most Germans, was fond of the play, and had a great admiration of Shakespeare, whose plays were revived at Covent Garden in 1840, Charles Kemble giving a last glimpse of the glory of the early Kemble performances. The couple presided over many little balls and dances which became a Court where the sovereigns were in the heyday of their

youth and happiness. Lady Bloomfield, who as the Hon. Miss Liddell was one of the Queen's Maids of Honour a little later, gives a pleasant account of an episode at one of these dances. "One lovely summer's morning we had danced till dawn, and the quadrangle being then open to the east, her Majesty went out on the roof of the portico to see the sun rise, which was one of the most beautiful sights I ever remember. It rose behind St. Paul's, which we saw quite distinctly; Westminster Abbey and the trees in the Green Park stood out against a golden sky."

All this innocent gaiety was consecrated by the faithful discharge of duty and the reverent observance of sacred obligations. At Easter, which was spent at Windsor, the Queen and the Prince took the Sacrament together for the first time. "The Prince," the Queen has said, "had a very strong feeling about the solemnity of the act, and did not like to appear in company either the evening before or on the day on which, he took it, and he and the Queen almost always dined alone on these occasions." Her Majesty has supplied a brief record, in the "Early Years of the Prince Consort," of one such peaceful evening. "We two dined together. Albert likes being quite alone before he takes the Sacrament; we played part of Mozart's Requiem, and then he read to me out of *_Stunden den Andacht_* (Hours of Devotion) the article on *_Selbster Kenntniss_* (Self-knowledge.)" The whole sounds like a sweet, solemn, blessed pause in the crowded busy life.

A sudden shock, which was only that of a great danger happily averted, broke in on the flush of all that was best worth having and doing in

existence, and seemed to utter a warning against the instability of life at its brightest and fairest. There was stag-hunting on Ascot Heath, at which the Queen and the Prince were to be present. He was to join in the hunt and she was to follow with Prince Ernest in a pony phaeton. As she stood by a window in Windsor Castle, she saw Prince Albert canter past on a restless and excited horse. In vain the rider turned the animal round several times, he got the bit between his teeth and started at the top of his speed among the trees of the Park; very soon he brushed against a branch and unseated the Prince, who fell, without, however, sustaining any serious injury. The Queen saw the beginning but not the end of the misadventure, and her alarm was only relieved by the return of one of the grooms in waiting, who told the extent of the accident. *_Noblesse oblige_*. The Prince mounted a fresh horse and proceeded to the hunt, and the Queen joined him. "Albert received me on the terrace of the large stand and led me up," the Queen wrote in her Journal. "He looked very pale, and said he had been much alarmed lest I should have been frightened by his accident.... He told me he had scraped the skin off his poor arm, had bruised his hip and knee, and his coat was torn and dirty. It was a frightful fall."

On the 20th of April, an event took place in France which at this time naturally was particularly interesting both to the Queen and the Prince. The Duc de Nemours, second son of Louis Philippe and brother to the Queen of the Belgians, married Princess Victoire of Saxe-Coburg, only daughter of the head of the Catholic branch of the family, sister of the King Consort of Portugal, and first cousin both to the Queen and Prince Albert. This marriage drew many intertwined family ties still more closely together. Princess Victoire was a pretty golden-haired girl, and is described afterwards as a singularly sweet, affectionate, reasonable woman. She had spent much of her youth at Coburg, and been a favourite playmate of Prince Albert, whose junior she was by three years. She was the friend of the Queen from girlhood. "We were like sisters," wrote her

Majesty, "bore the same name, married the same year.... There was in short a similarity between us, which, since 1839, united us closely and tenderly." The Duc de Nemours, without the intellectual gifts of some of his brothers, resembled his good mother, Queen Amelie, in many respects. He had quiet, domestic tastes, and was affectionately attached to his wife.

CHAPTER X. ROYAL OCCUPATIONS.--AN ATTEMPT ON THE QUEEN'S LIFE.

The family arrangements in the marriage of the Queen and Prince Albert appear to have been made with the kindest, most judicious consideration for what was due to former ties, that all the relations of life might be settled gradually and naturally, on the footing which it was desirable they should assume. The connection between the Queen and the Duchess of Kent was very close. It was that of a mother and child who had been nearly all in all to each other, who, till Queen Victoria's marriage, had not been separated for a day. Since the Duchess of Kent's arrival in England, she had never dwelt alone. It was now deemed advisable that she should have a separate house, which was, however, to be in constant communication with the Queen's, the intercourse between the two continuing to be of the most intimate character, mother and daughter meeting daily and sharing the most of their pleasures. In April, two months after the marriage, the Duchess removed to Ingestrie House, Belgrave Square.

In another month, on the 7th of May, Prince Ernest left England. The parting between the brothers was a severe trial to both. They bade farewell, German student fashion, singing together beforehand the parting song *„Abschied“*.

The young couple were now left in a greater measure to themselves to form their life, and lead it to noble conclusions. They spent the Queen's birthday in private at Claremont--a place endeared to her by the happiest associations of her childhood, and very pleasant to him because of its country attractions. There the pair could wander about the beautiful grounds and neighbourhood, as another royal pair had wandered before them, and do much as they pleased, like simple citizens or great folks living *„in villeggiatura“*. The custom was then established of thus keeping the real birthday together in retirement, while another day was set apart for public rejoicing.

There is a story told of the Queen and Prince Albert's early visits to Claremont--a story certainly not without its parallel in the lives of other popular young sovereigns in their honeymoons, but probable enough in this case. The couple were caught in a shower, during one of their longer rambles, and took refuge in a cottage--the old mistress of which was totally unacquainted with the high rank of her guests. She entertained them with many extraordinary anecdotes of Princess Charlotte and Prince Leopold, the original heroine and hero of Claremont. At last the dame volunteered to give her visitors the loan of her umbrella, with many charges to Prince Albert that it should be taken care of and returned to its owner. The Queen and the Prince started on their homeward way under the borrowed shelter, and it was not for some time that the donor knew with whom she had gossiped, and to whom she had dealt her favours.

The Prince's first appearance as an art patron took place in connection

with the Ancient Music Concerts. He had already been named one of the directors who arrange in turn each concert. He made the selections for his concert on the 29th of April, and both he and the Queen appeared at the rehearsal on the 27th. Perhaps the gentle science was what he loved above every other, being a true German in that as in all else. At this time he played and sang much with the Queen; the two played together often on the organ in one of his rooms. Lady Lyttelton has described the effect of his music. "Yesterday evening, as I was sitting here comfortably after the drive by candlelight, reading M. Guizot, suddenly there arose from the room beneath, oh, such sounds! It was Prince Albert, dear Prince Albert, playing on the organ; and with such master skill, as it appeared to me, modulating so learnedly, winding through every kind of bass and chord, till he wound up with the most perfect cadence, and then off again, louder and then softer. No tune, as I was too distant to perceive the execution or small touches so I only heard the harmony, but I never listened with much more pleasure to any music. I ventured at dinner to ask him what I had heard. 'Oh! my organ, a new possession of mine. I am so fond of the organ! It is the first of instruments; the only instrument for expressing one's feelings' (I thought, are they not good feelings that the organ expresses?), 'and it teaches to play; for on the organ a mistake, oh! such misery;' and he quite shuddered at the thought of the sostenuto discord."

But while the Prince was an enthusiastic musician, he was likewise fond of painting; his taste and talent in this respect also having been carefully cultivated. In these sunshiny early days, sunshiny in spite of their occasional clouds, he still possessed a moderate amount of leisure, notwithstanding the late hours night and morning, of which the Queen took the blame, declaring it was her fault that they breakfasted at ten, getting out very little--a practice quite different from their later habits. He seized the opportunity of starting various pursuits which formed afterwards the chief recreation of his and the Queen's laborious days. He tried etching, which afforded the two much entertainment, and he began his essays in landscape gardening, developing a delightful faculty with which she had the utmost sympathy.

On the 1st of June the Prince took the initiatory step in identifying himself with moral and social progress, and in placing himself, as the Queen's representative, at the head of those humane and civilising movements which recommended themselves to his good judgment and philanthropic spirit. He complied with the request that he should be chairman at a meeting to promote the abolition of the slave trade, and made his first public speech in advocacy of justice between man and man. This speech was no small effort to a young foreigner, who, however accomplished, was certainly not accustomed to public speaking in a foreign tongue. It was like delivering a maiden speech under great difficulties, and as it was of importance that he should produce a good impression, he spared no preparation for the task. He composed the speech himself, learnt it by heart, and repeated it to the Queen in the first instance.

Among the crowd present was the young Quaker lady, Caroline Fox, whose "Memories" have been given to the world. She wrote at the time: "The acclamations attending his (the Prince's) entrance were perfectly deafening, and he bore them all with calm, modest dignity, repeatedly bowing with considerable grace. He certainly is a very beautiful young man, a thorough German, and a fine poetic specimen of the race. He uttered his speech in a rather low tone and with the prettiest foreign accent."

On the 18th of the same month great horror and indignation were excited by

the report of an attempt to assassinate the Queen. About six o'clock on the June evening, her Majesty was driving, according to her usual custom, with Prince Albert. The low open phaeton, attended by two equeries, was proceeding up Constitution Hill, on its way first to the house of the Duchess of Kent in Belgrave Square and afterwards to Hyde Park. Suddenly a little man leaning against the park railing drew a pistol from under his coat and fired at her Majesty, who was sitting at the farther side from him. He was within six yards of the phaeton--so near, in fact, that the Queen, who was looking another way, neither saw him nor comprehended for a moment the cause of the loud noise ringing in her ears. But Prince Albert had seen the man hold something towards them, and was aware of what had occurred. The horses started and the carriage stopped. The Prince called to the postillions to drive on, while he caught the Queen's hands and asked if the fright had not shaken her, but the brave royal heart only made light of his alarm. He looked again, and saw the same man still standing in a theatrical attitude, a pistol in each hand. The next instant the fellow pointed the second pistol and fired once more. Both the Queen and the Prince saw the aim, as well as heard the shot, on this occasion, and she stooped, he pulling her down that the ball might pass over her head. In another moment the man, who still leant against the railing, pistols in hand, with much bravado and without any attempt to escape, was seized by a bystander. In the middle of the consternation and wrath of the gathering crowd, the Queen and the Prince went on to the Duchess of Kent that they might be the first to tell her what had happened and assure her of the safety of her daughter. A little later, in order to show the people that the Queen had not lost her confidence in them, the couple carried out their original intention of taking a drive in Hyde Park. There they were received with a perfect ovation, a crowd of nobility and gentry in carriages and on horseback forming a volunteer escort on the way back to Buckingham Palace, where another multitude awaited them, vehemently cheering, as the Queen, pale but smiling and bowing, re-entered her palace. The wretched lad who was the author of the attack did not deny it, but seemed rather sorry that it had failed to inflict any injury, though he had no motive to allege for such a crime. In spite of the strictest search no ball could be found, which left the question doubtful whether or not the pistols had been loaded. On further examination it proved that the lad, Edward Oxford--not above eighteen years of age, was a discharged barman from a public-house in Oxford Street. His father, who was dead, had been a working jeweller in Birmingham.

"It would be difficult to describe the state of loyal excitement into which the Metropolis has been thrown by this event," says the Annual Register. "It seems as if only the dastardly deed had been wanted to bring out the full love and devotion of the people to their young Queen," the happy wife and expectant mother, whose precious life might have been cut short by the unlooked-for shot of an assassin. At the different theatres and concerts that evening "God save the Queen" was sung with passionate fervour. When the Queen and Prince Albert drove out the next afternoon in the same phaeton, at the same hour, in Hyde Park, the demonstration of the previous day was repeated with effusion. The crowd was immense, the cheering was again vociferous. An improvised body-guard of hundreds of gentlemen on horseback surrounded the couple. "The line of carriages (calling at Buckingham Palace to make inquiries) extended a considerable way down the Mall." The calls were incessant till the procession from the Houses of Parliament arrived. Thousands of people assembled to witness it. The Sheriffs of London came first in four carriages. Then the Grenadier Guards with their band marched through the gateway, on which the royal standard was hoisted, and took up their position in the entrance court. The Cabinet Ministers and chief Officers

of the Household followed. The State carriage of the Speaker led the hundred and nine carriages filled with Members of the House of Commons. The Peers' carriages were upwards of eighty in number. The occupants, beginning with the Barons, rose in rank till they reached the Royal Dukes, and wound up with the Lord Chancellor. "Many of the Lords wore splendid uniforms and decorations and various orders; the Duke of Wellington especially was attired with much magnificence.... The terrace in front of the house was crowded with distinguished persons in grand costume," as on a gala-day. The Queen received the address of congratulation on her escape seated on the throne. What a strange contrast between the scene and its origin--the emphatically stately and dignified display, and the miserable act which gave rise to it! What blended feelings cause and effect must have produced in the principal performers--the inevitable pain and shame for the base reason, the well-warranted pride and pleasure in the honourable result!

The first time the Queen went to the opera afterwards she wrote in her Journal that the moment she and the Prince entered the box "the whole house rose and cheered and waved hats and handkerchiefs, and went on so for some time. 'God save the Queen' was sung.... Albert was called for separately and much cheered."

The trial of Oxford came on during the following month. The question of bullets or no bullets in the pistols was transferred to the jury. Evidence of symptoms of insanity and of confirmed insanity in the prisoner, his father, and grandfather, was shown, and after some difficulty in dealing with the first question the jury found the prisoner guilty, while he was at the same time declared insane. Therefore Oxford, like every other prisoner shielded by the irresponsibility of madness, was delivered up to be dealt with according to her Majesty's pleasure, which signified his imprisonment so long as the Crown should see fit.

The sole reason for the outrage on the Queen proved to be the morbid egotism of an ill-conditioned, ignorant, half-crazy lad; showing that one more danger exists for sovereigns--a peril born entirely of their high and solitary rank with its fascination for envious, irritable, distempered minds.

The following routine of the Queen's life at this time is given in the "Early Years of the Prince Consort": "They breakfasted at nine, and took a walk every morning soon afterwards."

In London, their walks were in Buckingham Palace gardens, fifty acres in extent, part of which was once the pleasant "Mulberry Gardens" of James I. The lake, not far from the palace, covers five acres. Looking across the velvet sward away to the masses of shady trees, it is hard to realise that one is still in London. The Prince had already enlivened these gardens with different kinds of animals and aquatic birds, a modified version of the Thier-Garten so often found in connection with royal residences in Germany.

The Queen mentions that, "in their morning walks in the gardens, it was a great amusement to the Prince to watch and feed these birds. He taught them to come when he whistled to them from a bridge connecting a small island with the rest of the gardens.

"Then came the usual amount of business (far less heavy, however, than now), besides which they drew and etched a great deal together, which was a source of great amusement, having the plates bit in the house.

Luncheon followed at the usual hour of two o'clock. Lord Melbourne, who was generally staying in the house, came to the Queen in the afternoon, and between five and six the Prince usually drove her out in a pony phaeton. If the Prince did not drive the Queen he rode, in which case she drove with the Duchess of Kent or the ladies. The Prince also read aloud most days to the Queen. The dinner was at eight o'clock, and always with the company. In the evening the Prince frequently played at double chess, a game of which he was very fond, and which he played extremely well."

The Prince would return "at a great pace" from his morning rides, which took him into all the districts of London where improvements were going on, and "would always come through the Queen's dressing-room, where she generally was at that time, with that bright loving smile with which he ever greeted her, telling her where he had been, what new buildings he had seen, what studios he had visited."

Her Majesty objected to the English custom of gentlemen remaining in the dining-room after the ladies had left the table. But, by the advice of Lord Melbourne, in which the Prince concurred, no direct change was made in what was almost a national institution. The hour when the whole party broke up, however, was seldom later than eleven.

The story got into circulation that the Queen's habit was to stand conversing with the ladies till the gentlemen joined them, and that knowing her practice, the dining-room was soon left empty. Lord Campbell gives his experience of this portion of a royal dinner some years after the Queen's marriage. "The Queen and the ladies withdrawing, Prince Albert came over to her side of the table, and we remained behind about a quarter of an hour, but we rose within the hour from the time of our sitting down. A snuff-box was twice carried round and offered to all the gentlemen. Prince Albert, to my surprise, took a pinch."

The Prince, who was an exceedingly temperate man at table, rather grudged the time spent in eating and drinking, just as he disliked riding for mere exercise, without any other object. Yet he was a bold and skilled rider, and could, without any privilege of rank, come in first in the hunting-field. It amused the Queen and her husband to find that this accomplishment, more than any other, was likely to make him popular among English gentlemen. But though he liked hunting as a recreation, he did not understand how it or any other sport could be made the business of a man's life.

By the month of July, the prospect of an heir to the throne rendered it advisable that provision should be made for the Queen's possible death, or lengthened disqualification for reigning. The Regency Bill was brought forward with more caution and better success than had attended on the Prince's Annuity Bill. In accordance with the prudent counsels of Baron Stockmar, the Opposition as well as the Ministry were taken into account and consulted. The consequence was that the Duke of Wellington, the mouthpiece of the Tories on the former occasion, was altogether propitious in the name of himself and his party, and it was agreed that the Prince was the proper person to appoint as Regent in case of any unhappy contingency. The Bill was passed unanimously and without objection in both Houses, except for a speech made by the Duke of Sussex in the House of Lords.

This conclusion was gratifying in all respects, not the least so in its testimony to the respect which the Prince's conduct had already called forth. "Three months ago they would not have done it for him," Lord

Melbourne told the Queen. "It is entirely his own character." It was also a pleasant proof of the goodwill of the Tories, whom the Prince had done everything in his power to conciliate, employing his influence to impress upon the young Queen the constitutional attitude of impartiality and neutrality towards all political parties.

There was a corresponding withdrawal of the absurd opposition to Prince Albert's taking his place by the Queen's side on all State occasions. "Let the Queen put the Prince where she likes and settle it herself, that is the best way," said the Duke of Wellington cordially. A lively example of the great Duke's want of toleration for the traditions of Court etiquette is given in a note to the "Life of the Prince Consort." The late Lord Albemarle, when Master of the Horse, was very sensitive about his right in that capacity to sit in the sovereign's coach on State occasions. "The Queen," said the Duke, when appealed to for his opinion, "can make Lord Albemarle sit at the top of the coach, under the coach, behind the coach, or wherever else her Majesty pleases."

On the 11th of August the Queen prorogued Parliament, accompanied by her husband for the first time. The following day the Court left for Windsor. The Prince was very fond of the country, and gladly went to it. The Queen, in her early womanhood, had been, as she said, "too happy to go to London, and wretched to leave it." But from the time of her marriage she shared her husband's tastes, and could have been "content and happy never to go to town." How her Majesty has retained the love of nature, which is a refuge of sorrow as well as a crown of happiness, we all know.

In the mornings at Windsor there were shooting in the season, and a wider field for landscape gardening for the Prince before he took to farming. In the evening there were occasional great dinners and little dances as in London. The young couple dispensed royal hospitality to a succession of friendly visitors, who came to see with their own eyes the bright palace home. The King and the Queen of the Belgians rejoiced in the fruits of his work. The Princess of Hohenlohe, herself a happy wife and mother, arrived with her children to witness her sister's felicity. Queen Adelaide did not shrink from revisiting Windsor, and seeing a beloved niece fill well King William and his consort's place.

Prince Albert's birthday was celebrated in England for the first time; there were illuminations in London; down at Windsor the day was kept, for the most part, in the simple family fashion, which is the best. The Prince was awakened by a musical reveille; a German chorale, chosen with loving, ungrudging care, as the first thing which was to greet him, was most certain, on that day of all others, to carry him back in spirit to his native country.

The family circle breakfasted by themselves in a favourite cottage in the park. Princess Feodora's children were in masquerade as Coburg peasants, doubtless hailing the Coburg Prince with an appropriate greeting. In the afternoon, in the fine weather, the Prince drove out the Queen; in the evening, "there was rather a larger dinner than usual."

On the 11th of September the Prince was formally sworn a member of her Majesty's Privy Council. And so conscientiously anxious was he to discharge worthily every duty which could be required of him, that, in the greater leisure of Windsor, he not only read "Hallam's Constitutional History" with the Queen, he began to read English law with a barrister.

In the meantime, an old historical figure, Princess Augusta of England,

who had appeared at the Queen's marriage, lay terribly ill at Clarence House. She died on the 22nd of September, having survived her sister, Princess Elizabeth, the Landgravine of Hesse Homburg, only eight months. Princess Augusta carried away with her many memories of the Court of George III. By a coincidence, the lady who may almost be called the Princess's biographer, at least whose animated sketches and affectionate praises of her "dear Princess Augusta" were destined to give the world of England its principal knowledge of an amiable princess, died at a great age the same year. Madame D'Arblay, as Miss Burney, the distinguished novelist, had been appointed in 1786, in a somewhat whimsical acknowledgement of her talents and services to the reading world, one of the keepers of Queen Charlotte's wardrobe. In this office she resided at Court for five years, and she has left in her diary the most graphic account which we have of the English royal life of the day. "Evelina" and "Cecilia" were old stories even in 1840; it was more than fifty years since Madame D'Arblay had taken royal service, and now her best-beloved young patroness had passed away an aged woman, only a few months later than the gifted and vivacious little keeper of the robes, whose duties, to be sure, had included reading habitually to the Queen when she was dressing, and sometimes to the Court circle. Princess Augusta's funeral went from her house of Frogmore at seven o'clock in the evening of the 2nd of October, one of the last of the night funerals of a past generation, and she was buried with the customary honours in St. George's Chapel, Windsor. Frogmore became from that time the country residence of the Duchess of Kent.

In November the Court returned to Buckingham Palace for the Queen's accouchement. Baron Stockmar, at the Prince's earnest entreaty, came to England for the event, though he remained then as always in the background. On the 21st of November the Princess Royal was born, the good news being announced to London by the firing of the Tower guns. The Cabinet Ministers and Officers of State were in attendance in an adjoining room, and the new-born child, wrapped in flannel, was carried by the nurse, escorted by Sir James Clark, into the presence of those who were to attest her birth, and laid for a moment on a table before them. Both mother and child were well, and although a momentary disappointment was felt at the sex of the infant, it did not detract from the general rejoicing at the Queen's safety with a living successor to the throne. It was said at the time, kindly gossips dwelling on the utterance with the utmost pleasure, that on the Prince expressing a fear that the people might be disappointed, the Queen reassured him in the most cheerful spirit, "Never mind, the next shall be a boy," and that she hoped she might have as many children as her grandmother, Queen Charlotte.

A fresh instance of a diseased appetite for notoriety, grafted on vagrant youthful curiosity and restless love of mischief, astonished and scandalised the English world. On the day after the birth of the Princess Royal a rascally boy named Jones was discovered concealed under a sofa in a room next to the Queen's. The offender was leniently dealt with in consideration of his immature years, but again and again, at intervals of a few months, the flibbertigibbet turned up in the most unlooked-for quarters, impudently asserting, on being questioned, that he had entered "the same way as before," and that he could, any time he pleased, find his way into the palace. It was supposed that he climbed over the wall on Constitution Hill and crept through one of the windows. But he could hardly have done so if it had not been for the confused palace management, for which nobody was responsible, with its inevitable disorder, that had not yet been overcome. The boy had to be committed to the House of Correction as a rogue and vagabond for three months. Afterwards he served

on board one of her Majesty's ships, where his taste for creating a sensation seems to have died a natural death.

In the Queen's weakness the young husband and father was continually developing new traits of manly tenderness. "His care and devotion were quite beyond expression." He declined to go anywhere, that he might be always at hand to do anything in his power for her comfort "He was content to sit by her in a darkened room, to read to her and write for her." "No one but himself ever lifted her from her bed to her sofa, and he always helped to wheel her on her bed or sofa into the next room. For this purpose he would come instantly when sent for from any part of the house." "His care for her was like that of a mother, nor could there be a kinder, wiser, more judicious nurse." Happy Queen!

The Queen made an excellent recovery, and the Court was back at Windsor holding Christmas and New Year relieved from all care and full of thankfulness. The peace and goodwill of the season, with the interchange of kindly gifts, were celebrated with pleasant picturesque German, in addition to old English customs. We have all heard wonderful tales of the baron of beef, the boar's head, the peacock with spread tail, the plum soup for which there is only one recipe, and that a royal one. There were fir-trees in the Queen's and the Prince's rooms and in humbler chambers. There was a great gathering of the household in a special corridor, where the Queen's presents were bestowed.

A new year dawned with bright promise on an expectant world. This last year had been so good in one sense that it could hardly be surpassed. What had it not done for the family life! It had given a good and loving wife to a good and loving husband, and a little child, with undreamt-of possibilities in its slumbering eyes and helpless hands. The public horizon was tolerably clear. The Welsh riots had been quelled and other acts of insubordination in the manufacturing districts put down--not without the use of force--but there was room for trust that such mad tumults would not be repeated. Father Matthews was reforming Ireland. There were far-away wars both with China and Afghanistan, certainly, but the wars were far away in more respects than one, distant enough to have their origin in the English protection of the opium trade, and interference--now with a peaceful, timidly conservative race--and again with fiercely jealous and warlike tribes, slurred over and forgotten, and only the successes of the national arms dwelt upon with pride and exultation.

Across "the silver streak" of the Channel there were more remarkable events, marked by a curious inconsistency, than the suitable marriage of the Duc de Nemours. Prince Louis Napoleon Buonaparte landed on the French coast with a handful of men prepared to invade the country, and was immediately overpowered and arrested. He was tried and condemned to imprisonment in the fortress of Ham, from which he escaped in due time, having earned for himself during long years the sobriquet of "the madman of Boulogne." The very same year Prince de Joinville, Louis Philippe's sailor son, was commissioned to bring the ashes of Napoleon from St. Helena to France. The coffin was conveyed in the Prince's frigate, *La Belle Poule*, to Cherbourg, whence a steamboat sailed with the solemn freight up the Seine to Paris. The funeral formed a splendid pageant, attended by the royal family, the ministers, and a great concourse of spectators. The dust of *le petit caporal* was deposited in a magnificent tomb in the Hotel des Invalides, before the eyes of a few survivors of his Old Guard.

Spain and Portugal were still the theatres of civil wars--now smouldering, now leaping up with brief fury. In Spain the Queen Regent, Christina, was driven from the kingdom, and had to take refuge in France for a time. In Portugal, in the middle of a political crisis, Maria da Gloria gave birth to a daughter, which died soon after its birth, while for days her own life was despaired of.

CHAPTER XI THE FIRST CHRISTENING.--THE SEASON OF 1841.

The Queen was able to open Parliament in person at the end of January.

The first christening in the royal household had been fixed to take place on the 10th of February, the first anniversary of the Queen's wedding-day, which was thus a double gala in 1841. The day before the Prince again had a dangerous accident. He was skating in the presence of the Queen and one of her ladies on the lake in the gardens of Buckingham Palace when the ice gave way a few yards from the bank, where the water was so deep that the skater had to swim for two or three minutes before he could extricate himself. The Queen had the presence of mind to lend him instant assistance, while her lady was "more occupied in screaming for help," so that the worst consequences of the plunge were a bad cold.

The christening took place at six in the evening in Buckingham Palace. The ceremony was performed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, assisted by the Archbishop of York, the Bishop of London, the Bishop of Norwich, and the Dean of Carlisle. The sponsors were the Duke of Saxe-Coburg Gotha, represented by the Duke of Wellington, King Leopold, the Queen-dowager, the Duchess of Gloucester, the Duchess of Kent, and the Duke of Sussex, the most of whom had been present at the baptism of her Majesty, and were able to compare royal child and royal mother in similar circumstances. The Duke of Cambridge and his son, Prince George, with Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar, were among the company. The infant was named "Victoria Adelaide Mary Louisa."

The Annual Register for the year has an elaborate description of the new silver-gilt font used on the occasion. It was in the shape of a water-lily supporting a shell, the rim of which was decorated with smaller water-lilies. The base bore, between the arms of the Queen and Prince Albert, the arms of the Princess Royal, surmounted by her Royal Highness's coronet. The water had been brought from the river Jordan.

A simple description of the event was given by Prince Albert in a letter to his grandmother, the Dowager-Duchess of Gotha. "The christening went off very well; your little great-granddaughter behaved with great propriety and like a Christian. She was awake, but did not cry at all, and seemed to crow with immense satisfaction at the lights and brilliant uniforms, for she is very intelligent and observing. The ceremony took place at half-past six P.M. After it there was a dinner, and then we had some instrumental music. The health of the little one was drunk with great enthusiasm."

The lively noticing powers of the Princess Royal when she was between two and three months of age is in amusing contradiction to a report which we remember as current at the time. It was mentioned in order to be denied by Leslie, who was commissioned to paint the royal christening, and worked at

the picture so diligently in the long days of the following summer that he was often occupied with the work from nine in the morning till seven or eight in the evening. He wrote in his "Recollections": "In 1841 I painted a second picture for the Queen, the christening of the Princess Royal. I was admitted to see the ceremony, and made a slight sketch of the royal personages as they stood round the font in the room. I made a study from the little Princess a few days afterwards. She was then three months old, and a finer child of that age I never saw. It is a curious proof of the readiness with which people believe whatever they hear to the disadvantage of those placed high in rank above them, that at the time at which I made the sketch it was said everywhere but in the palace and by those who belonged to the royal household, that the Princess was born blind, and by many it was even believed that she was born without feet. The sketch was shown at a party at Mr. Moon's, the evening after I made it, and the ladies all said, 'What a pity so fine a child should be entirely blind!' It was in vain I told them that her eyes were beautifully clear and bright, and that she took notice of everything about her. I was told that, though her eyes looked bright, and though she might appear to turn them to every object, it was certain she was blind."

What Leslie attributes to a species of envy, we think may be more justly regarded as having its foundation in the love of sensationalism to which human nature is prone--sensationalism which appears to become all the racier when it finds its food in high quarters. The particular direction the tendency took was influenced by the blindness of George III. and of his grandson, the Crown Prince of Hanover, which seemed to lend a plausibility to the absurd rumour.

Baron Stockmar states that the Princess Royal was a delicate child, causing considerable apprehension for her successful rearing during the first year of her life. It was only by judicious care that she developed a splendid constitution. Charles Leslie goes on to say: "The most agreeable part of my task in painting the christening of the Princess Royal was in studying the fine head of the wisest and best of living Kings, Leopold, a man whom the people he reigns over scarcely seem to deserve. Nothing could be more agreeable than his manner, and that of his amiable Queen, who was in the room all the time he sat. He speaks English very well, and she also spoke it. After I had painted for some time, she said, "May I look?" and suggesting some alterations, she said, "You must excuse me, I speak honest; but if I am wrong, don't mind me."

In those years the King and Queen of the Belgians were such frequent visitors of her Majesty, who may be said to have been his adopted child, that a whole floor of Buckingham Palace which was set apart for their use is still known as "the Belgian Floor." The portraits of both are in the Palace, and so is his likeness when he was many years younger, and one of the handsomest men in Europe. The last is hanging beside a full-length portrait of his first wife, Princess Charlotte, with her fair face and striking figure. In the summer of 1841 the Queen was farther and longer separated from her mother than she had ever been previously. The Duchess of Kent, secure in her daughter's prosperity and happiness, went to her native Germany, for the first time since she had come to England twenty-two years before. She was warmly received wherever she went. She visited, among other places, Amorbach, the seat of her son, the Prince of Leiningen, in Bavaria, where the Duchess had resided with the Duke of Kent in the first years of their married life. "It is like a dream that I am writing to you from this place," she addressed her daughter. "He (the Prince of Leiningen) has made many alterations in the house. Your father began them just before we left in March, 1819."

A threatened change of Ministry and a general election were pending; but amidst the political anxieties which already occupied much of the Queen and Prince Albert's thoughts, it was a bright summer, full of many interests and special sources of pleasure.

Mademoiselle Rachel, the great French actress, arrived in England. She had already established her empire in Paris by her marvellous revival of Racine's and Corneille's masterpieces. She was now to exercise the same fascination over an alien people, to whom her speech was a foreign tongue. She made her first appearance in the part of Hermione in Racine's *Andromaque* at the Italian Opera-house. Few who witnessed the spectacle ever forgot the slight figure, the pale, dark, Jewish face, the deep melody of the voice, the restrained passion, the concentrated rage, especially the pitiless irony, with which she gave the poet's meaning.

The Queen and the Prince shared the general enthusiasm. For that matter there was a little jealousy awakened lest there might be too much generous *abandon* in the royal approval of the great player. Perhaps this feeling arose in the minds of those who, dating from Puritan days, had a conscientious objection to all plays and players, and waxed hotter as time, alas! proved how, in contrast to the honourable reputation of the English Queen of Tragedy, Sarah Siddons, the character and life of the gifted French actress were miserably beneath her genius. There was a little vexed talk, which probably had small enough foundation, of the admission of Rachel into the highest society; of the Duchess of Kent's condescending to give her shawl to the shivering foreigner; of a bracelet with the simple inscription, "From Victoria to Rachel," as if there could be a common meeting-ground between the two, though the one was a queen in art and the other a queen in history. But if there was any imprudence, it might well have been excused as a fault of noble sympathy with art and cordial acknowledgement of it, which leant to virtue's side, a fault which had hitherto been not too common in England. The same year a Kemble, the last of the family who redeemed for a time the fallen fortunes of Covent Garden Theatre, Adelaide, the beautiful and accomplished younger daughter of Charles Kemble, brother to John Kemble and Sarah Siddons, came out as an operatic-singer in the part of "Norma." She was welcomed as her sweet voice, fine acting, and the traditions of her family deserved. She was invited to sing at the palace. From girlhood the Queen had been familiar with the Kembles in their connection with the English stage. The last time she visited the Academy as Princess Victoria, just before the death of King William, Leslie mentions, she asked that Charles Kemble might be presented to her, when the gentleman had the opportunity of making his "best genteel-comedy bow." Now it was on the younger generation of the Kembles that the Queen bestowed her gracious countenance. These were halcyon days for society as well as for the stage, when, in Mrs. Oliphant's words, "the Queen was in the foreground of the national life, affecting it always for good, and setting an example of purity and virtue. The theatres to which she went, and which both she and her husband enjoyed, were purified by her presence, evils which had been the growth of years disappearing before the face of the young Queen...."

On the 13th of June the Queen revisited Oxford in company with her husband, in time for Commemoration. Her Majesty and the Prince stayed at Nuneham, the seat of the Archbishop of York, and drove in to the University city. The Prince was present at a banquet in St. John's and attended divine service at New Inn Hall.

On the 21st of June the Queen and Prince Albert were at Woolwich, for the

launch of the good ship _Trafalgar_. Nothing so gay had been seen at the mouth of the river since King William and Queen Adelaide came down to Greenwich to keep the anniversary of the battle of Trafalgar. The water was covered with vessels, including every sort of craft that had been seen "since the building of Noah's Ark." The shore was equally crowded with an immense multitude of human beings finding standing-ground in the most unlikely places. The Queen drove down to the Dockyard in a travelling-carriage and four. She was received with a royal salute and glad bursts of cheering.

It is hardly necessary to say that the young Queen was exceedingly popular with the blue-jackets. In the course of a visit to Portsmouth she had gone over one of her ships. She was shown through the men's quarters, the sailors being under orders to remain perfectly quiet and abstain from cheering. Her Majesty tasted the men's coffee and pronounced it good. She asked if they got nothing stronger. A glass of grog was brought to her. She put it to her lips, and Jack could contain himself no longer; a burst of enthusiastic huzzas made the ribs of the ship ring.

At Woolwich a discharge of artillery announced the moment when the great vessel slipped from her stays, and "floated gallantly down the river" till she was brought up and swung round with her stern to London.

The King and Queen of the Belgians paid their second visit this year, the Queen remaining six weeks, detained latterly by the illness of her son in England. The long visit confirmed the tender friendship between the two queens. "During this stay, which had been such a happiness for me, we became most intimate," Queen Victoria wrote in her Journal, and she grudged the necessity of having to set out with Prince Albert on a royal progress before the departure of her cherished guest. "To lose four days of her stay, of which, I repeat, every hour is precious, is dreadful," her Majesty told King Leopold.

The short summer progress was otherwise very enjoyable. The Queen and Prince Albert visited the Duke of Bedford at the Russells' stately seat of Woburn Abbey, with its park twelve miles in extent. From Woburn the royal couple went to Panshanger, Earl Cowper's, and Brocket Hall, Lord Melbourne's, returning by Hatfield, the Marquis of Salisbury's. At Brocket the Queen was entertained by her Prime Minister. At Hatfield there were many memories of another Queen and her minister, since the ancient country-house had been a palace of Queen Elizabeth's, passing, in her successor's reign, by an exchange of mansions, from the hands of James I into those of the son and representative of Lord Burleigh, little crooked, long-headed Robert Cecil, first Earl of Salisbury. In Hatfield Park there is an oak still standing which bears the name of "Queen Elizabeth's Oak." It is said Princess Elizabeth was sitting in its shade when the news was brought to her of the death of her sister, Queen Mary, and her own accession to the throne of England.

The only difficulty--a pleasant one after all--which was experienced in these progresses, proceeded from the exuberant loyalty of the people. At straw-plaiting Dunstable a volunteer company of farmers joined the regular escort and nearly choked the travellers with the dust the worthy yeomen raised. On leaving Woburn Abbey the same dubious compliment was paid. In the Queen's merry words, "a crowd of good, loyal people rode with us part of the way. They so pressed and pushed that it was as if we were hunting."

The recent election had returned a majority of Conservative members, and soon after the reassembling of Parliament in August a vote of

non-confidence in Lord Melbourne's Ministry was carried. The same evening the Prime Minister went to Windsor to announce his resignation. He acted with his natural fairness and generosity, giving due honour to his adversaries, and congratulating the Queen on the great advantage she possessed in the presence and counsel of the Prince, thus softening to her the trial of the first change of Ministers in her reign. He only regretted the pain to himself of leaving her. "For four years I have seen you every day; but it is so different from what it would have been in 1839. The Prince understands everything so well, and has a clever, able head." The Queen was much affected in taking leave of a "faithful and attached friend," as well as Minister, while her words were, that his praise of the Prince gave her "great pleasure" and made her "very proud."

In anticipation of the change of Ministry it had been arranged, with Sir Robert Peel's concurrence, that the principal Whig ladies in the Queen's household--the Duchess of Sutherland, the Duchess of Bedford, and Lady Normanby--should voluntarily retire from office, and that this should be the practice in any future change of Ministry, so that the question of Ministerial interference in the withdrawal or the appointment of the ladies of the Queen's household might be set at rest. [Footnote: The retirement from office is now limited to the Mistress of the Robes.]

On the 3rd of September the new Ministers kissed hands on their appointment at a Cabinet Council held at Claremont. Lord Campbell gives some particulars. "I have just seen here several of our friends returned from Claremont. Both parties met there at once. They were shown into separate rooms. The Queen sat in her closet, no one being present but Prince Albert. The exaunters were called in one by one and gave up the seals or wands of their offices and retired. The new men by mistake went to Claremont all in their Court costume, whereas the Queen at Windsor and Claremont receives her Ministers in their usual morning dress. Nonnanby says taking leave of the Queen was very affecting."

Whatever momentary awkwardness may have attended the substitution of Sir Robert Peel as Prime Minister, it did not at all interfere--thanks to the candid, liberal nature of all concerned--with the friendly goodwill which it is so desirable should exist between sovereign and minister. We read in the "Life of the Prince Consort," "Lord Melbourne told Baron Stockmar, who had just returned from Coburg, that Sir Robert Peel had behaved most handsomely, and that the conduct of the Prince had throughout been most moderate and judicious."

Sir Robert had experienced considerable embarrassment at the recollection of his share in the debates on the Royal Annuity Bill, but the Prince did not show an equally retentive memory. His seeming forgetfulness of the past and cordiality in the present did more than reassure, it deeply touched and completely won a man who was himself capable of magnanimous self-renunciation.

Sir Robert Peel had the pleasure, in his early days in office, of suggesting to the Prince the Royal Commission to promote and encourage the fine arts in the United Kingdom, with reference to the rebuilding of the two Houses of Parliament. Sir Robert proposed that Prince Albert should be placed at the head of the Commission. This was not only a movement after the Prince's own heart, on which he spared no thought and labour for years to come, it was an act in which Prince and Minister--both of them lovers of art--could co-operate with the greatest satisfaction.

CHAPTER XII.

BIRTH OF THE PRINCE OF WALES.--THE AFGHAN DISASTERS.--VISIT OF THE KING OF PRUSSIA.--"THE QUEEN'S PLANTAGENET BALL."

On the 9th of November, 1841, the happiness of the Queen and Prince was increased by the birth of the Prince of Wales. The event took place on the morning of the Lord Mayor's Day, as the citizens of London rejoiced to learn by the booming of the Tower guns. In addition to the usual calls of the nobility and gentry, the Lord Mayor and his train went in great state to offer their congratulations and make their inquiries for the Queen-mother and child.

The sole shadow on the rejoicing was the dangerous illness of the Queen-dowager. She had an affection of the chest which rendered her a confirmed invalid for years. At this time the complaint took an aggravated form, and her weakness became so great that it was feared death was approaching. But she rallied--a recovery due in a great measure, it was believed, to her serene nature and patient resignation. She regained her strength in a degree and survived for years.

The public took a keen interest in all that concerned the heir to the crown, though times were less free and easy than they had been--all the world no longer trooped to the Queen's House as they had done to taste the caudle compounded when royal Charlotte's babies were born. There was at least the cradle with the nodding Prince of Wales feathers to gossip about. The patent creating the Duke of Cornwall Prince of Wales and Earl of Chester was issued on the 8th of December, when the child was a month old. It was a quaint enough document, inasmuch as the Queen declared in it that she ennobled and invested her son with the Principality and earldom by girding him with a sword, by putting a coronet on his head and a gold ring on his finger, and also by delivering a gold rod into his hand, that he might preside there, and direct and defend these parts. The Royal Nursery had now two small occupants, and their wise management, still more than that of the household, engaged the serious consideration of the Queen and the Prince's old friend, Baron Stockmar, and engrossed much of the attention of the youthful parents. They took great delight in the bright little girl, whom her mother named "Pussy," and the charming baby who was so near her in age.

"To think," wrote the Queen in her Journal this Christmas, "that we have two children now, and one who enjoys the sight already" (referring to the Christmas-tree); "it is like a dream."

"This is the dear Christmas Eve on which I have so often listened with impatience to your step which was to usher us into the gift-room," the Prince reminded his father. "To-day I have two children of my own to make gifts to, who, they know not why, are full of happy wonder at the German Christmas-tree and its radiant candles."

On this occasion the New Year was danced into "in good old English fashion. In the middle of the dance, as the clock finished striking twelve, a flourish of trumpets was blown, in accordance with a German custom." The past year had been good also, and fertile in blessings on that roof-tree, though in the world without there were the chafings and mutterings of more than one impending crisis. The corn-laws, with the embargo they laid on free trade, weighed heavily on the minds both of

statesmen and people. In Scotland Church and State were struggling keenly once more, though, bloodlessly this time, as they had struggled to the death in past centuries, for mastery where what each considered its rights were in question.

Among the blows dealt by death in 1841, there had been heavy losses to art in the passing away of Chantrey and Wilkie.

In January, 1842, events happened in Afghanistan which brought bitter grief to many an English home, and threw their shadow over the palace itself in the next few months. The fatal policy of English interference with the fiery tribes of Northern India in support of an unpopular ruler had ended in the murder of Sir Alexander Burns and Sir William Macnaghten, and the evacuation of Cabul by the English. This was not all. The march through the terrible mountain defiles in the depth of winter, under the continual assaults of an unscrupulous and cruel enemy, meant simply destruction. The ladies of the party, with Lady Sale, a heroic woman, at their head, the husbands of the ladies who were with the camp, and finally General Elphinstone, who had been the first in command at Cabul, but who was an old and infirm man, had to be surrendered as hostages. They were committed to the tender mercies of Akbar Khan, the son of the exiled Dost Mahomed, the moving spirit of the insurrection against the native puppet maintained by English authority, and the murderer, with his own hand, of Sir William Macnaghten, whose widow was among the prisoners. The surrender of hostages was partly a matter of necessity, in order to secure for the most helpless of the party the dubious protection of Akbar Khan, partly a desperate measure to prevent what would otherwise have been inevitable--the perishing of the women and children in the dreadful hardships of the retreat. The captives were carried first to Peshawur and afterwards to a succession of hill-forts in the direction of the Caucasus, while their countrymen at home, long before they had become familiar with the tragedy of the Indian Rebellion, burned with indignation and thrilled with horror at the possible fate of those victims of a treacherous, vindictive Afghan chief. In the meantime the awful march went on, amidst the rigours of winter, in wild snowy passes, by savage precipices, while the most unsparing guerilla warfare was kept up by the furious natives at every point of vantage. Alas! for the miserable end which we all know, some of us recalling it, through the mists of years, still fresh with the wonder, wrath, and sorrow which the news aroused here. Out of a company of sixteen thousand that left Cabul, hundreds were slain or died of exhaustion every day, three thousand fell in an ambush, and after a night's exposure to such frost as was never experienced in England. At last, on the 13th of January, 1842, one haggard man, Dr. Brydon, rode up, reeling in his saddle, to the gates of Jellalabad. The fortress was still in the keeping of Sir Robert Sale, who had steadfastly refused to retire. It is said his wife wrote to him from her prison, urging him to hold out, because she preferred her own and her daughter's death to his dishonour.

But the Afghan disasters were not fully known in England for months to come. In the interval, the christening of the Prince of Wales was celebrated with much splendour in St. George's Chapel, Windsor, on the 25th of January. The King of Prussia came over to England to officiate in person as one of the Prince's godfathers. The others were the child's two grand-uncles, the Duke of Cambridge and Prince Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg, uncle of the Queen and of Prince Albert, and father of the King Consort of Portugal and the Duchesse de Nemours. The godmothers were the Duchess of Kent, proxy for the Duchess of Saxe-Coburg, Prince Albert's stepmother; the Duchess of Cambridge, proxy for the child's great-grandmother, the Duchess of Saxe-Gotha; and the Princess Augusta of Cambridge, proxy for

the Princess Sophia of England.

The ambassadors and foreign ministers, the Cabinet ministers with their wives in full dress, the Knights of the Garter in their mantles and collars, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Bishops of London, Winchester, Oxford, and Norwich assembled in the Waterloo Gallery; the officers and the ladies of the Household awaited the Queen in the corridor. At noon, certain officers of the Household attended the King of Prussia, who was joined by the other sponsors at the head of the grand staircase, to the chapel.

The Queen's procession included the Duke of Wellington, bearing the Sword of State between the Lord Chamberlain, the Earl De la Warr, and the Lord Steward, the Earl of Liverpool, the three walking before her Majesty and Prince Albert, who were supported by their lords-in-waiting, and followed by the Duke of Sussex, Prince George of Cambridge, Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar, Prince Augustus and Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, sons of Prince Ferdinand and cousins of the Queen and Prince Albert.

When the sponsors had taken their places, and the other company were seated near the altar, the Lord Chamberlain, accompanied by the Groom of the Stall to Prince Albert, proceeded to the Chapter-house, and conducted in the infant Prince of Wales, attended by the lord and groom in waiting. The Duchess of Buccleugh, the Mistress of the Robes, took the infant from the nurse, and put him in the Archbishop's arms. The child was named "Albert" for his father, and "Edward" for his maternal grandfather, the Duke of Kent. The baby, on the authority of The Times, "behaved with princely decorum." After the ceremony, he was reconducted to the Chapter-house by the Lord Chamberlain. By Prince Albert's desire "The Hallelujah Chorus," which has never been given in England without the audience rising simultaneously, was played at the close of the service.

The Queen afterwards held a Chapter of the Order of the Garter, at which the King of Prussia, "as a lineal descendant of George I.," was elected a Knight Companion, the Queen buckling the garter round his knee. There was luncheon in the White Breakfast-room, and in the evening there was a banquet in St. George's Hall. The table reached from one end of the hall to the other, and was covered with gold plate. Lady Bloomfield, who was present, describes an immense gold vessel--more like a bath than anything else, capable of containing thirty dozens of wine. It was filled with mulled claret, to the amazement of the Prussians. Four toasts were drunk--that to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales taking precedence; toasts to his Majesty the King of Prussia, the Queen and Prince Albert followed. A grand musical performance in the Waterloo Gallery wound up the festivities of the day.

The presence of the King of Prussia added additional dignity to the proceedings. He was a great ally whose visit on the occasion was a becoming compliment. Besides, his personal character was then regarded as full of promise, and excited much interest. His attainments and accomplishments, which were really remarkable, won lively admiration. His warm regard for a man like Baron Bunsen seemed to afford the best augury for the liberality of his sentiments. As yet the danger of impracticability, discouragement, confusion, and paralysis of all that had been hoped for, was but faintly indicated in the dreaminess and fancifulness of his nature.

Lady Bloomfield describes the King as of middle size, rather fat, with an excellent countenance and little hair. The Queen met him on the grand

staircase, kissed him twice, and made him two low curtsies. Her Majesty says in her Journal: "He was in common morning costume, and complained much of appearing so before me.... He is entertaining, agreeable, and witty, tells a thing so pleasantly, and is full of amusing anecdotes."

Madame Bunsen, who was privileged to see a good deal of the gay doings during the King of Prussia's visit, has handed down her experience. "28th January, 1842, came by railway to Windsor, and found that in the York Tower a comfortable set of rooms were awaiting us. The upper housemaid gave us tea, and bread and butter--very refreshing; when dressed we went together to the corridor, soon met Lord De la Warr, the Duchess of Buccleugh, and Lord and Lady Westmoreland--the former showed us where to go--that is, to walk through the corridor (a fairy scene--lights, pictures, moving figures of courtiers unknown), the apartments which we passed through one after another till we reached the magnificent ball-room where the guests were assembled to await the Queen's appearance. Among these guests stood our King himself, punctual to quarter-past seven o'clock; soon came Prince Albert, to whom Lord De la Warr named me, when he spoke to me of Rome. We had not been there long before two gentlemen walking in by the same door by which we had entered, and then turning and making profound bows towards the open door, showed that the Queen was coming. She approached me directly and said, with a gracious smile, 'I am very much pleased to see you,' then passed on, and after speaking a few moments to the King took his arm and moved on, 'God save the Queen' having begun to sound from the Waterloo Gallery, where the Queen has always dined since the King has been with her. Lord Haddington led me to dinner, and one of the King's suite sat on the other side. The scene was one of fairy tales, of undescribed magnificence, the proportions of the hall, the mass of light in suspension, the gold plate, and the table glittering with a thousand lights in branches of a proper height not to meet the eye. The King's health was drunk, then the Queen's, and then the Queen went out, followed by all her ladies. During the half-hour or less that elapsed before Prince Albert and the King followed the Queen, she did not sit, but went round to speak to the different ladies. She asked after my children, and gave me an opportunity of thanking her for the gracious permission to behold her Majesty so soon after my arrival. The Duchess of Kent also spoke to me, and I was very glad of the notice of Lady Lyttelton, who is very charming. As soon as the King came the Queen went into the ball-room and made the King dance a quadrille with her, which he did with all suitable grace and dignity, though he has long ceased to dance. At half-past eleven, after the Queen had retired, I set out on my travels to my bed-chamber. I might have looked and wandered about some miles before I had found my door of exit, but was helped by an old gentleman, I believe Lord Albemarle."

The same thoughtful observer was present when the King of Prussia saw the Queen open Parliament. "February, 1842, Thursday. The opening of the Parliament was the thing from which I expected most, and I was not disappointed; the throngs in the streets, in the windows, in every place people could stand upon, all looking so pleased; the splendid Horse Guards, the Grenadiers of the Guard--of whom might be said as the King said on another occasion--'An appearance so fine, you know not how to believe it true;' the Yeomen of the Body Guard; then in the House of Lords, the Peers in their robes, the beautifully-dressed ladies with very many beautiful faces; lastly, the procession of the Queen's entry and herself, looking worthy and fit to be the converging-point of so many rays of grandeur. It is self-evident that she is not tall, but were she ever so tall, she could not have more grace and dignity, a head better set, a throat better arching; and one advantage there is in her looks when she

casts a glance, being of necessity cast up and not down, that the effect of the eyes is not lost, and they have an effect both bright and pleasing. The composure with which she filled the throne while awaiting the Commons, I much admired--it was a test, no fidget, no apathy. Then her voice and enunciation cannot be more perfect. In short it could not be said that she did well, but that she was the Queen--she was, and felt herself to be, the descendant of her ancestors. Stuffed in by her Majesty's mace-bearers, and peeping over their shoulders, I was enabled to struggle down the emotions I felt, at thinking what mighty pages in the world's history were condensed in the words so impressively uttered by that soft and feminine voice. Peace and war--the fate of millions--relations and exertions of power felt to the extremities of the globe! Alterations of corn-laws, birth of a future sovereign, with what should it close, but the heartfelt aspiration, God bless her and guide her for her sake, and the sake of all."

Lady Bloomfield, who was also present, mentions that when the Queen had finished speaking and descended from the throne, she turned to the King of Prussia and made him a low curtsy. The same eye-witness refers to one of the "beautiful faces" which Madame Bunsen remarked; it was that of one of the loveliest and most accomplished women of her time: "Miss Stewart (afterwards Marchioness of Waterford) was there, looking strikingly handsome. She wore a turquoise, blue velvet which was very becoming, and she was like one of the Madonnas she is so fond of painting."

The Queen and the Prince's hearts were gladdened this spring by the news of the approaching marriage of his brother, Prince Ernest, to Princess Alexandrine of Baden. In a family so united such intelligence awoke the liveliest sympathy. The Queen wrote eagerly on the subject to her uncle, and the uncle of the bridegroom, King Leopold. "My heart is full, very full of this marriage; it brings back so many recollections of our dear betrothal--as Ernest was with us all the time and longed for similar happiness... I have entreated Ernest to pass his honeymoon with us, and I beg you to urge him to do it, for he witnessed our happiness and we must therefore witness his_."

There were warm wishes for Prince Albert's presence at the ceremony at Carlsruhe on the 3rd of May; but though his inclination coincided with these wishes, he believed there were grave reasons for his remaining in England, and, as was usual with him, inclination yielded to duty. The times were full of change and excitement. The people were suffering. Rioting had occurred in the mining districts, both in England and Scotland. Lord Shaftesbury, then Lord Ashley, a champion of hard-pressed humanity, was able to obtain an Act of Parliament which redeemed women from the degradation and slavery of their work as beasts of burden in the mines, and he was pushing forward his "Factories Bill," to release little children from the unchildlike length of small labour, which was required from them in mills. The Anti-corn Law League was stirring up the country through its length and breadth. The twin names of Cobden and Bright, men of the people, were becoming associated everywhere with eloquent persistent appeals for "Free Trade"--cheap bread to starving multitudes. Fears were entertained of the attitude of the Chartists. The true state of matters in Afghanistan began to break on the public. America was sore on what she considered the tampering with her flag in the interests of the abolition of the slave trade. Sir Robert Peel's income-tax, in order to replenish an ill-filled exchequer, was pending. Notwithstanding, the season was a gay one, though the gaiety might be a little forced in some quarters. Certainly an underlying motive was an anxious effort to promote trade by a succession of "dinners, concerts, and balls."

One famous ball is almost historical. It is still remembered as "the Queen's Plantagenet Ball." It was a very artistic and wonderfully perfect revival, for one night at Buckingham Palace, of the age of Chaucer and the Court of Edward III. and Queen Philippa.

Nothing could exceed the enthusiasm with which the idea was taken up in the great world. All aristocratic London set themselves to study the pages of Chaucer and Froissart. At the same time, though the Court was to be that of Edward III and his Queen, no limit was put to the periods and nationalities to be selected by the guests. The ball was to be a masque, and perhaps it would have lost a little of its motley charm had it been confined entirely to one age in history, and to one country of the world. A comical petition had to be presented, that the masquers might remain covered before the Queen, lest the doffing of hats should cause the displacement of wigs.

The great attraction lay in the fact that not only did her Majesty represent one of her predecessors, an ancestress however remote, but that many of the guests were enabled to follow her example. They appeared--some in the very armour of their forefathers, others in costumes copied from family pictures, or in the dress of hereditary offices still held by the representatives of the ancient houses. For it was the sons and daughters of the great nobles of England that held high revelry in Buckingham Palace that night. There was an additional picturesqueness, as well as a curious vividness, lent to the pageant by the circumstance that in many cases the blood of the men and the women represented ran in the veins of the performers in the play.

The wildest rumours of the extent and cost of the ball circulated beforehand. It was said that eighteen thousand persons were engaged in it. The Earl of Pembroke was to wear thirty-thousand pounds' worth of diamonds--the few diamonds in his hat alone would be of the value of eighteen thousand pounds. He was to borrow ten thousand pounds' worth of diamonds from Storr and Mortimer at one per cent, for the night. These great jewellers' stores were reported to be exhausted. Every other jeweller and diamond merchant was in the same condition. It almost seemed as if the Prince of Esterhazy must be outdone, even though the report of his losses from falling stones on the Coronation-day had risen to two thousand pounds. One lady boasted that she would not give less than a thousand pounds for her dress alone. Lord Chesterfield's costume was to cost eight hundred pounds. Plain dresses could not be got under two hundred; the very commonest could not be bought under fifty pounds. A new material had been invented for the occasion--gold and silver blonde to replace the heavy stuffs of gold and silver, since the nineteenth century did not always furnish strength or endurance to bear such a burden in a crowded ball-room on a May night. Truly one description of trade must have received a lively impetus.

Both The Times and the Morning Post give full accounts of the ball. "The leading feature.... was the assemblage and meeting of the Courts of Anne of Brittany (the Duchess of Cambridge) and Edward III. and Philippa (her Majesty and Prince Albert). A separate entrance to the Palace was set apart for the Court of Brittany, the Duchess of Cambridge assembling her Court in one of the lower rooms of the Palace, while the Queen and Prince Albert, surrounded by a numerous and brilliant circle, prepared to receive her Royal Highness in the Throne-room, which was altered so as to be made as much as possible to harmonize with the period. The throne was removed and another erected, copied from an authentic

source of the time of Edward III. It was lined (as well as the whole alcove on which the throne was placed) with purple velvet, having worked upon it in gold the crown of England, the cross of St. George, and emblazoned shields with the arms of England and France. The State chairs were what might be called of Gothic design, and the throne was surmounted with Gothic tracery. At the back of the throne were emblazoned the royal arms of England in silver. Seated on this throne, her Majesty and Prince Albert awaited the arrival of the Court of Anne of Brittany."

Her Majesty's dress was entirely composed of the manufactures of Spitalfields. Over a skirt with a demi-train of ponceau velvet edged with fur there was a surcoat of brocade in blue and gold lined with miniver (only her Majesty wore this royal fur). From the stomacher a band of jewels on gold tissue descended. A mantle of gold and silver brocade lined with miniver was so fastened that the jewelled fastening traversed the jewelled band of the stomacher, and looked like a great jewelled cross on the breast. Her Majesty's hair, folded a la Clovis, was surmounted by a light crown of gold; she had but one diamond in her crown, so large that it shone like a star. It was valued at ten thousand pounds.

Prince Albert, as Edward III., wore a cloak of scarlet velvet, lined with ermine and trimmed with gold lace--showing oak-leaves and acorns, edged with two rows of large pearls. The band connecting the cloak was studded with jewels; so was the collar of the full robe, or under-cloak, of blue and gold brocade slashed with blue velvet. The hose were of scarlet silk, and the shoes were richly jewelled. The Prince had on a gold coronet set with precious stones.

The suite were in the costume of the time. The Hon. Mrs. Anson and Mrs. Brand, Women of the Bedchamber, had dresses bearing the quarterings of the old arms of England, with lions and fleurs-de-lys. The Maids of Honour had dresses and surcoats trimmed with gold and silver. The Duke of Buccleugh figured as one of the original Knights of the Garter. The Countess of Rosslyn appeared as the beautiful Countess of Salisbury.

About half-past ten, the heralds marshalled the procession from the lower suite of rooms up the grand white marble staircase, and by the Green Drawing-room to the Throne-room, all the State-rooms having been thrown open and brilliantly illuminated. The Duchess of Cambridge entered magnificently dressed as Anne of Brittany, led by the Duke of Beaufort, richly clad as Louis XII., and followed by her court. It included the Earl of Pembroke as the Comte d'Angouleme, with Princess Augusta of Cambridge as Princess Claude; Prince George of Cambridge as Gaston de Foix, with the Marchioness of Ailesbury as the Duchesse de Ferrare; Lord Cardigan as Bayard, with Lady Exeter as Jeanne de Conflans; Lord Claud Hamilton as the Comte de Chateaubriand, with Lady Lincoln as Ann de Villeroy.... The Duchess of Gloucester and the Duchess of Saxe-Weimar represented two French Chatelaines of the period. Each gentleman, leading a lady, passed before the Queen and Prince Albert, and did obeisance.

Among the most famous quadrilles which followed that of France were the German quadrille, led by the Duchess of Sutherland, and the Spanish quadrille, led by the Duchess of Buccleugh. There were also Italian, Scotch, Greek and Russian quadrilles, a Crusaders' quadrille led by the Marchioness of Londonderry, and a Waverley quadrille led by the Countess De la Warr.

One of the two finest effects of the evening was the passing of the quadrilles before the Queen, a ceremony which lasted for an hour. On

leaving the Throne-room, the quadrille company went by the Picture Gallery to join the general company in the ballroom. The Queen and the Prince then headed their procession, and walked to the ballroom, taking their places on the *_haut pas_* under a canopy of amber satin, when each quadrille set was called in order, and danced in turn before the Queen, the Scotch set dancing reels. The court returned to the Throne-room for the Russian mazurkas. The Russian or Cossack Masquers were led by Baroness Brunnow in a dress of the time of Catherine II., a scarlet velvet tunic, full white silk drawers, and white satin boots embroidered with gold, a Cossack cap of scarlet velvet with heron's feathers. The appearance of the Throne-room with its royal company and brilliant picturesque groups, when the mazurkas were danced, is said to have been striking and beautiful.

The diamonds of the Queen, the Duchess of Cambridge, and the Marchioness of Londonderry outshone all others. Lady Londonderry's very gloves and shoes were resplendent with brilliants. The Duke and Duchess of Beaufort--the one as Louis XII. of France, the other as Isabelle of Valois, Queen of Spain, in the French and Spanish quadrilles, were magnificent figures.

Among the beauties of the evening, and of Queen Victoria's earlier reign, were Lady Clementina Villiers as Vittoria Colonna; Lady Wilhelmina Stanhope as her ancestress, Anne Stanhope, Duchess of Somerset; Lady Frances and Lady Alexandrina Vane as Rowena and Queen Berengaria; and the Ladies Paget in the Greek quadrille led by the Duchess of Leinster. Another group of lovely sisters who took part in three different quadrilles, were the Countess of Chesterfield, Donna Florinda in the Spanish quadrille; the Honourable Mrs. Anson, Duchess of Lauenburg in the German quadrille; and Miss Forrester, Blanche de St. Pol in the French quadrille.

Of the ladies and gentlemen who came in the guise of ancient members of their families, or in the costumes of old hereditary offices, Lady De la Warr appeared as Isabella Lady De la Warr, daughter of the Lord High Treasurer of Charles I.; Lady Colville as the wife of Sir Robert Colville, Master of the Horse to James IV. of Scotland; Viscountess Pollington, daughter of the Earl of Orford, as Margaret Rolle, Baroness Clinton, in her own right, and Countess of Orford; and the Countess of Westmorland as Joan Beaufort, daughter of John of Gaunt and wife of Ralph Neville, first Earl of Westmoreland. Earl De la Warr wore the armour used by his ancestor in the battle of Cressy, and the Marquis of Exeter the armour of Sir John Cecil at the siege of Calais. The Earl of Warwick went as Thomas Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, Marshal-General of the army at the battle of Poitiers; the Duke of Norfolk as Thomas Howard, Earl-Marshal in the reign of Elizabeth; the Earl of Rosslyn as the Master of the Buckhounds; the Duke of St. Albans as Grand Falconer-hereditary offices.

Mr. Monckton Milnes, the poet, presented himself as Chaucer. The historical novelist of the day, Sir Edward Lytton Bulwer, contented himself with a comparatively humble anonymous dress, a doublet of dark velvet slashed with white satin. The Duke of Roxburgh as David Bruce, the captive King of Scotland, encountered no rival royal prisoner, though a ridiculous report had sprung up that a gentleman representing John of France was to form a prominent feature of the pageant, to walk in chains past the Queen. This stupid story not only wounded the sensitive vanity of the French, to whom the news travelled, it gave rise to a witty *_canard_* in the *_Morning Chronicle_* professing to give a debate on the affront, in the Chamber of Deputies.

The tent of Tippoo Saib was erected in the upper or Corinthian portico communicating with the Green Drawing-room, and used as a refreshment-room. At one o'clock, the Earl of Liverpool, the Lord High Steward, as an ancient seneschal, conducted the Queen to supper, which was served in the dining-room. The long double table was covered with shields, vases, and tankards of massive gold plate. Opposite the Queen, where she sat at the centre of the horseshoe or cross table, a superb buffet reached almost to the roof, covered with plate, interspersed with blossoming flowers. After supper her Majesty danced in a quadrille with Prince George of Cambridge, opposite the Duke of Beaufort and the Duchess of Buccleugh. The Queen left the ball-room at about a quarter to three o'clock, and dancing was continued for an hour afterwards. Thus ended the most unique and splendid fete of the reign. About a fortnight afterwards, the Queen and the Prince went in state to a ball given at Covent Garden Theatre, for the relief of the Spitalfields weavers. Society followed the Queen's example. There was another fancy ball at Stafford House, and a magnificent rout at Apsley House. Fanny Kemble was present at both, and retained a vivid remembrance of "the memorable appearance" of two of the belles of the evening at the last fete, "Lady Douro and Mdlle. D'Este, [Footnote: Daughter of the Duke of Sussex, by his morganatic marriage with Lady Augusta Murray. Mdlle. D'Este became the wife of Lord Chancellor Truro.] who, coming into the room together, produced a most striking effect by their great beauty and their exquisite dress. They both wore magnificent dresses of white lace over white satin, ornamented with large cactus flowers, those of the blonde Marchioness being of the sea-shell rose colour, and the dark Mademoiselle D'Este's of deep scarlet, and in the bottom of each of those large veined blossoms lay, like a great drop of dew, a single splendid diamond. The women were noble samples of fair and dark beauty, and their whole appearance, coming in together attired with such elegance and becoming magnificent simplicity, produced an effect of surprise and admiration on the whole brilliant assembly." Of this year's Drawing-rooms we happen to have two characteristic reports. Baroness Bunsen attended one on April 8th, and wrote: "I was extremely struck with the splendour of the scene at the Drawing-room, and had an excellent place near enough to see everybody come up to the Queen [Footnote: "At a Levee or Drawing-room it is his (the Lord Chamberlain's) duty to stand next to the Queen and read out the names of each one approaching the royal presence.... Any peeress on presentation, as also daughters of dukes, marquises, and earls, have the privilege of being kissed by her Majesty; all other ladies make the lowest Court curtsy they can, and lifting the Queen's hand, which she offers, on the palm of their hand, it is gently kissed.... It seems unnecessary to say that of course the right-hand glove is removed before reaching the Presence Chamber."--"Old Court Customs and Modern Court Rule," by the Hon. Mrs. Armytage_] and pass off again. I was very much entertained, and admired a number of beautiful persons. But nobody did I admire more than Mrs. Norton, whom I had never seen before, and Lady Canning's face always grows upon me." Fanny Kemble also attended a Drawing-room and described it after her fashion. "You ask about my going to the Drawing-room, which happened thus. The Duke of Rutland dined some little time ago at the Palace, and speaking of the late party at Belvoir, mentioned me, when the Queen asked why I didn't have myself presented? The Duke called next day, at my house, but we did not see him, and he being obliged to go out of town, left a message for me with Lady Londonderry to the effect that her Majesty's interest about me (curiosity would have been the more exact word I suspect) rendered it imperative that I should go to the Drawing-room; and indeed Lady Londonderry's authoritative 'Of course you'll go,' given in her most gracious manner, left me no doubt whatever as to my duty in that respect...."

"You ask me how I managed about diamonds to go to Court in?" she wrote afterwards in reply to a friend's question. "I used a set of the value of seven hundred pounds, which I also wore at the fete at Apsley House; they were only a necklace and earrings, which I wore ... stitched on scarlet velvet and as drops in the middle of scarlet velvet bows in my hair, and my dress being white satin and point lace, trimmed with white Roman pearls, it all looked nice enough.

"I suffered agonies of nervousness, and I rather think did all sorts of awkward things; but so I dare say do other people in the same predicament, and I did not trouble my head much about my various mis-performances. One thing, however, I can tell you, if her Majesty has seen me, I have not seen her, and should be quite excusable in cutting her wherever I met her. 'A cat may look at a king,' it is said; but how about looking at the Queen? In great uncertainty of mind on this point I did not look at my sovereign lady. I kissed a soft white hand which I believe was hers; I saw a pair of very handsome legs in very fine silk stockings, which I am convinced were not hers, but am inclined to attribute to Prince Albert; and this is all I perceived of the whole Royal family of England, for I made a sweeping curtsey to the 'good remainders of the Court' and came away, with no impression but that of a crowded mass of full-dressed confusion, and neither know how I got in or out of it."

We might furnish a third sketch of a Drawing-room from one of the letters of Bishop, then Archdeacon, Wilberforce, who was often at Court about this time. In the early part of 1842 he paid a visit to Windsor, of which he has left a graphic account. "All went on most pleasantly at the Castle. My reception and treatment throughout was exceedingly kind. The Queen and the Prince were both at church, as was also Lord Melbourne, who paid his first visit at the same time. The Queen's meeting with him was very interesting. The exceeding pleasure which lighted up her countenance was quite touching. His behaviour to her was perfect--the fullest attentive deference of the subject with a subdued air of 'your father's friend' that was quite fascinating. It was curious to see (for I contemplated myself at the moment objectively--and free from the consciousness of subjectivity), sitting round the Queen's table, (1) the Queen, (2) the Prince, (3) Lord Melbourne, (4) Archdeacon, (5) Lady F. Howard, (6) Baron Stockmar, (7) Duchess of Kent, (8) Lady Sandwich, in the evening, discussing Coleridge, German literature, &c., with 2 and 3, and a little with 4 and 6, who is a very superior man evidently. The remarks of 3 were highly characteristic, his complaints of 'hard words,' &c., and 2 showed a great deal of interest and taste in German and English literature, and a good deal of acquaintance with both. I had orders to sit by the Duchess of Kent at dinner, just opposite to 1 and 2, 3 sitting at l's right, and the conversation, especially after dinner, was much more general across the table on etymology," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XIII.

FRESH ATTEMPTS AGAINST THE QUEEN'S LIFE.--MENDELSSOHN.--DEATH OF THE DUC D'ORLEANS.

On the 30th of May a renewed attempt to assassinate the Queen, almost identical in the circumstances and the motive--or no motive, save morbid vanity--with the affair of Oxford, awoke the same disgust and condemnation. This was a double attack, for on the previous day, Sunday, at two o'clock, as the Queen and the Prince were driving home from the Chapel Royal, St. James's, in passing along the Mall, near Stafford House,

amidst a crowd of bowing, cheering spectators, the Prince saw a man step out and present a pistol at him. He heard the trigger snap, but the pistol missed fire. The Queen, who had been bowing to the people on the opposite side, neither saw nor heard anything. On reaching the Palace the Prince questioned the footmen in attendance, but neither had they noticed anything, and he could judge for himself that no commotion, such as would have followed an arrest, had taken place. He was tempted to doubt the evidence of his senses, though he thought it necessary to make a private statement before the Inspector of Police. Confirmation came in the story of a stuttering boy named Pearse. He had witnessed the scene, and after a little delay arrived of his own accord at the Palace, to report what had happened. Everybody concerned was now convinced of the threatened danger, but it was judged best to keep it secret. The Prince, writing afterwards to his father, mentions in his simple straightforward fashion that they were both naturally much agitated, and that the Queen was very nervous and unwell; as who would not be with the sword of Damocles quivering ready to fall on the doomed head? Her Majesty's doctor wished that she should go out, and the wish coincided with the quiet courage and good sense of the Royal couple. To have kept within doors might have been to shut themselves up for months, and the Queen said later, "she never could have existed under the uncertainty of a concealed attack. She would much rather run the immediate risk at any time than have the presentiment of danger constantly hovering over her." But the brave, generous woman, a true queen in facing the dastardly foe, was careful to save others from unnecessary exposure. The Annual Register of the year mentions that she did not permit her female attendants to accompany her according to her usual practice, on that dangerous drive. Lady Bloomfield, who as Miss Liddell was one of the Maids of Honour in waiting, amply confirms the statement. No whisper of what was expected to occur had reached the ladies of the Household. They waited at home all the afternoon counting on being summoned to drive with the Queen. Contrary to her ordinary habit and to her wonted consideration for them, they were neither sent for to accompany her, nor apprised in time that they were not wanted, so that they might have disposed of their leisure elsewhere. The Queen went out alone with Prince Albert. When she returned and everybody knew what she had encountered, she said to Miss Liddell: "I dare say, Georgy, you were surprised at not driving with me this afternoon, but the fact was that as we returned from church yesterday, a man presented a pistol at the carriage window, which flashed in the pan; we were so taken by surprise that we had not time to escape, so I knew what was hanging over me, and was determined to expose no life but my own." The young Maid of Honour, in speaking warmly of the Queen's courage and unselfishness, shrewdly reminds her readers that had three ladies driven rapidly by instead of one, the would-be assassin might have been bewildered and uncertain in his aim. The Queen and the Prince had driven in the direction of Hampstead in "superb weather," with "hosts of people on foot" around them--a strange contrast in their ease and tranquillity to the beating hearts and watchful eyes in the Royal carriage. There had been no misadventure and nothing suspicious observed, though every turn, almost every face was scanned, till on the way home, between the Green Park and the garden wall, at the same spot, though on the opposite side from where Oxford had stood two years before, a shot was fired about five paces off. The Prince immediately recognised the man who had aimed at him the day before, "a little swarthy ill-looking rascal," who had been already seized, though too late to stop the shot, by a policeman close at hand.

When the worst was over without harm done, "We felt as if a load had been taken off our hearts," wrote the Prince, "and we thanked the Almighty for having preserved us a second time from so great a danger." The Prince

added, "Uncle Mensdorff [Footnote: The Duchess of Kent's eldest sister married a private gentleman, originally a French _emigre_, afterwards a distinguished officer in the Austrian service. His sons were Prince Albert's early companions and intimate friends.] and mamma were driving close behind us. The Duchess Bernhard of Weimar was on horseback--not sixty paces from us."

It was said that when the Queen arrived at the Palace and met the Duchess of Kent, whom Count Mensdorff had conducted thither, the poor mother was deeply affected and fell upon her daughter's neck with a flood of tears, "while the Queen endeavoured to reassure her with cheerful words and affectionate caresses." Indeed the Queen was greatly relieved, and in the reaction she recovered her spirits. She wrote to the King of the Belgians the day afterwards, "I was really not at all frightened, and feel very proud at dear Uncle Mensdorff calling me 'very courageous,' which I shall ever remember with peculiar pride, coming from so distinguished an officer as he is." We may mention that the general impression made on the public by the Queen's bearing under these treacherous attacks was that of her utter fearlessness and strength of nerve; a corresponding idea, which we think quite mistaken, was that the Prince showed himself the more nervous of the two.

A great crowd assembled to cheer the Queen when she drove out on the following day. "One long shout of hurrahs," with waving of hats and handkerchiefs, greeted her. She bowed and smiled and appeared calm and collected, though somewhat flushed; but when she came back from what is described as like a triumphal progress, it was observed that, in spite of her gratification, she looked pale and not so well as she had done on the day preceding the attack. The bravest heart in a woman's breast could not surmount unmoved such an ordeal; she was at the Italian Opera the same evening, however, and heard the national anthem interrupted at every line by bursts of cheering.

In this case, as in the other, the offender was a mere lad, little over twenty, named John Francis. He was the son of a stage-carpenter, and had himself been a young carpenter who had led an irregular life, and been guilty of dishonesty. He behaved at first with much coolness and indifference, jeering at the magistrates. Francis was tried in the month of June for high treason, and sentenced to death, when his bluster ceased, and he fell back in a fainting fit in the arms of the turnkey.

The Queen was exceedingly anxious that the sentence should not be executed, though "fully conscious of the encouragement to similar attempts--which might follow from such leniency," and the sentence of death was commuted to banishment for life.

On the very day after the commutation of the sentence had been announced, Sunday, the 3rd of July, the Queen was again fired at as she sat by the side of her uncle, King Leopold, on her way to the Chapel Royal, St. James's. The pistol missed fire, and the man who presented it, a hunchback, was seized by a boy of sixteen called Dasset. So ridiculous did the group seem, that the very policemen pushed away both captor and captive as actors in a bad practical joke. Then the boy Dasset, who retained the pistol, was in danger of being taken up as the real culprit, trying to throw the blame upon another. At last several witnesses proved the true state of the case. The pistol was discovered to contain only powder, paper, and some bits of a tobacco-pipe rammed together. On examination it was found that the hunchback, another miserable lad named Bean, was a chemist's assistant, who had written a letter to his father

declaring that he "would never see him again, as he intended doing something which was not dishonest, but desperate."

The Queen was not aware of Bean's attempt till she came back from St. James's, "when she betrayed no alarm, but said she had expected a repetition of the attempts on her life, so long as the law remained unaltered by which they could be dealt with only as acts of high treason."

"Sir Robert Peel hurried up from Cambridge on hearing what had occurred, to consult with the Prince as to the steps to be taken. During this interview her Majesty entered the room, when the Minister, in public so cold and self-controlled, in reality so full of genuine feeling, out of his very manliness, was unable to control his emotion, and burst into tears;" [Footnote: "Life of the Prince Consort"] an honourable sequel to the difficulties and misunderstanding which had heralded the Premier's entrance on office.

It was, indeed, high time that a suitable provision should be made to meet what seemed likely to be a new and base abuse of Royal clemency.

In the meantime, Prince Albert's fair and fearless treatment of the whole matter was very remarkable. He wrote that he could imagine the circumstance of Bean's attempt being made the day after Francis received his pardon would excite much surprise in Germany. But the Prince was satisfied that Bean's letter making known his intention had been written days before. Prince Albert was convinced that, as the law then stood, Francis's execution, notwithstanding the verdict of the jury, would have been nothing less than a judicial murder, as it was essential that the act should be committed with intent to kill or wound, and in Francis's case this, to all appearance, was not the fact; at least it was open to grave doubt. There was no proof that Francis's pistol was loaded. "In this calm and wise way," observes Mr. Justin M'Carthy, "did the husband of the Queen, who had always shared with her whatever of danger there might be in the attempts, argue as to the manner in which they ought to be dealt with." The historian adds, "The ambition which moved most or all the miscreants who thus disturbed the Queen and the country, was that of the mountebank rather than the assassin." It merited contempt no less than severity. A bill was brought forward on the 12th of July, and passed on the 16th, making such attacks punishable, as high misdemeanours, by transportation for seven years, or imprisonment with or without hard labour for a term not exceeding three years; the culprit to be publicly or privately whipped as often and in such manner and form as the court shall direct, not exceeding thrice. Bean was tried by this law on the 25th of August, and sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment.

One of the attractions of the season was the reappearance of Rachel, ravishing all hearts by her acting of Camille in *Les Horaces*, and winning ovations of every kind up to roses dropped from the Queen's bouquet.

Mendelssohn was also in London, and went to Buckingham Palace. He has left a charming account of one of his visits in a letter to his mother. "I must tell you," he writes, "all the details of my last visit to Buckingham Palace.... It is, as G. says, the one really pleasant and thoroughly comfortable English house where one feels *a son aise*. Of course I do know a few others, but yet on the whole I agree with him. Joking apart, Prince Albert had asked me to go to him on Saturday at two o'clock, so that I might try his organ before I left England; I found him alone, and as we were talking away, the Queen came in, also alone, in a simple

morning-dress. She said she was obliged to leave for Claremont in an hour, and then, suddenly interrupting herself, exclaimed, 'But, goodness, what a confusion!' for the wind had littered the whole room, and even the pedals of the organ (which, by the way, made a very pretty picture in the room), with leaves of music from a large portfolio that lay open. As she spoke she knelt down, and began picking up the music; Prince Albert helped, and I too was not idle. Then Prince Albert proceeded to explain the stops to me, and she said that she would meanwhile put things straight.

"I begged that the Prince would first play me something, so that, as I said, I might boast about it in Germany. He played a chorale by heart, with the pedals, so charmingly, and clearly, and correctly, that it would have done credit to any professional; and the Queen, having finished her work, came and sat by him and listened, and looked pleased. Then it was my turn, and I began my chorus from *St. Paul*, "How lovely are the messengers." Before I got to the end of the first verse they both joined in the chorus, and all the time Prince Albert managed the stops for me so cleverly--first a flute, at the *forte* the great organ, at the D major part the whole register, then he made a lovely *diminuendo* with the stops, and so on to the end of the piece, and all by heart--that I was really quite enchanted. Then the young Prince of Gotha came in, and there was more chatting; and the Queen asked if I had written any new songs, and said she was very fond of singing my published ones. 'You should sing one to him,' said Prince Albert, and after a little begging she said she would try the 'Frühlingslied' in B flat. 'If it is still here,' she added, 'for all my music is packed up for Claremont.' Prince Albert went to look for it, but came back saying it was already packed. 'But one might, perhaps, unpack it,' said I. 'We must send for Lady ----,' she said (I did not catch the name). So the bell was rung, and the servants were sent after it, but without success; and at last the Queen went herself, and while she was gone, Prince Albert said to me, 'She begs you will accept this present as a remembrance,' and gave me a little case with a beautiful ring, on which is engraved 'V. R., 1842.'

"Then the Queen came back and said, 'Lady ---- is gone, and has taken all my things with her. It really is most annoying.' You can't think how that amused me. I then begged that I might not be made to suffer for the accident, and hoped she would sing another song. After some consultation with her husband, he said, 'She will sing you something of Gluck's.' Meantime, the Princess of Gotha had come in, and we five proceeded through various corridors and rooms to the Queen's sitting-room. The Duchess of Kent came in too, and while they were all talking, I rummaged about amongst the music, and soon discovered my first set of songs; so, of course, I begged her rather to sing one of those than the Gluck, to which she very kindly consented; and which did she choose? '*Schoner und schoner schmuck sich*,' sang it quite charmingly, in strict time and tune, and with very good execution. Only in the line '*Der Prosa Lasten und muh*,' where it goes down to D, and then comes up again by semi-tones, she sang D sharp each time, and as I gave her the note the two first times, the last time she sang D, where it ought to have been D sharp. But with the exception of this little mistake it was really charming, and the last long G I have never heard better, or purer, or more natural, from any amateur. Then I was obliged to confess that Fanny had written the song (which I found very hard; but pride must have a fall), and to beg her to sing one of my own also. 'If I would give her plenty of help she would gladly try,' she said, and then she sang '*Pilgerspruch*,' '*Lass dich nur*,' really quite faultlessly, and with charming feeling and expression. I thought to myself, one must not pay too many compliments on such an occasion, so I merely thanked her

a great many times, upon which she said. 'Oh, if only I had not been so frightened! generally I have such long breath.' Then I praised her heartily, and with the best conscience in the world; for just that part with the long C at the close, she had done so well, taking it and the three notes next to it all in the same breath, as one seldom hears it done, and therefore it amused me doubly that she herself should have begun about it.'

"After this Prince Albert sang the ' _Arndle-lied_,' ' _Es ist ein schnitter_,' and then he said I must play him something before I went, and gave me as themes the chorale which he had played on the organ, and

the song he had just sung. If everything had gone as usual I ought to have improvised dreadfully badly, for it is almost always so with me when I want it to go well, and then I should have gone away vexed with the whole morning. But just as if I were to keep nothing but the pleasantest, most charming recollection of it, I never improvised better; I was in the best mood for it, and played a long time, and enjoyed it myself so much that, besides the two themes, I brought in the songs that the Queen had sung quite naturally; and it all went off so easily, that I would gladly not have stopped; and they followed me with so much intelligence and attention, that I felt more at my ease than I ever did in improvising to an audience. The Queen said several times she hoped I would soon come to England again, and pay them a visit, and then I took leave; and down below I saw the beautiful carriages waiting, with their scarlet outriders, and in a quarter of an hour the flag was lowered, and the _Court Circular_ announced, 'Her Majesty left the palace at twenty minutes past three.'"

The Queen and the Prince were enjoying the company of Prince Albert's brother, Prince Ernest, the hereditary Prince of Saxe-Coburg Gotha, and his newly-wedded wife, who were both with the Court during its short stay at _Claremont_. There the news reached her Majesty of the sad and sudden death of the Duc d'Orleans, the eldest son of Louis Philippe, and the favourite brother of the Queen of the Belgians. The Duc d'Orleans had been with the King and Queen of France at Neuilly, from which he was returning in order to join the Duchesse d'Orleans at Plombieres, when the horses in his carriage started off near the Porte Maillot. Fearing that he should be overturned the Prince rashly leaped out, when his spurs and his sword caught in his cloak and helped to throw him to the ground with great violence. The result was concussion of the brain, from which he died within three hours, never recovering consciousness. The Duc d'Orleans was a young man of great promise, and his death was not only a source of deep distress to all connected with him, it was in the end, so far as men can judge, fatal to the political interests of his family. Many of us can recollect still something of the agonised prayer of the poor mother by the dying Prince, "My God, take me, but save my child!" and the cry of the bereaved father, the first time he addressed the Chamber afterwards, when he broke down and could utter nothing save the passionate lamentation of David of old, "My son, my son!" The Queen and Prince Albert were doubly and trebly allied to the Orleans family by the marriages of the Queen of the Belgians, the Duc de Nemours, and later of Princess Clementine, to three members of the Coburg family--the uncle and two of the cousins of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. They felt much for the unhappy family in their terrible bereavement. The Queen grieved especially for her particular friend, Queen Louise, and for the young widow, a cultured, intellectual German Princess, with her health already broken. "My poor dearest Louise, how my heart bleeds for her. I know how she loved poor Chartres, [Footnote: The Duc de Chartres was the earlier title of the Duc

d'Orleans, which he bore when his father was still Duc d'Orleans, before he became King of France as "Louis Philippe." Apparently the son continued "Chartres" to his intimate friends.] and deservedly, for he was so noble and good. All our anxiety now is to hear how poor dear frail Helene (the Duchesse d'Orleans) has borne this too dreadful loss. She loved him so, and he was so devoted to her."

During the night of the 27th of July this year, London was visited by the most violent thunderstorm which had been experienced for many summers. It lasted for several hours. The fine spire of the church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields was struck by the lightning and practically destroyed.

On the 9th of August the Queen prorogued Parliament, when the Prince and Princess of Saxe-Coburg Gotha witnessed the interesting ceremony, occupying chairs near the chair of State, kept vacant for the Prince of Wales to the right of the Queen, while Prince Albert sat in the chair to her left.

The Prince of Wales was still at a considerable distance from the occupancy of that chair. Even as we see him here, in a copy of Mrs. Thornycroft's graceful statue, he is in the character of a shepherd lad, like David of old, and not in that of the heir-apparent to the throne.

At the close of this season, the Queen's old friend and servant Baroness Lehzen withdrew from Court service and retired to Germany to end her days in her native country, in the company of a sister. Lady Bloomfield saw the Baroness Lehzen in her home at Buckeburg, within a day's journey of Hanover, a few years subsequently. "She resided with her sister in a comfortable small house, where she seemed perfectly contented and happy. She was as much devoted to the Queen as ever, and her rooms were filled with pictures and prints of her Majesty." The Prince and Princess of Buckeburg were very kind to her, and she had as much society as she liked or desired. What a change from the great monarchy of England to the tiny principedom of Buckeburg! But the Baroness was a German, and could reconcile the two ideas in her mind. She was also an ageing woman, to whom the rest and freedom of domestic life were sweet and the return to the customs of her youth not unacceptable..

CHAPTER XIV. THE QUEEN'S FIRST VISIT TO SCOTLAND.

The Queen had never been abroad. It was still well-nigh an unconstitutional step for a sovereign of England to claim the privilege, enjoyed by so many English subjects, of a foreign tour, let it be ever so short. However, this year the proposal of a visit to her uncle King Leopold at Brussels, where several members of Louis Philippe's family were to have met her, was made. But the lamentable death of the Duc d'Orleans put an end for the present to the project. Neither were affairs at home in so flourishing a condition as to encourage any great departure from ordinary rule and precedent. The manufacturing districts were in a most unsettled state. The perpetually recurring riots--so long as the corn laws stood in the way of a sure and abundant supply of grain, which meant cheap bread, and as the people believed prosperous trade--had broken out afresh in Lancashire, Yorkshire, and the Midland counties. The aspect of Manchester alone became so threatening, that all the soldiers who could be

spared from London, including a regiment of the Guards, were dispatched to the North of England. Happily, the disturbances were quelled, though not without bloodshed; and it was resolved, notwithstanding the fact that similar rioting had taken place in Lanarkshire, the Queen and the Prince should pay their first visit to Scotland, a country within her dominions, but different in physical features and history from the land in which she had been born and bred. How much the royal visitors were gratified, has been amply shown; but to realise what the Queen's visit was to the Scotch people, it is necessary to go back to the nation's loyalty and to the circumstance that since the exile of the Stewarts, nay, since the days when James VI. left his ancient capital to assume the crown of England, the monarchs had shown their faces rarely in the north; while in the cases of Charles I. and Charles II. there had been so much of self-interest and compulsion in their presence as to rob it of its grace. George IV. had come and gone certainly, but though he was duly welcomed, it was difficult even for his most zealous supporters to be enthusiastic about him. At the proposed arrival of the young Queen, who was well worthy of the most ardent devotion, the "leal" heart of Scotland swelled with glad anticipation. The country had its troubles like the rest of the world. In addition to vexed questions between perplexed mill-masters, shipbuilders, and mine-owners on the one side, and on the other, penniless mechanics and pitmen, the crisis which more than all others rent the Covenanting church, so dear to the descendants of the old Whigs, was close at hand. All was forgotten for the hour in the strange resemblance which exists between one strain of the character of the staid Scotch, and a vein in the nature of the impulsive French, two nations that used to be trusty allies. There is, indeed, a bond to unite "Caledonia stern and wild" and "the sunny land of France;" a weft of passionate poetry crosses alike the woof of the simple cunning of the Highlander and the slow canniness of the Lowlander. Scotland as well as France has been

The chosen home of chivalry, the garden of romance.

The news that the Queen and the Prince were coming, travelled with the rapidity of the ancient clansmen's fiery cross from the wan waters of the south to the stormy friths of the north, and kindled into a blaze the latent fire in every soul. The fields, the pastures, the quarries, the shootings, were all very well, and the Kirk was still better; but the Queen was at the door--the Queen who represented alike Queen Mary, King Jamie--all the King Jamies,--King William, the good friend of religious liberty, and of "Cardinal Carstairs," "Bonnie Prince Charlie," at once pitied and condemned, and King George, "honest man!" not unfair or unmerciful, whatever his minister Walpole might advise. The Queen was, above all, herself the flower of her race. Who would not hurry to meet and greet her, to give her the warmest reception?

All the traditions, all the instincts of the people thrilled and impelled them. Multitudes formed of broadly and picturesquely contrasting elements flocked to Edinburgh to hail her Majesty's landing. Manifold preparations were made for her entrance into the capital, the one regret being that she was not to dwell in her own beautiful palace of Holyrood--unoccupied by royal tenants since the last French exiles, Charles X., the Dauphin and the Dauphiness (the Daughter of the Temple), and the Duchesse de Berri, with her two children, the young Duc de Bourdeaux and his sister, found a brief refuge within its walls. The Queen, like her uncle George IV., was to be in the first place the guest of the Duke of Buccleugh at Dalkeith Palace.

Her Majesty and the Prince left Windsor at five o'clock on the morning of

the 29th August, 1842, and after journeying to London and Woolwich, embarked on board the Royal George yacht under a heavy shower of rain. The yacht was attended by a squadron of nine vessels, the Trinity House steamer, and a packet, besides being followed for some distance, in spite of the unpropitious weather, by innumerable little pleasure-boats. The squadron was both for safety and convenience; certain vessels conveyed the ladies and gentlemen of the suite, and one took the two dogs, the chosen companions of their master and mistress, "Eos," and another four-footed favourite, "Cairnach." [Footnote: Sir Edwin Landseer painted these two dogs for the Queen, "Eos" with the Princess Royal in 1841, "Eos" alone, a sketch for a large picture in 1842, "Cairnach" in 1841. In 1838, the great animal painter had painted for her Majesty "little Dash" along with two other dogs, and "Lorey," a pet parrot belonging to the Duchess of Kent.]

The voyage was both tedious and trying, the sea was rough, and the royal voyagers were ill. On the morning of the 31st they were only coasting Northumberland, when the Queen saw the Fern Islands, where Grace Darling's lighthouse and her heroic story were still things of yesterday. Before her Majesty's return to England, she heard what she had not known at the time, that the brave girl had died within twenty-four hours of the royal yacht's passing the lighthouse station.

The Queen's first remark on the Scotch coast, though it happened to be the comparatively tame east coast, was "very beautiful--so dark, rocky, bold, and wild--totally unlike our coast." All her observations had the naive freshness and sympathetic willingness to be pleased, of an unexhausted, unvitiated mind. She noticed everything, and was gratified by details which would have signified nothing to a sated, jaded nature, or, if they had made an impression, would only have called forth more weariness, varied by contemptuous criticism. The longer light in the north, that dear summer gloaming which is neither night nor day, but borrows something from both--from the silence and solemn mystery of the latter, and from the clear serenity of the former--a leisure time which is associated from youth to age with a host of happy, tender associations; the pipes playing in one of the fishing-boats; the reel danced on board an attendant steamer; the bonfires on the coast--nothing was too trivial to escape the interested watcher, or was lost upon her, Queen though she was.

The anchor of the royal yacht was let down in Leith Roads at midnight. At seven o'clock on the morning of the 1st of September the Queen saw before her the good town of Leith, where Queen Mary had landed from France; and in the background, Edinburgh half veiled in an autumn fog, lying at the foot of its semicircle of hills--the grim couchant lion of Arthur's seat; Salisbury Crags, grey and beetling; the heatherly slopes of the Pentlands in the distance. A little after eight her Majesty landed at Granton Pier, amidst the cheers of her Scotch subjects. The Duke of Buccleugh, whose public-spirited work the pier was, stood there to receive his sovereign, when she put her foot on shore, as he had already been on board the yacht to greet her arrival in what was once called Scotland Water.

When Queen Mary landed at Leith, it took her more than one day, if we remember rightly, to make a slow progress to her capital. Things are done faster in the nineteenth century; a few minutes by railway now separate Granton from Edinburgh. But the Edinburgh and Granton railway did not exist in 1842. Her Majesty and the Prince drove in a barouche, followed by the ladies and gentlemen of her suite in other carriages, and escorted by the Duke of Buccleugh and several gentlemen on horseback, to the ancient city of her Stewart ancestry. An unfortunate misconception robbed the

occasion of the dignified ceremony and the exhibition of fervent personal attachment which had awaited it. All the previous day the authorities and the crowd had been on the look-out for the great event, and in the delay had passed the time quite happily in watching the preparations, and the decorations and devices for the coming illumination. The Lord Provost, Sir James Forrest, had taken the precaution to send a carriageful of bailies over night, or by dawn of day, to catch the first sign of the Queen's landing, and drive with it, post-haste, to the chief magistrate, who with his fellows was to be stationed at the barrier erected in the High Street, to present the keys of the city to the sovereign claiming admittance. But whether the bailies blundered over their instructions or slept at their post, or lost their way, no warning of the Queen's approach reached the Provost and his satellites in time. They were calm in the confident persuasion that the Queen would not arrive till noon--at the soonest--a persuasion which was based on the conviction that the event was too great to be hurried over, and which left out of sight the consideration of the disagreeable sea-voyage, and the natural desire to be on solid ground, and at rest, on the part of the travel-tossed voyagers. "We both felt dreadfully tired and giddy," her Majesty wrote of herself and the Prince when they reached Dalkeith.

The result was that these gentlemen in office were seated at breakfast as usual, or were engaged in getting rid betimes of some of the numerous engagements which beset busy men on a busy day, when the cry arose that the Queen was there, in the midst of them, with nobody to meet her, no silver keys on a velvet cushion to be respectfully offered and graciously returned. The ancient institution of the Royal Archer Guard, one of the chief glories of the situation, was only straggling by twos and threes to its muster-ground. The Celtic Society was in a similar plight, headed in default of the Duke of Argyle by the Marquis of Lorn, a golden-haired stripling in a satin kilt of the Campbell set, who looked all the slighter and more youthful, with more dainty calves in his silken hose, because of the big burly chieftains--Islay conspicuous among them--whom he led. The stands, the windows, the very grand old streets were half empty as yet, in the raw September morning. No King or Queen had visited Edinburgh for a score of years, and when at last the Queen of Hearts did come, the citizens were found napping--a sore mortification with which her Majesty deals very gently in her Journal, scarcely alluding to the inopportune accident. In truth only a moiety of early risers--those mostly country folks who had trooped into the town--restless youthful spirits, ardent holiday-makers, who could not find any holiday too long--or gallant devoted innocent Queen-worshippers, sleepless with the thought that the Queen was so near and might already be stirring--were abroad and intent on what was passing, looking at the vacant places, speculating on how they would be choke full in a couple of hours, amusing themselves easily with the idlest trifles, by way of whetting the appetite for the great sight, which they were to remember all their lives. These spectators were startled by seeing a gentleman, said afterwards to have been Lord John Scott, the popular but somewhat madcap brother of the Duke of Buccleugh, gallop up the street bareheaded, waving his hat above his head and shouting "The Queen, the Queen!" The listeners looked at each other and laughed. How well the hoax was gone about; but who would presume to play such a trick, it was too much even from Lord John--did not somebody say it was Lord John? On the line of route too! What were the police thinking of?

Then swift corroboration followed, in the train of carriages rolling up, the first attended by a few of the Royal Archers, in their picturesque costumes of green and gold, each with his bow in one hand and his arrows in his belt. But the calmest had his equanimity disturbed by the

consciousness that the main body of his comrades, all noblemen and gentlemen of Scotland, were running pell-mell behind, in a desperate effort to form into rank and march in due order. One eager confused glance, one long-drawn breath, one vehement heart-throb for her who was the centre of all, and the disordered pageant had swept past.

The Queen wrote in her Journal that the Duke of Roxburgh and Lord Elcho were the members of the Body Guard on her side of the carriage, and that Lord Elcho, whom she did not know at the time, pointed out the various monuments and places of interest.

Both the Queen and Prince Albert were much struck by the beautiful town, the massive stone houses, the steep High Street, the tall buildings, "and the Castle on the grand rock in the middle of the town, and Arthur's Seat in the background, a splendid spectacle."

On the country road to Dalkeith, the cottages built of stone, the walls ("dry stane dykes") instead of fences, the old women in their close caps ("sou-backed mutches"), the girls and children of the working classes, with flowing hair, often red, and bare feet, all the little individual traits, which impress us on our first visit to a foreign country, were carefully noted down. The Duke and Duchess of Buccleugh proved a noble host and hostess, but they could provide no such cicerone for the Queen as was furnished for George IV., when Sir Walter Scott showed him Edinburgh, and for the Governor of the Netherlands, when Rubens introduced him to Antwerp. Neither did any peer or chief appear on the occasion of the Queen's visit, with such a telling accompaniment as that ruinous "tail" of wild Highlanders, attached to Glengarry, when he waited on the King.

On the "rest day," which succeeded that of her Majesty's arrival at Dalkeith, she had three fresh experiences, chronicled in her Journal. She tasted oatmeal porridge, which she thought "very good," and "Finnan haddies," of which she gave no opinion, and she was stopped and turned back in her drive by "a Scotch mist." Indeed, not all the Queen's proverbial good luck in the matter could now or at any future time greatly modify the bane of open-air enjoyment amidst the beautiful scenery of Scotland--the exceedingly variable, even inclement, weather which may be met with at all seasons.

Saturday, the 3rd of September, afforded abundant compensation for all that had been missed on the Queen's entrance into Edinburgh. She paid an announced and formal visit from Dalkeith Palace to the town, in order to accomplish the balked ceremony of the presentation of the keys and to see the Castle on its historic rock. By Holyrood Chapel and Holyrood Palace, which the Queen called "a royal-looking old place," but where she did not tarry now, because there was fever in the neighbourhood; up the old world Cannon-gate, and the High Street, where the Setouns and the Leslies had their brawl, and the Jacobites went with white cockades in their cocked hats and white roses at their breasts, braving the fire of the Castle, to pay homage to Prince Charlie; on to the barrier. Edinburgh was wide awake this time. The streets were densely crowded, every window, high and low, in the tall grey houses framed a galaxy of faces, stands had been erected, and platforms thrown out wherever stand and platform could find space. The very "leads" of the public buildings bore their burden of sightseers. The Lord Provost and his bailies stood ready, and the Queen came wearing the royal Stewart tartan, "A' fine colours but nane o' them blue," to show that she was akin to the surroundings. She heard and replied to the speech made to her by the representative of the old burghers, and gave him back the token of his rule. She reached the Castle, after having passed the

houses of Knox and the Earl of Moray. She saw the Scotch regalia, and heard anew how it had once been saved by a minister's brave wife, who carried it hidden in a bundle of yarn in her lap, out of the northern castle, which was in the hands of the enemy; and how it had been concealed again--only too well, forgotten in the course of a generation or two, and actually lost sight of for a hundred years. She entered the room, "such a very, very small room," she wrote, in her wonder at the rude and scanty accommodation of those days, in which James VI. was born. No doubt "Mons Meg," the old Flemish cannon and grim darling of the fortress, was presented to her. But what seems to have moved her most was the magnificent view, which included the rich Lothians and the silver shield of the Frith, and stretched, but only, when the weather was fine enough, in the direction of Stirlingshire, to the round-backed Ochils and the blue giants, the Grampians, while at her feet lay the green gardens of Princes Street and the handsome street itself--once the Nor' Loch and the Burgh Muir--Allan Ramsay's house and Heriot's Hospital, or "Wark," the princely gift of the worthy jeweller to his native town.

A little incident, the motive of which was unknown to her Majesty, occurred on her drive back to Dalkeith. An enthusiastic active young fellow, who had seen the presentation of the keys, hurried out the length of a mile on the country road to Dalkeith, and choosing a solitary point, stationed himself on the summit of a wall, where he was the only watcher, and awaited the return of the carriages. The special phaeton drove up with the young couple, talking and laughing together in the freedom of their privacy. The single spectator took off his hat at the risk of losing his precarious footing, and in respectful silence, bowed, or "louted low"--another difficult proceeding under the circumstances. Prince Albert, who was sitting with his arms crossed on his breast, treated the demonstration as not meant for him. The smiling Queen inclined her head, and the eager lad had what he sought, a mark of her recognition given to him alone. To the day of his death no more loyal heart beat for his Queen throughout her wide dominions.

The Queen drove to Leith on another day, and she and the Prince were still more charmed with the view, which he called "fairylike." After the fashion of most strangers, the travellers had their attention attracted by the Newhaven fish-wives, who offered a curious contrast to the rest of the population. Their Flemish origin announced itself, for her Majesty pronounced them "very clean and very Dutch -looking with their white caps and bright-coloured petticoats." It was about this time that a great author made them all his own, by "choosing a fit representative for his heroine, and describing a fisherman's marriage on the island of Inchcolm.

On Sunday, Dean Kamsay, whose memory is so linked with Scotch stories, read prayers.

On Monday, the Queen held a Drawing-room at Dalkeith Palace. It was an antiquarian question whether there had been another Drawing-room since the Union. Well might the stay-at-home ladies of Scotland plume themselves. Afterwards, her Majesty received addresses from the Magistrates of Edinburgh, the Scotch Church, and Universities.

The Queen's stay at Dalkeith was varied by drives about the beautiful grounds on the two Esks, and short visits to neighbouring country seats, characteristic and interesting, Dalmeny, Dalhousie, &c. &c. In the evening, it is said, Scotch music was frequently given for her Majesty's delectation, and that among the songs were some of the satires and parodies poured forth on the unfortunate Lord Provost and bailies, who had

robbed the town of the full glory of the Queen's arrival. The cleverest of these was an adaptation of an old Jacobite ditty, itself a cutting satire which a hundred years before had taunted the Georgian general, Sir John Cope, with the excess of caution that led him to shun an engagement, withdraw his forces over night, and leave the country open to the Pretender to march southward. The mocking verses thus challenged the defaulter--

Hey! Johnnie Cope, are ye waukin' yet?
Or are your drums a-beatin' yet?

Now, with a slight variation on the words the measure ran--

Hey! Jamie Forrest, are ye waukin' yet?
Or are your bailies snorin' yet?

Then, after proceeding to run over the temptations which might he supposed to have overmastered the party, the writer dwelt with emphasis on a favourite breakfast dish in Scotland--

For kipper it is savoury food,
Sae early in the mornin'.

Common rumour would have it that Lord John Scott, whose good qualities included a fine voice and a love for Scotch songs, to which his wife contributed at least one exquisite ballad, sang this squib to her Majesty. An improvement on the story, which is at least strictly in keeping with the Prince's character, added, that when another song was suggested, and the "Flowers of the Forest" mentioned, Prince Albert, unacquainted with the song in question, and misled by a word in the title, exclaimed kindly, "No, no; let the poor man alone, he has had enough of this sort of thing."

From Dalkeith the Queen and the Prince started for the Highlands, on a bright, clear, cold, frosty morning. They crossed the Forth and landed at Queen's Ferry, which bore its name from another queen when she was going on a very different errand; for there it is said the fugitive Margaret, the sister of the Atheling, after she had been wrecked in Scotland Water, landed and took her way on foot to Dunfermline to ask grace of Malcolm Cean Mohr, who made her his wife. Queen Victoria only saw Dunfermline and the abbey which holds the dust of King Robert the Bruce from a distance, as she journeyed by Kinross and Loch Leven, getting a nearer glimpse of Queen Mary's island prison, to Perthshire.

At Dupplin the 42nd Highlanders, in their kilts, were stationed appropriately. Perth, with its fair "Inches" lying on the brimming Tay, in the shadow of the wooded hills of Kinnoul and Moncrieff, delighted the royal strangers, and reminded Prince Albert of Basle.

The old Palace of Scone, under the guardianship of Lord Mansfield, was the restingplace for the night. Next day the Queen saw the mound where the early kings of Scotland were crowned. A sort of ancient royal visitors' book was brought out from Perth to her Majesty, and the Queen and the Prince were requested to write their names in it. The last names written were those of James VI. and Charles I. Her Majesty and Prince Albert gave their mottoes as well as their names. Beneath her signature she wrote, "_Dieu et mon Droit_;" beneath his he wrote, "_Treu und Fest._"

From Scone the party proceeded to Dunkeld, passing through Birnam Pass, the first of the three "Gates," into the Highlands, where the prophecy

against Macbeth was fulfilled, and entered what is emphatically "the Country" by the lowest spur of the mighty Grampians.

The romantic, richly-wooded beauty of Dunkeld was increased by a picturesque camp of Athole Highlanders, to the number of a thousand men, with their piper in attendance. They had been called out for her Majesty's benefit by the late Duke of Athole, then Lord Glenlyon, who was suffering from temporary blindness, so that he had to be led about by Lady Glenlyon, his wife. At Dunkeld the Queen lunched, and walked down the ranks of Highland soldiers. The piper played, and a reel and the ancient sword-dance, over crossed swords--the nimble dancer avoiding all contact with the naked blades--were danced. The whole scene--royal guests, noble men and women, stalwart clansmen in their waving dusky tartans--must have been very animated and striking in the lovely autumn setting of the mountains when the ling was red, the rowan berries hung like clusters of coral over the brown burns, and a field of oats here and there came out like a patch of gold among the heather. To put the finishing-touch to the picture, the grey tower of Gawin Douglas's Cathedral, still and solemn, kept watch over the tomb of the Wolf of Badenoch.

But Dunkeld was not the Queen's destination. She was going still farther into the Highlands. She left the mountains of Craig-y-barns and Craig-vinean behind her, and travelled on by Aberfeldy to Taymouth, the noble seat of the Marquis of Breadalbane. Lord Glenlyon's Highlanders gave place to Lord Breadalbane's, the Murrays, in their particular set of tartan with their juniper badge, to the Campbells and the Menzies, in their dark green and red and white kilts, with the tufts of bog myrtle and ash in their bonnets. The pipers were multiplied, and a company of the 92nd Highlanders replaced the 42nd, in kilts like their neighbours. "The firing of the guns," wrote the Queen, "the cheering of the great crowd, the picturesqueness of the dresses, the beauty of the surrounding country with its rich background of wooded hills, altogether formed one of the finest scenes imaginable. It seemed as if a great chieftain in olden feudal times was receiving his sovereign. It was princely and romantic."

Such a "sovereign" of such a "chief" is the crowned lady, every inch a queen, represented in Durham's bust reproduced in the illustration.

Lord Breadalbane was giving his Queen a royal welcome. Lady Breadalbane, a childless wife, had been one of the beautiful Haddington Baillies, descendants of Grizel Baillie; she was suffering from wasting sickness, and her beauty, still remarkable, was "as that of the dead." Some of the flower of the Scotch nobility were assembled in the house to meet the Queen and the Prince--members of the families of Buccleugh, Sutherland, Abercorn, Roxburgh, Kinnoul, Lauderdale &c. &c. The Gothic dining-room was dined in for the first time; the Queen was the earliest occupant of her suite of rooms. After dinner, the gardens were illuminated, the hills were crowned with bonfires, and Highlanders danced reels to the sound of the pipes by torchlight in front of the house. "It had a wild and very gay effect."

The whole life, with its environment, was like a revelation of new possibilities to the young English Queen who had never been out of England before. It was at the most propitious moment that she made her first acquaintance with the Scotch Highlands which she has learned to love so well; she enjoyed everything with the keen sense of novelty and the buoyance of unquenched spirits. Looking back upon it all, long afterwards, she wrote with simple pathos, "Albert and I were then only twenty-three, young and happy."

At Taymouth there was shooting for the Prince; and there was much pleasant driving, walking, and sketching for the Queen--with the drives walks, and sketches unlike anything that she had been accustomed to previously. The weather was not always favourable; the sport was not always so fortunate as on the first day, when the Prince shot nineteen roe-deer, several hares and pheasants, three brace of grouse, and wounded a capereailzie, which was afterwards brought in; but the travellers made the best of everything and became "quite fond of the bagpipes," which were played in perfection at breakfast, at luncheon, whenever the royal pair went out and in, and before and during dinner. One evening there was a ball for the benefit of the county people, at which the Queen danced a quadrille with Lord Breadalbane; Prince Albert and the Duchess of Buccleugh being the _vis-a-vis_.

On September 10th, a fine morning, the Queen left Taymouth. She was rowed up Loch Tay, past Ben Lawers with Benmore in the distance. The pipers played at intervals, the boatmen sang Gaelic songs, and the representative of Macdougall of Lorn steered. At Auchmore, where the party lunched, they were rejoined by the Highland Guard. As her Majesty drove round by Glen Dochart and Glen Ogle, the latter reminded her of the fatal Kyber Pass with which her thoughts had been busy in the beginning of the year. By the time Loch Earn was reached, the fine weather had changed to rain. By Glenartney and Duneira, earthquake-haunted Comrie, Ochertyre, where grows "the aik," and Crieff with the "Knock," on which the last Scotch witch was burnt, the travellers journeyed to Drummond Castle, belonging to Lady Willoughby d'Eresby, where her Majesty was to make her next stay. Lady Willoughby was a chieftainess in her own right, the heiress of the old Drummonds, Earls of Perth. Lord Willoughby was the representative of the lucky English Burrells and the Welsh Gwydyrs, one of whom had married a Maid of Honour to Catharine of Aragon, and come to grief, because, unlike her royal mistress, she and her husband adopted the Protestant religion, and fell into dire disgrace in the reign of Bloody Mary. The Drummonds, like the Murrays and unlike the Campbells, had been staunch Jacobites. The mother of the first and last Duke of Perth caused the old castle to be blown up after her two sons had joined the rebellion in the '45, lest the keep should fall into the hands of King George's soldiers. [Footnote: She is said to have been the heroine of the popular Jacobite song, "When the King comes over the water."] The Queen alludes in her Journal to the steep ascent to the castle. The long narrow avenue leads up by the side of the fine castle rock, tufted with wild strawberries, ferns, and heather, to the courtyard. Her Majesty also mentions the old terraced garden; "like an old French garden," or like such an Italian garden as was a favourite model for the gardens of its day.

The Willoughby Highlanders, wearing the Drummond tartan and the holly badge, were now the Queen's guard. The lady of the castle and her daughters wore the Drummond tartan and the holly when they met the Queen.

It was at Drummond Castle that Prince Albert made his first attempt at deer-stalking, under the able guidance of Campbell of Moonzie. The Prince's description of the sport was that it was "one of the most interesting of pursuits," in which the sportsman, clad in grey, in order to remain unseen, had to keep under the hill, beyond the possibility of scent, and crawl on hands and knees to approach his prey.

There was a story told at the time of the Prince and Campbell of Moonzie. Prince Albert had arranged to return at a particular hour to drive with the Queen. Moonzie, who was the most ardent and agile deer-stalker in the

neighbourhood, had got into the swing of the sport, till then unsuccessful, when, as the men lay crouching among the heather, waiting intently for the herd expected to come that way, the Prince said it was time to return.

"But the deer, your Royal Highness," faltered the Highlander, looking aghast, and speaking in the whisper which the exigencies of the case required.

The Prince explained that the Queen expected him.

It is to be feared the Highlander, in the excitement of the moment, and the marvel that any man--not to say any prince--could give up the sport at such a crisis, suggested that the Queen might wait, while the deer certainly would not.

"The Queen commands," said her true knight, with a quiet smile and a gentle rebuke.

In the evening there was company, as at Taymouth, some in kilts. Campbell of Moonzie showed himself as great in reels as in deer-stalking. (Ah! the wild glee and nimble grace of a Highland reel well danced.) The Queen danced one country dance with Lord Willoughby, while Prince Albert had the eldest daughter of the house, Lady Carington, for his partner.

The next day the royal party, starting as early as nine on a hazy morning, reached Stirling and visited the castle, which figures so largely in the lives of the old Stewart kings. The Queen saw the room in which James II. slew Douglas, John Knox's pulpit, the field of Bannockburn, which saved Scotland from a conquest, and the Knoll or "Knowe" where the Scotch Queens and the Court ladies sat to look down on their knights "Riding the Ring" or playing at the boisterously boyish game of "Hurleyhacket." But the autumn mists shut out the "Highland hills," already receding in the background, and the Links of Forth, where the river winds like the meshes of a chain through the fertile lowlands to the sea. Soon Drummond Castle and Taymouth, with their lochs and mountains and "plaided array," would be like a wonderful dream, to be often recalled and recounted at Windsor and Buckingham Palace.

From Stirling the Queen travelled back to Dalkeith, where she arrived the same night. During her Majesty's last day in Scotland, which she expressed herself as "very sorry to leave," she drove to Roslin Chapel, where twenty "barons bold" of the house of St. Clair wear shirts of mail for shrouds, then went on to storied Hawthornden--a wooded nest hung high over the water, where the poet Drummond entertained his English brother-of-the-pen, Ben Jonson.

On Thursday, the 15th of September, the Queen embarked in the Trident, a large steamboat, likely to be swifter than the Royal George, and surrounded by the flotilla, which, with the exception of one, fell behind, and out of sight in the course of the voyage, sailed for England, past Berwick Law, Tantallon, the ruined keep of the Douglasses, and the Bass, where a gloomy state prison once frowned on a rock, now given up to seagulls and Solan geese. The weather was favourable and the moonlight fine. The voyage became enjoyable as the young couple ate a "pleasant little dinner on deck in a tent, made of flags," or paced the deck in the moonlight, or read the "Lay of the Last Minstrel," and played on the piano in the cabin. Notwithstanding the good time, winds and waves are not to be trusted, and the roar of the guns which announced that the

vessel was at the Nore was a welcome awakening at three o'clock on the morning of Saturday, the 17th. The sun smiled through a slight haze on the sail up the river, among the familiar English sights and sounds. The tour, which had delighted the pair, was over; but home, where a loving mother and little children awaited them, was sweet.

CHAPTER XV.

A MARRIAGE, A DEATH, AND A BIRTH IN THE ROYAL FAMILY.--A PALACE HOME.

The rest of the autumn and early winter passed in busy quiet and domestic happiness. In November, the Queen honoured the Duke of Wellington by a second visit to Walmer. She was no longer the girl-princess--a solitary figure, but for her devoted mother, she was the Queen-wife, taking with her not only her good and noble husband, but her two fine children, to show her old servant, the great soldier of a former generation, who had known her from her childhood, how rich she had become in all womanly blessings. During her stay her Majesty went to Dover, and included the guardian castle of England, on the chalk cliffs which overlook the coast of France, among the venerable fortresses she had inspected this year.

In the meantime, the agitation for Free Trade was exciting the country in one direction, and O'Connell was thundering for a repeal of the union between England and Ireland in another. On the 20th of January, 1843, a public crime was committed which shocked the whole nation and aroused the utmost sympathy of the Queen and Prince Albert. A half-crazy man named Macnaughten, who conceived he had received a political injury from Sir Robert Peel, planned to waylay and shoot the Premier in Downing Street. The man mistook his victim, and fatally wounded Sir Robert's private secretary, Mr. Drummond, who perished in the room of his chief. The plea of insanity accepted by the jury on the trial was so far set aside by the judges.

The descendants of the numerous family of George III. and Queen Charlotte, in the third generation, only numbered five princes and princesses. Apart from her German kindred, the Queen had only four cousins--her nearest English relations after her uncles and aunts. Of these the Crown Prince of Hanover, German born but English bred as Prince George of Cumberland, and long regarded as, in default of Princess Victoria, the heir to the crown, married at Hanover, on the 18th of February, Princess Mary of Saxe-Altenburg. The Crown Prince was then twenty-four years of age. Though he had no longer any prospect of succeeding to the throne of England, he was the heir to a considerable German kingdom. But the terrible misfortune which had cost him his eyesight did not terminate his hard struggle with fate. His father, whose ambition had been built upon his son from his birth, appeared to have more difficulty in submitting to the sore conditions of the Prince's loss than the Prince himself showed. By a curious self-deception, the King of Hanover never acknowledged his son's blindness, but persisted in treating him, and causing others to treat him, as if he saw. The Queen of Hanover, once a bone of contention at the English Court, and Queen Charlotte's *_bete noire_*, as the divorced wife of one of her two husbands prior to her third marriage with the Duke of Cumberland, had died two years before. It was desirable in every light that she should find a successor--a princess--to preside over the widowed Court, and be the mother to the future kings of Hanover, supposing Hanover had remained on the roll of the nations. A fitting choice was made, and the old King took care that the marriage should be

celebrated with a splendour worthy of the grandson of a King of England. Twenty-four sovereigns and princes, among them the King of Prussia, graced the ceremony. The bride wore cloth of silver and a profusion of jewels, and whatever further troubles were in store for the blind bridegroom, whose manly fortitude and uprightness of character--albeit these qualities were not without their alloy of pride and obstinacy--won him the respect of his contemporaries, Providence blessed him on that February day with a good, bright, devoted wife.

On the 25th of March, the Thames Tunnel, which at the time was fondly regarded as the very triumph of modern engineering, and a source of the greatest convenience to London, was opened for foot-passengers by a procession of dignitaries and eminent men, including in their ranks the Lord Mayor, Sir Robert Inglis, Lord Lincoln, Joseph Hume, Messrs. Babbage and Faraday, &c. &c. The party descended by one staircase, shaft, and archway which carried them to Wapping, and, ascending again, returned by the other archway to Rotherhithe. Some of the Thames watermen hoisted black flags as a sign that they considered their craft doomed.

For the first time since her accession, the Queen had been unable, from the state of her health, to open Parliament or to hold the usual spring levees. Prince Albert relieved her of this, as of so many of her burdens, and Baron Stockmar paid a visit to England, at the Prince's urgent request, that the Baron's sagacity and experience might be brought to bear on what remained of the arduous task of getting a Queen's household into order and directing a royal nursery. The care of the Queen's Privy Purse had been transferred to the Prince on the departure of Baroness Lehzen. These various obligations, together with his rapidly increasing interest in public affairs, and the number of persons who claimed his attention, especially when he was in London, became a serious tax on his strength, a tax which the Queen even at this early date feared and sought to guard against. Baron Stockmar was greatly pleased with the aspect of the family. He proudly proclaimed that the Prince was quickly showing what was in him, among other things that he was rich in that very practical talent in which the Baron had feared the young man might be deficient; at the same time the old family friend remarked that the Prince, in the midst of his industry and happiness, frequently looked "pale, worried, and weary."

An instance of Prince Albert's cordial interest in the welfare of the humbler ranks is to be found in one of Bishop Wilberforce's letters, dated March, 1843: "After breakfast with the Prince, for three-quarters of an hour talked about Sunday. Told him that I thought 'Book of Sports' did more than anything to shock the English mind. He urged want of amusements for common people of an innocent class--no gardens. In Coburg, with ten thousand inhabitants, thirty-two gardens, frequented by different sorts of people, who meet and associate in them. 'I never heard a real _shout_ in England. All my servants marry because they say it is so dull here, nothing to interest--good living, good wine, but there is nothing to do but turn rogue or marry.'"

On the 20th of April, Prince Augustus of Saxe-Coburg was married to Princess Clementine of France, the youngest daughter of Louis Philippe. On the following day, the 21st, the Queen's uncle, the Duke of Sussex, who had long been infirm, and for a little time seriously ailing, died at Kensington Palace, at the age of seventy years. The body lay in state there on the 3rd of May, all persons in decent mourning being admitted to witness the sight. Twenty-five thousand persons availed themselves of the permission. On the following morning, the funeral of the first of the Royal Dukes, who was buried by daylight and not in the royal vault at

Windsor, took place. There was a great procession, a mile in length, beginning and ending with detachments of Horse and Foot Guards, their bands playing at intervals the "Dead March in Saul," in acknowledgement of the military rank of the deceased. The hearse, drawn by eight black horses, was preceded and followed by twenty-two mourning-coaches and carriages, each with six horses, and upwards of fifty private carriages, one of these containing Sir Augustus d'Este, the son of the dead Duke and of Lady d'Ameland (Lady Augusta Murray). [Footnote: The Duke of Sussex made a second morganatic marriage, after Lady d'Ameland's death, with Lady Cecilia Buggin, daughter of the second Earl of Arran, and widow of Sir George Buggin. She was created Duchess of Inverness. She survived the Duke of Sussex thirty years.] The Duke of Cambridge acted as chief mourner. The cortege passed along the High Street to Kensal Green Cemetery, where Prince Albert, Prince George of Cambridge, and the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, whose son was about to become the husband of Princess Augusta of Cambridge, awaited its arrival. The service was read by the Bishop of Norwich in the cemetery chapel, and the coffin was deposited in the vault prepared for it. It was observed of Prince Albert that "he seemed to be more affected than any person at the funeral."

An old face, once very familiar, had passed away: a young life had dawned. In the interval between the Duke of Sussex's death and funeral, five days after the death, on the 24th of April, 1843, a second princess was born. The Queen was soon able to write to King Leopold that the baby was to be called "Alice," an old English name, "Maud," another old English name, and "Mary," because she had been born on the birthday of the Duchess of Gloucester. The godfathers were the Queen's uncle, the King of Hanover, and Prince Albert's brother, by their father's retirement, already Duke of Coburg. The King of Hanover came to England, though, unfortunately, too late to be present at the christening, so that one likes to think of the Princess, whose name is associated with all that is good and kind, as having served from the first in the light of a messenger of peace to heal old feuds. The godmothers were the Princess of Hohenlohe and Princess Sophia Matilda of Gloucester.

In the illustration Princess Alice is given as she represented "Spring" in the family mask in 1854.

On the 18th of May, 1843, the prolonged contest between the civil and ecclesiastical courts in Scotland reached its climax--in many respects striking and noble, though it may be also one-sided, high-handed, and erring. The chief civil law-court in Scotland--the Court of Session--had overruled the decisions of the chief spiritual court--the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland--and installed, by the help of soldiers, in the parishes, which patronage had presented to them, two ministers, disliked by their respective congregations, and resolutely rejected by them, though neither for moral delinquencies nor heretical opinions. The Government, after a vain attempt to heal the breach and reconcile the contending parties, not only declined to interfere, but asserted the authority of the law of the land over a State church.

Once more the representatives of the Scotch clergy and laity, of all shades of opinion, met, as their forefathers had done for centuries, in the Assembly Hall, in Edinburgh, in the month of May. Then, after the usual introductory ceremonies, the moderator, or chairman, delivered a solemn protest against the State's interference with the spiritual rights of the Church, declared that the sovereignty of its Divine Head was invaded, and, in the name of himself and his brethren, rejected, a union which compelled submission to the civil law on what a considerable

proportion of the population persisted in regarding as purely spiritual questions. Four hundred and seventy ministers of one of the poorest churches in Christendom had appended their names to the protest. Churches, manses, livings were laid down, the mass following their leaders. Among them, though many a good and gifted man remained with equal conscientiousness behind, there were men of remarkable ability as well as Christian worth; and there was one, Dr. Chalmers, with a world-wide reputation for genius, eloquence, and splendid benevolence. The band formed themselves into a procession of black-coated soldiers of a King--not of this world--marched along the crowded streets of Edinburgh, hailed and cheered by an enthusiastic multitude, and entering a building temporarily engaged for the purpose, constituted themselves a separate church, and flung themselves on the liberality of their portion of the people, on whom they were thenceforth entirely dependent for maintenance. And their people, who, with their compatriots, are regarded among the nations as notably close-fisted and hard-headed, responded generously, lavishly, to the impassioned appeal. All Scotland was rent and convulsed then, and for years before and after, by the great split in what lay very near its heart--its church principles and government. These things were not done in a corner, and could not fail to arouse the interest of the Queen and Prince, whatever verdict their judgment might pronounce on the dispute, or however they might range themselves on the constitutional side of the question, as it was interpreted by their political advisers--indeed, by the first statesmen, Whig or Tory, of the day.

Six years later, Sir Edwin Landseer painted the picture called "The Free Kirk," which became the property of her Majesty.

The Royal Commission on the Fine Arts, at the head of which was Prince Albert, in view of the decoration of the new Houses of Parliament, had an exhibition of prize cartoons in Westminster Hall during the summer of 1843. Great expectations were entertained of the effect of such patronage on painting in its higher branches. Many careful investigations were made into the best processes of fresco painting, of which the Prince had a high opinion, and this mode of decoration was ultimately adopted, unfortunately, as it proved, for in spite of every precaution, and the greatest care on the part of the painters--some of whom, like Dyce, were learned in this direction, while others went to Italy to acquire the necessary knowledge--the result has been to show the perishable nature of the means used, in this climate at least, since the pictures on the walls of the Houses of Parliament have become but dim, fast-fading shadows of the original representations. In the early days of the movement the Prince, in order the better to test and encourage a new development of art in this country, gave orders for a series of fresco paintings from Milton's "Comus," in eight lunettes, to decorate a pavilion in the grounds of Buckingham Palace. Among the painters employed were Landseer, Maclise, Leslie, Uwins, Dyce, Stanfield, &c. &c. Two of them--Leslie and Uwins--record the lively interest which the Queen and the Prince took in the painting of the pavilion, how they would come unannounced and without attendants twice a day, when the Court was at Buckingham Palace, and watch the painters at work. Uwins wrote, that in many things the Queen and her husband were an example to the age. "They have breakfasted, heard morning prayers with the household in the private chapel, and are out some distance from the Palace, talking to us in the summer-house, before half-past nine o'clock--sometimes earlier. After the public duties of the day, and before the dinner, they come out again, evidently delighted to get away from the bustle of the world to enjoy each other's society in the solitude of the garden.... Here, too, the royal children are brought out by the nurses, and the whole arrangement seems like real domestic

pleasure."

The square of the Palace, with a park on either hand, and its main entrance fronting the Mall, has green gardens of its own, velvet turf, shady trees, shining water--now expanding into a great round pond, like that in Kensington Gardens, only larger--now narrowing till it is crossed by a rustic bridge. These cheat the eye and the fancy into the belief that the dwellers in the Palace have got rid of the town, and furnish pleasant paths and pretty effects of landscape gardening within a limited space.

But the Palace has a public as well as a private side. The former looks out on the parks and drives, which belong to all the world, and in the season are crowded with company.

The great white marble staircase leads to many a stately corridor, with kings and queens looking down from the walls, to many a magnificent room with domed and richly fretted roofs, ball-room with a raised dais for court company, and a spot where royal quadrilles are danced, banqueting-room, music-room, white, crimson, blue, and green drawing-rooms, crimson and gold throne-room. There are finely-wrought white marble chimney-pieces with boldly-carved heads, angelic figures, and dragons in full relief. There are polished pillars of purple-blue, and red scagliola, huge china vases--oriental, Dresden, unpolished Sevres--and glittering timepieces of every shape and device.

King George and Queen Charlotte in shadowy form preside once and again, as well they may, seeing this was her house when it was named the Queen's House. Their family, too, still linger in their portraits. George IV. in very full-blown kingly state, the Duke of York and his Duchess, the Duke of Kent and his Duchess, the King of Hanover, King William and Queen Adelaide, the Duke of Sussex. But not one of their lives is so linked with the place as the life of Queen Victoria has been, especially the double life of the Queen and the Prince Consort in their "blooming time." Buckingham Palace was their London home, to which they came every season as regularly as Park Lane and Piccadilly, with the squares and streets of Belgravia, find their fitting occupants. From this Palace the girl-Queen drove to Westminster, to be crowned, and returned to watch in the soft dusk of the summer evening all London illuminated in her honour. Here she announced her intended marriage to her Lords in Council; here she met her princely bridegroom come across the seas to wed her. From that gateway she drove in her bridal white and orange blossoms, and it was up these steps she walked an hour-old wife, leaning on the arm of her husband. Most of their children were born here. The Princess Royal was baptized here, and she went from Buckingham Palace to St. James's, like her mother before her, to be married. In the immediate neighbourhood occurred some of the miserable attempts on the Queen's life, and it was round Buckingham Palace that nobility and people thronged to convince themselves of her Majesty's safety, and assure her of their hot indignation and deep sympathy. On that balcony she has shown herself, to the thousands craving for the sight, on the opening-day of the first Exhibition and on the morning when the Guards left for the Crimea. Through these corridors and drawing-rooms streamed the princely pageant of the Queen's Plantagenet Ball. Kingly and courtly company, the renowned men and the fair women of her reign, have often held festival here. Along these quiet garden walks the Queen was wont to stroll with her husband-lover; from that rustic bridge he would summon his feathered favourites around him; in yon sheet of water he swam for his life among the broken ice, the day before the christening of the Princess Royal. In the little chalet close to the house the Queen loved to carry on

her correspondence on summer-days, rather than to write within palace walls, because she, whose life has been pure and candid as the day, has always loved dearly the open air of heaven. In the pavilion where the first English artists of the time strove to do their Prince's behest, working sometimes from eight in the morning to six or seven in the evening, her Majesty and the Prince delighted to watch Maclise put in Sabrina releasing the Lady from the enchanted chair, and Leslie make Comus offering the cup of witchery.

As in the case of King George and Queen Charlotte, it is well that portraits and marble statues of the Queen and the Prince, in the flower of their age, should remain here as unfailing links with the past which was spent within these walls.

In later years the widowed Queen has dwelt little at Buckingham Palace, coming rarely except for the Drawing-rooms, which inaugurate the season and lend the proper stamp to the gilded youth of the kingdom. What tales that Throne-room could tell of the beating hearts of debutantes and the ambitious dreams of care-laden chaperons! The last tale is of the kind consideration of the liege lady. From the room where the members of the royal family assemble apart, she walks, not to take her seat on the throne, but to stand in front of the steps which lead to it, that the ladies who advance towards her in single file may not have to climb the steps with stumbling feet, often caught in their trailing skirts, till the wearers were in danger of being precipitated against the royal knees as the ladies bent to kiss the Queen's hand. In the same manner, the slow and painful process of walking backwards with long trains, of which such stories were told in Queen Charlotte's day, is graciously dispensed with. A step or two, and the trains are thrown over their owners' arms by the pages in waiting, while the ladies are permitted to retire, like ordinary mortals, in a natural, easy, and what is really a more seemly fashion. A royal chapel has for a considerable time taken the place of a great conservatory, so that the Queen and the Prince could worship with their household, without the necessity of repairing to the neighbouring Chapel Royal of St. James's.

There are other suites of rooms besides the private apartments, notably the Belgian floor, full of memories of King Leopold and Queen Louise.

Among the portraits of foreign sovereigns, the correctly beautiful face of the Emperor Alexander of Russia, and the likeness of his successor, Nicholas, occur repeatedly. The portraits of the Emperor and Empress of Germany, when as Prince and Princess of Prussia they won the cordial friendship of the Queen, are here. There is a pleasant picture of Queen Victoria's girl friend, Maria da Gloria, and a companion picture of her husband, the Queen and the Prince's cousin. The burly figure of Louis Philippe appears in the company of two of his sons. Another ruler of France, the Emperor Napoleon III., looks sallow and solemn beside his Empress at the height of her loveliness. Other royal portraits are those of the King of Saxony, the present King and Queen of the Belgians, as Duke and Duchess of Brabant; the late blind King of Hanover and his devoted Queen; the Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, now blind also, and his Duchess, who was the handsome and winning Princess Augusta of Cambridge; her not less charming sister, Princess Mary, Duchess of Teck; the familiar face of their soldierlike brother, the Duke of Cambridge; the Maharajah Dhuleep Singh, in his slender youth and eastern dress, &c. &c.

In the sister country of France, one has a feeling that there are blood stains on all the palaces. Let us be thankful that, as a rule, it is not

so in England. But there are tragic faces and histories here too, mocking the glories of rank and State. There is a fine picture of Matilda of Denmark, to whom--but for the victim's fairer hair--her collateral descendant, Queen Victoria, is said to bear a great resemblance. The Queen's ancestress was herself a princess and a queen, yet she was fated to fall under an infamous, unproven charge, and to pine to an early death in a prison fortress.

Here, with a pathos all her own, in her pale dark girlish face and slight figure, is the Queen's Indian god-daughter, Princess Gouromma, the child of the Rajah of Coorg. She was educated in England, and married a Scotch gentleman named Campbell. But the grey northern skies and the bleak easterly winds were cruel to her, as they would have been to one of her native palm-trees, and she found an early grave.

A graceful remembrance of a peculiarly graceful tribute to the faithful service and devotion of a lifetime appears in a picture of the old Duke of Wellington--after whom the Queen named her third son--presenting his godfather's token of a costly casket to the infant Prince Arthur, seated on the royal mother's knee. Another laughing child, in the arms of another happy mother, is the Queen herself, held by the Duchess of Kent.

The long picture gallery contains valuable specimens of Dutch and Flemish art, a remnant of George IV.'s collection, and a portion, of the Queen's many fine examples of these schools. Here are Tenierses, full of riotous life; exquisite Metzus, Terburgs, and Gerard Dows; cattle by Paul Potter; ships by Van de Velde; skies by Cuyp; landscapes, with white horses, by Wouvermanns; driving clouds and shadow-darkened plains by Ruysdael, who, though he died in a workhouse, yet lives in his pictures in kings' palaces.

Lady Bloomfield has given the world a delightful glimpse of what the life at Windsor and Buckingham Palace was from 1842 to 1845; how much real friendliness existed in it; what simplicity and naturalness lay behind its pomp and magnificence. Dissipation and extravagance found no place there. That palace home--whether in town or country, where all sacred obligations and sweet domestic affections reigned supreme, where noble work had due prominence and high-minded study paved the way for innocent pleasure--was, indeed, a pattern to every home in the kingdom. The great household was like a large family, with a queenly elder sister and a royal brother at its head; for the Queen and the Prince were still in their first prime, and very kindly, as well as very wise, were their relations with old and young. It is good to read of the tenderly-united pair; of their well-regulated engagements--punctually performed as clockwork, and rarely jostling each other; of their generous consideration for others, their faithful regard for old friends, so that to this day the ranks of the Queen's household are replenished from the households of her youth. It has been pointed out how rarely the Duchess of Kent allowed any change in the little Princess's guardians and teachers. In like manner, as whoever will examine Court calendars may learn for themselves, this middle-aged Mistress of the Robes, or that elderly Lady in Waiting, was in former times a young Maid of Honour, and the youngest page of to-day is very likely the grandson of a veteran courtier, and has a hereditary interest in his surroundings.

When her Majesty was still young, there was the frankest sympathy with the young girls who were so proud to be in their Queen's service--a sympathy showing itself in a thousand unmistakable ways; in concern for each noble maiden's comfort and happiness; in interest in her friends pursuits, and

prospects; by the kindly informal manner in which each member of the girlish suite was addressed by her familiar christian-name, sometimes with its home abbreviation; by the kiss with which she was greeted on her return from her six months' absence. We do not always connect such lovable attributes with kings' and queens' courts, and it is an excellent thing for us to know that the greatest, towards whom none may presume, can also be the most ready to oblige, the least apt to exact, the most cordial and trustful.

We hear from Lady Bloomfield that the sum total of a Maid of Honour's obligations, when she is in residence, like a canon, is to give the Queen her bouquet before dinner every other day. In reality, the young lady and her companions, as well as the older and more experienced Ladies and Women of the Bedchamber, are in waiting to drive, ride, or walk with the Queen when she desires their society, to sit near her at dinner, to share her occupations--such as reading, music, drawing, needlework--when she wishes it, to help to make up any games, dances, &c. &c. These favoured damsels enjoy a modest income of three hundred a year, and wear a badge--the Queen's picture, surrounded with brilliants on a red bow--such as the public may have seen in the portraits of several of the Maids of Honour belonging to the Queen which were exhibited on the walls of the Academy within recent years. The hours of "the Maids" never were so early as those of their royal mistress, while their labours, like their responsibilities, have been light as thistledown in comparison with hers.

The greatest restriction imposed on these youthful members of the Household, when Lady Bloomfield as Miss Liddell figured among them, seems to have been that they were expected to be at their posts, and they were not at liberty to entertain all visitors in their private sitting-rooms, but had to receive some of their friends in a drawing-room which belonged to the ladies in common.

The routine of the Palace passes before us, unpretentious in its dignity as the actual life was led: the waiting of the ladies in the corridor to meet the Queen when she left her apartments and accompany her to dinner; the talk at the dinner-table; the round game of cards--_vingt-et-un_, or some other in the evening, for which the stakes were so low, that the players were accustomed to provide themselves with a stock of new shillings, sixpences, and fourpenny pieces, and the winnings were now threepence, now eightpence; the workers and talkers in the background. In spite of different times and different manners, there is a slight flavour of Queen Charlotte's drawing-room, in Miss Burney's day, about the whole scene.

The ordinary current was broken by varying eddies of royal visits and visitors, with their accompanying whirl and bubble of excitement, and by ceremonies, like the opening and proroguing of Parliament, State visits to the City, royal baptisms. In addition there were the more tranquil and homely diversions of the festivals of the seasons and family festivals. There was Christmas, when everybody gave and received Christmas-boxes; and this happy individual had a brooch, "of dark and light blue enamel, with two rubies and a diamond in the shape of a bow;" and another had a bracelet, with the Queen's portrait; while to all there were pins, rings, studs, shawls, &c. &c. Or it was the Duchess of Kent's birthday, when the Court went to dine and dance, and wish the kind Duchess many happy returns of the day, at Frogmore. On one occasion the little ball ended in a curious dance, called "Grand-pere," a sort of "Follow my Leader." "The Prince and the Duchess of Kent led the way, and it was great fun, but rather a romp." Solemn statesmen, hoary soldiers, reverent churchmen,

foreign diplomatists, were frequently consigned for companionship and entertainment to the "ladies of the Household," and relaxed and grew jocular in such company, under the spring sunshine of girlish smiles and laughter.

More mature and distinguished figures stood out among the women, to match the men--whose names will be household words so long as England keeps her place among the nations. Sagacious Baroness Lehzen, the incomparable early instructress and guide of the Queen, so good to all the young people who came under her influence, before she retired to her quiet home at Buckeburg; Lady Lyttelton, who had been with the Queen as one of the ladies-in-waiting ever since her Majesty came to the throne, who, after the most careful selection, was appointed governess to the Royal children, and was well qualified to discharge an office of such consequence to the Queen and the nation. It is impossible to read such portions of her letters as have been published without being struck by their wise womanliness and gentle motherliness. Beautiful Lady Canning, with her artist soul, was another star in an exalted firmament.

Little feet pattered amongst the brilliant groups. The Princess Royal was a remarkably bright, lively child; the Prince of Wales a beautiful good-tempered baby, in such a nautilus-shell cradle as Mrs. Thorneycroft copied in modelling the likeness of Princess Beatrice. We have the pretty fancy before us: the exquisite curves of the shell, its fair round-limbed occupant, one foot and one arm thrown out with the careless grace of childhood, as if to balance and steer the fairy bark, the other soft hand lightly resting on the breast, over which the head and face, full of infant innocence and peace, are inclined.

Both children were fond of music, as the daughter and son of parents so musical might well be. When the youthful pair were a little older they would stand still and quiet in the music-room to hear the Prince-father discourse sweet sounds on his organ, and the Queen-mother sing with one of her ladies, "in perfect time and tune," with a fine feeling for her songs, as Mendelssohn has described her. The small people furnished a never-ending series of merry anecdotes and witticisms all their own, and would have gone far to break down the highest dead wall of stiffness and reserve, had such a barrier ever existed. Now it was the little Princess, a quaint tiny figure "in dark-blue velvet and white shoes, and, yellow kid gloves," keeping the nurseries alive with her sports, showing off the new frocks she had got as a Christmas-box from her grandmamma, the Duchess of Kent, and bidding Miss Liddell put on one. Now it was the Queen offending the dignity of her little daughter by calling her "Missy," and being told in indignant remonstrance, "I'm not Missy--I'm the Princess Royal." Or it was Lady Lyttelton who was warned off with the dismissal in French, from the morsel of royalty, not quite three, "_N'approchez pas moi, moi ne veut pas vous_;" or it was the Duke of Wellington, with a dash of old chivalry, kissing the baby-hand and bidding its owner remember, him. Or the child was driving in Windsor Park with the Queen and three of her ladies, when first the Princess imagined she saw a cat beneath the trees, and announced, "Cat come to look at the Queen, I suppose." Then she longed for the heather on the bank, and asked Lady Dunmore to get her some; when Lady Dunmore said she could not do that, as they were driving so fast, the little lady observed composedly, "No, _you_ can't, but _those_ girls," meaning the two Maids of Honour, in the full dignity of their nineteen or twenty summers and their office, "might get me some."

Windsor Castle in the height of summer, Windsor in the park among the old oaks and ferns, Windsor on the grand terrace with its glorious English

view, might well leave bright lingering memories in a susceptible young mind. So we hear of a delightful ride, when the kind Queen mounted her Maid of Honour on a horse which had once belonged to Miss Liddell's sister, and in default of Miss Liddell's habit, which was not forthcoming, lent her one of the Queen's, with hat, cellar and cuffs to suit, and the two cantered and walked over the greensward and down many a leafy glade for two hours and a half. Once, we are told, the Queen, the Prince, and the whole company went out after dinner in the warm summer weather, and promenaded in the brilliant moonlight, a sight to see, with the lit-up castle in the background, the men in the Windsor uniform, the women in full dress, like poor Marie Antoinette's night promenades at Versailles, or a page from Boccaccio.

Running through all the young Maid of Honour's diary is the love which makes all service light; the loyal innocent sense of hardship at being in waiting and not seeing the Queen "at least once a day;" the affectionate regret to lose any of her Majesty's company; the pride and pleasure at being selected by the Queen for special duties.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CONDEMNATION OF THE ENGLISH DUEL.--ANOTHER MARRIAGE.--THE QUEEN'S VISIT TO CHATEAU D'EU.

On the 1st of July, 1843, duelling received its death-blow in England by a fatal duel--so unnatural and so painful in its consequences that it served the purpose of calling public attention to the offence--long tolerated, even advocated in some quarters, and to the theory of military honour on which this particular duel took place. Two officers, Colonel Fawcett and Lieutenant Munro, who were also brothers-in-law, had a quarrel. Colonel Fawcett was elderly, had been in India, was out of health and exceedingly irritable in temper. It came out afterwards that he had given his relation the greatest provocation. Still Lieutenant Munro hung back from what up to that time had been regarded as the sole resource of a gentleman, especially a military man, in the circumstances. He showed great reluctance to challenge Colonel Fawcett, and it was only after the impression--mistaken or otherwise--was given to the insulted man that his regiment expected him to take the old course, and if he did not do so he must be disgraced throughout the service, that he called out his brother-in-law.

The challenge was accepted, the meeting took place, Colonel Fawcett was shot dead, and the horrible anomaly presented itself of two sisters--the one rendered a widow by the hand of her brother-in-law, and a family of children clad in mourning for their uncle, whom their father had slain. Apart from the bloodshed, Lieutenant Munro was ruined by the miserable step on which he had been thrust. Public feeling was roused to protest against the barbarous practice by which a bully had it in his power to risk the life of a man immeasurably his superior, against whom he happened to have conceived a dislike. Prince Albert interested himself deeply in the question, especially as it concerned the army. Various expedients were suggested; eventually an amendment was inserted into the Articles of War which was founded on the more reasonable, humane, and Christian conclusion, that to offer an apology, or even to make reparation where wrong had been committed, was more becoming the character of an officer and a gentleman, than to furnish the alternative of standing up to kill or to be killed for a hasty word or a rash act.

On the 28th of July, Princess Augusta of Cambridge was married in the chapel at Buckingham Palace to the hereditary Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz. Princess Augusta was the elder of the two daughters of the Duke of Cambridge, was three years younger than the Queen, and at the time of her marriage was twenty-one years of age. In the cousins' childhood and early youth, during the reign of King William, the Duke of Cambridge had acted as the King's representative in Hanover, so that his family were much in Germany. At the date of the Queen's accession, Princess Augusta, a girl of fifteen, was considered old enough to appear with the rest of the royal family at the banquet at Guildhall, and in the other festivities which commemorated the beginning of the new reign. She figures in the various pictures of the Coronation, the Queen's marriage, &c. &c., and won the enthusiastic admiration of Leslie when he went to Cambridge House to take the portraits of the different members of the family for one of his pictures. Only a year before she had, in the character of Princess Claude of France, been one of the most graceful masquers at the Queen's Plantagenet Ball, and among the bridesmaids on the present occasion were two of the beauties at the ball, Lady Alexandrina Vane and Lady Clementina Villiers. Princess Augusta was marrying a young German prince, three years her senior, a kinsman of her father's through his mother, Queen Charlotte. She was going to the small northern duchy which had sent so brave a little queen to England.

Queen Victoria, Prince Albert, and all the royal family in the country, including the King of Hanover, who had remained to grace the ceremony, were present at the wedding, which, in old fashion, took place in the evening. Among the foreign guests were the King and Queen of the Belgians, the Prince and Princess of Oldenburg, the Crown Prince of Wurtemberg, &c. &c. The ambassadors, Cabinet Ministers, and officers of State were in attendance. The Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and the Bishops of London and Norwich, officiated. The marriage was registered and attested in the great dining room at Buckingham Palace. Then there passed away from the scene the Princess who had been for some years the solitary representative of the royal young ladyhood of England, as her sister, Princess Mary, was eleven years Princess Augusta's junior, and still only a little girl of ten. Princess Augusta had an annuity of three thousand a year voted to her by Parliament on her marriage.

A month later, on the 28th of August, the Queen went by railway to Southampton, in order to go on board the royal yacht for a trip to the Isle of Wight and the Devonshire coast. At Southampton Pier, the rain was falling heavily. Her Majesty had been received by the Mayor and Corporation, the Duke of Wellington, and other official personages, when it was discovered that there was not sufficient covering for the stage or gangway, which was to be run out between the pier and the yacht. Then the members of the Southampton Corporation were moved to follow the example of Sir Walter Raleigh in the service which introduced him to the notice of Queen Elizabeth. They pulled off their red gowns, spread them on the gangway, and so procured a dry footing for her Majesty.

Lady Bloomfield, as Miss Liddell, in the capacity of Maid of Honour in waiting, was with the Queen, and has furnished a few particulars of the pleasant voyage. The Queen landed frequently, returning to the yacht at night and sleeping on board. At the Isle of Wight she visited Norris Castle, where she had stayed in her youth, asking to see some of the rooms, and walking on the terrace. She told her companions that she would willingly have bought the place but could not afford it. At one point all the party except Lady Canning were overcome by sea sickness, which is no

respector of persons. At Dartmouth the Queen entered her barge and was rowed round the harbour, for the better inspection of the place, and the gratification of the multitude on the quays and in every description of sailing craft. At Plymouth the visitors landed and proceeded to Mount Edgcumbe, the beautiful seat of the Edgcumbe family. Wherever her Majesty went she made collections of flowers, which she had dried and kept as mementoes of the scenes in which they had been gathered. In driving through Plymouth, the crowd was so great, and pressed so much on the escort, that the infantry bayonets crossed in the carriages.

At Falmouth, the Queen was again rowed in her barge round the harbour, but the concourse of small boats became dangerous, as their occupants deserted the helms and rushed to one side to see the Queen, and the royal barge could only be extricated by the rowers exerting their utmost strength and skill, and forcing a passage through the swarming flotilla. The Mayor of Falmouth was a Quaker, and asked permission to keep on his hat while reading his address to the Queen. The Mayor of Truro, who with the Mayor of Penryn had accompanied their official brother when he put off in a small boat to intercept her Majesty in her circuit round the harbour, was doomed to play a more undignified part. He unluckily overleaped himself and fell into the water, so that he and his address, being too wet for presentation, were obliged to be put on shore again.

On board the Queen used to amuse herself with a favourite occupation of the ladies of the day, plaiting paper so as to resemble straw plait for bonnets. She was sufficiently skilled in the art to instruct her Maid of Honour in it.

On one occasion the Queen chanced to have her camp-stool set where it shut up the door of the place that held the sailors' grog-tubs. After much hanging about and consulting with the authorities, she was made acquainted with the fact, when she rose on condition that a glass of grog should be brought to her. She tasted it and said, "I am afraid I can only make the same remark I did once before, that I think it would be very good if it were stronger," an observation that called forth the unqualified delight of the men. Sometimes in the evening the sailors, at her Majesty's request, danced hornpipes on deck.

But the Queen's cruises this year were not to end on English or even Scotch ground. She was to make the first visit to France which had been paid by an English sovereign since Henry VIII. met Francis I. on the field of the Cloth of Gold. Earlier in the year two of Louis Philippe's sons, the sailor Prince Joinville, "tall, dark, and good looking, with a large beard, but, unfortunately for him, terribly deaf," and his brother, the man of intellect and culture if not of genius, the Duc d'Aumale, "much shorter and very fair," had been together at Windsor; and had doubtless arranged the preliminaries of the informal visit which the Queen was to pay to Louis Philippe. The King of France and his large family were in the habit of spending some time in summer or autumn at Chateau d'Eu, near the seaport of Treport, in Normandy; and to this point the Queen could easily run across in her yacht and exchange friendly greetings, without the elaborate preparations and manifold trouble which must be the accompaniment of a State visit to the Tuileries.

Accordingly the Queen and Prince Albert, on the 1st of September, sailed past the Eddystone Lighthouse, where they were joined by a little fleet of war-ships, and struck off for the coast of France. Besides her suite, the Queen was accompanied by two of her ministers, Lords Aberdeen and Liverpool. With the first, a shrewd worthy Scot, distinguished as a

statesman by his experience, calm sagacity, and unblemished integrity, her Majesty and Prince Albert were destined to have cordial relations in the years to come.

In the meantime, French country people were pouring into Treport, where the King's barge lay ready. It was provided with a crimson silk awning, having white muslin curtains over a horseshoe-shaped seat covered with crimson velvet, capable of containing eleven or twelve persons. The rowers were clad in white, with red sashes and, red ribands round their hats.

The Queen was to land by crossing the deck of a vessel moored along the quay and mounting a ladder, the steps of which were covered with crimson velvet. At five o'clock in the afternoon the King and his whole family, a great cortege, arrived on horseback and in open chars-a-bancs. Prince Joinville had met the yacht at Cherbourg and gone on board. As soon as it lay-to the King came alongside in his barge. The citizen King was stout, florid, and bluff-looking, with thick grizzled hair brushed up into a point. As the exiled Duke of Orleans, in the days of the great Revolution, he had been a friend of the Queen's father, the Duke of Kent. The King did not fail to remind his guest of this, after he had kissed her on each cheek, kissed her hand, and told her again and again how delighted he was to see her. When the two sovereigns entered the barge the standards of England and France were hoisted together, and amidst royal salutes from the vessels in the roads and from the batteries on shore, to the music of regimental bands, in the sunset of a fine autumn evening the party landed.

At the end of the jetty the ladies of the royal family of France with their suites stood in a curved line. Queen Amelie, with her snowy curls and benevolent face, was two paces in advance of the others. Behind her were her daughter and daughter-in-law, the Queen of the Belgians and the widowed Duchesse d'Orleans, who appeared in public for the first time since her husband's death a year before. A little farther back stood Madame Adelaide, the King's sister, and the other princesses, the younger daughter and the daughters-in-law of the house. Louis Philippe presented Queen Victoria to his Queen, who "took her by both hands and saluted her several times on both cheeks with evident warmth of manner." Queen Louise, and at least one of the other ladies, were well known to the visitor, whom they greeted gladly, while the air was filled with shouts of "Vive la Reine Victoria!" "Vive la Reine d'Angleterre!"

The Queen, who was dressed simply, as usual, in a purple satin gown, a black mantilla trimmed with lace, and a straw bonnet with straw-coloured ribands and one ostrich feather, immediately entered the King's char-a-bancs, which had a canopy and curtains that were left open. Lady Bloomfield describes it as drawn by twelve large clumsy horses. There was a coachman on the box, with three footmen behind, and there was "a motley crowd of outriders on wretched horses and dressed in different liveries." The other chars-a-bancs with six horses followed, and the whole took their way to the Chateau, a quaint and pleasant dwelling, some of it as old as the time of the Great Mademoiselle.

A stately banquet was held in the evening in the banqueting-room, hung round with royal portraits and historical pictures, the table heavy with gold and silver plate, including the gold plateau and the great gold vases filled with flowers. The King, in uniform, sat at the centre of the table. He had on his right hand Queen Victoria, wearing a gown of crimson velvet, the order of the garter and a parure of diamonds and emeralds, but having her hair simply braided. On her other side sat Prince Joinville. On the King's left hand was Queen Louise. The Duchesse d'Orleans, in

accordance with French etiquette for widows in their weeds, did not come to the dinner-table. Opposite the King sat his Queen, with Prince Albert on her right hand and the Duc d'Aumale on her left. The royal host and hostess carved like any other old-fashioned couple.

The Queen received the same lively impressions from her first visit to France that she had experienced on her first visit to Scotland. Apart from the scenery there was yet more to strike her. The decidedly foreign dresses of the people, the strange tongue, the mill going on Sunday, the different sound of the church bells--nothing escaped her. There was also, in the large family of her brother king and ally--connected with her by so many ties, every member familiar to her by hearsay, if not known to her personally--much to interest her. The Queen had been, to all intents and purposes, brought up like an only child, and her genial disposition had craved for entire sympathy and equal companionship. She seems to have regarded wistfully, as an only child often regards, what she had never known, the full, varied, yet united life of a large, happy, warmly attached family circle. When she saw her children possessed of the blessing which had been denied to her in her early days, she was tempted to look back on the widowed restricted household in Kensington Palace as on a somewhat chill and grey environment. She has more than once referred to her childhood as dull and sad by comparison with what she lived to know of the young life of other children.

But the great royal household of France at this date, in addition to its wealth of interests and occupations, and its kindness to the stranger who was so quick to respond to kindness, was singularly endowed with elements of attractiveness for Queen Victoria. It appeared, indeed, as if all life at its different stages, in its different aspects, even in its different nationalities, met and mingled with a wonderful charm under the one roof-tree. Besides the old parent couple and the maiden aunt, who had seen such changes of fortune, there were three young couples, each with their several careers before them. There was the bride of yesterday, the youngest daughter of the house, Princess Clementine, with her young German husband, the Queen and Prince Albert's kinsman; there was Nemours, wedded to another German cousin, the sweet-tempered golden-haired Princess Victoire; there was Joinville, with his dark-haired Brazilian Princess. [Footnote: A kinswoman of Maria da Gloria's] It had been said that he had gone farther, as became a sailor, in search of a wife than any other prince in Europe. She was very pretty in a tropical fashion, very piquante, and, perhaps, just a little *sauvage*. She had never seen snow, and the rules and ceremonies of a great European court were almost as strange to her. Lady Bloomfield mentions her as if she were something of a spoilt child who could hardly keep from showing that the rigid laws of her new position fretted and bored her. She wore glowing pomegranate blossoms in her hair, and looked pensive, as if she were pining for the gorgeous little hummingbirds and great white magnolias--the mixture of natural splendour and ease, passion and languor, of a typical South American home.

D'Aumale and Montpensier were still gay young bachelors, and well would it have been for the welfare of the Orleans family and the credit of Louis Philippe if one of them had remained so. There was a widow as well as a bride in the house. There were the cherished memories of a dearly-prized lost son and daughter to touch with tender sorrow its blithest moments and lightest words. The Queen had to make the acquaintance of Helene, Duchesse d'Orleans; [Footnote: Princess Helena of Mecklenburg-Schwerin.] tall, thin and pale, not handsome, but better than handsome, full of character and feeling, shrinking from observation in her black dress, with the shadow of

a life-long grief over her heart and life. And the visitor had to hear again of the gifted Princess Marie, the friend of Ary Scheffer, whose statue of Jeanne d'Arc is the best monument of a life cut down in its brilliant promise. Princess Marie's devoted sister Louise, Queen of the Belgians, in her place as the eldest surviving daughter of France, had long been Queen Victoria's great friend. Finally, there was the third generation, headed by the fatherless boy, "little Paris," with regard to whom few then doubted that he would one day sit on the throne of France.

It was not principally because the Chateau d'Eu was in France that the Queen wrote, the first morning she awoke there, the fulfilment of her favourite air-castle of so many years was like a dream, or that she grieved when her visit was over. She sought to find, and believed she had found, a whole host of new friends and kindred--another father and mother, more brothers and sisters, nephews and nieces, to make her life still richer and more full of kindly ties.

The speciality in the form of entertainment at Chateau d'Eu was drives in the sociable charr-a-bancs in the neighbouring forest, ending in _dejeuners_ and _fetes-champetres_, which the Queen enjoyed heartily, both because they were novel to her and because they were spontaneous and untrammelled. "So pretty, so merry, so rural," she declared. "Like the fetes in Germany," Prince Albert said. The long, frequently rough drives under the yellowing trees in the golden September light, the camp-chairs, the wine in plain bottles, the improvised kitchen hidden among the bushes, the many young people of high rank all so gay, the king full of liveliness and brusqueness, his queen full of motherliness and consideration for all--everything was delightful.

One pathetic little incident occurred when the guests were being shown over the parish church of Notre Dame. As they came to the crypt, with its ancient monuments of the Comtes d'Eu, the Duchesse d'Orleans was overcome with emotion, and the Queen of the Belgians drew her aside. When the rest of the party passed again through the church, on their way back, they came upon the two mourning women prostrate before one of the altars, the Duchesse weeping bitterly.

The King presented Queen Victoria with fine specimens of Gobelin tapestry and of Sevres china. He went farther in professions and compliments. He was not content to leave the discussion of politics to M. Guizot and Lord Aberdeen. Louis Philippe volunteered to the Queen's minister the statement that he would not give his son to Spain (referring to a proposed marriage between the Duc de Montpensier and the Infanta Luisa, the sister of the young Queen Isabella, who had been lately declared of age), even if he were asked. To which the stout Scot replied, without beating about the bush, "that except one of the sons of France, any aspirant whom Spain might choose would be acceptable to England."

Louis Philippe, Queen Amelie, and the whole family escorted the Queen and the Prince on board the yacht, parting with them affectionately. Prince Joinville accompanied the couple to the Pavilion, Brighton. In the course of the sail there was a race between his ship and the _Black Eagle_, in which the English vessel won, to the French sailors' disgust.

Louis Philippe felt great satisfaction at a visit which proved his cordial relations with England, and served to remove the reproach which he seemed to think clung to him and prevented the other European royal families from fraternising with him and his children as they would otherwise have done--namely, that he was not the representative of the elder, and what

many were pleased to consider the legitimate, branch of the Bourbons. He was but a king set up by the people, whom the people might pull down again. There was not much apparent prospect of this overthrow then, though the forces were at work which brought it about. In token of his gratification, and as a memorial of what had given him so much pleasure, the King caused a series of pictures to be taken of Queen Victoria's landing, and of the various events of her stay. These pictures remain, among several series, transferred to the upper rooms of one of the French palaces, and furnish glimpses of other things that have vanished besides the fashion of the day. There the various groups reappear. Queen Amelie with her piled-up curls, the citizen King and their numerous young people doing honour to the young Queen of England and her husband, both looking juvenile in their turn--all the more so for a certain antiquated cut in their garments at this date, a formality in his hat and neckerchief, a demureness in her close bonnet, and a pretty show of youthful matronliness in the little lace cap which, if we mistake not, she wears on one occasion.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE QUEEN'S TRIP TO OSTEND:--VISITS TO DRAYTON, CHATSWORTH, AND BELVOIR.

"Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coute." In the course of another week the Queen took a second trip to the Continent, sailing to Ostend to pay the most natural visit in the world--the only thing singular about it was that it had been so long delayed--to her uncle, King Leopold. The yacht, which had been lying off Brighton, was accompanied by eight other steamers, and joined at Walmer by two ships of the line. At Dover a salute was fired from the castle. At Deal the Duke of Wellington came on board and dined with the royal party, the Queen watching with some anxiety the return of the old man in his boat, through a considerable surf which wetted him thoroughly, before he mounted his horse and rode off to Walmer, to superintend the illumination of the Castle in lines of light. In like manner every ship lying in the Downs glittered through the darkness.

At two o'clock on the following afternoon the Queen and the Prince reached Ostend, where they were received by King Leopold and Queen Louise. There had been some uncertainty whether the travellers, after not too smooth a passage, would be equal to the fatigue of a banquet at the Hotel de Ville that evening. But repose is the good thing to which royalty can rarely attain, so it was settled that the banquet should go on. The display was less, and there was more of undress among the chief personages than there had been at the opening banquet at Chateau d'Eu. The Queen must have looked to her host not far removed from the docile young niece he had so carefully trained and tutored, as she sat by him in white lace and muslin, with flowers in her hair--only bound by a *ferroniere* of diamonds. The King and Prince Albert were in plain clothes, save that they showed the ribands and insignia of the orders of the Garter and the Bath; the Queen of the Belgians wore a white lace bonnet. It was in the main a simple family party made for the travellers.

The next day the Prince and Princess of Hohenlohe arrived, when the elder sister would have knelt and paid her homage to the younger, had not her Majesty prevented her with a sisterly embrace. Ostend was the head-quarters of the royal party, from which in the mellow autumn time they visited Bruges and Ghent. "The old cities of Flanders had put on their fairest array and were very tastefully decorated with tapestries,

flowers, trees, pictures, &c. &c." The crowds of staid Flemings were stirred up to joyous enthusiasm.

The Queen's artistic tastes, in addition to her fresh sympathies and her affection for her uncle and his wife, rendered the whole scene delightful to her. She was fitted to relish each detail, from the carillons to the carvings. She inspected all that was to be seen at Bruges, from the Palace of Justice to the Chapel of the Holy Blood. At Ghent, she went to the church of St. Bavon, where the Van Eycks have left the best part of their wonderful picture before the altar while the dust of Hubert and Margaret, rests in the crypt below. She saw the fragment of the palace in which John of Gaunt was born, when an English queen-consort, Philippa, resided there five hundred years before. She visited the old Beguinage, with the shadowlike figures of the nuns in black and white flitting to and fro.

From Ostend the Queen and Prince Albert proceeded to the cheerful, prosperous, and, by comparison, modern town of Brussels, King Leopold's capital, and stayed a night at his palace of Lacken, which had been built by Prince Albert's ancestor and namesake, Duke Albert of Sechsen, when he governed the Netherlands along with his wife the Archduchess Christina, the favourite daughter of Maria Theresa and the sister of Marie Antoinette. From Brussels the travellers journeyed to Antwerp, where they saw another grand cathedral and witnessed the antique spectacle of "the Giant" before the palace in the Place de Mer.

On leaving Antwerp, the Queen and the Prince sailed for England, escorted so far on their way by King Leopold and Queen Louise. "It was such a joy to me," her Majesty wrote to her uncle, soon after their parting, "to be once again under the roof of one who has ever been a father to me." The vessel lay all night in Margate Roads, and the next morning arrived at Woolwich.

In the month of October her Majesty and the Prince visited Cambridge, where he received his degree of LL.D. A witty letter, written by Professor Sedgwick, describing the royal visit to the Woodwardian Museum, is quoted by Sir Theodore Martin

"....I received a formidable note from our master telling me of an intended royal visit to the Woodwardian den of wild beasts, immediately after Prince Albert's degree; and enjoining me to clear a passage by the side entrance through the old divinity schools. This threw me off my balance, for since the building of the new library this place of ancient theological disputation has been converted into a kind of lumber-room, and was filled from end to end with every kind of unclean things--mops, slop-pails, chimney-pots, ladders, broken benches, rejected broken cabinets, two long ladders, and an old rusty scythe were the things that met the eye, and all covered with half an inch of venerable dust. There is at the end of the room a kind of gallery or gangway, by which the undergraduates used to find their way to my lecture-room, but this was also full of every kind of rubbish and abomination. We did our best; soon tumbled all impediments into the area below, spread huge mats over the slop-pails, and, in a time incredibly short, a goodly red carpet was spread along the gangway, and thence down my lecture-room to the door of the Museum. But still there was a dreadful evil to encounter. What we had done brought out such a rank compound of villanous smells that even my plebeian nose was sorely put to it; so I went to a chemist's, procured certain bottles of sweet odours, and sprinkled them cunningly where most wanted.

"Inside the Museum all was previously in order, and inside the entrance door from the gangway was a huge picture of the Megatherium, under which the Queen must pass to the Museum, and at that place I was to receive her Majesty. So I dusted my outer garments and ran to the Senate House, and I was just in time to see the Prince take his degree and join in the acclamations. This ended, I ran back to the feet of the Megatherium, and in a few minutes the royal party entered the mysterious gangway above described. They halted, I half thought in a spirit of mischief, to contemplate the furniture of the schools, and the Vice-chancellor (Whewell) pointed out the beauties of the dirty spot where Queen Bess had sat two hundred and fifty years before, when she presided at the Divinity Act. A few steps more brought them under the feet of the, Megatherium. I bowed as low as my anatomy would let me, and the Queen and Prince bowed again most graciously, and so began act first. The Queen seemed happy and well pleased, and was mightily taken with one or two of my monsters, especially with the 'Plesiosaurus,' and a gigantic stag. The subject was new to her; but the Prince evidently had a good general knowledge of the old world, and not only asked good questions and listened with great courtesy to all I had to say, but in one or two instances helped me on by pointing to the rare things in my collection, especially in that part of it which contains the German fossils. I thought myself very fortunate in being able to exhibit the finest collection of German fossils to be seen in England. They fairly went the round of the Museum, neither of them seemed in a hurry, and the Queen was quite happy to hear her husband talk about a novel subject with so much knowledge and spirit. He called her back once or twice to look at a fine impression of a dragon-fly which I have in the Solenhope slate. Having glanced at the long succession of our fossils, from the youngest to the oldest, the party again moved into the lecture-room. The Queen was again mightily taken with the long neck of the Plesiosaurus; under it was a fine head of an Ichthyosaurus which I had just been unpacking. I did not know anything about it, as I had myself never seen its face before, for it arrived in my absence. The Queen asked what it was. I told her as plainly as I could. She then asked whence it came; and what do you think I said? That I did not know the exact place, but I believed it came as a delegate from the monsters of the lower world to greet her Majesty on her arrival at the University. I did not repeat this till I found that I had been overheard, and that my impertinence had been talked of among my Cambridge friends. All was, however, taken in good part, and soon afterwards the royal party again approached the mysterious gangway. The Queen and Prince bowed, the Megatherium packed up his legs close under the abdominal region of his august body, the royal pageant passed under, and was soon out of my sight and welcomed by the cheers of the multitude before the library.

"I will only add that I went through every kind of backward movement to admiration of all beholders, only having once trodden on the hinder part of my cassock, and never once having fallen during my retrogradations before the face of the Queen. In short, had I been a king crab, I could not have walked backwards better."

When in Cambridgeshire the Queen and the Prince visited Lord Hardwicke at Wimpole, where the whole county was assembled at a ball, and Earl De la Warr at Bourne.

In this month of October the great agitator for the repeal of the Irish Union, Daniel O'Connell, was arrested, in company with other Irish agitators, on a charge of sedition and conspiracy. After a prolonged trial, which lasted to the early summer of the following year, he was sentenced to a year's imprisonment and the payment of a fine of two

thousand pounds, with recognisances to keep the peace for seven years. The sentence lapsed on technical grounds, but its moral effect was considerable.

In the month of September the Queen and Prince Albert visited Sir Robert Peel at Drayton, travelling by railroad, with every station they passed thronged by spectators. At Rugby the pupils of the great school, headed by Dr. Tait, were drawn up on the platform. Sir Robert Peel received his guests in a pavilion erected for the occasion, and conducted her Majesty to her carriage, round which was an escort of Staffordshire yeomanry. At the entrance to the town of Tamworth, the mayor, kneeling, presented his mace, with the words, "I deliver to your Majesty the mace;" to which the Queen replied, "Take it, it cannot be in better hands."

At eight o'clock in the evening Sir Robert Peel conducted the Queen, who wore pink silk and a profusion of emeralds and diamonds, to the dining-room, Prince Albert giving his arm to Lady Peel. Among the guests were the Duke of Wellington and the Duke and Duchess of Buccleugh. The Duchess on one occasion during the visit wore an old brocade which had belonged to a great grand-aunt of the Duke's, and was pronounced very beautiful. After dinner the party withdrew to the library. Either on this evening or the next the Queen played at the quaint old game of "Patience," with some of her ladies, while the gentlemen "stood about."

On the following day her Majesty walked in the grounds, while Prince Albert gratified an earnest wish by visiting Birmingham and inspecting its manufactures, undeterred, perhaps rather allured, by the fact that the great town of steel and iron was regarded as one of the centres of Chartism. This did not prevent its mighty population from displaying the most exultant loyalty as they pressed round the carriage in which the Prince and the Mayor, reported to be a rank Chartist, drove to glass and silver-plate manufactories and papier-mache works, the town hall, and the schools.

At the railway station the Prince was joined by the Queen-dowager and Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar, who came from Whitley Court to accompany him back to Drayton. The next morning was devoted to shooting, when Prince Albert confirmed his good character as a sportsman by bringing down sixty pheasants, twenty-five hares, eight rabbits, one woodcock, and two wild ducks. In the afternoon the Queen visited Lichfield, to which she had gone as "the young Princess." Indeed, the next part of the tour was over old ground in Derbyshire, for from Drayton the royal couple proceeded to Chatsworth, and spent several days amidst the beauties of the Peak. Twenty thousand persons were assembled in the magnificent grounds at Chatsworth, and artillery had been brought from Woolwich to fire a salute. Many old friends, notably members of the great Whig houses--Lord Melbourne, Lord and Lady Palmerston, the Marquis and Marchioness of Normanby--met to grace the occasion. There was a grand ball, at which the aristocracy of invention and industry, trade and wealth, represented by the Arkwrights and the Strutts, mingled with the autocracy of ancient birth and landed property. Mrs. Arkwright was presented to the Queen. Her Majesty opened the ball with the Duke of Devonshire, dancing afterwards with Lord Morpeth and Lord Leveson--in the last instance, "a country dance, with much vigour"--and waltzing with Prince Albert. On the 2nd of December the party visited Haddon Hall, the ancient seat of the Vernons, where Dorothy Vernon lived and loved. On their return in the evening, the great conservatory was brilliantly illuminated, and there was a display of fireworks.

On the 3rd, Sunday, the Queen walked through the kitchen gardens and

botanical gardens, and drove to Edensor. On the return of the party by the Home Farm, they went to see a prize-pig, weighing seventy pounds. The day ended with a concert of sacred music.

On Monday, the 4th, the Queen and the Prince parted from the Duke of Devonshire at Derby, and proceeded to Nottingham--not to visit what remained of the Castle so long associated with John and Lucy Hutchinson, or to penetrate to the cradle of hosiery, daring an encounter with the "Nottingham Lambs," the roughest of roughs, who at election times were wont to add to their natural beauties by painting their faces red, white, and blue, as savages tattoo themselves--but as a step on the way to Belvoir, the seat of the Duke of Rutland. There her Majesty entered that most aristocratic portion of England known as "The Dukeries." The Duke of Rutland, attended by two hundred of his tenantry on horseback, awaited his guests at Red Mile, and rode with them the three miles to Belvoir. Soon after the Queen's arrival, Dr. Stanton presented her Majesty with the key of Stanton Town, according to the tenure on which that estate is held.

Belvoir was a sight in itself, even after the stately lawns of Chatsworth. "I do not know whether you ever saw Belvoir," writes Fanny Kemble; "it is a beautiful place; the situation is noble, and the views, from the windows of the castle, and the terraces and gardens hanging over the steep hill crowned by it, is charming. The whole vale of Belvoir, and miles of meadow and woodland, lie stretched below it, like a map unrolled to the distant horizon, presenting extensive and varied prospects in every direction; while from the glen which surrounds the castle-hill, like a deep moat filled with a forest, the spring winds swell up as from a sea of woodland, and the snatches of birds' carolling, and cawing rooks' discourse, float up to one from the topmost branches of tall trees, far below one's feet, as one stands on the battlemented terraces."

December was not the best time for seeing some of the attractions of Belvoir; but Lady Bloomfield has written of her Majesty's proverbial good fortune in these excursions: "The Queen yachts during the equinox, and has the sea a dead calm; visits about in the dead of winter, and has summer weather." There were other respects in which Belvoir was in its glory in midwinter--it belonged to a hunting neighbourhood and a hunting society. Whereas at Drayton and Chatsworth the royal pair had been principally surrounded by Tory and Whig statesmen, at Belvoir, while the Queen-dowager and some of the most distinguished members of the company at Chatsworth were again of the party, the Queen and the Prince found themselves in the centre of the fox-hunters of Melton Mowbray.

Happily, the Prince could hunt with the best, and the Queen liked to look on at her husband's sport, so that the order of the day was the throwing off of the hounds at Croxton. In the evening the Queen played whist. The next day there was a second splendid meet royally attended, with cards again at night. The Prince wrote of one of these "runs," to Baron Stockmar, that he had distinguished himself by keeping up with the hounds all through. "Anson" and "Bouverie" had both fallen on his left and right, but he had come off "with a whole skin." We are also told that the Prince's horsemanship excited the amazed admiration of the spectators, to the Queen's half-impatient amusement. "One can scarcely credit the absurdity of the people," she wrote to her uncle, King Leopold; "but Albert's riding so boldly has made such a sensation that it has been written all over the country, and they make much more of it than if he had done some great act." Apparently the Melton Mowbray fox-hunters had, till now, hardly appreciated that fine combination of physical and mental qualities, which is best expressed in two lines of an old song:--

His step is foremost in the ha',
His sword in battle keen.

On the 7th of December the visitors left for Windsor, passing through endless triumphal arches on the road, greeted at Leicester by seven thousand school children.

Shortly after the Queen's return home, she and the Prince heard, with regret, of the death of Thomas Graham, Lord Lynedoch. The veteran fell, indeed, like a shock of corn ripe for the garner, until it had been difficult to recognise in the feeble, nearly blind old man, upwards of ninety, the stout soldier of Barossa and Vittoria. But he carried with him many a memory which could never be recalled. Gallant captain though he was, his whole life was touched with tender romance. Born only four years after the Jacobite rebellion of '45, married in 1774, when he was twenty-five years of age, to his beautiful wife, the Hon. Mary Cathcart--whose sister Jane was married on the same day to John, Duke of Athole--for eighteen years Mr. Graham lived the quiet life of a country gentleman in Lynedoch Cottage, the most charming of cottages _ornes_, thatch-roofed, with a conservatory as big as itself, set down in a fine park. The river Almond flowed by, serving as a kind of boundary, and marking the curious limit which the plague kept in its last visit to Scotland. On a green "haugh" beneath what is known as the Burnbraes, within a short distance of Lynedoch Cottage, may be seen the carefully-kept double grave of two girls heroines of Scotch song, who died there of the "pest," from which they were fleeing.

Mr. Graham was happy in his marriage, though it is said Mrs. Graham did not relish that element in her lot which had made her the wife of a simple commoner, while her sister, not more fair, was a duchess. Death entered on the scene, and caused the distinctions of rank to be forgotten. The cherished wife was laid in a quiet grave in Methven kirk-yard, and the childless widower mourned for the desire of his heart with a grief that refused to be comforted. By the advice of his friends, who feared for his reason or his life, he went abroad, where he joined Lord Hood as a volunteer. It is said he fought his first battle in a black coat, with the hope that, being thus rendered conspicuous in any act of daring which he might perform, he would be stricken down before the day was done. Honours, not death, were to be his portion in his new career. A commission, rapid promotion, the praise of his countrymen followed. He received the thanks of both Houses of Parliament. It was on this occasion that Sheridan said eloquently, in allusion to the soldier's services in the retreat to Corunna, "In the hour of peril Graham was their best adviser, in the hour of disaster Graham was their surest consolation." A peerage, which there was none to share or inherit, a pension, the Orders of the Bath, of St. Michael and St. George, &c. &c., were conferred upon him. It seemed only the other day since Lord Lynedoch, hearing of her Majesty's first visit to Scotland, hurried home from Switzerland to receive his queen. A place in Westminster Abbey was ready for all that was mortal of him, but he had left express injunctions that he was to be buried in Methven kirk-yard, beside the wife of his youth, dead more than half a century before.

Most people know the history of Gainsborough's lovely picture of Mrs. Graham, the glory of the Scotch National Gallery--that it was not brought home till after the death of the lady, whose husband could not bear to look on her painted likeness, and sent it, in its case, to the care of a London merchant, in whose keeping it remained unopened, and well-nigh forgotten, for upwards of fifty years. On Lord Lynedoch's death, the

picture came into the possession of his heir, Mr. Graham, of Redgorton, who presented it--a noble gift--to the Scotch National Academy.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ALLIES FROM AFAR.--DEATH AND ABSENCE.--BIRTHDAY GREETINGS.

Lady Bloomfield describes a set of visitors at Windsor this year such as have not infrequently come a long way to pay their homage to the Queen, and to see for themselves the wonders of civilisation. The party consisted of five Indian chiefs, two squaws, a little girl, and a half-breed, accompanied by Mr. Catlin as interpreter. The Queen received the strangers in the Waterloo Gallery. The elder chief made a speech with all the dignity and self-confidence of his race. It was to the effect that he was much pleased the Great Spirit had permitted him to cross the large lake (the Atlantic) in safety. They had wished to see their great mother, the Queen. England was the light of the world; its rays illuminated all nations, and reached even to their country. They found it much larger than they expected, and the buildings were finer than theirs, and the wigwam (Windsor Castle) was very grand, and they were pleased to see it. Nevertheless, they should return to their own country and be quite happy and contented. They thanked the Great Spirit they had enough to eat and drink. They thought the people in England must be very rich, and they looked pleased and happy. They (the Chippewas) had served under the English sovereigns and had fought their battles. He--the chief--had served under ----, the greatest chief that had ever existed or had ever been known. He had been on the field of battle when his general was killed and had helped to bury him. He had received kindness from the English nation, for which he thanked them; their wigwams at home had been made comfortable with English goods. He had nothing more to say. He had finished.

These Indians had their faces tattooed and were clad in skins, with large bunches of feathers on their heads. The men were armed with tomahawks, clubs, wooden swords, bows, and spears. The women were in the height of squaw-fashion, with long black hair, dresses reaching to their feet, and quantities of coloured beads. Two war-dances were danced before the Queen, one of the chiefs playing a sort of drum, the music being assisted by shrieks and cries and the shaking of a rattle. The dance began by the dancers quivering in every joint, then passed into a slow movement, which ended in violent action.

Such an interlude was welcome in the necessary monotony of Court life to those who do not penetrate into its inmost circle. Lady Bloomfield writes, "Everything else changes; the life at Court never does; it is exactly the same from day to day and year to year." And she records, as an agreeable diversion from the set routine, the mistake of one of the pages, by which an equerry-in-waiting, in the absence of another official, received a wrong order about dinner. When the Queen dines in private there is a purely Household dinner in the room appointed for the purpose. In those days the Queen rarely dined two days consecutively in private, so that her suite were surprised by the announcement that there were to be two Household dinners--the one after the other. The ladies and gentlemen sat down together in the Oak Room at eight o'clock, and had finished their soup and fish, when a message came from the Queen to know who had given the order that they were to dine without her. The company stared blankly at each other, finished their dinner with what appetite they might, and adjourned to the drawing-room, when they were told that her Majesty was

coming. One can fancy the consternation of the courtiers, who were "only in plain evening coats," instead of Windsor uniform. Happily it occurred to the defaulters that it would be but right to anticipate her Majesty, so that all rushed off to the corridor to meet the Queen and the Prince, who were much amused by the blunder.

There is a pleasant little picture of the young family at Windsor in one of the Prince's letters this winter: "The children, in whose welfare you take so kindly an interest, are making most favourable progress. The eldest, "Pussy" (the Princess Royal at three years of age), is now quite a little personage. She speaks English and French with great fluency and choice of phrase.... The little gentleman (the Prince of Wales) is grown much stronger than he was.... The youngest (Princess Alice) is the beauty of the family, and is an extraordinarily good and merry child."

January, 1844, brought a severe trial to Prince Albert, and through him to the Queen, in the sudden though not quite unexpected death of his father at Gotha, at the comparatively early age of sixty years. Father and son were much attached to each other, they had been parted for nearly four years since the Prince's marriage, and the early meeting to which they had been looking forward was denied to them.

The Queen wrote to Baron Stockmar, in the beginning of February, "Oh, if you could be here now with us: My darling stands so alone, and his grief is so great and touching.... He says (forgive my bad writing, but my tears blind me) I am now all to him. Oh, if I can be, I shall be only too happy; but I am so disturbed and affected myself, I fear I can be but of little use."

"I have been with the Queen a good deal, altogether,"--Lady Lyttelton refers to this time; "she is very affecting in her grief, which is in truth all on the Prince's account; and every time she looks at him her eyes fill afresh. He has suffered dreadfully, being very fond of his father, and his separation from him and the suddenness of the event, and his having expected to see him soon, all contribute to make him worse."

The Prince himself wrote to his trusty friend, "God will give us all strength to bear the blow becomingly. That we were separated gives it a peculiar poignancy; not to see him, not to be present to close his eyes, not to help to comfort those he leaves behind, and to be comforted by them is very hard. Here we sit together, poor Mama (the Duchess of Kent, the late Duke of Coburg's sister), Victoria and myself, and weep, with a great cold public around us, insensible as stone."

The Prince had one source of consolation, that of a good son who had never caused his father pain. He had another strong solace in the reality and worth of the new ties which were replacing the old, both in his own case and in that of his brother. "The good Alexandrine," Prince Albert remarked, referring to his sister-in-law, "seems to me in the whole picture like the consoling angel." Then he goes on, "Just so is Victoria to me, who feels and shares my grief and is the treasure on which my whole existence rests. The relation in which we stand to each other leaves nothing to desire. It is a union of heart and soul, and is therefore noble; and in it the poor children shall find their cradle, so as to be able one day to ensure a like happiness for themselves."

Lady Lyttelton describes a sermon which Archdeacon Wilberforce preached at Windsor at this season, February, 1844. "Just before church time the Queen told me that Archdeacon Wilberforce was going to preach, so I had my treat

most unexpectedly, mercifully I could call it, for the sermon, expressed in his usual golden sweetness of language, was peculiarly practical and useful to myself--I mean, ought to be. 'Hold thee still in the Lord and abide patiently upon him,' was the text, and the peace, trust and rest which breathed in every sentence, ought to do something to assuage any and every _worret_, temporal and spiritual. There were some beautiful passages on looking forward into 'the misty future,' and its misery to a worldly view, and the contrary. The whole was rather the more striking from its seeming to come down so gently upon the emblems of earthly sorrow (referring to the mourning for Prince Albert's father), we are in such 'a boundless contiguity of shade.' There was a beautiful passage--I wish you could have heard it, because you could write it out--about growth in grace being greatest when mind and heart are at rest, and in stillness like the first shoot of spring which is not forwarded by the storm or hurricane, but by the silent dews of early dawn; another upon the melancholy of human life, 'most beautiful because most true.'"

It was judged desirable that the Prince should go to Germany for a fortnight at Easter. It was his first separation from the Queen since their marriage, and both felt it keenly. Lady Lyttelton wrote of her Majesty on the occasion: "The Queen has been behaving like a pattern wife as she is, about the Prince's tour; so feeling and so wretched and yet so unselfish; encouraging him to go, and putting the best face on it to the last moment.... We all feel sadly wretched and unnatural in his absence, and I am actually counting the days on my part as her Majesty is on hers," adds the kindly, sympathetic woman. The Queen of the Belgians,--and later, King Leopold, came over to console their niece by their company during part of her solitude. But her best refreshment must have been the letters with which couriers were constantly riding to and fro, full of a lover's tenderness and a brother's care, from the first to the last; these dispatches came unfailingly. They breathed "the tender green of hope," like the spring which was on the land at the time.

From Dover the husband wrote: "My own darling.... I have been here about an hour and regret the lost time which I might have spent with you. Poor child, you will, while I write, be getting ready for luncheon, and you will find a place vacant where I sat yesterday; in your heart, however, I hope my place will not be vacant. I, at least, have you on board with me in spirit. I reiterate my entreaty, 'Bear up,' and do not give way to low spirits, but try to occupy yourself as much as possible; you are even now half a day nearer to seeing me again; by the time you get this letter you will be a whole one--thirteen more and I am again within your arms."

From Ostend he wrote, "I occupy your old room." From Cologne, "Your picture has been hung up everywhere, and been very prettily wreathed with laurel, so that you will look down from the walls on my _tete-a-tete_ with Bouverie" (the Prince's equerry).... "Every step takes me farther from you--not a cheerful thought." From Gotha, in the centre of his kinsfolk, he told her what delight her gifts had given, and added, "Could you have witnessed the happiness my return gave my family, you would have been amply repaid for the sacrifice of our separation. We spoke much of you." From Reinhardtsbrunn and Rosenau he sent the flowers he had gathered for her. He wrote of the toys he had got for the children, the presents he was bringing for her. At Kalenberg--one of his late father's country seats--he broke out warmly, "Oh, how lovely and friendly is this dear old country; how glad I should be to have my little wife beside me, that I might share my pleasure with her."

Coburg had grown marvellously in beauty. In company with his stepmother,

brother, and sister-in-law, he went to the town church and was deeply moved by the devotional singing, and "an admirable sermon" from the pastor, who had confirmed the two brothers. Afterwards they rode together to their father's last resting-place. The Prince's biographer closes the account of this tour with a few significant words from Prince Albert's diary, in which he noted down in the briefest form the events of each day: "Crossed on the 11th. I arrived at six o'clock in the evening at Windsor. Great joy."

As a surprise for the Queen's birthday this year, the Prince had privately ordered a little picture of angels from Sir C. Eastlake, who had received a similar commission from the Queen for a picture with which she intended to greet the Prince.

A still more welcome surprise to Her Majesty was a miniature of Prince Albert in armour, according to a fancy of the Queen's, by Thorburn, a likeness which proved the best of all the portraits taken of the Prince, the most successful in catching the outward look when it expressed most characteristically the man within. This picture, together with that of the angels holding a medallion bearing the inscription "_Heil und segen_" (Health and Blessing), and all the other presents were placed in a room "turned into a bower by dint of enormous garlands."

The Queen and the Prince's relations with artists were naturally, from the royal couple's artistic tastes, intimate and happy. Accordingly, many pictures not only of great personages in State ceremonies, but of family groups in the simplicity of domestic life, survive as a proof of the connection. Vandyck did not paint Charles I. and Henrietta Maria more frequently than Landseer and some of his contemporaries painted her Majesty, with her husband and children, in the bright and unclouded summer of her life; and Vandyck, never painted his royal patrons in such easy unaffected guise and everyday circumstances. There is such a picture of Landseer's, well known from engravings, in which the Prince is represented in a Highland dress returned late from shooting, seated, surrounded by the trophies of his sport in deer, blackcock, &c. &c., and by a whole colony of delighted dogs,—beautiful Eos conspicuous by her sobriety and reserve, while an enraptured terrier presses forward to lick his master's hand. The Queen, dressed for dinner and still girlish-looking in her white satin, stands talking to the Prince. The Princess Royal, a chubby child of two or three, is prowling childlike among the dead game, curiously making her investigations.

Of many stories told of royal visits to studios, there are two which refer to an _enfant terrible_, the baby son of one of the painters. This small man having undertaken to be cicerone to his father's work, sought specially to point out to her Majesty that two elves were likenesses of himself and a little brother, "only, you know, we don't go about without clothes at home," he volunteered the confidential explanation.

The same child horrified an attentive audience by declining to receive a gracious advance made to him by the Queen, asserting with the utmost candour, "I don't like you."

"But why don't you like me, my boy?" inquired the loving mother of other little children, in some bewilderment.

"Because you are the Queen of England and you killed Queen Mary," the ardent champion of the slain Queen answered boldly.

The story goes on, that after a little laughter at the anachronism, Her Majesty took some trouble to explain to the malcontent that he was wrong, she did not kill Queen Mary, she had been very sorry for her fate. So far from killing her, she, Queen Victoria, was one of Queen Mary's descendants, and it was because she came of the old Stewart line that she reigned over both England and Scotland.

CHAPTER XIX.

ROYAL VISITORS.--THE BIRTH OF PRINCE ALFRED.--A NORTHERN RETREAT.

The year 1844 may be instanced as rich in royal visitors to England. On the 1st of June the King of Saxony arrived and shortly after him a greater lion, the Emperor of Russia. The King of Saxony came as an honest friend and sightseer, entering heartily into the obligations of the latter. There was more doubt as to the motives of the Czar of all the Russias, and considerable wariness was needed in dealing with the northern eagle, whose real object might be, if not to use his beak and claws on the English nation, to employ them on some other nation after he had got an assurance that England would not interfere with his game. Indeed, jealousy of the French, and of the friendship between the Queen and Louis Philippe, was at the bottom of the Emperor's sudden appearance on the scene.

The Emperor had paid England a previous visit so far back as 1816, in the days of George, Prince Regent, when Prince Leopold and Princess Charlotte were the young couple at Claremont. He had then won much admiration and popularity by his strikingly handsome person, stately politeness, and gallant devotion to the English ladies who caught his fancy. He was still a handsome man--over six feet, with regular features, remarkable eyes, and bushy moustaches. He wore on his arrival a cloth cloak lined with costly fur, and a kind of cap which looked like a turban--rather a telling costume.

But time and the man's life and character had stamped themselves on what had once been a goodly mould. There was something oppressive in his elaborate politeness. There was a glare, not far removed from ferocity, in the great grey eyes, so little shaded by their lids and light eyelashes that occasionally a portion of the white eyeball above the iris was revealed, and there was an intangible brooding melancholy about the autocrat whose will was still law to millions of his fellow-creatures.

The Queen received her distinguished guest in the great hall at Buckingham Palace. Shortly afterwards there was a _dejeuner_, at which some of the Emperor's old acquaintances in the royal family and out of it, met him--the Duchess of Gloucester, the Princess Sophia, the Duke of Cambridge, the Duke of Wellington, &c. &c. In the evening there was a banquet.

The Emperor followed the Queen to Windsor, where, amidst the gaieties of the Ascot week, he was royally entertained. Two visits were paid to the racecourse, with which the new-comer associated his name by founding the five hundred pounds prize. There was a grand review in Windsor Park, at which both the Emperor of Russia and the King of Saxony were present, as well as Her Majesty and Prince Albert and the royal children. The Emperor in a uniform of green and red, the King of Saxony in a uniform of blue and gold, and Prince Albert in a field-marshal's uniform--all the three wearing the insignia of the Garter--were the observed of all observers in

the martial crowd. The only incidents of the day which struck Lady Lyttelton were "the very fine cheer on the old Duke of Wellington passing the Queen's carriage, and the really beautiful salute of Prince Albert, who rode by at the head of his regiment, and of course lowered his sword in full military form to the Queen, with such a look and smile as he did it! I never saw so many pretty feelings expressed in a minute."

On the return of the Court with its guests to Buckingham Palace, the Emperor went with Prince Albert to a fete at Chiswick, given by the Duke of Devonshire, and attended by seven or eight hundred noble guests. The Czar returned from it loud in the praise of the beauty of English women, while staunchly faithful to the belles he had admired twenty-eight years before. The same evening he accompanied the Queen to the opera, when she took his hand and made him stand with her in the front of the box, that the brilliant assemblage might see and welcome him.

The Emperor was an adept at saying courteous things. He remarked to the Queen, of Windsor, which he greatly admired, "It is worthy of you, Madame." He wished Prince Albert were his son. When the hour of leave-taking came he found the Queen in the small drawing-room with her children. He declared with emotion that he might at all times be relied upon as her most devoted servant, and prayed God to bless her. He kissed her hand and she kissed him; he embraced and blessed the children. He besought her to go no farther with him. "I will throw myself at your knees; pray let me lead you to your room." "But," wrote the Queen, "of course I would not consent, and took his arm to go to the hall.... At the top of the few steps leading to the lower hall he again took most kindly leave, and his voice betrayed his emotion. He kissed my hand and we embraced. When I saw him at the door I went down the steps, and from the carriage he begged I would not stand there; but I did, and saw him drive off with Albert to Woolwich."

The Emperor was rather suspiciously fond of declaring, "I mean what I say, and what I promise I will perform." Some of his speeches were emphatic enough. "I esteem England highly, but as for what the French say of me I care not; I spit upon it." He felt awkward in evening dress; he was so accustomed to wear military uniform that without it he said he felt as if they had taken off his skin. To humour him, uniform was worn every evening at Windsor during his stay. Among his camp habits was one which he had formed in his youth and kept up to the last: it was that of sleeping every night on clean straw stuffed into a leathern case. The first thing his valets did on being shown their master's bedroom in Windsor Castle was to send out for a truss of straw for the Emperor's bed. The last thing got for him at Woolwich was the same simple stuffing for his rude mattress.

On the 15th of June, 1844, Thomas Campbell, author of the "Pleasures of Hope," "Ye Mariners of England," &c., died at Boulogne at the age of sixty-seven. Although he had not quite reached the threescore and ten, the span of man's life on earth, he had long survived the authors, Scott, Byron, &c., with whom his name is linked. He was one of many well-known men in very different spheres who passed away in 1844. Sir Augustus Callcott, the painter; Crockford with his house of Turf celebrity; Beckford, the eccentric author of "Vathek," and the owner of the art-treasures of Fonthill; Lord Sidmouth, the well-known statesman of the "Addington Administration;" Sir Francis Burdett, who in recent times was lodged in the Tower under a charge of high treason.

In the same year an attempt was made to honour the memory of a greater poet than Thomas Campbell, one whose worldly reward had not been great,

whose history ended in a grievous tragedy. The Scotchmen of the day seized the opportunity of the return of two of Robert Burns's sons from military service in India to give them a welcome home which should do something to atone for any neglect and injustice that had befallen their father. The festival was not altogether successful, as such festivals rarely are, but it excited considerable enthusiasm in the poet's native country, especially in his county of Ayrshire. And when the lord of the Castle of Montgomery presided over the tribute to the sons of the ploughman who had "shorn the harvest" with his Highland Mary on the Eglinton "lea-riggs," and Christopher North made the speech of the day, the demonstration could not be considered an entire failure.

Scotch hearts warmed to the belief that the Queen understood and admired Burns's poetry, and proud reference was made to the circumstance that during one of her Highland excursions she applied the famous descriptive passage in the "Birks of Aberfeldy" to the scene before her:

The braes ascend like lofty wa'e,
The foamy stream deep roaring fa's,
O'erhung with fragrant spreading shaws,
The birks of Aberfeldy.

The hoary cliffs are crown'd wi' flowers,
White o'er the linn the burnie pours,
And rising, weets wi' misty showers
The birks of Aberfeldy.

This summer, brown Queen Pomare, and the affairs of far-off Tahiti, had a strange, inordinate amount of attention from the English public. French interference in the island, the imprisonment of an English consul and Protestant missionary, roused the British lion. The dusky island-queen claimed the help of her English allies, and till Louis Philippe and M. Guizot disowned the policy which had been practised by their representatives in the South Seas, there was actually fear of war between England and France, in spite of the friendly visit to Chateau d'Eu. Happily the King and his minister made, or appeared to make, reparation as well as explanation, and the danger blew over.

On the 31st of July, down at Windsor a humble but affectionately loved friend died. Prince Albert's greyhound Eos--his companion from his fourteenth to his twenty-fifth year, his *_avant courier_* when he came as a bridegroom to claim his bride--was found dead, without previous symptom of illness. She lies buried on the top of the bank above the Slopes, and a bronze model of her marks the spot.

On the 6th of August the Queen's second son was born at Windsor Castle. The Prince of Prussia (the present Emperor of Germany), the third royal visitor this year, came over in time for the christening, when the little prince received the name of the great Saxon King of England, Alfred, together with the names of his uncle, Ernest, and his father, Albert. The godfathers were Prince George of Cambridge, the Queen's cousin, represented by his father; and the Prince of Leiningen, the Queen's brother, represented by the Duke of Wellington; while the godmother was the Queen and Prince Albert's sister-in-law, the Duchess of Coburg-Gotha, represented by the Duchess of Kent. "To see these two children there too," the Queen wrote of the Princess Royal and the Prince of Wales, "seems such a dream to me ... May God bless them all, poor little things." The engraving represents the sailor-Prince in his childhood.

A tour in Ireland had been projected for the Queen's holiday, but the excitement in the country consequent on the liberation of O'Connell and his companions rendered the time and place unpropitious for a royal visit, so it was decided that Her Majesty should go again to Scotland. On this occasion the Queen and the Prince took their little four-year-old daughter with them. The route was not quite the same as formerly. The party went by a shorter way to the Highlands, the yacht sailing to Dundee, the great manufacturing city so fortunate in its situation, where the rushing Tay calms and broadens into a wide Frith, with a background of green hills and a foreground of the pleasantly broken shores of Forfar and Fife. The trades held high holiday, and gave the Queen a jubilant welcome, the air ringing with shouts of gladness as she landed from the yacht, leaning on Prince Albert's arm, while he led by the hand the small daughter who reminded the Queen so vividly of herself--as the little Princess of past years.

The Queen, escorted by the Scots Greys, proceeded by Cupar Angus to Dunkeld, stopping at one of the hotels to get "some broth for the child," who proved an excellent traveller, sleeping in her carriage at her usual hours, not put out or frightened at noise or crowds--an excellent thing in a future empress--standing bowing to the people from the windows like a great lady.

At Moulinearn her Majesty tasted that luscious compound of whisky, honey, and milk known as "Athol brose."

The Queen's destination was Blair Castle, the seat of Lord Glenlyon--a white, barrack-like building in the centre of some of the grandest scenery of the Perthshire Highlands. There a strong body of Murrays met her Majesty at the gate and ran by the side of the carriages to the portico of the Castle, where the clansmen, pipers and all, were drawn up in four companies of forty each, to receive the guests. The Queen occupied the Castle during her stay, Lord and Lady Glenlyon, with their son and the other members of their family, being quartered in the lodge for the time.

The Queen and the Prince led the perfectly retired and simple life which was so agreeable to them. Spent among romantic and interesting scenery, it was doubly delightful to the young couple. They dispensed as much as possible with state and ceremony. The Highland Guard were ordered not to present arms more than twice a day to the Queen, and once a day to the Prince and the Princess Royal; but in other respects the Guard were so much impressed by their responsibility that not only would they permit no stranger to pass their _cordon_ without giving the password, which was changed every day, they stopped Lord Glenlyon's brother for want of the necessary "open sesame," telling him that, lord's brother or not, he could not pass without the word.

Her Majesty's piper, Mackay, had orders to play a pibroch under her windows every morning at seven o'clock. At the same early hour a bunch of fresh heather, with a draught of icy-cold water from Glen Tilt, was brought to the Queen. The Princess Royal, on her Shetland pony, accompanied the Queen and the Prince in their morning rambles. Sometimes the little one was carried in her father's arms, while he pointed out to her any object that would amuse her and call forth her prattle. "Pussy's cheeks are on the point of bursting, they have grown so red and plump," wrote the Prince to his stepmother. "She is learning Gaelic, but makes wild work with the names of the mountains."

So free was the life that one morning when a lady, plainly dressed and

unaccompanied, left the Castle about seven o'clock no notice was taken of her, and it was only after she had gone some distance that the rank of the pedestrian was discovered. With a little hesitation, a body-guard was told off and followed her Majesty, but she intimated that she would dispense with their attendance, and went on alone as far as the lodge, where she inquired for Lord Glenlyon. It was understood afterwards that she had chosen to be her own messenger with regard to some arrangements to be made respecting a visit to the Falls of the Bruar.

Lord Glenlyon was not out of bed, and the deputy-porter was electrified by being told that the Queen had called on his master. On her Majesty's return to the house she took a different road and lost her way, so that she had to apply to some Highland reapers whom she met, trudging to one of the isolated oatfields, to direct her to the Castle. They told her civilly, but without ceremony, to cross one of the "parks" (fields or meadows) and climb over a paling--instructions which she obeyed literally, and found herself at home again.

On a fine September morning the two who were so happy in each other's company rode on a dun and a grey pony, attended only by Sandy McAra, who led the Queen's pony through the ford, up the grassy hill of Tulloch, "to the very top." There they saw a whole circle of stupendous Bens--Ben Vrackie, Ben-y-Ghlo, Ben-y-Chat, as well as the Falls of the Bruar and the Pass of Killiecrankie, which the Hanoverian troopers likened to "the mouth of hell" on the day that Dundee fell on the field at Urrard.

"It was quite romantic," declared the Queen joyfully. "Here we were with only this Highlander behind us holding the ponies--for we got off twice and walked about; not a house, not a creature near us, but the pretty Highland sheep, with their horns and black faces, up at the top of Tulloch, surrounded by beautiful mountains ... the most delightful, the most romantic ride I ever had."

There was much more riding and driving in Glen Tilt, with its disputed "right of way" ease, but there was none to bar the Queen's progress. Her Majesty showed herself a fearless rider, abandoning the cart-roads and following the foot-tracks among the mountains. She grew as fond of her homely Highland pony, Arghait Bhean, with which Lord Glenlyon supplied her, as she was of her Windsor stud, with every trace of high breeding in their small heads, arching necks, slender legs, and dainty hoofs.

One day the foresters succeeded in driving a great herd of red-deer, with their magnificent antlers, across the heights, so that the Queen had a passing view of them. On another day she was able to join in the deer-stalking, scrambling for hours in the wake of the hunters, among the rocks and heather, when she was not "allowed," as she described it, to speak above a whisper, in case she should spoil the sport. It was a brief taste of an ideal, open-air, unsophisticated life, upon which there was no intrusion, except when stolid sightseers flocked to the little parish church of Blair Athol for the chance of "seeing royalty at its prayers, and hardly a regret beyond the lack of time to sketch the groups of keepers and dogs, the deer, the mountains.

The Queen, as usual, enjoyed and admired everything there was to admire--the pretty jackets or "short gowns" of the rustic maidens; the "burns," clear as glass; the mossy stones; the peeps between the trees; the depth of the shadows; the corn-cutting or "shearing," when a patch of yellow oats broke the purple shadow of the moor; Ben-y-Ghlo standing like

a mighty sentinel commanding the course of the Garry, as when many a lad "with his bonnet and white cockade," sped with fleet foot by the flashing waters, "leaving his mountains to follow Prince Charlie;" Chrianean, where the eagles sometimes sat; the sunsets when the sky was "crimson, golden red, and blue," and the hills "looked purple and lilac," till the hues grew softer and the outlines dimmer. Prince Albert, an ardent admirer of natural scenery, was in ecstasy with the mountain landscape. But her Majesty has already permitted her people to share in the halcyon days of those Highland tours.

On the homeward journey to Dundee, Lord Glenlyon and his brother, Captain Murray, performed the loyal feat of riding fifty miles, the whole distance from Blair, by the Queen's carriage.

CHAPTER XX.

LOUIS PHILIPPE'S VISIT.--THE OPENING OF THE ROYAL EXCHANGE.

The Queen and the Prince returned to Windsor to receive a visit from Louis Philippe. The King, who had spent part of his exiled youth in England, had not been back since 1815, when he took refuge there again during "the Hundred Days," after Napoleon's return from Elba and Louis XVIII.'s withdrawal to Ghent, till the battle of Waterloo restored the heads of the Bourbon and Orleans families to the Tuileries and the Palais Royal.

The King arrived on the 6th of October, accompanied by his son, the Duc de Montpensier, M. Guizot, and a numerous suite. They had sailed from Treport in the steamer *Gomer*, attended by three other steamers, and arrived at Portsmouth, where the Corporation came on board to present an address.

The King answered in English, with much effusion and affability, shaking hands with the whole batch of magistrates, telling those who were too slow in removing their white gloves, "Oh! never mind your gloves, gentlemen," and recalling a former visit to Portsmouth when he was an exile. Prince Albert and the Duke of Wellington went on board the steamer, when the enthusiastic elderly gentleman saluted the Prince on both cheeks, to which he submitted, though he did not reply in kind, contenting himself with shaking his guest by the hand. It would seem as if the Prince had some perception of the wiliness which was one quality of the big, bluff citizen king, and of the discretion which must be practised in dealing with him, no less than with the Russian bear. For in writing from Blair to a kinswoman, in anticipation of the visit, the writer states, with a dash of humour, that after a preliminary training on the sea, the bold deerstalker and mountaineer would have to transform himself into a courtier to receive and entertain a King of the French, and play the part of a staid and astute diplomatist.

The king wore the French uniform of a Lieutenant-General--blue with red facings. The moment he ascended the stairs of the jetty, he turned with his hand on his heart and bowed to the multitude of spectators.

The Queen met her visitor in the grand vestibule fronting George the Fourth's Gate at Windsor Castle; the Duchess of Kent and the ladies of the Household, Sir Robert Peel and Lord Liverpool, and the officers of the Household, were with her Majesty. The moment the carriage drew up, the Queen advanced and extended her arms to her father's old friend. The two

sovereigns embraced, and she led the way to the suite of rooms which had been previously occupied by the Emperor of Russia.

Lady Lyttelton has supplied her version of the arrival. "At two o'clock he arrived, this curious king, worth seeing if ever a body was. The Queen having graciously permitted me to be present, I joined the Court in the corridor, and we waited an hour, and then the Queen of England came out of her room to go and receive the King of France--the first time in history! Her Majesty had not long to wait (in the armoury, as she received him in the State apartments, his own private rooms; very civil); and from the armoury, amidst all the old trophies and knights' armour, and Nelson's bust, and Marlborough's flag, and Wellington's, we saw the first of the escort enter, the Quadrangle, and down flew the Queen, and we after her, to the outside of the door on the pavement of the Quadrangle, just in time to see the escort clattering up and the carriage close behind. The old man was much moved, I think, and his hand rather shook as he alighted, his hat quite off, and grey hair seen. His countenance is striking--much better than the portraits--and his embrace of the Queen was very parental, and nice. Montpensier is a handsome youth, and the courtiers and ministers very well-looking, grave, gentlemenlike people. It was a striking piece of real history--made one feel and think much."

"He is the first king of France who comes on a visit to the sovereign of this country," wrote the Queen in her Journal.... "The King said, as he went up the grand staircase to his apartments, 'Heavens! how beautiful!'.... I never saw anybody more pleased or more amused in looking at every picture, every bust. He knew every bust, and knew everything about everybody here in a most wonderful way. Such a memory! such activity! It is a pleasure to show him anything, as he is so pleased and interested. He is enchanted with the Castle, and repeated to me again and again (as did also his people) how delighted he was to be here; how he had feared that what he had so earnestly wished since I came to the throne would not take place, and 'Heavens! what a pleasure it is to me to give you my arm!'" The dinner was comparatively private, in the Queen's dining-room.

On the 8th of the month the whole royal party went on a little pilgrimage to Claremont and Twickenham, to the house in which Louis Philippe, as Duc d'Orleans, had resided, and wound up the day by a great banquet in St. George's Hall. The Queen records of this excursion, "We proceeded by Staines, where the King recognised the inn and everything, to Twickenham, where we drove up to the house where he used to live, and where Lord and Lady Mornington, who received us, are now living. It is a very pretty house, much embellished since the King lived there, but otherwise much the same, and he seemed greatly pleased to see it again. He walked round the garden, in spite of the heavy shower which had just fallen.... The King himself directed the postillion which way to go to pass by the house where he lived for five years with his poor brothers, before his marriage. From here we drove to Hampton Court, where we walked over Wolsey's Hall and all the rooms. The King remained a long time in them, looking at the pictures, and marking on the catalogue numbers of those which he intended to have copied for Versailles. We then drove to Claremont. Here we got out and lunched, and after luncheon took a hurried walk in the grounds.... We left Claremont after four, and reached Windsor at a little before six."

Of the conversation during the banquet her Majesty wrote, "He talked to me of the time when he was 'in a school in the Grisons, a teacher merely,' receiving twenty pence a day, having to brush his own boots, and under the name of Chabot. What an eventful life his has been!" On the 9th there was

an installation of a Knight of the Garter. Sir Theodore Martin reminds his readers, 'with regard to the ceremony, that it "must have been pregnant with suggestions to all present who remembered that the Order had been instituted by Edward III. after the battle of Cressy, and that its earliest knights were the Black Prince and his companions, whose prowess had been so fatal to France. "In the Throne-room, in a State chair, sat Queen Victoria, in the (blue velvet) mantle of the Order, its motto inscribed on a bracelet that encircled her arm; a diamond tiara on her head. The chair of State by her side was vacant. Round the table before her sat the knights-companions of the highest rank; on the steps of the throne behind the Queen's chair were seated the high civil ministers of the two sovereigns, and some officers of the French suite. At the opposite end of the room were the royal ladies (members of the royal family) and the two young Princes (the Duc de Montpensier and Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar) visiting at the Castle.... The King, dressed in a uniform of dark blue and gold, was introduced by Prince Albert and the Duke of Cambridge, preceded by Garter King-at-Arms, the Queen and the knights all standing. The sovereign (Queen Victoria) in French announced the election. The declaration having been pronounced by the Chancellor of the Order, the new knight was invested by the Queen and Prince Albert with the Garter and the George, and received the accolade."

"Albert then placed the Garter round the King's leg," wrote the Queen. "I pulled it through while the admonition was being read, and the King said to me, 'I wish to kiss this hand,' which he did afterwards, and I embraced him."

"Taking the King's arm, her Majesty conducted him in state to his own apartments," the Annual Register ends its account of an interesting episode.

"At four o'clock we again went over to the King's room," wrote the Queen, "and I placed at his feet a large cup representing St. George and the dragon, with which he was very much pleased." That night there was a splendid banquet in St. George's Hall to commemorate the installment.

On the 12th the King was to have left, but first the Corporation of London went down to Windsor in civic state to present Louis Philippe with an address. This unusual compliment from the City was due partly to the general satisfaction which the visit, with, its promise of continued friendly relations between England and France, gave to the whole country, partly to the circumstance that it was judged inadmissible, in view of the susceptibility of the French nation, for the King of France to pay a formal visit to London, since the Queen of England, in her recent trip to Treport, had not gone to Paris. A somewhat comical contretemps occurred in the preparation of the reply to this address. It was written by the person who usually acted for the King in such matters, and brought to him shortly before the arrival of the Corporation, when Louis Philippe found to his disgust that the speech was so French in spirit, and expressed in such bad English, he could not hope to make it understood. "It is deplorable.... It is cruel," cried the mortified King. "And to send it to me at one o'clock! They will be here immediately!" No time was to be lost; the King had to sit down and, with the help of his host and hostess, who had come to his rooms opportunely, to write out a more suitable answer.

In M. Guizot's "Memoirs" he tells a curious incident of this visit. On retiring to his room at night he lost his way, and appeared to wander, as Baroness Bunsen feared she might do on a similar occasion, along miles of

corridors and stairs. At last, believing he recognised his room-door, he turned the handle, but immediately withdrew, on getting a glimpse of a lady seated at a toilet-table, with a maid busy about her mistress's hair. It was not till next day that from some smiling words addressed to him by the Queen the horrified statesman discovered he had been guilty of an invasion of the royal apartments.

Louis Philippe started on his homeward journey accompanied by her Majesty and Prince Albert, who were to go on board the Gomer and there take leave of their guest. Afterwards they were to embark in the royal yacht and cross to the Isle of Wight. But the stormy weather overturned all these plans. The swell in the sea was so great that it was feared the King could not land at Treport. Eventually he parted from the Queen and the Prince on shore, returned in the evening to London, went to New Cross--where he found the station on fire--proceeded by train to Dover, and sailed next day, amidst wind and rain, in French steamer to Calais. In order to soften the disappointment to the officers and crew of the Gomer, the Queen and Prince Albert breakfasted on board that vessel before they proceeded to the Isle of Wight.

The cause of the cruise of the Queen and the Prince at this season was the wish to see for themselves the house and grounds of Osborne, belonging to Lady Isabella Blatchford. They were to be sold, and had been, suggested by Sir Robert Peel to her Majesty and the Prince as exactly constituted to form the retired yet not too remote country and seaside home--not palace, for which the royal couple were looking out. It is unnecessary to say that the personal visit was quite satisfactory, though the purchase was not made till some months later. The engraving gives a pleasant idea of the Osborne of to-day, with its double towers--seen out at sea--its terraces, and its fountains.

On the 21st of October the Queen and the Prince happened to be yachting off Portsmouth. It was the anniversary of the battle of Trafalgar, and the Victory lay in the roads, adorned with wreaths and garlands from stem to stern. The Queen expressed her desire to visit the ship. She went at once to the quarter-deck to see the spot where Nelson fell. It is marked by a brass plate with an inscription, on this day surrounded by a wreath of laurel. The Queen gazed in silence, the tears rising to her eyes. Then she plucked a couple of leaves from the laurel wreath, and asked to be shown the cabin in which Nelson died. The cockpit was lit up while the party were inspecting the poop of the Victory, which bears the words of the great Admiral's last signal, "England expects every man to do his duty." In the cockpit, long associated with merry, mischievous sprites of "middies," there had been for many a year the representation of a funeral urn, with the sentence, "Here Nelson died." The visitors looked at the spot without speaking. There, on this very day in the fast-receding past, amidst the hardly subdued din of a great naval battle, the dying hero with his failing breath made the brief, tender appeal to his faithful captain, "Kiss me, Hardy." The Queen requested that there might be no firing when she left the ship, and was sped on her way only by "the three tremendous British cheers of the sailors manning the yards."

On the 28th of October the great civic ceremonies of the opening of the new Royal Exchange by the Queen took place. The morning had been foggy, but cleared up into brilliant autumn sunshine, a happy instance of the Queen's weather, when a considerable part of the programme, as a matter of necessity, was enacted under the open sky.

Crowds almost as great as on the day of the Coronation six years before occupied the line of route, swarming in St. James's Park and St. Paul's Churchyard and at Charing Cross, while the Poultry--deriving its name from the circumstance that it was once filled with poulterers' shops--was reserved for the Livery of the City Companies. Every window which could command the passing of the pageant was filled with spectators. The Queen, in her State coach, drawn by her cream-coloured horses, drove through the marble arch at Buckingham Palace about eleven o'clock. She was accompanied by Prince Albert, and attended by Lady Canning in the absence of the Duchess of Buccleugh, Mistress of the Robes, and by the Earl of Jersey, Master of the Horse. The great officers of her Household in long procession preceded her, and she was followed by an escort of Life Guards. At this time the Queen's popularity was a very active principle, though not more heartfelt and abiding than it is to-day. As she appeared, it is said the words "God bless you," uttered by some loyal subject, were caught up and passed from lip to lip, running through the vast concourse. The simply-clad lady of the Highlands was magnificently dressed to-day, to do honour to her City of London, in white satin and silver tissue, sparkling with jewels. On her left side she wore the star of the Order of the Garter, and round her left arm the Garter itself, with the motto set in diamonds. She had at the back of her head a miniature crown entirely composed of brilliants, while above her forehead she wore a diamond tiara. Prince Albert was in the uniform of a colonel of artillery.

The City magnates as usual had gathered at Child's Bank, from which they went to Temple Bar. The common councilmen were in their mazarine-blue cloaks and cocked hats, the aldermen in their scarlet robes, the Lord Mayor in a robe of crimson velvet, with a collar of SS, and, strange to say, a Spanish hat and feather. In truth a goodly show. The gates of Temple Bar, which had been previously closed, were thrown open to admit the royal procession. The Queen's carriage drew up. The Lord Mayor advanced on foot before the spikes on which many a traitor's head had been stuck, and with a profound reverence offered to her Majesty the City sword, which, the Queen touched as a sign of acceptance, and then waved it back to the Lord Mayor. Nothing can read better, but accidents will happen.

From Lady Bloomfield, on the authority of the late Sir Robert Peel, who told the story in the maid-of-honour's hearing, we have additional particulars. The Lord Mayor, in his Spanish hat and feather, was at this very moment in as awkward a predicament as ever befell an unlucky chief magistrate. He had drawn on a pair of jack-boots over his shoes and stockings, to keep the mud off till the moment of action. Unfortunately the boots proved too tight, and could not be got off when the sign was given that the Queen was coming. One of the victim's spurs caught in the fur trimming of an alderman's robe, and rendered the confusion worse. The Lord Mayor stood with a leg out, and several men tugging at his boot. In the meantime the Queen was coming nearer and nearer; she was only a few paces off, while the representative of her good City of London struggled in an agony with one boot on and one off. At last he became beside himself, and cried wildly, "For God's sake put that boot on again." He only got it on in time to make his obeisance to her Majesty. He had to wear the detestable boots till the banquet; just before it, he was successfully stripped of his encumbrances.

As the procession went on, the civic body fell into its place, the Lord Mayor on horseback, where his jack-boots would not look amiss, with three footmen in livery on each side of him, carrying the City sword before the Queen's coach.

The Royal Exchange, at the end of the Poultry, with the Mansion House on the right and the Bank of England on the left, has been twice burnt. Sir Thomas Gresham's Exchange, which was built after an Antwerp model, while it bore the Greshams' grasshopper crest conspicuous on the front, was opened by good Queen Bess, and perished in the Great Fire of London. This building's successor was burnt down in 1838, one of the bells which rang tunes pealing forth, in the middle of the fire, the only too appropriate melody, "There's nae luck about the house." In the large cloistered court of the present Royal Exchange, the stage of this day's festivities, stands a statue of Queen Victoria. There is an allegorical figure of Commerce on the front of the building. The inscription on the pedestal, selected by Dean Milman, is due to a suggestion of Prince Albert's to the sculptor, Westmacott, that there should be the recognition of a superior Power. The well-chosen words declare "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof."

At the Royal Exchange the body of the procession went in by the northern entrance, only to hurry to the western door to receive the Queen. She entered the building leaning on the arm of Prince Albert, and the royal standard was immediately hoisted. The procession was again formed. She set forth "in slow State" to make her circuit of the roofless quadrangle, round the corridor and through the inner court, all in the open air. At the foot of the campanile the bells chimed for the first time "God save the Queen." Her Majesty went upstairs and passed through the second banqueting-room to show herself, then walked on to the throne-room, hung with crimson velvet and cloth, and furnished with a throne of crimson velvet. The Queen took her seat, Prince Albert standing on her right and the Duchess of Kent and the Duke of Cambridge on her left, Sir Robert Peel and Sir James Graham being near. The Lord Mayor and the rest of the Corporation formed a semicircle facing the Queen. The Recorder read the loyal and congratulatory address welcoming his sovereign, and recalling Queen Elizabeth's visit to open the first Exchange. Did anybody remember the picture of the Virgin Queen with the outshone goddesses fleeing abashed before her virtues, with which the child-princess reared at Kensington must have been familiar?

The speaker concluded by asking her Majesty's "favourable regard and sanction for the work which her loyal citizens of London had now completed." The Queen returned a gracious reply, gave the Lord Mayor her hand to kiss, and doubtless consoled him for any misadventure by announcing her intention to create him a baronet in remembrance of the day.

In the great room of the underwriters, ninety-eight feet long by forty wide, a dejeuner was served, at which the Queen, the Prince, the Duchess of Kent, and the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, with other persons of rank, including the foreign ambassadors and their wives, sat on the dais at the cross-table. At the long table beneath the dais, among the Cabinet ministers and their wives, members of Parliament, judges, the Court of Aldermen, and many other distinguished and privileged persons, sat Sir Robert and Lady Sale, in another scene than any they had known among the defiles and forts of Afghanistan. The Bishop of London said grace. The usual toasts, "Her gracious Majesty, Queen Victoria"--no longer the young girl who bore her part so well at the Guildhall dinner, but the woman in her flower, endowed with all which makes life precious--"Prince Albert, the Prince of Wales, and the rest of the royal family," were drunk, and replied to by the comprehensive wish, "Prosperity to the City of London."

At twenty minutes after two the Queen and the Prince went downstairs again to the quadrangle, in the centre of which her Majesty stopped, while the Ministers and the Corporation formed a circle round her. The heralds made proclamation and commanded silence; the Queen, after receiving a slip of paper from Sir James Graham, announced in clear, distinct tones, "It is my royal will and pleasure that this building be hereafter called "The Royal Exchange." This ceremony concluded the day's programme, and her Majesty left shortly afterwards. Great festivities in the City wound up the gala. The Lord Mayor entertained at the Mansion House, the Lady Mayoress gave a ball, the Livery Companies dined in their respective halls.

A little adventure occurred at the Opera in November, 1844. The Queen went, not in State, or even semi-state, but privately, to hear Auber's opera of "The Siren," when Mr. Bunn, the lessee, was found to have made known without authority her Majesty's intention. The result was a great house, but some inconvenience to the first lady in the land. The Queen was called for, but declined to come forward, and for ten minutes there was a commotion, the audience refusing to let the opera go on. At last the National Anthem was played, the Queen showed herself, and this section of her subjects was appeased and passed from clamorous discontent to equally clamorous satisfaction.

During the winter Sir Robert and Lady Sale paid the Queen a visit at Windsor, while Miss Liddell was maid-of-honour in waiting. The lively narrator of the events of these days describes Lady Sale, as tall, thin, and rather plain, but with a good countenance, while Sir Robert was stout. Lady Sale told these wondering listeners, in a palace that she started from Cabul in a cloth habit, which got wet the first day, and became like a sheet of ice, while it was nine days before she could take it off. She was wounded in the arm on the second day's march, the ball passing first below the elbow and coming out at the wrist, while there were other balls which passed through her habit; Mrs. Sturt's fatherless child, Lady Sales's grand-daughter, was born in a small room without light and almost without air. The captive ladies often slept in the open air on the snow, with the help of sheepskins, half of which were under and half over the sleepers. They washed their clothes by dipping them in the rivers and patting the garments till they became dry. Sometimes the prisoners were twenty-four hours without food, and when served it consisted of dishes of rice with sheeps' tails in the middle, and melted fat like tallow poured over them. The captivity lasted ten weary months, while the captives were dragged from place to place, over fearful roads, amidst the snows of the Caucasus. Lady Sale was told she was kept by Akbar Khan as a hold on her "devil of a husband."

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