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QUEEN VICTORIA

STORY OF HER LIFE AND REIGN

1819-1901

[ILLUSTRATION: QUEEN VICTORIA. (From a Photograph by Russell & Son.)]

'Her court was pure, her life serene;
God gave her peace; her land reposed;
A thousand claims to reverence closed
In her as Mother, Wife, and Queen.'

TENNYSON.

'God bless the Queen for all her unwearied goodness! I admire her as a woman, love her as a friend, and reverence her as a Queen. Her courage, patience, and endurance are marvellous to me.'

NORMAN MACLEOD.

'A Prince indeed,
Beyond all titles, and a household name,
Hereafter, through all time, Albert the Good.'

TENNYSON.

PREFACE.

This brief life of Queen Victoria gives the salient features of her reign, including the domestic and public life, with a glance at the wonderful history and progress of our country during the past half-century. In the space at command it has been impossible to give extended treatment. The history is necessarily very brief, as also the account of the public and private life, yet it is believed no really important feature of her life and reign has been omitted.

It is a duty, incumbent on old and young alike, as well as a pleasing privilege, to mark how freedom has slowly 'broadened down, from precedent to precedent,' and how knowledge, wealth, and well-being are more widely distributed to-day than at any former period of our history. And this knowledge can only increase the gratitude of the reader for the golden reign of Queen Victoria, of whom it has been truly written:

A thousand claims to reverence closed
In her as Mother, Wife, and Queen.

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CHAPTER I.

Reign of Queen Victoria--Outlook of Royalty in 1819--Duke and Duchess of Kent--Birth of Victoria--Wisely trained by Duchess of Kent--Taught by

Fräulein Lehzen--Anecdotes of this Period--Discovers that she is next to the Throne.

The reign of Queen Victoria may be aptly described as a period of progress in all that related to the well-being of the subjects of her vast empire. In every department of science, literature, politics, and the practical life of the nation, there has been steady improvement and progress. Our ships circumnavigate the globe and do the chief carrying trade of the world. The locomotive binds industrial centres, and abridges time and space as it speeds along its iron pathway; whilst steam-power does the work of thousands of hands in our large factories. The telegraph links us to our colonies, and to the various nationalities of the world, in commerce and in closer sympathy; and never was the hand and heart of Benevolence busier than in this later period of the nineteenth century. Our colonial empire has shared also in the welfare and progress of the mother-country.

When we come to look into the lives of the Queen and Prince-Consort, we are thankful for all they have been and done. The wider our survey of history, and the more we know of other rulers and courts, the more thankful we shall be that they have been a guiding and balancing power, allied to all that was progressive, noble, and true, and for the benefit of the vast empire over which Her Majesty reigns. And the personal example has been no less valuable in

Wearing the white flower of a blameless life,
Before a thousand peering littlenesses,
In that fierce light which heats upon a throne,
And blackens every blot.

In the year 1819 the family outlook of the British royal house was not a very bright one. The old king, George III., was lingering on in deep seclusion, a very pathetic figure, blind and imbecile. His son the Prince Regent, afterwards George IV., had not done honour to his position, nor brought happiness to any connected with him. Most of the other princes were elderly men and childless; and the Prince-Regent's only daughter, the Princess Charlotte, on whom the hopes of the nation had rested, and whose marriage had raised those hopes to enthusiasm, was newly laid in her premature grave.

But almost immediately after Princess Charlotte's death, the king's third and fourth sons, the Dukes of Clarence and Kent, had married. Of the Duke of Clarence we need say little more. He and his consort eventually reigned as William IV. and Queen Adelaide, and they had two children who died in earliest infancy, and did not further complicate the succession to the crown.

The Duke of Kent, born in 1767, fourth son of George III.--a tall, stately man, of soldierly bearing, inclined to corpulency and entirely bald--married the widowed Princess of Leiningen, already the mother of a son and a daughter by her first husband. The duke was of active, busy habits; and he was patron of many charitable institutions--he presided

over no less than seventy-two charity meetings in 1816. Baron Stockmar describes the Princess of Leiningen after her marriage in 1818, as 'of middle height, rather large, but with a good figure, with fine brown eyes and hair, fresh and youthful, naturally cheerful and friendly; altogether most charming and attractive. She was fond of dress, and dressed well and in good taste. Nature had endowed her with warm feelings, and she was naturally truthful, affectionate, and unselfish, full of sympathy, and generous.' The princely pair lived in Germany until the birth of a child was expected, when the duke at first thought of taking a house in Lanarkshire--which would have made Queen Victoria by birth a Scotchwoman. Eventually, the Duke and Duchess of Kent took up their abode in Kensington Palace.

On the 24th May 1819, their daughter was born, and she was named Alexandrina Victoria, after the reigning Emperor of Russia and her mother. The Prince Regent had wished the name of Georgiana; her own father wished to call her Elizabeth. The little one was the first of the British royal house to receive the benefits of Jenner's discovery of vaccination. The Duke of Kent was so careful of his little girl that he took a cottage at Sidmouth to escape the London winter. To a friend he wrote: 'My little girl thrives under the influence of a Devonshire climate, and is, I am delighted to say, strong and healthy; too healthy, I fear, in the opinion of some members of my family, by whom she is regarded as an intruder.' Next winter the Duke came in one day, after tramping through rain and snow, and played with his little child while in his damp clothes; he thus contracted a chill from which he never rallied, and died January 23, 1820.

This child was destined to be the Empress-Queen, on whose dominion the sun never sets. Yet so remote did such a destiny then seem, owing to the possibilities of the Regent's life, and of children being born to the Duke of Clarence, that in some courtly biographies of George III. there is no mention made of the birth of the little princess. Even in their accounts of the death of her father the Duke of Kent, seven months afterwards, they do not deem it necessary to state that he left a daughter behind him; though he, poor man, had never had any doubts of her future importance, and had been in the habit of saying to her attendants, 'Take care of her, for she may be Queen of England.' The Duke of Kent was a capable and energetic soldier, of pure tastes and simple pleasures. In presenting new colours to the Royal Scots in 1876, the Queen said: 'I have been associated with your regiment from my earliest infancy, as my dear father was your colonel. He was proud of his profession, and I was always told to consider myself a soldier's child.'

The position of the widowed Duchess of Kent, a stranger in a foreign country, was rather sad and lonely. It was further complicated by narrowness of means. The old king, her father-in-law, died soon after her husband. The duchess was a woman of sense and spirit. Instead of yielding to any natural impulse to retire to Germany, she resolved that her little English princess should have an English rearing. She found a firm friend and upholder in her brother Leopold, husband of the late Princess Charlotte, and afterwards King of the Belgians. On discovering her straitened means he gave her an allowance of £3000 a year, which was continued until it was no longer necessary in 1831. As the duke came into

a separate income only at a late period of his life, he had died much in debt. Long afterwards the Queen said to Lord Melbourne: 'I want to pay all that remains of my father's debts. I must do it. I consider it a sacred duty.' And she did not rest till she did it. In reply to an address of congratulation on the coming of age of the Queen, the Duchess of Kent said:

'My late regretted consort's circumstances, and my duties, obliged us to reside in Germany; but the Duke of Kent at much inconvenience, and I at great personal risk, returned to England, that our child should be "born and bred a Briton." In a few months afterwards my infant and myself were awfully deprived of father and husband. We stood alone--almost friendless and alone in this country; I could not even speak the language of it. I did not hesitate how to act, I gave up my home, my kindred, my duties [the regency of Leiningen], to devote myself to that duty which was to be the whole object of my future life. I was supported in the execution of my duties by the country. It placed its trust in me, and the Regency Bill gave me its last act of confidence. I have in times of great difficulty avoided all connection with any party in the state; but if I have done so, I have never ceased to press on my daughter her duties, so as to gain by her conduct the respect and affection of the people. This I have taught her should be her first earthly duty as a constitutional sovereign.'

The little princess was brought up quietly and wisely at Kensington and Claremont. In a letter from the Queen to her uncle Leopold, written in 1843, we find the following: 'This place [Claremont] has a particular 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 [the Princess Royal] plays with my old bricks, &c., and I see her running and jumping in the flower-garden, as old, though I fear still _little_, Victoria of former days used to do.'

Bishop Fulford of Montreal remembered seeing her when four months old in the arms of her nurse. In the following year she might be seen in a hand-carriage with her half-sister, the Princess Feodora of Leiningen. Wilberforce in a letter to Hannah More, July 21, 1820, wrote: 'In consequence of a very civil message from the Duchess of Kent, I waited on her this morning. She received me with her fine, animated child on the floor by her side, with its playthings, of which I soon became one.' She became familiar to many as a pretty infant, riding on her sleek donkey (a gift from her uncle the Duke of York) in Kensington Gardens. She used to be seen in a large straw hat and a white cotton frock, watering the plants under the palace windows, dividing the contents of the watering-pot between the flowers and her feet, and often took breakfast with her mother on the lawn there. There are playful stories told of those happy early days. The little princess was very fond of music, listening as one spell-bound when first she heard some of Beethoven's glorious compositions. But like most children, she rebelled against the drudgery of scales and finger exercises, and on being told that there is 'no royal road to music,' she sportively locked the piano and announced that 'the royal road is never to take a lesson till you feel disposed.'

Sir Walter Scott records in his diary that he dined with the Duchess of Kent on 19th May 1828. 'I was very kindly received by Prince Leopold, and presented to the little Victoria--the heir-apparent to the crown as things now stand. The little lady is educated with much care, and watched so closely that no busy maid has a moment to whisper "You are heir of England." I suspect if we could dissect the little heart, we should find that some pigeon or other bird of the air had carried the matter, however.' This, it seems, was not the case. Charles Knight has told us how he one morning saw the household breakfasting in the open air, at a table on the lawn. It is also related that Victoria took her airings in Kensington Gardens in a little phaeton drawn by a tiny pony, led by a page. A dog ran between the legs of the pony one day, frightening it, so that the little carriage was upset, and the princess would have fallen on her head, but for the presence of mind of an Irishman who rescued her. Leigh Hunt saw her once '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;' and he adds that the footman who followed seemed to him like a gigantic fairy. When the princess was in her fifth year, George IV., who acted as one of her godfathers, sent a message to parliament which resulted in a grant for the cost of the education of his niece.

In 1824, when the princess was five years old, Fräulein Lehzen, a German lady, became her governess; afterwards she held the post of the Queen's private secretary, until relieved by the Prince-Consort. She was the daughter of a Hanoverian pastor, and came to England in 1818 as governess to the Princess Feodora of Leiningen. In her home letters she records that 'the princess received her in a pretty, childlike way,' and describes her as 'not tall, but very pretty;' adding that she 'has dark brown hair, beautiful blue eyes, and a mouth which, though not tiny, is very good-tempered and pleasant; very fine teeth, a small but graceful figure, and a very small foot. She was dressed in white muslin with a coral necklet.' The domestic life was that of any other well-regulated and happy family. The princess shared her governess's bedroom. They all took their meals together at a round table. When they did not go to church, the duchess read a sermon aloud and commented pleasantly on it. As early as 1830 Thomas Moore heard the Princess Victoria sing duets with her mother, who also sang some pretty German songs herself.

Nor are there lacking traces of strict and chastening discipline. The princess had been early taught that there are good habits and duties in the management of money. When she was buying toys at Tunbridge Wells, her wishes outran her little purse, and the box for which she could not pay was not carried away on credit, but set aside for her to fetch away when the next quarter-day would renew her allowance. Fräulein Lehzen says, 'The duchess wished that when she and the princess drove out, I should sit by her side, and the princess at the back. Several times I could not prevent it, but at last she has given in, and says on such occasions with a laugh to her daughter: "Sit by me, since Fräulein Lehzen wishes it to be so." But,' says the governess, 'I do not hesitate to remark to the little one, whom I am most anxious not to spoil, that this consideration is not on her account, because she is still a child, but that my respect for her mother disposes me to decline the seat.' Once when the princess was reading how Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi, introduced her sons to the first of

Roman ladies with the words, 'These are my jewels,' she looked up from her book, and remarked: 'She should have said my _Cornelians_.'

[Illustration: Princess Victoria--Early Portrait.]

Mrs Oliphant remembers of having in her own youth seen the Princess Victoria, and says: 'The calm full look of her eyes affected me. Those eyes were very blue, serene, still, looking at you with a tranquil breadth of expression which, somehow, conveyed to your mind a feeling of unquestioned power and greatness, quite poetical in its serious simplicity.' While on a visit to Malvern she climbed walls and trees, and rode on a donkey. One day she had climbed an apple tree, and could not get down till relieved by the gardener, who got a guinea for his pains, which was preserved and neatly framed. On another occasion, at Wentworth House, the gardener cautioned her: 'Be careful, miss, it's slape' (using a provincial form for 'slippery'), while she was descending a sloping piece of turf, where the ground was wet. While she was asking, 'What is _slape?_' her feet slid from beneath her, and the old gardener was able to explain as he lifted her up, 'That's slape, miss.'

Miss Jane Porter, then resident at Claremont, describes the princess as a beautiful child, with a cherubic form of features, clustered round by glossy, fair ringlets. Her complexion was remarkably transparent, with a soft, but often heightening tinge of the sweet blush-rose upon her cheeks, that imparted a peculiar brilliancy to her clear blue eyes. Whenever she met any strangers in her usual paths, she always seemed, by the quickness of her glance, to inquire who and what they were? The intelligence of her countenance was extraordinary at her very early age, but might easily be accounted for on perceiving the extraordinary intelligence of her mind. At Esher Church, even in her sixth year, the youthful princess was accustomed to devote earnest attention to the sermons preached there, as the Duchess of Kent was in the habit of inquiring not only for the text, but the heads of the discourse. 'The sweet spring of the princess's life,' continues Miss Porter, 'was thus dedicated to the sowing of all precious seeds of knowledge, and the cultivation of all elegant acquirements.... Young as she was, she sang with sweetness and taste; and my brother, Sir Robert (who, when in England, frequently had the honour of dining at Claremont), often had the pleasure of listening to the infant chorister, mingling her cherub-like melody with the mature and delightful harmonies of the Duchess of Kent and Prince Leopold.'

When Fräulein Lehzen died in 1870, her old pupil wrote of her as 'my dearest, kindest friend, old Lehzen; 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, although I was greatly in awe of her. She really seemed to have no thought but for me.' And the future queen profited by it all, for it has been truly said that, 'had she not been the Queen of England, her acquirements and accomplishments would have given her a high standing in society.'

Dr Davys, the future Bishop of Peterborough, was her instructor in Latin, history, mathematics, and theology, and the Dowager Duchess of

Northumberland had also, after her own mother, a considerable share in her training.

The Duchess of Kent took her daughter to visit many of the chief cities, cathedrals, and other places of interest in the British Isles. Her first public act was to present the colours to a regiment of foot at Plymouth. An American writer has recorded that he saw the widowed lady and her little girl in the churchyard of Brading, in the Isle of Wight. They were seated near the grave of the heroine of a 'short and simple annal of the poor'--the *'Dairyman's Daughter'*, whose story, as told by the Rev. Legh Richmond, had a great popularity at the time. The duchess was reading from a volume she carried (probably that one), and the little princess's soft eyes were tearful.

The princess, it appears, was much devoted to dolls, and played with them until she was nearly fourteen years old. Her favourites were small wooden dolls which she would occupy herself in dressing; and she had a house in which they could be placed. As she had no girl companions, many an hour was solaced in this manner. She dressed these dolls from some costumes she saw in the theatre or in private life. A list of her dolls was kept in a copy-book, the name of each, and by whom it was dressed, and the character it represented, being given. The dolls seem to have been packed away about 1833. Of the 132 dolls preserved, thirty-two were dressed by the princess. They range from three to nine inches in height. The sewing and adornment of the rich coloured silks and satins show great deftness of finger.

Her wise mother withheld her from the pomp and circumstance of the court. She was not even allowed to be present at the coronation of her uncle, the Duke of Clarence, when he ascended the throne as William IV. He could not understand such reticence, was annoyed by it, and expressed his annoyance angrily. But his consort, good Queen Adelaide, was always kind and considerate: even when she lost all her own little ones, she could be generous enough to say to the Duchess of Kent, 'My children are dead, but yours lives, and she is mine too.'

All doubts as to the princess's relation to the succession were gradually removed. George IV. had died childless. Both the children of William IV. were dead. The Princess Victoria therefore was the heiress of England. A paper had been placed in the volume of history she had been reading, after perusing which she remarked, 'I never saw this before.'

'It was not thought necessary you should, princess,' the governess replied.

'I see,' she said timidly, 'that I am nearer the throne than I thought.'

'So it is, madam,' said the governess.

'Now many a child,' observed the princess thoughtfully, 'would boast, but they don't know the difficulty. There is much splendour, but there is more responsibility.' And putting her hand on her governess's, she said solemnly, 'I will be good.' Let that be recorded as among royal vows that have been faithfully fulfilled.

In August 1835, the Princess Victoria was confirmed in the Chapel Royal, St James's, by the Archbishop of Canterbury; and she was so much moved by the solemn service, that at the close of it she laid her head on her mother's breast, and sobbed with emotion.

CHAPTER II.

First Meeting with Prince Albert--Death of William IV.--Accession of Queen Victoria--First Speech from the Throne--Coronation--Life at Windsor--Personal Appearance--Betrothal to Prince Albert--Income from the Country--Her Majesty a genuine Ruler.

The first great event in the young princess's life, and that which was destined to colour it all for her good and happiness, was her first meeting in 1836 with her cousins, her mother's nephews, the young princes Ernest and Albert of Saxe-Coburg. That visit was of about a month's duration, and from the beginning the attraction was mutual. We can see how matters went in a letter from Princess Victoria to King Leopold, 7th June 1836. 'I have only now to beg you, my dearest uncle, 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 go on prosperously and well on this subject, now of so much importance to me.' Although in her heart preferring Albert, she had been equally kind to both, and her preference was as yet unknown. And as a mere preference it had for a while to remain, as the princess was only seventeen, and the education of the prince was yet incomplete. He was still on his student travels, collecting flowers and views and autographs for the sweet maiden in England, when in 1837, news reached him that by the death of William IV. she had attained her great dignity, and was proclaimed queen.

[Illustration: The Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Conyngham announcing to the Queen the Death of William IV.]

The death of William IV. took place at 2.30 A.M. on June 20, 1837. According to a contemporary account, the Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Conyngham reached Kensington Palace about five as bearers of the news. They desired to see the Queen. They were ushered into an apartment, and in a few minutes the door opened, and she came in, wrapped in a dressing-gown, with slippers on her naked feet, and with tearful eyes and trembling lips. Conyngham told his errand in few words, and as soon as he uttered the words 'Your Majesty,' she put out her hand to him to be kissed. He dropped on one knee, and kissed her hand. The archbishop likewise kissed her hand, and when he had spoken of the king's death, she asked him for his prayers on her behalf.

The first result of the accession of Victoria was the separation of Hanover from the British crown. By the Salic law of that realm, a woman was not permitted to reign; and thus the German principality, which had

come to us with the first George, and which had led us into so many wars on the Continent, ceased to have any concern with the fortunes of this country. The crown of Hanover now went to the Duke of Cumberland, the Queen's uncle.

On 26th June 1837, her cousin Albert wrote: '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.'

The Queen closed her first speech from the throne as follows: '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 upon the protection of almighty God. It will be my care to strengthen our institutions, civil and ecclesiastical, by discreet improvement wherever improvement is required, and to do all in my power to compose and allay animosity and discord. Acting upon these principles, I shall upon all occasions look with confidence to the wisdom of parliament and the affections of my people, which form the true support of the dignity of the crown, and ensure the stability of the constitution.'

'When called upon by the Duke of Wellington to sign her first death-warrant, the Queen asked, with tears in her eyes, 'Have you nothing to say in behalf of this man?'

'Nothing; he has deserted three times,' was the reply.

'Oh, your Grace, think again.'

'Well, your Majesty,' said the duke, 'though he is certainly a very bad _soldier_, some witnesses spoke for his character, and, for aught I know to the contrary, he may be a good _man_.'

'Oh, thank you for that a thousand times!' the Queen exclaimed; and she wrote 'pardoned' across the paper.

The great Duke of Wellington declared that he could not have desired a daughter of his own to play her part better than did the young queen. She seemed 'awed, but not daunted.' Nor was the gentler womanly side of life neglected. She wrote at once to the widowed Queen Adelaide, begging her, in all her arrangements, to consult nothing but her own health and convenience, and to remain at Windsor just as long as she pleased. And on the superscription of that letter she refused to give her widowed aunt her new style of 'Queen Dowager.' 'I am quite aware of Her Majesty's altered position,' she said, 'but I will not be the first person to remind her of it.' And on the evening of the king's funeral, a sick girl, daughter of an old servant of the Duke of Kent, to whom the duchess and the princess had been accustomed to show kindness, received from 'Queen Victoria,' a gift of the Psalms of David, with a marker worked by the royal hands, and placed in the forty-first psalm.

The first three weeks of her reign were spent at Kensington, and the Queen took possession of Buckingham Palace on 13th July 1837. Mr Jeaffreson, in describing her personal appearance, says: 'Studied at full face, she was seen to have an ample brow, something higher, and receding less abruptly, than the average brow of her princely kindred; a pair of noble blue eyes, and a delicately curved upper lip, that was more attractive for being at times slightly disdainful, and even petulant in its expression. No woman was ever more fortunate than our young Queen in the purity and delicate pinkiness of her glowing complexion.... Her Majesty's countenance was strangely eloquent of tenderness, refinement, and unobtrusive force.... Among the high-born beauties of her day, the young Queen Victoria was remarkable for the number of her ways of smiling.' Other observers say that the smallness of her stature was quite forgotten in the gracefulness of her demeanour. Fanny Kemble thought the Queen's voice exquisite, when dissolving parliament in July 1837: her enunciation was as perfect as the intonation was melodious. Charles Sumner was also delighted, and thought he never heard anything better delivered.

She was proclaimed queen, June 21, 1837: the coronation took place in Westminster Abbey on June 28, 1838, and has been vividly described by many pens. At least 300,000 visitors came to London on this occasion. We are told of the glow of purple, of the acclamations of the crowd, and the chorus of Westminster scholars, of the flash of diamonds as the assembled peeresses assumed their coronets when the crown was placed on the head of the young queen. But we best like the touch of womanly solicitude and helpfulness with which Her Majesty made a hasty movement forward as an aged peer, Lord Rolle, tripped over his robes, and stumbled on the steps of the throne. As she left the Abbey, 'the tender paleness that had overspread her fair face on her entrance had yielded to a glow of rosy celestial red.'

Miss Harriet Martineau thus describes the scene before the entrance of the Queen: '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 the mere sprinkling of oddities, everybody was in full dress. The scarlet of the military officers mixed in well, and the groups of clergy were dignified; but to an unaccustomed eye the prevalence of court dress had a curious effect. I was perpetually taking whole groups of gentlemen for Quakers till I recollected myself. The Earl Marshal's assistants, called Gold Sticks, looked well from above, lightly flitting about in white breeches, silk stockings, blue laced frocks, and white sashes.

'The throne, covered as was its footstool with cloth of gold, stood on an elevation of four steps in front of the area. The first peeress took her seat in the north transept opposite at a quarter to 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.... About nine o'clock the first gleams of the sun started 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 lady shone out like a rainbow. The brightness, vastness, and dreamy magnificence of the scene produced a strange effect of exhaustion and sleepiness.... The guns told when the Queen set forth, and there was unusual 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 dazzling radiance all around.... At half-past eleven the guns told that the Queen had arrived.'

An eye-witness says: 'The Queen came in as gay as a lark, and looking like a girl on her birthday. However, this only lasted till she reached the middle of the cross of the Abbey, at the foot of the throne. On her rising from her knees before the "footstool," after her private devotions, the Archbishop of Canterbury turned her round to each of the four corners of the Abbey, saying, in a voice so clear that it was heard in the inmost recesses, "Sirs, I here present unto you the undoubted Queen of this realm. Will ye all swear to do her homage?" Each time he said it there were shouts of "Long live Queen Victoria!" and the sounding of trumpets and the waving of banners, which made the poor little Queen turn first very red and then very pale. Most of the ladies cried, and I felt I should not forget it as long as I lived. The Queen recovered herself after this, and went through all the rest as if she had been crowned before, but seemed much impressed by the service, and a most beautiful one it is.' The service was that which was drawn up by St Dunstan, and with a very few alterations has been used ever since. Then the anointing followed--a canopy of cloth of gold was held over the Queen's head, a cross was traced with oil upon her head and hands, and the Dean of Westminster and the archbishop pronounced the words, 'Be thou anointed with holy oil, as kings, priests, and prophets were anointed.' Meanwhile, the choir chanted the 'Anointing of Solomon,' after which the archbishop gave her his benediction, all the bishops joining in the amen. She was next seated in St Edward's chair, underneath which is the rough stone on which the Scottish kings had been crowned, brought away from Scotland by Edward I. While seated here she received the ring which was a token that she was betrothed to her people, a globe surmounted by a cross, and a sceptre. The crown was then placed upon her head; the trumpets sounded, the drums beat, the cannons were fired, and cheers rose from the multitude both without and within the building. The archbishop presented a Bible to Her Majesty, led her to the throne, and bowed before her; the bishops and lords present in their order of rank did the same, saying, 'I do become your liegeman of life and limb and of earthly worship, and faith and love I will bear unto you, to live and die against all manner of folks; so help me God.'

When the ceremony of allegiance was over, the Queen received the holy communion, and, after the last blessing was pronounced, in splendid array left the Abbey. Mr Greville, one of the brilliant gossip-mongers of the court, related that Lord John Thynne, who officiated for the Dean of Westminster, told him that no one knew but the archbishop and himself what ceremony was to be gone through, and that the Queen never knew what she was to do next. She said to Thynne, 'Pray tell me what I am to do, for they don't know.' At the end, when the orb was put into her hand, she

said, 'What am I to do with it?' 'Your Majesty is to carry it, if you please, in your hand.' 'Am I?' she said; 'it is very heavy.' The ruby ring was made for her little finger instead of her fourth; when the archbishop was to put it on she extended the former, but he said it was to be put on the latter. She said it was too small, and she could not get it on. He said it was right to put it there, and, as he insisted, she yielded, but had first to take off her other rings, and then it was forced on; but it hurt her very much, and as soon as the ceremony was over, she was obliged to bathe her finger in iced water in order to get it off. It is said that she was very considerate to the royal dukes, her uncles, when they presented themselves to do homage. When the Duke of Sussex, who was old and infirm, came forward to take the oath of allegiance, she anticipated him, kissed his cheek, and said tenderly, 'Do not kneel, my uncle, for I am still Victoria, your niece.'

Lord Shaftesbury wrote of the service, as 'so solemn, so deeply religious, so humbling, and yet so sublime. Every word of it is invaluable; throughout, the church is everything, secular greatness nothing. She declares, in the name and by the authority of God, and almost enforces, as a condition preliminary to her benediction, all that can make princes rise to temporal and eternal glory. Many, very many, were deeply impressed.'

[Illustration: Queen Victoria at the Period of her Accession.]

The old crown weighed more than seven pounds; the new one, made for this coronation, but three pounds. The value of the jewels in the crown was estimated at £112,760. These precious stones included 1 large ruby and sapphire; 16 sapphires, 11 emeralds, 4 rubies, 1363 brilliant diamonds; 1273 rose diamonds, 147 table diamonds; 4 drop-shaped pearls; 273 other pearls. The entire coronation expenses amounted to less than £70,000: those of George IV. amounted to £238,000 (banquet, £138,000). As the ceremony lasted four and a half hours, it was well Queen Victoria was spared the fatigue of a banquet.

Reasons of state and court etiquette required the Duchess of Kent to retire from the constant companionship of her daughter, lest she should be suspected of undue influence over her. The young queen of England had entered upon a time of moral trial. Many of those who had been ready to applaud her were found equally ready to criticise her. Her mother's natural pangs at settling down into their new relationship were maliciously interpreted as consequences of the Queen's coldness and self-will. It was said that she 'began to exhibit slight signs of a peremptory disposition.'

It is good to know from such a well-informed authority as Mrs Oliphant that the immediate circle of friends around her fed her with no flatteries. The life of the Queen at Windsor has been thus described: 'She rose at a little after eight; breakfasted in her private rooms; then her ministers were admitted; despatches were read, and there would be a consultation with Lord Melbourne. After luncheon she rode out, and on her return amused herself with music and singing and such like recreations till dinner, which was about 8 P.M. On the appearance of the ladies in the drawing-room she stood, moving about from one to the other, talking for a

short time to each, and also speaking to the gentlemen as they came from the dining-room. A whist table would be made up for the Duchess of Kent. The Queen and the others seated themselves about a large round table and engaged in conversation.'

'Poor little Queen!' said Carlyle, with a shake of his head at the time, 'she is at an age when a girl can hardly be trusted to choose a bonnet for herself, yet a task is laid upon her from which an archangel might shrink.' Her Majesty was not overawed, however, and expressly declared to her mother that she ascended the throne without alarm. 'She is as merry and playful as a kitten,' wrote Sir John Campbell.... 'She was in great spirits, and danced with more than usual gaiety a romping, country-dance called the Tempest.' An observant writer of this date says: 'She had a fine vein of humour, a keen sense of the ludicrous; enjoyed equestrian exercise, and rode remarkably well.'

N. P. Willis, the American poet, who saw her on horseback in Hyde Park, said: 'Her Majesty rides quite fearlessly and securely; I met her party full gallop near the centre of the Rotten Row. On came the Queen on a dun-coloured, highly groomed horse, with her prime-minister on one side of her, and Lord Byron on the other; her *cortège* of maids of honour, and lords and ladies of the court checking their spirited horses, and preserving always a slight distance between themselves and Her Majesty. ... Victoria's round, plump figure looks exceedingly well in her dark-green riding dress.... She rode with her mouth open, and seemed exhilarated with pleasure.' James Gordon Bennett, who saw her at the opera, describes her as 'a fair-haired little girl, dressed with great simplicity in white muslin, with hair plain, a blue ribbon at the back.... Her bust is extremely well proportioned, and her complexion very fair. There is a slight parting of her rosy lips, between which you can see little nicks of something like very white teeth. The expression of her face is amiable and good-tempered. I could see nothing like that awful majesty, that mysterious something which doth hedge a queen.'

Mr Greville, who dined at the Queen's table in Buckingham Palace in 1837, pronounced the whole thing dull, so dull that he marvelled how any one could like such a life: but both here and at a ball he declared the bearing of the Queen to be perfect, noting also that her complexion was clear, and that the expression of her eyes was agreeable.

Despite her strong attraction to her cousin Albert, she expressed a determination not to think of marriage for a time. The sudden change from her quiet, girlish life in Kensington to the prominence and the powers of a great queen, standing 'in that fierce light which beats upon a throne,' might well have excused a good deal of wilfulness had the excuse been needed.

Her Majesty decides that 'a worse school for a young girl, or one more detrimental to all natural feelings and affections, cannot well be imagined.' Perhaps it was an experience which she needed to convince her fully of the value and blessedness of the true domesticity which was soon to be hers. After she had in 1837 placed her life-interest in the hereditary revenues of the crown at the disposal of the House of Commons,

her yearly income was fixed at £385,000. This income is allocated as follows: For Her Majesty's privy purse, £60,000; salaries of Her Majesty's household and retired allowances, £131,260; expenses of household, £172,500; royal bounty, alms, &c., £13,200; unappropriated moneys, £8040.

The first change from a Whig to a Conservative government ruffled the waters a little. Her Majesty was advised by the Duke of Wellington to invite Sir Robert Peel to form a new ministry. She did so, but frankly told Peel that she was very sorry to lose Lord Melbourne. When arranging his cabinet, Sir Robert found that objections were raised to the retention of certain Whig ladies in personal attendance upon the Queen, as being very likely to influence her. The Duchess of Sutherland and Lady Normanby, it is believed, were particularly meant. The Queen at first flatly refused to dismiss her Ladies of the Bedchamber, to whom she had got so accustomed. As Sir Robert Peel would not yield the point, she recalled Lord Melbourne, who now retained office till 1841. The affair caused a great deal of talk in political and non-political circles. The Queen wrote: 'They wanted to deprive me of my ladies, and I suppose they would deprive me next of my dresses and my housemaids; but I will show them that I am Queen of England.' This little episode has since gone by the name of the 'Bedchamber Plot.'

Of Her Majesty it may safely be said that she has always been a genuine ruler, in the sense that from the first she trained herself to comprehend the mysteries of statecraft. She had Lord Melbourne as her first prime-minister, and from the beginning every despatch of the Foreign Office was offered to her attention. In 1848, a year of exceptional activity, these numbered 28,000.

If for a while the Queen thus drew back from actually deciding to marry the cousin whom, nevertheless, she owned to be 'fascinating,' that cousin on his side was not one of those of whom it may be said:

He either fears his fate too much,
Or his deserts are small,
That dares not put it to the touch,
To gain or lose it all.

'I am ready,' he said, 'to submit to delay, if I have only some certain assurance to go upon. But if, after waiting perhaps for three years, I should find that the Queen no longer desired the marriage, it would place me in a ridiculous position, and would, to a certain extent, ruin all my prospects for the future.'

Love proved stronger than girlish pride and independence--the woman was greater than the queen. The young pair met again on the 10th October 1839, and on the 14th of the same month the Queen communicated the welcome news of her approaching marriage to her prime-minister. Her best friends were all delighted with the news.

'You will be very nervous on declaring your engagement to the Council,' said the Duchess of Gloucester.

'Yes,' replied the Queen, 'but I did something far more trying to my nerves a short time since.'

'What was that?' the duchess asked.

'I proposed to Albert,' was the reply.

Etiquette of course forbade the gentleman in this case to speak first; and we can well believe that the Queen was more nervous over this matter than over many a state occasion. How the thing took place we may gather in part from a letter of Prince Albert to his grandmother: 'The Queen sent for me to her room, and disclosed to me, in a genuine outburst of love and affection, that I had gained her whole heart.' After the glad announcement was made, warm congratulations were showered on the young people. Lord Melbourne expressed great satisfaction on behalf of himself and his country. 'You will be much more comfortable,' he said, 'for a woman cannot stand alone for any time in whatever position she may be.' To King Leopold, who had much to do with the matter, the news was particularly welcome. In his joyous response to the Queen occur these words: 'I had, when I learned 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 the best for your happiness.... In your position, which may, and will perhaps, become in future even more difficult in a political point of view, you could not exist without having a happy and agreeable _intØrieur_. And I am much deceived (which I think I am not) or you will find in Albert just the very qualities and disposition which are indispensable for your happiness, and will suit your own character, temper, and mode of life.'

[Illustration: The Houses of Parliament. (From a photograph by Frith.)]

To Baron Stockmar, the prince wrote: 'Victoria is so good and kind to me, that I am often puzzled to believe that I should be the object of so much affection.' Prince Albert knew he was choosing a position of no ordinary difficulty and responsibility. 'With the exception of my relation to 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 welfare of so many, will surely be sufficient to support me.'

True love is always humble. Among the entries in the Queen's Journals are many like this: 'How I will strive to make Albert feel as little as possible the great sacrifice he has made! I told him it _was_ a great sacrifice on his part, but he would not allow it.' After they had spent a month together, the prince returned to Germany. The following extract occurs in a letter from Prince Albert to the Duchess of Kent: '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!'

On the 23d November, she made the important declaration regarding her approaching marriage to the privy-councillors, eighty-three of whom

assembled in Buckingham Palace to hear it. She wore upon her slender wrist a bracelet with the prince's portrait, 'which seemed,' she says, 'to give her courage.' The Queen afterwards described the scene: 'Precisely at two I went in. Lord Melbourne I saw kindly looking at me, with tears in his eyes, but he was not near me. I then read my short declaration. I felt that 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, most welcome communication might be printed. I then left the room, the whole thing not taking above three minutes.' The Queen had to make the same statement before parliament, when Sir Robert Peel replied. 'Her Majesty,' he said, 'has the singular good fortune to be able to gratify her private feelings while she performs her public duty, and to obtain the best guarantee for happiness by contracting an alliance founded on affection.' Hereupon arose a discussion both in and out of parliament as to the amount of the grant to Prince Albert, which was settled at £30,000 a year. But Prince Albert assured the Queen that this squabbling did not trouble him: 'All I have to say is, while I possess your love, they cannot make me unhappy.' Another source of trouble arose from the fact that several members of the royal family thought it an indignity that they should give precedence to a German prince.

Prince Albert was born at Schloss Rosenau, near Coburg, August 26, 1819, the younger son of the Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, by his first marriage with Louisa, daughter of the Duke of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg. After a careful domestic education, the prince, along with his elder brother, studied at Brussels and Bonn (1836-38), where, in addition to the sciences connected with state-craft, he devoted himself with ardour to natural history and chemistry, and displayed great taste for the fine arts, especially painting and music. Gifted with a handsome figure, he attained expertness in all knightly exercises; whilst by Baron Stockmar, his Mentor, he was imbued with a real interest in European politics.

King Leopold wrote truly of him: 'If I am not very much mistaken, he possesses all the qualities required to fit him for the position which he will occupy in England. His understanding is sound, his apprehension is clear and rapid, and his heart in the right place. He has great powers of observation, and possesses singular prudence, without anything about him that can be called cold or morose.' The two met first in 1836, and fell in love, as we have seen, like ordinary mortals, though the marriage had long been projected by King Leopold and Baron Stockmar.

CHAPTER III.

Marriage--Delicacy of the Prince's Position--Family Habits--Birth of Princess Royal--Queen's Views of Religious Training--Osborne and Balmoral--Bloomfield's _Reminiscences_--Death of the Duke of Wellington.

Nowhere does the genuine unselfishness and sweet womanliness of the Queen

show more than in her record of those days. She did not, like too many brides, think of herself as the only or even the principal person to be considered. She did not grudge that her bridegroom's heart should feel the strength of former ties. 'The sacrifice,' in her eyes, was all on his side, though he would not admit that. He had to leave his brother, his home, his dear native land. He on his side could ask, 'What am I, that such happiness should be mine? for excess of happiness it is for me to know that I am so dear to you.' But her one thought was, 'God grant that I may be the happy person--the most happy person, to make this dearest, blessed being happy and contented.' 'Albert has completely won my heart,' she had written to Baron Stockmar.... 'I feel certain he will make me very happy. I wish I could say I felt as certain of my making him happy, but I shall do my best.'

The marriage itself took place on 10th February 1840 in the Chapel Royal, St James's Palace. It was a cold cheerless morning, but the sun burst forth just as the Queen entered the chapel. As a grand and beautiful pageant, it was second only to the Coronation. The Queen was enthusiastically cheered as she drove between Buckingham Palace and St James's. She is described as looking pale and anxious, but lovely. Her dress was of rich white satin, trimmed with orange blossoms; a wreath of orange blossoms encircled her head, and over it a veil of rich Honiton lace, which fell over her face. Her jewels were the collar of the Order of the Garter, and a diamond necklace and ear-rings. She had twelve bridesmaids, and the ceremony was performed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and the Bishop of London.

Her Majesty bore herself from first to last with quietness and confidence, and went through the service with due earnestness and solemnity.

The wedding breakfast was at Buckingham Palace. The wedding-cake was no less than three hundred pounds in weight, fourteen inches in depth, and three yards in circumference. The young couple proceeded to Windsor, where they were received by an enthusiastic throng of Eton boys, in white gloves and white favours.

One of the ladies-in-waiting wrote to her family that '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.' And this sympathetic observer adds: 'Such a new thing for her to dare to be unguarded 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 day after the marriage the Queen wrote to Baron Stockmar: 'There cannot exist a purer, dearer, nobler being in the world than the prince;' and she never had cause to take these words back. The blessing of loving and being loved was certainly given to Queen Victoria.

The royal pair spent three days of honeymoon at Windsor, and then Her Majesty had to return to London, to hold court, and to receive addresses of congratulation on her marriage; indeed, she was nearly 'addressed to

death.' The Queen and Prince Albert went everywhere together; to church, to reviews, to races, theatres, and drawing-rooms; and everywhere the people were charmed with their beauty and happiness.

One of the trials of royalty is that they are the observed of all observers, and from the first Prince Albert understood the extreme delicacy of his position. How well he met the difficulty is told by General Gray (_Early Years_):

'From the moment of his establishment in the English palace as the husband of the Queen, his first object was to maintain, and, if possible, even raise the character of the court. With this view he knew that it was not enough that his own conduct should be in truth free from reproach; no shadow of a shade of suspicion should by possibility attach to it. He knew that, in his position, every action would be scanned--not always, possibly, in a friendly spirit; that his goings out and his comings in would be watched; and that in every society, however little disposed to be censorious, there would always be found some prone, where an opening afforded, to exaggerate and even invent stories against him, and to put an uncharitable construction on the most innocent acts. He therefore, from the first, laid down strict, not to say severe rules for his guidance. He imposed a degree of restraint and self-denial upon his own movements which could not but have been irksome, had he not been sustained by a sense of the advantage which the throne would derive from it.

'He denied himself the pleasure--which, to one so fond as he was of personally watching and inspecting every improvement that was in progress, would have been very great--of walking at will about the town. Wherever he went, whether in a carriage or on horseback, he was accompanied by his equerry. He paid no visits in general society. His visits were to the studio of the artist, to museums of art or science, to institutions for good and benevolent purposes. Wherever a visit from him, or his presence, could tend to advance the real good of the people, there his horses might be seen waiting; never at the door of mere fashion. Scandal itself could take no liberty with his name. He loved to ride through all the districts of London where building and improvements were in progress, more especially when they were such as would conduce to the health or recreation of the working classes; and few, if any, took such interest as he did in all that was being done, at any distance east, west, north, or south of the great city--from Victoria Park to Battersea--from the Regent's Park to the Crystal Palace, and far beyond. "He would frequently return," the Queen says, "to luncheon at a great pace, and would always come through the Queen's dressing-room, telling where he had been--what new buildings he had seen--what studios he had visited." Riding, for riding's sake, he disliked. "It bores me so," he said. It was for real service that Prince Albert devoted his life; and for this end he gave himself to the very diligent study of the English Constitution. Never obtrusive, he yet did the work, kept the wheels moving; but in the background, sinking his individuality in that of the Queen, and leaving her all the honour.'

[Illustration: Marriage of Queen Victoria.]

A hard-working man himself, the prince and also the Queen were in sympathy with the working-classes, and erected improved dwellings upon the estates of Osborne and Balmoral. The prince was also in favour of working-men's clubs and coffee palaces. It was remarked that whether he spoke to a painter, sculptor, architect, man of science, or ordinary tradesman, each of them was apt to think that his speciality was their own calling, owing to his understanding and knowledge of it. He rose at seven A.M., summer and winter, dressed, and went to his sitting-room, where in winter a fire was burning, and a green lamp was lit. He read and answered letters here, and prepared for Her Majesty drafts of replies to ministers and other matters. After breakfast, he would read such articles in the papers or reviews as seemed to his thoughtful mind to be good or important. At ten he went out with the Queen.

So began the happy years of peaceful married life. The prince liked early hours and country pleasures, and the Queen, like a loyal wife, not merely consented to his tastes, but made them absolutely her own. Before she had been married a year, she made the naive pretty confession that 'formerly I was too happy to go to London and wretched to leave it, and now, since the blessed hour of my marriage, and still more since the summer, I dislike and am unhappy to leave the country, and would be content and happy never to go to town;' adding ingenuously, 'The solid pleasures of a peaceful, quiet, yet merry life in the country, with my inestimable husband and friend, my all in all, are far more durable than the amusements of London, though we don't despise or dislike them sometimes.'

They took breakfast at nine; then they went through details of routine business, and sketched or played till luncheon, after which the Queen had a daily interview with Lord Melbourne (prime-minister till the next year). Then they drove, walked, or rode, dined at eight o'clock, and had pleasant social circles afterwards, which were broken up before midnight. Both were fond of art and music. Indeed the Prince-Consort gave a powerful impulse to that study of classical music which has since become so universal. Mendelssohn himself praised the Queen's singing, though without flattering blindness to its faults and shortcomings. And the brightness of life was all the brighter because it flowed over a substratum of seriousness and solemnity. The first time that the Queen and her husband partook of holy communion together, they spent the preceding evening--the vigil of Easter--in retirement, occupied with good German books, and soothed and elevated by Mozart's music, for the prince was master of the organ, and the Queen of the piano. The prince made his maiden speech at a meeting for the abolition of the slave-trade, speaking in a low tone, and with 'the prettiest foreign accent.' While she was driving up Constitution Hill, an attempt was made upon the Queen's life by a weak-minded youth, but luckily neither of the pistol shots took effect. There have been at least seven other happily futile attempts on the life of the Queen.

The Princess Royal was born on the 21st November 1840; and the royal mother, fondly tended by her husband, made a speedy and happy recovery. Prince Albert's care for the Queen in these circumstances was like that of a mother.

The Prince of Wales was born on November 9, 1841, and after that the

little family circle rapidly increased, and with it the parents' sense of responsibility. 'A man's education begins the first day of his life,' said the prince's tried friend, the wise Baron Stockmar, and the Queen felt it 'a hard case' that the pressure of public business prevented her from being always with her little ones when they said their prayers. She has given us her views on religious training:

'I am quite clear that children should be taught to have great reverence for God and for religion, but that they should have the feeling of devotion and love which our Heavenly Father encourages His earthly children to have for Him, and not one of fear and trembling; and that the thoughts of death and an after-life should not be presented in an alarming and forbidding view; and that they should be made to know, _as yet_, no difference of creeds.'

Court gossips considered the Queen 'to be very fond of her children, but severe in her manner, and a strict disciplinarian in her family.' A nurse in the royal household informed Baron Bunsen that 'the children were kept very plain indeed: it was quite poor living--only a bit of roast meat, and perhaps a plain pudding.' Other servants have reported that the Queen would have made 'an admirable poor man's wife.' We used to hear how the young princesses had to smooth out and roll up their bonnet strings. By these trifling side-lights we discern a vigorous, wholesome discipline, striving to counteract the enervating influences of rank and power, and their attendant flattery and self-indulgence. 'One of the main principles observed in the education of the royal children was this--that though they received the best training of body and mind to fit them for the high position they would eventually have to fill, they should in no wise come in contact with the actual court life. The children were scarcely known to the Queen's ladies-in-waiting, as they only now and then made their appearance for a moment after dinner at dessert, or accompanied their parents out driving. The care of them was exclusively intrusted to persons who possessed the Queen and Prince-Consort's entire confidence, and with whom they could at all times communicate direct.' An artist employed to decorate the pavilion in the garden of Buckingham Palace, wrote of Her Majesty and the prince: 'In many things they are 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 their 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.'

[Illustration: Osborne House.(From a Photograph by Frith.)]

The seaside villa of Osborne, built at the Queen's own charges at a cost of £200,000, and the remote castle of Balmoral, the creation of the Prince-Consort, were the favourite homes of the royal household: the creations as it were, of their domestic love, and inwrought with their own personalities, as statelier Windsor could never be. In the Swiss cottage at Osborne, with its museum, kitchen, storeroom, and little gardens, the young people learned to do household work and understand the management of a small establishment. The parents were invited as guests, to enjoy the

dishes which the princesses had prepared with their own hands, and there each child was free to follow the bent of its own industrial inclination. In the Highlands, again, among the reserved and dignified Scottish peasantry, the children were encouraged to visit freely, to make themselves acquainted with the wants and feelings of the poor, and to regard them with an understanding sympathy and affection.

Sir Robert Peel, who succeeded Lord Melbourne in 1841 as prime-minister, had the following advice from his predecessor as to his conduct in office, which shows the Queen's good sense: 'Whenever he does anything, or has anything to propose, let him explain to her clearly his reasons. The Queen is not conceited; she is aware there are many things she cannot understand, and she likes to have them explained to her elementarily, not at length and in detail, but shortly and clearly.

One of the minor posts in the new ministry was filled by a young member of parliament, who was destined in after-years to become as celebrated as Peel himself. This was the distinguished scholar and orator, William Ewart Gladstone, the son of Sir John Gladstone, a Scotch merchant who had settled in Liverpool. He was already a power in parliament, and every year after this saw him rising into greater prominence.

In the new parliament, too, though not in the ministry, was another member, who afterwards rose to high office, and became very famous. This was Benjamin Disraeli, son of Disraeli the elder, a distinguished literary man. Although very clever, Benjamin Disraeli had not as yet obtained any influence in the House. His first speech, indeed, had been received with much laughter; but, as he himself had then predicted, a time came at last when the House did listen to him.

Lady Bloomfield, while maid-of-honour to the Queen, was much in the society of royalty. The following are extracts from her Reminiscences, giving a sketch of the life at Windsor in 1843: 'I went to the Queen's rooms yesterday, and saw her before we began to sing. She was so thoroughly kind and gracious. The music went off very well. Costa [Sir Michael] accompanied, and I was pleased by the Queen's telling me, when I asked her whether I had not better practise the things a little more, "that was not necessary, as I knew them perfectly." She also said, "If it was convenient to me, I was to go down to her room any evening to try the masses." Just as if anything she desired could be inconvenient. We had a pleasant interview with the royal children in Lady Lyttelton's room yesterday, and almost a romp with the little Princess Royal and the Prince of Wales. They had got a round ivory counter, which I spun for them, and they went into such fits of laughter, it did my heart good to hear them. The Princess Royal is wonderfully quick and clever. She is always in the Queen's rooms when we play or sing, and she seems especially fond of music, and stands listening most attentively, without moving.

'Dec. 18.--We walked with the Queen and prince yesterday to the Home Farm, saw the turkeys crammed, looked at the pigs, and then went to see the new aviary, where there is a beautiful collection of pigeons, fowls, &c., of rare kinds. The pigeons are so tame that they will perch upon Prince Albert's hat and the Queen's shoulders. It was funny seeing the

royal pair amusing themselves with farming.

'_Dec_. 19.--My waiting is nearly over, and though I shall be delighted to get home, I always regret leaving my dear kind mistress, particularly when I have been a good deal with Her Majesty, as I have been this waiting. We sang again last night, and after Costa went away, I sorted a quantity of music for the Queen; and then Prince Albert said he had composed a German ballad, which he thought would suit my voice, and he wished me to sing it. So his royal highness accompanied me, and I sang it at sight, which rather alarmed me; but I got through it, and it is very pretty. The Duchess of Kent has promised to have it copied for me.'

In 1847 Baron Stockmar wrote: 'The Queen improves greatly. She makes daily advances in discernment and experience; the candour, the love of truth, the fairness, the considerateness with which she judges men and things are truly delightful, and the ingenuous self-knowledge with which she speaks about herself is simply charming.' It was not perhaps surprising that the Queen's views and the prince's views on public questions coincided.

When Lord Shaftesbury, then Lord Ashley, delivered a very able speech on the Mine and Colliery Bill, the Prince-Consort wrote, 'I have carefully perused your speech, which you were so good as to send me, and I have been highly gratified by your efforts, as well as horror-stricken by the statements which you have brought before the country. I know you do not wish for praise, and I therefore withhold it; but God's best blessing will rest with you and support you in your arduous but glorious task.'

In 1848, a year of revolution, the Prince-Consort consulted Lord Shaftesbury as to his attitude towards the working-classes. The interview took place at Osborne, and the Queen and Prince-Consort were greatly alarmed by the revolution in France and the exile of Louis-Philippe. 'They feared the continuance of commotions in England, and were desirous to know how they could exercise their influence to soothe the people. The Queen, on my arrival, expressed this sentiment very warmly, and added at dinner, "The prince will talk to you to-morrow. We have sent for you to have your opinion on what we should do in view of the state of affairs to show our interest in the working-classes, and you are the only man who can advise us in the matter."'

On the following morning, during a long walk of an hour and a half in the garden, Lord Shaftesbury counselled the prince to put himself at the head of all social movements in art and science, and especially of those movements as they bore upon the poor, and thus would he show the interest felt by royalty in the happiness of the kingdom. The prince did so with marked success; and after he had presided at a Labourers' Friend Society, a noted Socialist remarked, 'If the prince goes on like this, why, he'll upset our apple-cart.'

The poet-laureate is an official attached to the household of royalty, and it was long his duty to write an ode on the king's birthday. Towards the end of the reign of George III. this was dropped. On the death of the poet Wordsworth on 23d April 1850, the next poet-laureate was Alfred Tennyson. The Queen, it is said, had picked up one of his earlier volumes, and had

been charmed with his 'Miller's Daughter;' her procuring a copy of the volume for the Princess Alice gave a great impetus to his popularity. No poet has ever written more truly and finely about royalty, as witness the dedication to the *Idylls of the King*, which enshrines the memory of the Prince-Consort; or the beautiful dedication to the Queen, dated March 1851, which closes thus:

Her court was pure, her life serene;
God gave her peace; her land reposed;
A thousand claims to reverence closed
In her as Mother, Wife, and Queen.

And statesmen at her council met
Who knew the seasons, when to take
Occasion by the hand, and make
The bounds of freedom wider yet.

'It is perhaps natural,' says a contemporary writer, 'for the laureates to be loyal, but there is no doubt that the sincere tributes which he paid to the Queen and to her consort contributed materially to the steadying of the foundation of the British throne. He almost alone among the poets gave expression to the inarticulate loyalty of the ordinary Englishman, and he did it without being either servile or sycophantic. If it were only for his dedication to the Queen and Prince-Consort, he would have repaid a thousand times over the value of all the bottles of sherry and the annual stipends the poet-laureates have received since the days of Ben Jonson.'

Mrs Gilchrist writes: 'Tennyson likes and admires the Queen personally much, enjoys conversation with her. Mrs Tennyson generally goes too, and says the Queen's manner towards him is childlike and charming, and they both give their opinions freely, even when these differ from the Queen's, which she takes with perfect humour, and is very animated herself.' The Prince-Consort, to whom Tennyson dedicated his *Idylls of the King*,

Since he held them dear,
Perchance as finding there unconsciously
Some image of himself,

had his copy inscribed with the poet's autograph.

One most characteristic feature of the Queen's reign was the inauguration, in 1851, of that system of International Exhibitions which has infused a new and larger spirit into commerce, and whose influence as yet only begins to work. The idea came from the Prince-Consort, and was carried out by his unflinching industry, energy, and perseverance. Sir Joseph Paxton's genius raised a palace of crystal in Hyde Park, inclosing within it some of the magnificent trees, few, if any, of which were destroyed by the undertaking. As Thackeray wrote:

A blazing arch of lucid glass
Leaps like a fountain from the grass
To meet the sun.

The Queen took the greatest interest in the work, which she felt was her husband's. She visited it almost daily, entering into interested conversation with the manufacturers who had brought their wares for display. The building was opened on the 1st of May, which the Queen names in her diary as 'a day which makes my heart swell with pride and glory and thankfulness.' She dwells lovingly on 'the tremendous cheers, the joy expressed in every face,' adding, 'We feel happy--so full of thankfulness. God is indeed our kind and merciful Father.'

After the building had served its purpose, the exhibition building was removed to Sydenham, a London suburb then almost in the country, and opened by the Queen, 10th June 1854. Under its new name of the 'Crystal Palace' it has since been the resort of millions of pleasure-seekers. It was fondly hoped by its promoters that the Great Exhibition would knit the nations together in friendship, and 'inaugurate a long reign of peace.' Yet the year 1851 was not out before Louis Napoleon overthrew the new French Republic, of which he had been elected president, by a *coup d'État*, or 'stroke of policy,' as cruel as it was cowardly. Lord Palmerston's approval of this outrage, without the knowledge of either the Queen or Lord John Russell, procured him his dismissal from the cabinet. Two months later, however, Palmerston 'gave Russell his tit-for-tat,' defeating him over a Militia Bill.

In the year 1852, amid the anxieties consequent on the sudden assumption of imperial power by Louis Napoleon, the Queen writes thus to her uncle, King Leopold: 'I grow daily to dislike politics and business more and more. We women are not made for governing, and if we are good women, we must dislike these masculine occupations.'

It was about this time that unjust reports were circulated concerning the political influence of Prince Albert, who was represented as 'inimical to the progress of liberty throughout the world, and the friend of reactionary movements and absolute government.' When parliament was opened, the prince was completely vindicated, and his past services to the country, as the bosom counsellor of the sovereign, were made clear. The Queen naturally felt the pain of these calumnies more deeply than did the prince himself, but on the anniversary of her wedding day she could write: 'Trials we must have; but what are they if we are together?'

[Illustration: Duke of Wellington.]

In 1852 the great Duke of Wellington died, full of years and honours. He passed quietly away in his sleep, in his simple camp-bed in the castle of Walmer. Though he had been opposed to the Reform Bill and many other popular measures, he was still loved and respected by the nation for his high sense of duty and his many sterling qualities. The hero of Waterloo was laid beside the hero of Trafalgar in St Paul's Cathedral. He was lowered into his grave by some of his old comrades-in-arms, who had fought and conquered under him; and from the Queen to the humblest of her subjects, it was felt on that day 'that a great man was dead.'

Of his death the Queen wrote: 'What a *loss!* We cannot think of this country without "the Duke," our immortal hero! In him centred almost every

earthly honour a subject could possess.... With what singleness of purpose, what straightforwardness, what courage, were all the motives of his actions guided! The crown never possessed--and I fear never _will_--so devoted, loyal, and faithful a subject, so staunch a supporter.'

An eccentric miser, J. C. Neild, who died 30th August 1852, left £250,000 to Her Majesty. This man had pinched and starved himself for thirty years in order to accumulate this sum. The Queen satisfied herself that he had no relations living, before accepting the money.

[Illustration: Great Exhibition of 1851.]

CHAPTER IV.

Chief Public Events, 1837-49--Rebellion in Canada--Opium War with China--Wars in North-west India--Penny Postage--Repeal of the Corn-laws--Potato Famine--Free Trade--Chartism.

The Queen had been only a few months on the throne when tidings arrived of a rebellion in Canada. The colonists had long been dissatisfied with the way in which the government was conducted by the mother-country. In the year 1840 Upper and Lower Canada were united into one province, and though the union was not at first a success, the colonists were granted the power of managing their own affairs; and soon came to devote their efforts to developing the resources of the country, and ceased to agitate for complete independence. The principle of union then adopted has since been extended to most of the other North American colonies; and at the present time the Dominion of Canada stretches across the whole breadth of the continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

Another contest which marked the early years of the new reign was the inglorious war with China (1839-42). The Chinese are great consumers of opium, a hurtful drug, which produces a sort of dreamy stupor or intoxication. The opium poppy is extensively grown in India, and every year large quantities were exported to China. The government of the latter country, professedly anxious to preserve its subjects from the baneful influence of this drug, entirely prohibited the trade in it. Several cargoes of opium belonging to British merchants were seized and destroyed, and the trading ports closed against our vessels. Our government resented this conduct as an interference with the freedom of commerce, and demanded compensation and the keeping open of the ports.

As the Chinese refused to submit to the demands of those whom they considered barbarous foreigners, a British armament was sent to enforce our terms. The Celestials fought bravely enough, but British discipline had all its own way. Neither the antiquated junks nor the flimsily constructed forts of the enemy were any match for our men-of-war. Several ports had been bombarded and Nankin threatened, when the Chinese yielded.

They were compelled to pay nearly six millions sterling towards the expenses of the war; to give up to us the island of Hong-Kong; and to throw open Canton, Shanghai, and three other ports to our commerce.

During this period also the British took a prominent part in upholding the Sultan of Turkey against his revolted vassal, Mehemet Ali, the Pasha of Egypt. The latter, a very able prince, had overrun Syria; and there seemed every likelihood that he would shortly establish his independence, and add besides a considerable portion of Turkish territory to his dominions. Lord Palmerston, the British foreign minister, however, brought about an alliance with Austria and the eastern powers of Europe to maintain the integrity of the Turkish empire. The Egyptians were driven out of Syria, and the supremacy of the Turks restored. The energetic action of Lord Palmerston at this crisis brought him much popularity; and from this time until his death, twenty-five years later, the nation almost absolutely trusted him in all foreign affairs.

[Illustration: Sir Robert Peel.]

So necessary at the present day has the penny post become to all classes of the people, that we can scarcely realise how our forefathers managed to live without it. Yet even so recently as the accession of Victoria, the nation was not in the enjoyment of this great blessing. So seldom in those days did a letter reach the abode of a working-man, that when the postman did make his approach, he was thought to be the bearer of news of great importance.

The adoption of the penny postage scheme was the only great measure of Lord Melbourne's ministry during the early years of the new reign. The credit of it, however, did not in reality belong to the ministers. The measure was forced upon them by the pressure of public opinion, which had been enlightened by Rowland Hill's pamphlet upon the question. Hill was the son of a Birmingham schoolmaster; and thus, like so many other benefactors of the human race, was of comparatively humble origin. He had thoroughly studied the question of postal reform, and his pamphlet, which was first published in 1837, had a great effect upon the public mind. Previous to this, indeed, several other persons had advocated the reform of the post-office system, and notably Mr Wallace, member of parliament for Greenock.

Before 1839, the rates of postage had been very heavy, and varied according to the distance. From one part of London, or any other large town, to another, the rate was 2d.; from London to Brighton, 8d.; to Edinburgh, 1s. 1d.; and to Belfast, 1s. 4d. Some of these charges were almost equal to the daily wages of a labouring-man.

There was considerable opposition to the new measure, especially among the officials of the postal department. Many prominent men, too, both in and out of parliament, were afraid it would never pay. The clever and witty Sydney Smith spoke slightly of it as the 'nonsensical penny postage scheme.' In spite of the objections urged against it, however, it was adopted by parliament in the later part of 1839, and brought into actual operation in January 1840; and the example set by this country has since

been followed by all civilised states. Every letter was now to be _prepaid_ by affixing the penny stamp. In this way a letter not exceeding half-an-ounce in weight could be carried to any part of the United Kingdom. In 1871 the rate was reduced to a penny for one ounce. The success of this great measure is best shown by the increase of letters delivered in Great Britain and Ireland: from 85 millions in 1839, the number had more than doubled by 1892. Thus, at the present time, the income from stamps forms no inconsiderable item of the revenue; while it need scarcely be said that the advantages of the penny post, both to business men and the public generally, cannot be over-estimated.

Between the years 1839 and 1849 the British were engaged in a series of military enterprises in the north-west of India, which greatly tried the bravery of our soldiers, and were attended even with serious disaster. They resulted, however, in the conquest of the territories in the basin of the Indus, and in establishing the British sway in India more firmly than ever.

With the view of averting certain dangers which seemed to threaten our Indian empire in that quarter, the English invaded Afghanistan. The expedition was, in the first instance, completely successful. Candahar and Cabul were both occupied by British troops, and a prince friendly to England was placed upon the throne (1839). The main force then returned to India, leaving garrisons at Candahar and Cabul to keep the hostile tribes in order.

The troops left behind at Cabul were destined to terrible disaster. General Elphinstone, who commanded, relying too much on the good faith of the Afghans, omitted to take wise measures of defence. The Afghans secretly planned a revolt against the English, and the general, finding himself cut off from help from India, weakly sought to make terms with the enemy.

The Afghans proved treacherous, and General Elphinstone was reduced to begin a retreat through the wild passes towards India. It was a fearful march. The fierce tribes who inhabited the hilly country along the route attacked our forces in front, flank, and rear. It was the depth of winter, and the sepoy troops, benumbed with cold, and unable to make any defence, were cut down without mercy. Of the whole army, to the number of 4500 fighting men and 12,000 camp followers, which had left Cabul, only one man (Dr Brydon) reached Jellalabad in safety. All the rest had perished or been taken captive. As soon as the news of this disaster reached India, prompt steps were taken to punish the Afghans and rescue the prisoners who had been left in their hands. General Pollock fought his way through the Khyber Pass, and reached Jellalabad. He then pushed forward to Cabul, and on the way the soldiers were maddened by the sight of the skeletons of their late comrades, which lay bleaching on the hill-sides along the route. They exacted a terrible vengeance wherever they met the foe, and the Afghans fled into their almost inaccessible mountains. General Nott, with the force from Candahar, united with Pollock at Cabul. The English prisoners were safely restored to their anxious friends. After levelling the fortifications of Cabul, the entire force left the country.

Shortly afterwards, war broke out with the Ameers of Scinde, a large province occupying the basin of the lower Indus. The British commander, Sir Charles Napier, speedily proved to the enemy that the spirit of the British army had not failed since the days of Plassey. With a force of only 3000 men, he attacked and completely defeated two armies much superior in numbers (1843). The result of these two victories--Meanee and Dubba--was the annexation of Scinde to the British dominions.

The main stream of the Indus is formed by the junction of five smaller branches. The large and fertile tract of country watered by these tributary streams is named the Punjab, or the land of the 'five waters.' It was inhabited by a people called the Sikhs, who, at first a religious sect, have gradually become the bravest and fiercest warriors in India. They had a numerous army, which was rendered more formidable by a large train of artillery and numerous squadrons of daring cavalry.

After being long friendly to us, disturbances had arisen among them; the army became mutinous and demanded to be led against the British. Much severe fighting took place; at length, after a series of victories, gained mainly by the use of the bayonet, the British army pushed on to Lahore, the capital, and the Sikhs surrendered (1846).

Three years later they again rose; but after some further engagements, their main army was routed with great slaughter by Lord Gough, in the battle of Gujerat. The territory of the Punjab was thereupon added to our Indian empire.

The terrible famine which was passing over Ireland (1846-47), owing to the failure of the potato crop, had to be dealt with by the ministry. The sufferings of the Irish peasantry during this trying time were most fearful; and sympathy was keenly aroused in this country. Parliament voted large sums of money to relieve the distress as much as possible, the government started public works to find employment for the poor, and their efforts were nobly seconded by the generosity of private individuals. But so great had been the suffering that the population of Ireland was reduced from eight to six millions during this period.

The measure for which Peel's ministry will always be famous was the Repeal of the Corn-laws. The population of the country was rapidly increasing; and as there were now more mouths to fill, it became more than ever necessary to provide a cheap and plentiful supply of bread to fill them. For several years the nation had been divided into two parties on this question. Those who were in favour of protection for the British wheat-grower were called Protectionists, while those who wished to abolish the corn-duties styled themselves Free-traders.

In the year 1839 an Anti-Corn-law League had been formed for the purpose of spreading free-trade doctrines among the people. It had its headquarters at Manchester, and hence the statesmen who took the leading part in it were frequently called the 'Manchester Party.' There being no building at that time large enough to hold the meetings in, a temporary wooden structure was erected, the site of which is marked by the present Free-trade Hall. The guiding spirit of the league was Richard Cobden, a

cotton manufacturer, who threw himself heart and soul into the cause. He was assisted by many other able men, the chief of whom was the great orator, John Bright. Branches of the league were soon established in all the towns of the kingdom, and a paid body of lecturers was employed to carry on the agitation and draw recruits into its ranks.

At the beginning of the year 1845, owing to the success of Peel's financial measures, the nation was in a state of great prosperity and contentment; and there seemed little hope that the repealers would be able to carry their scheme for some time to come. Before the year was out, however, the aspect of affairs was completely changed. As John Bright said years afterwards, 'Famine itself, against which we had warred, joined us.' There was a failure in the harvest, both the corn and potato crops being blighted. Things in this country were bad enough; but they were far worse in Ireland, where famine and starvation stared the people in the face. Under these circumstances the demand for free-trade grew stronger and stronger; and the league had the satisfaction of gaining over to its ranks no less a person than Sir Robert Peel himself.

When Peel announced his change of opinion in the House of Commons, the anger of the Protectionists, who were chiefly Conservatives, knew no bounds. They considered they had been betrayed by the leader whom they had trusted and supported. Mr Disraeli, in a speech of great bitterness, taunted the prime-minister with his change of views. His speech was cheered to the echo by the angry Protectionists; and from this moment Disraeli became the spokesman and leader of that section of the Conservative party which was opposed to repeal.

The next year a measure for the repeal of the corn-laws was introduced into parliament by the prime-minister. In spite of the fierce opposition of Mr Disraeli and his friends, it passed both Houses by large majorities. At the close of the debates, Peel frankly acknowledged that the honour of passing this great measure was due, not to himself, but to Richard Cobden. On the very day on which the Corn Bill passed the Lords, the Peel ministry was defeated in the Commons on a question of Irish coercion, and had to resign.

[Illustration: The Charge of the Light Brigade at Balaklava.]

The fall of the government was brought about by the Protectionists, who on this occasion united with their Whig opponents for the purpose of being avenged upon their old leader.

Peel bore his retirement with great dignity, and firmly refused to accept any honours either for himself or his family. Four years afterwards, he was thrown from his horse while riding up Constitution Hill, and the injuries he received caused his death in a few days. A monument was erected to him in Westminster Abbey. On its base are inscribed the closing words of the speech in which he announced his resignation: 'It may be that I shall leave a name sometimes remembered with expressions of good-will in the abodes of those whose lot it is to labour, and to earn their daily bread by the sweat of their brow, when they shall recruit their exhausted strength with abundant and untaxed food, the sweeter because it is no

longer leavened with a sense of injustice.'

On the retirement of Sir Robert Peel from office in 1846, Lord John Russell became prime-minister, with Lord Palmerston as foreign secretary. No very great measures were passed by the new ministry, but the policy of free trade recently adopted by the country was steadily carried out. But, although parliament did not occupy itself with any very important reforms during his tenure of office, Lord Russell had his hands quite full in other respects. Chartism came to a head during this period; and besides this, there were fresh difficulties in Ireland in store for the new premier.

For ten years during the early part of the reign of Victoria, Chartism was like a dark shadow over the land, causing much uneasiness among peaceable and well-disposed persons. The Reform Bill of 1832 had disappointed the expectations of the working-classes. They themselves had not been enfranchised by it; and to this fact they were ready to ascribe the poverty and wretchedness which still undoubtedly existed among them.

It was not long, therefore, before an agitation was set on foot for the purpose of bringing about a further reform of parliament. At a meeting held in Birmingham (1838), the People's Charter was drawn up. It contained six 'points' which henceforward were to be the watchwords of the party, until they succeeded in carrying them into law. These points were (1) universal suffrage; (2) annual parliaments; (3) vote by ballot; (4) the right of any one to sit in parliament, irrespective of property; (5) the payment of members; and (6) the redistribution of the country into equal electoral districts.

The agitation came to a head in 1848. Britain had thus her own 'little flutter' of revolution, like so many other European countries during that memorable year. On the 10th of April, the Chartists were to muster on Kennington Common half a million strong. Headed by O'Connor, they were then to enter London in procession bearing a monster petition to parliament insisting on their six 'points.' The demonstration, however, which had called forth all these preparations, proved a miserable failure. Instead of half a million people, only some twenty or thirty thousand appeared at the place of meeting, and the peace of the capital was not in the least disturbed. From this time Chartism fell into contempt, and speedily died out. Of the six 'points,' all but the second and fifth have since that time become the law of the land, as the growing requirements of the nation have seemed to render them necessary.

CHAPTER V.

The Crimean War, 1854-55--Siege of
Sebastopol--Balaklava--Inkermann--Interest of the Queen and Prince-Consort
in the suffering Soldiers--Florence Nightingale--Distribution of Victoria
Crosses by the Queen.

For a long time the Turkish empire had been gradually falling into decay, and the possessions of the Turk--the 'sick man,' as he has been aptly termed--had excited the greed of neighbouring countries. Russia especially had made several attempts to put an end to the 'sick man' by violent means, and seize upon his rich inheritance.

The year 1853 seemed to the Czar Nicholas to be a favourable time for accomplishing his designs against Turkey. Great Britain and France both vigorously remonstrated against the proceedings of the Czar; but believing that neither of them would fight, he commanded his armies to cross the Pruth into Turkish territory. By this step the 'dogs of war' were once more slipped in Europe, after a peace of forty years' duration. The Russian forces pushed on for the Danube, doubtless expecting to cross that river and take possession of the long-wished-for prize of Constantinople before the western powers had made up their minds whether to fight or not. To their disappointment, however, the Russians met with a most stubborn resistance from the Turks, and utterly failed to take the fortress of Silistria, where the besieged were encouraged and directed by some British officers.

Meanwhile, the queen of Great Britain and the emperor of France had both declared war against Russia, March 28, 1854. Before long, our fleets were scouring the Baltic and the Black seas, chasing and capturing every Russian vessel which dared to venture out, bombarding the fortresses, and blockading the seaports. Two armies also were sent out to the assistance of Turkey; the British force being commanded by Lord Raglan, and the French by Marshal St Arnaud.

The Turks having repulsed the Russian armies on the Danube, the allies resolved to invade the peninsula of the Crimea, and make an assault upon the Russian fortress of Sebastopol. The great fortress was a standing menace to Turkey; and to effect its destruction seemed the likeliest means of humbling Russia and bringing the war to a close. Accordingly a landing of the allied forces--British, French, and Turkish--to the number of 54,000 men, was made on the Crimea, at Eupatoria, no opposition being offered by the enemy. The army then set forward along the coast toward the Russian stronghold, the fleet accompanying it by sea. In order to bar the progress of the allied forces, the Russian army of the Crimea was strongly posted on a ridge of heights, with the small stream of the Alma in front, September 20, 1854. After a severe struggle the heights were gallantly stormed, and the Russians retreated towards Sebastopol.

The allied armies now laid siege to Sebastopol. It went on for a year, during which the invaders were exposed to many hardships from the assaults of the foe, and the severity of the climate during the winter months. Before the year was out, also, both Lord Raglan and the French general died, and their places were taken by others. Nor did the Czar Nicholas live to witness the result of the war which he had commenced. His son, Alexander, made no change, however, but trod in the footsteps of his sire.

In the early days of the siege, and before the allies had got reinforcements from home, the Russians made several formidable attacks

upon the camp. Their first attempt was directed against the British lines, with the design of capturing the port of Balaklava, October 25, 1854. They were gallantly repulsed, however, chiefly by Sir Colin Campbell and his Highlanders, who firmly stood their ground against the charge of the Russian horse. The British cavalry, advancing to the assistance of the infantry, cut through the masses of their opponents as if they had been men of straw. It was in this battle that the famous charge of the Light Brigade took place, when, owing to some misunderstanding on the part of the commanders, six hundred of our light horsemen, entirely unsupported, rode at full gallop upon the Russian batteries. It was a brilliant but disastrous feat; in the space of a few minutes, four hundred of the gallant men were uselessly sacrificed. 'It is magnificent, but it is not war,' was the remark of a French general.

Shortly afterwards occurred the desperate fight of Inkermann, November 5, 1854, where about 8000 British troops bravely stood their ground for hours against 40,000 Russians. Upon their ammunition running short, some of our brave men, rather than retreat, hurled volleys of stones at the foe. Ultimately, a strong body of the French came to their aid, and the Russians were driven from the field.

Not long after this encounter, the besiegers met with a disaster which did them more harm than all the assaults of the Russian hordes. A terrific storm swept across the Black Sea and the Crimea, November 14, 1854. A great number of the vessels in Balaklava harbour were wrecked, and there was an immense loss of stores of all kinds intended for the troops. The hurricane also produced the most dreadful consequences on land. Tents were blown down, fires extinguished, and food and cooking utensils destroyed. The poor soldiers, drenched to the skin, and without so much as a dry blanket to wrap round them, had to pass the dreary night as best they could upon the soft wet ground. For some time afterwards there was a great scarcity of food and clothing and other necessaries, and much suffering was endured during the long dreary winter. When tidings of these misfortunes reached England there was much indignation against the government, and especially against the officials whose duty it was to keep the army properly supplied with stores. The prime-minister, the Earl of Aberdeen, resigned, and was succeeded by Lord Palmerston. Vigorous steps were now taken to provide for the comfort of the troops, and in a short time the camp was abundantly supplied with everything necessary.

All through the following summer the siege operations went on. Nearer and nearer approached the trenches towards the doomed city, which at intervals was subjected to a terrific bombardment from hundreds of guns. The allied armies had been strongly reinforced from home, and had also been joined by a Sardinian force, so that the Russians no longer ventured to attack them so frequently. At length the advances of the allies were completed, and the final cannonade took place, and lasted for three days. The storming columns then carried the main forts; and the Russians, finding that further resistance was useless, evacuated the town during the night, and the following day it was taken possession of by the combined armies. With the capture of Sebastopol, 8th Sept., 1855, the war was virtually at an end, though peace was not formally declared till six months afterwards by the Treaty of Paris.

The Queen and prince watched intently every movement of the tremendous drama. In the terrible winter of 1855, the Queen's thoughts were with her troops, suffering in the inclement weather, amid arrangements that proved miserably inadequate to their needs. On 6th December 1854, the Queen wrote the following letter to Mr Sidney Herbert, Secretary of War. 'Would you tell Mrs Herbert that I begged she would let me see frequently the accounts she receives from Miss Nightingale or Mrs Bracebridge, as I hear no details of the wounded, though I see so many from officers, &c., about the battlefield; and naturally the former must interest me more than any one. Let Mrs Herbert also know that I wish Miss Nightingale and the ladies would tell these poor, noble, wounded and sick men that no one takes a warmer interest, or feels more for their sufferings, or admires their courage and heroism more than their Queen. Day and night she thinks of her beloved troops; so does the prince.' With her own hands she made comforters, mittens, and other articles of clothing, for distribution among the soldiers, and she wrote to Lord Raglan that she 'had heard that their coffee was given to them green, instead of roasted, and some other things of this kind, which had distressed her, and she besought that they should be made as comfortable as circumstances can admit.'

The little princes and princesses contributed their childish but very pretty drawings to an exhibition which was opened for the benefit of the soldiers' widows and children. As the disabled soldiers returned to this country, the Queen and the prince took the earliest opportunity of ascertaining by personal observation in what condition they were, and how they were cared for. And when the war was over, Miss Florence Nightingale, the soldier's nurse and friend, was an honoured guest in the royal family, 'putting before us,' writes the prince, 'all the defects of our present military hospital system, and the reforms that are needed.' On 5th March 1855, the Queen wrote to Lord Panmure suggesting the necessity of hospitals for sick and wounded soldiers, which eventually took shape in the great military hospital at Netley.

[Illustration: Victoria Cross.]

Victoria Crosses were distributed by the Queen in Hyde Park, 26th June 1857, to those soldiers who had performed special acts of bravery in presence of the enemy. This decoration was instituted at the close of the Crimean War, and has since been conferred from time to time. It is in the form of a Maltese cross, and is made of bronze. In the centre are the royal arms, surmounted by the lion, and below, in a scroll, the words 'For Valour.' The ribbon is blue for the navy, and red for the army. On the clasp are two branches of laurel, and from it the cross hangs, supported by the initial 'V.'

[Illustration: Massacre at Cawnpore.]

The Indian Mutiny, 1857-58--Cause of the Mutiny--Massacre of Cawnpore--Relief of Lucknow--The Queen's Letter to Lord Canning.

Exactly one hundred years after Clive had laid the foundation of our empire in India by the victory of Plassey, events occurred in that country which completely cast into the shade the tragic incident of the 'Black Hole' of Calcutta. During the century which had elapsed since the days of Clive, the British power had been extended, till nearly the whole of the great peninsula from the Himalaya Mountains to Cape Comorin was subject to our sway. A native army had been formed, which far outnumbered the British force maintained there. The loyalty of these sepoy troops had not hitherto been suspected; and in fact they had frequently given proofs of their fidelity in the frontier wars.

Unsuspected by the officers, a spirit of discontent had been gradually spreading among the sepoy regiments. An impression had become prevalent among them that the British government intended forcing them to give up their ancient faith and become Christians. Just about this time, the new Enfield rifle was distributed among them in place of the old 'brown Bess.' The cartridges intended for this weapon were greased; and as the ends of them had to be bitten off before use, the sepoy fancied that the fat of the cow--an animal they had been taught to consider sacred--had been purposely used in order to degrade them, and make them lose caste.

The fierce temper of the sepoy was now thoroughly roused, and a general mutiny took place. It commenced at Meerut, where the native troops rose against their officers, and put them to death, and then took possession of the ancient city of Delhi, which remained in their hands for some months. The rebellion quickly spread to other towns, and for a short time a great portion of the north and centre of India was in the power of the rebels. Wherever they got the upper hand, they were guilty of shocking deeds of cruelty upon the Europeans. The British troops which were stationed in different places offered the most heroic resistance to the rebels, and the mutiny was at length suppressed.

Of all the incidents of that terrible year, two stand out in bold relief, on account of the thrilling interest attaching to them. These are the massacre of Cawnpore and the relief of Lucknow. Cawnpore, which was in the heart of the disaffected area, contained about a thousand Europeans, of whom two-thirds were women and children. The defensive post into which they had thrown themselves at the beginning of the outbreak was speedily surrounded by an overwhelming number of the mutineers, led on by the infamous Nana Sahib. The few defenders held out bravely for a time, but at last surrendered on a promise of being allowed to depart in safety. The sepoy accompanied them to the river-side, but as soon as the men were on board the boats, a murderous fire was opened upon them, and only one man escaped. The women and children, being reserved for a still more cruel fate, were carried back to Cawnpore. Hearing that General Havelock was approaching with a body of troops for the relief of the place, Nana Sahib marched out to intercept him, but was driven back. Smarting under this defeat, he returned to Cawnpore, and gave directions for the instant massacre of his helpless prisoners. His orders were promptly carried out

by his troops, under circumstances of the most shocking cruelty. Shortly afterwards, Havelock and his little army arrived, but only to find, to their unutterable grief, that they were too late to rescue their unfortunate countrywomen and their children.

[Illustration: Relief of Lucknow.]

Havelock now marched to the relief of Lucknow, where the British garrison, under Sir Henry Lawrence, was surrounded by thousands of the rebels. Havelock encountered the enemy over and over again on his march, and inflicted defeat upon them. Step by step, our men fought their way into the fort at Lucknow, where, if they could not relieve their friends, they could remain and die with them. But this was not to be. Another deliverer with a stronger force was coming swiftly up; and very soon the ears of the anxious defenders were gladdened by the martial sound of the bagpipes, playing 'The Campbells are coming;' and shortly afterwards, Sir Colin Campbell and his gallant Highlanders--the victors of Balaklava--were grasping the hands of their brother veterans, who were thus at length relieved. The brave Lawrence had died from his wounds before Sir Colin arrived, and Havelock only survived a few weeks. He lived long enough, however, to see that by his heroic efforts he had upheld Britain's power in her darkest moment; and that her forces were now coming on with irresistible might, to complete the work which he had so gallantly begun.

The power of the rebels in that quarter was now broken. In Central India Sir Hugh Rose had been equally successful; and the heroic deeds of the British troops in suppressing the revolt cannot be better described than in the words of this general, in addressing his soldiers after the triumph was achieved: 'Soldiers, you have marched more than a thousand miles and taken more than a hundred guns; you have forced your way through mountain-passes and intricate jungles, and over rivers; you have captured the strongest forts, and beat the enemy, no matter what the odds, wherever you met them; you have restored extensive districts to the government; and peace and order now reign where before for twelve months were tyranny and rebellion.'

This rising led to an alteration in the government of India. The old East India Company was abolished, and its power transferred to the crown, which is represented in parliament by a secretary of state, and in India by a viceroy. More recently the Queen received the title of Empress of India.

When the mutiny was quelled, nobody deprecated more than the Queen did the vindictiveness with which a certain section of the English people desired to treat all the countrymen of the military mutineers whose reported atrocities had roused their indignation. The Queen wrote to Lord Canning that she shared 'his feelings of sorrow and indignation at the unchristian spirit shown towards Indians in general and towards sepoy without discrimination.... To the nation at large--to the peaceable inhabitants--to the many kind and friendly natives who have assisted us, sheltered the fugitives, and been faithful and true--there should be shown the greatest kindness.... The greatest wish on their Queen's part is to see them happy, contented, and flourishing.'

CHAPTER VII.

Marriage of the Princess Royal--Carriage Accident--Twenty-first Anniversary of Wedding-day--Death of the Prince-Consort.

Meanwhile a domestic incident had made a great change in the royal family. The Princess Royal had become engaged to Prince Frederick-William of Prussia (for three months Emperor of Germany), and the marriage came off on the 25th of January 1858. It was the first break in the home circle.

The Queen recorded it in her diary as 'the second most eventful day in my life as regards feelings.' Before the wedding, the Queen and her daughter were photographed together, but the Queen 'trembled so, that her likeness came out indistinct.' The correspondence between the mother and her daughter began and continued, close and confidential, full of trusting affection and solicitous wisdom.

[Illustration: Prince-Consort.]

On November 9, 1858, the Prince of Wales celebrated his eighteenth birthday. Mr Greville in his journal tells us that on that occasion the Queen wrote her son 'one of the most admirable letters that ever were penned.' She told him that he may have thought the rule they adopted for his education a severe one, but that his welfare was their only object, and well knowing to what seductions of flattery he would eventually be exposed, they wished to prepare and strengthen his mind against them; that he must now consider himself his own master, and that they should never intrude any advice upon him, although always ready to counsel him whenever he thought fit to attend. This was a very long letter, which the prince received with a feeling that proved the wisdom which dictated it.

In 1860, while travelling with the Queen in Germany, the Prince-Consort met with a severe carriage accident, his comparative escape from which left the Queen full of happy thanksgiving, though, as she herself says, 'when she feels most deeply, she always appears calmest.' But, she added, she 'could not rest without doing something to mark permanently her feelings. In times of old,' she considered, 'a church or a monument would probably have been erected on the spot.' But her desire was to do something which might benefit her fellow-creatures.

The outgrowth of this true impulse of the Queen's was the establishment of the 'Victoria Stiff' at Coburg, whereby sums of money are applied in apprenticing worthy young men or in purchasing tools for them, and in giving dowries to deserving young women or otherwise settling them in life.

In the course of the same year the Queen's second daughter, Princess Alice, afterwards the friend and companion of her mother's first days of widowhood, was betrothed to Prince Louis of Hesse. In February 1861, the Queen and the Prince-Consort kept the twenty-first anniversary of their

wedding-day--'a day which has brought us,' says the Queen, 'and I may say, to the world at large, such incalculable blessings. Very few can say with me,' she adds, 'that their husband at the end of twenty-one years is not only full of the friendship, kindness, and affection which a truly happy marriage brings with it, but of the same tender love as in the very first days of our marriage.' The Prince-Consort wrote to the aged Duchess of Kent, 'You have, I trust, found good and loving children in us, and we have experienced nothing but love and kindness from you.'

Alas! it was the death of that beloved mother which was to cast the first of the many shadows which have since fallen upon the royal home. The duchess died, after a slight illness, rather suddenly at last, the Queen and the prince reaching her side too late for any recognition. It was a terrible blow to the Queen: she wrote to her uncle Leopold that she felt 'truly orphaned.' Her sister, the Princess Hohenlohe, daughter of the Duchess of Kent by her first marriage, could not come to England at the time, but wrote letters full of sympathy and inspiration; yet Her Majesty became very nervous, and was inclined to shrink into solitude, even from her children, and to find comfort nowhere but with the beloved consort who was himself so soon to be taken from her.

The great blow which made the royal lady a widow, and deprived the whole country of the throne's wisest and most disinterested counsellor, came on the 14th of December 1861.

In the year 1861, what with public and private anxieties, the prince felt ill and feverish, and miserable. He passed his last birthday on a visit to Ireland, where the Prince of Wales was serving in the camp at the Curragh of Kildare. From Ireland, the Queen, the prince, Prince Alfred, and the Princesses Alice and Helena went to Balmoral; and there the prince enjoyed his favourite pastime of deer-stalking. On the return to Windsor in October, the Queen began to be anxious about her husband. One of the last letters of the prince was to his daughter the Crown Princess of Prussia, on her twenty-first birthday, and it shows the noble spirit which animated his whole career. 'May your life, which has begun beautifully, expand still further to the good of others and the contentment of your own mind! True inward happiness is to be sought only in the internal consciousness of effort systematically devoted to good and useful ends. Success, indeed, depends upon the blessing which the Most High sees meet to vouchsafe to our endeavours. May this success not fail you, and may your outward life leave you unhurt by the storms to which the sad heart so often looks forward with a shrinking dread.'

In conversation with the Queen, he seemed to have a presentiment that he had not long to live. 'I do not cling to life; you do, but I set no store by it. If I knew that those I love were well cared for, I should be quite ready to die to-morrow.... I am sure, if I had a severe illness, I should give up at once. I should not struggle for life.'

The fatigue and exposure which he underwent on a visit to Sandhurst to inspect the buildings for the Staff College and Royal Military Hospital, there is no doubt, injured his delicate health. Next Sunday he was full of rheumatic pains; he had already suffered greatly from rheumatism during

the previous fortnight. One of his last services to his country was to write a memorandum in connection with the Trent complications; which suggestions were adopted by British ministers and forwarded to the United States. He attended church on Sunday, 1st December, but looked very ill. Dr Jenner was sent for, and for the next few days he grew worse, with symptoms of gastric or low fever.

Another account says: 'The anxious Queen, still bowed down by the remembrance of the recent death of her mother, the Duchess of Kent, went through her state duties as one "in a dreadful dream." Sunday, the 8th, saw the prince in a more dangerous condition. Of this day one of the Queen's household, in a letter written shortly afterwards, says: "The last Sunday Prince Albert passed on earth was a very blessed one for Princess Alice to look back upon. He was very weak and very ill, and she spent the afternoon alone with him while the others were at church. He begged to have the sofa drawn to the window that he might see the sky and the clouds sailing past. He then asked her to play to him, and she went through several of his favourite hymns and chorales. After she had played some time she looked round and saw him lying back, his hands folded as if in prayer, and his eyes shut. He lay so long without moving that she thought he had fallen asleep. Presently he looked up and smiled. She said, 'Were you asleep, dear papa?' 'Oh no!' he answered; 'only I have such sweet thoughts.' During his illness his hands were often folded in prayer; and when he did not speak, his serene face showed that the 'sweet thoughts' were with him to the end."

'On the afternoon of Saturday, the 14th of December, it was evident that the end was near. "Gutes Frauchen" ("Good little wife") were his last loving words to the Queen as he kissed her and then rested his head upon her shoulder. A little while afterwards the Queen bent over him and said, "Es ist kleins Frauchen" ("It is little wife"); the prince evidently knew her, although he could not speak, and bowed his head in response. Without apparent suffering he quietly sank to rest, and towards eleven o'clock it was seen that the soul had left its earthly tabernacle. The well-known hymn beginning--

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee,

had been the favourite of Prince Albert in his last illness. His physician expressed one day the hope that he would be better in a few days; but the prince replied, "No, I shall not recover, but I am not taken by surprise; I am not afraid, I trust I am prepared."

'When the end came' (we quote the beautiful words of the biographer) 'in the solemn hush of that mournful chamber there was such grief as has rarely hallowed any death-bed. A great light, which had blessed the world, and which the mourners had but yesterday hoped might long bless it, was waning fast away. A husband, a father, a friend, a master, endeared by every quality by which man in such relations can win the love of his fellow-men, was passing into the silent land, and his loving glance, his wise counsels, his firm, manly thought should be known among them no more. The castle clock chimed the third quarter after ten. Calm and peaceful

grew the beloved form; the features settled into the beauty of a perfectly serene repose; two or three long but gentle breaths were drawn; and that great soul had fled to seek a nobler scope for its aspirations in the world within the veil, for which it had often yearned, where there is rest for the weary, and where the "spirits of the just are made perfect."

The funeral took place on the 23d December, at Frogmore, and the Prince of Wales was the chief mourner. The words on the coffin were as follow: 'Here lies the most illustrious and exalted Albert, Prince-Consort, Duke of Saxony, Prince of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, Knight of the most noble Order of the Garter, the most beloved husband of the most august and potent Queen Victoria. He died on the 14th day of December 1861, in the forty-third year of his age.'

A Prince indeed,
Beyond all titles, and a household name,
Hereafter, through all time, Albert the Good.

On that sad Christmas which followed the prince's death the usual festivities were omitted in the royal household, and the nation mourned in unison with the Queen for the great and good departed.

It has been well said by a distinguished writer that it was only 'since his death, and chiefly since the Queen's own generous and tender impulse prompted her to make the nation the confidant of her own great love and happiness, that the Prince-Consort has had full justice.... Perhaps, if truth were told, he was too uniformly noble, too high above all soil and fault, to win the fickle popular admiration, which is more caught by picturesque irregularity than by the higher perfections of a wholly worthy life.'

CHAPTER VIII.

The Queen in Mourning--Death of Princess Alice--Illness of Prince of Wales--The Family of the Queen--Opening of Indian Exhibition and Imperial Institute--Jubilee--Jubilee Statue--Death of Duke of Clarence--Address to the Nation on the marriage of Princess May.

Henceforth the great Queen was 'written widow,' and while striving nobly in her loneliness to fulfil those public functions, in which she had hitherto been so faithfully companioned, she shrank at first from courtly pageantry and from the gay whirl of London life, and lived chiefly in the quiet homes which she had always loved best, at Osborne and Balmoral. When she has come out among her people, it has chiefly been for the sake of some public benefit for the poor and the suffering.

At times there have been murmurs against the Queen for failing in her widowhood to maintain the gaieties and extravagances of an open court in the capital of her dominions. It was said that 'trade was bad therefore,'

and times of depression and want of employment were attributed to this cause. The nation is growing wiser. It is seen that true prosperity does not consist merely in the quick circulation of money--above all, certainly not in the transference of wealth gained from the tillers of the soil to the classes which minister solely to vanity and luxury.

A few months after her father's death, the Princess Alice married her betrothed, Prince Louis, and since her own death (on the same day of the year as her father's) in the year 1878, we have had an opportunity of looking into the royal household from the point of view of a daughter and a sister. The Prince-Consort's death-bed made a very close tie between the Queen and the Princess Alice, who herself had a full share of womanly sorrow in her comparatively short life, and the tone of perfect self-abnegation which pervades her letters is very touching. On that fatal 14th December 1878, the first of the Queen's children was taken from her. The Princess Alice fell a victim to her kind-hearted care while nursing those of her family ill with diphtheria. Her last inquiries were about poor and sick people in her little capital. And the day before she died, she expressed to Sir William Jenner her regret that she should cause her mother so much anxiety. The Queen in a letter thanked her subjects for their sympathy with her loss of a dear child, who was 'a bright example of loving tenderness, courageous devotion, and self-sacrifice to duty.'

In 1863, on the 10th of March, the Prince of Wales married the Princess Alexandra of Denmark, and in 1871, when the fatal date, the 14th of December came round, he lay at the point of death, suffering precisely as his father had done. But his life was spared, and in the following spring, accompanied by the Queen and by his young wife, and in the presence of all the power, the genius, and the rank of the realm, he made solemn thanksgiving in St Paul's Cathedral.

On the 3rd November 1871, Mr H. M. Stanley, a young newspaper correspondent, succeeded in finding Dr Livingstone. This was but the beginning of greater enterprises, for, catching the noble enthusiasm which characterised Livingstone, Stanley afterwards crossed the Dark Continent, and revealed the head-waters of the Congo. Again he plunged into Africa and succoured Emin Pasha, whose death was announced in the autumn of 1893.

To Mr Stanley, Lord Granville, then Foreign Secretary, sent the present of a gold snuff-box set with diamonds, and the following letter: 'Sir--I have great satisfaction in conveying to you, by command of the Queen, Her Majesty's high appreciation of the prudence and zeal which you have displayed in opening a communication with Dr Livingstone, relieving Her Majesty from the anxiety which, in common with her subjects, she had felt in regard to the fate of that distinguished traveller. The Queen desires me to express her thanks for the service you have thus rendered, together with Her Majesty's congratulations on your having so successfully carried out the mission which you so fearlessly undertook.'

The most notable events of the year 1873 were the death of the Emperor Napoleon III. in his exile at Chiselhurst, and the visit of the Shah of Persia, who was received by Her Majesty in state at Windsor. The Prince of Wales made almost a royal tour through India in 1875-76, and early in the

following year witnessed the proclamation of the Queen as Empress of India.

In 1886 the Queen opened the Colonial and Indian Exhibition at Kensington, the results of which, financially and otherwise, were highly satisfactory. On 21st June 1887, Her Majesty completed the fiftieth year of her reign, and the occasion was made one of rejoicing not only in Britain, but in all parts of our world-wide empire. In every town and village of the kingdom, by high and low, rich and poor, tribute was paid, in one way or other, to a reign which, above all others, has been distinguished for the splendour of its achievements in arts, science, and literature, as well as for its great commercial progress. One notable feature was the release of 23,307 prisoners in India. The Jubilee presents were exhibited in St James's Palace, and afterwards in Bethnal Green Museum, and attracted large crowds of sight-seers. The Jubilee celebrations were brought to a close by a naval review in the presence of the Queen at Spithead. The fleet assembled numbered 135 war-vessels, with 20,200 officers and men, and 500 guns.

Early in 1887 a movement was set afoot in order to found in London an Imperial Institute as a permanent memorial of the Queen's Jubilee. Her Majesty laid the foundation stone on July 4, 1887, and it was formally opened in 1893. A movement was also commenced having for its object the receiving of contributions towards a personal Jubilee offering to the Queen, from the women and girls of all classes, grades, and ages throughout the United Kingdom. A leaflet was written for general distribution, which ran as follows: 'The women and girls of the United Kingdom, of all ages, ranks, classes, beliefs, and opinions, are asked to join in one common offering to their Queen, in token of loyalty, affection, and reverence, towards the only female sovereign in history who, for fifty years, has borne the toils and troubles of public life, known the sorrows that fall to all women, and as wife, mother, widow, and ruler held up a bright and spotless example to her own and all other nations. Contributions to range from one penny to one pound. The nature of the offering will be decided by the Queen herself, and the names of all contributors will be presented to Her Majesty.' The Queen selected as this women's Jubilee gift a replica of Baron Marochetti's Glasgow statue of Prince Albert, to be placed in Windsor Great Park, opposite the statue of herself in Windsor.

The amount reached £75,000; nearly 3,000,000 had subscribed, and the statue was unveiled by the Queen, May 12, 1890. The surplus was devoted to founding an institution for promoting the education and maintenance of nurses for the sick poor in their own homes.

In connection with the Jubilee the Queen addressed the following letter to her people:

WINDSOR CASTLE, _June_ 24, 1887.

I am anxious to express to my people my warm thanks for the kind, and more than kind, reception I met with on going to and returning from Westminster Abbey, with all my children and grandchildren.

The enthusiastic reception I met with then, as well as on all these eventful days, in London, as well as in Windsor, on the occasion of my Jubilee, has touched me most deeply. It has shown that the labour and anxiety of fifty long years, twenty-two of which I spent in unclouded happiness shared and cheered by my beloved husband, while an equal number were full of sorrows and trials, borne without his sheltering arm and wise help, have been appreciated by my people.

This feeling and the sense of duty towards my dear country and subjects, who are so inseparably bound up with my life, will encourage me in my task, often a very difficult and arduous one, during the remainder of my life.

The wonderful order preserved on this occasion, and the good behaviour of the enormous multitudes assembled, merits my highest admiration.

That God may protect and abundantly bless my country is my fervent prayer.

VICTORIA, R. & I.

[Illustration: Windsor Castle.]

When a Jubilee Memorial Statue of the Queen, presented by the tenantry and servants on Her Majesty's estates, was unveiled by the Prince of Wales at Balmoral, the Queen in her reply said, she was 'deeply touched at the grateful terms in which you have alluded to my long residence among you. The great devotion shown to me and mine, and the sympathy I have met with while here, have ever added to the joys and lightened the sorrows of my life.'

In the Jubilee year the Queen did not grudge to traverse the great east end of London, that she might grace with her presence the opening of 'the People's Palace.' But we have not space to notice one half of the public functions performed by the Queen.

On June 28, 1893, a Jubilee statue of the Queen, executed by Princess Louise, was unveiled at Broad Walk, Kensington. The statue, of white marble, represents the Queen in a sitting position, wearing her crown and coronation robes, whilst the right hand holds the sceptre. The windows of Kensington Palace--indeed the room in which Her Majesty received the news of her accession to the throne--command a view of the memorial, which faces the round pond. The likeness is a good one of Her Majesty in her youth. The pedestal bears the following inscription:

'VICTORIA R., 1837.

'In front of the Palace where she was born, and where she lived till her accession, her loyal subjects of Kensington placed this statue, the work of her daughter, to commemorate fifty years of her reign.'

Sir A. Borthwick read an address to the Queen on behalf of the inhabitants

of Kensington, in which they heartily welcomed her to the scene of her birth and early years, and of the accession to the throne, 'whence by God's blessing she had so gloriously directed the destinies of her people and of that world-wide empire which, under the imperial sway, had made such vast progress in extent and wealth as well as in development of science, art, and culture.' The statue representing Her Majesty at the date of accession would, they trusted, ever be cherished, not for its artistic merit only, and as being the handiwork of Her Majesty's beloved daughter, Princess Louise, who had so skilfully traced the lineaments of a sovereign most illustrious of her line, but also as the only statue representing the Queen at that early date.

The Queen, in reply, said: 'I thank you sincerely for your loyal address, and for the kind wish to commemorate my jubilee by the erection of a statue of myself on the spot where I was born and lived till my accession. It gives me great pleasure to be here on this occasion in my dear old home, and to witness the unveiling of this fine statue so admirably designed and executed by my daughter.'

All the Queen's children are now married. The Princess Helena became Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein. The Princess Louise has gone somewhat out of the usual course of British princesses and in 1871 married the Marquis of Lorne, Duke of Argyll since 1900. Him the Queen described on her visit to Inveraray in 1847 as 'a dear, white, fat, fair little fellow, with reddish hair but very delicate features.' The Princess Beatrice, of whom we all think as the daughter who stayed at home with her mother, became the wife of Prince Henry of Battenberg, without altogether surrendering her filial position and duties. A daughter born October 24, 1887, was baptised at Balmoral, the first royal christening which had taken place in Scotland for three hundred years.

Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, married the favourite child and only daughter of the late Emperor of Russia, and sister of the Czar. On the death of Duke Ernst of Coburg-Gotha, brother of the Prince-Consort, he succeeded to the ducal throne on August 24, 1893, as Duke Alfred of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. He died in 1900. Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught, wedded the daughter of Prince Charles, 'the Red Prince' of Prussia; and Leopold, Duke of Albany, took for his wife Princess Helena of Waldeck. Prince Leopold had had a somewhat suffering life from his childhood, and he died suddenly while abroad, on March 28, 1884, leaving behind his young wife and two little children, one of whom was born after his death.

On July 27, 1889, Princess Louise, eldest daughter of the Prince of Wales, was married to the Duke of Fife. Preparations were being made to celebrate another marriage, that of the Duke of Clarence and Avondale, eldest son of the Prince of Wales, to Princess Victoria Mary (May) of Teck, in January 1892; but to the sorrow of all, he was stricken down with influenza accompanied by pneumonia on January 10th, and died on the 14th. The Queen addressed a pathetic letter to the nation in return for public sympathy, which was much more than a mere note of thanks and acknowledgement.

OSBORNE, _January_ 26, 1892.

I must once again give expression to my deep sense of the loyalty and affectionate sympathy evinced by my subjects in every part of my empire on an occasion more sad and tragical than any but one which has befallen me and mine, as well as the nation. The overwhelming misfortune of my clearly loved grandson having been thus suddenly cut off in the flower of his age, full of promise for the future, amiable and gentle, and endearing himself to all, renders it hard for his sorely stricken parents, his dear young bride, and his fond grandmother to bow in submission to the inscrutable decrees of Providence.

The sympathy of millions, which has been so touchingly and visibly expressed, is deeply gratifying at such a time, and I wish, both in my own name and that of my children, to express, from my heart, my warm gratitude to _all_.

These testimonies of sympathy with us, and appreciation of my dear grandson, whom I loved as a son, and whose devotion to me was as great as that of a son, will be a help and consolation to me and mine in our affliction.

My bereavements during the last thirty years of my reign have indeed been heavy. Though the labours, anxieties, and responsibilities inseparable from my position have been great, yet it is my earnest prayer that God may continue to give me health and strength to work for the good and happiness of my dear country and empire while life lasts.

VICTORIA, R.I.

On July 6, 1893, the Duke of York was united in marriage to the Princess May, amidst great national rejoicing. Three years later occurred the death of Prince Henry of Battenberg, husband of Princess Beatrice, when returning from the Ashanti Expedition. On 22d July 1896 Princess Maud, daughter of the Prince of Wales, married Prince Charles, son of Frederick, Crown Prince of Denmark. The Queen was present on the occasion of the marriage, which took place in the Chapel Royal, Buckingham Palace. The visit of the Emperor and Empress of Russia to Balmoral in the autumn was a memorable occasion, marked by great festivity and rejoicing.

During 1896 the Queen received an immense number of congratulatory messages on entering upon the sixtieth year of her reign; and on 23d September she exceeded the limit attained by any previous English sovereign. Many proposals were made to publicly mark this happy event. One scheme, supported by the Prince of Wales, had for its object the freeing of certain London hospitals of debt; but at the Queen's personal request the celebration of the Diamond Jubilee was reserved until the completion of the sixtieth year of her reign in June 1897.

CHAPTER IX.

The Queen as an Artist and Author--In her Holiday Haunts--Side-lights on the Queen--Norman Macleod--The Queen's appreciation of Tennyson, Dickens, and Livingstone--Letter to Mr Peabody--The Queen's Drawing-room--Her pet Animals--A Model Mistress--Mr Jeaffreson's Tribute--Baron Stockmar--A golden Reign.

The Prince-Consort, as we have seen, was accomplished in music and painting, and knew much about many subjects. The Queen is not only an author, but an artist, and takes a great interest in art. To an exhibition under the auspices of the Royal Anglo-Australian Society of Artists, the Queen contributed five water-colour drawings, and a set of proof-etchings by the Prince-Consort. The subjects were the Duke of Connaught at the age of three; the princesses Alice and Victoria of Hesse (1875); portraits of the Princess Royal, now Dowager Empress of Germany, and Prince Alfred. In advanced life, too, the Queen began to study Hindustani.

In her *_Leaves from Her Journal_* (1869) and *_More Leaves_* (1884), and letters printed in the *Life of the Prince-Consort*, the Queen took the public into her confidence, and afforded a glimpse of the simplicity and purity of the court in our era. In the extracts from her *Journals* (1842-82), we have homely records of visits and holiday excursions, with descriptions of picturesque scenery, simply and faithfully set down, the writer expressing with directness the feelings of the moment.

Deprived by her high rank of friends--as we understand them in ordinary life--Her Majesty seems to have borne an affection for her husband and her offspring even above the common. With her devotion to the late Prince-Consort we are all acquainted; but her books show us that it was an attachment by no means owing any of its intensity to regret. While he yet lived and gladdened her with the sunshine of his presence, there are no words she can use too strong to express her love and admiration for him; and it is easy to see, before it happened, how desolate his loss would leave her. Then the Prince of Wales was always 'Bertie,' and the Princess Royal 'Vicky,' and the family circle generally a group as loving and united--without a trace of courtly stiffness--as was to be found round any hearth in Britain.

What the Prince-Consort wrote of domestic servants, seems to have also been the feeling of the Queen: 'Whose heart would fail to sympathise with those who minister to us in sickness, receive us upon our first appearance in the world, and even extend their cares to our mortal remains--who lie under our roof, form our household, and are part of our family?'

There is no one, in ever so menial position, about her person, who is not mentioned with kindness and particularity. A footnote annexed to the humble name almost always contains a short biography of the individual, whether wardrobe-maid, groom, or gillie. Thus of her trusty attendant John Brown (1826-83) she writes: 'The same who, in 1858, became my regular attendant out of doors everywhere in the Highlands; who commenced as gillie in 1849, and was selected by Albert and me to go with my carriage. In 1851 he entered our service permanently, and began in that year leading

my pony, and advanced step by step by his good conduct and intelligence. His attention, care, and faithfulness cannot be exceeded; and the state of my health, which of late years has been sorely tried and weakened, renders such qualifications most valuable, and indeed most needful in a constant attendant upon all occasions. He has since, most deservedly, been promoted to be an upper servant, and my permanent personal attendant (December 1865). He has all the independence and elevated feelings peculiar to the Highland race, and is singularly straightforward, simple-minded, kind-hearted, and disinterested; always ready to oblige, and of a discretion rarely to be met with. He is now in his fortieth year. His father was a small farmer, who lived at the Bush on the opposite side to Balmoral. He is the second of nine brothers--three of whom have died--two are in Australia and New Zealand, two are living in the neighbourhood of Balmoral; and the youngest, Archie (Archibald), is valet to our son Leopold, and is an excellent, trustworthy young man.' The Queen had that memory for old faces almost peculiar to her royal house, and no sooner did she set foot in the new garden which was being made at Dalkeith, than she recognised Mackintosh there, 'who was formerly gardener at Claremont.'

One very pleasing trait about Her Majesty was that, although, as a matter of course, all persons vied in doing her pleasure, she never took any act of respect or kindness towards her for granted. She made frequent mention of the courteous civilities shown her, just as though she had been in the habit of meeting with the reverse of such conduct. At Dalkeith (the Duke of Buccleuch's, who was her host on more than one occasion), 'everybody was very kind and civil, and full of inquiries as to our voyage;' and 'the Roseberies' (at Dalmeny, where she lunched) 'were all civility and attention.'

In her books a healthy interest is shown in all that concerns the welfare of the people. The Queen and the Prince-Consort came to Scotland in 1842 in the *Royal George* yacht, and, tired and giddy, drove to Dalkeith Palace, where they were guests of the Duke of Buccleuch. The Queen tasted real Scotch fare at breakfast, oatmeal porridge and 'Finnan haddies.' She saw the sights of Edinburgh, and in driving through the Highlands afterwards, had a reception from Lord Breadalbane at Taymouth Castle.

The descriptions of her stay at Lord Breadalbane's, and at Lord Glenlyon's in Blair-Athole, are very graphic. 'At a quarter to six, we reached Taymouth. At the gate a guard of Highlanders, Lord Breadalbane's men, met us. Taymouth lies in a valley surrounded by very high, wooded hills; it is most beautiful. The house is a kind of castle, built of granite. The *coup-d'oeil* was indescribable. There were a number of Lord Breadalbane's Highlanders, all in the Campbell tartan, drawn up in front of the house, with Lord Breadalbane himself, in a Highland dress, at their head, a few of Sir Neil Menzies's men (in the Menzies red and white tartan), a number of pipers playing, and a company of the 92d Highlanders, also in kilts. The firing of the guns, 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. Lord and Lady Breadalbane took us up-stairs, the hall and stairs being

lined with Highlanders. The Gothic staircase is of stone, and very fine; the whole of the house is newly and exquisitely furnished. The drawing-room, especially, is splendid. Thence you go into a passage and a library, which adjoins our private apartments. They showed us two sets of apartments, and we chose those which are on the right hand of the corridor or anteroom to the library. At eight we dined. Staying in the house, besides ourselves, are the Buccleuchs and the two Ministers, the Duchess of Sutherland and Lady Elizabeth Leveson Gower, the Abercorns, Roxburghes, Kinnoulls, Lord Lauderdale, Sir Anthony Maitland, Lord Lorne, the Fox Maules, Belhavens, Mr and Mrs William Russell, Sir J. and Lady Elizabeth and the Misses Pringle, and two Messrs Baillie, brothers of Lady Breadalbane. The dining-room is a fine room in Gothic style, and has never been dined in till this day. Our apartments also are inhabited for the first time. After dinner, the grounds were most splendidly illuminated--a whole chain of lamps along the railings, and on the ground was written in lamps: "Welcome Victoria--Albert." A small fort, which is up in the woods, was illuminated, and bonfires were burning on the tops of the hills. I never saw anything so fairy-like. There were some pretty fireworks, and the whole ended by the Highlanders dancing reels, which they do to perfection, to the sound of the pipes, by torchlight in front of the house. It had a wild and very gay effect.'

[Illustration: Pass of Killiecrankie--'The Queen's View']

Her Majesty drove about daily, enjoying the magnificent scenery, or by the banks of Tay, to see Lord Breadalbane's American buffaloes; while Prince Albert had sport--nineteen roe-deer on the first day, besides hares, pheasants, grouse, and a capercaillie, all which trophies were spread out before the house. Three hundred Highlanders 'beat' for him, while, whenever the Queen (accompanied by the Duchess of Norfolk) walked in the grounds, two of the Highland guard followed with drawn swords. They arrived at a lodge, where 'a fat, good-humoured little woman, about forty, cut some flowers for each of us, and the Duchess gave her some money, saying: "From Her Majesty." I never saw any one more surprised than she was; she, however, came up to me, and said very warmly that my people were delighted to see me in Scotland.' At a later date the Queen revisited Taymouth, where once--'Albert and I were then only twenty-three!'--she passed such happy days. 'I was very thankful to have seen it again,' says she, with quiet pathos. 'It seemed unaltered.'

This visit to Scotland was attended with happy results, and made a favourable impression upon both. 'The country,' wrote Prince Albert, 'is full of beauty, of a severe and grand character; perfect for sport of all kinds, and the air remarkably pure and light in comparison with what we have here. The people are more natural, and marked by that honesty and sympathy which always distinguish the inhabitants of mountainous countries who live far away from towns.'

On the occasion of a visit to Blair-Athole, the Queen wrote of the Pass of Killiecrankie, that it was 'quite magnificent; the road winds along it, and you look down a great height, all wooded on both sides; the Garry rolling below.' On another occasion she wrote: 'We took a delightful walk of two hours. Immediately near the house, the scenery is very wild, which

is most enjoyable. The moment you step out of the house, you see those splendid hills all round. We went to the left through some neglected pleasure-grounds, and then through the wood, along a steep winding path overhanging the rapid stream. These Scotch streams, full of stones, and clear as glass, are most beautiful; the peeps between the trees, the depth of the shadows, the mossy stones, mixed with slate, &c., which cover the banks, are lovely; at every turn you have a picture. We were up high, but could not get to the top; Albert in such delight; it is a happiness to see him, he is in such spirits. We came back by a higher drive, and then went to the factor's house, still higher up, where Lord and Lady Glenlyon are living, having given Blair up to us. We walked on to a cornfield, where a number of women were cutting and reaping the oats ("shearing," as they call it in Scotland), with a splendid view of the hills before us, so rural and romantic, so unlike our daily Windsor walk (delightful as that is); and this change does such good: as Albert observes, it refreshes one for a long time. We then went into the kitchen-garden, and to a walk from which there is a magnificent view. This mixture of great wildness and art is perfection.

'At a little before four o'clock, Albert drove me out in the pony-phaeton till nearly six--such a drive! Really to be able to sit in one's pony-carriage, and to see such wild, beautiful scenery as we did, the furthest point being only five miles from the house, is an immense delight. We drove along Glen Tilt, through a wood overhanging the river Tilt, which joins the Garry, and as we left the wood we came upon such a lovely view--Ben-y-Gloe straight before us--and under these high hills the river Tilt gushing and winding over stones and slates, and the hills and mountains skirted at the bottom with beautiful trees; the whole lit up by the sun; and the air so pure and fine; but no description can at all do it justice, or give an idea of what this drive was.' The royal pair mount their ponies, and with only one attendant, a gillie, delight in getting above the world and out of it: '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 charms of natural scenery, greatly as they were appreciated, required now and then to be relieved by a little excitement, and the Queen and Prince hit upon an ingenious plan of procuring this. They would issue forth from Balmoral in hired carriages, with horses to match, and would drive to some Highland town, and dine and dress at its inn, under assumed names. It was no doubt great fun to Her Majesty to put up with the accommodation of a third-rate provincial inn, where 'a ringleted woman did everything' in the way of waiting at table, and where in place of soup there was mutton-broth with vegetables, 'which I did not much relish.'

On one of these expeditions, Her Majesty was so unfortunate as to hit upon the inn at Dalwhinnie as a place of sojourn. 'We went up-stairs: the inn was much larger than at Fettercairn, but not nearly so nice and cheerful; there was a drawing-room and a dining-room; and we had a very good-sized bedroom. Albert had a dressing-room of equal size. Mary Andrews (who was very useful and efficient) and Lady Churchill's maid had a room together, every one being in the house; but unfortunately there was hardly anything to eat, and there was only tea, and two miserable starved Highland

chickens, without any potatoes! No pudding, and no _fun_; no little maid (the two there not wishing to come in), nor our two people--who were wet and drying our and their things--to wait on us! It was not a nice supper; and the evening was wet. As it was late, we soon retired to rest. Mary and Maxted (Lady Churchill's maid) had been dining below with Grant, Brown, and Stewart (who came the same as last time, with the maids) in the "commercial room" at the foot of the stairs. They had only the remnants of our two starved chickens!'

The ascent of the hill of Tulloch on a pony, the Queen wrote, was 'the most delightful, the most romantic ride and walk I ever had.' The quiet, the liberty, the Highlanders, and the hills were all thoroughly enjoyed by the Queen, and when she returned to the Lowlands it made her sad to see the country becoming 'flatter and flatter,' while the English coast appeared 'terribly flat.' Again the Queen and Prince-Consort were in the West Highlands in 1847, but had dreadful weather at Ardverikie, on Loch Laggan.

Not even Osborne, Windsor, or Buckingham Palace proved happier residences than their holiday home at Balmoral. The fine air of the north of Scotland had been so beneficial to the royal family, that they were advised to purchase a house in Aberdeenshire.

The Queen and prince took up their autumn residence at Balmoral in September 1848. A few years later, the house was much improved and enlarged from designs by the Prince-Consort. It was soothing to retire thither after a year of the bustle of London. 'It was so calm and so solitary, it did one good as one gazed around; and the pure mountain air was most refreshing. All seemed to breathe freedom and peace, and to make one forget the world and its sad turmoils.' Mr Greville, as clerk of the Council, saw the circle there in 1849, and thought the Queen and prince appeared to great advantage, living in simplicity and ease. 'The Queen is running in and out of the house all day long, and often goes about alone, walks into the cottages, and sits down and chats with the old women.... I was greatly struck with the prince. I saw at once that he is very intelligent and highly cultivated; and, moreover, that he has a thoughtful mind, and thinks of subjects worth thinking about. He seems very much at his ease, very gay, pleasant, and without the least stiffness or air of dignity.' The Queen was in Ireland in 1849, and had a splendid reception.

The Queen took possession of the new castle at Balmoral in the autumn of 1855, and a year later she wrote that 'every year my heart becomes more fixed in this dear paradise, and so much more so now, that all has become my dear Albert's own creation, own work, own building, own laying out, as at Osborne; and his great taste, and the impress of his dear hand, have been stamped everywhere.'

After building the cairn on the top of Craig Gowan, to commemorate their taking possession of Balmoral, the Queen wrote: 'May God bless this place, and allow us yet to see it and enjoy it many a long year.'

In the north country, too, she met with little adventures, which doubtless helped to rally her courage and spirits--a carriage accident, when there

was 'a moment during which I had time to reflect whether I should be killed or not, and to think there were, still things I had not settled and wanted to do;' subsequently sitting in the cold on the road-side, recalling 'what my beloved one had always said to me, namely, to make the best of what could not be altered.' What a thoroughly loving, clinging woman's heart the 'Queen-Empress' shows when 'she feels tired, sad, and bewildered' because 'for the first time in her life she was alone in a strange house, without either mother or husband.'

Some interesting glimpses of the Queen are given in the biography of the late Dr Norman Macleod. This popular divine was asked to preach before the Queen in Crathie Church in 1854--the church that stood till 1893, when the Queen laid the foundation stone of a new one. He preached an old sermon without a note, never looking once at the royal seat, but solely at the congregation. The Sunday at Balmoral was perfect in its peace and beauty. In his sermon he tried to show what true life is, a finding rest through the yoke of God's service instead of the service of self, and by the cross of self-denial instead of self-gratification. 'In the evening,' writes Dr Macleod in his Journal, 'after daundering in a green field with a path through it which led to the high-road, and while sitting on a block of granite, full of quiet thoughts, mentally reposing in the midst of the beautiful scenery, I was aroused from my reverie by some one asking me if I was the clergyman who had preached that day. I was soon in the presence of the Queen and prince; when Her Majesty came forward and said, with a sweet, kind, and smiling face: "We wish to thank you for your sermon." She then asked me how my father was--what was the name of my parish, &c.; and so, after bowing and smiling, they both continued their quiet evening walk alone. And thus God blessed me, and I thanked His name.' The Queen in her Journal remarked that she had never heard a finer sermon, and that the allusions in the prayer to herself and the children gave her a 'lump in the throat.'

Dr Macleod was again at Balmoral in 1862 and 1866. Of this visit in May 1862, made after the Queen's bereavement, he reported to his wife that 'all has passed well--that is to say, God enabled me to speak in private and in public to the Queen, in such a way as seemed to me to be truth, the truth in God's sight--that which I believed she needed, though I felt it would be very trying to her spirit to receive it. And what fills me with deepest thanksgiving is, that she has received it, and written to me such a kind, tender letter of thanks for it, which shall be treasured in my heart while I live.

[Illustration: Balmoral Castle.]

'Prince Alfred sent for me last night to see him before going away. Thank God, I spoke fully and frankly to him--we were alone--of his difficulties, temptations, and of his father's example; what the nation expected of him; how, if he did God's will, good and able men would rally round him; how, if he became selfish, a selfish set of flatterers would truckle to him and ruin him, while caring only for themselves. He thanked me for all I said, and wished me to travel with him to-day to Aberdeen, but the Queen wishes to see me again.'

In his Journal of May 14, he wrote: 'After dinner I was summoned unexpectedly to the Queen's room. She was alone. She met me, and with an unutterably sad expression which filled my eyes with tears, at once began to speak about the prince. It is impossible for me to recall distinctly the sequence or substance of that long conversation. She spoke of his excellences--his love, his cheerfulness, how he was everything to her; how all now on earth seemed dead to her. She said she never shut her eyes to trials, but liked to look them in the face; how she would never shrink from duty, but that all was at present done mechanically; that her highest ideas of purity and love were obtained from him, and that God could not be displeased with her love. But there was nothing morbid in her grief. I spoke freely to her about all I felt regarding him--the love of the nation and their sympathy; and took every opportunity of bringing before her the reality of God's love and sympathy, her noble calling as a queen, the value of her life to the nation, the blessedness of prayer.'

On the Monday following the Sabbath services, Dr Macleod had a long interview with the Queen. 'She was very much more like her old self,' he writes, 'cheerful, and full of talk about persons and things. She, of course, spoke of the prince. She said that he always believed he was to die soon, and that he often told her that he had never any fear of death.... The more I learned about the Prince-Consort, the more I agree with what the Queen said to me about him, "that he really did not seem to comprehend a selfish character, or what selfishness was."'

It was Dr Macleod's feeling that the Queen had a reasoning, searching mind, anxious to get at the root and the reality of things, and abhorring all shams, whether in word or deed. In October 1866, he records: 'After dinner, the Queen invited me to her room, where I found the Princess Helena and Marchioness of Ely. The Queen sat down to spin at a nice Scotch wheel, while I read Robert Burns to her: "Tam o' Shanter," and "A man's a man for a' that," her favourite. The Prince and Princess of Hesse sent for me to see their children. The eldest, Victoria, whom I saw at Darmstadt, is a most sweet child; the youngest, Elizabeth, a round, fat ball of loving good-nature. I gave her a real hobble, such as I give Polly. I suppose the little thing never got anything like it, for she screamed and kicked with a perfect _furore_ of delight, would go from me to neither father nor mother nor nurse, to their great merriment, but buried her chubby face in my cheek, until I gave her another right good hobble. They are such dear children. The Prince of Wales sent a message asking me to go and see him.... All seem to be very happy. We had a great deal of pleasant talk in the garden. Dear, good General Grey drove me home.'

In a letter written in 1867, he expresses himself thus:

'I had a long interview with the Queen. With my last breath I will uphold the excellence and nobleness of her character. It was really grand to hear her talk on moral courage, and on living for duty.' The Queen, on hearing of Dr Macleod's death, wrote: 'How I loved to talk to him, to ask his advice, to speak to him of my sorrows, my anxieties! ... How dreadful to lose that dear, kind, loving, large-hearted friend! I cried very bitterly, for this is a terrible loss to me.'

Both the Queen and Prince-Consort have had a hearty appreciation of literary men of eminence and all public benefactors. We have already noted their appreciation of Tennyson.

The Queen, after a long interview with Charles Dickens, presented him with a copy of her *Leaves*, and wrote on it that it was a gift 'from one of the humblest of writers to one of the greatest.'

In December 1850, Dr Livingstone wrote to his parents: 'The Royal Geographical Society have awarded twenty-five guineas for the discovery of the lake ('Ngami). It is from the Queen.' Before this he had written: 'I wonder you do not go to see the Queen. I was as disloyal as others when in England, for though I might have seen her in London I never went. Do you ever pray for her?' In 1858 Livingstone was honoured by the Queen with a private interview. An account says, 'She sent for Livingstone, who attended Her Majesty at the palace, without ceremony, in his black coat and blue trousers, and his cap surrounded with a stripe of gold lace.... The Queen conversed with him affably for half-an-hour on the subject of his travels. Dr Livingstone told Her Majesty that he would now be able to say to the natives that he had seen his chief, his not having done so before having been a constant subject of surprise to the children of the African wilderness. He mentioned to Her Majesty also that the people were in the habit of inquiring whether his chief was wealthy; and that when he assured them she was very wealthy, they would ask how many cows she had got, a question at which the Queen laughed heartily.'

But the Queen had plenty of live-stock too. From an account in the *Idler* of the Queen's pet animals, we learn that they consist almost entirely of dogs, horses, and donkeys. The following is a list of some of the royal pets: Flora and Alma, two horses fourteen hands high, presented to the Queen by Victor Emmanuel. Jenny, a white donkey, twenty-five years of age, which has been with the Queen since it was a foal. Tewfik, a white Egyptian ass, bought in Cairo by Lord Wolseley. Two Shetland ponies--one, The Skewbald, three feet six inches high; another, a dark brown mare like a miniature cart-horse. The royal herd of fifty cows in milk, chiefly shorthorns and Jerseys. An enormous bison named Jack, obtained in exchange for a Canadian bison from the Zoological Gardens. A cream-coloured pony called Sanger, presented to the Queen by the circus proprietor. A Zulu cow bred from the herd of Cetewayo's brother. A strong handsome donkey called Jacquot, with a white nose and knotted tail. This donkey draws the Queen's chair (a little four-wheeled carriage with rubber tyres and a low step), and has accompanied her to Florence. A gray donkey, the son of the Egyptian Tewfik, carries the Queen's grandchildren. Jessie, the Queen's favourite riding mare, which is twenty-seven years old. A gray Arab, presented to Her Majesty by the Thakore of Morvi. The stables contain eighteen harness horses, most of them gray, and twelve brougham horses ranging from dark brown to light chestnut. Four brown ponies, fourteen hands high, bred from a pony called Beatrice, which Princess Beatrice used to ride. The Royal Mews cover an extent of four acres, and accommodate as many as one hundred horses. The carriage-house contains the post-chaise in which the Queen and the Prince-Consort travelled through Germany seven years after their marriage. The carriages of the household weigh about 15 cwt. each. The royal kennels contain fifty-five dogs.

George Peabody, who had given in all about half a million of money towards building industrial homes in London, having declined many honours, was asked what gift, if any, he would accept. His reply was: 'A letter from the Queen of England, which I may carry across the Atlantic and deposit as a memorial of one of her most faithful sons.' The following letter was accordingly received from Her Majesty:

WINDSOR CASTLE, _March_ 28, 1866.

The Queen hears that Mr Peabody intends shortly to return to America; and she would be sorry that he should leave England without being assured by herself how deeply she appreciates the noble act, of more than princely munificence, by which he has sought to relieve the wants of her poorer subjects residing in London. It is an act, as the Queen believes, wholly without parallel; and which will carry its best reward in the consciousness of having contributed so largely to the assistance of those who can little help themselves.

The Queen would not, however, have been satisfied without giving Mr Peabody some public mark of her sense of his munificence; and she would gladly have conferred upon him either a baronetcy or the Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath, but that she understands Mr Peabody to feel himself debarred from accepting such distinctions.

It only remains, therefore, for the Queen to give Mr Peabody this assurance of her personal feelings; which she would further wish to mark by asking him to accept a miniature portrait of herself, which she will desire to have painted for him, and which, when finished, can either be sent to him in America, or given to him on the return which she rejoices to hear he meditates to the country that owes him so much.

To this letter Mr Peabody replied:

THE PALACE HOTEL, BUCKINGHAM GATE,

LONDON, _April_ 3, 1866.

MADAM--I feel sensibly my inability to express in adequate terms the gratification with which I have read the letter which your Majesty has done me the high honour of transmitting by the hands of Earl Russell.

On the occasion which has attracted your Majesty's attention, of setting apart a portion of my property to ameliorate the condition and augment the comforts of the poor of London, I have been actuated by a deep sense of gratitude to God, who has blessed me with prosperity, and of attachment to this great country, where, under your Majesty's benign rule, I have received so much personal kindness, and enjoyed so many years of happiness. Next to the approval of my own conscience, I shall always prize the assurance which your Majesty's letter conveys to me of the approbation of the

Queen of England, whose whole life has attested that her exalted station has in no degree diminished her sympathy with the humblest of her subjects. The portrait which your Majesty is graciously pleased to bestow on me I shall value as the most gracious heirloom that I can leave in the land of my birth; where, together with the letter which your Majesty has addressed to me, it will ever be regarded as an evidence of the kindly feeling of the Queen of the United Kingdom toward a citizen of the United States.

I have the honour to be

Your Majesty's most obedient servant,

GEORGE PEABODY.

This miniature of the Queen is mounted in an elaborate and massive chased gold frame, surmounted by the royal crown; is a half-length, fourteen inches long and ten wide, done in enamel, by Tilb, a London artist, and is the largest miniature of the kind ever attempted in England. It has been deposited, along with the gold box containing the freedom of the city of London, in a vault in the Institute at Peabody; also the gold box from the Fishmongers' Association, London; a book of autographs; a presentation copy of the Queen's first published book, with her autograph; and a cane which belonged to Benjamin Franklin.

We have only tried to draw within a small canvas a portrait of her as 'mother, wife, and queen.' She has herself told the story of her happy days in her Highland home, to which we have already alluded; nor has she shrunk from letting her people see her when she went there after all was changed, when the view was so fine, the day so bright--and the heather so beautifully pink--but no pleasure, no joy! all dead! But she found help and sympathy among her beloved Scottish peasantry, with whom she could form human friendships, unchilled by politics and unchecked by court jealousies. They could win her into the sunshine even on the sacred anniversaries. One of them said to her, 'I thought you would like to be here (a bright and favoured spot) on his birthday.' The good Christian man 'being of opinion,' writes the Queen, 'that this beloved day, and even the 14th of December, must not be looked upon as a day of mourning.' 'That's not the light to look at it,' said he. The Queen found 'true and strong faith in these good simple people.' It is pleasant, to note that by-and-by she kept the prince's birthday by giving souvenirs to her children, servants, and friends.

She who years before, during a short separation from her dear husband, had written, 'All the numerous children are as nothing to me when he is away--it seems as if the whole life of the house and home were gone,' could enter into the spirit of Dr Norman Macleod's pathetic story of the old woman who, having lost husband and children, was asked how she had been able to bear her sorrows, and replied, 'Ah, when he went awa', it made a great hole, and all the others went through it.'

As we have already said, the Queen was a genuine ruler, and while at Windsor she had not only a regular array of papers and despatches to go

through, but many court ceremonies. In the morning there was a drive before breakfast, and after that meal she read her private letters and newspapers. One of the ladies-in-waiting had previously gone over the newspapers and marked the paragraphs which seemed of most interest to the Queen. Afterwards came the examination of the boxes of papers and despatches, of which there might be twenty or thirty, which sometimes occupied about three hours. The contents were then sorted, and sent to be dealt with by her secretary, Sir Henry Ponsonby.

When the Queen was robed for a state occasion, such as a Drawing-room, she was sometimes adorned with jewellery worth. £150,000. At other times she wore scarcely any. Drawing-rooms, when ladies were presented and had the honour of kissing the Queen's hand, were held about two o'clock. At a royal dinner-party the Queen arrived last. Having walked round and spoken to her guests, she then preceded them into the royal dining-room, and seated herself with one of her children on either side. She was always punctual. It was polite to allow her to start the conversation; after that, she liked to hear her guests talking. Her own talk was always agreeable, and she was fond of humour and a hearty laugh.

The Queen showed herself a model mistress, and also showed an example of industry. At the Chicago Exhibition in 1893 were napkins made from flax spun by Her Majesty, and a straw hat plaited by her. There was, too, a noble human grace about her acts of beneficence. For instance, in erecting an almshouse for poor old women in the Isle of Wight, she retained one tiny room, exactly like the rest, for her own use. It is, we believe, untrue that she ever read in cottages. Her diary is full of references to those who served her, even in the humblest capacities. She attended the funeral service for the father of her faithful servant, John Brown; and when the latter died, she wrote that her loss was irreparable, as he deservedly possessed her entire confidence. Interested in the country people around Balmoral, Her Majesty paid visits to old women, and gave them petticoats. On August 26, 1869, she called on old Mrs Grant, gave her a shawl and pair of socks, 'and found the poor old soul in bed, looking very weak and very ill, but bowing her head and thanking me in her usual way. I took her hand and held it.' She abounded in practical sympathy with all their joys and sorrows. One of the lodge-keepers in Windsor Forest remarked that 'a wonderful good woman to her servants is the Queen.' Her Majesty had come several times to see her husband when down with rheumatic fever, and the princesses often brought her oranges and jellies with their own hands. She trained her children to live in the same spirit: nearly all of the Princess Alice's letters home contained references to domestic friends and messages to be conveyed to them. She wrote in 1865 to the Queen: 'From you I have inherited an ardent and sympathising spirit, and feel the pain of those I love, as though it were my own.'

She was always full of kindly consideration for others. Many stories are told of the gracious methods taken by her to efface the pain caused by blunders or awkwardness at review, levee, or drawing-room. Mr Jeaffreson has written: 'Living in history as the most sagacious and enlightened sovereign of her epoch, Her Majesty will also stand before posterity as the finest type of feminine excellence given to human nature in the nineteenth century; even as her husband will stand before posterity as the

brightest example of princely worth given to the age that is drawing to a close. Regarded with admiration throughout all time as a beneficent queen and splendid empress, she will also be honoured reverentially by the coming centuries as a supremely good and noble woman.'

Nor did the Queen lack for friends upon another level. The old Duke of Wellington, the Iron Duke, the victor of Waterloo, is said to have loved her fondly. If any stranger had seen them together, 'he would have imagined he beheld a fond father and an affectionate daughter laughingly chatting.' She herself recorded her great regard for Dr Norman Macleod, as we have noted, Lady Jane Churchill, and several others. But the devotion which she and the Prince-Consort ever showed to the Baron Stockmar rises to the height of ideal friendship. Stockmar had been the private physician of Leopold, King of the Belgians, in his earlier days, and in the course of events became the trusted adviser of the young Prince Albert. To him the Queen and the prince wrote as only dutiful children might write to the most affectionate and wisest of parents. They sought his advice and followed it. They reared their children to do him honour. What this friend was, may be gathered from what shrewd people thought of him. Lord Palmerston, no partial critic, declared, 'I have come in my life across only one absolutely disinterested man, and that is--Stockmar.' Subtle aphorisms on the conduct of life may be culled, almost at random, from his letters to the royal pair. We can take but one, which, read in conjunction with the lives he influenced, is deeply significant:

'Were I now to be asked,' he wrote as he drew near his seventieth year, 'by any young man just entering into life, "What is the chief good for which it behoves a man to strive?" my only answer would be "Love and Friendship." Were he to ask me, "What is a man's most priceless possession?" I must answer, "The consciousness of having loved and sought the truth--of having yearned for the truth for its own sake! All else is either mere vanity or a sick man's dream."'

John Bright once said of the Queen, that she was 'the most perfectly truthful person I ever met.' No former monarch has so thoroughly comprehended the great truth, that the powers of the crown are held in trust for the people, and are the means and not the end of government. This enlightened policy has entitled her to the glorious distinction of having been the most constitutional monarch Britain has ever seen.

In 1897 the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria was celebrated, representatives from all parts of the empire and from many foreign countries taking part in a magnificent procession to and from St Paul's Cathedral.

The already aged Queen continued to reign for only a few years longer. The new century had hardly dawned when she was stricken down by the hand of death. After a brief illness she passed away at Osborne on 22d January 1901, amidst an outburst of sorrow from the whole civilised world. Next day the Prince of Wales was proclaimed as King Edward VII. On Saturday, 2d February, amid a splendid naval and military pageant, the body of the Queen was borne to St George's Chapel, Windsor, and on Monday buried in the Frogmore Mausoleum beside Prince Albert.

CHAPTER X.

Summary of Public Events, 1856-93--Civil War in America--Extension of the Franchise--Disestablishment of Irish Church--Education Act of 1870--Wars in China and Abyssinia--Purchase of Suez Canal Shares--Wars in Afghanistan, Zululand, and Egypt--Home Rule Bill--Growth of the Empire and National Progress.

We now continue our summary of public affairs. The Crimean War had been finished, and the mutiny had broken out, whilst Lord Palmerston was prime-minister. In 1858 he was obliged to resign his post; but he returned to office next year, and this he held till his death in 1865. Under him there was quiet both in home and in foreign affairs, and we managed to keep from being mixed up with the great wars which raged abroad.

Seldom has a premier been better liked than Lord Palmerston. Nominally a Whig, but at heart an old-fashioned Tory, he was first and foremost an Englishman, ever jealous for Britain's credit and security. He was not gifted with burning eloquence or biting sarcasm; but his vigour, straightforwardness, good sense, and kindness endeared him even to his adversaries. Honestly indifferent to domestic reform, but a finished master of foreign politics, he was of all men the man to guide the nation through the ten coming years, which at home were a season of calm and reaction, but troubled and threatening abroad.

Besides the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny, we had another war with China, as unjust as the opium war of sixteen years before, and quite as successful. In 1856, the Canton authorities seized the crew of a Chinese pirate which carried a British flag. Under strong pressure from British officials, Commissioner Yeh surrendered the crew, but refused all apology, whereupon Canton was bombarded. A twelvemonth later, it was stormed by the British and French allied forces; Yeh was captured, and sent off to die at Calcutta; and in June 1858 a treaty was signed, throwing open all China to British subjects. In a third war (1859-60), to enforce the terms of that treaty, Peking surrendered, and its vast Summer Palace was sacked and destroyed.

In January 1858, an attempt on the life of the Emperor Napoleon was made by Orsini, an Italian refugee, who had hatched his plot and procured his bomb-shells in England. Lord Palmerston therefore introduced a bill, removing conspiracy to murder from the class of misdemeanour to that of felony. The defeat of that bill, as a truckling to France, brought in the second Derby administration, which lasted sixteen months, and in which a professed Jew was first admitted to parliament, in the person of Baron Rothschild. Another Jew, by race but not by creed, Mr Disraeli, was at the time the leader of the House of Commons. His new Reform Bill satisfied nobody; its rejection was followed by a dissolution; and Lord Palmerston returned to office, June 1859.

Sardinia had aided France against Russia, and France was now aiding Sardinia to expel the Austrians from Italy. The campaign was short and successful; but rejoice as we might for the cause of Italian unity, the French emperor's activity suggested his future invasion of Britain; and to this period belongs the development, if not the beginning, of our Volunteer army, which, from 150,000 in 1860, increased to upwards of 200,000 in twenty-five years. Still, a commercial treaty with France, on free-trade lines, was negotiated between Louis Napoleon and Mr Cobden; and Mr Gladstone carried it through parliament in the face of strong opposition. Lord John Russell again introduced a Reform Bill, but the apathy of Lord Palmerston, and the pressure of other business, led to its quiet withdrawal. The rejection by the Lords of a bill to abolish the duty on paper seemed likely at one time to lead to a collision between the two Houses. Ultimately the Commons contented themselves with a protest against this unwonted stretch of authority, and the paper-duty was removed in 1861.

From 1861 to 1865, a civil war raged in America, between the slave-holding Southern States (the Confederates) and the abolitionist Northern States (the Federals). At first, British feeling was strongly in favour of the Northerners; but it changed before long, partly in consequence of their seizure of two Confederate envoys on a British mail-steamer, the *Trent*, and of the interruption of our cotton trade, which caused a cotton famine and great distress in Lancashire. With the war itself, and the final hard-won triumph of the North, we had no immediate connection; but the Southern cause was promoted by five privateers being built in England. These armed cruisers were not professedly built for the Southerners, but under false pretences were actually equipped for war against Northern commerce. One of them, the *Alabama*, was not merely built in a British dockyard, but manned for the most part by a British crew. In her two years' cruise she burned sixty-five Federal merchantmen. The Federal government protested at the time; but it was not till 1872 that the *Alabama* question was peacefully settled by arbitration in a conference at Geneva, and we had to pay three millions sterling in satisfaction of the American claims.

Other events during the Palmerston administration were a tedious native rebellion in New Zealand (1860-65); the marriage of the Prince of Wales to the Princess Alexandra of Denmark (1863); the cession of the Ionian Isles to Greece (1864); and on the Continent there was the Schleswig-Holstein War (1864), in which, beset by both Prussia and Austria, Denmark looked, but looked vainly, for succour from Britain.

As the Reform Bill of 1832 excluded the great bulk of the working classes from the franchise, it was felt by many that it could not be a final measure; and no long time had passed before agitation for further reform had commenced.

In the year 1854 the veteran Lord John Russell once more brought the subject before the House of Commons; but the attention of the country was fixed on the war with Russia, and it was not thought a good time to deal with the question of reform. Again, in 1859, the cabinet of Earl Derby

brought forward a scheme; but it also failed. In the year 1866, Earl Russell was once more at the head of affairs; and it seemed at one time that the aged statesman would succeed in giving the country a second Reform Bill. After many debates, however, Lord Russell's scheme was rejected, and he resigned.

The Earl of Derby next became premier, with Mr Disraeli as leader of the House of Commons. These statesmen succeeded at length in finding a way for settling the vexed question; and the result was a measure which greatly extended the franchise. The new bill gave the privilege of voting to all householders in boroughs who paid poor-rates, without regard to the amount of rent. A lodger qualification of £10 a year was also introduced. In the counties all who paid a rent of not less than £12 were entitled to a vote. Generally speaking, it may be said that previous to 1832 the upper classes controlled the representation; the first Reform Bill gave the franchise to the middle classes; while the second conferred it on a large section of the working classes.

Such was the Reform Bill of 1867, which made important changes in our system of election. One of the most pleasing features of this and other reforms which we have effected, is the fact that they have been brought about in a peaceful way. While in France and most other European countries, changes in government have frequently been accompanied by revolution and civil war, we have been able to improve our laws without disturbance and without bloodshed.

After the passing of this important act, Mr Gladstone came into power with a large Liberal majority. He had long been one of the foremost orators and debaters of the party. Originally a Conservative, he had become a freetrader with Sir Robert Peel, and for the next few years was a prominent member of the Peelite party. During Lord Palmerston's second administration, he made a most successful Chancellor of the Exchequer. For some years he had represented Oxford University as a Conservative; but at the general election of 1865, he lost his seat owing to the liberal tendencies he had lately shown. Henceforward he became one of the most decided Liberals; and after the retirement of Earl Russell in 1866, he became the leader of that party.

[Illustration: William Ewart Gladstone. (From a Photograph by R. W. Thomas.)]

Under him many reforms were carried. The Protestant Episcopal Church of Ireland, whose adherents formed only a small minority of the population, was disestablished. Thus at one blow a very important element of the religious difficulty, which had caused so much trouble in Ireland, was removed. A measure was also passed, giving the Irish tenant a greater interest in the soil which he cultivated.

Of all the great measures for the benefit of the working classes which have been passed during the present century, none deserves a higher place than the Education Bill of 1870. A great change for the better had been made in the condition of the people. Their food had been cheapened; the conditions under which they performed their daily toil in the factory or

the mine had been improved; and their comforts greatly increased. In all these respects their lot compared favourably with that of other nations. But in education the English were still far behind some of their neighbours, and especially the Germans.

For thirty or forty years before the passing of the Education Act, a great deal had been done by voluntary effort towards supplying the educational needs of the people in England. The National Society, and the British and Foreign Society, by building schools and training teachers, had done much for the children of our native land. Parliament also had lent its aid, by voting an annual grant towards the expenses of the existing schools.

But the population was increasing so rapidly that, in spite of these efforts, there was still a great lack of schools. After all that had been done, it was calculated that there yet remained two-thirds of the juvenile population of the country for whom no provision had been made. An inquiry into the condition of education in some of the large towns showed sad results. In Birmingham, out of a population of 83,000 children of school age, only 26,000 were under instruction; Leeds showed a proportion of 58,000 to 19,000; and so on with other towns.

These figures startled men of all parties; and it was felt that not a moment more ought to be lost in providing for the educational needs which had been shown to exist. Accordingly, Mr Forster, the Vice-president of the Council, a statesman whose name will be honourably handed down in connection with this great question, brought in his famous scheme for grappling with the difficulty. Like all great measures, it was noted for its simplicity.

It laid down, in the first place, the great principle that 'there should be efficient school provision in every district of England where it was wanted; and that every child in the country should have the means of education placed within its reach.' To carry this principle into effect, it appointed boards of management, or school boards, to be elected at intervals of three years by the ratepayers themselves.

The chief duties of these boards were defined to be, the erection of schools in all places where sufficient provision did not already exist; and the framing of bylaws, by which they might compel attendance at school in cases where the parents showed themselves indifferent to the welfare of their children. These were the main features of the bill, which passed through parliament, and speedily became the law of the land.

Since the passing of the Education Act, the results achieved by it in England have been most gratifying. The number of children attending school has largely increased; the quality of the instruction has been greatly improved; and in districts which were formerly neglected, excellent school buildings have been erected and fitted up.

By means of the excellent education provided in her parish schools Scotland had long held a foremost place among the nations of the world. Yet it was felt that even there the system of education needed improvement. Accordingly, in 1872, school boards were established and

other changes in education were made in Scotland.

There were other minor but still important changes in other departments. It was provided that the right to hold the position of commissioned or higher officers in the army should be given by open examination, and not be bought as hitherto. All students, without distinction as to religious creed, were admitted to the privileges of the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Voters were protected in the exercise of their rights by the introduction of the _Ballot_, or system of secret voting. The country now seemed to be tired of reform for a time, and the Gladstone ministry was overthrown.

During the period of which we treat, though we had no great war, we had a number of small conflicts. The series of quarrels with China may be said to have terminated with our conquest of Peking in 1860. In 1869 the conduct of King John of Abyssinia, in unlawfully imprisoning English subjects, compelled us to send an expedition to rescue them, which it successfully accomplished; and in 1873 we were obliged to send another expedition against King Koffee of Ashanti, on the West African coast, who attacked our allies. This expedition was also a complete success, as we forced our foes to agree to a peace advantageous for us.

In addition may be recorded the successful laying of the Atlantic cable (1866), after nine years of vain endeavour; the passing of an act (1867), under which British North America is all, except Newfoundland, now federally united in the vast Dominion of Canada, with a constitution like that of the mother-country; and the purchase by government of the telegraph system (1868).

On the fall of the Gladstone ministry in 1874, a Conservative one, under Mr Disraeli (afterwards Lord Beaconsfield), came into power, and for some years managed the national affairs.

During these years, several important measures affecting the foreign affairs of our empire were carried out. We purchased a large number of shares in the French company which owns the Suez Canal. British ships going to India pass through that canal, and therefore it was considered by our rulers that it would be for our advantage to have a good deal to do with the management of the company. In India, since the suppression of the Mutiny, and abolition of the East India Company, the Queen had the direct rule. She was in 1876 declared Empress of that country.

In 1877, Russia went to war with Turkey on questions connected with the treatment of the Christian subjects of the Sultan. Our government was opposed to many things in the conduct of the Russians in the matter, and at one time it seemed very likely that a war between us and them would take place. All matters in dispute, however, were arranged in a satisfactory manner at a Congress held at Berlin in 1878.

Then came another Afghan war, its object being the exclusion of Russian influence from Cabul, and such an extension of our Indian frontier as should henceforth render impossible the exclusion of British influence. In September 1878 the Ameer, Shere Ali, Dost Mohammed's son and successor,

refused admission to a British envoy: his refusal was treated as an insolent challenge, and our peaceful mission became a hostile invasion. There was some sharp fighting in the passes; but Jellalabad was ours by the end of December, and Candahar very soon afterwards. Shere Ali died early in 1879; and his son, Yakoob Khan, the new Ameer, in May signed the treaty of Gandamak, conceding the 'scientific frontier' and all our other demands. Every one was saying how well and easily the affair had been managed, when tidings reached us of a great calamity--the murder, on 3d September, at Cabul, of our envoy, Sir Louis Cavagnari, with almost all his small escort. The treaty, of course, became so much wastepaper; but no time was lost in avenging the outrage, for after more fighting, Cabul was occupied by General Roberts in the second week of October. The war went on in a desultory fashion, till in July 1880 we recognised a new Ameer in Abdurrahman, heretofore a Russian pensioner, and a grandson of Dost Mohammed. That same month a British brigade was cut to pieces near Candahar; but, starting from Cabul at the head of 10,000 picked troops, General Roberts in twenty-three days marched 318 miles, relieved Candahar's garrison, and won the battle of Mazra. Already our forces had begun to withdraw from the country, and Candahar was evacuated in 1881. A peaceful British mission was undertaken in the autumn of 1893, when various matters regarding the frontier of Afghanistan were dealt with.

[Illustration: Earl Roberts. (From a Photograph by Poole, Waterford.)]

In 1877 we annexed the Dutch Transvaal Republic; the republic was restored under British suzerainty. In 1879 we invaded the Zulus' territory. On 11th January Lord Chelmsford crossed the Natal frontier; on the 22d the Zulus surrounded his camp, and all but annihilated its garrison. The heroic defence of Rorke's Drift, by 80 against 4000, saved Natal from a Zulu invasion; but it was not till July that the campaign was ended by the victory of Ulundi. The saddest event in all the war was the death of the French Prince Imperial, who was serving with the British forces. He was out with a small reconnoitring party, which was surprised by a band of Zulus; his escort mounted and fled; and he was found next morning dead, his body gashed with eighteen assegai wounds. The Zulu king, Cetewayo, was captured in August, and sent a prisoner to Cape Town. Zululand was divided amongst twelve chieftains; but in 1883, after a visit to England, Cetewayo was reinstated in the central part of his kingdom. It was not so easy to set him up again; in 1884 he died a fugitive, overthrown by one of his rivals.

Two very notable men passed away in 1881--Thomas Carlyle, author of *The French Revolution*, and Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield. Born in 1804, Disraeli entered parliament in 1837, the year of the Queen's accession. His first speech, though clever enough, was greeted with shouts of laughter, till, losing patience, he cried, almost shouted: 'I have begun several things many times, and have often succeeded at last; ay, and though I sit down now, the time will come when you will hear me.' In nine years that time did come. From the hour of his onslaught on Sir Robert Peel in the Corn-Law debate of 22d January 1846, he became the leader of the Tory party.

Since the making of the Suez Canal opened a new route to India, we have

had a fresh interest in Egypt. In 1882, Egypt was disturbed by troubles which attracted great attention in this country. Through a rising under Arabi Pasha the government was upset, and at Alexandria riots took place, in which Europeans were murdered. Then followed the bombardment of Alexandria by the British fleet. Our forces under Sir Garnet Wolseley defeated the Egyptian army at Tel-el-Kebir, and occupied Cairo, the capital of the country.

Arabi Pasha was banished for life, and the authority of the Khedive was restored under British control. We thus maintained peace and order in Egypt; but a great revolt took place in the provinces of the Soudan, which had been conquered by Egypt. An Egyptian army commanded by General Hicks was almost entirely destroyed by the natives under a religious leader called the Mahdi.

In these circumstances it was decided to send General Gordon to withdraw the Egyptian garrisons from the Soudan, and to give up that vast country to its native rulers. Gordon made his way to Khartoum, but he found the native revolt more formidable than he expected. He was besieged in that city, and refusing to leave the people to their fate, heroically defended it against great odds for nearly a year. An expedition sent under Wolseley to release him did not arrive till Khartoum had fallen and Gordon was slain (1885).

After being defeated in several battles, the forces of the Mahdi were taught that, however brave, they were no match for our troops. When it was determined to reconquer the Soudan the duty was entrusted to Sir Herbert Kitchener, who routed the Khalifa at Omdurman in 1898.

During recent years there have also been troubles on our Indian frontier. In 1886 we annexed Burma, which had suffered much misery under a cruel tyrant. But the greatest danger to India lies on the north-western border, where Russia has been making rapid progress. The conquest of Merv by the Russians brought their dominion close to that of our allies, the Afghans, and it became necessary to establish a fixed boundary between them.

While this was being done, the Russians came into collision with the Afghans at Penjdeh, and in 1885 inflicted a defeat upon them. As a result of this quarrel, it seemed possible at one time that we might go to war with Russia. We came, however, to an agreement with that power, and as we now have a more settled boundary, we may hope to avoid further conflict on the question. But for many years we have been busy in fortifying our north-western frontier, that we may be ready to defend India against invasion.

We have lately seen a vast extension of our empire in Africa. And though the love of gold has been the great motive in our advance into the Dark Continent, our rule is sure to prove a benefit to the native peoples. Vast tracts of land rich in mineral wealth, and well adapted both for pasture and cultivation, have been brought under the sway of Britain. Commerce has been stimulated, and mission stations have been established on almost every lake and river. From Dr Livingstone's advent in Africa in 1841 dates the modern interest in South Africa. He passed away in 1873. But the

explorations of Stanley, Baker, Burton, and the operations of the chartered companies in Uganda and Mashonaland have all helped to make the Dark Continent more familiar to the public.

At the general election in the spring of 1880, the Liberals had a large majority, and Mr Gladstone again became prime-minister. In accordance with the expectation of the country, he proceeded to make some important changes.

It was complained by many that the agricultural labourers had no share in electing members of parliament. A bill was therefore introduced in 1884 to extend to the counties the privilege of voting, which, in 1867, had been granted to householders and lodgers in towns. This bill passed the House of Commons, but the House of Lords refused to pass it, because it was not accompanied by a measure for the better distribution of seats.

[Illustration: The Funeral Procession of Queen Victoria. (From a Photograph by Dorrett & Martin.)]

Parliament again met in the autumn; and as the bill was a second time carried through the House of Commons, there was for a time the prospect of a contest between the two Houses. To prevent such a result, the leaders of both parties met in consultation, and it was agreed that the bill should be allowed to pass on condition that there should be a better distribution of seats. The main provision of the Redistribution Act, as it was called, was to take the right of electing members from all towns with a population under 15,000, and to merge them in the country districts in which they were situated.

In home affairs the Irish question has, during many years, claimed more attention than any other. For some time there had been a great fall in the prices of agricultural produce, and consequently the farmers in Ireland had a difficulty in finding the money to pay their rents. Then followed evictions, which the peasantry resisted by violence. Parliament passed several measures, partly to give relief to the peasantry under the hard times which had fallen upon them, partly with a view to making the law stronger for the suppression of outrages. As these laws did not always meet the approval of the Irish and their leaders in parliament, scenes of violence frequently occurred. The worst act in the unhappy struggle--the murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish and of Mr Burke, in the Phoenix Park, Dublin, in 1882--was the work of a secret society, and received the condemnation of the Irish leaders. For many years there had been growing in Ireland a party which demanded Home Rule--that is, that Ireland should manage her domestic affairs by a parliament of her own at Dublin. At the general election in 1885, 86 members out of 103 returned for Ireland were in favour of Home Rule. In 1886 Mr Gladstone introduced a bill to grant Home Rule to Ireland; but, as many of the Liberals refused to follow him in this change of policy, he was defeated in the House of Commons.

In an appeal to the country, he was likewise defeated, and the Marquis of Salisbury became prime-minister, with the support of a combination of Conservatives and Liberal Unionists. The government of Lord Salisbury lasted for six years. It carried several useful measures, among which may

be mentioned free education, and the act for establishing county councils both in England and Scotland. At the general election of 1892, Mr Gladstone had a majority; for the fourth time he undertook the duties of premiership, and in 1893 for the second time brought a Home Rule Bill into parliament, which was rejected by the House of Lords on September 8th.

Owing to increasing infirmities of age, Mr Gladstone resigned early in 1894, and was succeeded by Lord Rosebery, who carried on the government of the country until defeated in July 1895. Lord Salisbury now formed his third administration, and had to deal with embarrassing situations in connection with the Armenian massacres; the Jameson raid on the Transvaal (1896), which led to a prolonged inquiry in London; a boundary line dispute with Venezuela, which led up to a proposed arbitration treaty with the United States; the Cretan insurrection, and the Greco-Turkish war. There were native wars in West Africa and Rhodesia, while a railway was commenced from Mombasa on the coast, inland to the British Protectorate of Uganda. At the general election in 1900 Lord Salisbury was again returned to power by a large majority.

Meanwhile, Britain had lost one of its greatest men. Early in the year 1898 it became known that Mr Gladstone was stricken by a mortal disease. Party feeling was at once laid aside, and the whole nation, as it were, watched with deepest sympathy by the bedside of the dying statesman. After a lingering and painful illness, borne with heroic fortitude and gentle patience, he passed away on the 19th of May. Nine days later he was buried in Westminster Abbey, the last resting-place of so many of England's illustrious dead.

The government had to deal with the long and troublesome Boer war in South Africa, 1899-1901. To save it from trouble at the hands of the natives, the Transvaal had been annexed by Britain in 1877. In 1880, however, the Boers rose in revolt, and defeated a number of British troops at Majuba Hill. After this the country was granted independence in internal affairs.

Owing to the discovery of gold, thousands of settlers were attracted to the Transvaal, and the injustice done to these Uitlanders, as the new-comers were called, led in time to serious trouble. The Uitlanders complained that though they were the majority in the country, and were made to pay by far the greater part of the taxes, they were denied nearly all political rights. At the close of the year 1895 Dr Jameson made a most unwise raid into the Transvaal, in support of a proposed rising of the Uitlanders to obtain political rights. He was surrounded by the Boers and obliged to surrender.

British settlers in the Transvaal were now treated worse than before. Negotiations were carried on between the British government and the Boers, but were suddenly broken off by the latter, who demanded that no more British soldiers should be sent to South Africa. This demand being refused, the Boers, supported by their brethren of the Orange Free State, declared war against Britain, and invaded Natal and Cape Colony in October 1899.

Ladysmith, in the north of Natal, was invested by the Boers, the British

army there being under the command of General Sir George White. The Boers also besieged Kimberley, an important town, containing valuable diamond-mines, in the north-west of Cape Colony. Farther north a small British garrison was hemmed in at Mafeking, a little town near the Transvaal border.

Lord Methuen, with a British column, was sent to the relief of Kimberley, and Sir Redvers Buller, with a strong army, set out to relieve Ladysmith; but both these generals sustained reverses, the former at Magersfontein, and the latter at the Tugela River.

Towards the end of December, Lord Roberts, with Lord Kitchener as chief of his staff, was sent out to the Cape as Commander-in-Chief. On the 15th of February, Kimberley was relieved; and shortly afterwards the Boer general Cronje, with his entire army of upwards of four thousand men, surrendered to Lord Roberts at Paardeberg.

After several gallant attempts, General Buller finally succeeded in relieving Ladysmith, which had been besieged by the Boers for four months. Bloemfontein, the capital of the Free State, was next captured by Lord Roberts; and on the 17th of May, Mafeking was relieved. The brave little garrison of this town, under their able and dauntless leader, Baden-Powell, had endured the greatest privations, and during a siege of seven months had maintained the most marvellously gallant defence of modern times.

Before the end of May, Johannesburg surrendered to Lord Roberts; and on the 5th of June he hoisted the British flag in Pretoria, the capital of the Transvaal. About the same time the Orange Free State was annexed to Great Britain under the name of the Orange River Colony; and on the 1st of September the Transvaal was declared British territory.

The most striking feature of this war was the loyalty and enthusiasm displayed by the colonies in the cause of the mother-country. Canada, Australia, and New Zealand vied with each other in sending volunteers to fight for and uphold the rights of their fellow-colonists in South Africa, thus giving to the world such an evidence of the unity of the British Empire as it had never before seen. Volunteers from the mother-country, too, rallied round their nation's flag in great numbers, and nobly went forth to maintain her cause on the field of battle.

The progress of the nation during the reign of Queen Victoria was marvellous. At the commencement of that period the railway system was only in its infancy. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the country is covered from end to end with a complete network of railways; a journey which, in the old times of stagecoaches, took two or three weeks, being now accomplished in a few hours. The perfection of the railway system has afforded facilities for a wonderfully complete system of postage--the mails being carried to all parts of the kingdom in one night. The rapidity of conveyance is only rivalled by the cheapness to the public.

The penny postage scheme adopted in 1839, and since further improved, has conferred untold benefits upon the people. Even more wonderful than the

railway is the electric telegraph system, which has, so to speak, annihilated distance. By its means a short message can be sent from one end of the kingdom to the other in a few minutes, at the cost of sixpence. Even the ocean forms no barrier to the operations of this marvellous agency. By means of submarine cables Britain is linked with far-distant lands, and is at once made acquainted with everything that happens there.

Owing to the wonderful progress of invention, and the general use of steam-power, enormous strides have been made in all branches of industry. By means of the improvements introduced into our agricultural operations, the farmer is enabled to get through his sowing and reaping more quickly; by the employment of machinery, all branches of our manufactures have been brought to a wonderful state of perfection, and much of the labour formerly done by hand is now executed by steam-power. In commerce, the old system of navigation by means of sailing-vessels is rapidly giving place to the marine engine, and magnificent steamers now traverse the ocean in all directions with the greatest regularity. Amongst great engineering triumphs have been the erection of the Forth Bridge, which was formally declared open for passenger traffic, on 4th March 1890, by the Prince of Wales; the cutting of the Manchester Ship Canal, and the building of such greyhounds of the Atlantic as the *‘Majestic’* and *‘Teutonic’*, the *‘Campania’* and *‘Lucania’*, which have crossed the Atlantic in about five and a half days.

It is to be deeply lamented that the art of war has, with the aid of invention, flourished not less than the arts of peace. Modern invention has made a total change in military and naval warfare. The artillery and small-arms of to-day are as superior, both in range and precision, to those used on the field of Waterloo, as the ‘brown Bess’ of that time was superior to the ‘bows and bills’ of the middle ages. The old line-of-battle ships ‘which Nelson led to victory’ have given place to huge iron-plated monsters, moved by steam, and carrying such heavy guns, that one such ship would have proved a match for the united fleets of Britain and France at Trafalgar.

In matters which are more directly concerned with the welfare of the people, the country made remarkable advances during the reign of Queen Victoria. Political freedom was given to the masses, and many wise laws were passed for improving their social condition. Education became more widely diffused, and a cheap press brought information on all subjects within the reach of the humblest. Our literature was enriched by the contributions of a host of brilliant writers--Macaulay and Carlyle, the historians; Dickens, Thackeray, Lytton, and George Eliot, the novelists, and the poets Tennyson and Browning. But if we have no names of quite equal eminence now living amongst us, we have still a splendid array of talent in all departments of literature, and the production of books, periodicals, and newspapers never was more abundant.

The blessings of progress were not confined to Britain alone. The magnificent colonies of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa abundantly shared in them.

The population of the country had more than doubled during that period.

The chief increase took place in the metropolis, the manufacturing towns of the north, the great mining districts, the chief seaports, and fashionable watering-places. London had increased enormously in size, and at the close of the reign contained as many inhabitants, perhaps, as the whole of England in the time of Elizabeth.

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Queen Victoria is associated with Britain's great age of industrial expansion, economic progress and, especially, empire. At her death, it was said, Britain had a worldwide empire on which the sun never set. In the early part of her reign, she was influenced by two men: her first Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne, and then her husband, Prince Albert, whom she married in 1840.