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THE EARLY  
COURT OF QUEEN VICTORIA









*Queen Victoria.*  
*From the painting by W. G. Ross, A. R. S.*

THE EARLY COURT  
OF  
QUEEN VICTORIA

BY

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*"The Fair Ladies of Hampton Court," Etc*



LONDON  
EVELEIGH NASH

1912

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## PREFACE

No apology need be made for this book, though perhaps a reason for publishing it may be given. In these pages I have endeavoured to show Queen Victoria in her natural setting during her youth, hoping thereby to present her as a really human person. For twenty-five years at least the tendency among those who write has been so to overwhelm the late Queen with adulation that the ordinary reader turns from the subject in disgust. We are not fit for perfection; we believe that perfection is only an ideal—one which would probably become insufferable were it to degenerate into actuality—and when biographers, whose line, it is true, has been more or less laid down for them, depict Queen Victoria without fault and possessing almost preternatural wisdom and virtue, then there must be danger of unpopularity for the great Queen.

As a child my loyalty was upset by the "I will be good" story, and in my childish heart I despised the childish utterer of that sentence. The fault of this lay not in the fact that the little Princess made an impulsive resolution, but in the further fact that that story has been used as an example for other children by all adults who know it. When, at the second Jubilee, I

wrote an anecdotal life of the Queen, I was amused at the literature through which I had to wade for my facts. Taken in the mass, it became a pæan of praise with every trace of real human loveliness erased. Of course, the person really to blame for this in the last resort was the Queen herself. For her one great fault was an exaggerated, indeed a morbid, belief in the infallibility, not of herself as a person, but of the Crown. Nothing angered her more than dissent from, or criticism of, the Crown. It was a curious position, for she practically was the Crown, and therefore the criticism of any public acts of hers, was doubly displeasing to her, as she considered that it was the highest dignity of the State, and not a mere person, which was belittled. Under such pressure—even though it was unspoken its influence was felt—writers wrote naturally that which would please, certainly that which would give no offence; and they were not so much untrue to fact as vigilant that all adverse matter and circumstance should remain unchronicled.

But those who talk of the late Queen do so in an increasing spirit of criticism, and this prompted me to endeavour to show the young Monarch as she really was, surrounded by the somewhat cruel limitations of her time—a girl frank, loving, truthful, and admirable in many ways, yet one in whom the seeds of an undue pride had been planted and most earnestly fostered by those responsible—in spite of which fact, however, a person much more lovable than any counsel of perfection could possibly have produced.

My materials have been gathered largely from contemporary journals and newspapers, and among the books to which I am indebted I must mention Lady Bloomfield's "Reminiscences" for some delightful pictures of Queen Victoria's life at the beginning of her reign. Mr. Sidney Lee's admirable "Life" has also been of use; while the correspondence of Her Majesty was more helpful in amplifying or supporting information already gained than in really supplying fresh facts. The trenchant remarks of Charles Greville and the terse, lively, and often amusing criticisms of Thomas Creevy also could not be ignored by any writer about public people in the 'thirties who wished to get a personal impression.

HAMPTON-ON-THAMES,  
*November, 1911.*





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# THE EARLY COURT OF QUEEN VICTORIA

## CHAPTER I

### PRINCESS VICTORIA'S RELATIVES

“ We are going presently to write our names for the Duchess of Kent, who has produced a daughter.”—*The Hon. Mrs. Calvert.* 1819.

THE DUCHESS OF KENT was not a very popular woman with the Guelph family. George IV. hated her, and made her less welcome than he had made her husband, his brother, to whom he intimated early in 1819 that he would no longer be received at Court; William IV. did not like her when he was the Duke of Clarence, but his wife was so sorry for her sister-in-law's misfortunes that she showed her much kindness and affection until, holding the position of Queen herself, she was obliged to resent the hauteur with which she was treated. The Fitzclarences, who surrounded William IV., had little reason to admire her, and the Tory Ministers found themselves treated by her with only spasmodic politeness. The people in general cared nothing one way or another until the Duchess displayed marked Whig tendencies, and then the Tory Press made a custom of criticising all that she did,

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and displaying a wonderfully intimate knowledge of her affairs, private and public.

For nearly a quarter of a century the life of the Duchess in England was one of stress; indeed, one might repeat of her the oft-repeated words, she "was ever a fighter," for she seemed always at variance with the reigning monarch. She owed the very rare appearance of herself and her daughter in the Court of George IV. to the kind heart of Lady Conyngham, the King's mistress, who thereby earned Victoria's affectionate regard, in spite of her position. Of this lady, by the way, who was coarse, fair, dull, and by no means fascinating, and who succeeded Lady Hertford in the King's household, some wit said that in taking her George had exchanged St. James for St. Giles.

By the time of William IV. the Duchess had become not simply a passive resister but an active agitator, and many scenes of anger took place between her and the King. Both George and William often renewed the threat of taking her child from her that the young Princess might be placed in the hands of someone more complacent to the Royal will. George would really have done this, but that the Duke of Wellington, who was his adviser, always temporised and put off the execution of the threat. When the Duchess became mother to the Queen of England, though things changed they were no better; but the details of the relationship between these two prominent people needs more than a paragraph in explanation.

Yet we have much for which to thank the Duchess

of Kent, in that she brought up her daughter in business habits, in purity of thought, and in all those virtues which make a good woman. Domestically she was a kind tyrant, necessarily an injudicious one, for tyranny is always injudicious. In following the life of the young Princess one wonders how much the mother, imposing a very restrictive rule upon the child, knew of that child's character. Obedient, dutiful, submissive, troubled openly only by occasional fits of rebellion and self-will, did Victoria in her early days ever foreshadow the revulsion against the maternal authority which seized upon her later? One would imagine not, or the Duchess would have become wiser in her treatment. As the girl grew towards womanhood, did she ever betray the growth of resistance, did she show that beneath all the quiet of the exterior lay an autocratic character which was only biding its opportunity?—and did her mother have any suspicion of what might happen between the years 1837 and 1841, which were to be the most anguished of her life, when she would be forced to realise that her too scrupulous care had brought her, not power and honour, but a determined and sustained indifference?

When this girl of eighteen was proclaimed Queen of England no one knew whether to be glad or sorry. She was said to be shy, young for her age, and entirely subservient to her mother; indeed, as a person she was practically non-existent. It was the Duchess who counted, and absurd reports had been circulated in the papers as to the *Camerilla* at Kensington Palace, which aimed at securing Ministerial power on the death

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of King William. As Victoria went to her Proclamation at St. James's Palace there was much curiosity shown, and but little cheering done on the way. In the courtyard of the Palace stood a great, observant crowd, silent until given the signal to cheer, and then its voice was led by the roar of Daniel O'Connell, the Liberator, for he considered that the chances, with a Radical faction at Kensington, were now in his favour.

As for the Ministers, they knew no more of the fair Alexandrina Victoria than anyone else, and a contemporary tells us that none of her acquaintances—friends she had scarcely any—none of her attendants at Kensington, had any idea of what lay beneath the quiet, placid exterior, or could prophesy as to what she was capable of doing. Even the Duchess of Northumberland, who had directed her studies for some years, was no better informed; for never during those years had she seen the child alone; there had always been a third person present, either the Duchess or the Baroness Lehzen. Thus while some people regretted the death of a King who, in spite of his peculiarities, was a good man and a great improvement on those who had gone before him, the universal emotion concerning his successor was neither joy nor sorrow, but that of a vivid curiosity.

Victoria was like an enchanted princess, around whom had been drawn a magic circle which rendered her invisible to all eyes. But she could see beyond its range, could watch the forces which made up the world she was about to enter, and learn more of her subjects than they had learned of her. From time to



time, while imprisoned in her circle, disturbances from outside had affected her; she had felt some things keenly and despairingly, but with an imperturbable face she had let them pass by; she had been in hot rebellion often, but no one but herself, and perhaps her half-sister, Féodore of Leiningen, knew of it; she had longed for friends and companionship, and had engrossed herself in her studies, those futile studies thought the right thing for the girls of that day. Of these hidden things she did not speak, and she did not cry over them, for in her mother's house there had been no spot in which she could shed tears unseen.

From the day of her birth to her accession she had scarcely ever been alone for ten minutes at a time! And doting biographers purr over this and say, "What an excellent mother!" Here is a quotation in slipshod style from one such: "The exemplary mother had not allowed her daughter to be scarcely ten minutes together either by night or day out of her sight, except in her infant years during her daily airing and on the very rare occasions of her Royal Highness dining away from home."

The biographers and gossipers about Victoria agree in speaking of the unremitting surveillance which was exercised over the young Princess. She was imprisoned in a close atmosphere of love and tuition, and was never free to write a letter, to see a friend, or to think her own thoughts without the presence of her mother or the Baroness. It is very probable that for a long time she was unconscious that there was anything unusual in this, but it must have grown terribly

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burdensome to her, so much so that her first request as a Queen to her mother concerned this very point. She received the oaths of allegiance the day after King William died, and when this trying and tumultuous ceremony was over she sought her mother, allowing her overwrought nerves to find relief in tears, or, in the language of the day, "she flung herself upon her mother's bosom to weep." Being soothed into calmness, she said :

"I can scarcely believe that I am Queen of England, but I suppose it is really true."

On being reassured, she continued :

"In time I shall become accustomed to my change of station ; meanwhile, since it is really so, and you see in your little daughter the Sovereign of this great country, will you grant her the first request she has had occasion in her regal capacity to put to you? I wish, my dear mamma, *to be left alone for two hours.*"

The early writer who gives this incident sees no youthful tragedy in it, but goes off into pæans of praise for the careful and diligent mother. But it is scarcely to be marvelled at that the Queen in later days wrote of "her sad and unhappy childhood." Nor can we wonder that from the day of her first regal request to her mother she availed herself of the luxury of one or two quiet hours in each twenty-four to herself in her own room, with a locked door between herself and all the world. For years she clung to this privilege, which every ordinary girl would regard as a right.

A letter written by Princess Féodore in 1843 to Queen Victoria shows how unremitting was the sur-

veillance upon and how deep was the loneliness of the girl up to the time of her accession. Victoria had written from Claremont, and her half-sister answered:—"Claremont is a dear quiet place; to me also the recollection of the few pleasant days spent during my youth. I always left Claremont with tears for Kensington Palace. When I look back upon those years, which ought to have been the happiest in my life, from fourteen to twenty, I cannot help pitying myself. Not to have enjoyed the pleasures of youth is nothing, but to have been deprived of all intercourse, and not one cheerful thought in that dismal existence of ours, was very hard. My only happy time was going out driving with you and Lehzen; then I could speak and look as I liked. I escaped some years of imprisonment, which you, my poor darling sister, had to endure, after I was married. But God Almighty has changed both our destinies most mercifully, and has made us *so* happy in our homes—which is the only real happiness in this life; and those years of trial were, I am sure, very useful to us both, though certainly not pleasant. Thank God, they are over!"

What would any mother of to-day feel if one of her children, when grown up, could write to another in this way of their childhood? It was a tragedy both for mother and children, only the mother perhaps never realised it, and she did not feel the results of it until the children had escaped her thralldom. "Poor little Victory!" as Carlyle called her, looking back upon this, it is possible to forgive her for her subsequent hardness to her mother, for she could not help

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it; the hardness had been forced upon her by example and practice in her childish days.

But to understand the life of our late Queen in its youth it is necessary to know its surroundings and background, and for this purpose an account of the Royal family which then existed seems desirable.

\* \* \* \* \*

King William IV. had, when comparatively young, married a pretty and delightful actress, who was known as Mrs. Jordan. He was a man of clean domestic life, and he persisted in regarding this lady as his lawful wife, and the children she bore to him—nine in all—as his lawful children. When Princess Charlotte died, however, he sacrificed himself—and his wife—upon the altar of expediency, and married Amelia Adelaide Louise Therese Caroline Wilhelmina of Saxe-Meiningen. She was twenty-six, plain, thin, sedate, reserved, and had been brought up in all the useless branches of “polite and useful learning,” thought the correct thing for a lady of her position. She had no leaning towards gaiety, frivolity, or dress, and hated immorality and irreligion. She was, in fact, an “excellent selection,” but she was also one of those people who are invariably described in negatives. Another woman might have had just the same appearance and thoroughly good character, and by adding to it a pleasant manner have been a favourite with everyone. But Adelaide’s manner was bad, and she was generally disliked. William, however, found a good wife in her—though there are some sly allusions to his

being hen-pecked—and little Victoria could always depend on kindly affection from Queen Adelaide.

The Duchess of Clarence gave birth to two daughters, both of whom died in infancy, and she seems to have shown no jealousy of the little girl who would take the place which should have belonged to her own child had it lived. She was also always kind to her husband's exacting and loud-mannered children, the Fitzclarences, receiving them all as constant visitors at Windsor or St. James's, and making pets of their children. Thus at one time she had Lady Augusta Kennedy and four children staying at Windsor, while Lady Sophia Sydney and three children lived there; there was also a boy of Lady Falkland's with her. These eight grandchildren of the King's would play with the King and Queen in the corridor after lunch, and as a visitor to Adelaide once remarked, "It is so pretty to hear them lisp 'dear Queeny,' 'dear King.'"

Yet the conduct of the Fitzclarences to Adelaide was abominable, and Lord Errol—the husband of the third daughter, Lady Elizabeth—who had been appointed Lord Marischal of Scotland, was heard one day speaking in such an unpardonable way of the Queen in a public coffee-house that he was interrupted by cries of "Shame!" from a gentleman present. Colonel Fox, who married Lady Mary, received the appointment of Surveyor General of the Ordnance, and was made Aide-de-Camp to the King. Of the four sons, Lord Munster held several military appointments, received an annual allowance from the Privy Purse, and was given a property by his father-in-law, Lord

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Egremont. Lord Frederick was a Colonel, and Equerry and Aide-de-Camp to his father. Lord Adolphus was a Captain in the Navy, Groom of the Robes, and Deputy-Ranger of Bushey Park; while Lord Augustus was Chaplain to the King, and held a valuable living at Mapledurham. This family was by no means popular, and was being constantly criticised by the newspapers. Said *Figaro in London*, in 1832:—"The brutal conduct of the Fitzclarences towards their poor weak old father has gained for them the name *unnatural*, instead of natural, children."

It seems to have been agreed generally that the Fitzclarences felt that the time of their harvest must be short, and that therefore it behoved them to make as much hay as possible. They badgered William for honours and promotions, and the King did what he could; he was once heard complaining to one of his admirals of this persecution, adding, "I had at last to make him a Guelphic Knight" (a Hanoverian honour). "And serve him right, your Majesty," replied the seaman, imagining that some disgrace was implied.

Once when George Fitzclarence demanded to be made a peer and to have a pension, and the King said he could not do it, all the sons struck work, or their pretence of work, thus in high life foreshadowing the doings of the workers of a later time. George actually resigned his office of Deputy-Adjutant-General, and wrote the King a furious letter. This was awkward, because so long as these gentlemen drew their money through sinecures the public was willing to accept them fairly good-temperedly, but as avowed pensioners the

outcry against them would have been overwhelming. The matter seems to have been smoothed over by the young man being made Earl of Munster.

The Duke of Sussex had also an unrecognised family of two, Augustus and Ellen D'Este, who gave the King much trouble, and in revenge for their disappointment about places and honours published the Duke's letters to their mother, which caused considerable scandal.

Of Princess Victoria's uncles those who survived at her accession were the Duke of Cumberland, the Duke of Cambridge, and the Duke of Sussex. The Duke of Cambridge was Viceroy of Hanover during William's reign, and had one son, something of a weakling in his youth.

It is necessary to refer at some length to the Duke of Cumberland, as he remained a thorn in the side of the Sovereign of England as long as he lived. He was a man of a violent temper and of a coarse, overbearing disposition, his great desire being to work his way to the Throne of England. He had hung about George IV., guarding his own interests, keeping away from his Royal brother any person whom he thought might weaken his own influence, and strengthening, as far as he could, the idea, which arose from what were considered the eccentricities of Clarence, that the latter was afflicted by periods of insanity.

Yet from contemporary sources there is evidence that King George had no love for Cumberland. Lord Ellenborough, in his "Political Diary," notes in 1829, "The King, our master, is the weakest man in England.

He hates the Duke of Cumberland. He wishes his death. He is relieved when he is away; but he is afraid of him, and crouches to him." Again, when the Catholic Emancipation Bill was being fought, Cumberland insisted upon coming back to England for it. Attempts were made to stop him, but he either missed or passed the messengers. Of this Ellenborough writes, "The King is afraid of him, and God knows what mischief he may do. However, there is no possibility of forming an anti-Catholic Government, and that the King must feel." Poor George! Thenceforth he had his Government at one ear and Cumberland at the other, drawing from the diarist the remark: "In fact, the excitement he is in may lead to insanity, and nothing but the removal of the Duke of Cumberland will restore him to peace." In his last illness George IV. refused to see his brother.

When William ascended the Throne there was little for Prince Ernest, Duke of Cumberland, to do but to make the best of it. But beyond that, however, he made various attempts to be disagreeable. Thus Lord Ellenborough mentions that the Duke of Wellington intended to go down to Windsor on the morrow, as the Duke of Cumberland meditated making a raid on the late King's papers. Cumberland was probably remembering the example of his eldest brother, who, many years earlier, when George III. was ill, took it upon himself to examine his father's private papers, and thus brought about a right royal row.

During George IV.'s reign, Cumberland had kept his horses in the Queen's disused stables, which, when



Adelaide was translated to the kingly palace, were needed for her use. So King William requested his brother to remove his horses to make room for the Queen's; to which the Duke answered politely that "he would be damned if they should go." However, on being told that unless he moved them the King's grooms had orders to turn them out the next day, he sulkily succumbed. He had, in fact, hoped to retain in the new reign all the privileges he had secured during the former, and could not take his disappointment manfully; thus he had arrogated to himself the sole dignity of Gold Stick, an honour that had always been divided among the three Colonels of the Guards; and when William restored things to their former position it entailed opposition on the part of Cumberland, who countermanded the King's orders about the Guards at his Coronation, which, of course, was followed by further humiliation for the Duke.

But Cumberland's chief exploit was his leadership of the Orange Lodges, which aimed at protecting Protestantism from all Popery. As the Duke's ambition grew, he began to see in this organisation the help it might be to him, and he taught various lessons to the emissaries who were sent over the country to form new Lodges. One of the cries towards the end of George's reign was that the members should "rally round the Throne," and then it was asserted that the Duke of Clarence was insane, and that the Duke of Wellington was aiming at the Crown. This was spoken of at first vaguely as "a wild design in embryo," and "a wild ambition" by Lieutenant-Colonel Fairburn, Cumber-

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land's accredited agent. This gentleman was afraid of naming names, and classed the Iron Duke among the "grovelling worms who dare to vie with the omnipotence of Heaven." In another letter he said :

"One moreover of whom it might ill become me to speak but in terms of reverence, has nevertheless been weak enough to ape the coarseness of a Cromwell, thus recalling the recollection to what would have been far better left in oblivion, his seizure of the diadem with his placing it upon his brow, was a precocious sort of self inauguration." This alluded to the widespread opposition to the raising of Wellington to the Peerage.

Several newspapers became infected by the Orangemen, members of whose organisation were to be found in the Army, the Church, and among the rank and file of the Members of Parliament. A daily journal in 1830 declared first that George the Fourth was not as ill as he was said to be, and was amusing himself by writing the bulletins about his health, secondly that the next in succession (the Duke of Clarence) would be incapable of reigning "for reasons which occasioned his removal from the office of Lord High Admiral," and that a military chief of most unbounded ambition would disapprove of a maritime Government, thirdly that the second heir-presumptive was "not alone a female but a minor," and that therefore a bold effort should be made to frustrate any attempt "at a vicarious form of government."

However, in spite of Cumberland's ambition, and of the public recognition of that ambition, William the Fourth came to the throne, but his brother did not for

at least twelve or thirteen years more give up all hope of reigning in England. He still fostered the Orange Lodges, and when it was seen that William would be obliged to assent to the Reform Bill, the Orange speakers sounded their audiences as to whether, if William were deposed, they would support Cumberland in an attempt to become his successor.

This scheme not coming off, the Duke went on building up his power until Joseph Hume brought the whole thing before Parliament in 1836, when the startling disclosures then made caused the suppression of the Orange Lodges. It was asserted that the Duke of Cumberland, as Grand Master of the whole association, was a dangerous man. The Lodges all regarded him as their political leader; he was called the Supreme Head of the Grand Orange Lodge of Great Britain and Ireland; it was laid down that his pleasure was law, and that the Orangemen were bound to obey his summons and do his will for whatever purpose he desired. There were 15,000 Lodges in Ireland, with a membership of 200,000 arm-bearing men; and 1,500 Lodges in England, besides some in the Colonies. Thus the Duke had the unquestioning obedience of 300,000 men—40,000 in London alone. Meetings were called in Ireland of ten, twenty, and even thirty thousand men. From all this Joseph Hume not unwisely inferred that it was time to consider whether the Duke of Cumberland was King or subject.

The whole matter made a tremendous public impression, and there were rumours that the Princess Victoria was in danger of her life from these secret enemies.

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At a public dinner in Nottingham the chairman, a Mr. Wakefield, said that the hope of the English people "was founded on the way in which the illustrious Princess was educated, which gave them every reason to believe that her attachment to this country was such that her reign—provided she lived—would be a blessing at large. The toast he would propose was—The Princess Victoria, and may the machinations against her suffer the same fate as the Orange conspiracy."

One of the newspapers of the day endeavoured to comfort her for any fears she might have had by the following lines:—

"Oh, fear not, fair lily, our country's just pride,  
The hypocrite's schemes or the traitor's foul band;  
The firm knights of Britain will range by thy side  
And proclaim thee hereafter the Queen of our land.

By virtues illustrious, the gem of our isle—  
Around thee will range in the time of alarm,  
Those friends whose attachment no fiend shall beguile,  
For the isle that has reared thee shall shield thee from  
harm."

Other papers were much more emphatic, not so much in expressing a desire to save the Princess from harm as in an attempt to accuse Cumberland of evil intentions. *The Satirist*, for instance, published a cartoon showing Cumberland smothering someone in bed, with Queen Adelaide looking on from the doorway. On the bed hangings is embroidered a crown above a large "V," and beneath the picture are the following lines:

"Can such man live to crush the nation's choice,  
Which after years of blood would now rejoice?  
Will a fond people yield their mighty throne

To that base heartless prince, whom all disown?  
 Blest day, when their loud voices shall decree  
 This land from such a monster shall be free."

Elsewhere the Duke is represented in the company of the Bishop of Salisbury, Sir Charles Wetherell, and Billy Holmes,\* among whom the following scrap of conversation passes :

" *Cum.* A brother's brat between me and the Crown !

*Bish.* Yet there are means !

*Holmes.* Poison, for instance.

*Weth.* Or a razor.

*Cum.* (*with a fiendish laugh*). Ay, a razor, if nothing better serve."

With such open condemnation as this from any paper, even though it were one which from its very name existed to draw attention to irregularities and unpopular people, there was nothing for the Duke to do but to dissociate himself from all suspicious connections. Whether he was a most horribly libelled man or whether he had been intriguing as affirmed, it is a matter of history that in March, 1836, he in the name of the Orange Lodges signified his submission to the Royal will that those Lodges should be dissolved.

Like all the Guelphs, the Duke was curiously outspoken. For instance, he would take into his confidence someone near his person and tell how he longed to be King, adding that he was much more fit to be King than his brother, who might be a good sailor, but who was kingly neither in looks nor manners.

The writer of a delightful book of gossip, published some years ago, entitled "Tales of my Father," gives

\* William Holmes, D.C.L., "the adroit and dexterous Whip of the Tory Party."

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a very definite form to this absorbing ambition. The Duke and William IV. were dining alone together at Windsor, the Queen being ill, and the suite dining in an adjoining room. The sound of loud voices reached those without, for both brothers had drunk too much; then the Duke ordered the doors to be opened and proposed "The King's Health. God save the King!" at which the suite dutifully entered and drank. Then the Duke asked permission to propose another toast.

"Name it, your Grace," answered the King.

"The King's heir, and God bless *him!*" proudly responded the Duke.

These audacious words were followed by a dead silence, the two brothers staring at each other, after which William rose, held his glass high, and cried, "The King's heir! God bless *her!*" Then throwing the glass over his shoulder, he turned to his brother and exclaimed, "My crown came with a lass, and my crown will go to a lass."

The Duke did not drink the toast, but left the room abruptly, scarcely bowing to his brother as he passed.

The verses and allusions quoted speak plainly to the extraordinary dislike which was felt for the Duke; he was suspected of horrible crimes, and though publicly pronounced innocent, was still suspected. The allusion in the verses to blood and a razor referred to an alleged attempt made upon the Duke's life in 1810 by one of his valets. In the summer of that year Cumberland was found in his apartments in St. James' Palace wounded in six different places, and the valet was found in his bed with his throat cut. The decision

upon this was that for some unknown reason the servant had attacked his master and had then gone back to his room and cut his throat in bed. The evidence was just shaky enough to leave doubt, for there were peculiar features, blood being found all about the man's room, even in the wash basin, but the judge's decision was, of course, a foregone conclusion. Popular opinion decided, however, that the Duke had met with his injuries while his man fought for his life, but naturally any hardy editor who allowed such an idea to be published received punishment.

In 1829 Cumberland's reputation suffered a worse shock in the revelations made by a certain Captain Garth, who found a box of letters hidden in the house of his putative father, General Garth. These letters threw an amazing light on his own birth, showing that he was the son of the Duke of Cumberland and of Princess Sophia. Captain Garth appointed a Mr. Westmacott, while the Duke or George IV. appointed Sir Herbert Taylor, the King's private secretary, to arrange matters, and in spite of the fact that the Duke and the Royal Family denied everything, an agreement was come to by which Garth was to receive £2,400 a year as annuity, and a sum of £8,000 down to pay his debts, on condition that he should forget the box and its contents. The matter was almost forgotten when Garth filed a bill in Chancery to prevent Westmacott from disposing of the box, because he had only received £3,000 on account and had been refused the rest. So the sordid affair was once again dragged through the columns of every paper. Sir Herbert

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Taylor explained that the failure to keep the arrangement was caused by the fact that Garth had told the secrets in the box to other people, and had kept copies of the letters. All the dailies and weeklies had their varying articles upon this, and then—publicly—the matter died out. Garth was probably squared. Whether his tale was true or false it had this justification, that General Garth was believed—according to the “Annual Register”—to have had a son by a lady of very illustrious birth, and it was further said that George III. had induced the General to accept the paternity of the boy. Earl Grey notes, however, in a letter to Princess Lieven, that “the renewed attack on the subject of Garth looks like a renewed apprehension of the effects of Cumberland’s influence on the King.”

Quite apart from this charge, Cumberland was unscrupulous in his amours, and one is constantly coming across references to this vice; thus Lord Ellenborough notes, in 1830: “The suicide of —— on account of his wife’s seduction by the Duke of Cumberland, will drive the Duke of Cumberland out of the field.”

Cumberland had one legitimate son, Prince George, who is described as a beautiful boy, tall, slim, upright, with fair hair and fresh complexion, his eyes always partly shut, for, poor lad, he was blind. He knew little of his cousin Victoria, though he often wished to know her better, but the Duchess was from the first afraid of any matrimonial entanglement with her husband’s family, and would not let the young people meet oftener than she could help.

The Duke of Sussex was very different from his



brother, being a kindly, amiable man, and the most popular of the Princes. He was a lover of books and of philosophy; but Creevy said of him that "he never says anything that makes you think him foolish, yet there is a nothingness in him which is to the last degree fatiguing." He married Lady Augusta Murray, daughter of the fourth Earl of Dunmore, in 1793, the marriage being dissolved in the following year as contrary to the Royal Marriage Act—a fact which did not trouble the Duke much until his inclination led him to break with Lady Augusta. Their son Augustus was born in 1794, and their daughter in 1801. Long before Augusta's death in 1830 the Duke of Sussex had taken as a second partner in life Lady Cecilia, daughter of the Earl of Arran, and widow of an attorney knight of the unromantic name of Buggin. It seems a pity that Lady Augusta, who was of Royal blood, should have had to give place to one owning such a name! However, Lady Cecilia took her mother's name of Underwood, and was known by it until, in 1840, the Duke went through the long-delayed form of marriage with her, and Queen Victoria created her Duchess of Inverness.

The Princess Victoria had a real affection for her uncles, King William and the Duke of Sussex, but Cumberland she always abhorred, probably not for his immorality—they were all immoral—but on account of the hatred he felt for her and her mother, and for the brutality of his nature, which made him subject to paroxysms of passion, during which everyone, even his wife, feared him.

It is curious to realise that Queen Victoria, who laid

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such stress upon the purity of her Court, and who did much to revolutionise society in this regard, was surrounded by people who openly defied the laws, written and unwritten. In later life she would not allow near her Throne a woman against whom there had been a breath of scandal, but in the early days of her reign she was surrounded by men who were smirched and dishonoured by loose living. To her, indeed, there was one law for men and another for women, and in spite of the terrible lesson she received in 1839—to be dealt with in a later chapter—she held to that attitude throughout her life.

One other person who, besides her mother, dominated the Princess's daily existence was her uncle, Prince Leopold, her mother's brother. As the husband of Princess Charlotte he drew an income of £50,000 from this country, and had been given Claremont as a dwelling. These he retained after the death of his wife in 1816, living partly in London and partly at Claremont. He led a quieter, more sedate life than did the Guelphs, was precise in his ways, prided himself highly on his fine manners, and was cordially detested by the English Princes and Peers. The fact that he did not drink angered both George IV. and William IV., while his affectation of superiority annoyed his associates, and his reputation for meanness brought him sneers from everyone.

George IV. showed him almost from the first what a gulf in manners there was between them, and did not trouble about the fact that he himself was the one that lacked them. At a *Levée* which he held in 1821 he deliberately turned his back upon his son-in-law.

The Prince did his best to carry off the matter in a dignified way; he is said not to have altered a muscle of his face, but to have approached the Duke of York, saying to him in a loud tone, "The King has thought proper to take *his* line, and I shall take *mine*." He then left the assembly.

Some hints of Leopold's character may be given in his own words—words which betray at once his pedantry and his absolute lack of humour. In a letter to the young Queen, in which he tried to explain the character of Princess Charlotte, he said: "The most difficult task I had was to change her manners; she had something too brusque and too rash in her movements, which made the Regent quite unhappy, and which sometimes was occasioned by a struggle between shyness and the necessity of exerting herself. I had, I may say so without seeming to boast, the manners of the best society of Europe, having early moved in it, and been what is called in French *de la fleur des pois*. A good judge I therefore was, but Charlotte found it rather hard to be so scrutinised, and grumbled occasionally how I could so often find fault with her."

Leopold could not understand a joke; chaffing or quizzing always raised his displeasure; and indeed he seems somewhat to have merited, by his manner alone, some of the severe criticisms lavished upon him. How much of the feeling against him was prompted by insular prejudice, how much was jealousy, and how much personal dislike, it is difficult to say, but there was probably something of all three to account for it.

As far as the Royal Dukes' feelings went, there was

some justification for jealousy. Leopold, a foreign Prince, was being allowed from the Civil List an annual £50,000, having been for only about a year the husband of the Heir-Apparent. The Royal Dukes of England were receiving only £18,000 and £24,000 each, and they were the sons and brothers of Kings of England. However, the sharp-tongued Creevy, who could not have been personally affected, spoke of him always as Humbug Leopold, and one of the Fitzclarences said in 1824 that the Duchess of Clarence was the best and most charming woman in the world, that Prince Leopold was a damned humbug, and that he (Fitzclarence) disliked the Duchess of Kent.

But whatever the popular opinion concerning him, Leopold, when his sister became a widow, was a shield between her and the world. The Duke of Kent was taken ill in Sidmouth, and two days before he died Prince Leopold went thither to do what he could for his sister. One cannot help wondering how it was that the Duke struggled on so long with the burden of worries that he had to bear. After his marriage he lived in Germany until the prospect of an heir brought him and his wife to England. His income was then little or nothing, for he had been obliged to make an assignment of his property to his creditors, to work off debts contracted partly when, as a young man, he had been allowed by his tutor, Baron Wangenheim, the princely income of thirty shillings a week as pocket-money, the remainder of £6,000 a year being used by the Baron, who was astute enough to intercept

the Prince's letters home. The Duchess of Kent had a jointure of £6,000 a year, and upon this they lived. From his youth to his death the Duke was worried by the lack of money and by creditors, through no extravagance of his own, as well as by the enmity of his brother, the Regent.

When the Duke of Kent died, Leopold was the only friend the Duchess had in England, and he went through the affairs of his late brother-in-law, finding to his consternation that there was not enough money left even to carry the family back to London, or to pay for the necessary winding up of affairs at Sidmouth. George IV. would give no help of any sort; he hated the Duchess, as he did most of his brothers' wives, and his one idea was to cause her to take her child back to Germany and relieve him and the country entirely of any obligation towards them. However, the Duchess and her brother came to the conclusion that they should resist this desire with all their strength, and to make things easier Leopold added to his sister's six thousand a year an annual amount of £3,000. For decency's sake the King had to give them a roof over their heads, and he assigned to the Duchess some rooms in Kensington Palace. I have come across fatuous biographies of Queen Victoria in which Leopold has been extolled for his liberality to his sister, as a noble brother, &c., but when the position is regarded in a detached way the absurdity and injustice of the whole arrangement is patent. The alien Leopold was drawing, as has already been said,

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£50,000 a year from the English Exchequer, having no obligations upon him of any sort, no Royal position to keep up, while his sister, the wife of the King's brother, and mother of the probable Queen of England, had less than an eighth of that amount, was allowed nothing more from the Government, and was expected to be very grateful to Leopold in that he handed over to her a little of the money that he received. Six years later a sum of six thousand was annually allowed the Duchess by the Government for the education of her daughter, and in 1831, when the Princess Victoria was needing yet more in the way of instruction, training, and social necessities, another £10,000 brought her income up to £22,000 a year, more than her poor husband had ever owned.

Until 1831 Leopold lived at Claremont, cultivated its gardens to the utmost, and provoked much criticism for the business-like way in which he sent the produce up to London. Claremont became also a country-house residence for the Duchess of Kent and her little daughter, Victoria looking back upon the comparative freedom she enjoyed there as helping to make those visits the happiest events of her early life. Then came the demand for a King for Greece, and Leopold had the chance of securing the position, George, however, remarking that if he did go to Greece he should leave his income behind him. There is no doubt that an affluent, objectless life in England had its charms, and that a man might pay too dearly for wearing the crown of a small unsettled kingdom surrounded by enemies.

So Leopold vacillated, always leaning with each swing a little nearer the crown, yet wishing to retain the money. The newspapers of the day were full of the money part of the transaction. First, would the country buy of him the land he had purchased here, valued at fifty thousand or thereabouts? would England guarantee him a loan of £1,500,000? would England give him for seven years an annual £70,000 instead of £50,000? From month to month negotiations dragged on, until at last it was announced that Leopold had got the promise of all he desired, and by that time George IV. was very ill. So the Prince, with new ideas in his mind, waited for nearly two months more before even then making his decision, raising many a laugh and many a scoffing hint in society as to his real reason. "Ingoldsby" Barham crystallised some of the sayings in his verses upon "The Mad Dog," as follows:—

“The Dog hath bitten—Oh, woe is me—  
 A Market Gardener of high degree;  
     Imperial Peas  
     No longer please,  
 An Imperial Crown he burneth to seize!  
     Early Cucumbers, Windsor Beans,  
     Cabbages, Cauliflowers, Broccoli, Greens,  
     Girkins to pickle, Apples to munch,  
     Radishes fine, five farthings a bunch,  
     Carrots red and Turnips white,  
     Parsnips yellow no more delight,  
     He spurneth Lettuces, Onions, Leeks,  
 He would be Sovereign King of the Greeks.  
     No more in a row  
     A goodly show.

His Highness's carts to market go!  
 Yet still I heard Sam Rogers hint,  
 He hath no distaste for *celery* or *mint*.  
     A different whim  
     Now seizeth him,  
 And Greece for his part may sink or swim.  
     For they cry that he  
     Would Regent be,  
 And Rule fair England from sea to sea.  
     Oh, never was mortal man so mad,—  
     Alack! alack, for the Gardener lad."

When it was certain that George IV. could not recover, Leopold declined the honour of being King of Greece, upon which Barham wrote the following verse:—

"A King for Greece!—a King for Greece!  
 Wanted a Sovereign Prince for Greece!  
     For the recreant Knight  
     Hath broken his plight,  
 Some say from policy, some from fright,  
 Some say in hope to rule for his niece,  
 He hath refused to be King over Greece."

Thomas Creevy wrote concerning this decision in one of his letters, "I suppose Mrs. Kent thinks her daughter's reign is coming on apace, and that her brother may be of use to her as *versus* Cumberland."

In 1831 Leopold became King of the Belgians, and then, attention having been so thoroughly drawn to his pension, a determined demand was made that it should cease when he left England. Matters were not settled quite so simply. Leopold retained Claremont, stipulated that his debts of £83,000 should be paid for him, and that he should return four-fifths of the annuity.



When the Duke of Kent had died crushed with debt, not so much more than this sober gentleman owed, that debt was left to hang round the necks of his widow and child. The Duke of Kent was popular, Leopold was not; yet the former was neglected and the latter was honoured. Really there seems little advantage in being popular!

When Leopold announced with some solemnity that he was called to reign over four million noble Belgians, Coleridge, referring to that country's discontented state, remarked that it would have been more appropriate if he had said that he was called to rein in four million restive asses.

## CHAPTER II

### PRINCESS VICTORIA'S MOTHER AND UNCLE

“ A country gentleman going to the theatre when William IV. was there would not believe the King was King because he was not wearing his crown ; being almost persuaded, he looked more closely and then was quite sure that William was not the King, for the Lion and the Unicorn did *not* hang down on each side of him, and he had always been taught—and implicitly believed—that the King of England had never had any other arms than these.”—*Contemporary Gossip*.

FROM what has been said of the treatment given to the Duchess of Kent it can hardly be wondered at that she turned from the whole Royal family, though she could not always resist the kindness of the Duchess of Clarence, who came to weep with her and to admire the fat, good baby. The Duke of Sussex, too, did his best to show by his visits and advice that she might rely upon his friendship, but on the whole the resentment felt by the widowed mother was so keen that she would do nothing to conciliate the people among whom she thought it wise to live. Thus until the death of William IV. in 1837 there were constant royal disputes, which increased in bitterness as Victoria neared her majority.

The Duke of Wellington sometimes took an active

part in trying to make things run smoothly for the Duchess, even against her will. For instance, he knew not only the Duke of Cumberland's sentiments about her, but he knew also that Cumberland was an ugly hater. He had married in 1815 and his wife was not received by his mother, Queen Charlotte, so the Duchess of Kent, following her lead, took no notice of the Duchess of Cumberland when she came to take up her residence in England. Upon this, the Duke of Wellington told Leopold to advise his sister to write regretting that she was unable to welcome her on her arrival, and so was prevented from calling. When the lady of Kent got the message she wanted to know why she should do this thing, and Wellington replied that he should not tell her why, that he knew what was going on better than she did, and advised her for her own sake to do as he suggested. The Duchess returned that she would give him credit for counselling her well, and did as he suggested. For this act of politeness she reaped her reward in remaining untroubled for a long time by any active show of enmity from the Duke of Cumberland.

As a matter of fact, the Duchess of Kent had her share of the Teutonic quality of self-complacence; she was a strong woman who knew her own mind and who had very definite aims in life, and she did not think it worth while to placate anyone. Either anger against the Royal Family made her continually show haughtiness to them, or she was obsessed by a sense of the very important position she held as mother of a possible Sovereign of England. A weaker person,

possessing a greater charm and tact, and imbued with less determination to secure her own rights, would have sailed serenely and almost unconsciously through troubles which the Duchess always met more than half-way, if she did not actually cause them. Perhaps had she insisted less definitely upon recognition for herself, that recognition would have been more freely accorded.

It was even more difficult for her to meet William IV. cordially than George IV. for the reason that they not only met more often, but that, while William readily recognised the child as his probable successor, George had for years refused to see her. It was not until Victoria was seven that she and her mother received an invitation to go to Windsor, and there is recorded an incident of that visit which, though amusing, is somewhat provocative of cynicism. George told this infant to choose a tune for the band to play, and she gave the diplomatic answer that she wanted them to play "God save the King." One wonders whether she had run to an astute mother for advice, whether it was her favourite tune in actual fact, or whether the unwonted delights of her visit, and the kindness of George, the hitherto unknown uncle, made her spontaneously think of the air which would best please him. Whatever the motive had been, it was a clever reply.

When William IV. became King in 1830 he desired that the Princess Victoria should attend the Court functions, and we are given a ludicrous picture of this child of eleven, dressed in a long Court train and a veil reaching to the ground, following Queen Adelaide

at a chapter of the Order of the Garter held at St. James' Palace. She was also present at the prorogation of Parliament, and attended her first Drawing Room in February, 1831, in honour of the Queen's birthday. Royalties of the time were inconsistent with regard to their birthdays. Thus on this occasion Adelaide's natal day was honoured in February, while in 1836 it was kept in August. In that latter year, too, according to the papers, the King's birthday was celebrated both in May and August! But the Duchess did not willingly allow her child to go to Court. She may have feared the influence of the coarse manners and uncontrolled tempers shown by the Princes, but this could not have been an excuse for slighting Queen Adelaide. However, there is no record from her own pen of the reason which induced her to keep Princess Victoria at home.

As soon as King George was dead, the Duchess made the first false move in her relations with William. She was too anxious for recognition, too eager to secure what she thought was due to her, and she did not give the new King the chance of showing his appreciation of her change of circumstances. She wrote to the Duke of Wellington, then Prime Minister, asking that a suitable income should be bestowed upon her and her daughter, over which allowance she should have full control, and that the Princess should be put on the footing of Heir-Apparent. It is hard to imagine a more injudicious course for her to have taken. There had just been elevated to the Throne a man who had been comparatively poor all his life, and who was

looking forward to the luxury of exercising a great power; one who had a quick temper, to which he gave uncontrolled expression. His wife had borne two children, both of whom had died, and there was still the possibility that she might give birth to more. Yet here, before he had had time to realise his position, was a woman whom he disliked dictating to him what her place should be near the Throne, and demanding that her daughter at once should be recognised as next in succession.

To the demands of the Duchess the Duke of Wellington replied that nothing could even be proposed for her until the Civil List was settled, but that nothing should be considered without her knowledge. This reply is said to have much offended the Duchess, and for a long time she ignored the gallant old man when she met him.

This incident probably left its stamp upon the future intercourse of the King and the Duchess; it certainly affected William's attitude at the Coronation in 1831; for he insisted upon being immediately followed in the procession, not by the little Victoria, but by his brothers. Everyone expected to see the child taking part in the festivities of that day, but when the morning arrived, and the most wonderful and gorgeous carriages rolled up to the Abbey, none of them held the Princess. All the world wondered where were mother and child, and then *The Times* published an article upon the matter, accusing the Duchess of staying away through pique, and commenting strongly upon the "systematic

opposition" which Her Royal Highness showed "to all the wishes and all the feelings of the present King." Some newspapers had got into the facetious habit of alluding to *The Times* as Grandmamma, but on this occasion the *Morning Post* insulted its great relative by accusing it of "grossness and scurrility," and affirming that a place had been allotted to the Princess which was derogatory to her rank; which after all was scarcely a refutation of the charge against the Duchess. When questions on this matter of absence were asked in Parliament, it was vaguely asserted that sufficient reasons had existed with which the King was perfectly satisfied. *The Globe*—among others—announced that the Princess had been kept away through illness, and this was the impression which it seemed most politic to accept. It appeared that Lord de Ros, whose sister was Maid-of-Honour to the Queen, had written the offending article in *The Times*, and it is quite likely, not only that he believed what he wrote, but that it was true, in spite of the reports that the Duchess "was in the greatest distress and vexation over the matter." For though the indisposition of the Princess was said to have "rendered her removal from the Isle of Wight to town to take part in so exciting a pageant much too hazardous to be attempted," the little lady was the centre of a crowd two or three days later when she laid the foundation stone of a new church at East Cowes. It is also quite certain that the Princess anticipated going, for in later life she often, when speaking of that time to her

children, mentioned how bitterly she cried at her mother's decision, and her disappointment when she was kept at home. "Nothing could console me, not even my dolls," she said.

Both King and country showed confidence in the Duchess when the Regency Bill was under discussion—an important Bill, for if the King died, a minor would become the Sovereign. It was decided that if Queen Adelaide bore another child she should hold the post of Regent, but otherwise, during the minority of the Princess Victoria, the Duchess of Kent should be Regent. When this Bill was framed, the Duke of Wellington, mindful of his promise, asked the King's leave to wait upon the Duchess with it. The King agreed, and the Duke wrote to Her Royal Highness saying that he had a communication to make to her on the part of His Majesty, and therefore proposed to wait upon her at Kensington Palace. The Duchess was, however, at Claremont, and from there she sent the following reply:—

"MY LORD DUKE,

I have just received your letter of this date. As it is not convenient for me to receive Your Grace at Kensington, I prefer having in writing, addressed to me here, the communication you state the King has commanded you to make to me.

"VICTORIA."

It would seem as though the Duchess not only distrusted the King's word, but had not yet forgiven the Duke for not being able to accede to her earlier request.



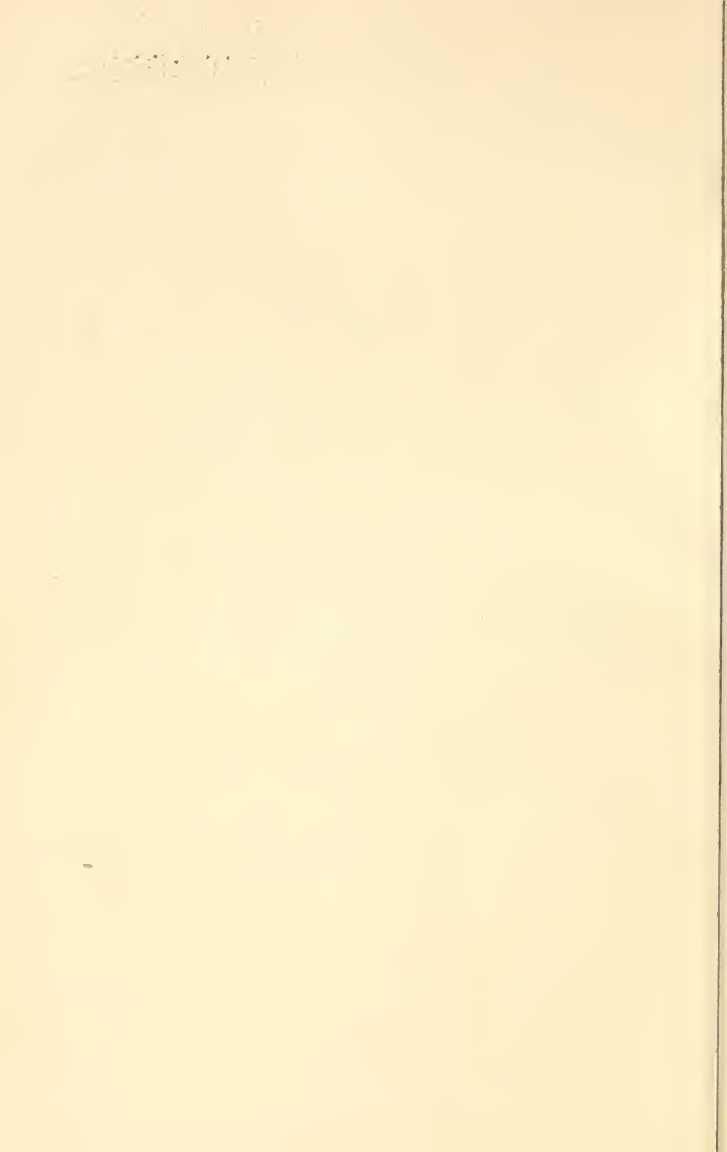


*Photo]*

QUEEN ADELAIDE.

*(Emery Walker.)*

From the Painting by Sir William Beechey, in the National  
Portrait Gallery.



Had she sent her general adviser, Sir John Conroy, to negotiate with the Duke, or had she invited the latter to Claremont, she would have kept within the limits of politeness; as it was, the only thing left for the Duke to do was to send the Bill to her to study, as he could not in writing give all the explanations he had intended. In the meanwhile Lord Lyndhurst had brought up the measure in the House of Lords, and the Duchess of Kent had sent Conroy up to hear him.

Sir John Conroy was very much in the confidence of the Duchess. He had been equerry to the Duke of Kent for ten years, and had been greatly trusted by His Royal Highness, so much so that he was appointed co-executor of the Duke's will, with General Wetherall as colleague. After his master's death Conroy became *major-domo* to the Duchess, and was consulted by her in all things. There are some indications that he fostered the desire for greater importance, and it is possible that some of the troubles that made so indelible an impression upon the mind of the Princess were due to his influence. It was a great pity, for the Duchess could quite safely have left her dignity in the hands of the King's Ministers. Such men as Wellington or Lyndhurst, or even those of the Opposition, Melbourne and Brougham, would have seen that so important a person as the mother of the heiress to the Throne received her due. She could not be sure of the King, for, when he disliked a person, were it man or woman, his manners were atrocious. But as one cynical subject once asked in reference to him, "What can you expect of a man with a head like a pine-

apple?" Greville made the further complimentary remark concerning something that the King had said, "If he were not such an ass that nobody does anything but laugh at what he says, this would be very important."

However, William was by no means always an ass. He alternately aroused laughter and admiration, and sometimes, among individuals, fierce anger. When in good health he was lively and appreciated a joke, and, unlike his predecessor, he was conscientious in seeing to business matters and keeping his engagements. Even Greville, who, in spite of his sweeping judgments, was an honest critic, not often allowing mere prejudice to warp his opinion, said of William on another occasion, "The fact is he turns out to be an incomparable King, and deserves all the encomiums lavished upon him." William horrified people at first by prying into every concern; he actually, to the stupefaction of some, reviewed the Guards, both horse and foot, and spent some energy in "blowing up" the people at the Court, actions which were regarded as symptoms of a disordered mind. Later, when suffering from illness, he did not hesitate to "blow up" his Prime Minister, or the Commander-in-Chief, or the guest at his table—and all in public! During the first year of his reign people thought and spoke of nothing but the King, how he slept in a cot, how he dismissed his brother's cooks, how he insisted upon sitting backwards when in a carriage, refusing to allow anyone to occupy the seat facing him. One day he went to inspect the Tower of London, and a contemporary writer gives this picture of the Royal party:—

“ The King is a little, old, red-nosed, weather-beaten, jolly-looking person, with an ungraceful air and carriage; and as to the Duke of Sussex, what with his stiff collar and cocked hat bobbing over his face, nothing could be seen of him but his nose. He seemed quite overcome with heat, and went along puffing and panting with the great, fat Duchess of Cumberland leaning on his arm. The Queen is even worse than I thought—a little insignificant person as ever I saw. She was dressed, as perhaps you will see by the papers, ‘exceeding plain,’ in bombazine with a little shabby muslin collar, dyed Leghorn hat, and leather shoes.”

Creevy went to the opera on a Royal night, and his impressions, related in his own peculiarly flippant way, were as follows:—“ Billy 4th at the Opera was everything one could wish: a more *Wapping* air I defy a King to have—his hair five times as full of *poudre* as mine, and his seaman’s gold lace cock-and-pinch hat was charming. He slept most of the Opera—never spoke to anyone, or took the slightest interest in the concern. . . . I was sorry not to see more of Victoria: she was in a box with the Duchess of Kent, opposite, and, of course, rather under us. When she looked over the box I saw her, and she looked a very nice little girl indeed.”

He adds a little later that when the question of proroguing Parliament by commission arose, and Lord Grey said to William that it was, of course, quite out of the question to ask him to prorogue in person, the King replied: “ My Lord, I’ll go, if I go in a hackney coach,” which showed at least the true kingly spirit,

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even if it was perturbing to his Minister. William meant it, too, and Lord Durham had to borrow the Chancellor's carriage and dash off to the Master of the Horse, whom he found at breakfast. On the demand being made that he should at once have the King's equipage sent round, the latter asked :

“What, is there a revolution?”

“No,” was the answer, “but there will be if you stop to finish that meal first.”

In 1834 Oliver Wendell Holmes was in England, and he also went to the Opera one night when the King was present. His impressions are to the full as uncomplimentary and as outspoken as those of the jovial Creevy.

“I went last night to the Royal Opera, where they were to be in state. I had to give more than two dollars for a pit ticket,\* and had hardly room to stand up, almost crowded to death. The Duchess of Kent and the Princess Victoria—a girl of fifteen—came in first on the side opposite the King's box. The audience applauded somewhat, not ferociously. . . . The Princess is a nice, fresh-looking girl, blonde, and rather pretty. The King looks like a retired butcher. The Queen is much such a person as the wife of the late William Frost, of Cambridge, an exemplary milkman, now probably immortal on a slab of slatestone as a father, a husband, and a brother. The King blew his nose twice, and wiped the royal perspiration repeatedly from a face which is probably the largest uncivilised spot in England.” The critic adds, in excuse for his

\* The pit in those days was still a fashionable part of the house, being where the stalls are now.

plain speaking, "I have a disposition to tartness and levity which tells to the disadvantage of the Royal living and advantage of the plebeian defunct, but it is accidental and must be forgiven."

But to return to the reasons for the animosity between the King and the Duchess of Kent. There was another person besides Conroy about the Duchess's household who was generally regarded as injudicious, and whose name was speedily written in the King's bad books. This was John George Lambton, created Earl of Durham in 1833, a man of whom Lord Brougham said that he had many good and some great qualities, but all were much obscured, and even perverted, by his temper, which was greatly affected by the painful liver disease from which he suffered. Creevy speaks of him, soon after the death of his first wife, as an excellent host, as full of good qualities, and possessing remarkable talents, adding that "his three little babies are his great resource." Durham once said that he thought £40,000 a year a moderate income—one which a man might just jog on with; and the phrase was never forgotten, he being called "Old Jog" or "King Jog" by some of his friends ever after.

Before his elevation to the peerage Durham had been very friendly with the Duke of Kent, for they thought alike in politics, both being Whigs. Thus from the start Durham was associated with the Kent household; and as he was arrogant and tactless, with tremendous ideas about money, he must have been one of the worst advisers that the Duchess could have secured. He seems to have been particularly active

in small matters before the commencement of William's reign, becoming Leopold's right-hand man when he thought of accepting the position of King of Greece, drawing up all his papers for him, and being "his bottle-holder ever since." Greville styles him the Duchess of Kent's "magnus Apollo." When Leopold left England, Durham became more useful still to the Duchess, and is heard of constantly in connection with the affairs at Kensington. In 1831 the Duchess hired Norris Castle, in the Isle of Wight, for the autumn, and Lord Durham is mentioned as being there as a guest; one malicious commentary upon the matter being that "Lord Durham was acting the part of Prime Minister to the Duchess of Kent and *Queen* Victoria, who were all together making their arrangements for a new reign"; and it was a general opinion that when the Princess ascended the throne Durham would be first favourite with her and her mother. On his return from an Extraordinary Embassy to St. Petersburg the King gave him an audience, which, says Greville, "must have been very agreeable to him (the King), as he hates him and the Duchess of Kent."

There are many little stories told of this man's pettishness; his second wife was the daughter of Lord Grey, and it is said that he harassed the life out of his father-in-law during the Reform agitation. Once when Lord Grey was speaking he rudely interrupted him. Grey paused, and said, "My dear Lambton, only hear what I am going to say," whereupon the other jumped up, replying, "Oh, if I am not to be



allowed to speak, I may as well go away"; so, ordering his carriage, he departed.

In a bad mood he once said evil things about Lady Jersey, accusing her of defaming his wife to the Queen, and declaring that Lady Durham should demand an audience of Her Majesty to contradict these scandals. For once he had met his peer in bad temper, for Lady Jersey, at the Drawing Room which was the cause of little Victoria's first appearance at William's Court, saw him standing at the opposite side of the room. She went close to him, and said loudly :

"Lord Durham, I hear that you have said things about me which are not true, and I desire that you will call upon me to-morrow with a witness to hear my denial."

She was in a fury, and put Lord Durham into the same state. He, turning white, muttered that he would never go into her house again, but she had flounced back to her seat, and did not hear him.

Durham naturally made an enemy of a man like Brougham, who was too extreme himself to like the same quality in another, and when Durham resigned office a popular couplet ran :

"Bore Durham fell—(ye Whigs his loss deplore)—  
Pierced by the tusks of Brougham—greater Bore."

There seems to be no record of the Duchess of Kent asking advice, consulting the King, or even telling him her plans; she marked out her own path and took it composedly, leaving the consequences to follow. She probably reasoned that the Princess was her child, and she was the recognised guardian,

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therefore she could act independently. That she brought her up well is evident, though in these days so often called degenerate, and yet so full of happiness for children, most mothers would be sorry for a babe of six years old who had to carry home on Sunday morning the text of the sermon with the heads of the discourse. I have read somewhere that the child would fix her eyes upon the clergyman's face as soon as he began his sermon, and never move them while he continued to speak, seeming to give a preternatural attention to all that he said; the reason being explained by the fact that her mother desired to test her appreciation of his address by putting that strain upon her memory and understanding. Well, many mothers did the same thing in those days, but, fortunately for the children, we have a better sense of what is fitting to-day.

When the extra allowance of £10,000 was made to the Duchess in 1831, the Duchess of Northumberland was appointed governess to Victoria, and went to Kensington each day to superintend the studies. The *Court Journal*, in commenting upon this, spoke of the Princess as the Duchess's "great charge," upon which *Figaro in London* made the remark that it was scarcely according to fact to call the child a great charge to her governess, though it might with propriety be admitted that "her little Royal Highness was a *great charge* to the country," a weak pun based upon insufficient cause, as the family income was, all things considered, by no means large.

Those who had so far helped in the Princess's education deserve a word. The person who earliest

exercised her authority was Louise Lehzen, the daughter of a Lutheran clergyman in Hanover, who had been governess to Princess Féodore, the Duchess's elder daughter by the Prince of Leiningen. In 1824, by the command of George IV., this lady transferred her attentions to Princess Victoria, and from that time until 1842 was her constant companion. The fact that she came from a small German State was sufficient to make her unpopular in England, but she won the child's confidence, and helped in teaching her the usual accomplishments of the day. That she was a governess in reality may be doubted; she talked much but knew little, and had no respect for progressive ideas in education, though she was shrewd in judgment. The Princess both loved and feared her, saying after her death in 1870: "She knew me from six months old, and from my fifth to my eighteenth years devoted all her care and energies to me with most wonderful abnegation of self, never even taking one day's holiday. I adored, though I was greatly in awe of her. She really seemed to have no thought but for me."

Among the close friends of Baroness Lehzen—she was created, by the suggestion of Princess Sophia, a Hanoverian Baroness in 1826, when Dr. Davys was appointed as tutor to the Princess—was the Baroness Späth, who had for a long time been Lady-in-Waiting to the Duchess, and might have continued to hold the post had not Sir John Conroy quarrelled with her and secured her dismissal. For this maybe he, in later years, failed to reach the honours to which he aspired, for Lehzen never forgave him, and remained

his enemy to the end. Who can say that her dislike of the Duchess's counsellor did not influence the Princess's feelings towards him? Baroness Späth perhaps annoyed the Duchess as well as Conroy by her exuberant love for the Princess. It is mentioned in a letter from Princess Féodore to the Queen: "There certainly never was such devotedness as hers to all our family, although it sometimes showed itself rather foolishly—with you it was always a sort of idolatry, when she used to go upon her knees before you when you were a child. She and poor old Louis did all they could to spoil you."

Louis had been an attendant and dresser to Princess Charlotte, and she remained until her death, in 1838, in the service of Victoria, who felt much affection for her.

Baroness Lehzen was only responsible for the child's training for three years, for when the Princess was about eight years old, as has been said, a grant of six thousand a year—in addition to the six thousand then forming the Duchess's income—was allowed "for the purpose of making an adequate provision for the honourable support and education of Her Highness Princess Alexandrina Victoria of Kent." It was really felt that the child needed to be under English tuition, and a country clergyman, the Rev. George Davys, became her tutor. No sooner had the Duchess chosen him than King William asserted that it was a bad choice, and that no one under the rank of a prelate should have been offered the work, whereupon the Duchess intimated that it would be quite easy to give

Mr. Davys a bishopric; and this was eventually done, though at first the Crown living of St. Hallows-on-the-Wall in the City was the preferment bestowed. Mr. Davys gathered various masters to teach the Princess different subjects, but from many sources it is seen that Baroness Lehzen still did much of the elementary teaching, though her labours in this respect stopped when the Duchess of Northumberland took charge. Mr. Davys's daughter, a girl a little older than the Princess, shared the tuition, and, as far as can be told, represented most of what the Princess knew of child companionship. When Victoria became Queen this early friend was made permanent Woman of the Bed-chamber.

The strained relations between the King and his sister-in-law took active form over what were known as the Duchess's progresses. On looking at the matter from this long distance of time, it is impossible not to agree with the Duchess that it was well that the child should see England, should know the different districts of the country, should visit the manufacturing towns, the seats of learning, and the beautiful hills in the north and west. The grievance lay, first and foremost, in the fact that the King would have liked to introduce his successor to his people through Court functions and constant companionship, but was debarred almost entirely from seeing her; and, secondly, that the Duchess planned all her journeys quite independently of the King, and demanded Royal honours wherever she went. Thus for some years from 1832 an annual series of visits was projected,

taking place generally in the autumn. The first of which we have any definite account was made in 1832, and shows an extraordinary activity. The Duchess and her suite went to Chatsworth, Hardwicke Hall, Chesterfield, Matlock; to the Earl of Shrewsbury's at Alton Towers, and to the Earl of Liverpool's at Shrewsbury, where they knew they would have a warm welcome, as Lady Catherine Jenkinson, Lord Liverpool's daughter, was one of the Ladies in Waiting upon the Duchess. This was followed by visits to Oakley Park, Howell Grange, and Oxford, where the degree of Doctor was conferred upon Conroy. Powis Castle, the early home of the Duchess of Northumberland, was also visited, and a house rented at Beaumaris, on the Isle of Anglesey, for a month, whence they had to flee, because of an epidemic of cholera, to Plâs Newydd, the home of the Marquis of Anglesey, on the Menai Straits, which the Marquis gladly put at their disposal.

In Wales, Victoria, a child of thirteen, presented prizes at the Eisteddfod, laid the foundation of a boys' school, and, on her way back through Chester, opened a new bridge over the Dee.

Year after year tours of this sort were carried out, the arrangements being in the hands of Sir John Conroy—"a ridiculous fellow," says Greville—who seemed to have given every opening that he could for loyal speeches, which, in the peculiar circumstances, could not avoid touching upon dangerous topics.

On the whole, the laudatory biographies of Queen Victoria have shown great injustice to William IV.

The writers of those biographies, painfully anxious to please living people, have not allowed themselves to exercise either sound criticism or sound judgment. They have made the King a vulgar, brutal monster, always ready to insult "defenceless women," and have extolled the Duchess of Kent as a miracle of propriety and wisdom. As a matter of fact, both of them, in different ways, were wanting in self-control; both were people of passionate temperament, the King hotly so, the Duchess in a more reserved but equally intractable way. At that time William still had a faint hope that his wife might bear children—a fact that is shown in the negotiations concerning the Regency, and in various little significant events. For that reason he insisted upon Princess Victoria being regarded as Heir Presumptive, which was keenly resented by the Duchess, who thought that the right title should be Heir Apparent. Thus when all the papers detailed the events of the Duchess's tours through the country, and gave in full many loyal speeches and their acknowledgments, or if they did not give them in full were particular to pick out the most striking passages, it is scarcely to be wondered at that the soul of the King was shaken with rage, for these speeches were sometimes a little too anticipatory to be pleasant to him. "The Princess who will rule over us," was a common phrase, to which the Duchess responded freely with "your future Queen," softening the expression, however, with the pious wish, "I trust at a very distant date."

These progresses, lasting sometimes for a couple of

months or even longer, gave the young Princess much information, and showed her something of England; she probably liked the novelty at first, and all through enjoyed some incidents and the kindness offered her. She is said to have displayed wonderfully precocious powers of shrewdness (a cheap bit of praise!), and to have written long letters to her governess, describing, "with an accuracy, minuteness, and spirit quite extraordinary," her impressions of the manners, customs, and peculiarities of the people in the various towns she visited. But there were times when she was bored to death. The absurd triumphal meanderings through this town and that, bowing here, bowing there, surrounded by crowds sometimes so dense that the carriage could not move, cheered, gazed at, addressed by mayors and popular speakers—all this became dull and tedious to her. A young thing who should have been playing at ball and learning French verbs had to sit for hours playing, instead, at being grown up, and when she entered a house as a guest had to retain a dignified manner, had to lead off the dance with a middle-aged host instead of romping with his young people, and for dreary weeks had to assume a mock royalty. There must have been also moments of acute pain; for a girl of that age, at least in the present day, will turn scarlet with anger if she and her qualities are discussed before her face, without perhaps quite comprehending why she feels that such a course is a dire and undignified offence, by inference depriving her of her sensibility and relegating her to the posi-



tion of the unthinking creatures who cannot understand what is said.

Yet little Victoria had to listen daily to the speeches made by her mother, in which her education, her tendencies, and the desires concerning her were fully described to the "great unwashed." Such instances as the following were of common occurrence. When, in 1833, mother and child attended the ceremony of opening the pier at Southampton, the Mayor offered a loyal address, to which the Duchess replied, among other things, that it was a great advantage to the Princess to be thus early taught the importance of being attached to works of utility, adding that it was her anxious desire to impress upon her daughter the value of everything recommended by its practical utility to all classes of the community.

On another occasion she said to the public crowd, "I cannot better allude to your good feeling towards the Princess than by joining fervently in the wish that she may set an example in her conduct of that piety towards God and charity towards men which is the only sure foundation either of individual happiness or national prosperity."

Again she would say that "it was the object of her life to render her daughter deserving of the affectionate solicitude she so universally inspired, and to make her worthy of the attachment and respect of a free and loyal people." These sentiments were quite natural and laudable, the only thing wrong about them being

that they were expressed publicly and with considerable ceremony before the child of whom they were spoken. For these responses were generally written, and when the moment came for their delivery, John Conroy, standing by the Duchess's side, would hand up her answer, "just as the Prime Minister hands the King the copy of his speech when opening Parliament." This habit was specially noticed when, in 1835, the royal pair went through the north-east of England, to York, Wentworth House, Doncaster (where they witnessed the races), Belvoir Castle, Burghley, Lynn, Holkham, and Euston Hall. At Burghley the loyal address spoke of the Princess as one "destined to mount the throne of these realms," and most splendid preparations were made by Burghley's master, the Marquis of Exeter, for the lodgment of his guests. The dinner was a great function and all went well until a clumsy or nervous servant slipped and turned the contents of an ice-pail into the Duchess's lap, "which made a great bustle." The Princess opened the ball with Lord Exeter, and then, like a good child, went off to bed.

At Holkham a crowd of people were waiting in the brilliantly illuminated Egyptian Hall while the Princess was dragged for miles in her carriage by navvies, making her two hours late. At last a carriage arrived at the Hall containing three ladies, and Mr. Coke, with a lighted candle in each hand, made a profound bow. When he resumed the perpendicular the visitors had vanished, and the host was told that he had been

making his obeisance to the dressers! Soon after this, their Royal Highnesses appeared, and the Princess won all by her pleasant courtesy.

It is more than probable that among those who were personally affected by these journeys they were popular, but on the whole they were harshly criticised, not only by those who surrounded the King, but by the diarists of that time, and among those who guided the tone of the newspapers; and these we must suppose gave voice to the general sentiment. It was an age which preferred the retirement of women, and many people were shocked at the publicity of it all. The Duchess went, they affirmed, "to fish up loyalty in the provinces, and to prepare her daughter for the business of sovereignty, which, however, in this free and high-spirited country is merely to be hooted at, cheered, gazed at, dragged in triumph and addressed by the populace." On one occasion they dined at Plymouth, the blinds up to show the illuminated room to the dense crowd which filled the area of the hotel, "a vulgar process which appears to have excited fresh enthusiasm among the herd of minions who accompanied with adulatory yelps the course of the visitors."

Apart from the spiteful tone of all this, the charge was true; but the Duchess was right. She was following a certain system of education; she was bringing up a Queen, teaching her the social duties of her station and training her in those habits of self-control and *savoir faire* which made Victoria astonish England

at her accession by her coolness and dignity. Without her mother's training the Princess would have been far more like the Georges in outward manners than she was; with it she became perhaps too conscious of what was due from others to herself, too ready to be offended if all did not bow to the wishes of "the Crown"; but the gain was the country's, and the country has largely to thank the Duchess of Kent for a revolution in the character and moral position of the English Sovereign.

It was during the second visit to Norris Castle, in the Isle of Wight, in 1833, that another quarrel took place between the King and his sister-in-law. At Osborne Lodge—the site of the later Osborne Cottage built by Victoria—Sir John Conroy had his residence, where he entertained the two Princesses. They also went to East Cowes, to Whippingham, and crossed over at different times to Portsmouth, to Weymouth, and to Plymouth. They inspected the dockyards, made a cruise to Eddystone Lighthouse, went to Torquay, Exeter and Swanage; the Princess presented new colours to the Royal Irish Fusiliers stationed at Devonport, during which ceremony the Duchess told the troops that "her daughter's study of English history had inspired her with martial ardour." Day after day they were crossing and recrossing the Sound, and every time they appeared salutes were fired. It is true that William could not hear the guns at Windsor or at St. James's, but the knowledge of the daily, and more than daily, recurrence annoyed him. To be saluted on

arrival and on departure was one thing, but to have a "continual popping" going on was quite another. So William called a Council, and dignified statesmen had to go to Court to discuss the matter. Greville's account runs as follows:—

"The King has been (not unnaturally) disgusted at the Duchess of Kent's progresses with her daughter through the kingdom, and amongst the rest with her sailings at the Isle of Wight, and the continual popping in the shape of salutes to Her Royal Highness. He did not choose that the latter practice should go on, and he signified his pleasure to Sir James Graham and Lord Hill, for salutes are matters of general order, both to Army and Navy."

It was thought better to make no order on the subject, but that the two gentlemen, with Lord Grey, should open a negotiation with the Duchess, and ask her of her own accord to waive the salutes, and should send word when returning to the Isle of Wight that, as she was sailing about for her amusement, she preferred that she should not be saluted whenever she appeared. However, the Duchess was too childishly fond of the importance of the noise to be a party to its discontinuance, and took council of Conroy, who is reported to have replied, "that, as Her Royal Highness's *confidential adviser*, he could not recommend her to give way on this point." The King would not give way either, so by an Order in Council the regulations were altered under the King's directions, and the Royal

Standard was for the future only to be saluted when the King or Queen was on board.

It was a stupid wrangle on a silly subject, but even in so small a matter as this, in the modern desire to justify everything that the mother of Victoria did, writers of royal "Lives" always affirm that the King was bad-tempered enough to object to the salute being offered to the Duchess on her arrival at the commencement of her holiday.

That the Duchess should resent such happenings as this was natural, but it was rather sad that she included her old friend Queen Adelaide in her resentful feelings.

In contemporary writings I find many comments upon the change of manner which she gradually showed towards Adelaide after the former had become Queen. Before that the two ladies had been good friends, but there seems to have arisen such a jealousy on the part of the Duchess that she began to treat the Queen with studied rudeness, and to make absurd demands as to her own treatment. Thus, if she were under the obligation of calling upon the Queen, she would name her own hour, and, if that did not suit Adelaide, would make that an excuse for considering the call paid. In earlier and more friendly times, if one of these ladies went to see the other, she would feel at liberty to go from room to room until she found her. By 1833, however, though the Duchess still followed this custom at the Palace, she would not allow it to the Queen at Kensington, but gave

orders that she must await her in this or that room.

In that same year the Duchess had two nephews on a visit at the time when Donna Maria da Gloria of Portugal was staying with the King. The Queen gave a ball for the young people, and between the dances was quite glad to see that little Victoria seemed to care for her as much as ever and constantly came to sit by her side. During the evening Adelaide, wishing to know something of the two young German princelings, asked the Duchess to have them brought to her that she might have a talk with them. But for some hidden reason the Duchess refused, and added to the snub by taking her whole party away long before the ball was over, saying that the Princes had been to a review and were tired. Lady Bedingfield, who tells this story, adds: "Note that they are six feet high and stout for their age!" It is difficult to think that anything but ill-humour was responsible for this, that or the idea that she must show her importance by leaving early, for the Duchess would sometimes keep her daughter at the Opera until a very late hour.

However, gentle-minded Adelaide passed this by and invited the young men down to Windsor, upon which the Duchess wrote one of her characteristic notes, saying that she could not come with them and could not spare them, and as they had paid their respects to the King at the Drawing Room, she did not think the visit to Windsor necessary. There was some discussion between the royal pair as to how this letter should be

answered, and the King preferred that a bare acknowledgment should be made. Adelaide had the curiosity to look in the paper to see what these boys were so busy about on the day she had hoped to have them with her, and found that they had spent it at the Zoological Gardens!



## CHAPTER III

### PRINCESS VICTORIA'S TUITION IN POLITICS

“Confound their politics.”—*National Anthem.*

QUEEN ADELAIDE, being in a high place, had many detractors, though she was certainly a kind and gentle woman. Her two faults in the eyes of the English people were that she was drawn from a poor German family, and that she exercised, or was said, perhaps erroneously, to exercise a strong political influence in great matters over the King. It was the time of the fight over the Reform Bill, when the whole country was in a ferment, and everyone, down to the children, took sides, whether they understood the question or not. When it became known that the Queen was opposed to the passage of the Bill, the papers published skits and cartoons against her, accusing her of plotting against the people and even against the Crown, so that the populace did not hesitate to show its animus. Thus on one occasion when an election was exciting the passions of all, the King arranged to pay a State visit to the City, and the Lord Mayor, somewhat foolishly, illuminated the streets the day before. The glare and light seem to have been the one thing too

much for the inflamed minds of the mob, which showed its joy by breaking windows and creating a general uproar. The Queen had, unfortunately, gone that evening to a concert without guards, and as she was returning she was recognised, her carriage being surrounded by a roaring crowd, some of whom tried to thrust their heads into the windows. The footmen used their canes freely to beat them off, and the coachman managed to reach the Palace safely; but the poor lady was much alarmed and thought herself in danger of her life. The King, worried at her late return, paced from room to room waiting her, and when at last she arrived he caught hold of Lord Howe, her Chamberlain, who preceded her, asking in agitated voice :

“How is the Queen?”

Howe, being an eager anti-reformer, replied that she was much frightened and proceeded to make the very worst of the occurrence, with the result that the King, in a fury, determined to cancel his proposed visit to the City, much to the chagrin of his Ministers.

As for William himself, he blew hot and cold over the Bill, as everyone knows, and it became a duel between Lord Grey and Queen Adelaide, so it was said, as to which should gain the greatest power over the King, and William began to get the reputation of being a henpecked husband. At one point Grey desired to go to the country that he might prove that the Lords were the impediment in the way of the Bill, and the King consented to a dissolution, actually taking leave of his Minister. The next day, however, actuated by some hidden motive, he absolutely and



WILLIAM IV.

1871  
1872

flatly refused to countenance the change, thus forcing Lord Grey to persevere in what seemed a hopeless attempt to get the Bill passed through the House of Lords. The Whig press was furious, and published such outspoken opinions as the following :—

“ Hail, thou conundrum of our age,  
 Britannia's great first fiddle,  
 By turns a fool, by turns a sage,  
 A puzzling royal riddle.

By turns you make us weep or smile,  
 Your country's curse or glory,  
 The Billy Black of Britain's Isle,  
 By turns a Whig or Tory.”

While the Bill was pressing its turbulent passage through the Commons, and during the subsequent troubles, the idea took stronger hold upon the people that the Queen was the motive of the King's continued vacillations. They went further still, and said that she was influenced by Lord Howe, who was believed to entertain a romantic attachment for her. Indeed, letters of hers are in existence more or less proving that there was truth in the idea of the influence. Her desire was to dismiss the Whigs and form a Tory Government, and in one letter to Lord Howe she notes that “ the King's eyes are open, and he sees the great difficulties in which he is placed, that he really sees everything in the right light,” adding that he thought the Tories not strong enough to form an administration.

Lord Howe voted against the measure, and Lord Grey, seeing how the Government was being defeated

by members of the Royal household, forced the King to dismiss him. This the Queen regarded as an outrage. She refused to allow another chamberlain to be appointed, and Howe attended the Queen as assiduously as ever, the two working unceasingly against the Government. This led to something like popular hatred of Adelaide, and to the universal spread of the horrid reports which were being circulated about her and her late Chamberlain, proofs of which animosity were forthcoming every time she appeared in public. The *Court Journal* deplored the fact that when she drove out the Queen experienced almost daily insult from the populace, being hissed as she passed. Raikes tells us that he saw the King and Queen at the Duke of Wellington's *fête* at Apsley House, that His Majesty looked tired, and Queen Adelaide was out of spirits. "She had attended a review in Hyde Park in the morning, when the sovereign mob thought proper to greet her with much incivility and rudeness." The King himself by no means escaped the hostility of the people, for he no sooner showed himself on the stand at Ascot than a stone hit him full in the forehead. Fortunately it did him no serious injury, and the ruffian who threw it was found to be half-witted.

Socially the affair with Lord Howe assumed serious proportions. The Queen was so angry at his dismissal that, to placate her, it was suggested that he should be reinstated, a condition being made that, though he should not be asked to vote against his conscience, he should undertake not to vote against the Bill. This

condition he indignantly refused, and the Queen was not conciliated.

Greville, who much disliked Queen Adelaide, notes of the Court held at Brighton at Christmas, 1832 :—  
 “The Court is very active, vulgar, and hospitable. King, Queen, Princes, Princesses, bastards, and attendants constantly trotting about in every direction. . . . Lord Howe is devoted to the Queen, and is never away from her. She receives his attentions, but demonstrates nothing in return; he is like a boy in love with this frightful spotted Majesty, while his delightful wife is laid up with a sprained ankle and dislocated joint on the sofa.” Indeed, everyone looked upon him as an ardent lover, and noted that he was dining every day at the Pavilion, riding with the Queen, and never quitting her side, keeping his eyes always fixed on her face. Adelaide herself was very careful; she was surrounded by the Fitzclarences, who would have been delighted to prove her in the wrong, and even they could not find fault with her attitude to her quasi-Chamberlain.

Lady Howe, when again able to go to Court, was vexed to death about it, and induced Greville to warn her husband of the scandalous stories afloat. Greville did this, but it only annoyed Lord Howe, who, however, by his manner convinced that worldly man that there was nothing in the matter but folly and the vanity of being confidential adviser to the Queen. As a result of this conversation, Howe suggested to Her Majesty that she should appoint a new Chamberlain, and that he should wait upon the King to inform him

of the fact. This, however, the Queen absolutely forbade, and Howe stayed on, with the result that a year or two later Queen Adelaide's name was in every mouth in a very discreditable way.

Greville was horribly prejudiced against the Queen, and very much taken with Lady Howe, but the latter seems to have been a curiously irresponsible person. Once, when she and her husband were driving with the Queen, she, being tired, coolly put her feet up on to her husband's knee, and then rested them on the window-ledge, saying innocently to his distressed lordship, "What do you mean by shaking your head?"

On another occasion the Howes were assisting Adelaide to ticket things for a bazaar, and Lady Howe fell in love with some shoes; so, fitting one on, she put her foot on the table to show how well it set. Can anyone imagine a woman behaving like that before Queen Victoria? The autocratic manners of the Duchess of Kent are but a tale to us now, but her training of her daughter in modesty and decorous ways was a reality of which we still feel the benefit.

Queen Adelaide was the most confiding and rash of women; her theory of life was so simple that when one of her ladies tried to suggest caution to her in relation to Lord Howe, saying that the newspapers had been very ill-natured about her friendship for him, she replied that she knew that, but truth would always find its way. It did in her case, but she had personally to run the gauntlet of scandal. Lady Bedingfield remarked of her, "The Queen is so good and virtuous



that she has no idea people could fancy that she likes him (Howe) too much."

In 1834 the Queen went on an extended tour to her home in Saxe-Meiningen, taking with her presents of no less than eleven carriages and many other things, much to the anger of the people, who were then in a starving condition. On her return in September she was ill, being quite knocked up with the festivities in Germany, and a report was started—being first whispered at the Lord Mayor's banquet—that the Queen was with child. This was confirmed by her ladies, and in February the medical men, though still uncertain, leaned to the decision that such was the case. *The Court Journal* went so far as to announce that her Majesty was said to have derived peculiar benefit from drinking at a spring in Germany known as Child's Well; so the papers all debated the facts, and the Royal hangers-on were in a state of great commotion.

Lord Howe's name was on everyone's lips, and the less dignified papers did not hesitate openly to hint what society people were whispering. Alvanley, the wit of the time, suggested that the psalm, "Lord, *how* wonderful are Thy works," should be generally sung, and cartoons and ribald verses appeared everywhere. One of the latter ran:

"How(e) wondrous are thy works, my lord,  
 How(e) glorious are thy ways!  
 How(e) shall we sing thy song, my lord?  
 How(e) celebrate thy praise?"

Another such rhyme tells us how

“ Poor little Vicky, in a fright  
Disjointed feels her royal nose.”

and goes on to explain that

“ Her Grace, the Duchess-Mother pouts,  
And General Conroy’s in the dumps,  
He dreams no more of Ins-and-Outs,  
His suit is now no longer trumps.

The little Princes in a flutter,  
Throw all their whips and tops away,  
And quarrel with their bread and butter,  
And mope and sulk the live-long day.

The whiskered Ernest rubs his eyes,  
Poor Georgie Cumberland loudly groans,  
While little Cambridge yells and cries,  
That such new cousins he disowns.

However many people may have believed it to be true that Adelaide expected another child, there were not many about the Court who could have credited the scandalous part of the story. As Greville said, “Of course, there will be plenty of scandal. It so happens, however, that Howe had not been with the Court for a considerable time.” In May, newspapers that had given many inches to spreading the belief, announced in two lines that the report that an heir was expected to the Throne was untrue, and so vanished the last of William’s hopes that he might be succeeded in the direct line.

I think it was Lady Cardigan who said that Lord Howe had named his three daughters after three of his former loves, Lady *Georgina* Fane, Queen *Adelaide*, and *Emily* Bagot.

When William IV. first came to the throne he was imbued with a determination to rule justly and irrespective of party, but he was in the midst of Tory influence while the Government was Whig. His Ministers became exhausted by the long effort they had to make to keep him consistent on the question of Reform, and the passing of the Bill may be said to have begun his outwardly expressed leaning towards Toryism. This increased as time went on, and in 1834 one of the most remarkable political events took place.

The leadership of the House of Commons was vacant owing to the death of Earl Spencer, by which his son, Lord Althorp, took his seat in the higher chamber. The Whigs were in a majority of a third of the House, but were obliged to fight the Lords for the passage of their Bills. Lord Melbourne went to consult the King as to the new leader, and William, with vague grumblings and irritable manner, seemed to agree with Melbourne's plans; however, in the morning before he left Windsor a letter was handed to the Minister from the King dismissing the Government. This letter was anything but dignified, as it indulged in personal reflections upon Lord John Russell and Mr. Spring-Rice.

“ But conceive our poor friend's desperation  
 When, in answer to this application,  
     Turning coolly about,  
     Said the Sovereign, ' You're out !  
 And I'll form a new Administration.' ”

Melbourne spent the day in inducing his Monarch

to alter his letter so that it should cause no more heart-burnings than could be avoided, and he talked the matter over with Palmerston that night. Lord Brougham came in late, and, under a promise not to divulge until the next day what had happened, he also heard the story. Brougham kept his promise in a way, for he waited until after midnight and then communicated the whole matter to the *Times*. So the next morning the keepers of this grave secret found a flourishing announcement in the leading Tory paper. "The King has taken the opportunity of Lord Spencer's death to turn out the Ministry, and there is every reason to believe that the Duke of Wellington has been sent for. The Queen has done it all."

This caused a series of convulsions in every stratum of society. The King accused Melbourne of having published a matter which should have been kept secret until correctly announced at the correct moment; the Government blamed Melbourne all round. Everyone believed that the whole thing had been preconcerted, but of them all the consequences fell heaviest upon Queen Adelaide. The sentence, "The Queen has done it all," was placarded all over London, and the people believed that now there was no doubt but that they had a real grievance against the Queen, and they hated her bitterly. Yet it is fairly certain that the Queen was as astonished as everyone else; no one but the King knew what the King had planned, and it is probable that he did not know until he suddenly made up his mind after seeing Melbourne that evening. He appointed the Duke of Wellington First Lord of the

Treasury and Secretary of State, and he had to send someone off in a hurry to Italy to find Sir Robert Peel; but the new Government only lived until April of the following year, when it was defeated, and Melbourne came back to office.

William took this as well as he could, but he grew to hate the Whigs. There were times when he would neither see nor speak to one of them, when he treated his Ministers with open insult. Over and over again in the last two years of his reign one reads of the way in which he refused to acknowledge them. At the Queen's birthday dinner-party in 1836 not one of the Ministry nor a Whig of any sort was invited; and at his own birthday party no one at all connected with the Government, except the members in his household, was asked to be present. He was evidently resolved that, if he had to see them in London, the gates of Windsor should be closed to them. On the other hand, he chose his guests deliberately from the Tories, the men he liked best being Lord Winchilsea and Lord Wharncliffe, both holding violent views, and the Duke of Dorset, who was an extreme Tory. It was said that for the Tories stood the King, the House of Lords, the Church, the Bar and all the law, a large minority in the House of Commons, the agricultural interest, and the monied interest generally; while for the Whigs stood a small majority in the Commons, the manufacturing towns, and a portion of the rabble. Of course, those who triumphantly asserted this blinked the fact that the majority of the whole country stood for the Whigs, as the Tories could not, with all their

interest, form a Government which would be acceptable.

Greville notes in 1836: "To-day we had a Council, when His Most Gracious Majesty behaved most ungraciously to his confidential servants, whom he certainly does not delight to honour."

Sometimes the King made a very special effort to hurt his Ministers. Lord Aylmer had been recalled from Canada by the Whig Government for some irregularities, and he was introduced at the reception of the Bath in 1837. As he approached the throne William called up Palmerston, Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and Lord Minto, First Lord of the Admiralty, making them stand one on either side of Aylmer, that they might hear every word that was said. He then announced that he wished to take that, the most public opportunity, of telling him that he approved most entirely of his conduct in Canada, that he had acted like a true and loyal subject towards a set of traitors and conspirators, and behaved as it became a British officer to do in such circumstances. In fact, he mortified his Ministers as much as he could, and gratified Aylmer to the same extent.

It is not to be supposed that the Ministers liked to be treated with such rudeness, nor to be ignored, but they took it quietly, made no public grumble, went on with their work, and left such insults to be forgotten; only the King's attitude made this difference, they began to look upon themselves as Ministers to the House of Commons rather than to the Crown, which tended to lessen the kingly power. A little later,

when Victoria sat on the throne, and, being a Whig, paid honour to her Ministers, but showed dislike to the Opposition and indifference to the nobles of Tory tendencies, the outcry was loud and deep. Her inexperience, her sex, her age, were blamed as the reasons; open disloyalty was shown her, and sometimes marked rudeness. Yet she was but following the ways of her predecessor in somewhat milder fashion. She was one of a family which never hid its preferences, and she had learned the lesson—bad as it was—at the Royal board of a man whom she loved.

Victoria had been bred a Whig. Her father and mother were Whigs, and all her mother's counsellors and friends held the same views; Lord Durham went further even, being regarded as the leader of the Radicals. Lord Ashley once gave it as his opinion that from her earliest years the Princess had been taught to regard the Tories as her personal enemies. "I am told that the language at Kensington was calculated to inspire her with fear and hatred of them."

Through the years of King William's reign, when he, poor man, was in a constant state of ebullition with his Ministers, his people, or members of his family, the Princess Victoria changed from a child to a woman. She listened quietly, as children did listen in those days, to the politics talked in her mother's circle, and became imbued with very strong views; she visited, and played at Royalty like a well-made automaton; she studied music, French, English, singing, and dancing under various tutors, and thought a great deal

about the time when she would be England's Sovereign.

Leopold, who, it is said, was soon deadly sick of his Belgian crown and wishful to abdicate, thinking it better to be an English Prince with fifty thousand a year and uncle to the Queen, than to be monarch of a troublesome little kingdom which all its neighbours regarded with an evil or a covetous eye, still kept Claremont in good order, having given the mastership of the house over to Sir John Conroy. And there Victoria was taken when she seemed to flag. She loved the place, for were not the happiest moments of her girlish life spent there? It was there that she met her grandmother, the Dowager Duchess of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, who, on seeing her, made the first suggestion that she might do worse than marry into the Saxe-Coburg family, and she had definitely in her mind her grandson Albert. The gardens at Claremont were well cultivated, and all that the Duchess of Kent did not use was sent to Leopold, a thing which caused many a joke at his expense.

The Duchess of Kent and her daughter stayed quietly sometimes at Margate, sometimes at Tunbridge Wells, but their real home was at Kensington. There the Princess's life was a quiet one; she saw little, too little, of the Court, and still went to bed at nine o'clock. Occasionally the Duchess gave dinner-parties at which Victoria appeared before and after the meal. Thus, in 1833, Her Royal Highness did her best to mollify the King's resentment against her by giving a



large party in his honour; and Croker writes of dining with the Duchess "with a large Conservative party—four Dukes and three Duchesses, and the rest of thirty people in proportion. I was the only untitled and almost the only undecorated guest. The little Princess ceases to be little. She grows tall, is very good-looking, but not, I think, strong; yet she may live to be plain Mrs. Guelph." A suggestion which, as we have seen, appeared nearing fulfilment some time later.

Two of Victoria's first cousins came over that year, Princes Alexander and Ernest of Wurtemberg, and even at that date the matchmakers wondered whether there was not some ulterior motive for their coming. As on an earlier occasion, King William gave a juvenile ball at St. James's Palace. But in spite of the gossip the young men came and went, leaving no tit-bit of news for the talkers to discuss. This marriage of the Princess had occupied some minds almost from the day of her birth; and when she was but nine years old it was said that she must marry either the son of the Duke of Cumberland or the son of the Duke of Cambridge, a proceeding which would have been entirely gratifying to the father of whichever boy was chosen.

One of the Princess's favourite amusements was studying music, and she must have found it much more entertaining than the pretensions of boy lovers; indeed, she liked it so much that in 1834 Mrs. Brookfield said that her teachers had been obliged to keep her music

under the smotherings of less delightful studies, or it would have run away with her; adding that "the Duchess of Northumberland has no sinecure of her governorship, but really fags with her pupil."<sup>1</sup>

Princess Victoria loved the Italian opera, went often to the theatre, and for her soul's health she was given every possible opportunity of listening to sacred oratorios, with the result that Handel was anathema to her in later life. Indeed, music occupied so much time and interest that the papers announced the appointment of Mr. George Herbert Rodwell—Director of Music at Covent Garden—as composer to the Duchess of Kent and Princess Victoria. This led to many satirical comments, in which it was suggested that they went through their daily life to an accompaniment of suitable music. A humorous journal gave the following scene as taking place in Victoria's boudoir :

"A tooth-brush, O.P., upper entrance, looking-glass in flat, toilet-table, P.S., tooth-powder in centre, rouge in the background, pincushions in the distance, combs, hair-brushes, &c., in confusion. A chord—enter the Princess through door in flat. Slow music, during which the Princess opens the top of a chest of drawers, and takes out a frill, which she puts on, and exit through door opposite. Slow music, and enter the Duchess—she advances towards the toilet-table with a start. Hurried music by Rodwell, composer to Her Royal Highness; she sits down. A chord—opens window. Air and chorus of housemaids without. She sits down. Crash—advances towards the rouge-pot.

<sup>1</sup> "Mrs. Brookfield and her Circle."

Slow music—she takes it away. Crash—by Rodwell, and exit to hurried music.”

The writer adds to this that the curious in these matters will be enabled to see through the moral of the delightful sketch, which shows the anxiety of the Duchess to prevent the amiable little Princess from applying rouge to her infantile cheeks, “a practice we cannot sufficiently reprobate. The music is admirably adapted to the situations by Rodwell, whose appointment as composer to the royal duo we shall in future be able to appreciate.”

The two Princesses were, in fact, constantly going to concerts, and William Henry Brookfield poked fun at them in a letter written to his friend Venables—he who had broken Thackeray's nose in a fight in their schoolboy days. A three days' musical festival was arranged at Westminster, and he thus describes one afternoon:—“We went to town for the fiddling, which it was the pill<sup>1</sup> of the day to cry down. I was much gratified by the show and altogether. I sate by the Duke of Wellington, who was good enough to go out and fetch me a pot of porter. When ‘See the Conquering Hero Comes’ was sung in ‘Judas Maccabeus,’ all eyes were turned upon me. I rose and bowed—but did not think the place was suited for any more marked acknowledgment. The King sang the Coronation Anthem exceedingly well, and Princess Victoria whistled ‘The Dead March in Saul’ with rather more than her usual effect. But the *chef d'œuvre* was con-

<sup>1</sup> A slang term, probably meaning to talk pompously or trivially.

fessed by all to be Macaulay in 'The praise of God and of the second Day.' I rose a wiser and, I think, a sadder man."

It was probably at this festival that young Lord Elphinstone first frightened the Royal mother by writing the following acrostic upon the Princess's name :—

" Propitious Heaven ! who, midst this beauteous blaze,  
Rapt in the grandeur of the Minstrel scene,  
Is that young Innocent, on whom all gaze?  
Nor conscious they the while of choral strain;  
Could I command a Guido's magic power,  
Enthusiast grown, I'd catch thy vivid glow—  
Serene, unsullied child of sun and shower!  
Still on the parent stem allowed to blow.

Vain, worse than vain, the Bard who'd boldly try,  
In his most brilliant page or loftiest lay,  
Choice how he may be, to depict the eye,  
The lovely eye, of that sweet smiling fay!  
Oh, 'tis the Maid, who wakes to plaudits loud,  
Rich in the treasure of an angel face,  
In every gift that makes a nation proud—  
A mother's joy—an honoured Monarch's grace."

Elphinstone did not dream that with these lines he was putting the first nail in the coffin of his hopes of a career at Court or in England.

In 1835 the Princess came more to the front, and probably this was caused by the fact that she suffered early in the year from a serious attack of typhoid, striking many people with consternation, and making King William, who was feeling his age, yet more keenly desirous of securing her company. So in June

she went to Ascot in the same carriage with the King and Queen. It is amusing to note that, in spite of the simplicity of dress for which she is supposed to have been so conspicuous, and for which everyone has so much praised the Duchess of Kent, the Princess wore on this occasion a large pink bonnet, a rose-coloured satin dress *broché*, and a pélerine cape trimmed with black. The description, at least, is a little painful. But N. P. Willis, the American literary man, speaks of her that day as being quite unnecessarily pretty and interesting, and deplores the probability that the heir to the English Crown would be sold in marriage for political purposes without regard to her personal character and wishes.

One writer described the Duchess of Kent on the same occasion in the sentimental and fulsome way so much beloved by women writers about Royalty. "Her brow seemed as if it would well become an imperial diadem; such lofty and commanding intellect was there, united with feminine softness and matronly grace. She looked fit to be the mother of the Queen. The expression of maternal pride and delight with which on this occasion she surveyed her child at every fresh burst of the people's affection is not to be forgotten by those who witnessed it."

In August, Victoria was confirmed by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London at the Chapel Royal, St. James's. There is much that is solemn at a confirmation, there should be much that is joyous and brave as well; the girl should feel her

responsibility, she also ought to be glad at becoming really a member of God's Church, and in outward show, at least, a Child of God. But at this confirmation the Archbishop made so solemn, so pathetic, so "parental" an exhortation that the whole company wept. The Duchess of Kent sobbed audibly, the Queen and her ladies also wept aloud, tears ran down the King's rubicund face, and the poor little Princess was not only drowned in tears, but frightened to death. The whole tone of the affair seems to have suited the spirit of the age, for one lady who was present described it afterwards as a "beautifully touching scene."

Through this part of the year there seems to have been something like peace between William and his sister-in-law, though at his birthday party there was thrown across the dinner-table a shadow of the storm which later was to descend upon "the duo" from Kensington. William never neglected the opportunity of making a speech; if he had anything to say he said it, whether the moment was propitious or otherwise; if he had nothing to say, he still got on to his feet and talked, probably without any relevance to what was going on, and his matter was often personal. After one dinner he talked disconnectedly about the Turf and his wife, saying that the Queen was an excellent woman as everyone knew. At this birthday party, in 1835, William said, among other things:—

"I cannot expect to live very long, but I hope that my successor may be of full age when she mounts the throne. I have a great respect for the person upon

whom, in the event of my death, the Regency would devolve, but I have great distrust of the persons by whom she is surrounded. I know that everything which falls from my lips is reported again, and I say this thus candidly and publicly because it is my desire and intention that these my sentiments should be made known."

It could hardly be pleasant for the Duchess to be thus criticised before a great party of her friends, but a year later criticism was not the right word by which to describe the King's tirade against the Duchess. All those around His Majesty knew that he could not live very long; not that his health was really bad, but his temper was vacillating, he was at times so uncontrolled, so childish, and so changeable that men of the world listened to his harangues unmoved. He would deliberately insult one of his "confidential advisers," and the injured one would command his face as well as he could, bow, and let it pass. It was not possible to make a serious matter of such an incident, for to do that would have meant introducing new Ministers every week at least. Those about him felt that the business of the country could only be carried on by ignoring his humours, and that they were more or less marking time until William's successor sat on the throne. In fact, the future alone was considered by all. The King prayed to live until Victoria's majority; the Duchess dreamed of a Regency, a throne, and a husband for her daughter; and the Princess—who knows what she thought? She contented herself with in-

specting the young men who came to be inspected while she waited.

One of the few children who made an impression upon the life of the young Princess was Donna Maria, the young Queen of Portugal, who was just a month older than herself. She came to England in 1829, and was entertained by George IV., who, among other festivities, gave a children's ball, being urged thereto by one of the Court ladies, who pushed the idea by saying to him with a naïve stupidity, "Oh, do; it would be so nice to see the two little Queens dancing together."

In 1833 Donna Maria went to France, where she was received with great want of hospitality by Louis Philippe. William did not want her in England, but the French King's action spurred him to extend a warm hospitality to her here, and thus she renewed a childish friendship with Princess Victoria, in so far as the Duchess of Kent would allow it.

In 1835 this girl of sixteen married the Duke of Leuchtenberg, who, poor fellow, only went to Lisbon to be poisoned by its foulness and to die of throat disease in a month. By the autumn of the same year, seeing that there was no chance of a successor to the throne appearing, the callous counsellors determined that their young Queen must marry again, and were in such a hurry that the two weddings took place within twelve months. The second bridegroom chosen was Prince Ferdinand, the elder son of Prince Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg. *En route* for his difficult



position in Portugal, this young man, who was exceedingly handsome, came on a visit to England with his father and his younger brother Augustus; and the mention of his name leads to the subject of the Princess Victoria's suitors.

## CHAPTER IV

### PRINCESS VICTORIA'S SUITORS

“What warmth is there in your affection towards any of these princely suitors that are already come?”—*Merchant of Venice*.

ALL the world knows that Princess Victoria made a love match, and that Nathaniel P. Willis's prognostication that she would be married solely for reasons of State was never fulfilled, but it is probable that few people know that she, like other girls, made little flights into the region of romance, and that a small crowd of young men presented themselves at the English Court, as it were, on approbation. The influx began in the spring of 1836, and, of course, produced fresh unpleasantness between the King and the Duchess. The latter had already decided upon the person whom she would wish for a son-in-law, and it is almost needless to say that in that case King William was likely to prefer any other young man in Christendom.

The only fount of information on such a subject as this is the contemporary Press, with here and there some allusion in letters of the time. When comparing the Press of to-day with the Press of seventy or eighty years ago, it is wonderful to note the difference of

interest which was shown in such matters. To-day we not only pretend to believe that Royalty is perfect, but we publicly express that belief whenever opportunity offers. We are always very polite. In the time of King William and in the early years of Queen Victoria's reign it seems to have been the custom to regard Royalty as very imperfect indeed; to find evil motives for even the most obviously good actions; to lay bare every secret, and to leave the poor monarch of the realm not a shred of moral clothing with which to cover his thoughts or designs. A little while ago a report was published without comment that the matrimonial fate of our present Prince of Wales was already settled. No one troubled about it or took the matter up, there was not the slightest idea of making political capital out of it; and when he really does marry we shall all be decorously delighted. It is quite unlikely that the newspapers will give columns of criticism to his bride, will rake up or make up evil stories about her, point out what a disastrous effect she will have upon England, or indeed do anything but wish the young people well, and pass on to the next subject. Of course, the Princess Victoria presented a special case; she was believed to be shy and adaptable in character, and there was some ground for imagining that it would be the Duchess of Kent who would really rule when the time came—she and the chosen husband; therefore there was an especial wave of agitation whenever the idea of an alliance was started.

The same thing applied to the Royal Family as a whole. One set of papers would make banal announce-

ments as to the doings of the King, Queen, or Dukes; whereupon another set would fasten upon these seemingly simple incidents, show that they held hidden significance which was contrary to the nation's welfare, and would then well belabour the unlucky Royal subject. Now the banal announcement may appear, and a few subservient papers amplify them and fall down and worship, but most will let them pass without comment. There is one story which has been appearing weekly somewhere or other for the past year to the effect that Queen Mary spends her evenings among her ladies knitting coarse garments for the poor. This pleases the sentimental ideas of the lovers of tit-bit publications, so it is a constant recurrer; but most sensible people shrug their shoulders at it; they know that a Queen has more important things to do, and that it would be a greater act of charity on her part to pay some poor folks to make the clothes. But no one tries to prove any connection between this and a possible German war, or make it a peg upon which to hang tales of poverty, as they would have done a century ago.

In reality, the people of England know nothing about the Court; in the old days they knew too much. The causes of this change are probably three: the greater security of social and foreign affairs to-day, the lessening power of the Crown, and the reticent attitude which the Prince Consort insisted upon concerning Royal doings and surroundings, a habit which loosened a little under King Edward, but which seems to be strengthening under his successor. However,

“the good have no story” may be said, generally speaking, to be true of families, and it is probable that if sensational events came to pass in the Palace, all the papers would once again regard them as legitimate matter for praise or stricture. In the old days they did not wait for sensational events; they took a commonplace happening and dressed it in lurid language, which sold the papers in spite of the tax upon them, and pleased their readers.

In reproducing some of these highly coloured comments it must not be believed that my loyalty is peccable. I merely recognise that words that inflamed people eighty years ago are amusing now, and for those who can take from them the little spark of truth they are also to some extent serviceable as illuminators of the past.

Prince Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg had already settled the career of his eldest son, and he saw no reason why—like a good matchmaking parent—he should not try to find a kingdom for his second son Augustus, who was much the less attractive of the two. As soon as they arrived everyone was on the watch, the pity was that none of the gossip-mongers could be present when intentions were talked over. Because they were not there, no one can now tell whether intentions were mentioned at all, or whether things were left to develop in an ordinary way. In any case, Prince Ferdinand must have been disappointed, for Augustus was a silent lad, and did little to make himself agreeable, while the handsome Ferdinand the younger is said to have been captivated by his

fresh young cousin—they were all cousins—at first sight.

The visitors went first to Kensington, and then to Windsor, where they were royally entertained, and returned to pass two weeks at Kensington Palace. The Prince and Augustus went home, hoping nothing, and still Ferdinand remained, in spite of his bride awaiting him in Lisbon. A lady diarist of the day says that he lingered from day to day, “nay, week after week,” allured by “the fascinations of Kensington’s Royal bowers.” However, this was something of an exaggeration, as Ferdinand had to be in Lisbon by a certain date for his marriage in April. At last he had to go, and he travelled with the Duchess and Princess to Claremont. There he took an “affectionate leave,” and went his solitary—but for a few attendants—way to the sea.

He met his young and dark bride kindly, and within a week or two took the same disease of the throat which had killed his predecessor less than a year earlier. Being a young man of great determination, he absolutely refused the kind ministrations of the Portuguese doctors, and was cured by his own German attendant. Whether he was happier alive than he would have been dead it is not easy to say, for his new subjects prepared a nice little quarrel for him before he arrived, and he was soon in the midst of mutinies and revolutions.

The first young man who probably caused a real flutter in the Kensington home was not of Royal blood at all. This was young Lord Elphinstone, to whom

it was said the Princess had lost her heart, and who was therefore thought sufficiently formidable to make the Duchess take a very extreme step. He was Lord of the Bedchamber to King William, was handsome, well-mannered, unassuming, always ready to help in small matters, and eminently fitted to catch a girl's fancy. He was also, as one paper put it satirically, a most convenient person to engage to do the amiable at balls and parties, and beyond all doubt was a most useful and agreeable master of the ceremonies of fashion. It was said that he had not only lost his heart to the pretty Princess, but had taken hers in return. He would sit and watch her surreptitiously in church, and on one occasion so far forgot his religious duties as to make a sketch of her while there, which sketch he was later imprudent enough to present to her. Maternal care took alarm; Sir John Couroy was consulted, and a whole set of hidden wires were pulled to put a stop to love's young dream. The result was to be read in every morning paper one day at the beginning of 1836:—

“Lord Elphinstone has been appointed Governor of Madras. The Court of Directors (of the East India Company) ratified the nomination on Wednesday.” So ran the announcement. The *Satirist*, much annoyed, commented, “The appointment of Lord Elphinstone is certainly not one to be applauded. . . . To send him out as the Governor of Madras is, to say the very least of it, unwise”; and it went on to point out that many a man better fitted for the post had been overlooked that he might have

it. "A Lord of the Bedchamber spoiled in a Governor of Madras! Lord Elphinstone *may* have qualified for the appointment, but the public surely has a right to demand tried ability and weight of character," was another comment. And so, though gossip awoke several times later to nod and hint, the young lord left his goddess and his native land, not to return for seven long years.

The *Age*, ultra-Tory and virulently anti-Catholic in its sentiments, outspoken to the verge of libel, and unscrupulous in its assertion of wild facts, had something to say weekly at this time about the Princess's lovers. It started the campaign by asserting the obvious truth that the Princess Victoria was now becoming the object of the highest and purest interest to England, and must not be lightly bestowed, adding, "The gentleman who with a few *sons* lives at the Tuileries would perhaps like to nibble here—but until the established Protestant religion is overthrown he has no chance. A German paper mentions that a rumour is current that Prince Augustus of Saxe-Coburg is likely to win the Princess Victoria. Whether or not the desire be father to the thought we know not, nor do we care; to omit all other objections to a union such as the one hinted at, it is sufficient to state that the Prince alluded to is a Catholic."

With the end of April arrived further papas with two sons each, and then began the duel between King William and his sister-in-law. The latter had, as has been said, quietly made choice of her daughter's bridegroom, being guided in the selection by her brother



Leopold, and we are told that her nephew Albert had been taught from his early childhood that he would one day marry his cousin Victoria. However, he did not see his destined mate until May, 1836, when he was nearly seventeen, and when he and his elder brother Ernest, escorted by his father, the Duke of Saxe-Coburg, paid a visit of a month's duration to Kensington. King William hated the idea, and he did his little best to spoil the scheme, which was too unformed to allow of any open action. He had behind him the Tories generally and all the Tory Press, while the anti-Catholics wasted much good energy in traducing Leopold, the Prince whom long before everyone had received with open arms. Leopold had married the daughter of the King of France, and was suspected of having become a Catholic, thus adding to the dislike which was felt for him in England. One paper said of him at this time, "The name of Leopold is the most unpopular in the kingdom, and is accompanied with certain sordid associations of which our national ledger gives ample and disgraceful evidence."

So, to counterbalance the schemes of the Duchess, King William invited to England the young Duke of Brunswick, also the Prince of Orange and his two sons, William and Alexander, who were reported to be fine young men, though stiff and formal in their manner. These were as heartily welcomed by the King's supporters as the others were traduced. "There is something in the very name of William of Orange which is encouraging in these times of Popish assumption and pseudo-Protestant treachery. Whether

our fancies as to a certain union be verified or not, time will prove. Should it take place, we think the people of England will not object, whatever the malignants of Ireland may say against one of the same family as the Hero of the Boyne."

Those who looked on enjoyed the situation, and there is little doubt but that the Prince of Orange, on behalf of his son, would have won in the contest if it had depended on the sympathies of the English people. In his youth the Prince had been an aspirant for the hand of Princess Charlotte, his rival being the successful Leopold, who had not only taken his hoped-for bride, but later half of his Principality. When Leopold was mentioned in his presence, Orange would say, "*Voilà un homme qui a pris ma femme et mon royaume.*" Gossip went that he intended to place his sons at an English university, that he might make them as English as possible; and there were those who affirmed that the House of Orange had great claims upon the country's gratitude, but that we had satisfied in full any claim that the House of Saxe-Coburg might put forward. Advice was offered freely to the Duchess of Kent; she "is a shrewd and sensible woman, and will not, we hope, misunderstand our loyalty when we say, 'We must have no more Coburgs.' One fair rose of England has been gathered by a Coburg, and there shall be no further sacrifice of a future Queen to them." The Coburgs were dubbed a mercenary, good-for-nothing set by one section, while another put all the German princes into the same category. "All the multitudinous progeny of the small peoples of the

Saxe-Gotha, Saxe-Coburg, and their cousin Saxes are racing against each other for the hand of the Princess Victoria, to say nothing of a brace of Brunswicks and a Prince of Orange and his two sons, who probably thinks he should be given first chance, as he was done out of the Princess Charlotte. The Duke of Cumberland's son is quite *hors-de-combat*, and the simple child, George of Cambridge, is not encouraged by the Government on account of his mental incapacity. The Saxe tribe are the most hungry, the most persevering, and the most lucky."

Indeed, the English might have been excused some annoyance at the favour shown to the great Teutonic nation, for, in addition to the nine or ten gentlemen mentioned, there were also here in England during the same spring the Prince of Leiningen, Victoria's half-brother, Prince Ernest of Hesse-Philippthal, and Prince Edward of Carolath. These last three and Prince Ferdinand with his sons were all invited to a great ball which the Duchess of Kent gave at the end of March, just as at the end of May she gave a brilliant ball at which her own guests and those of the King were naturally present. King William entertained the Coburgs as graciously as he did the lad from Brunswick and the Oranges, and, indeed, did his utmost to ensure that Victoria should meet them all together as often as possible. But it was inevitable that at Kensington Palace there should be many opportunities for the young Saxe-Coburgs to talk with their cousin. An aide-de-camp of the Duke of Cumberland's, and Lord de Lisle, son-in-law of King William, watched

Victoria and Albert pacing the Palace garden one day.

“Do you think they are lovers?” one man asked the other; and he shook his head dubiously, answering in non-committal way, “They seem to be good friends, anyhow.”

Whether there were too many from which to choose, or whether it was true that Victoria was, for the best of all reasons, proof against their attractions, this tribe of young men came and went, making no impression. She danced with them all, for she dearly loved dancing, talked German to them all, for it is doubtful whether one of them could speak English, and said good-bye to them all with an equable smile, and probably with a sigh of relief that now she would be free to go her own way to some extent.

The papers showed as much interest in their going as in their coming. All had an idea that, though nothing had been announced, something had been fixed up. Those who had no animus against the German “invasion” were contented with such ventures as, “I hear to-day that the young Prince of Saxe-Coburg is the destined husband of our Princess Victoria,” or, “It is rumoured that the two rival suitors (Coburg and Orange) for the highest and fairest hand in the kingdom, returned home without making any impression on the heart of the interesting lady in question.” One grumbler observed that the Princess had been prevented from going to Ascot, as she was kept at home to entertain “these round-faced youths.” But those who feared the youths lashed right and left, speaking

of the impolitic liberality of certain high personages, and the dogged good nature of John Bull which gained for him the appellation of fool from all the world for allowing his means to be squandered over German fortune-hunters. The worst tirade was naturally given by the *Age*, which used Leopold as a whipping boy, and in rhythmic sentences announced:—"This King Leopold has become the Sovereign of a Popish country, the husband of a Popish Princess, and the son-in-law of a Popish Monarch. King Leopold was the accepted of Protestant England's welcome—the chosen of Protestant England's hope—and the son-in-law of Protestant England's Sovereign. What a contrast! Nay, further—King Leopold, if not a convert to Popery, at least conforms to its rites; and mark this, the nephew whose matrimonial agent he had the arrogance to be *is a member of the Roman Catholic Church*; although, following his uncle's example, the youth would also no doubt *change his religion*—for a Crown!"

As for the young people themselves, they were probably quite as unconscious of the agonised flutter which their meeting had raised in journalistic doves as they were unmoved by love for each other. *He* thought *she* was very amiable and astonishingly self-possessed; *she* commended his welfare to her uncle's protection, for the whole project had been explained to her, and her reason as well as her family affection had found good in it. So in her letter to Leopold she acknowledged this by saying, "I hope and trust that all will go on prosperously and well

on this subject, now of so much importance to me."

And so for a space the matter ended. But it is really worthy of note that among all the young visitors from Germany and elsewhere, there were no girls; no smart young cousins came to rival Victoria's charms, and she had the field entirely to herself. This, at least, gives some justification for the belief that match-making was in the air.

After this, for some reason the Duchess of Kent withdrew Victoria entirely from Court. William and Adelaide sent her invitations in vain, and the irascible Monarch grew more and more angry over the matter. It may be, of course, that the Duchess was annoyed at the King's very transparent attempt to frustrate her plans for her daughter, and showed her resentment in this somewhat trivial way, or she may have aimed more strenuously at removing the girl from influence which she had always deemed bad. It was quite useless for the King to fume, as all the Kents had to do was to go to Claremont and get out of his reach; and the only revenge he could take was that of denouncing the Duchess at any and every opportunity, and advertising his increasing dislike of her to all who would listen.

In August, 1837, this simmering hatred came to the boil, and readily flowed over into the public ears. William invited the Duchess and her child to stay at Windsor from early in the month until after the 21st, hoping that they would be present to celebrate Queen Adelaide's birthday on the 13th and his own on the 21st, for which latter two dinners were arranged, as the 21st was a Sunday; thus there was to be a family

dinner on that day, and a more public one on the 22nd. The Duchess seems to have had an unfortunate knack of writing crude—not to say rude—letters. To this invitation she responded that as she wished to keep her own birthday on the 15th at Claremont, she could not be at Windsor until the 20th; and she entirely ignored all mention of the festivities for the Queen. There seems to have been little reason for this direct snub to Adelaide, and it was probably caused more by a want of imagination than through a definite desire to annoy, but it naturally resulted in irritating the King anew. He, however, made no reply to this letter, but that did not mean that the Duchess was not in his thoughts. Perhaps someone had given him a hint, or perhaps William suspected that the Duchess was taking liberties; but on the afternoon of the 20th, when he had prorogued Parliament, and when he probably knew that the Duchess would already have started for Windsor, he went down to Kensington Palace. There he found what he perhaps had expected to find, that his sister-in-law had appropriated to her own use seventeen extra rooms, of which a year before he had refused her the accommodation. He went straight from Kensington to Windsor, where the Duchess and her daughter had already arrived. Without waiting to change, he marched straight to the drawing-room, kissed the Princess, holding both her hands and telling her in fatherly way how pleased he was to see her. He then made a low bow to the Duchess, and, like the old dunderhead that he was, immediately began the battle.

They were by no means alone, the whole house-

party being assembled, all of whom were astounded to hear their Monarch say in loud, harsh accents that he had just come from Kensington, where he had found that a most unwarrantable liberty had been taken. Someone had possessed themselves of apartments not only without his consent, but against his expressed commands, and he ended up with, "he neither understood nor would endure conduct so disrespectful to himself."

What happened further we are not told, but there can be no doubt that all through this very trying evening the Duchess of Kent behaved with perfect dignity; she might be wanting in politeness privately, but publicly nothing upset her control. Adolphus Fitzclarence was present, and sat within two or three of the Duchess at the dinner, thus he heard plainly all that was said. A little later he fully retailed the scandal to Greville. He says that on the Sunday morning the King had by no means got over his excitement, which lasted more or less through the day. At dinner, though this was supposed to be a family function, at least a hundred people were present, either belonging to the Court or gathered from the neighbourhood. On one side of the King sat the Duchess of Kent, directly opposite him was Princess Victoria next the Queen. Everything went well until the time of speeches arrived, and the first health to be proposed was naturally that of His Majesty. At that this incomparably tactless King got upon his feet and straightway began to express all the anger he felt. The part particularly interesting to the Duchess ran :—



“I trust in God that my life may be spared for nine months longer, after which period, in the event of my death, no Regency would take place. I should then have the satisfaction of leaving the Royal authority to the personal exercise of that young lady (pointing to the Princess), the heiress presumptive to the Crown, and not in the hands of a person now near me, who is surrounded by evil advisers and who is herself incompetent to act with propriety in the station in which she would be placed. I have no hesitation in saying that I have been insulted—grossly insulted—by that person, but I am determined to endure no longer a course of behaviour so disrespectful to me. Amongst other things, I have particularly to complain of the manner in which that young lady has been kept away from my Court; she has been repeatedly kept from my Drawing Rooms, at which she ought always to have been present, but I am fully resolved that this shall not happen again. I would have her know that I am King, and I am determined to make my authority respected, and for the future I shall insist and command that the Princess do upon all occasions appear at my Court, as it is her duty to do.”

It is said that His Majesty finished his tirade by speaking of the Princess in a fatherly and affectionate way, saying that though he had seen so little of her, he took no less interest in her, and the more he saw of her in public and in private the greater pleasure it would be to him.

Before he had got to this, however, the Princess was crying, the Queen looked terribly distressed, and the whole company sat aghast, their eyes on the table. When a dead silence fell after this awful philippic, all must have wondered what was to happen next, but the Duchess, who had more sense than her assailant, uttered no word, and the Queen gave the signal for retiring. Then we are told that the Duchess had her say, and that there was an awful scene between the pair; she ordered her carriage, but all concerned did their best to change her determination of going from the Castle at once, and some sort of a reconciliation ensued.

The King might relent, might change his mind or forget things, but he does not seem ever to have repented his foolish deeds. Thus the next day he asked Adolphus what everyone said of his speech, and that young man made a diplomatic answer, saying that though everyone thought the Duchess merited his rebuke, it ought not to have been given at his own table before a hundred people; he ought to have sent for her to his closet, and said all he felt and thought there. To which William answered that he did not care where or before whom he said what he thought, and that, "by God, he had been insulted by her in a measure that was past all endurance, and he would stand it no longer."

What a terrible exhibition of inhospitality and bad taste! Yet we have to realise that the King had been much provoked, and, being the man of severe limita-

tions that he was, he took the only course which occurred to him. There can be no doubt that a real affection existed between William and his niece, that he knew that but a small span of life remained to him, and that he was constantly refused the society and the sight of his successor. Though the autocratic Duchess had married into the Guelph family, she never seemed to understand the exceedingly primitive characters of the people who composed that family, or, if she did understand them, she gave them little credit for their virtues, but recognised to the full all their sins of omission and commission.

A slight instance of the small way in which she annoyed them is given in the "Tales of My Father," already referred to. The Duchess of Cumberland sent an aide-de-camp to the Duchess of Kent with a message about the illness of young George. When the young man had told Her Royal Highness all that she wished to know, she invited him to dine and stay the night. His answer was that he could not do so, as he had no leave, and the Duke was most particular on that point.

"I will manage all that!" the Duchess haughtily replied. "I should like to present you to the Princess Victoria." So a message was sent to the Duke of Cumberland that the captain had been commanded to remain at Kensington, with the result that the next morning a letter arrived for the guest from the Duke, informing him that his business was to look after Prince George, not to be nursery governess to Princess Vic-

toria; that he had slept out of St. James's without leave; and that if he did not come back at once he would be put under arrest. In this there was no deference shown to the will of the Duchess, nothing but annoyance expressed at the excess of hospitality to his messenger.

After that terrible birthday party the Duchess stayed for yet another dinner at the Castle, and it seems that she was somewhat long in entering the drawing-room the second evening. The Queen would not go in without her, which caused William loudly to demand the whereabouts of his wife. When he was told that she was waiting for the Duchess, he said just as loudly :

“That woman is a nuisance!” No one can wonder that the Duchess hated him; it is only possible to feel what a pity it was that things had been allowed to come to such a pass.

From that time history gives no account of meetings between St. James's and Kensington.

It was during her last year at Kensington Palace that Victoria was troubled by the first of the mad suitors who for three years were recurrent factors in her life. This was a Mr. Hunnings, a man of about forty, who was the owner of considerable property near Tunbridge Wells, where he first saw Victoria. He may have been sane enough in other ways, but he was certainly mad in his regard for the heiress to the Throne. He spoke of her as his “little Princess,” and lamented the fact that her cruel guardians kept her from him. He haunted Kensington Gardens, and

the Duchess and her daughter scarcely left the Palace but they found this man stationed near the door, bowing most gracefully with his hand on his heart. He would follow the two at a distance until they turned some corner out of his sight, and then at a smart run would either overtake them or by a short cut get ahead, so that they would find him again and again facing them and making most respectful salutes. He regularly attended the services in the Chapel Royal attached to Kensington Palace, sitting where he could obtain a full view of the Royal pew, and would generally put half a sovereign in the plate.

Of course, this matter soon became public property, and was too good a subject for joke to be ignored. Wags would do their best to encourage the hopeful lover by writing him letters, and he once showed a policeman such a missive purporting to be signed by the Princess, expressing a deep love for him, and asking him to write to her, placing his answer under a certain tree, as she would have no chance of speaking to him. The police had, of course, to be on the alert in case he did anything more than usually extravagant, and he complained bitterly of their surveillance, saying that he felt it to be most degrading.

He was for ever trying some new way of keeping the Princess Victoria under his observation, and at last hit upon the idea of having a barouche exactly like that of the Duchess of Kent, his servant being dressed in Royal undress livery, a dark pepper-and-salt coat

and glazed hat with broad purple velvet band, and in this he would follow his "little Princess" when she drove out. On Victoria's eighteenth birthday he licensed a cab to which he gave her name, decorated it with ribbons, and persuaded the proprietor to allow it to be illuminated with lamps at night. His own house was illuminated from top to bottom, and during the day he invited everyone who passed to stop and drink the health of the Princess. By evening a dense crowd had gathered before his door, most of those who composed it being ready to drink again and again to their future Queen, and already in such a state of intoxication that the police interfered and put a stop to his liberality. The whole affair would have been nipped in the bud had it occurred at the present time, but eighty years ago the police were few and given but scanty powers.

On the accession of Victoria to the Throne this annoying lover was somehow pushed into the background, and we hear no more of him, excepting that at a fancy bazaar at Lincoln he eagerly purchased some things worked by Her Majesty and was eventually locked up for assaulting the Mayor.

As Princess Victoria neared her majority all the newspapers showed unrest; they devoted daily leaders and paragraphs to their hopes and fears; there were hints of plots and schemings, of arrangements made at Kensington, of members chosen to form the new Royal Household as soon as William was dead. The names of everyone around the Duchess were paraded

in print, to their praise or detriment. The *Newcastle Chronicle* got frightened over a scheme which, it said, had been fixed up between Sir John Conroy and Lord Durham, who was then Ambassador Extraordinary at St. Petersburg.

When the Princess came of age, they said, she would, of course, be given an establishment of her own. Lord Durham would return from Russia before that, so as to be ready to put himself at the head of Victoria's household, his ambition being, however, to make that position but a step to the Premiership. Meanwhile, he would be keeping the post warm for Sir John Conroy, who coveted the headship of the household for himself. This—the paper pointed out—would only need a little management. Lord Durham was a personal friend of Leopold's, so he would arrange the Coburg marriage, and both men would gain their promotion through the gratitude of the Duchess and her brother.

Poor Victoria! she evidently did not count in this matter at all; she was but a peg on which two ambitious men were supposed to hang their schemes for advancement. Yet this note was sounded in all the diatribes upon her suggested marriage. What the King wished, what the Duchess and her brother wished, what this or that party wished, all these were discussed to the full, but what the Princess herself wished was thought scarcely worthy of any attention.

So in the spring of 1837 the Princess's future husband was as fertile a subject of interest as it had been

in the spring of the year before. In Brussels her marriage with Prince Albert was talked of as an assured thing, for he and his brother were residing there, "in a hired house of no very distinguished class, and obtaining their dinners from the Restaurateur Dubois for themselves and tutors and servants at twenty-five francs a day," said one bad-tempered article, adding, "We mention this to show the extent of their income and the princely generosity of their uncle, the King of the Belgians, in not giving them an attic in his palace."

There had always been whispers about the Kensington clique or the Kensington camarilla, and from this time forward those who a year or two before would have been prominent members of the Orange League never lost an opportunity of gibing at and traducing the foreigners who surrounded the Princess on the score of intrigue and cupidity. What was the motive of all the outcry it is difficult to say, but when now and then it seemed necessary to give it some form, it nearly always resolved itself into a hatred or terror of Popery. Those who shouted so much seemed to be unaware that, while they expressed loyalty to the Duchess, it was her own brother whom they so violently traduced, and that she was as foreign as he, while Victoria had the same blood and the same traditions. However, discrimination cannot be expected of political fanatics, for whatever happens can be made to fit any theory by those interested.

The politicians of others countries looked on and



wondered, and sometimes dug some fact out of history with which to urge the grumblers onward. Thus the *Gazette de France* gravely published an article in 1836 to prove that King William was a mere impostor, and that the Princess Victoria had no right of succession, the only legitimate Queen of England being Mademoiselle de Berry. This is how the writer of the article proved it; and if there had been no law concerning the Protestant succession, and also, I think, if James II. had left no son, he would have been right. But they are rather big "ifs":—

(i) Henrietta, daughter of Charles I.

(ii) Anne-Marie of Orléans, daughter of Henrietta.

(iii) Victor Amédée III., King of Sardinia and Duke of Savoy, son of Anne-Marie.

(iv) Marie-Thérèse of Savoy, daughter of Victor Amédée.

(v) Louis-Antoine, Duc d'Angoulême, Comte d'Artois, son of Marie-Thérèse.

(vi) In default of direct issue the right of succession would go to Mademoiselle de Berry, daughter of the Duc de Berry, and niece of the Duc d'Angoulême.

The article concluded with:—"Monseigneur the Duc d'Angoulême, for the Catholics of Ireland, Scotland, and England, ought incontestably to be considered King of Great Britain, and Mademoiselle heiress presumptive to the Crown, in the place and instead of William IV. and the Princess Victoria, who reigns only by virtue of a Protestant law of usurpation and revolution."

However, the energetic anti-Catholic gentlemen in England were perfectly well aware that England—and, incidentally, themselves—were quite safe from the rule of any Catholic monarch, and though they used a thing like this as a peg upon which to hang their diatribes, they did it with tongue in cheek—and a very bad-tempered cheek, too.

## CHAPTER V

### QUEEN VICTORIA'S ACCESSION

“ Oh, maiden, heir of Kings,  
A King has left his place,  
The Majesty of death has swept  
All other from his face.  
And thou upon thy mother's breast  
No longer lean adown—  
But take the glory for the rest,  
And rule the land that loves thee best!  
The Maiden wept;  
She wept to wear a crown!”

*Elizabeth Barrett [Browning].*

ON May 24th, 1837, Princess Victoria attained her majority, being eighteen years of age; and the King knew that his prayer had been answered. He arranged a magnificent State ball in honour of the event; but his day for balls was over, for just as the nine months he had asked for expired, he was taken ill, and though he rallied several times he did not again show himself in public. Queen Adelaide did not fill the part of hostess either, for she was too anxious about her husband to leave him. She was a good wife and, notwithstanding all the evil said of her, a good woman. I have not in all my researches come across—apart from her political bias—a single instance of any act

or word on her part which could be brought forward to her discredit. But to be no lover of pomp, show, or dress was a sufficiently serious omission to condemn any Queen in the eyes of her Court.

This wonderful birthday meant a busy time for the Princess. She was awakened in the morning by music outside her window, composed and arranged by Mr. Rodwell, concerning which a sneering comment was made that Rodwell had made "an ass of himself on the Princess's birthday by braying under her window." There were many costly gifts to receive—the King sent her a beautiful piano—and many deputations from public bodies to take her attention. With these the Duchess was in her element, for she was almost as fond of making speeches as was the King; but the Princess still, and for the last time, played the part of the child in public, standing by and listening to the wise and indiscreet sayings of her mother. Well, it was the Duchess's last chance, too, though she did not know it, for her sun was setting just when she thought it was rising to the mid heavens.

When a deputation from the City of London came to make a pretty speech, Her Royal Highness was true to her custom of not forgetting an injury. Though eighteen years had passed, and George IV. had long been in his grave, she still nourished the slights that had been put upon her on her arrival in England. The Duchess of Clarence had not been welcomed with open arms, the Duchess of Cumberland had for years been ignored by the Royal Family, but these two ladies treated the matter in dignified silence. However, the

Duchess of Kent had done everything she could to keep alive bad feeling, and on this day, which should have been given over to kindness, she reminded the gentlemen from the City that when the Duke of Kent died she and the Princess "stood alone, almost friendless and unknown in this country. I could not even speak the language of it." Then she went on to point out that, in spite of all, she had done her best to bring up her daughter to be the true Sovereign of the nation; that she had put her into intercourse with all classes of people, and had taught her that the protection of popular liberties and the preservation of the constitutional prerogatives of the Crown were the proper aims of a Monarch.

It was not a long speech, but it was scarcely calculated to be soothing reading for the irascible and ailing King.

The village of Kensington—it was a village in those days, the Duchess appreciating for her child the good air of the country lanes—was *en fête* for the birthday; a great flag of white silk, inscribed in gold with the name of Victoria, was hoisted over the Palace, and Union Jacks were run up on the church and on the Green, to say nothing of every house showing its regard by the exhibition of flags. A general holiday was declared, and at the State ball given that night it is safe to believe that Victoria grieved at the absence of the King and Queen, even though there was always fear of discomfort when they and her mother met. There had been further strained relations in April of this year, when Lady de Lisle, one of the King's—his

favourite—daughters, died at Kensington Palace, of which she was the custodian. During her illness the Duchess carried her resentment so far as to pay her no attention, and the *Court Journal* announced that a party, of distinguished guests who had been invited to dinner, was not put off, though Lady de Lisle lay dead in the Palace. A bitter comment upon this was made that, when the Duchess's confectioner, being insane through drink, had committed suicide a little while earlier, all festivities had been stopped out of sympathy for the man's wife.

At the May Drawing Room, probably in retaliation for this, all the men attached to the Duchess's household were excluded by Royal mandate from being present, giving rise to the remark that "the necessity for this suspension of privilege must have been very great, as from what everybody knows of the kind disposition of the King, he would not have exercised his prerogative in a way that cannot otherwise be understood than as an act of censure."

The poor old King was still in fear about his country; he did not believe, as many did, that Victoria was too delicate to live long, but he did think her too young to reign, for he knew that her general attitude was one of gentle obedience to her mother, and he thought that when he was dead the Duchess of Kent would be virtually Queen of England. It is said that about five days before he died he praised God for the good sleep he had had, and the Queen said :

"And shall I pray to the Almighty that you may have a good day?"

“Oh, do!” answered the King. “I wish I could live for ten years for the sake of the country. I feel it my duty to keep well as long as possible.”

Just after the birthday King William wrote to the Duchess of Kent, offering to form an independent household for the Princess; but this she sharply declined, and we are told the reply was couched “in very unsatisfactory terms.”

But William could not bear that this girl should not benefit in some way personally from her majority, so he wrote her a letter, offering her the sum of ten thousand a year from his own purse which was to be regarded as her very own, independent of her mother's income. This letter was given to the Lord Chamberlain, then Lord Conyngham, with instructions that he was to give it to no one but the Princess. Conyngham went to Kensington and was received by Sir John Conroy, who met his request to see the Princess by asking on what authority did he make such a demand—which certainly seems to justify the King's doubt as to there being fair play at Kensington, and also proves that Victoria was not allowed to receive visitors.

“On the authority of His Majesty the King,” replied Lord Conyngham.

Upon this Conroy disappeared, and after an interval the Chamberlain was ushered into the presence of the Duchess and the Princess. Bowing low, Conyngham said he had been charged by His Majesty with a letter for the Princess Victoria, and at this the masterful mother at once held out her hand to receive the precious missive.

“Pardon me, madam,” said the courtier, “I have been expressly commanded by the King to deliver this into the Princess’s own hand.”

It must have been a humiliating moment for the proud woman, and it was but the first of many such. The Princess took the letter, and Conyngham bowed himself out of the room. To the intense anger of the Duchess, her daughter wrote affectionately to her uncle, accepting the kind offer made to her. William then named a responsible person who was to receive this money for her, and the usual dispute began, for the Duchess thought she should be the disburser of the sum, of which she proposed taking six thousand pounds and giving Victoria four thousand.

This is true, though it reads with all the dramatic interest of fiction, and the effect is heightened by our ignorance of the girl who was the unhappy and unwilling cause of these quarrels. For seven years she had suffered from these violent and futile disputes between two persons whom she loved, and who, though loving her well, yet loved their own conception of what was good for her so much that they were ready to make her miserable. Who uttered the last word in this quarrel no one knows, for it was never settled, and Victoria had no need of the ten thousand a year.

Everyone knew now that the King was dying. The Court dreaded death, for there was no forecasting events. What would happen to the country with a bit of a girl at its head—a girl who had been rarely seen among them, who never came to Court, and who seemed timid and retiring? One cannot wonder that



the forgotten dislike of Leopold rose to fever heat, that the wildest stories were told of the Camarilla at Kensington, and that it was reported that the new Royal Household was all planned and the members of it named—all entirely without taking the Princess into consideration. She did not count with the public or with the Press; she was the merest cipher. She would be Queen, of course—that was admitted—but the people with whom England would have to deal would be the Duchess and Leopold, Conroy and Lord Durham, the Coburgs, and the tribe of Germans who had already inflamed resentment in some quarters. Lord Durham was on his way home, and his return was regarded with keen curiosity, for it was felt that he would probably play a great political part, and would influence materially the Councils of the Queen.

A few years later, however, it was a well-known fact, though since forgotten, that the whole of the appointments to be filled in the Royal Household upon the death of William IV. and the formation of Her Majesty's domestic establishment had been arranged in accordance with the political notions, not of the Duchess of Kent, but of Victoria's uncle, the Duke of Sussex, in conjunction with Lord Melbourne, in both of whom she reposed great confidence.

England—that part of it which was interested—watched breathlessly while William fought his last fight, and the social and political forces gathered themselves together for some great and unknown change. In this state of tension there was one man, loyal and upright, who seemed always ready to give good advice

and who would neither lose nor gain by the change; this was the Duke of Wellington. To him on Waterloo Day the King sent a message, bidding him hold the usual banquet in commemoration of the great fight; just as it pleased him that Victoria should go in state to Ascot on June 12th, for which he sent seven carriages for her *cortège*, her own being drawn by six grey horses.

Cumberland, still troubled with a lingering hope that his ambition might be satisfied, went to the Duke, asking what he should do.

“Do?” said the Duke. “The best thing you can do is to go away as fast as you can. Go instantly, and take care that you are not pelted.”

This is given on good authority, and, if true, could not have been very pleasant for the Duke to hear, as he probably had hoped for very different advice. He had always held that the Salic law, as applied to the Hanoverian dynasty, should also apply to Great Britain, and as Victoria had no right to rule in Hanover, she had therefore no right to rule in England. It was about this period that he asked of his aide-de-camp, already mentioned :

“Would you and your troop follow me through the streets of London if I were proclaimed King?”

“Yes, and to the Tower the next day,” was the indignant reply.

“You have cut your own throat, my boy, by that remark. As King of England I could make you a great man. What will the Princess Victoria do for you and yours?”

It was to the Duke of Wellington that Lord Melbourne went a month later for advice as to how best to initiate the Queen into her various duties. Indeed, though Wellington had not taken the popular side in the long struggle over Reform, he was by no means a keen party man; in each question he followed the line that he believed would be best for the nation, and, in spite of plots and innuendoes, he was, with one, perhaps with two, exceptions, loyal to the Crown, no matter who wore it.

When it was almost certain that William would not recover, "Grandmamma," or, to use its better name, *The Times*, proceeded to mould "the child" Victoria into shape. It began with a fairly mild article, not, of course, insinuating anything, but just devoutly praying that her education had been conducted under a noble and lofty regard to her fitness for the duties of Queen of England, that she had been prepared to think for herself, to employ her *own* discernment, to take nothing upon trust; and asserting that she ought not to be made the subject of jealous or vexatious restraint or be kept in a state of pupilage, &c.

Two days later it went a step further in a leader, expressing the fear that the Princess had received a narrow, or a jealous, or otherwise ill-framed education, and roundly impressing upon the Duchess that she had no political status, no political duties whatever beyond that of obedience to laws. They said that she had no more power over the Sovereign (who happened to be her offspring) than any other Duchess of the Royal Family. They considered that she could not be a

sound adviser to an inexperienced Queen because of her foreign connections, while her *entourage* at home would form no desirable Cabinet for a Queen of England. Then the article concluded with the avowal that it had been written on purpose to meet the eye of Victoria, that she might learn how vital it was that her earliest advisers should be men in whom the better part of England could repose entire confidence.

Strongly Whig over the Catholic Emancipation Bill, *The Times* had gone as strongly Tory on the Reform Bill, and was furious at the idea that the Whig Ministry, of which the King could not rid himself, was still likely to keep in power. They were entirely without information as to the character of King William's successor, and thought, as did most of the world, that England would be ruled by the Duchess of Kent and her circle. What influence these articles may have had upon the Princess there is no written evidence to show, but it is certain that from the moment that this docile little daughter attained the Throne she followed out exactly in this matter the policy thus urged upon her by a paper the general policy of which she did not in the least approve.

When King William died, *The Times* entirely lost its head. It had struck these sledge-hammer blows at the Duchess of Kent, but it did not believe in the Princess Victoria. The day after the new Queen had read her Declaration, *The Times*, as *The Examiner* said, insulted her understanding by declaring that she did not comprehend the import of the words she delivered, and they took particular exception to her

statement that she congratulated herself on succeeding a monarch whose "desire to promote the amelioration of the laws and institutions of the country has rendered his name an object of general attachment and veneration." From their standpoint this was, of course, pure Radicalism, for, as good Tories, they held concerning the laws as Leibnitz did of the world, that the laws we had were "the best of all possible" laws, and needed no amelioration. Neither *The Times* nor any other paper grumbled when, in 1901, King Edward declared at his first Council that he was determined, "as long as there is breath in my body, to work for the good and amelioration of my people." Yet Victoria's was the better sentence. Of course, it is possible to ameliorate people, but it is easier to perform the operation on laws or even on lives.

From Victoria the editorial turned to Lord Melbourne and became really funny, asking, "Has this Whig-Radical Ethiopian changed his skin? this leopard of Popery his spots?" and it finished up with the fine patriotic intimation that it was the strength of devotion to the Constitution which prompted "us to ring the alarm bell throughout the British Empire until we shall have helped to achieve its salvation, have seen it perish, or have ourselves ceased to exist."

On the evening of June 19th, 1837, King William saw all his children, and at two o'clock on the morning of the 20th he died. We all know the story of how the Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Conyngham, the Lord Chamberlain, rode to Kensington to convey the news to Victoria that she was now Queen. Miss

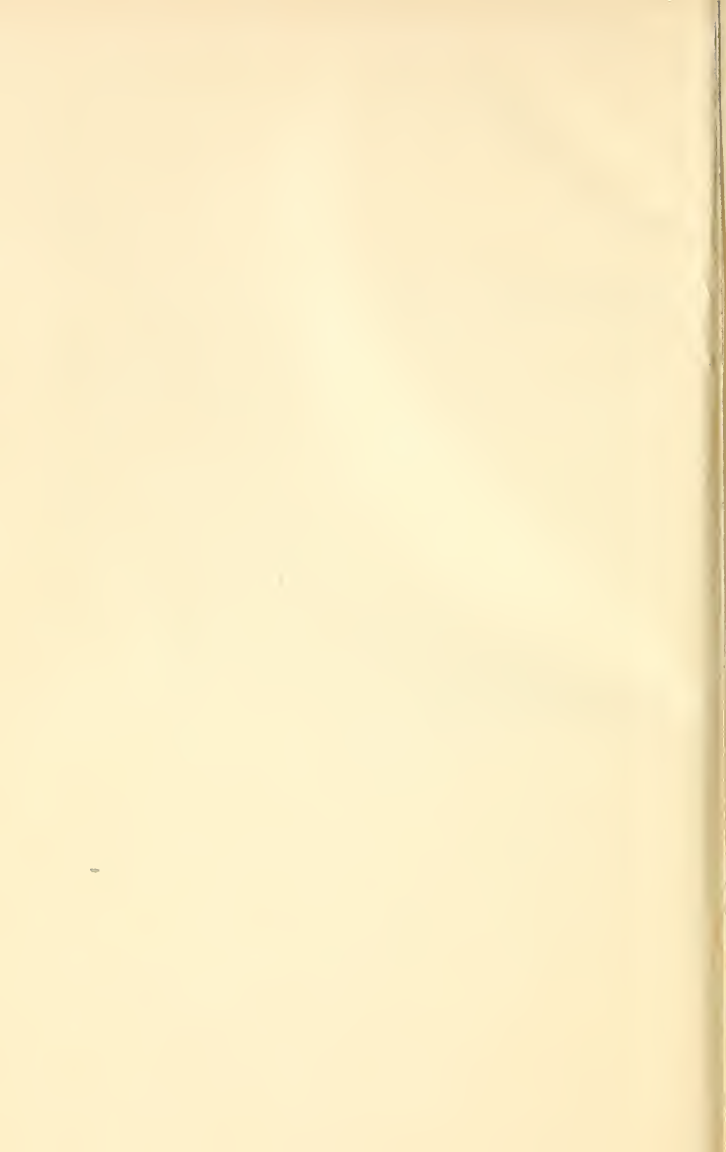
Wynn, who published her diaries under the pseudonym of "A Lady of Quality," gives a rather amusing account of the occurrence. The two gentlemen arrived at Kensington Palace at about five in the morning; they knocked, rang, and thumped for a considerable time before they could rouse the porter at the gates; then, having been kept waiting in a courtyard, they were turned into one of the lower rooms and forgotten by everyone. They rang, and desired the attendant who appeared to tell the Princess's maid that they requested an audience. Nothing followed, and they rang again. The maid, who now answered the bell, said that the Princess was in such a sweet sleep that she could not disturb her. "We are come to the Queen on business of State, and her sleep must give way to that," was the answer.

In a few minutes Victoria appeared in a loose white nightgown and shawl, her hair falling about her shoulders, her feet in slippers, tears in her eyes, but perfectly cool and collected.

The following morning a Council was called for eleven o'clock, but the summonses were sent out so late that many were not received until the hour appointed. Lord Melbourne, as Prime Minister, had to teach the Queen her part, which he had first to learn himself, and he found her quiet, dignified, and eager to bear herself well. The Lords assembled in one room of Kensington Palace, and were solemnly informed by the Lord President of the events, which they all knew perfectly, that the King was dead, and that they were gathered together to swear allegiance



LORD MELBOURNE.





to the new Sovereign. This little form observed, the Lord President, the two Royal Dukes—Cumberland was quite sure now that he had not a chance left at present—the two Archbishops, the Chancellor, and the Prime Minister went into the next room, where with great formality the news of William's death was conveyed to the girl who stood there alone, not in her nightgown this time, but in a sober garment of black. The doors between the rooms were then thrown open, and the Queen entered that in which stood a great crowd of nobles and office-holders. Greville says, "The Queen entered, accompanied by her two uncles, who advanced to meet her," which certainly might have been more lucid had it been differently worded.

The Duke of Sussex spoke later of the Queen's nervousness, saying that she continually took his hand as though to reassure herself; he added that Lord Melbourne never took his eyes off her, and seemed more nervous than she, fearing that she might make a slip. Half a century later, when the Queen was asked if she did not feel nervous at her first Council, she replied, "No, I have no recollection of feeling in the slightest degree nervous." Nervous or not, she behaved with grace and dignity, as everyone should have expected; but all present seemed to think that something like a scene would take place, or that they were going to swear their loyal oaths to a person wanting in understanding, if we may judge by the chorus of praise which arose later. "It was extraordinary and far beyond what was looked for"; she actually "read her speech in a clear, distinct, and audible voice"; Peel said how

amazed he was at her manner and behaviour, at her apparent deep sense of her position, her modesty, and her firmness.

Did these wise men really think that a girl brought up in such an atmosphere of self-control and restriction as Victoria had been would have shamed herself by crying, or stuttering, or fainting, or giggling? Their extenuation lies in the fact that scarcely any among them knew anything at all of the Princess, and that very fact excited such intense curiosity to see how she would behave, that the crowd of Privy Councillors assembled was so great that, according to one who was present, the scene of swearing allegiance was more like that at the bidding in an auction-room than anything else.

Cumberland, who now became King of Hanover, was the first to take the oath, and Sussex, who was very infirm, and some distance from Her Majesty, was met half-way across the room, the Queen kissing them both. Greville noted with satisfaction that her courtesy did not break down when the heads of either party greeted her, that she was as pleasant to Wellington and Peel as to Melbourne and the Ministers. Really, his social knowledge should have saved him any doubts on that point, and rendered it unnecessary for him to "particularly watch" her when the Tory lords approached.

Creevy was much more pleasing when he wrote, "I cannot resist telling you that our dear little Queen in every respect is *perfection*." Here is exaggeration, it is true, but no insistence upon doubt as to her being ordinarily well-mannered.

Even such a grave event as a first Privy Council meeting may provide food for laughter, and there is one little incident in connection with this Council which was not only amusing, but should have given those present some clear idea of their young Sovereign's character. Sir Bernard Bosanquet, who was present, tells us that, "With the utmost dignity, before her assembled Privy Councillors, with her clear young voice, the Queen began reading :

" 'This Act intituléd'—which is the legal way of spelling entitled.

" 'Entitled, your Majesty, entitled,' hastily corrected Lord Melbourne in a loud aside.

" The young Queen slowly drew herself up and said, quietly and firmly, 'I have said it.'

" Then, after a pause, once more the beautiful childish voice rang out :

" 'This Act intituléd——'"

A curious mistake, or change of mind, took place over the Queen's name. The Peers took the oath of fidelity to Alexandrina Victoria, and all the forms were duly made out in those names. Later in the day the Queen announced that she would be known as Victoria only, which caused a great stir officially, as new parchments with the amended style had to be procured in every case.

Her accession seems to have made a great difference to the little Queen. While only Princess everyone agreed in describing her as quiet, timid, shy; she was always hidden under the wing of her mother, who thought for her, acted for her, and spoke for her. As

soon as she stood alone she became openly what she had probably always been in private, gay and high-spirited; she rode almost every day and drove in the Park; she courted publicity, saying, "Let my people see me," and everywhere she met smiling faces and affectionate regards. There were, of course, those who foretold the usual sad tale, among them being Frances Anne Kemble, who wrote:

"Poor young creature! at eighteen to bear such a burden of responsibility! I should think the mere state and grandeur, and slow-paced solemnity of her degree enough to strike a girl of that age into a melancholy, without all the other graver considerations and causes for care and anxiety which belong to it. I dare say, whatever she may think now, before many years are over, she would be glad to have a small pension of £30,000 a year, and leave to 'go and play,' like common folk of fortune. But, to be sure, if *noblesse oblige*, Royalty must do so still more, or, at any rate, on a wider scale; and so I take up my burden again—poor young Queen of England."

If anyone ever was, by nature, position, and training, born to a life of hard work, that person was Queen Victoria, and so long as she had the spirit and the ability to meet her life bravely, I cannot see that there was any need to pity her. It was inevitable that she should make mistakes and repent of them, for by such comes growth. If she had great responsibilities, she was surrounded by those who upheld her arms and practically took all those responsibilities upon their shoulders.

Carlyle only mentioned Queen Victoria two or three times in his letters, always with a fatherly, personal note, which yet held more than a hint of pity, indicating that he saw some immediate cause for disquiet. A few months after her accession he wrote: "Yesterday, going through one of the Parks, I saw the poor little Queen. She was in an open carriage, preceded by three or four swift red-coated troopers; all off for Windsor just as I happened to pass. Another carriage or carriages followed with maids of honour, &c.; the whole drove very fast. It seemed to me the poor little Queen was a bit modest, nice, sonsy little lassie; blue eyes, light hair, white skin; of extremely small stature: she looked timid, anxious, almost frightened; for the people looked at her in perfect silence; one old livery-man alone touched his hat to her: I was heartily sorry for the poor bairn—though perhaps she might have said, as Parson Swan did, 'Greet not for me, brethren; for verily, yea verily, I greet not for mysel'.'"

At that first Privy Council, the day after the death of King William, a somewhat curious document was prepared or passed in the form of a proclamation from Queen Victoria: "For the Encouragement of Piety and Virtue, and for the Prevention and Punishing of Vice, Profaneness, and Immorality." George III. had issued such a proclamation, and whether it had been the custom for all our Sovereigns to do so I do not know, but this one seems curious enough to be noted. Part of it ran as follows:

"To the intent therefore that religion, piety, and

good manners may (according to Our most Hearty desire) flourish and increase under our administration and government, We have thought fit by the advice of our Privy Council to issue this Our Royal Proclamation, and do hereby declare Our Royal Purpose and Resolution to discountenance and punish all manner of Vice, Profaneness, and Immorality in all persons of whatsoever degree or Quality within this Our Realm, and particularly in such as are employed near Our Royal Person; and that, for the encouragement of Religion and morality, We will upon all occasions distinguish persons of piety and virtue by marks of Our Royal Favour. And We do expect and require that all persons of honour, or in place of authority, will give good example by their own virtue and piety, and to their utmost contribute to the discountenancing persons of dissolute and debauched lives, that they, being reduced by that means to shame and contempt for their loose and evil actions and behaviour, may be thereby also enforced the sooner to reform their ill habits and practices, and that the visible displeasure of good men towards them may (so far as it is possible) supply what the laws (probably) cannot altogether prevent.”

This lengthy document went on to deal with the observance of the Lord's Day, with gambling, card-playing, and drinking.

One wonders whether the Queen or her advisers believed that such a proclamation could lead to any raising of the standard of morals. The Queen, in her youthfulness, might think so, but the men around her must have been very doubtful of it even while doing

the will of their Sovereign, or conforming to a custom, by letting such a document be issued. Yet it is a notable thing that this proclamation embodies in a paragraph the form which improvement in social manners took during the Queen's reign.

The Proclaiming of the Sovereign was the next ceremony in the new life which was opening up for this young person, and she drove to St. James's Palace with the Duchess of Kent and another lady, while in the carriage which preceded her were the Earl of Jersey, Lord Conyngham, the Lord Chamberlain, and Lord Albemarle, the Master of the Horse; in the third carriage were Sir John Conroy and Lady Flora Hastings. Lady Flora had attended the Duchess for some years, and should have been thoroughly well known to the Queen, but yet two years later she had the misfortune to be grievously misjudged and tragically ill-used by her Sovereign.

There were moments at the commencement of her reign when Queen Victoria felt horribly nervous, but she had more than enough self-control to prevent herself from being overcome by emotion. When she came out of the door at Kensington Palace arrayed in black, she looked a veritable child. Her eyes were full of tears, her hands clasped and unclasped, and she trembled at the ordeal before her; yet she turned and looked at the body of Guards drawn up on either side of her door, and bowed in acknowledgment of their salute. Lord Melbourne was by her side, watching her with a fatherly look, and so began that cordial friendship between the Queen and the peer which

lasted for years, and ended only in death on one side and something like forgetfulness on the other.

On the route to St. James's, Greville says, there was very little shouting and very few hats were raised, but other recorders tell of the repeated cheers of the multitude. In the courtyard, as has been said, there was no cheering until a given signal, when Daniel O'Connell led the way, and the noise was then so hearty that the Queen burst into tears.

After this, events crowded thick and fast, and one of the first was the Royal removal to the New, or Buckingham, Palace, a place which Creevy stigmatised as "the Devil's Own," saying that there were raspberry-coloured pillars without end, enough to turn you sick to look at, and that the costly ornaments in the State rooms exceeded all belief in their bad taste and every kind of infirmity. It seems to-day strange to regard the London residence of the Monarch as being at Pimlico, and yet that is its true locality. On this removal *The Times* condescended to ask a conundrum: "Why is Buckingham Palace the cheapest that was ever built?" and proceeded to supply the answer, "Because it was built for one sovereign and furnished for another." When the simply arranged bedroom at Kensington, which had for nearly eighteen years been shared by mother and child, was finally deserted, Victoria gave orders that the room should remain as it was, and nothing be removed or added.

There was the necessary Levée to be held, and so great was the curiosity that such a crowd attended as



had never before been seen at such a function. Over two thousand people were present to kiss the Queen's hand; diamond buckles were broken and lost, orders and decorations torn from their wearers, and epaulettes rubbed from the shoulders of officers. The Drawing Room the next day, in spite of torrents of rain, was more fully attended than it had been for many years. At the Levée Her Majesty was "black as a raven from head to foot, her hair was plainly dressed without ornament, but she wore the Ribbon of the Garter, with the Star on her left breast and the buckle on her left arm.

When she found that the Garter had to be worn, the Queen sent for the Duke of Norfolk, and asked anxiously, "But, my Lord Duke, where *shall* I wear the Garter?" The Duke could only think of a portrait of Queen Anne, in which the Garter was placed on the left arm, and Victoria decided to follow that precedent.

At the Levée there is room for suspicion that the Queen did forget her good manners, though the lapse was not caused by girlish fright or nervousness. Among those whom she received was Lord Lyndhurst, and although she had shown "her usual pretty manner" to all who preceded him, as soon as he approached she drew herself up as though she had seen a snake, at which Lyndhurst turned as red as fire, and afterwards looked as fierce as a fiend.

Having just held a brief for the Queen's good manners, I feel that this incident is somewhat awkward, especially as I cannot really tell why she was rude to

Lyndhurst. She may have been affected by his lordship's wonderful system of "ratting," for he had a habit of making a speech against a Bill, say the Catholic Emancipation Bill, for example, or the Municipal Reform Bill, which became famous, and then when he found it good policy to change his views, would make another notable speech in its favour. Early in his career he held republican opinions, and thought little of the Whigs because their notions of reform were so mild; but when he showed himself extremely clever in defending a noted case, Lord Castlereagh—"carotid-cutting Castlereagh"—is reported to have said, "I can discover in him something of the *rat*, and I will set my trap for him, baited with Cheshire cheese"—meaning that he would offer him the office of Chief Justice of Cheshire.

The trap was set, and Lyndhurst, then plain John Copley, quietly—and perhaps gratefully—walked into it, and on the first vacancy became Solicitor-General to the King. It was said about him that he had danced round the Tree of Liberty to the tune of "Ça ira," and yet became one of the most virulent opponents of all movements towards freedom. However, as Mackintosh said to Lord John Russell, it was with the Whig *prospects*, not their *views*, that he quarrelled, and it may have been just this which made the young Queen scorn him, and feel, as she once owned to Lord Melbourne, a personal dislike of him.

There is a little incident on record which shows just how complaisant he could be in any matter affecting

his interest. A story got about, and was published in the newspapers, that the Duke of Cumberland had called upon Lady Lyndhurst, of whom Creevy said "she has such beautiful eyes and such a way of using them that quite shocked Lady Louisa and me," and so grossly misbehaved himself that he was turned out of the house. He went a second time, when he contented himself with uttering coarse abuse of Lyndhurst. When this affair was made public, Cumberland sent a copy of a journal in which the paragraph appeared to the Lord Chancellor, as Lyndhurst then was, and asked that he should have Lady Lyndhurst's permission to contradict "the gross falsehood."

The thing was true, however, and the Chancellor felt in a fix; he could not fight a Royal Duke, and yet he wished to warn him not to repeat the offence. So he temporised; said he had not before seen the paragraph, which was no doubt one of a series of calumnies to which Lady Lyndhurst had for some time been exposed. This, however, did not satisfy Duke Ernest, who was anxious that his shady character should be cleared of this stain; so he wrote again, demanding a definite sanction to contradict the report. Upon this Lyndhurst, it is said, though seeing the result one hardly believes it, went to the national adviser, the Duke of Wellington, who counselled him to reply that he did not wish to annoy Lady Lyndhurst by speaking of this matter to her. To this he added that, as to excluding the Duke from their home, the grateful attachment they both felt for their Sovereign

made that impossible. So the matter ended. Lyndhurst had cleverly evaded giving the Duke a straightforward answer—which was more like himself than like the Duke of Wellington—and had practically assured him that he would be received as a guest again in the house which he had abused. Lyndhurst would have seemed more admirable if he had been more of a man and less of a diplomatist; and it is quite likely that other incidents of this kind had occurred to make the young Queen, in her youthful zeal for probity, show her dislike for him publicly. Besides, had she not just inculcated virtue by proclamation, and declared the way in which she would reward evil-doers?

To do Lyndhurst justice, however, he seemed to bear her no malice, and when the storm, raised by *The Times*, gathered strength from her friendship for Melbourne and broke in fury upon her before she had been Queen many weeks, Lyndhurst sincerely lamented it. The Tories could not control their disappointment and anger when it was announced that Lord Melbourne was to continue Prime Minister, and they vilified the Queen at every opportunity. To quote from Lord Campbell, a contemporary: "The practice was to contrast her invidiously with Adelaide, the Queen Dowager, and at public dinners to receive the Queen's health with solemn silence, while the succeeding toast of the Queen Dowager was the signal for long continued cheers. Some writers went so far as to praise the Salic law, by which females are excluded from the throne, pointing out the happiness we should have

enjoyed under the rule of the Duke of Cumberland, but consoling the nation by the assurance that his line would soon succeed, as the new Queen, from physical defects, could never bear children."

Well, after all, there *was* some reason for pitying the young, sonsie lassie who was then Queen of England!

## CHAPTER VI

### QUEEN VICTORIA'S ADVISERS

“Conservatism stands on man's confessed limitations; reform on his indisputable infinitude; conservatism on circumstance; liberalism on power.”—*Emerson*.

AMONG the deputations that came to wish the new Queen well was one from the Society of Friends, led by Joseph Sturge. Asked afterwards if he kissed the Queen's hand, he answered, “Oh, yes, and found that act of homage no hardship, I assure thee. It was a fair, soft, delicate little hand.” He added that Her Majesty was “a nice, pleasant, modest little woman, graceful though a little shy, and, on the whole, comely.”

Among the investitures that took place was that of the Duke of Leiningen, Queen Victoria's half-brother, who was invested with the Order of the Garter; Prince Esterhazy, that lover of jewels, was invested with the Military Order of the Bath, and the Queen held a Chapter for the purpose, wearing the mantle of the Order, the ribbon and the badge. All the Knights Grand Cross appeared on this splendid occasion.

Queen Victoria had probably no wish to change her Parliament, but custom decreed that it should be

prorogued, and she decided to prorogue it in person, much to the alarm of the Duchess her mother, who begged her not to do so, fearing the effect that the excitement might have on her health. But the child was already three weeks away from her leading-strings; she was beginning to feel the glories of independence, and she would no longer submit blindly to the will of another. The word excitement displeased her, and she is said to have answered: "That is a word I do not like to hear; all these successive ceremonies interest and please me, but have no such effect on my mind as that which I understand by excitement."

So the Queen went in State to the House of Lords, where the old Throne devoted to the use of old Sovereigns was banished, and replaced by a new one bedizened with the Royal Arms in gold, and the words "Victoria Regina" also in gold. With girlish delight in her new state, Her Majesty donned "a white satin kirtle embroidered in gold, a robe of crimson velvet trimmed with ermine stripes and gold lace, confined at the waist and shoulders with gold cord, and having an ermine cape attached (this was in July!) a stomacher of diamonds, a tiara and bracelets of diamonds, the Garter round her arm, and the Ribbon of the Garter over her shoulder completed the outward attire." One evening paper commented upon the Queen and her dress as follows: "Her emotion was plainly discernible in the rapid heaving of her bosom and the brilliancy of her diamond stomacher, which sparkled out occasionally from the dark recess in which the throne was placed, like the sun on the swell of the

smooth ocean as the billows rise and fall." The earliest Victorian journalists knew something of the gentle art of high falutin'!

The Queen acquitted herself well in this trying position, and we are told that the Duchess of Kent wept tears of joy on seeing the way in which "her august daughter" acquitted herself. Other tears seem also to have been shed, for Lord Grey declared that he actually cried from pleasure at the Queen's voice and speech; and he added that, after seeing and hearing three Sovereigns of England, the latest surpassed them all, easily, in every respect.

One of the sentimentalists of the day wrote concerning the Duchess and her daughter, "the first separation that had ever taken place between Her Majesty and her Royal mother was decreed by the immutable (?) laws of Royal etiquette on this occasion, and doubtless it was felt as no slight trial by both." Yet they were both in the same room!

Another contemporary tells us that the impertinent old Lady Jersey took powerful opera-glasses with her to the House of Lords, and through them fixed her eyes relentlessly on the Queen, which, according to the laws of etiquette in those days, was a direct personal affront if applied to people of high rank.

While King William was ill, there had been many private conferences among members of the Government as to the right course to pursue when the Princess came to the throne. Sir Robert Peel had given it as his opinion that the young Queen should retain Lord Melbourne as her chief adviser and rely frankly on



his guidance, and the Duke of Wellington (also a Tory) was strongly in favour of the same course. Victoria was probably but obeying her uncle Sussex's promptings when on the morning after the King's death she sent for Melbourne and put herself in his hands.

One of the first things to be considered was the formation of the Royal Household, and in this matter the Queen had something to say. She uttered a wish on the 20th of June that Lady Lansdowne should be her principal lady, either as Mistress of the Robes or as First Lady in Waiting. Lady Lansdowne accepted the post of First Lady in Waiting, and two days later Victoria invited the Duchess of Sutherland to become Mistress of the Robes, and asked Lady Tavistock to be one of her Ladies.

Inquiry had been made into the Household of Queen Anne, and it was found that she had had eleven Ladies of the Bedchamber, but Victoria thought that this was too cumbrous an attendance, and eventually decided upon one Mistress of the Robes, seven Ladies in Waiting, and eight Women of the Bedchamber. Lady Portman, Lady Lyttelton, and the Countess of Durham were among the Ladies, while Miss Davys, her preceptor's daughter, was appointed Resident Woman of the Bedchamber, including in her duties those of private secretary in so far as private correspondence was concerned. The Queen and Miss Davys had been friends for years, and once when Victoria's opinion was asked on some subject discussed by that lady, she replied: "If you really wish me to speak my mind I must say I perfectly agree with Miss Davys.

How, indeed, should I do otherwise, for have we not both been educated by her father?"

Thus some of her ladies were chosen from among those whom she liked, while others were recommended to her by Melbourne or her uncle, but the result was that they were all, or nearly all, related to the Whigs. Croker touched upon this subject in the *Quarterly Review* for July, 1837, pointing out that it was impolitic that the Queen should be surrounded with many members of the same families, "however respectable," and also that it was neither constitutional in principle nor convenient in practice that her private life should be exposed to the fluctuations of political change, or that political changes should be either produced or prevented by private favour or personal attachments; meaning thereby that her ladies should be chosen from both parties, so that when the Government was changed her Household should be to a certain extent stable. However, the mistake was made, and in 1839 it had to be paid for.

As to her Lords in Waiting, Queen Victoria retained five gentlemen who had been Lords of the Bed-chamber to King William, and added to them three from the supporters of Lord Melbourne.

Others besides Croker discussed the formation of the Household, only they did not content themselves with philosophical disquisitions or allude chiefly to the future. One paper said that "the indecent usurpation of nominating Her Majesty's Household—of surrounding her person by a female brigade of political spies—had in *one instance* produced a dignified and

determined resistance." Alluding probably to the fact that the Countess of Rosebery had declined to serve. They declared that Her Majesty's wishes had been "most sternly thwarted, even where they ought in kindness and courtesy to have been deemed supreme—so far is the distribution of offices from affording any index of the Queen's opinions"; and averred that Victoria wished to make the Duchess of Northumberland, a Tory, who had resigned her position a few months earlier, her Mistress of the Robes, only the Duchess of Kent and "the Irish bombardier, Sir John Conroy," thought otherwise, so the honour fell to the Marchioness of Lansdowne. The more volatile Tory papers begged her piteously to dismiss the Whigs, and the *Age* went on its knees to her in the following and many other effusions:—

"If your Majesty would reign in the hearts of your subjects, nor hold a barren sceptre in your hand, you will enquire for the confidential advisers of your family (and you will not find *them* among your present Ministers), solicit their advice, and learn from them the real nature of your Royal office, the *true* state of your loyal subjects, the present position of your dominions in all their political relations—internal, foreign, and commercial."

An early matter for discussion was whether Her Majesty should be allowed a private secretary, after the example of the two last Sovereigns. George III. had done all his own work until 1805, when he became blind, and, much to the disgust of politicians, paid Colonel Herbert Taylor out of funds at the disposal

of the Crown to be his private secretary. When the Prince Regent made Colonel McMahon his secretary, and asked that his salary should be paid out of the public funds, Parliament opposed the suggestion to such an extent that the salary had to be paid from the Privy Purse. The appointment itself was attacked in Parliament, the contention being that it was highly unconstitutional, for the secrets of State would thus pass through a third party—other than the King and the Ministers—and that a private secretary would constitute a Court of Revision above the Cabinet. Fortunately, the Ministers defended the appointment. Prior to this the poor Monarch had had personally to sign thousands of documents every year, and in the absence of the secretary had to seal and address the communications; thus the services of an assistant were absolutely essential if the Sovereign were not to become a sort of automatic machine for doing mechanical work.

William IV. made Sir Herbert Taylor his secretary; but when Victoria came to the throne, the duties of this servant were so misunderstood that she was allowed no secretary; all alike being afraid lest the servant should become the master and adviser. The Queen wished to appoint Baron Stockmar, but fortunately for everyone Melbourne would not consent to this, for as Stockmar was practically the agent of King Leopold, the nation would have been indignant at his being put into so important a position. Leopold had had the prudence not to hurry over to England as soon as his niece became Queen, which was wise of him, for had he come he would have been accused of desiring



KING LEOPOLD OF THE BELGIANS.

From the Drawing by Sir Thomas Lawrence. P.R.A.



to rule the country through her, and, besides, discord must have arisen between him and his sister the Duchess. What he did was to send the Baron over, who for some years had been occupied in training Prince Albert for the high position his uncle intended him to hold. The Baron's unacknowledged post about the Queen was that of theoretic political tutor rather than actual adviser, for he had been brought up in the midst of German theories, and never seemed to understand the difference between the English and German system of governing. That he gave Queen Victoria much excellent advice, and that a profound and trusting regard existed between them, cannot be doubted, but he was another foreigner added to those already about the Throne, and his name was instantly connected with those who were still known as the Kensington Camarilla. There were naturally many who distrusted the Baron. Abercromby, the Speaker, said that he felt it his duty to call attention in Parliament to the unconstitutional position of the foreigner Stockmar; a course which, however, he never followed. Melbourne himself, much as he was said to approve of the German, occasionally felt a certain uneasiness about him, which was expressed as follows:—

“King Leopold and Stockmar are very good and intelligent people, but I dislike very much to hear it said that I am influenced by them. We know it is not true, but still I dislike to hear it said.”

A general report *was* spread abroad that the Baron was acting in the important position of secretary to the Queen, and Melbourne in a letter to a colleague wrote :

“There is, of course, no truth in Stockmar’s appointment. It should be quietly contradicted.” While this matter was being discussed, Victoria sent for Sir Herbert Taylor to get his advice, and he asked, “Is your Majesty afraid of the work?” which drew from her the reply, “I mean to work.” “Then don’t have a secretary,” he retorted, which was silly, seeing that without one the Queen would have to spend all her time doing secretarial work.

In the end Melbourne arranged to act as secretary to her Majesty on matters of state, which entailed seeing her every day, and the Baroness Lehzen undertook at first personal and domestic affairs, and there were more than hints that she really did fill the post of adviser so dreaded by those in Parliament.

The name of the Baroness Lehzen raised the fury of the more intemperate of political writers, for they had always suspected her of acting, not against the interest of England so much as against the interest of party. This may or may not have been the case, but there can be no doubt whatever concerning her intense love for her one-time pupil, and it was probably this as well as her enmity to Conroy that helped to make a breach between her and the Duchess; for two people loving the same person are very likely to get different ideas concerning that person’s good, and to quarrel over each other’s methods. Baroness Lehzen, as has been said, was a real German, stolid, conventional, sensible, and, like many of her countrywomen, showing little imagination. She may have had as much influence as the Duchess or King Leopold in



debaring the girl from all imaginative literature and from all fiction. When Victoria became Queen she had never read a novel, and there seems to be no evidence that she had ever touched literature or anything beyond lessons or history books. This, of course, may have been caused by a certain system of education, or it may have been that those in authority had no taste for *belles lettres* or intellectual exercise. It was the day in which it was thought dangerous for a woman to use her brains, and when a certain limited knowledge of facts was regarded as education. I notice that when the Duchess asked the Bishops of London and Lincoln to "examine" the Princess in 1830, they mention only the subjects of Christian Religion, Scripture, History, Geography, Arithmetic, and the Latin Grammar, and expressed themselves entirely satisfied. Of course, this was a fairly good education for the period, but it was all a matter of memory, and, apart from history, left little place for the exercise of the mind.

By the time Victoria had been Queen for a year she had read three novels, and had struggled through two books of memoirs, but it was possible that what she had lost in her youthful training could never be regained. However, her daily habits were impeccable. She had been brought up in simplicity both in dress and food, regularity in meals, work, play, and sleep, and punctuality, being punctual herself and demanding it of others. She was also taught never to half-learn or half-do anything, but always to finish that which she began. One story of her punctuality is told

by several writers, but the irrepressible Creevy gives it in an amusing form, so I quote it here.

“A word or two about Vic. She is as much idolised as ever, except by the Duchess of Sutherland, who received a very proper snub from her two days ago. She was half an hour late for dinner, so little Vic. told her that she hoped it might not happen another time; for, tho’ she did not mind in the least waiting herself, it was very unpleasant to keep her company waiting.”

Lady Georgiana Grey had the Baroness by her side at dinner one day, and heard from her high laudations of Her Majesty, such as that she was absolutely perfect, that she worked from morning to night, and that she would be surrounded with dispatch boxes while her maid was doing her hair. There was an earlier occasion on which Lehzen let her heart overflow about the perfections of her charge, saying, among other things, that, though she would never be a beautiful or grand-looking woman, she would certainly be one of the greatest Monarchs of Europe—“great, not in beauty nor in stature, but great in intellect and as a wife and in motherly love to her children, and greater still as mother of England.” To this she added, “I know all about her, and I feel she will live to be idolised, and leave a name behind her such as none of her predecessors have left.”

If these words were so uttered, and not amplified by uncertain memory, it seems that there was at least one person who thought that she knew the character of the Princess. Stockmar is said to have come to

the same judgment when he first saw her in 1836. "England will grow great and famous under her rule!" was his remark. It is added that these words being repeated to the King, drew from him the answer, "If Stockmar said that, I cease regretting that I have no children to whom to hand down the crown."

It was a pity that between the two women who had done most towards forming the mind of the young Queen there should have arisen an abiding coolness. Sir John Conroy was the one person in whom the Duchess reposed her confidence, and whose advice she sought before taking any action; but Lehzen hated Conroy, and had probably inspired her pupil with the same sentiment. It was more than likely that Conroy, as well as the Duchess, was perfectly aware of her feelings, for the Baroness considered that they did not use her well. Then, too, judging from after events, it is very possible that Lehzen had already acquired an undue influence over Victoria, and had raised the bitter jealousy of the Duchess. However, the whole little circle kept up appearances, and the people forming it were outwardly on cordial terms. Victoria was devoted to her Lehzen, and when at home apparently always required her company; for the Ministers who had occasion to see Her Majesty would often, on entering a room by one door, see the Baroness disappearing by another, and as soon as the audience was over she would return to the Queen.

The one thing about Victoria's new home which must astonish all who think about it is, that from the time she became Queen, her mother went into the back-

ground. This proud woman, who had fought Kings and Princes that she might give her child the best that she knew; she who by the asperity of her temper and haughty pride had become a personage distinct from all other members of the Royal family, now that that beloved child was in the highest position in the land, sank into nothingness. She was never consulted, she did not always know what was happening, no word of State affairs reached her ears; the old companionship was gone, for alas! in the old days she had drawn the rein too tightly, so that when once the young creature was free she feared the restraining hand too much to trust it again.

One of Victoria's first acts must have given her mother much pain, though it is likely that she had had warning of what would occur. Sir John Conroy, who had been right-hand man both to the Duke and to the Duchess, had fallen into the faults so common to long service. He was too sure of his ground, too ready to assume responsibility, and he had never troubled to look upon the Princess as a force with which he should reckon. Thus he was entirely disliked by her, and she determined that in her new household she would be freed from a man who, whatever his merits, was personally obnoxious to herself.

So long as Her Majesty remained at Kensington, that is, until July 13th, Conroy was a member of the Household, and he perhaps did not believe that the young Queen would at once and so effectually grasp her power. He had not yet learned to discriminate between the past and the present, and followed his

usual course as master of the servants. Thus one day a groom who had been in constant attendance upon Victoria could not be found, and on inquiries being made it was explained that Conroy had dismissed him. That is said to have brought matters to a head. The Queen sent for Sir John—so runs one account—and asked him to name the reward he expected for his services to her parents. His reply was that he desired the Red Ribband, an Irish Peerage, and a pension of £3,000 a year. The Queen answered that the first two lay with her Ministers, and she could not promise for them, but the pension he should have. In another account we learn that she made him a baronet in addition to bestowing the pension, but that all connection with the Palace ceased, and that he was never distinguished by the slightest mark of personal favour; “so that nothing can be more striking than the contrast between the magnitude of the pecuniary bounty and the complete personal disregard of which he is the object.”

“Conroy goes not to Court, the reason’s plain,  
King John has played his part and ceased to reign”

sung a flippant paragraphist.

Under these circumstances the Duchess lost the daily companionship of the friend upon whom, judiciously or otherwise, she was accustomed to lean, a matter which rankled long and bitterly in the poor lady’s mind. However, the Queen was still her well-beloved child, and it was a long time before she could forget to exercise her motherly desire to guide events; thus she watched with alarm the brilliant life now led

by the girl, who for eighteen years had been carefully guarded from late hours, luxurious food, and social excitement of every sort. Now the emancipated girl filled long days with business engagements, with public pageants, with theatres and balls, and other amusements. She was enjoying to the full the consciousness of being the centre of things, she was beginning to appreciate her power, and was punctilious in carrying out any settled plan. When her mother urged her to remain quietly at home she laughed at her fears, and showed no disposition to go back to the nursery *régime* of Kensington. So the Duchess made an ally of the doctor—probably Sir James Clark, who played so unfortunate a part two years later. He remonstrated with Her Majesty upon the life of excitement that she was experiencing, saying that it must be injurious to her.

“Say too much amusement rather than excitement,” replied the Queen. “I know not what the future will bring, but I have met with so much affection, so much respect, and every act of sovereignty has been made so light, that I have not yet felt the weight of the Crown.”

Then the doctor changed his complaint, and remarked upon the enormous dinner parties she gave, saying that their size must make them very fatiguing. But Victoria was ready with her answer.

“These dinner parties amuse me. If I had a small party I should have to exert myself to entertain my guests. but with a large one they are called upon to

amuse me, and then I become personally acquainted with those who surround the throne."

There was one disquieting person who was partially removed from Victoria's life upon her accession, and that was the Duke of Cumberland, who became King of Hanover on the death of his brother. William had in 1833 granted a liberal constitution with representative government to his Hanoverian dominions, where his brother, the Duke of Cambridge, was Viceroy. On William's death Cambridge returned to England, and Cumberland left England to harass his new subjects. One of his first acts was to reverse all that his brother had done, to abolish the constitution, make himself arbitrary King, and prosecute the Liberal Professors of Göttingen. This was not done in spite, but from a sincere conviction that reform of any sort was wrong. He was a Tory of the Tories, but, I believe, quite honest in his politics. He really thought that England was going to destruction—a myth which is cherished by some up to the present day—the first step downwards being the repeal of the Corporation and Test Act in 1828, the next the Catholic Emancipation Act, while the climax of our ruin was the Reform Bill. It was in his private and social life that King Ernest was so odious. His wife, who admired him as a man of intellect, was terrified by his fits of ungovernable temper; his sister in Hanover said that the loss of her brother Cambridge nearly killed her, "the whole thing is so changed one's mind is quite upset"; while his lax ideas of morality really made him detestable.

The papers abounded in announcements that he was unpopular. At the coronation of William IV. *The Times* drew a gentle contrast between the way in which the Duke and the Ministers were received: "The Duke of Cumberland experienced in the course of yesterday proofs, we dare say not unexpected by His Royal Highness, of the extraordinary estimation in which most Englishmen hold him. The Duke of Wellington whom, if he had never been a politician, his countrymen would gladly, gratefully, and for ever have recognised as an illustrious military chief, was treated respectfully by the spectators in the Abbey; but Lord Grey and Lord Brougham received every testimony of the warmest and most eager approbation." In turning to the article in the Dictionary of National Biography, I find a very partial account given of the Duke of Cumberland, the impression made being that he was a brave, clever man, much maligned by the Whigs and Radicals. This, however, was not exactly the case, the Duke's delinquencies being recorded by every shade of opinion, and though it is most likely that those opposed to him in politics shouted the loudest, the undoubted fact remains that all joined in the cry.

In the election of July, 1837, the Whigs were returned to power, having lost in the counties but gained elsewhere; this confirmed Lord Melbourne in his place as Prime Minister, and put him into the position of guardian to Her Majesty. Melbourne must in some ways have been a wonderful man for that position. He was then in his fifty-eighth year, a man of the



world, somewhat sceptical, "but honourable, well-meaning, honest, clever, highly educated, and a moderate Liberal." He was a peace lover, and perhaps sometimes was inclined to say, like the over-indulgent parent, "anything for peace!"—one of his favourite utterances being, "Damn it! why can't everyone be quiet?" He was constitutionally incapable of sustaining a quarrel, for he had no jealousy or rancour in his disposition, a dispute bored him, and he felt no interest in getting the better of an argument; he could easily forgive, and do so without humiliating the aggressor. With these good qualities went indolence and a certain amount of carelessness. But that he was neither a place-hunter nor a flatterer is amply proved by the fact that at first everyone approved of his position with the Queen. No one could suggest any other course to pursue, and it was not until a little later that the Tories saw how entirely they had given the Crown into the hands of the Whigs.

Melbourne's sufferings in life came from the fact that he was in advance of his age in one respect. To-day no one could have had any excuse for trying to blackmail him or to damage his reputation. Eighty years ago matters were different, and no man could make a friend of a charming lady, go to see her as often as he pleased, and expect to be free from danger. As Melbourne did this sort of thing, he naturally had to account for it.

In 1828 Lord Brandon, who was a Doctor of Divinity, found letters which seemed to prove that there was a too warm friendship between his wife and

Mr. William Lamb, which was Melbourne's name before he came into his title. The parson-peer thereupon wrote to his wife telling her what he had found, and what conclusion he drew from it. Then he added that if she would use her influence with Mr. Lamb to procure him a Bishopric he would overlook the offence and give her back the letters. To this the lady replied that she would neither degrade herself nor Mr. Lamb by such a course, and that the letter just received from him she should show to the latter gentleman. The result was a suit for divorce brought by Lord Brandon, which he lost through insufficient evidence; the production of his letter would, however, have been sufficient to make a jury decide against him.

A few years later Melbourne met again the Hon. Mrs. Norton, whom he had known in her childhood. She was both beautiful and clever, and being a granddaughter of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, had inherited a shade of his genius. Unfortunately when she was but nineteen, she had married a man named George Norton, a younger brother of Fletcher Norton, third Lord Grantley, who was also an unsuccessful barrister of twenty-seven, coarse in disposition, greedy and brutal, though, like most young people, he managed to hide his faults from the girl he wooed until after the marriage. Mrs. Norton was a poet, clever rather than spontaneous, and she published a little volume called "The Sorrows of Rosalie: A Tale, with Other Poems." This was Byronic in style, and the praise poured upon it effectually opened a literary career for its author. From that time her labours practically



THE HON. MRS. NORTON.



kept her household going, with the exception that, having begged Lord Melbourne to do something for her husband, George Norton was given a Metropolitan police magistracy in 1831. Norton was anything but satisfactory at his work, and thus a coolness arose between him and Melbourne; but the latter still visited at his house, feeling a kindly friendship for Mrs. Norton, whose lively Irish mind and conversation charmed him.

Norton was scarcely the man to make home a pleasant place, and at last matters between husband and wife came to an open rupture. Upon this, it was said that a little plot was hatched. Everyone knew that before long a young Queen would be upon the throne, and everyone also knew the integrity and strict sentiments of the Duchess of Kent. From these the conclusion was drawn by "some of the less reputable members of the Opposition," that if Melbourne were publicly discredited he would never be Prime Minister under the new rule. "The Court is mighty prudish, and between them our off-hand Premier will find himself in a ticklish position." Thus, remembering the former case against Lord Melbourne, and remembering that mud is likely to stick closest the more frequently it is flung, George Norton was incited to institute a divorce case against his wife, with Melbourne as co-respondent.

Lord Melbourne had this thunder-cloud hanging over him for months, and in spite of his brave words to Mrs. Norton, it at last made him absolutely ill.

"Since first I heard that I was to be proceeded

against, I have had neither sleep nor appetite, I have suffered more intensely than I ever did in my life, and I attribute the whole of my illness (at least the severity of it) to the uneasiness of my mind. Now what is this uneasiness for? Not for my own character, because, as you justly say, the imputation upon me is as nothing. It is not for the political consequences to myself, although I deeply feel the consequences which my indiscretion may bring upon those who are attached to me and follow my fortunes. The real and principal object of my anxiety is you, and the situation in which you have been so unjustly placed." Again he writes: "I hope you will not take it ill if I implore you to try at least to be calm under these trials. You know what is alleged is utterly false, and what is false can rarely be made to appear true."

The case was talked of for months before it came to trial, and all the newspapers had their comments to make, facetiously writing of "Mrs. Norton and her Lamb." On the whole, however, they preached the innocence of the Premier; even the *Age*, ultra-Tory and scandalous as it was, honestly said that it believed him to be wrongly accused; though, later, that paper was anything but kind to him. It was the 22nd of June, 1836, when Justice Tindal sat in the Court of Common Pleas to decide upon the moral conduct of Viscount Melbourne and the Hon. Mrs. Norton, and also to decide whether it would be just to award Mr. Norton damages to the value of £10,000. Sir William Follett led for the plaintiff, and unwisely admitted that he had not advised his going to trial, adding, however,

that he certainly expected to secure a verdict. However, he managed to ask of his client a most unfortunate question, whether it was true that Mr. Norton had ever walked with his wife to Lord Melbourne's house and left her there. Upon Norton admitting that he had done so, Follett replied that that was the end of the case. The only witnesses were servants, mostly of damaged character, discarded from the Norton household, some of them several years earlier. These had been nursed for some time quietly at Lord Grantley's country seat, yet in spite of their kindly treatment none of them could swear to any occurrences which had taken place within the preceding three years. At the close of the plaintiff's case the jury refused an adjournment, so the judge analysed the evidence, and a verdict of acquittal was returned, drawing loud cheers from the onlookers, which were echoed by those waiting outside the Court. The news was carried immediately to the House of Commons, where it was received with acclamation; and King William cordially congratulated his Minister the next day on having "baffled the machinations which he did not doubt had their origin in sinister aims fomented by the meaner animosities of party." Other congratulations poured in from every quarter, and the paragraphist made his harvest out of the case, one comment running:—

"This Crim. con. case, complex and ram-  
ified since it commenced,  
Prove that meek Melbourne's still a Lamb,  
The fair one sinn'd against."

Lord Wynford, uncle to George Norton, noted as

one of the violent Tories, and the Duke of Cumberland were openly spoken of as the foster-fathers of this charge, but when it failed both men assured Melbourne on their honour that they knew nothing about it. Lord Wynford said that he had not heard of the case until four days after it was commenced, and had not seen "that unfortunate young man" (Norton) for two or three years. The impression, however, remained that the case had its origin in political scheming, and Greville (a Tory himself) certainly believed this, for on the 27th of June he wrote:—

"Great exultation at the verdict on the part of his (Melbourne's) political adherents, great disappointment on that of the mob of low Tories, and a creditable satisfaction among the better sort; it was a triumphal acquittal. The wonder is how with such a case Norton's family ventured into Court, but (although it is stoutly denied) there can be no doubt that old Wynford was at the bottom of it and persuaded Lord Grantley to urge it on for some political purposes. There is pretty conclusive evidence of this. Fletcher Norton, who is staying in town, was examined on the trial, and Denison, who is Norton's neighbour, and who talked to Fletcher Norton's host, was told that Fletcher Norton had shown him the case on which they were going to proceed, and that he had told him he thought it was a very weak one, to which he had replied so did he, but he expected it would produce a very important political effect."

In 1837 Lord Melbourne became political adviser to the Queen. As her Prime Minister he had to see



her every day, as her Secretary he had to spend an hour or two with her daily in going through her State correspondence. Thus before many months were passed, the Opposition began to make stringent remarks upon Melbourne at Windsor, but the Duke of Wellington, satisfied with his actions and his treatment of the Queen, said, "I wish he were always there!" This continued companionship raised a warm feeling of friendship in the minds of both; Melbourne became devoted to his Queen, and received from her an almost filial confidence. George Villiers, who was once on a visit to Windsor, was greatly impressed with the relationship between the two, remarking :—

"Lord Melbourne's attitude to the Queen is so parental and anxious, but always so deferential and respectful; hers, indicative of such entire confidence, such pleasure in his society. She is continually talking to him; let who will be there, he always sits next her at dinner, and evidently by arrangement, because he always takes in the lady in waiting, which necessarily places him next her, the etiquette being that the lady in waiting sits next but one to the Queen. It is not unnatural, and to him it is peculiarly interesting. I have no doubt he is passionately fond of her as he might be of his daughter if he had one, and the more because he is a man with a capacity for loving without having anything in the world to love. It has become his province to educate, instruct, and form the most interesting mind in the world. No occupation was ever more engrossing or involved greater responsibility. I

have no doubt that Melbourne is both equal to and worthy of the task, and that it is fortunate she has fallen into his hands, and that he discharges this great duty wisely, honourably, and conscientiously. There are, however, or rather may be hereafter, inconveniences in the establishment of such an intimacy, and in a connection of so close and affectionate a nature between the young Queen and her Minister; for whenever the Government, which hangs by a thread, shall be broken up, the parting will be painful, and their subsequent relations will not be without embarrassment to themselves, nor fail to be the cause of jealousy in others. It is a great proof of the discretion and purity of his conduct and behaviour, that he is admired, respected, and liked by all the Court."

There were, however, to the Viscount some small inconveniences caused by his constant attendance at Court. He possessed very courtierlike instincts, it is true, but in general his attitudes were anything but those of a courtier, for he loved to lounge and sprawl, while his language was distinctly unparliamentary, being interlarded with Damns. Someone writes that when Brougham's own irresponsibility made it impossible to trust him again with the Great Seal, Melbourne made the emphatic remark:

"G—d d—n you, I tell you I can't give you the Great Seal, and there's an end of it!" When Brougham was a second time disappointed of place, he is reported to have said to his former chief, who was very anxious not to hurt his feelings more than could be helped:

“Why don't you say again what you said before, and damn me for wanting the Seal?”

On one occasion Melbourne went with Lady Grant Duff, Mrs. Norton, and Henry Reeve to see “Every Man in his Humour,” and before the curtain rose he remarked that it would be a dull play with no kudos in it. Between the acts he exclaimed in a stentorian voice, heard across the pit :

“I knew this play would be dull, but that it would be so damnably dull as this I did not suppose !”

These things Melbourne had to alter; he had to soften his laugh, keep a guard upon his tongue, and sit uprightly in his chair; all of which he accomplished, though it is recorded that when in 1846 Peel made a *volte face* on the repeal of the Corn Laws, Melbourne, though seated at the Queen's table, burst out with :

“It's a damned dishonest act, Ma'am, a damned dishonest act.” One account of this relates that the Queen only laughed, while the others around the table did not know how or where to look, as the Court was in favour of Repeal and Peel was its trusted Minister; but another story goes that Melbourne was so excited that Her Majesty had to say firmly :

“Never mind, Lord Melbourne; we will discuss this at another time.”

This change of opinion on the part of Peel, by the way, caused many hard words to be showered upon him, the Duke of Wellington saying, with a side allusion to the Irish famine :

“Rotten potatoes have done it; they put Peel in his

damned fright"; while Lord Alvanley declared that Peel ought not to die a natural death.

It is probable that Melbourne's upright regard for his own principles attracted Victoria more sincerely than some of his other good qualities, for her rank never inclined him to assent to her wishes if he thought them injudicious.

## CHAPTER VII

### QUEEN VICTORIA'S CIRCLE

“Under the present reign the perfect decorum of the Court is thought to have put a check on the gross vices of the aristocracy; yet gaming, racing, drinking, and mistresses bring them down, and the democrat can still gather scandals, if he will.”—*Emerson*.

THAT the Queen had a determined will was evidenced by a rather amusing incident early in her reign. A great military review in Hyde Park had been suggested for July 18th, but failed to take place, and the Press did its best to discover the hidden reason for its abandonment. It is really wonderful how successful newspaper men were in ferreting out secrets, for this time, though they may have added details, with a little bit invented and a little bit inferred, the main fact was correct.

Her Majesty was determined that she would appear at the review on horseback, accompanied by the Duke of Wellington and Lord Hill, which was certainly the most effective way of seeing ranks of soldiers pass before her. A leading London paper reported that Lord Melbourne was horrified at the idea, for he thought that propriety demanded that a great lady should drive in a carriage. This point was discussed

with "firmness" on both sides, the Queen refusing to alter her method of going, and the Prime Minister thinking that method too great an innovation to be countenanced. At last, as Melbourne backed from her presence, the Queen finished the interview with, "Very well, my lord, very well; remember, no horse, no review!"

So far the papers. But from contemporary correspondence I find that the matter was considered of sufficient importance for the Duke of Wellington to ask Lord Liverpool if there were not some idea of the Queen riding to the review, and on being told that there was talk of it, he expressed his opinion that it would be very dangerous, as it was difficult to get good steady horses, and, besides, the Queen would not be able to have a "female" attendant with her, which would seem indelicate, and that, in fact, she had better go in a carriage.

But Queen Victoria would not be dictated to in this matter; she decided that there should be no review *this year*. "I was determined to have it only if I *could* ride, and as I have not ridden for two years, it was better not." So she showed diplomacy as well as determination—two very good qualities in a Sovereign.

As to the Duke's doubt about the horses, at that very time Victoria was pressing the Dowager Queen Adelaide to take away two or three of her own riding horses from among the number which, by the death of the King, had been transferred to herself.

However, Queen Victoria held a review in the Home

Park at Windsor in August, when King Leopold was with her, and both regiments of the Guards, horse and foot, passed before her, she being mounted on a grey charger, and wearing a blue riding-habit and cloth cap with a deep gold band round it. When the troops were at "attention" the Queen rode along the line and between the ranks.

While the elections were in progress in July, both parties made unfair use of Her Majesty's name. "Vote for —— (Whig candidate) and the Queen!" was the general appeal from the Whig side. In fact, both sides claimed her; and though we consider the tactics employed to-day at elections are sometimes degrading and unnecessary, they are not quite so bad as they were in the "good old times" of the early part of last century. The poor disappointed Tories were spurred to desperation by the conviction forced upon them that their turn was not yet, and did their best to score off their opponents. They would not believe in the generally received idea that the young Queen favoured the Whigs, an idea which was absolutely true, however, and they wrote such warnings as the following:—

"The infamous use made of the Queen's name is traitorous, base, and cowardly. Her Majesty, if she has any political bias, which we very much doubt, and earnestly for her own sake hope she may never have, is too young and inexperienced in matters of State policy to have given utterance to it. The continuance in office of the Melbourne Ministry is no proof of her

affection for them. They are not of her selection; and, it may be, are only retained under warning till more eligible successors are found."

In this strain ran many protests, which a little later, when the Government had done some work, took a new form. There were whispers, and then assertions made, that the Queen had converted all her Ministers to Conservatism, and in January, 1838, the *Morning Post* had a leader upon the subject:—

"Her Majesty . . . has effected an almost instantaneous conversion of Lord Melbourne, Lord John Russell, and all the other members of the Administration into Conservatives, the most ostentatious, not the most sincere, of whom England can boast. Yes, the same statesmen who vexed and harassed the declining years of their late aged Monarch by their alliance with the men of the movement, . . . finding themselves at the commencement of a Conservative reign which the most juvenile of their number cannot expect to survive, and having discovered, moreover, that the hints breathed at them from Kensington during the latter part of their Royal Mistress's minority were of no true or holy inspiration, but such spurious and illicit intimations as seldom fail to deceive alike the givers and the receivers, have thought fit to make for themselves a movement, and a very decided one, in a direction diametrically opposed to that in which for several years past they have been labouring to advance. The obsequious Ministers of a Conservative Sovereign, they are as decidedly Conservative as their existing alliances and their actual position will allow. Hence their hoary



chief is in constant personal attendance upon our youthful Conservative SOVEREIGN, not to impart political instruction, but to imbibe it."

A week or so later the same paper followed this up with another leader, in which it said:—

"The Whigs—the Melbourne or bastard Whigs we mean—have, with a most accommodating and meretricious facility, prostituted their hereditary and their personal pretexts—for principles we cannot call them—to captivate the 'sweet voices' of the swinish constituency (? electorate), which, for purposes more swinish than the constituency created, they have forced into existence."

We scarcely aim at outdoing this sort of thing to-day; no paper would dare to label the electorate "swinish," for the extension of the franchise would at least have had the effect of making all England feel itself insulted through every constituency.

That there had been no conversion of the Government it is unnecessary to say, but there may have been something to warrant the hope—or otherwise—that such a change had taken place, for Melbourne was distinctly a moderate Whig, disapproving of really Radical measures, just as Wellington disapproved of following blindly the desires of his party when he regarded their methods as impolitic. There was, however, a generally expressed hope that the Whigs would not long be retained in power, and articles upon this point filled the Tory papers, while songs were sung in the streets on the same theme. In Hudders-

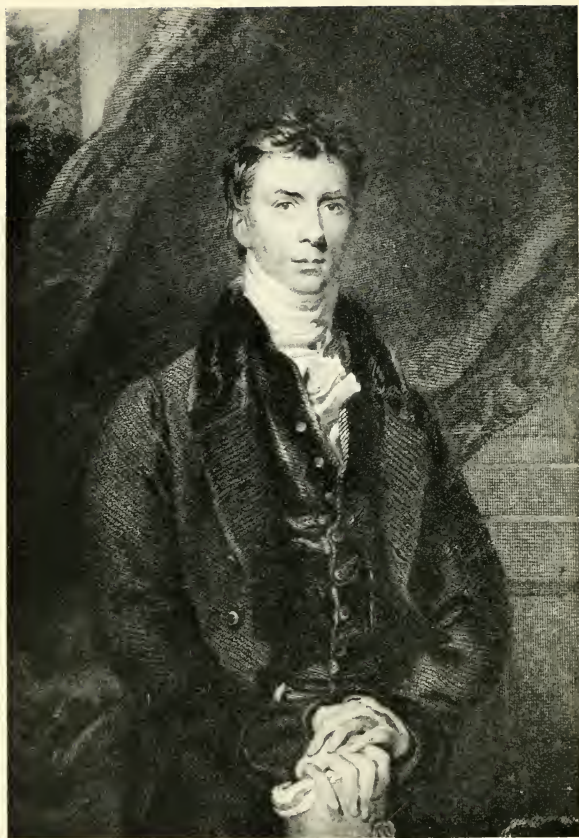
field upon a window-pane is said to have been written :—

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

Fatherly and experienced as was Melbourne, and ready as was the Queen to be taught, she did not give herself unreservedly into his hands, and there was no truth in the cheap witticism which I have come across somewhere : “ ‘ The Lion of England,’ said the Queen, with one of her bland smiles, ‘ has been taught to lie down with the Lamb ! ’ ”

If there was anything of particular importance to decide, Victoria was not one to go calmly where she was led ; she had left all that ductility behind on the day that she attained her eighteenth year. Her answer would be : “ I would rather think about it first ; I will let you know my decision to-morrow.” Thus would she reply to everyone, with the result that many said that she could not decide a question until she had asked advice of Melbourne. But he recorded that such was her habit with him, and that when he talked to her upon any subject which required an expressed opinion of her own, she would reply that she would think it over and let him know her sentiments the next day. Of course, the next suggestion was that Lehzen was her counsellor, and that she always ran to her for advice ; failing that lady, that it was Stockmar. The curious thing was that only one person seems to have suggested that the Duchess of Kent was the power





LORD BROUGHAM.

behind the Throne, and this was Lord Brougham, of whom Greville, being at Holland House once, wrote that he "came in after dinner, looking like an old clothes man, and as dirty as the ground." But there is no doubt at all that the Queen really and wisely decided to think matters out for herself, and not to adjudge any matter rashly. Leopold constantly gave her this advice: "Whenever a question is of some importance, it should not be decided on the day on which it is submitted to you. . . . It is really not doing oneself justice *de décider des questions sur le pouce.*"

Greville complained that Victoria betrayed caution and prudence, the former to a degree unnatural in one so young, and unpleasing in that it suppressed the youthful impulses regarded generally as so graceful and so attractive. This caution was shown in her dislike of expressing an opinion upon people; Melbourne was never able to extract any idea as to whom she liked or disliked, which seemed much to surprise him; but once, probably anxious to know who, supposing for some unforeseen reason he failed her, would be most acceptable as her adviser, he pressed the point. Her Majesty, still cautious, asked if it were a matter of State policy that she should answer. Melbourne replied that in no other circumstances would he have presumed to put such a question. "Then," she said, "there is one person for whom I should feel a decided preference, and that is the Duke of Wellington."

It was but natural that the Premier—a word much in use at that period—should feel some embarrassment at the amount of work he had to bring this girl,

who might well have hoped for a life of ease and enjoyment, and sometimes he apologised for his exactions. She would not, however, recognise the need for such apology, saying that the attention required from her was only a change of occupation; she had not so far led a life of leisure, "for you know well that I have not long left off my lessons."

At this time the Queen was said to be much more like the Brunswicks than the Guelphs, being, in fact, very like the unfortunate wife of George I., who was imprisoned for years in the Royal palace at Celle, in Hanover. Sophia's hair was much fairer, but the features were the same.

The little Queen, despite her busy life and the extra work she gave herself in her attempt to remember and judge, had time to think of other people. She worked with the zeal of the new-comer, kept a journal, in which she entered anything remarkable that she noticed, with her criticisms thereon; and after every important debate would collect all the newspaper reports and make a *précis* of the best of them. She thought for the comfort of the Dowager Queen, and was somewhat troubled about the Fitzclarences; the pension list was gone through by her, and some little acts of kindness done. Thus old Sir John Lade, who had been one of the wildest of the Regent's companions in the palmy days of the Pavilion, was still alive, having run through all his possessions. "Our Prinny" had given him a pension of five hundred a year out of the Privy Purse; William IV. gave him three hundred a year when he came to the throne, but it was supposed that with the

young Queen his pension must end. The poor old *roué*, then over eighty, implored Lord Sefton's interest with Melbourne to secure him some portion, however small, of the amount; but Melbourne could hold him out no hope that he would receive it. When Queen Victoria was asked her pleasure in the matter, she said, "But is not Sir John over eighty years old?" "That is so, your Majesty." "Then I will neither inquire into the pension nor reduce it; it shall be continued from my Privy Purse," she answered.

The tribe of Fitzclarences were in a state of rebellious anxiety concerning their own affairs; they all were holding sinecures and drawing salaries, besides being in receipt of pensions out of the public pension list and nearly £10,000 a year given them by King William. It was in Victoria's power to withdraw all this, and the accounts of the austerity of the Kensington circle thoroughly frightened them. Between the Duchess of Kent and all the Fitzclarences, whether taken singly or as a family, there was no love, no liking, scarcely tolerance; and so little was known of Victoria by them that they could only suppose that she shared her mother's views.

Lord Munster, the eldest, received the first shock, which communicated itself to the other members. He held the post of Lieutenant of the Round Tower, and on his surrendering the keys to the Queen they were not given back to him, though Victoria was most pleasant and polite. But Munster behaved with discretion, for he probably expected this; and after some days it was discovered that he had been given the post

for life. So the keys were returned him, with ample apology from Lord Melbourne. When the pensions and other things were considered, the Prime Minister advised Her Majesty to grant all the Fitzclarences the same amounts they had enjoyed during their father's life, for, he said, "It would be kind, it would be generous, and it would be conclusive. No further demand could be made."

As for the Dowager Queen, Victoria showed her every attention and affection, begging her to take from Windsor anything that she wished for. On the first occasion that Queen Adelaide visited her at the Castle she desired that she would choose which bedroom she would like to occupy; whereupon the old Queen naturally asked to have that in which she had slept when King William was alive. It had already been dedicated to the young Queen's use, but she willingly gave it up, forbidding anyone to let Queen Adelaide know that she was turning out for her. Thus everyone began to feel a certain confidence in at least the good disposition of the Queen, and those who stood to lose or gain began to breathe more freely.

It was a queer swinging of the pendulum, for the Duchess of Kent, who ought to have attained the height of her ambition and happiness, was at this time one of the most disappointed and miserable of women, while those who feared to lose all found themselves assured in their positions for the rest of their lives. Madame de Lieven, so noted for her love of political intrigue, was granted an audience by the Queen at the end of July, 1837, and found that cautious young lady



disinclined to talk of anything but commonplaces, being probably afraid of committing herself. Victoria had, in fact, been warned by Leopold to beware of the wily Frenchwoman. Madame de Lieven's interview with the Duchess of Kent was, however, of a much more intimate character, and before she left she was doing her best to condole with that august lady for being the mother of a Queen—for having, in fact, accomplished her desire, and having nothing left for which to live.

The poor Duchess complained that, though her daughter showed her every attention and kindness, she had rendered herself absolutely independent of that mother who had so long (and so unwisely) guided every moment of her days and nights, so that the Duchess felt abjectly insignificant. She also still felt bitterly mortified at the way in which Conroy had been dismissed. Her words to Madame de Lieven were, "There is no longer any future for me; there is no longer anything."

She felt that this child, who for eighteen years had been almost the only thing she lived for, was now lost to her. Poor woman! if only she had understood human nature a little better she would have had a less royal time over her child in the past and a greater influence in the present. Madame de Lieven urged the idea of reflected glory upon her; told her that she ought to be the happiest of human beings in seeing the elevation of her child, in watching her success, in appreciating the praise and admiration which were lavished upon her; but the Duchess only "shook her

head with a melancholy smile," saying that that would not fill her life; that the accomplishment of her wishes only made her unhappy and forlorn. In actual fact the Duchess was an ambitious woman, and the intriguing at Kensington had not been a supposition, but a fact. A month after Queen Victoria's accession Leopold, writing to her of a person who loved intrigue, added, "Your life amongst intriguers and tormented by intrigues has given you an experience on this important subject, which you will do well not to lose sight of, as it will unfortunately often reproduce itself—though the aims and methods may not be the same." The Duchess had thought to see herself filling the great post of Regent over a great kingdom, wielding the power, if not the sceptre, of a monarch; and when this dream passed she fully expected to point the guiding finger for her daughter, to be present at State discussions, to be consulted in all difficulties; indeed, to continue to be the ruling influence in Victoria's life, and through her in England. She could not realise that her own independent attitude had taught her child the same quality, for the Queen wrote in her journal on June 20th that she saw Lord Melbourne at nine o'clock, "and, *of course, quite alone*, as I shall *always* do all my Ministers." It was well for Victoria that she put her foot down so firmly, even though so cruelly, at the outset, for otherwise it would have been inevitable that she would have been the unhappy one.

The Duchess's position certainly did not justify Brougham's spiteful assertion in the House some little

time later; indeed, it gives the lie to it. That statesman in this speech started the dislike which for a long time the Queen felt for him. He was then still sitting on the Ministerial side, and listened to the proposition that the Duchess of Kent should receive a grant of £30,000 a year, with a not unusual desire to make trouble. In an outrageous speech he denounced as extravagant such a grant, and spoke of the Duchess as the "Queen-Mother." There were many who felt this to be a veiled attack on the Duchess's probable influence over the Queen, and who resented it; but Melbourne punished Brougham more astutely by appearing to believe that he had simply made an error. "Mother of the Queen," he ejaculated. Brougham loved a quarrel, and turned upon Melbourne at once. "I admit my noble friend is right. On a point of this sort I humble myself before my noble friend. I have no courtier-like cultivation. I am rude of speech. The tongue of my noble friend is so well hung and so well attuned to courtly airs, that I cannot compete with him for the prize which he is now so eagerly struggling to win. Not being given to glozing and flattery, I may say that the Duchess of Kent (whether to be called the Queen-Mother or the Mother of the Queen) is nearly connected with the Throne; and a plain man like myself, having no motive but to do my duty, may be permitted to surmise that any additional provision for her might possibly come from the Civil List, which you have so lavishly voted."

Melbourne replied by pointing out the difference

between a Queen Dowager and a Princess who had never sat on the Throne, and complimented Brougham on his skill in "egregious flattery."

In spite of his dirt and his carelessness about dress—"He wears a black stock or collar, and it is so wide that you see a dirty coloured handkerchief under, tied tight round his neck. You never saw such an object, or anything half so dirty"—Brougham was one of the most remarkably intellectual men of his day. We have heard accounts of how over-prolific writers dictate three stories at once to three different typewriters all in the same room; and really Brougham seems to have had some such capacity. If he did not do about six things at once, he did them in such rapid succession that it makes one's brain whirl to think of it. He worked ceaselessly from 9 a.m. to 1 a.m., and seemed quite fresh at the end of that time; a day's work might include going through the details of a Chancery suit, writing a philosophical or mathematical treatise, correcting articles for the "Library of Useful Knowledge," and preparing a great speech for the House of Lords. Yet he was so intemperate in his speech, so ready with invective, so inconstant in his views, that he became a terror to the House, and, indeed, seemed constantly on the border-line of insanity. One writer said he was like a wasp, for ever buzzing and stinging the Government, animated to sting by spite and malice. Creevy spoke of him as the Archfiend, Old Wicked-Shifts, and Beelzebub; and when he had a new carriage with, on the panel, a coronet surmounting a large B, Sydney Smith

remarked, "There goes a carriage with a bee outside and a wasp inside."

In 1838, when he knew that he would no longer have the Great Seal as Lord Chancellor, someone in Paris asked him who were the Queen's Ministers. "Really," he replied, "I do not know; I cannot recall the names of more than three or four." Yet there was a very tender spot in his heart, which made him remark upon being introduced to a beautiful young girl, "I don't know what to say to these young things; I feel like the old Devil talking to an angel." Brougham, too, adored his daughter, who only lived nineteen years, dying at Cannes after a life of illness. He built the Villa Eleanor for her at Cannes, and after her death her bedroom, always called Eleanor's room, was kept unaltered during Brougham's life. He had Eleanor's body brought to England and buried in the graveyard of Lincoln's Inn Fields, probably the only woman ever buried there. He became very unpopular with the Court after Victoria's marriage by speaking of her as Albertina, and never losing an opportunity of saying something disrespectful. One night he behaved so badly at a Court function that he was totally ignored for a long time after. Then one day Her Majesty asked the Chancellor why it was that Lord Brougham never appeared, and this was looked upon as the olive-branch, which Brougham gladly recognised, sending both to the Queen and to Prince Albert one of his books, which Victoria acknowledged by sending him an autograph letter of thanks, thought by everyone a great honour.

His very soul craved for appreciation and applause, and in October, 1839, he took a queer way of finding out what the world would say if he were no more. He, Leader (the member for Westminster), and Robert Shafto went in a hackney carriage from Brougham Hall to see some ruins in the district. An accident of some sort happened, and this suggested to Brougham the practical joke of reporting his own death. A letter supposed to have been written by Shafto was received by Alfred Montgomery, a great favourite with Brougham, detailing the expedition, saying that the splinter bar broke, all were thrown out, Brougham was kicked on the head, and the carriage turned over on him, killing him on the spot. Montgomery rushed to Gore House, before Lady Blessington had sat down to breakfast, with the news, and by the afternoon a thousand rumours were afloat. Brougham was mourned by all. Sheil hurried from the Athenæum Club on Monday evening to pen a magniloquent obituary, which appeared in the next day's *Morning Chronicle*. "Windsor Castle shook with glee, and Lord Holland began to think he should venture to speak again in the Lords. For the first time for five years all the world talked for a whole day about Brougham's virtues, and there was wondrous forgiveness of injuries in the whole metropolis." On Monday a letter by him, written on Sunday, was received at the Colonial Office, and soon the hoax became known. At first Brougham denied being the author of the grim jest, scared, perhaps, by the anger of those who had wept over his death. He actually challenged his old

friend Sir Arthur Paget for accusing him of the deed; and on November 23rd we have the amusing scene of the Duke of Cambridge, after the Queen had withdrawn from a Council, running round the room after Brougham, shouting at the top of his voice :

“By God, Brougham, you did it! By God, you wrote the letter yourself!”

It was in relation to this and to Brougham's desire for political promotion that Henry Reeve said : “Brougham is less manageable than usual; for though he has had a resurrection, he may and must despair of an ascension.”

On an earlier occasion Brougham scored neatly off another of the Royal Dukes. The Duke of Gloucester was conversing with him on the burning topic of the Reform Bill, and grew so warm in the argument that at length he observed hastily that the Chancellor was *very near a fool*. Brougham readily replied that he could not think of contradicting the Duke, as he fully saw the force of His Royal Highness's *position*.

Lord John Russell, the Home Secretary, was of a very different type. Theodore Hook first gave him the nickname of “the Widow's Mite,” as he was very small, and had married the widow of Lord Ribblesdale, herself also of small size. Creevy talks of meeting them somewhere : “In came the little things, as merry-looking as they well could be, but really much more calculated, from their size, to show off on a chimney-piece than to mix and be trod upon in company.” But those who looked at John Russell from a different aspect found him equal to every occasion, strong in

principle, clear in his ideas, bold and straightforward in his disposition, and afraid of no one.

Not the least noteworthy of the men who influenced politics in the early part of the Queen's reign was Sir Robert Peel, who declared at the beginning of her first Parliament that if the Government tried to carry through any further measures of reform he would resist them to the utmost. Like Melbourne, he was not a whole-hearted party man, and when in power disappointed everyone by trying to steer a middle course. He was shy, reserved, cautious, and unable to be really decisive; also by his lack of cordial manners he was unfortunate enough to accentuate in the Queen's mind every prejudice she held against the Tories, for, unlike Melbourne, he had no idea of how to please a woman.

Among the Queen's women were one or two worthy of mention, chief of whom was the First Lady of the Bedchamber, the Duchess of Sutherland. In spite of the want of punctuality, she was a most attractive woman, giving an impression of something very plenteous and sunny in her appearance. She was tall, large, and carried herself with a good-natured stateliness; her hair was blond, her features large and well-chiselled, her smile beaming, and benevolence in every look and word. In 1853 Henry Reeve said of her: "In our time there has been nobody who continues to surround herself with a sort of fictitious dignity like the Duchess of Sutherland. She is not clever, and in anyone else her affectations might be laughed at. But she is neither worldly nor ambitious; is very good-natured, and has a thoroughly kindly heart; all of





HARRIET, DUCHESS OF SUTHERLAND.



which, added to her beauty and high character, gives her an influence in society far beyond what wealth and rank could claim for her."

It is a pity that the Marchioness of Tavistock, later Duchess of Bedford, whom Her Majesty had known many years, had not rather more than she had of Lady Sutherland's kindness; she might then have saved the Queen from one of the most painful episodes in her life. One writer called her a gaby, modifying it, however, by saying that she was all truth and daylight; and Lady Cardigan speaks of the charming recollection she could conjure up of her, saying that it was at her house that she heard Tom Moore sing and play his Irish melodies. Lady Tavistock was driving one Sunday in the carriage which followed the Queen, when the latter, being cold, got out to walk, and, of course, all the ladies had to do the same. It had been raining, and presumably Victoria was properly shod for the occasion; Lady Tavistock was not, however, and soon her shoes and stockings were wet through and covered with mud. When at last they got back to the Castle the shivering Lady Tavistock found that her maid was out, the cupboards were all locked up, and there was nothing to do but to go to bed until she could get dry stockings!

The Queen was of quick temper and wilful. Her half-sister once wrote: "I was much amused at your tracing the quickness of our tempers in the female line up to Grandmamma (the Dowager Duchess of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld), but I must own that you are quite right." Thus she never forgot that she was the Queen,

and went her own way irrespective of other people. Palmerston said in conversation that any Minister who had to deal with her (the Queen) would soon find out that she was no ordinary person; and on a lady giving the credit to the Duchess of Kent, he added that Her Majesty had an understanding of her own which could have been made by no one. "A resolute little tit," one diarist of the time dubbed her.

Once the first freshness of being Queen was dulled, Victoria set herself to enjoy life as much as possible. Theatres, the opera, balls, and parties were the order of the evening. She rode every day, generally accompanied by the Duchess of Kent, and often with Melbourne on one side of her and Lord Palmerston on the other. Her usual riding habit was of dark green cloth, and she wore a black beaver hat without veil or trimming. Once when riding, and having sixteen people in her train, she passed over Battersea Bridge, the toll-taker counted the party and demanded the toll from the groom who brought up the rear. The man had no money, but, taken by surprise, and perhaps unaware that the Monarch had a "free pass" over the roads of the kingdom, he parted with a silk handkerchief as a pledge of future payment.

Queen Victoria gave a grand concert at Buckingham Palace in honour of her mother's birthday on the 17th of August, the Court going out of mourning for the day—a concert made memorable by the fact that all the men—even the aged Duke of Sussex—were required to stand, as well as the Ladies of the Household, while the ladies who were guests occupied chairs. This

somewhat inhospitable arrangement seems to have made a great impression, for I have come across mention of it in various places.

The Queen opened the Victoria Gate of Hyde Park, entertained her uncle, King Leopold, and his wife at Windsor in September, sat for her portrait—being, it is said, a most patient sitter—and appointed Sir David Wilkie as Painter in Ordinary. When Hayter was painting her he had done much to the face, but had not started upon the arms, and she asked him how he would place her hands. “Just take them and pose them as you think,” she said. With some diffidence the painter did as she wished. She turned to the lady near her, saying, “How strange! I have often thought how I would place the hands if I were painting the portrait of a Queen, and it was exactly in this position.”

A queer little speech, which shows how thoroughly the Princess had soaked her mind in the anticipation of being Queen.

*The Times*, which Lord Grey once called the most infamous of all papers, published a curious description of a portrait of Queen Victoria which was painted in 1838 by Parris. The writer went into rhapsodies over it, and concluded by remarking that “the bosom had been most delicately handled, and had been brought out by the artist in admirable rotundity, who had imparted full relief to it.” Lord Palmerston used to say that when Her Majesty was once asked how she would like to be painted, she replied, “In my Dalmatic robe. Lord Melbourne thinks that I look best in that.”

When she went to the Royal Academy for the second time that year (after her accession), C. R. Leslie says that she appeared towards her mother the same affectionate little girl as hitherto, calling her "Mamma."

On her return to town from Windsor in the autumn there were many functions to attend, the first and most wonderful being the banquet given in her honour on November 9th at Guildhall. Books have been written on this ceremony, and amusing incidents are not wanting to make it interesting. The streets were avenues of green boughs and flags as the Queen drove through them, followed by a train of two hundred carriages. On this occasion Her Majesty sat alone in her State carriage, her mother occupying one which preceded her.

The new Lord Mayor (Alderman Cowan) and the Aldermen met the Queen outside Temple Bar, near Child's Bank. All the civic magnates were riding, and for this purpose had hired horses from the Artillery Barracks at Woolwich, each horse being brought up by its usual rider, who was to act as attendant squire to the Alderman who temporarily became its master.

It was not an easy thing for gentlemen unaccustomed to the saddle to mount on horseback; however, with much care and pains bestowed by the troopers, the Aldermen were at last seated and formed into procession. One of the daily journals added to its account of the proceedings: "We believe only one fell off, and that accident happened through a laudable desire to perform an act of obeisance to a fair lady at a window. The worthy Alderman fell flat upon the ground, and his horse walked over him. Since the days of John

Gilpin no feat of a citizen of London on horseback has excited so much masculine laughter and feminine sympathy. A general cry was raised, the procession stopped, and several military officers and brother corporators rushed to the assistance of the fallen cavalier, who had sustained but little injury, and he was hoisted into the saddle amidst general cheers and laughter."

It is needless to tell of the display at Guildhall—of the £400,000 worth of plate, gold dishes, coffee-cups of gold with handles of lapis lazuli, a candelabra formed of a thousand ounces of gold, and a thousand other extravagances. It reads like an Eastern story. The banquet itself lasted three hours, while the whole function took from two in the afternoon until past nine at night. The Queen was gorgeous in pink satin, gold and silver, pearls and diamonds; and the Queen of the City was equally gorgeous, though perhaps not so youthful, in green velvet, white satin, gold fringe, Brussels lace, opals, and diamonds. On the return journey the Queen went as she had come, a stately little figure alone in an enormous carriage.

At this period she delighted in her State amusements, and it is pleasant to think that for once fate allowed a young thing to go through all these experiences just at the right age, just when a romantic, colour-loving girl could really appreciate pomp and ceremony, could bow and smile, and listen with pleasure to cheers and applause, without seeing the things that lay behind.

The Queen's next excitement was the opening of Parliament, which she did with all the grace that had

attached to her from the first, making people like Fanny Kemble go into ecstasies over her face, "not handsome, but very pretty," her clear soft eyes, her dignity, her beautifully moulded hands and arms, her exquisite voice, &c. Well, young queens are not very plentiful, so it is good to make much of them when they are found; only to-day we should feel ashamed to be so delighted with ordinary composure and good-breeding; we should be much more likely to condemn unsparingly the lack of them. But then the standard of womanly excellence of those days and of these have little relationship to each other.

There were theatres to visit, with their Royal boxes fitted up and decorated for the young Sovereign, and at that time the King's Theatre became Her Majesty's by her command. This eventful year drew to its close with the Christmas festivities spent at Windsor.



## CHAPTER VIII

### QUEEN VICTORIA'S PRIME MINISTER

“ Good Monarchs we've had whom we think on with pride,  
Who wisely e'er filled their high station,  
But now we've a woman, Heaven bless her ! beside  
She's a child of our noble nation.  
Victoria the First is of virtue the gem,  
May sorrow ne'er seek to oppress her,  
Then, fill up your goblets once more to the brim,  
Long life to the Queen, God bless her ! ”

*Anon.*

“ Nobody is more abused by bad people than Melbourne—  
and nobody is more forgiving. ”—*Queen Victoria.*

FROM the beginning of the reign Melbourne had been in constant attendance on his Queen, exacting from her an assiduity in State matters which she was very ready to give, and taking no notice of the gossipers' innuendoes which filled the social atmosphere. Nothing startling had happened, but Court matters had taken a turn which meant a slow drifting into trouble of various kinds.

There is no doubt at all that Victoria went heart and soul with the Whigs. She was not a Radical, but

she was also not a Tory. Though in later years she was accused of neglecting Ireland, at that time she was keen to deal justly with that part of her kingdom. She was interested in foreign affairs, and she did her successful utmost to understand the affairs of England. The fears of the Anti-Catholics had not been verified, though those people seemed to take little comfort in the fact; Victoria was not influenced by her foreign surroundings; she had not put Sir John Conroy into a high place of honour; nor had Lord Durham, the leader of the Radicals, become Master of the Household—in place of that he was invested with the dignity of a Knight Grand Cross of the Most Honourable Order of the Garter, and appointed Governor of Canada, while Lady Durham became one of the Queen's ladies.

But Queen Victoria introduced certain new customs into her social life which caused considerable offence. For instance, she gave precedence to the Diplomatic Corps, and so raised much anger among the aristocracy, who opposed the innovation and revenged themselves for it whenever and wherever they got the opportunity, which frequently gave rise to very disagreeable incidents. This is quite understandable, for if the Queen always had Melbourne on her left and Bülow or some other foreigner on her right, the English Dukes and other men of rank had no chance of being distinguished by her favours. On the other hand, the Queen saw the Englishmen often, and it must have been more amusing for her to talk with the strangers.

The Opposition felt gradually obliged to divest itself of the plans it had made for the new reign, and the Lords, who had assumed that King William was, without his will, in the hands of a faction from whose bondage he could not release himself, and had strongly hoped that Victoria would range herself on their side, had also to realise that they would receive no special support from the Crown. Indeed, a gulf of dislike was being formed with the Government and the Queen on one side, and the Opposition and the House of Lords on the other. As early as the autumn of 1837, in their spleen the latter started foolish stories about the Queen and Melbourne. The more thoughtless would not believe in the real position of affairs, and had, forsooth! to whisper that at last Melbourne was showing his ambition, and that it was no mere tutorial care that he was giving to Her Majesty. The Countess Grey wrote in the October following Victoria's accession, "I hope you are amused at the report of Lord Melbourne being likely to marry the Queen. For my part I have no objection. I am inclined to be very loyal and fond of her; she seems to be so considerate and good-natured." Princess Lieven, too, made in a letter the very complacent remark about Melbourne's association with the Queen, "I for myself cannot help imagining that she must be going to marry him. It is all, however, according to rule, and I find 't both proper and in his own interest that Lord Melbourne should keep himself absolutely master of the situation." It was so absurd an idea that even if the Queen

had heard of it she could not have let it trouble her. A day or so before Princess Lieven's letter had been written, Victoria had been talking in most intimate fashion to Lady Cowper (Melbourne's sister), saying to her: "He eats too much, and I often tell him so. Indeed, I do so myself, and my doctor has ordered me not to eat luncheon any more." "And does your Majesty quite obey him?" asked Lady Cowper. "Why yes, I think I do, for I only eat a little broth."

Creevy comments upon this in a letter, "Now, I think a little Queen taking care of a Prime Minister's stomach, he being nearly sixty, is everything one could wish! If only the Tory press could get hold of this fact what fun they would make of it." It would indeed have been a much better subject than that Melbourne was anxious to marry his Sovereign. I must quote a little further from this sprightly diarist, for he was on the spot, and gives us an account of the Queen which is frank, and therefore not animated by the servile desire to praise in spite of everything. He went to dine with Her Majesty when she made her visit to the Pavilion at Brighton, and having been told that he was to sit on the Duchess of Kent's right hand, he said of it later, "Oh, what a fright I was in about my right ear," which, however, being deaf, should not have troubled him, as he would naturally present his left ear to the Duchess. His account continued:

"Here comes the Queen, the Duchess of Kent the least little bit in the world behind her, all her ladies

in a row still more behind; Lord Conyngham and Cavendish on each flank of the Queen. . . . She was told by Lord Conyngham that I had not been presented, upon which a scene took place that to me was truly distressing. The poor little thing could not get her glove off. I never was so annoyed in my life; yet what could I do? But she blushed and laughed and pulled till the thing was done, and I kissed her hand. . . . Then to dinner. . . . The Duchess of Kent was agreeable and chatty, and she said, 'Shall we drink some wine?' My eyes, however, all the while were fixed on Vic. To mitigate the harshness of any criticism I may pronounce upon her manners, let me express my conviction that she and her mother are one. I never saw a more pretty or natural devotion than she shows to her mother in everything, and I reckon this as by far the most amiable, as well as *valuable*, disposition to start with in the fearful struggle she has in life before her. Now for her appearance, but all in the strictest confidence. A more homely little thing you never beheld, *when she is at her ease*, and she is evidently dying to be always more so. She laughs in real earnest, opening her mouth as wide as it can go, showing not very pretty gums. . . . She eats quite as heartily as she laughs, I think I may say she gobbles. . . . She blushes and laughs every instant in so natural a way as to disarm anybody. Her voice is perfect, so is the expression of her face, when she means to say or do a pretty thing."

One would like to know the sentiments of the

passages which have been left out of this account by the editor of the book; things a little more plainly spoken than those left in, which are plain enough perhaps. That the Queen loved a hearty laugh is well known, and from some current print I have copied this vulgar criticism upon her: "The extraordinary funny laugh of the little lady is amusing enough. Her smile is proverbially beautiful; but there is no very great necessity for such a peculiar display of the ivories, albeit they are unquestionably excellent." Her Majesty is said to have eaten ungracefully all her life. I remember years ago hearing a pert daughter reprove her father for picking a bone. He turned calm eyes upon her as he replied, "It is well known that the Queen always picks bones at table; I like doing it and may surely follow the fashion set by Her Majesty." A lady diarist of the day notes that during one of her tours in the Midlands the Princess was given asparagus, and insisted upon eating it in her own way, "which was not a very pretty one," and it was some time before she would give heed to the Duchess's repeated remonstrances.

A little later the genial letter writer who gave so frank a description of the greatest lady in the land, added to an epistle, "Alas! tho' last not least, in truth little Vic. and her mother are *not* one, tho' Melbourne knows of no other cause of this disunion than Conroy, whom the Duchess of Kent sees still almost daily, and for a long time together."

There was one matter which troubled the Queen

from the day she began to reign, and that was the need of money, for the Civil List could not be arranged until Parliament met in November. Messrs. Coutts, however, came to the rescue, with a desire that she would draw upon them for all that she needed. Yet at that time neither she nor anyone else knew what would be the amount of her income. It was felt generally by the Ministers that it would be better to show confidence in their Sovereign than to be niggardly in the allowance made, as the provision of a good income would take away all excuse in future for the contracting of Royal debt. So the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Rt. Hon. Spring-Rice, who when he first came to Court was said to see everything *en couleur de rose*, had to bear the burden of this. Melbourne begged him to "come prepared to act boldly and liberally, and by no means to fiddle upon small points and about petty salaries."

Spring-Rice loyally did as he was advised, and made himself still more unpopular than he had hitherto been. The Economists, the Radicals, and the Opposition—a coalition which was much more successful three or four years later when asked to grant an income to Prince Albert—railed alike at the extravagance; for trade and agriculture were in a state of depression, and an expensive scheme of Poor Law was being considered with the hope that it might do something to relieve the worst poverty. The newspapers taunted and upbraided Spring-Rice to their mischievous content, and made little verses upon him.

“Your name, Spring-Rice, is not the thing,  
 To call you so is flummery,  
 For how can that belong to Spring  
 Whose treatment should be summery?”

was one comment. A second which I have come across is more spiteful: “Mr. Spring-Rice is a smart, little, flat-catching thimble-rigger, full of small tricks and deceptions. Yet whenever he attempts to practise on a large scale he invariably throws crabs.” I wonder whether Spring-Rice’s optimism survived all the attacks made upon him during his political career.

In spite of the grumbling the Civil List was quickly pushed through, and the Royal maiden found herself the possessor of—in addition to the Duchies of Lancaster and Cornwall—a total annuity of £385,000 a year, being £10,000 more than the net income granted to William IV. This large sum was divided in the following way. Privy Purse, £60,000; Household salaries, £131,260; Household expenses, £172,500; Royal Bounty, £13,200; and unappropriated, £8,040. With this the Queen was very content, and returned thanks to Parliament in person for what it had done. Then she did a wonderful thing, for by the autumn of the following year she had transferred to her father’s creditors out of her privy purse nearly £50,000. This was a noble thing to do, indeed, seemingly almost impossible, when one remembers the family from which she had sprung—one King after another, to say nothing of the Princes, dying deeply in debt, and considering it but a normal condition—and also remember-



ing the fascination which the spending of money on personal matters must have had for a girl hitherto almost deprived of money.

This income, however, gave new soreness to those who were smarting already, and the better sort, being debarred from criticising their Queen too openly, turned upon Lord Melbourne, who never troubled to read strictures upon himself, and who took such criticism, when he did hear it, with a smile. From the day of Victoria's accession until the day that he went out of office, Melbourne was the favourite object of vilification. The Court was said to be, under his influence, such a hot-bed of Whiggism "that a Conservative cat was not so much as permitted to mew in the precincts of the Palace," and it began to be hinted that the Queen might remember that she was Queen over England and not over a party. The first form of attack was directed against Melbourne's constant association with her; he was accused of pleasure-seeking, of idleness, and of irresponsibility. Queen Victoria, who was most conscientious about business matters, seems to have shortened her stay at Brighton on his account, for the *Court Journal* announced: "Her Majesty arrived at Buckingham Palace from Brighton, the distance from the latter place being too far for Lord Melbourne," which meant, of course, for her to see him each day. Upon this another journal asked:

"Why will the Queen at Brighton make  
So very, very short a stay?  
Solely, of course, for Sponge's sake,  
Who cannot *dine* there every day."

“Lord Sponge Melbourne” was a favourite form of address for him in the satiric papers.

However, the real fury did not burst around the Throne until some time after the Queen’s coronation, and it became a veritable hurricane after the troubles of 1839. Meanwhile Melbourne did his best, not only to guide Her Majesty and to educate her in statecraft, but to arrange the affairs of the realm as far as he could in the face of virulent opposition. There was really no justification for the comment made by *The Times* early in 1838 that Melbourne “was a mere dangler after the frivolous courtesies of the ball room and boudoir.”

In a conversation with her Prime Minister the Queen once told him that the first thing which had convinced her that he was worthy of her confidence was his conduct in the disputes at Kensington the year before concerning her suggested allowance. Then, though he knew that the King was near his end, and that he was offending the Duchess, who might soon be the most important person in the kingdom, he consistently took the King’s part, in face of that King’s disfavour. This the then silent but observant young Princess regarded as a proof of his honesty and determination to do what was right, and it is evident that she herself sided with the King on that occasion. Indeed, from the affection with which she always afterwards spoke of her uncle, it can hardly be doubted that she was with him in many of the quarrels which occurred. Greville says that when King William made that fierce

attack on her mother at the Windsor banquet, and expressed his earnest hope that he might live to see the majority of his niece, "Victoria must have inwardly rejoiced at the expression of sentiments so accordant with her own." But this is going too far, for though it may have been true concerning her concurrence with the King's hope, it is most likely that in such a scene the girl's feelings were those of terror, regret, and a passionate sympathy with her insulted mother. Afterwards that particular sentiment may have appealed to her, but scarcely at the time.

Many accounts are given by contemporary writers as to how the Queen's evenings were spent in the first years of her reign, and they all tally with regard to the general details. Her semi-state entry into the drawing-room just before the announcement of dinner seems always to have commenced the evening. She would then shake hands with the women and bow to the men, speaking a few words to everyone. At the table Melbourne, when present, always sat on her left hand, and a foreign ambassador or, failing any such, the highest in rank present among the English, on the other. The men only stayed a quarter of an hour in the dining-room after the Queen rose, and were then expected in the drawing-room, where she always stood until they appeared. Then the Duchess of Kent would be settled at a whist table, and the Queen would marshal the other guests about a round table—Melbourne, the careless and easy, sitting bolt upright and keeping a guard upon his tongue, still at her left hand.

There they all remained talking small talk until the band had finished its music, and the evening was at an end at about half-past eleven. How a man of the world like Melbourne could put up with that night after night it is difficult to say, for he might have been in any one of half a dozen other places where there was real conversation going on, and where he could have been at his ease.

Among Melbourne's curious failings was a habit of talking to himself, a habit which grew with his years. He was once seen coming out of Brooks's, saying emphatically, though unaccompanied by anyone, "I'll be damned if I do it for you, my Lord." One day Lord Hardwicke was writing in the library of the House of Lords, when Melbourne entered straight from a debate on the Non-Intrusion question in Scotland. The Prime Minister threw himself into a chair saying, "God bless me! What's to be done now? I had only just settled that confounded Irish Church question, when earth yawns, and here comes up a devilish worse one about the Scotch Church."

This peculiarity he seems to have successfully dropped when in the presence of Queen Victoria, even though he spent about six hours out of the twenty-four in her society. But there can be no doubt that he had a feeling of paternal affection for his young Sovereign, which led him to give up much for her sake. Some malicious writer tried to make a joke with a sting in it upon the Prime Minister and his constant attendance upon Victoria, heading it "Royal Quip."

It ran as follows:—"Some days ago the dinner-seeking Premier, on a drawing-room lounge, was endeavouring to render himself as amiable as possible to his Royal Mistress. Among other questions she was asked whether or not she had read Lady Blessington's last charming work, 'The Idler in Italy.' Her reply was in the negative; 'I know not,' archly continued our youthful Sovereign, 'what may have been the exploits of the Idler in Italy, but I am convinced that the Idler at Home is a great bore.' Mel. instantly took leave of Her Majesty. We note, however, that matters have since been satisfactorily arranged, seeing that the Premier had his feet under the Royal mahogany on Wednesday last."

As for the Coronation, we have heard so much during late years of these celebrations that there is no need to enter into any great detail about it, but it may be mentioned that the event formed a good excuse for contention between the two political parties, and others found it a good peg on which to hang their scorn or their platitudes. The cry of the Banquet was raised, the Government having decided that as that picturesque but mediæval custom had been dropped at the preceding Coronation it should not be revived. This was, of course, sufficient to make the Tories call for one, and to raise a cry of false economy and meanness. The Duke of Buckingham wrote, "The Ministers turned a deaf ear to all representations either of right or of policy, and the British Empire was con-

demned to stand in the eyes of foreigners as too poor to crown her monarch with the state which, when much poorer, the nation had willingly afforded."

Yet now, seventy-three years later, we have just been reading of the amusement caused in foreign circles about the way in which we cling to old customs in our coronations. And earlier, when William IV. was crowned *The Times* published a curious leader in which it more than justified the curtailment of the various functions. The writer of the article spoke of the quackeries played off in the course of the ceremony, "revoltingly compounded of the worst dregs of Popery and feudalism," and continued, "What a fuss with palls, and ingots, and spurs, and swords, and oil for anointing (greasing) their Sacred Majesties, and whipping off and on of mantles and the rest of it." The writer closed with an expression of the hope that when a leisure hour should arrive the entire character of the solemnity should be re-cast. It may well be wondered how far the views of *The Times* of to-day agree with those it held in that yester-year!

The walking procession of all the Estates of the Realm was also dispensed with, and for the last time the Queen's Barge-master with forty-eight watermen preceded twelve of the Royal carriages.

Marshal Soult, who came as special Ambassador from the King of France, was so much cheered both in and out of the Abbey that he was overcome, and seizing the arm of his aide-de-camp, said, "Ah! vraitment, c'est un brave peuple!" Later he declared

publicly that it was the greatest day of his life, for it proved that the English believed that he had fought as an honourable man. He brought over with him a State carriage, which had been used by the Prince of Condé, and had it decorated in the most costly fashion. It was a curious thing that both in Queen Victoria's and King William's Coronations there was a great competition in equipages. The Russian Ambassador (Count von Strogonoff) bought for sixteen hundred pounds a carriage for which the Duke of Devonshire had given three thousand when he went on his Extraordinary Embassy to St. Petersburg. Another diplomatist gave two hundred and fifty pounds merely for the hire of a vehicle for the day.

There was also among the Ambassadors—who had the liberty of dressing as they would—what might almost have seemed a competition in dress. Thus the Greek Ambassador was adjudged as the most picturesque, and Prince Esterhazy, son of the Minister Plenipotentiary from the Emperor of Austria, was the most gorgeous—one lady said of him that he looked as though he had been caught in a shower of diamonds and had come in dripping; she almost expected to see them settling in little pools on the floor. Prince Paul von Schwarzenberg, the Austrian Ambassador Extraordinary, wore violet velvet heavily embroidered in seed pearls, the jewels with which he was covered being worth half a million florins, while his boots alone cost sixteen thousand florins.

We have all heard that the old Duke of Sussex

embraced the Queen on this public occasion, that old Lord Rolle stumbled and fell down two steps, giving Her Majesty the opportunity of doing one of her pretty acts; and that a large bird hovered over the Palace and was regarded as an omen of good luck. We have all heard, too, of the Coronation ring, which, though made for the little finger by mistake, the Archbishop insisted should be placed on the fourth finger—a painful event for the poor little Queen. As there had been no rehearsal, “little Victory” never knew what to do next, and said once to John Thynne, “Pray tell me what to do, for they don’t know.” Someone who “did not know” made her leave her chair and enter St. Edward’s Chapel before the Archbishop had finished the prayers, much to that ecclesiastic’s chagrin. Then when the Orb was put into her hand she asked, “What am I to do with it?” and on learning that she was to carry it in her left hand, replied, sighingly, “But it is very heavy!”

All these incidents have been told over and over again, but there are some things not so well known, and one is that in consequence of the ceremony extending from noon to five o’clock people would have fainted from hunger, if caterers had not been allowed to sell their wares in the Abbey. At a convenient moment the Queen was conducted into St. Edward’s Chapel, where she found the altar spread with food and bottles of wine. It disturbs one’s sense of the fitness of things that an altar, even to a long dead saint, should be used as a dining table, yet perhaps it is no worse



than the irreverent selling of the outsides of churches for the erection of tiers of seats whenever a Royal Procession is coming along.

The author of "The Ingoldsby Legends" described the Coronation very amusingly under the name of Barney Macguire, one verse of which runs:—

"Then the crame and custard, and the beef and mustard,  
 All on the tombstones like a poulterer's shop;  
 With lobsters and white-bait, and other swate-meats,  
 And wine and nagus, and Imparial Pop!  
 There was cakes and apples in all the chapels,  
 With fine polonies and rich mellow pears,—  
 Och! the Count von Strogonoff, sure he got prog enough,  
 The sly ould Divil undernathe the stairs."

In another set of verses on the subject the same author said he was in the Abbey looking through the wrong end of a pair of binoculars, and—

"At first I saw a little Queen was sitting all alone,  
 And little Duke and Duchesses knelt round her little throne,  
 And a little Lord Archbishop came, and a little prayer he said,  
 And then he popped a little crown upon her little head."

It is curious to note that the Queen, when writing in her journal of the Coronation, just mentioned her mother as being there, but of Lehzen she wrote: "There was another most dear being present at this ceremony, in the box immediately above the Royal box and who witnessed all: it was my dearly beloved angelic Lehzen, whose eyes I caught when on the Throne, and we exchanged smiles."

Lord Glenelg was Victoria's Colonial Secretary for a period, and one imagines that he must have inspired

Dickens with the idea of the Fat Boy, for we often hear of him as asleep at the wrong time. Like other people, he had to get up very early for the Coronation, and it was therefore not surprising that he fell asleep in his place in the Abbey. He awoke for the crowning, and duly put on his coronet, then promptly fell asleep again, and his head nodding, the heavy thing fell off with a clatter. Roused by the noise, he sat up, put his hand to his cranium, and cried aloud, "Oh! I have lost my nightcap!" The "nightcap" had rolled out of sight, and was not recovered until after the homage, but the story does not tell how he managed to offer his fealty without it.

This failing of Glenelg's was constantly being referred to in the papers in jest or earnest. Here is a sample: "Is it true, Mel., that railroads rest upon sleepers?" asked Victoria. "Yes, your Majesty," replied Mel. "Then pray take care that Lord Glenelg travels only by the mail coach, as if he goes by the railway he may be mistaken for a sleeper," was the Queen's entreaty. Another joke, even then somewhat time-worn, ran:—

"'What, twelve!' Lord Glenelg, waking cries;

'How quick the time has passed!'

'No wonder,' little John replies,

'You sleep so very fast.'"

Lyndhurst distinguished himself before the ceremony commenced by standing on some steps beyond the choir, and with eyeglass up scrutinising the Peers "and particularly the Peccresses" as they came from the entrance.

One of the silliest customs of the Coronation was the flinging of medals about behind the throne, that is to say, between the altar steps and the choir. On this occasion Lord Surrey, the Lord Treasurer of the Household, flung them right and left, and there was a pretty scramble; maids of honour, peers, generals, goldsticks, robed aldermen wrestled and fought, some getting more than their share, and some less. The judges, however, felt themselves enclosed in the dignity of the law, they did not scramble or move, but pathetically wooed the fates by standing stiffly erect and holding out their hands. Such a "good boy" attitude ought to have been rewarded, but alas, not one of them caught a falling piece of silver.

Lord Dalhousie was struck with the absence of popular enthusiasm and of reverence inside the Abbey, and Carlyle's commentary upon the event is scarcely cheerful. He had been invited to the Montagues' window to see the procession, and he went there, though he gave away his invitation ticket to the Abbey.

"Crowds and mummeries are not agreeable to me. The Procession was all gilding, velvet and grandeur; the poor little Queen seemed to have been greeting; one could not but wish the poor little lassie well; she is small, sony, and modest—and has the ugliest task, I should say, of all girls in these Isles." He added to this, "She is at an age when a girl can hardly be trusted to choose a bonnet for herself; yet a task is laid on her from which an archangel might shrink."

C. R. Leslie, the artist, told of her that as soon as she returned to Buckingham Palace after this long day

she hurried to put off all the splendid signs of royalty that she might give her spaniel Dash its bath. A similar incident is related of her return from opening her first Parliament. An old Court official watched her as she re-entered the Palace, being much impressed with her dignity as she crossed the rooms of St. James's. He wondered if this would last when she was alone, and curiously followed her as she went through a door leading to the staircase which led to her own apartments. There at the foot of the staircase he saw her roll her train round her arm, pick up her dress all round, and run up two steps at a time, calling to her dogs.

This mixture of dignity and girlishness is very endearing, as those who have watched youthful womanhood well know.

The year of the Coronation was a year of small things as far as the Court was concerned, a year of steady tramping along the road of disaffection among the better-class politicians, and a year of endeavour to do the right thing on the part of the Queen, relieved by an occasional autocracy of manner which led her to do the wrong thing. Relations between herself and her mother became more and more strained, so much so that it was a matter of public comment. Conroy still hung about the Duchess and was still maligned in the papers, *The Times* toward the end of the year being found guilty of libelling him by saying that he bought property in Wales which he had paid for, though not with his own money. On the other hand, the

tradesmen who served the Duchess of Kent presented Sir John Conroy with plate to the value of £400, to show their appreciation of the kindness and urbanity with which he had invariably treated them.

The *Age* now changed its tone; instead of vilifying the Duchess and all her friends, it chose to regard her as a martyr, *against* whom plots were formed by the foreign Camarilla, which included Leopold, Lehzen, Stockmar, Sir James Clark (Physician), Sir Henry Seton, and any foreigners who might be at Court or passing through. It asserted now that the ruin of Conroy was part of a plot for alienating mother and daughter, and placing the latter more firmly under foreign influence; but there are people who would scarcely consider £3,000 a year pension as ruin.

The Baroness Lehzen, of whom Lady Normanby said that she was a kind and motherly person to the young Maids of Honour, retained her position with the Queen, and the more firmly she seemed to be established the more furiously did one section of the public and the Press hate her. One or two examples will show the way in which the more outspoken papers wrote of her; and all had the idea at the back of their anger that she was pushing forward with all her influence the pretensions of Albert of Saxe-Coburg, who, surrounded by Catholic belongings, would do some frightful, undescribed, and impossible deeds when settled in power. It was all wild, stupid, and hysterical, yet somewhat amusing to look back to now.

It should be remembered that Fräulein Lehzen was

the daughter of a Lutheran clergyman, and that she came to England with the Duchess of Kent as a governess or nursery governess to Princess Féodore. A Lutheran clergyman was not likely to be a man of any particular rank, but he was at least a man of thought; he may have been very poor, as a large proportion of clergymen have been all through the ages, and his daughters may have, most likely did, help in the work of the house and gardens. This, however, is but surmise in an endeavour to explain the absurd reproaches levelled at the Baroness. Thus writes the *Age*, which was bitterly hated by the Whigs, because it published every little fault and prank of the men of their party; a paper which they naturally, under the circumstances, said to be simply a lying, scandalous rag, but which, as a matter of fact, was often very astute, and told the truth with just that touch of exaggeration which gave it the necessary allurements.

“On public grounds we are determined to let the country know the detestable schemes by which a foreign Camarilla rules in the Palace [now Buckingham, not Kensington, Palace], to which the noble and virtuous of the land are not invited—nor would they go if they were. [The last sentence is somewhat reminiscent of the fox and the grapes.] We do not object to the Baroness because she was originally a milk girl, but because of her manner and behaviour, especially to the Duchess of Kent. She has rendered herself most hateful to the people of England, because her connection with Leopold, through his creature Stockmar,

is calculated to inflict the deepest injury upon the Sovereign and the country generally; because she is a bad-hearted woman; and because she is trying to bring about a union at once mercenary and distasteful."

As time went on, the Tory section of the Press grew more emphatic in its utterances, and the extreme Tory clique expressed itself in plainer and more violent and libellous language. With them the Baroness was anathema. They affirmed that having in her youth been a milkmaid, she was now only fit for the housemaid's table; her sister had been Queen Caroline's maid, and she had come as such to the Duchess of Kent for a few pounds a year. "Yet now she insults the good Duchess, who is beloved by everyone." "She has broken up the mother's influence, and deliberately taught the child to look coldly on one who has nobly done her duty to the country by educating that child suitably, and, having gained the needed ascendancy, had come to an understanding with Leopold and his friends as to the use to be made of her power." The Duchess of Kent, who they said was insulted by her *ci-devant* servant, should have their protection, they vowed, but did not explain how it would be given.

A story went around that once at Windsor the Baroness mislaid her keys, and that in consequence the Queen could not open any of her dispatch boxes, and thus everyone averred that the secrets of the Empire were entrusted to "this German spy." "We demand to know what office this woman bears about the

Sovereign? She may rest assured that this question will not only be asked, but a reply peremptorily demanded when Parliament meets." Her position was denounced as unconstitutional and dangerous to the personal comfort of Her Majesty, it was said—though the real meaning was "to the dying hope that the Tories would ever regain their influence." When some hireling about the Court made known the fact that Lehzen had changed her bedroom, taking the next room to that occupied by Victoria, there being no door but a curtain between the two rooms, a terrible fear arose, and all the exaggerations about complete ascendancy over the mind of the Queen were started afresh. "The Constitution does not permit the Sovereign to have an irresponsible adviser, and if anyone under the guise and specious title of friend obtains possession of State matters and controls State proceedings, is a foreigner and in communication with a foreign Court, that same Constitution will vindicate its outraged fences and expel the intruder even from the Royal footstool." To heighten the indignation, it was said that Louis Philippe was fostering a plot in favour of the Catholics, and through Leopold was making the Baroness his tool, so that the "exasperated Protestants of the Empire" were losing their hope of favour, but "were determined to wrest a satisfactory certainty from the Crown as their ancestors had done before them."

Melbourne was naturally blamed, though his influence was by no means strong enough to allow him to interfere in the Queen's private friendships, and



he more or less knew that the suggestion that Lehzen was consulted in State matters was unfounded.

In all this lies the inner cause of that difficulty which arose in 1839 and convulsed politicians, the "Bed-chamber Squabble," as it has been called. It burst forth without warning, no one probably being more surprised than the two chief actors, the Queen and Sir Robert Peel. Though it will be necessary to go back again to events of 1838, it is better perhaps to detail here the intricacies of this knotty question, which had such an important, if temporary, effect on politics.

## CHAPTER IX

### QUEEN VICTORIA'S LADIES AND LOVERS

“The war with China—the price of sugar—the Corn Laws—the fourteen new Bishops about to be hatched—timber—cotton—a property tax, and the penny post—all these matters and persons are of secondary importance to this greater question—whether the female who hands the Queen her gown shall think Lord Melbourne ‘a very pretty fellow in his day’; or whether she shall believe my friend Sir Robert to be as great a conjurer as Roger Bacon or the Wizard of the North. . . . It is whether Lady Mary thinks black, or Lady Clementina thinks white; whether her father who begot her voted with the Marquis of Londonderry or Earl Grey—that is the grand question to be solved before my friend Sir Robert can condescend to be the Saviour of his country.”—*Punch*.

IT was in the very nature of things that the Melbourne Ministry should be weak. Its majority was not great, and as the House of Lords was almost solidly against it, Bills could not be passed. In the Lords was Brougham, angry at being denied the Great Seal, at heart a lover of the aristocrat, yet making a bid for the favour of the Radicals. He once brought up a mischievous subject for discussion in the Peers, drawing upon himself the refusal of the Duke of Wellington to be merely factious, and a declaration from Melbourne against the motion. At this, Brougham said furiously of the former, “Westminster Abbey is

yawning for him," but he had to drop his motion. Commenting upon this, Greville says that "Brougham cares for nothing but the pleasure of worrying and embarrassing the Ministers (his former colleagues), whom he detests with an intense hatred; and the Tories, who are bitter and spiteful, and hate them merely as Ministers and as occupants of the place they covet, and not as men, are provoked to death at being baulked in the occasion that seemed to present itself of putting them in a difficulty."

There is on record another occasion on which Brougham began to attack the Duke of Wellington in the House of Lords, and Wellington, lifting his finger, said, loud enough to be heard across the House, "Now take care what you say next!" As if panic-struck, Brougham broke off and began to talk of another matter. The Duke of Wellington, in fact, with his larger view and his international sense, generally refused to do stupid things from party feelings; and as leader of the House of Lords, he knew the weakness of the Tories at that juncture, and saw little hope of their forming a Government.

However, given opposition such as Brougham's, and a majority depending upon doubtful Radicals, it was not surprising that there was little real work accomplished in the Commons, and that the Government was always in danger of being overturned. It was on May 6th, 1839, that Lord John Russell brought in a Bill for the suspension for five years of the Constitution of Jamaica, because its Assembly had refused to accept the Prisons Act in connection with

the slave trade passed by Parliament. The majority was only five in a House of 583, therefore the Government decided to resign. In July, 1837, *Fraser's Magazine* had a sonnet in facetious vein upon the Princess's birthday, which might have been written for this event, it is so appropriate, though the particular allusion I cannot explain :—

“ Great was the omen on the auspicious night  
 When kept was fair Victoria's natal day—  
 London in gas, and oil and tallow gay,  
 Look'd a vast isle of artificial light;  
 Anchors and crowns and roses beaming bright;  
 Stars, garters and triangles shone around;  
 Lions or unicorns all chained and crowned,  
 And other blazonings—yellow, green, red, white—  
 Dazzled the air. But, more delighted, we  
 Welcomed one blazing letter, everywhere  
 Playing a double duty. Hail, great V!  
 V! Ministerial sad majority—  
 Mark of the unhappy five! With grim despair  
 Did Melbourne and his men that symbol see! ”

This Government crisis came like a blow upon the Queen, who saw all the routine of her life being altered; she was to lose the genial, fatherly Melbourne, and take in his place perhaps the Duke of Wellington, but, failing him, whom? Sir Robert Peel, whom she scarcely knew and did not like, who possessed none of Melbourne's brilliant social qualities, while his accustomed attitude was said to be that of a dancing master giving a lesson. “ The Queen might have liked him better if he could have kept his legs still,” said Greville.

So poor little Victory cried all the rest of the day, never stopping even when interviewing Lord John Russell. She dined alone in her own room, and did



SIR ROBERT PEEL.



not appear that evening. By the next morning, however, she was cool again, and sent for the Duke of Wellington, whose loyalty she trusted as she did that of Melbourne. The Duke also had a fatherly feeling for Her Majesty, and was very sympathetic with her, even when she said openly that she had always liked her late Ministers, and was very sorry that she must lose them. Wellington, who was too strong to be anything but frank, enjoyed the frankness with which the Queen praised his political opponents, but he said that he was now too old and too deaf to become her Prime Minister, and in addition he thought it would be wiser if she appointed a man whose real position was in the lower House. Sir Robert Peel was the only possible person, and Victoria asked the Duke to send him to her. In gentle, paternal tone, he suggested that the matter would be more in order if she would send personally for Peel, upon which the Queen said she would do so, but asked the Duke to see him and tell him to expect her letter.

As soon as Sir Robert received the important missive he clothed himself in full dress, according to etiquette, and went to the Palace. He was a sensitive, shy man, and he knew that his principles, if not himself personally, were disliked, so he went to the interview in a nervous, diffident frame of mind, which allowed him no leisure to add an extra courtliness to his awkward manners. At first he felt reassured, as the Queen received him very graciously, but after her greeting he had a shock when Victoria openly said that she was parting with her late Ministers with infinite regret,

for she had entirely approved of their actions. It was so much what the late King would have said! That little difficulty being over, they began to talk business, Peel suggesting various names for office. The audience ended by his being required to bring a full list with him the next day.

When Sir Robert brought the list the following morning Victoria approved of it, only stipulating that the Duke of Wellington should have a seat in the Cabinet. Then came the unexpected tempest, beginning quietly, as tempests often do, but ending in a general convulsion.

Having settled the men satisfactorily, Sir Robert Peel nervously—he must have been nervous, for Lord Grey reports that he was harsh and peremptory—put forth a list of changes to be made in the Household. Her Majesty expected this—had, indeed, talked of it to the Duke, but she had been thinking solely of the equerries and other men about her, and for a few minutes the discussion turned upon them. Soon after this (to quote from Her Majesty's journal) Sir Robert Peel said:

“‘Now, about the Ladies?’

“‘Upon which I said I could *not* give up any of my Ladies, and never had imagined such a thing. He asked if I meant to retain *all*.

“‘*All*,’ I said.

“‘The Mistress of the Robes and the Ladies of the Bedchamber?’

“‘I replied, ‘All!’—for he said they were the wives of the opponents of the Government, mentioning Lady



Normanby in particular as one of the late Ministers' wives. I said that would not interfere; that I never talked politics with them, and that they were related, many of them to Tories, and I enumerated those of my Bedchamber Women and Maids of Honour; upon which he said he did not mean *all* the Bedchamber Women and *all* the Maids of Honour; he meant the Mistress of the Robes and the Ladies of the Bedchamber; to which I replied *they* were of more consequence than the others, and that I could *not* consent, and that it had never been done before. He said I was a Queen Regnant, and that made the difference! 'Not here,' I said—and I maintained my right. Sir Robert then urged it upon public grounds only, but I said here that I could not consent."

In Victoria's letter to Melbourne she said: "Sir Robert Peel has behaved very ill, and has insisted on my giving up my Ladies, to which I replied that I never would consent; and I never saw a man so frightened . . . he was quite perturbed—but this is *infamous*. I said, besides many other things, that if he or the Duke of Wellington had been at the head of the Government when I came to the Throne, perhaps there might have been a few more Tory ladies, but that if you had come into office you would never have *dreamt* of changing them. I was calm but very decided, and I think you would have been pleased to see my composure and great firmness; the Queen of England will not submit to such trickery."

Peel felt it to be a deadlock; the Queen's autocratic tendency had already made itself sufficiently felt for

him to know that argument was of no use for him. He said that he must consult his colleagues, and so backed out.

Victoria sent at once for Lord John Russell, and asked if she could rightfully refuse this demand. There was no precedent for Sir Robert Peel's decision, though from his party's point of view there was every necessity for it. Queen Anne had kept her beloved Sarah Churchill all through the changes of administration until she wearied of her. When the Government changed under William IV., Lord Grey (the Whig) not only left Queen Adelaide's Household of Ladies untouched, but did not change an equerry or groom; though later, when Lord Howe voted against him on a vital question, he insisted upon his removal. When that was done Peel and his party asserted that an unheard-of outrage had been offered the Queen, and Adelaide did not speak to Lord Grey for more than a year, and then had to be keenly persuaded before she would enter a room where he was closeted with King William.

Lord John Russell told Queen Victoria that she had right on her side, and she said that, in that case, she expected the support of himself and his colleagues as she had supported them in the past. She sent for the Duke, who told her that she was wrong, and that she ought, being Queen Regnant, to regard her ladies in the same light as her lords.

"No," replied Her Majesty; "I have lords besides, and these I give up to you."

Peel came also, but both he and the Duke found

their young Monarch immovable, and ready with answers to all that they advanced. She foresaw, as any astute woman would have done, that in allowing this innovation she would be opening the door for a host of petty troubles in the future; she blinked the fact that she was King as well as Queen, and that a King was required to change all his officers. So the two politicians left her presence defeated, and Peel called his friends together that afternoon.

In the meanwhile, Russell begged Melbourne to do nothing of himself, but to call the Cabinet together; and at nine that night the Ministers were gathered from all places—dinner, the theatres, opera, and clubs. Before them Melbourne laid a letter from the Queen, in which she is reported to have said, though probably the correct text of this letter has been given above :

“Do not fear that I was not calm and composed. They wanted to deprive me of my Ladies, and I suppose they would deprive me next of my dressers and housemaids! They wished to treat me like a girl, but I will show them I am Queen of England.”

Lord John, the most diplomatic member of the Cabinet, wanted the Queen to be advised to get from Peel his precise demands, for, as is usual in a quarrel, the actual details had never been elucidated. This, however, was overruled, and a letter was concocted for the Queen to send to Peel. It was short and to the point :—

“The Queen, having considered the proposal made to her yesterday by Sir Robert Peel to remove the Ladies of her Bedchamber, cannot consent to adopt a

course which she conceives to be contrary to usage, and which is repugnant to her feelings."

While these events were happening, the report of them spread far and wide, and was hotly commented on in all the papers. The Queen may have let drop a remark that Peel wished to drive from her all the friends of her childhood, for this was the note the Whig papers sounded. Anger, condolence, appreciation were all expressed, while on the other side anger was mixed with disloyalty and with an assumption that the Queen must give way to a righteous and politic course.

"We can state," said one of the Tory journals, "that there is not the slightest hesitation or feeling of annoyance on the part of our Conservative leaders. For the sake of Royalty they may regret the untoward interference of female meddlers in State matters of most awful importance (this was surely a hit at the Queen as well as at her ladies!); but for themselves they know that the Sovereign cannot do without appealing to their loyalty to save her from 'her friends,' and they will not fail in their duty. In a few days Sir Robert Peel's triumph will be complete."

A few of the most extreme papers begged the "female nobility of England to abstain from going to Court," to refuse "to sanction by their presence a patronage of persons whom they themselves would not tolerate in private life."

The "persons" who were not to be "patronised" by the "female nobility" included the Duchess of

Sutherland and the Countess of Burlington, both sisters of Lord Morpeth, a Cabinet Minister and Secretary for Ireland; the Marchioness of Normanby, wife of the Secretary of State; the Marchioness of Tavistock, Lord John Russell's sister-in-law; the Marchioness of Breadalbane, whose husband had received his title from the Whigs; Lady Portman, wife of another Whig-made peer; Lady Lyttelton, sister of Earl Spencer; and the Countess of Charlemont, wife of an Irish Earl.

It was whispered, though probably only scandalously, that Melbourne had in his pocket the resignations of the Marchioness of Tavistock and Lady Portman, but kept them from the Queen. There may have been some truth in this, however, as those ladies were most unpopular with all classes, and probably thought their wisest course would be to resign before worse happened.

Sir Robert Peel replied to the Queen's communication in a long letter, in which he resigned the charge she had imposed upon him; and as all England was discussing the Bedchamber question, Victoria, who really felt that she had justice on her side, allowed him to read her letter and his own in Parliament that the true facts of the matter might be known. For the public believed that Peel had planned to separate the Queen from all the friends of her childhood, and to force her to accept as servants a completely new set, all especially imbued with Tory principles, and Peel felt that he should publicly justify his action. But as

the Queen would not move an inch from the position she had taken up, the old Whig Ministry was reinstated.

As for the opinion expressed by contemporaries on this matter, I should say that the balance was against the Queen, not so much because of the justice of the matter as because she was a young woman, and therefore incapable presumably of understanding affairs. People said that she was an inexperienced girl who wanted her own way though the heavens fell; she upset her Government that her private comfort might not be assailed; the whole thing was planned so that she could again have the Whigs in power! Scarcely any of them, except perhaps Lord Grey, cast their vote for her. But these writers were all men, and mostly Tories—that is to say, they were the people who suffered. They talked about the principle involved, but they only cared about the idea in practice. Then they did not look beyond the Queen's words, nor remember the violent and exaggerated statements which they themselves had made about Baroness Lehzen.

Victoria naturally felt that if she conceded the principle she would be giving over into the hands of the enemy the friend whom she most valued. She knew that some of the Tories had clamoured for Lehzen's dismissal, had threatened to ask questions about her in Parliament. Then, too, she had a real liking for Lady Normanby, of whom one of the Maids of Honour said later, "She is so clever and well-informed, and yet there is that about her which pre-



LADY TAVISTOCK.

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vents one feeling ashamed of one's ignorance"; for Lady Tavistock; and probably for other of her ladies. Think of the position of a girl of twenty, who is suddenly called upon, not to dismiss her attendants, but to send away all those who were, by the nature of their duties, admitted to the most intimate relations with her, the Ladies of the Bedchamber. It is quite comprehensible that she should resist.

Peel said afterwards that he did not mean all, and it was a pity that the Queen was too hasty to listen to his propositions to the end; though it is certain, if we may judge by the expression he used, "that his Government could not be carried on if ladies attached to Whig leaders remained about the Queen," that he did at the outset mean all the Bedchamber ladies; indeed, he said as much as that to Croker when he wrote that there were only nine of them, while there were twenty-five women of the Household altogether. He further said what—in view of all the attacks on Lehzen—lets some light into his feelings: "The paid spy of a foreign enemy might be introduced into the Household—might have access to every Cabinet secret."

Had Peel been in a strong position he probably would have been less obstinate on the point, for though he was perhaps right in a strictly constitutional sense, he could have yielded without any real sacrifice of principle; but he feared even the attempt to form a Government, for it would be a Government with a minority, an odious position for any Minister. There was, in fact, some analogy between the position of Peel

then and that of Melbourne when he accepted office under the Queen. In 1837 the Whig Ministry was struggling for its life, and it would have been expecting something impossible to have expected that Melbourne should have put Tory ladies about Her Majesty. When Peel's turn came he was equally anxious not to have Whig ladies.

So Peel made an able speech on the matter in the House, Brougham made a violent one, Wellington a thoughtful and moderate one, Russell a feeble one, and Melbourne's, they say, was the best of all. In the course of his speech Peel referred to the Lehzen matter, saying that he had not meant to turn out the Baroness, which annoyed that lady very much, she remarking with much asperity that he had no right to say such a thing; he should have said that he *could* not turn her out, for she was in no public post or service, and Peel had nothing to do with her. It is said that the Duke of Sussex advised his niece not to accede to Peel's request about the Ladies of the Bedchamber, but Victoria herself affirmed that she took no advice on the matter.

Some wag called the resuscitated Cabinet the *Jupon* Cabinet, and Justin McCarthy said of its leaders that Peel could not govern with Lady Normanby, and Melbourne could not govern without her. "What is it keeps the present Ministers in office? Two women in the Bedchamber and two rats in Parliament," was another little pleasantry. Macaulay added as his comment: "The month of May, 1839, saw the leaders of the great party, which had marched into office

across the steps of the Throne, standing feebly at bay behind the petticoats of their wives and sisters. Whether the part they played was forced upon them by circumstances, or whether it was not, their example was disastrous in its effects upon English public life."

While the excitement was at its height the papers were full of gibes and personalities, and one published the following lines upon Melbourne, whose constant attendance at Windsor, as has been pointed out, led to a running comment upon his method and place of dining:—

“Farewell, farewell! to each rich-brimming chalice,  
At Windsor beside me so constantly seen—  
Farewell to the dear, daily feeds at the Palace—  
The romps with the Baroness, chats with the Queen.

Farewell! 'tis with tears that, while falling will blister,  
I weep for the mesh in which we are all caught;  
Alas! for poor Lehzen with none to assist her,  
They'll never be able to work out the plot.”

A little earlier some satirical paper announced of the Prime Minister that, when compelled to remain in the House of Lords till late in the evening, “the pet lamb had a nice tit-bit sent express from the Royal table, with a particular request to cut the matter as short as possible and hurry ‘to where the glasses sparkle on the board!’” adding, “We believe Melbourne generally manages to comply, and, if practicable, arrives in ‘pudding time.’”

Another paragraph offered the information that: “Lord Melbourne gave a Parliamentary dinner yesterday in South Street. The Fire Brigade were all

activity and we counted six engines in the immediate vicinity. The alarm was given by his lordship's neighbours, who were extremely horrified by the sight of the chimney. Melbourne giving a dinner! Wonders will never cease!"

For a long time the Queen's popularity had been decreasing, and open disloyalty was shown with the beginning of the Lady Flora Hastings scandal. Victoria herself did not help matters, for after the political crisis she became even more exclusive in her invitations. She had arranged a ball and a great concert for the middle of May, just after the political tempest, and from all accounts they seem to have been very dull amusements, or so said the Tories, none of whom were invited who could possibly be left out. The Queen herself, however, was in good spirits, possibly more than pleased at having retained her Ministers.

The Bedchamber Crisis drew from the King of Hanover a little moan over the ruin of England: "Alas! how fallen is she since the last ten years! . . . May Providence be merciful to her, and save her, is my most earnest prayer!"

During the spring of 1839, while Victoria was harassed by the two most disturbing troubles of her young womanhood, she was also being urged from various quarters to settle her domestic affairs by marriage, and indeed from the beginning of 1836 curiosity had made tongues busy on the matter of her choice. Perhaps it is true that with the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love, for it seemed

always then that the young men from Germany or Denmark or Russia came a-courting, or, to put it more diplomatically, came on a visit to England. Then, too, if there were any amorous lunatics about they generally seemed to turn up at Buckingham Palace or Windsor Castle.

Actual suggestions concerning marriage were made before Victoria became Queen, for in the spring of 1837 Lord William Russell, then our representative in Berlin, wrote as follows to the Duchess of Kent."

"Madam,—Would it be agreeable to your Royal Highness that Prince Adelbert of Prussia, the son of Prince William, should place himself on the list of those who pretend to the hand of H.R.H. the Princess Victoria?

"Your consent, Madam, would give great satisfaction to the Court of Berlin."

The Duchess acknowledged the receipt, and then indulged in a little eulogy of herself, for she continued: "The undoubted confidence placed in me by the country, being the only parent since the Restoration who has had the uncontrolled power in bringing up the heir of the Throne, imposes on me duties of no ordinary character. Therefore, I could not, compatibly with those I owe my child, the King, and the country, give your Lordship the answer you desire; the application should go to the King. But if I know my duty to the King, I know also my maternal ones, and I will candidly tell your Lordship that I am of opinion that the Princess should not marry till she is much older. I will also add that, in the choice of the person to share

her great destiny, I have but one wish—that her happiness and the interest of the country be realised in it.”

I wonder how the Duchess liked the hint of a rebuke in Russell's answer:—

“On informing Prince Wittgenstein (Minister of the Royal House in Berlin) that your maternal feelings led you to think the Princess Victoria too young to marry, he said that the King of Prussia would, on learning your opinion, object to Prince Adelbert's projected visit to England. I beg to observe to Your Royal Highness that it was only proposed to admit Prince Adelbert to the list of suitors for the hand of Princess Victoria, to which he was to win his claim by his character and personal attractions.”

Von Bülow suggested that a young Prince of Holstein-Sonderburg-Beck-Glücksburg might find favour with Queen Victoria, but surely the territorial miscellany added to his name would have been sufficient to frighten any girl. There was a rumour that the Duc de Nemours intended to enter the lists, and there was much talk when Duke Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha projected another visit to England with his son Augustus. In the spring of 1839 the Tsarevitch of Russia arrived with the Grand Duke, and many of the newspapers began their little gossipings as to the good and evil of such an alliance. This report was later said to be without foundation, one paper adding to its repudiation the hope that when the Queen should be tempted to forego following the example of Queen Elizabeth, perhaps the Orange flower would be placed near her heart as well as on

her head. "God grant it may be so!" This being an allusion to the visit at the same time of Prince William, the younger son of the King of the Netherlands.

It was judged that Prince George of Cambridge stood a good chance, for did not his Queen-cousin open the first State Ball in May, 1838, by dancing a quadrille with him? It is true that she also danced with young Prince Esterhazy—who married the daughter of the Earl of Jersey—with the Earl of Douro, the Earl of Uxbridge, and other noblemen, but then George was first honoured and was of her own age. While writing of this Ball, I must mention the Austrian Prince's wonderful clothing at the third State Ball, which was given on June 18th, the second having been on Her Majesty's birthday. He wore a pelisse of dark crimson velvet, his sword-belt thickly studded with diamonds, the hilt of the sword and scabbard simply encrusted with them; round his hussar cap were several rows of pearls, edging a string of diamonds, and all fastened with a diamond tassel. His Order of the Golden Fleece (suspended round his neck) and the stars and jewels of his other orders of knighthood were all set in diamonds and other precious stones. He must surely have looked like Prince Charming in a pantomime, and if any old men were there, he probably reminded them of the Regent who once went to a ball in pink satin, wearing a hat adorned with five thousand beads.

Of the first State Ball Greville says, with his usual

touch of acidity: "Last night I was at the ball at the Palace—a poor affair in comparison with the Tuileries. Gallery ill-lit; rest of the rooms tolerable; Queen's manner and bearing perfect. Before supper and after dancing she sat on a sofa somewhat elevated in the drawing-room, looking at the waltzing; she did not waltz herself. Her mother sat on one side of her, and the Princess Augusta on the other; then the Duchesses of Gloucester and Cambridge and the Princess of Cambridge; her household with their wands, standing all round; her manners exceedingly graceful, and blended with dignity and cordiality, a simplicity and good humour when she talks to people which are mighty captivating. When supper was announced she moved from her seat, all her officers going before her—she first, alone, and the Royal Family following; her exceeding youth contrasted with their maturer ages, but she did it well." Lady Bedford commented upon the Queen at this ball: "The young Queen danced a good deal; if she were taller and less stout, she would be very pretty."

However, to return to the suitors. What the Ministers, the Court, or even the Queen did not know on this matter the papers did, for they caught and crystallised in type every rumour, adding sufficient information to make them read like truth. In January, 1838, people said that the Queen was recalling Lord Elphinstone from the post which really spelt banishment for him. They added that she had sent him an autograph letter which greatly disconcerted the Cabinet, and that he would arrive before the Corona-



tion, at which a new office would be created for his benefit. One commentator upon this remarked: "Our Ministers will find a young girl as difficult to manage as an old man; the vivacity of youth proves as perplexing as the obstinacy of age. The question of our hereditary government will shortly be agitated as well as that of our hereditary legislation; since it is quite certain that the King of Hanover, knowing his chance of succession, even should he survive the Queen, to be extremely doubtful, will stir up his party in this country to protest against Her Majesty's free choice. The sooner the time comes the better." This report was repudiated by *The Times* and *The Morning Chronicle*. However, *The Satirist* asserted that the matter was debated in the Cabinet and that a certain personage was with difficulty prevented from sending a letter she had written. *The Times* then declared that the Queen had never spoken to Lord Elphinstone. To which *The Satirist* answered with copies of two letters purporting to be written by Her Majesty, in the first of which she asked Elphinstone to return before her Coronation, promising to make him a Duke, which would ensure his attendance upon her. In the second absurd and vulgar production, quite obviously fictitious, she was made to say:

"I am so enraged I can scarcely hold the pen in my hand. That old pest, daddy Melbourne, having found out through Ma, who was told by the baroness that you and I were carrying on a correspondence—that horrible old pest, who certainly is the plague of my existence, has just been here to *advise* me—not to

break off the match, for that I told him at once would be useless—but to relinquish the idea of having you home before I arrive at the age of twenty-one. The giving of this advice he said was a ‘duty’ which ‘State reasons’ compelled him to perform. I wish he were at Jerusalem. He would let me have nothing my own way if he could help it. Here I must remain now for nearly three years before I am permitted even to see you. Is it not dreadful? But I won’t, I’m determined I won’t wait so long as he says. I’ll get rid of him the very first opportunity, and if the Prime Minister will not consent to your immediate return, I’m determined that I’ll have no Prime Minister at all. For the present, however, I suppose I must yield to ‘State reasons,’ which are, in my mind, no reasons at all. But they sha’n’t keep you there much longer, be well assured of that.”

Whatever the young Queen’s desires may or may not have been, Lord Elphinstone did not see his native land again until about 1843, when Victoria was the happy mother of several children, and he was not invited to Court until 1846, being made a Lord-in-Waiting the following year.

Though, as has been said, the young Prince of Orange came over again he does not seem to have done himself much credit, eliciting the judgment from one diarist that he had made a great fool of himself here supping, dancing, and indulging in little (rather innocent) orgies at the houses of Lady Dudley Stuart and Mrs. Fox, who, the story went, escorted him—when, to

his infinite disgust, he had to go home—as far as Gravesend, “where they (the ladies) were found the next day in their white satin shoes and evening dresses.”

Behind all other rumours, however, lurked the idea that Albert of Saxe-Coburg would be Victoria's bridegroom, an idea which more or less oppressed the girl-Queen. Whether there was any real truth in the report about Lord Elphinstone, or whether she wished to wield her power independently for a time, it is impossible to say, but early in 1838, and again in July, 1839, she wrote to her uncle Leopold that she had no intention of marrying for several years to come; and after her accession she entirely ceased corresponding with her cousin. The Coburgs were not regarded by those about the Queen as likely to prove attractive to her, being criticised as “simple” and too “Deutsch.” Palmerston said of them: “After being used to agreeable and well-informed Englishmen, I fear the Queen will not easily find a foreign prince to her liking,” and the national prejudice showed itself in such contemptuous phrases about anything they did as, “How unlike an Englishman!”

But the Queen's attitude did not seem seriously to trouble Leopold, who went on training his nephew, writing of him to Stockmar on one occasion: “If I am not much mistaken in Albert, he possesses all the qualities required to fit him completely for the position he will occupy in England. His understanding is sound, his apprehension clear and rapid, and his feelings correct.

He has great powers of observation, and possesses much prudence, without anything about him that can be called cold or morose."

In later years Victoria was sad over her decision not to marry, saying that she could not think without indignation of her wish to keep the Prince waiting, at the risk of ruining his prospects, perhaps for three or four years until she felt inclined to marry, and she put her vacillation down to the fact that the sudden change from the seclusion of Kensington Palace to the independent position of being Queen Regnant diverted her mind entirely from marriage. She went so far as to "bitterly repent" this very natural result of her early life and her peculiar position; yet she might have known that, given the circumstances and her temperament, it was the only result to expect.

But Victoria at this time did not entirely break off the engagement, and as a sign of this she instructed Stockmar to journey with the Prince when he travelled through Italy in search of that thing so zealously desired in the early part of the nineteenth century, "the completion of his education."

It is said that Leopold did not mention the marriage unreservedly to his nephew until the Prince visited Brussels in February of 1838. In March of that year Leopold wrote to Stockmar as follows: "I have had a long conversation with Albert, and have put the whole case honestly and kindly before him. He looks at the question from its most elevated and honourable point of view; he considers that troubles are inseparable from all human positions, and that, therefore, if one

must be subjected to plagues and annoyances, it is better to be so for some great or worthy object than for trifles and miseries. I have told him that his great youth would make it necessary to postpone the marriage for a few years. I found him very sensible on all these points. But one thing he observed with truth: 'I am ready,' he said, 'to submit to this 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 very ridiculous position, and would to a certain extent ruin all the prospects of my future life.'

The Whigs seemed to take this matter quite philosophically, but the Tories had not a good word to say either of Leopold or of Albert. Thus *The Times* in December, 1838, said: "There is no foreigner who sets his foot in England less welcome to the people generally, or looked at with more distrust or alienation than Leopold, the Brummagem King of Belgium, who is nothing better than a provisional prefect of France, on whose ruler his marriage has made him doubly dependent."

In Paris it was regarded as a most extraordinary thing that the Queen had not married long before, and having decided that she was *not* going to marry her Prime Minister, the gossipers in the salons suggested that Queen Victoria was not to be allowed to marry at all, as Lord Melbourne feared he might so lose his influence. "Therefore, his anxiety is to keep Her Majesty single." They added that if, however, the country insisted on their Sovereign's marrying, Prince

Albert of Saxe-Coburg was being trained for the honour, under the especial guidance "of that moral gentleman, Stockmar."

A month later, that is to say in January, 1839, the following jubilant paragraph appeared in *The Sun* :—

"The country will learn with delight that the most interesting part in the Speech from the Throne, to both Houses of Parliament and the country at large, will be the announcement of Her Majesty's intended marriage. The happy object of Queen Victoria's choice is Prince Albert, son of the reigning Duke of Saxe-Coburg, and cousin of Her Majesty. Prince Albert is handsome and about twenty-two years of age."

*The Times* asked next day if someone had not been hoaxing the editor of *The Sun*. "We suspect so, though we do not profess to have any knowledge on the subject."

*The Morning Chronicle*—Melbourne's paper—replied: "We are authorised to give the most positive contradiction to the above announcement."

The comment of *The Age* upon the matter was of the "I told you so" type, and then it proceeded to libels and defamation. "Prince Albert is known to be a youth of most untoward disposition. . . . As far as we can learn, Prince Albert is suspicious, crafty, and, like his uncle, Leopold, never looks anyone full in the face.

"Yet this is he who is to be 'the happy object of Queen Victoria's choice.' *Choice*, indeed! The Baroness Lehzen has acted well upon the instructions

given her by Leopold just before good King William's death; and the virtues, beauty, worth, and amiabilities of this young Prince have been dinned hourly in the Royal Ear.

“We think Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg intellectually and morally most unfit to be trusted with the happiness of our young Queen; and because he belongs to a family which is either Protestant or Papist as it suits their interest; thus Albert's father is a Protestant, his uncle Ferdinand is a Papist, and his son is Papist Connubial King of Portugal; Leopold is anything, Protestant to an English princess, Papist to a French princess. And we object to Prince Albert because he is being thrust upon the Queen, who is in such a state of vassalage, induced by the cunning influence of the Baroness Lehzen, as to be publicly talked of in the salons of Paris as the mere puppet of her uncle Leopold.”

This tirade and mass of exaggeration was followed by the publication of a spurious letter supposed to have been addressed to the editor by the young Prince Albert:—

“Sare,—I sall addresser you in Anglaish, cos vy? Cos in honnare of de countray in vich I vas vant to be second rang personne. Ver well. Terefore if the Q—— vas like me to mari her, Cot tam, Sare, vat am tat to you—eh? Am you her modare? Ver well, ten; vat rite you to objet to 'tis alliance—eh? Noting: von tam noting. Terefore, Sare, I vos appy to troubel you to hold fast your tam tongue. La Baronne tell to me tat her M——'s modare hab not objection:

tere fore, vy should nobody else hab now? Vy sall you play him debbil vid dis littel projet ob my uncale and Stockmar, and odare some ver tere amis? It vos ter most tamnable! I say dat, Sare! Terefore, you will be pleas to co to de debbel! I am, Sare,  
 "ALBERT FRANÇOISE AUGUSTE CHARLES EMANUEL."

As a matter of fact, the announcement was premature, and the Queen had two serious troubles to endure before she sought refuge in matrimony, one being the Bedchamber trouble already dealt with, and the other the Lady Flora Hastings scandal.

What had really started the belief that the marriage was settled was the fact that two of Leopold's confidential *hommes d'affaires*, Monsieur Van Praet and Baron de Diestrau, came over to England in January, and were said to have had interviews with Melbourne, to have seen much of Lehzen, to have been agreeable to Sir James Clark and Sir Henry Seton, and to have gone back to Brussels "to report progress concerning the chance of planting another young Coburg in England."

Prince George of Denmark also came to London in 1839, bringing with him an enormous household, including a Master of the Horse, a Master of the Robes, six Lords of the Bedchamber, and eight grooms of the Bedchamber, all among the first people of his country. He, too, was supposed to be looking for a wife, but he did not find one in England.

From that time on, the Queen, who was said "to be caricatured here, charivaried there," had to see her name daily in the papers coupled with that of some



young man or other, Albert's name recurring often. Lord Alfred Paget, the second son of the Marquis of Anglesey, then in his twenty-third year, figured fairly frequently as a love-sick swain, who wore Her Majesty's portrait over his heart—and under his shirt front—and, the better to assert his love, hung her miniature round the neck of his dog. *The Satirist* of January, 1838, asserted that “Her Majesty must be married soon, or there will be the devil to pay,” and went on to say, “She must be an extraordinary little creature to turn people's brains in this fashion. A swain has forced his way into Buckingham Palace declaring himself to be ‘a shepherd sent from Heaven to look after the Royal lamb.’ There are plenty of wolves in sheep's clothing already looking after her, and Her Majesty's present shepherd will have plenty to do to keep them out of the fold.”

One paragraph ran as follows, commencing with a quotation from another paper: “‘Her Majesty having received from Germany a delicious cake, sent it as a present to the Princess Augusta.’ This is doubtless one of those delicate attentions which ‘my nephew Albert’ has been instructed to despatch from Coburg through the medium of the dearly loved Baroness Lehzen. It would have been cut up for Twelfth Night at the Palace, but *as Lord Melbourne could not secure the character of the King*, he refused to take a slice, so the cake was sent off to the good-natured Princess.” The italics are mine.

As soon as Victoria's accession had seemed near, the thoughts of madmen seemed to turn to her, and

from time to time one such would go to some Royal residence that he might be crowned King, or receive his rights, or secure a wife. One day in May, 1837, a man named Captain John Wood, of the 10th Regiment of Foot, was found sitting on the terrace at Kensington Palace, where the Duchess often breakfasted. A policeman requested him to go away, but he said he had a right to be there, as he was the real and rightful King of England, and the person at Windsor was only the Duke of Clarence. He told the magistrate, before whom he was taken, that his proper name was John Guelph, and that he was a son of George IV. and Queen Caroline, being born at Blackheath, adding that the Royal family knew all about it. He seemed perfectly sane, and being admonished, went away.

For some time after her accession a Scotch suitor would make special journeys to Windsor to see Queen Victoria, sometimes standing all the morning at the door of St. George's Chapel that he might watch her leave after service. Then he would walk on the terrace in the afternoon that he might have the pleasure of bowing to his liege Lady.

One, who was undoubtedly a lunatic, climbed some iron gates in the Park, and walked across to the Castle, demanding admittance as King of England. "Very well, your Majesty," said the porter, "be pleased to wait till I get my hat." He then took him to the Castle and handed him over to the police. He was named Stockledge, and was in a large way of business in Manchester. On being questioned as to his motive,

he said he was like all other men who wanted wives—he was looking after one.

A third was less peaceable, for he got into the gardens of Buckingham Palace declaring he would kill the Queen, and was sent to prison. Two days after his release he went to Windsor and tried to enter the Castle by breaking some panes of glass. What became of him I do not know. Another man who tried to get into the Palace early in 1838 was rather mixed in his ideas, for he insisted on seeing the Queen, the Duchess of Kent, or O'Connell, "who is as good as any!"

## CHAPTER X

### QUEEN VICTORIA'S DISLOYAL SUBJECTS.

“ We have lordlings in dozens, the Tories exclaim,  
To fill every place from the throng,  
Although the curs'd Whigs, be it told to our shame,  
Kept us poor Lords in waiting too long.”

*Contemporary Verse.*

ALL through this period we get pleasant glimpses of the young Queen passing some at least of her time in a girlish way. She was a girl, surrounded by a bevy of girls, and was very fond of dancing, for which exercise she did not always wait for the presence of a band in the ballroom. Count von Bülow was once staying at Windsor, being given rooms which were directly under the Queen's apartments, and one afternoon he could hear Victoria singing and playing the piano. On telling her at dinner what pleasure he had enjoyed, she looked very concerned, for, as she later confessed to Lord Melbourne, she had been dancing about her sitting-room with her Ladies in Waiting, and had “been quite extravagantly merry.” She would have small impromptu dances at Buckingham Palace, which were kept up sometimes till dawn. Georgiana Liddell, Lady Normanby's sister, went to one of these, and when the dance was over the youth-

ful Queen went out on to the roof of the portico to see the sun rise behind St. Paul's. The Cathedral was distinctly visible, also Westminster Abbey, which, with the trees in the Green Park, stood out against a golden sky.

Most of the Liddell sisters played and sang well, and the Queen was anxious to hear the voice of the youngest of them all (and there were many, no fewer than seventeen brothers and sisters). Georgiana, in fear and trembling, sang one of Grisi's favourite airs, omitting a shake at the end through pure nervousness. The Queen noticed this, and turning to Lady Normanby asked, "Does not your sister shake, Lady Normanby?" "Oh, yes, Ma'am," was the reply; "she is shaking all over."

Sometimes, perhaps, Her Majesty was thoughtless in satisfying her desire for pleasure; at least, Thalberg, a celebrated musician, thought so on one occasion. He was frequently commanded to play before the Queen, and one evening she gave him five subjects to perform. The next day someone congratulated him on his triumph. "Triumph!" he exclaimed; "a fine triumph to be nearly killed."

The Queen often arranged concerts, and I have come across an announcement of a concert which she *might* have organised, full of satirico-political allusions. The parenthetical additions have been inserted by way of elucidatory notes:—

"The Vicar of Bray." By Lord Palmerston. (An allusion to his love of office.)

"Pray, Goody, please to Moderate." By Lord

Holland. (Lady Holland was noted as an untiring talker.)

“The Beautiful Boy.” By Lord Morpeth.

“I that once was a Plough-Boy.” By Baron Stockmar. (In allusion to his supposed low origin.)

“An old Man would be Wooing.” By Lord Melbourne.

“Buy a Broom!” By Baroness Lehzen. (Another allusion to low origin.)

“We are all nodding.” By Lord Glenelg.

“Oh, what a row!” By Lord Durham. (He was noted for his hot temper, and he was then scarcely out of the Canadian turmoil.)

“The Laird o’ Cockpen.” By Sir J. Campbell. (A Scotsman who was then English Attorney-General.)

“I’m a very knowing Prig.” By Sir James Clark.

“The King of the Cannibal Islands.” By King Leopold.

I do not know the reason for Lord Morpeth singing of a beautiful boy, but Sir James Clark seems to have justified by some of his actions the song chosen for him.

Though Victoria had been Queen for nearly two years, she still—to judge from various accounts—preferred simplicity in dress, and one story is admiringly told of her which, to an unbiassed mind, is open to the suggestion that she did not show politeness or good taste. The Duchess of Sutherland gave a great ball at Stafford House in honour of the Queen, and, that she might further show the respect she felt for her Royal mistress, she wore a most magnificent dress and

glittered with diamonds. Her Majesty went "in a simple muslin embroidered in colours," and, on shaking hands with her hostess, said :

"I come from my house to your palace." This sounds too affected or too rude to be true, but it is given by Lady Dorothy Nevill in "Under Five Reigns."

Victoria's simplicity seems occasionally to have degenerated into carelessness, for I have come across different remarks upon the way in which she wore her shoes down at heel—remarks always accompanied with a suggestion that there was something wrong with her feet, though that was tempered with the addition that she walked gracefully.

When Lord Durham set England a-talking by his autocratic actions in Canada, and was, through the demands of the Opposition, recalled, the Duchess of Kent must have felt grief at this second failure in the little circle of her close friends. If all that has been said was true, she relied very largely upon the advice of Lord Durham before he became Ambassador to St. Petersburg, for she was then in the habit of trusting implicitly in her brother. I have seen a report of a speech made by a Mr. Wilks, the Liberal Member for Boston in 1836, part of which ran : "Never was there a more excellent and amiable being than the Duchess of Kent. She consulted Lord Durham (he was the great man of the neighbourhood), by Leopold's desire, upon everything that belonged to the political opinions of the Duchess and the Princess. He was asked to prepare replies and to acknowledge com-

munications, and everything breathed a spirit of attachment on their part to the constitutional rights of the people." As Lord Durham was looked upon as the leader of the Radical party, it is hardly to be wondered at that the Tories disliked him and thought him a dangerous influence.

Lady Durham had been made one of the Ladies of the Bedchamber at the accession of Victoria, drawing from the Princess Lieven the opinion that the Queen could not have a better or a nobler woman; but when her husband came back from Canada the Countess resigned her post, much to the Queen's sorrow, for she, too, was fond of the Durhams. Early in her reign she had given Lady Durham apartments at Windsor in which she could reside permanently, and when she was in waiting invited her always to bring her little girl, "the most charming child," to remain with her. Durham died in 1840, while still a young man.

Victoria was very fond of children, and would always, if possible, have some staying at the Palace, spending a part of each day playing with them. She once instructed Lord Melbourne to invite Lord and Lady John Russell to stay three days with her, saying that she "would be delighted to see Lady Russell's little girl, and would be very happy if she would bring the baby also." Poor little Lady John! not many months later another baby brought death to her!

Occasionally the newspapers spoke of the Queen in lighter vein, and this paragraph appeared in 1838:—"Could anything have been less expected than to see her present Majesty, a lovely young female, encouraging the practice of snuffing by allowing herself to be



named patron of certain snuff-shops? 'By Special Appointment Snuff Manufacturer to Her Majesty Queen Victoria'! What next?"

This second story appeared in a contemporary book of reminiscences. An Irish check-taker at the Zoological Gardens told a friend that the Queen had come once to the gardens *incog*.

"Why," said his friend, "it is odd that we never heard of it."

"Not at all, not at all," replied Pat, "for she didn't come like a Queen, but *clane* and dacent like any other body."

During the year of 1839 the spite against Melbourne became stronger and led to absurdly wild statements; indeed, the whole agitation was the result of an acute and semi-public hysteria. His popularity with the Queen had led the Tory papers more or less to withdraw their support of the Crown, thus giving rise to annoying episodes, not only in political, but in social life. It was asserted that Victoria was surrounded with people of bad character, and though all the world, even the journals which delighted in scandal, had acclaimed the acquittal of Melbourne in the Norton case, the mud of the past was diligently scraped up and flung over him, with the evident desire that some of it would stick on the Queen. *The Morning Herald* remarked, "It is one of the unfortunate signs of the times that we see so many persons of known immoral character selected for office." To this another paper added a list of a dozen people who were supposed to be unfit, about many of whom no evidence of being

worse than their brothers remains. Of course, the person who heads the list is "Lord Melbourne, dinner eater and private secretary." He is followed by the Marquis of Headford, who, many years earlier, had been convicted of adultery with his wife's sister. The Marquis of Anglesey was a third, and I suppose it would be difficult for anyone to hold a brief for the particular line of Anglesey lords which was extinguished so dramatically a few years ago. Lord Palmerston had his place in the list, as it was whispered that Lady Cowper, Melbourne's sister, had long been his mistress. Some time after her widowhood she married Palmerston—in December, 1839—of which event Princess Lieven says: "She wrote to me on the subject, and such a simple, natural, good letter, so full of yearning for that happiness and comfort and support which every woman needs, that I am quite convinced she is right in what she does." Lady Cardigan, in her recent book of reminiscences, adds to this: "She was a perfect hostess, a charming woman, and an ideal helpmeet. At one of her parties her son (by Lord Cowper) was presented to a foreign ambassador, who, not understanding, looked at him and at Lord Palmerston, saying, 'On voit bien, m's'u, que c'est votre fils, il vous ressemble tant.'"

Upon the publication of this list of evil doers, other journals took up the cry, and indignant paragraphs, similar to the following, appeared on all sides.

"Is there a father in the Empire who would endure such a person as Lord Melbourne to be perpetually by the side of a young girl? Lord Melbourne may

smile, because he had cast aside manly generosity, but we tell him that if loyalty is becoming dull, and sneers are taking the place of blessings; if, where the land would honour, it begins to censure, and where it would pay homage it passes an unwelcome jest; and if, as the result of all this, hearts grow cold, and regard only as a Ministerial puppet one who even yet is the object of love, he will have to thank his own selfishness for the blight he will have thus brought upon the Crown."

*The Glasgow Constitutional* published an effusion upon the indifferent Prime Minister, and in considering these articles we must remember that if Melbourne had been a Tory he would have received praise and approbation from these very papers, while the quiescent Whig journals would probably have been ladling out abuse. "Even his private conduct is in some respects national property, and by acceptance of high office, even his personal character becomes no longer altogether his own, but is intimately associated both with the nation and its head. It is therefore a fair subject both of observation and comment, and the time has now arrived when these are imperiously called for. His present demeanour has led to most invidious remarks. It has become too notorious to escape the most unobservant eye, and whispers of suspicion have been poured into the dullest ear."

Disloyalty and disrespect began to be shown openly for the Queen. Greville, the cynic and pessimist, constantly informs us that her people no longer cared for her. In 1838 Her Majesty was at Ascot, and was only tolerably received by a great concourse of people;

there was some shouting, but not a great deal, and few hats taken off. "This mark of respect has quite gone out of use, and neither her station nor her sex secures it; we are not the nearer a revolution for this, but it is ugly. All the world went to the Royal stand, and Her Majesty was very gracious and civil, speaking to everybody."

In March of the next year Greville shows how this antipathetic feeling had increased. "The great characteristic of the present time is indifference, nobody appears to care for anything; nobody cares for the Queen, her popularity has sunk to zero, and loyalty is a dead letter; nobody cares for the Government or for any man or set of men. . . . Melbourne seems to hold office for no other purpose but that of dining at Buckingham House, and he is content to rub on from day to day, letting all things take their chance. Palmerston, the most enigmatical of Ministers, who is detested by the Corps Diplomatique, abhorred in his own office, unpopular in the House of Commons, liked by nobody, abused by everybody, still reigns in his little kingdom of the Foreign Office, and is impervious to any sense of shame for the obloquy which has been cast upon him, and apparently not troubling himself about the affairs of the Government generally."

Harriet Martineau adds her testimony to this state of affairs when she notes that "some rabid Tory gentlemen have lately grown insolent, and taken insufferable liberties with the Royal name." This disloyalty was indeed recognised and justified to their

own satisfaction by the Tories themselves; in alluding to Lord Melbourne one of their organs asserted:—

“If he sees the virtuous of the land avoiding the Palace Halls and Court receptions as they would a pestilence—if he sees even common respect withheld from one whom, but for his despicable policy, we should reverence and love—if he discovers that cold loyalty towards the wearer of the Crown in these days puts the Crown itself in jeopardy—he will then, perhaps, see the full extent of the scorn and loathing with which he is regarded by everyone not lost to the proprieties, decencies, and modesty of social life.”

*The Age*, probably the most virulent of all Melbourne's paper enemies, published an open letter to him, saying that he was exposing the highest personage in the land to be the jest of the vicious and a source of pity to the well-disposed. “Do you think it likely that any other young lady who had a father or a brother to protect her would allow a person of notorious gallantry to be constantly whispering soft nonsense in her ear? Why, then, should the highest lady in the realm, who, in fact, belongs to the country at large, be subjected to what would not be allowed in any private family? . . . If you affect not to know it I tell you plainly that ever since the Coronation, the enthusiasm of the people for their young Queen has been sensibly decreasing, owing solely to the bad advice of her Ministers. . . . However unpalatable it may be, I again tell you that your constant attendance on the Queen is unconstitutional, indecent, and disgraceful;

whatever motive you have, it is impossible to justify it. I defy you to name an instance of any Prime Minister acting as you have done; and considering the age and sex of the Sovereign, I denounce it as unmanly and unprincipled. Lolling on your couch at the Palace, you may pretend to despise these unvarnished truths; but that you are conscious of your unwarrantable conduct was plainly evinced by the passion you flew into when Lord Brougham so admirably twitted you with it."

That Melbourne allowed Robert Owen, the reformer, to be presented to the Queen was, some months after the event, used in passionate eagerness against him. The Duke of Kent had known Owen, and at the time of his death had been arranging to visit his co-operative settlement at New Lanark, near Glasgow; for the Duke agreed with Owen's principles, so much so that he took the chair at a meeting which was called to appoint a committee to investigate and report on Owen's plans to provide for the poor and to ameliorate the conditions of the working class. Owen's ideas had enlarged during the ten years which had intervened, and he was in 1839 keen upon education, the disuse of arms, the alteration of ecclesiastical law, &c. Wishing to present a petition to Her Majesty, he approached Melbourne, who told him that the right method of procedure was to attend a *levée*. This the reformer did, in regulation white silk stockings, buckle shoes, bag-wig, and sword. He presented his petition, no one noticed his presence or gave a thought to it until, some time later, some speaker holding Socialistic

views won notoriety. This caused the Bishop of Exeter to present to the House of Lords in January, 1840, a petition of his own, demanding that legal proceedings should be taken against any person who spread Socialistic views, and attacking Melbourne for having allowed such a man as Owen to approach the Queen. There was a certain bitterness about this, which was later intensified by Victoria's attitude upon education.

The Government had, by a majority of two only, voted a sum of money for the support of National Education, and the Lords, under the plea of defending the National Religion, prayed the Queen that she should give directions that no steps should be taken with respect to the establishment of any plan of general education without giving them an opportunity of considering such a measure.

From time immemorial, education, that is to say knowledge, has been regarded as the sworn enemy of religion; the Catholics were afraid of the influence of the Bible; the Protestants were, and are, equally afraid of the influence of thought; both believe that religion can be killed by knowledge. One of the greatest of olden philosophers affirmed practically that the ignorant person could not be good, that goodness, which should be synonymous with religion, could not exist without knowledge. This really seems to be the more sensible view; the ignorant child eats poisoned berries, the child who knows avoids them; the ignorant man debases his body and his mind without realising what he is doing; the man who knows enough to fore-

cast events has at least that safeguard against destruction. It is not too much to say that those who believe that ignorance is the best preserver of religion do no honour to real religion, which is an attitude of mind and not an outward conformity to this or that view or creed.

However, this is a digression. The act of the Lords was an encroachment upon the function of the Commons to deal with money Bills, and thus was, as the historian says, "an attempt to overstep the limits which the Constitution laid down." The Queen, in her answer, expressed regret that the Lords should have taken such a step, adding that it was with a deep sense of duty that she thought it right to appoint a Committee of her Privy Council to superintend the distribution of the grant voted by the House of Commons.

Two sermons preached about this time before Her Majesty, which made something of a stir, were a sign of the independent way in which she was regarded by dignitaries of the Church. In one, her chaplain, Mr. Percival, dealt with recent history, for he made his discourse take the form of an attack upon Peel, or someone believed to be Peel, who, he said, had sacrificed his conscience to political objects in consenting to Catholic Emancipation. The other was more personal to Queen Victoria, for Hook—nephew of Theodore Hook, and afterwards Dean of Chester—announced that the Church would endure, "let what might happen to the Throne." On Victoria's return to Buckingham Palace Lord Normanby politely in-



quired whether Her Majesty had not found it very hot in church.

“Yes,” she replied, “and the sermon was very hot too.”

The disaffection among the Tories was the result entirely of their exclusion from office, and it spread all over the country. At a dinner at Shrewsbury the company refused to drink the health of the new Lord Lieutenant (the Duke of Sutherland) because Lady Sutherland was at the head of the Queen's ladies. Greville said that the leaders of the party were too wise and too decorous to approve of such conduct, and that it was caused by the animus of the tail and the body. James Bradshaw, the Tory M.P. for Canterbury, made a speech at that town remarkable for being a personal attack of the most violent and indecent kind on the Queen, “a tissue of folly and impertinence,” which was received with shouts of applause at a Conservative dinner, and reported with many compliments and some gentle reprehension by the Tory Press. Others followed, and indeed the party which thought itself injured did its very best to prejudice Her Majesty against itself. Upon this, Edward Horsman, the Whig Member for Cocker-mouth, made a speech in his constituency, in which, alluding to Bradshaw's *Victorippicks*, he said that Bradshaw had the tongue of a traitor and the heart of a coward. Six weeks later Bradshaw, who had probably been made in various ways to feel his position keenly, sent a challenge to Horsman. George Anson, Melbourne's pri-

vate secretary, and brother of Lord Lichfield, acted as Horsman's second, and Colonel Gurwood, the editor of Wellington's Despatches and his confidential friend, seconded Bradshaw. There was much indignation over this, not only among the Whigs, but among the respectable Tories, for Gurwood had just been appointed to the Governorship of the Tower, being thus given both a pension and a place. His excuse for going out with Bradshaw was that he had never read the offending speech, upon which Greville remarks: "As Gurwood is a man of honour and veracity, this must be true; but it is passing strange that he alone should not have read what everybody else has been talking about for the last two months, and that he should go out with a man as his second on account of words spoken, and not inquire what they were." When George Anson offered to show him the speech he declined to read it.

The two men met, shots were exchanged, and no harm done, and then Gurwood asked if Horsman would retract. "Not until Bradshaw does, or apologises," was Anson's answer.

Bradshaw seemed miserable and upset, and saying that he could not live without honour, expressed himself ready to say anything that the two seconds agreed upon. So George Anson drew him up an apology. Horsman took back his words, and the matter ended.

At Ascot, in 1839, as the Queen's cortège drove up the racecourse it was greeted with silence, only broken by occasional hisses. Poor little Queen! to have come to this in two years! This reception led to silly

reports with—if they were true—sillier action behind them. The papers all got hold of some version of the same affair, and the substance of the article that appeared in *The Morning Post* was that Lady Lichfield had told the Queen that two of the most prominent among those who had thus annoyed Her Majesty were the Duchess of Montrose and Lady Sarah Ingestre; and, further, that those two ladies were informed—whether officially or not is not said—that the Queen knew of their action. The Duchess and Lady Sarah immediately saw Lady Lichfield, who denied that she had said anything about them, and on pressure gave an explicit denial in writing. When a Ball at Buckingham Palace followed the Ascot festivities, the two suspected of hissing discovered that they were out of favour; so the Duchess went to the Palace and requested an audience of Her Majesty. After being kept waiting for two hours, the Earl of Uxbridge told her she could not be admitted to an audience, as only Peeresses in their own right could demand such a privilege. Upon this, her Grace insisted that the Earl should take down in writing what she had to say and lay her communication immediately before the Queen. So the matter rested, until the Duke of Montrose thought it needful to open a correspondence with Melbourne on the subject. Then on July 5th *The Times* published a denial of part of the report, one which by no means exonerated the two accused ladies. “We are authorised to give the most positive denial to a report which has been inserted in most of the public papers, that the Countess of Lichfield informed

the Queen that the Duchess of Montrose and Lady Sarah Ingestre hissed Her Majesty on the racecourse at Ascot, and there could have been no foundation for so unjust an accusation." Thus Lady Lichfield was practically cleared, but the other two suspects were "where they were"; and the Queen? She remained under the unspoken imputation of being pettish and injudicious. But in those days she had not learnt the wisdom which came to her later, and when her dignity was wounded she was often too angry to use any tact, and would let the wound fester until it caused much ill-will.

## CHAPTER XI

### QUEEN VICTORIA'S TRAGIC MISTAKE

“It is really horrible that any family should be reduced to thank God for *the blessing* of depriving them of one of its dearest members.”—*Lady Sophia Hastings*.

“I think everyone should *own* their fault in a kind way to anyone, be he or she the lowest—if one has been rude to or injured them by word or deed, especially those below you. People will readily forget an insult or an injury when others *own* their fault, and express sorrow or regret at what they have done.”—*Queen Victoria*.

It was in 1839 that the most sad and regrettable event in the personal story of Queen Victoria's reign took place, the affair known as the Lady Flora Hastings Scandal. Lady Flora, who was the eldest daughter of the Marquis of Hastings and of Lady Hastings—Countess of Loudoun in her own right—had been Lady in Waiting to the Duchess of Kent since 1834. Her name occurs as attending the Duchess at all Royal functions, and there was a feeling of real affection between her mistress and herself. In 1839 she was thirty-three years of age, a woman who had proved her uprightness and sincerity, yet, because of dissension at Court, because of the curious friction

between the Queen and her mother, she was subjected to the bitterest calumnies.

Ever since her accession the gulf between the Queen and the Duchess had been widening, and there can be little doubt that Lehzen on the one hand and Conroy on the other were the people who, willingly or otherwise, were the cause of this. Victoria seems to have put the Baroness so high in her regard as to give her the place which the Duchess, with every justice and right, should have held. This was shown publicly as well as privately, for I have seen a paragraph in one paper of the day, that is to say of January, 1839, commenting upon the fact that the Queen had been three times to the theatre, accompanied on each occasion by the Baroness Lehzen, but not at all by the Duchess. The two Royal ladies lived, it is true, in the same house, and the Queen's mother attended the Royal dinner table, and sat in the drawing-room afterwards with her daughter's guests; but beyond that they were drifting towards a real and painful separation. The stories of Lehzen's rudeness to the Duchess were not without foundation, and her spite against the Conroy family had in no way abated; thus, as Lady Flora was friendly with the Conroys and was regarded as one of the "set" around the Duchess she also was not much in favour.

In all quarrels there is some exaggeration, and some imagination as well as some truth; there is also generally great difficulty in justly deciding who is to blame; therefore it was only natural at the time that there should have been many who believed the

calumnies against Lady Flora in spite of all the evidence in her favour. But to-day it is quite certain that she is fully exculpated, that she alone comes out of the trouble with honour.

Lady Flora returned from Scotland early in the year to her duties about the Duchess, feeling very unwell; so much so that she consulted Sir James Clark, physician both to the Duchess and to Her Majesty. The medical treatment and the exercise prescribed did her good, the swelling in her body subsided, and she thought she would soon be quite well. But this enlargement of her figure had given rise to a certain suspicion in the mind of the physician, which he was not man enough to mention delicately or professionally to his patient. He thought about it first, and then went to Lady Portman, one of the Queen's ladies in waiting, and told her what he believed. Hearing such a thing from the doctor who had been in attendance upon Lady Flora made the suggestion a fact to Lady Portman.

The story goes that she confided in Lady Tavistock, who thought it her duty to repeat the information to Lord Melbourne, and eventually some or all of them laid the matter before the Queen. What share Baroness Lehzen bore in this little plot—for the way in which it was guarded from the persons really interested gave it the semblance of a plot—it is not easy to say, but later she was accused of being the centre of offence. It is probable that advice was all she tendered, but if that is so it was very bad advice, and it led the young Queen, who should have been

above all meannesses, to do that which should and did cost her passionate regret and many tears. In the first instance, she was impulsively harsh and suspicious; when it was proved that there was no cause for either harshness or suspicion, she was just as repentant and eager to make amends. But when in the bitterly disturbed state of society the scandal grew out of hand and some signal mark was needed from her to clear Lady Flora's honour, all her kindness froze. She would neither take the blame nor allot it, but treated the whole affair with a stony silence. This was a terrible mistake! If only she could have put into practice the bravery of her own words, quoted at the head of this chapter, how much better it would have been!

Once the idea of Lady Flora's indiscretion was in Her Majesty's mind, her only, absolutely her only, honourable course would have been either to see Lady Flora herself, or, if that seemed too difficult, to consult her mother, the Duchess of Kent. But the Queen was so blinded by her advisers or by her prejudices that she took the whole matter into her own hands, and sent Sir James Clark to interview Lady Flora. The following is part of a letter written about Lady Flora on March 7th by the Marchioness of Hastings to her son-in-law, Captain Charles Henry.

"Sir James Clark, shocking to tell, accused her of being privately married, and you can imagine her indignation and horror. She flatly denied it, and then this ambassador said that nothing but a medical examination by himself and another would 'clear her





LADY FLORA HASTINGS



character and satisfy the ladies of the Court.' From her he went to the Duchess (of Kent), who resented the insult instantly. He was followed by Lady Portman, who was deputed by the Queen to desire she would not appear before her till 'her character was cleared' by this most revolting proposal. The dear, dear Duchess could not make up her mind to this; Flora desired it. Two persons have been named as those suspected of her shame, Sir John Conroy, who has been like a father in his care of her, and Lord Headfort, evidently as a cloak to the attempt which was to separate Flora and the Duchess's old and attached servant from her. Flora persisted, and the Speaker (?) and Sir John Conroy both said she was right, and the Duchess at last gave a reluctant consent. Flora named Sir Charles Clarke in addition, and the strongest medical opinion he and Sir James Clark could sign was given, to the confoundation of those wicked persons who could so act. Flora wrote to Hastings (her brother), who went up alone, and has behaved with a judgment and spirit which is a cheer to me in so much misery. He went to Lord Melbourne, and insisted on his thorough disavowal of having anything to do with it; and asked an audience of the Queen. Lord Melbourne at first refused, but Hastings insisted, and Hastings very respectfully but very decidedly pointed out to Her Majesty the fallacy of such advisers, 'be they who they may,' who could recommend such a course to her. Sorry am I to say Lady Tavistock does not stand clear of wickedness and vile gossip at least, but Lady Portman took

the messages, after *a man* was sent to make the base attack on my poor child. The Duchess kept by her, and refused till ample reparation was made to go either to dinner or in the evening. To-morrow I will send you part of her dear letter about my darling Flo. I dare add no more. The Queen sent for Flora, the tears were in her eyes (I am glad they were so), and expressed her sorrow. She (Flora) took it rightly, but added, 'I must respectfully observe, Madam, I am the first, and I trust I shall be the last, Hastings ever so treated by their Sovereign. I was treated as if guilty without a trial.' She took it very well, and has been markedly kind to her since. Sir James Clark has been dismissed by the Duchess."

This letter from the Duchess of Kent was sent to the Countess of Loudoun:—

"Buckingham Palace, 5th March, 1839."

"MY DEAR LADY HASTINGS,

"Our beloved Lady Flora will tell you all the dreadful things that have occurred here; I will only say that no mother could have defended a daughter more than I have done her. She is of all her sex that being that most deserves it, and she stands on the highest ground. This attack, my dear Lady Hastings, was levelled at me through your innocent child. But God spared us!

"Believe me, the hour will come when the Queen will see and feel what she has been betrayed into. When your first feeling of indignation subsides, for mine knew no bounds, you will in your nobleness of

soul view with scorn all these proceedings. I cannot say more. I have stood by your child and your house as if all was my own. Believe me, with the truest affection and esteem,

“Your devoted friend,  
“VICTORIA.”

Lady Flora's first letter on this matter, written to her sister and brother-in-law, runs as follows:—

“MY DEAR CHARLES AND SELINA,

“Though I know neither of you would ever believe (were the Angel Gabriel to reveal it to you) anything evil of old Flo, I must not let you hear from others the horrible conspiracy from which it has pleased God to preserve me. It is evidently got up by Lehzen, who has found willing tools in Ladies Tavistock and Portman and Sir James Clark; evidently ultimately directed against the Duchess (of Kent), though primarily against me. The means employed were to blacken my character, and represent me to be—I can scarce write the words!—with child! I have no time for particulars to-day, but will write you fully to-morrow. I have come out gloriously. I underwent as they demanded, and the Queen urged by them did also, the most rigid medical examination, and have the fullest certificate of my innocence, signed by Sir James Clark and Sir Charles Clarke. My Duchess could not have been kinder had she been my mother; she is one of the noblest of human beings—Hastings came to town instantly and behaved like an angel, with such judgment and affection! All my real friends have been very true to me and very kind to

me. I would not write thus hurriedly, but I hear it has reached the Clubs, and I fear your learning it from another source, and being anxious about me. It made me very ill for two or three days, I was so shocked and shattered. The poor Queen was sadly misled in the business; she did not know what she did and sanctioned; she is very sorry. I hear at the Clubs they have named two or three names with mine; one is poor Sir John Conroy's. How infamous. No one, thank God, however, is disposed to think ill of our father and mother's child, nor has my conduct been such as to encourage evil thoughts of me, and I am told people are vehement at the insult I have received."

Lady Flora complained of the way in which this examination was conducted, and her maid, who was present, spoke of the roughness and indecency shown. Later, when she was delirious, she accused the doctors who attended her of saying she was like a married woman. During the preliminaries Sir Charles Clarke, a specialist in midwifery, said kindly, "Lady Flora's answers are so satisfactory that we need proceed no further," to which "that brute, Sir James Clark" (to quote from Lady Sophia) answered, "If Lady Flora is so sure of her innocence, she can have no objection to what is proposed."

There was little chance of keeping such an affair quiet. From club to newspaper was but a step, and by the 10th of March Lady Adelaide Hastings, a sister of Lady Flora, wrote: "It is known all over London, and *The Morning Post*, though without the names, spoke so distinctly of the whole occurrence

that there is no hiding it, even were there any advantage in so doing. In the whole truth there is nothing that is not honourable to all but the Queen, her Ladies, and Sir James Clark. The Duchess (of Kent), whose conduct has been most kind and like a mother to our dear sister, and who bitterly feels the insult, dismissed him from her household immediately. He is a wretch to have allowed himself to be put forward as the tool of those base women, and as a man and a physician has acted infamously. The Queen has not yet dismissed him, but I think she must, at least if she has any regard to public opinion, which loudly calls at least for his disgrace. The Queen has been misled and duped, I think. I cannot believe that she knew all that was said in her name, or that the message Lady Portman brought us, as from her, had her real sanction. One would think nineteen was too young for a woman so to forget what was due to a mother, and to have so little regard for the feelings of one she had lived in intimacy with. You will be grieved to hear that Lord Harewood's daughter (Lady Portman) could have acted as Lady Portman has done, but she acted very ill. After giving the Queen's message to Flora (and, observe, it was not till after Sir James Clark's insulting charge), she went 'by command' to communicate it to the Duchess, on whose saying, 'She knew Flora and her family too well to listen to such an imputation of that kind on her,' Lady Portman insisted on asserting it, as Flora says in her letter, 'with a degree of pertinacity amounting to violence.' The Duchess refused to see her again.

The Duchess wrote Mamma a letter full of affection for Flora, and praise of her conduct, and evidently bitterly feeling the Queen's conduct. She came and sat with Flora in her room that evening to try and comfort her, and has indeed all along been most affectionate, but it is a sad thing to feel that because they are so faithful to her, her friend and servant must be exposed to indignity from her daughter. It was the 16th of last month this took place. The Duchess and Flora stayed in her own apartments for a week, as she said she would not associate with the rest of the inhabitants of the Palace, till proper apologies had been made. She was then induced to receive their ample apologies, as the Minister (the Duke of Wellington,\* who Flora says has behaved kindly and like a good soldier) represented that it would injure the Queen if she held out any longer."

So far as this the matter was a most unhappy mistake, caused by gossip and uncharitableness on the part of some, and by ignorance and an unnatural prejudice on the part of the Queen. Had Victoria taken some means, in addition to that of expressing her sorrow, of showing that the blame was on her side, things would have smoothed down, and we might never have heard of the affair. But she did nothing. The watching public began to grow curious; if neither the doctor nor the two ladies were sufficiently to blame to warrant dismissal, had there been some truth in the charge after all? it not unnaturally asked. The two following extracts from letters written by Lady Sophia

\* The Duke of Wellington had no official post at the time,



Hastings show the next stage of the scandal. They are hard and revengeful, and give an impression of being the reflex of the prevailing bitter political agitation as much as the result of the injury to the family.

“—— have given up Sir James Clark as their physician, and many medical men have refused to meet him in consultation, as they, and Sir Henry Halford among them, say he has cast an odium on the profession. I hear they cried out, either in the Park or in the Theatre, to the Queen, ‘Dismiss Lady Portman,’ and on Saturday she was hissed in the Park. I hope this may bring her to her senses, and make her give up the unfit people who are about her. The Royal Family have felt very properly about this. Princess Sophia sent Mamma a message through Dr. Doyle, who had seen her, expressive of her sympathy, and the Duchess of Gloucester spoke in the same way, both reprobating the conduct of the Queen. Even Lord Melbourne’s friends say, ‘It was a great oversight not to dismiss Sir James Clark.’ The report is, *he* says, ‘they dare not dismiss him for fear of his telling things.’”

Again: “I am so angry with the whole pack. As long as they thought they could keep matters quiet, and hide their own disgrace, they were all so amiable, and the Queen so gracious to Flora. Since her family have resented the affront, Her Majesty takes no notice, pays her not the slightest attention for weeks, till after she was so ill she had two medical men attending her for days, Her Majesty sends to inquire for her. The child’s notice is worth nothing, but it shows the disgusting meanness of the clique. Lady Tavistock

keeps *rubbing against* Flora at parties, following her, and trying to force herself on her acquaintance. None of them appear *in the least* sensible of the generous forbearance which has spared their public disgrace and conviction for the sake of their families. They go on as if *they* were injured. Oh, how I hate them!"

This attitude of the Queen, who was evidently determined that she would dismiss no one, and do nothing that would satisfy the public that Lady Flora was innocent, and who resented the demand upon her that she should do so as much as the Hastings resented the charge made against a member of their family, led to very bad results. Before the end of March gossip had but one theme, and that was the probable guilt of Lady Flora Hastings. The talk was not confined to London; Paris, Brussels, and Vienna were discussing the matter with interest; so much so that Captain Hamilton FitzGerald, who had married Lady Charlotte Rawdon, sister of the late Marquis of Hastings, wrote a letter to *The Examiner*, which was copied into all the other papers. It was a temperate, fair, and clear account of what had taken place, throwing no imputation upon anyone; and it included the following paragraph about Victoria: "Lady Flora is convinced that the Queen was surprised into the order which was given, and that Her Majesty did not understand what she was betrayed into; for, ever since the horrid event, Her Majesty has shown her regret by the most gracious kindness to Lady Flora, and expressed it warmly, with 'tears in her eyes.'"

Captain FitzGerald was considerably blamed by

various people for this letter, so much so that two months later—an evidence of the continuance of the scandal, which had by that time assumed very serious proportions—he wrote a second and a third letter, which he sent to the Marchioness of Hastings, as well as copies to Flora Hastings' brother, begging that they should be shown to everyone interested. They ran as follows:—

“Brussels, *May 30th*, 1839.

“I have been blamed by so many people for having made (as they say) an unnecessary exposure of the outrage inflicted on Lady Flora Hastings at Buckingham Palace that I think it necessary to explain why I published a narrative of the principal facts attending it. I was living at Brussels when it occurred; everyone there knew of it before I did. On the 13th of March I received a letter from England giving me a minute detail of what had happened, from which I thought there could not be a doubt of her innocence, and that her brother had fully done his duty. I was soon undeceived. Letters poured in upon me from all quarters containing the same injurious reports. I found that Lord Hastings' proceedings were unknown, except in his own circle, and at Buckingham Palace; that he was abused in the London Clubs for not having acted with sufficient spirit, and that infamous stories were circulated about his sister, under the old plea of propagating lies with strictest injunctions to secrecy. Everyone except her own family are acquainted with them. Whenever I tried to trace them to their source,

I was met by the same answer: 'I cannot give up my authority, and I must beg of you not to quote me, but I assure you the report is very generally believed.' It was said that the present was at least the second error, as when she left Buckingham Palace last year she was certainly pregnant. Bets were laid on the time when her situation would force her to 'bolt' from the Palace! At Vienna it was believed on the 15th of March that she had remained an hour on her knees begging mercy of the Queen, and that Lord Hastings having, as a Peer, forced his way into the Royal presence, had upbraided Her Majesty, who made him no answer, but curtsied and retired when his tirade was over! I immediately went to England; when I arrived in London I found all these reports in circulation. Lady Flora's family were not in town, and the generality of indifferent people were inclined to believe them. The known fact that no one of the Queen's household had been punished for the insult she had received seemed to say that the Government did not think her assailants deserved punishment, or, in other words, that she had not been ill-treated by them. The inference from which was, that she had been favoured and spared from motives of humanity. Nothing seemed to me to prevent the complete establishment of this opinion, but the prompt punishment which the Duchess of Kent had inflicted on Sir James Clark by dismissing him from Her Royal Highness's household. I landed in the City, and remained there many days to ascertain what judgment the respectable and unprejudiced citizens had passed on the case. I consulted with many

persons, and by their assistance was present at many discussions held by people who did not know me, at those respectable houses where men of business pass their evenings, and discuss the news and speculations. I found public opinion was universally against Lady Flora. The general idea was that 'she had been treated with unnecessary harshness,' that she 'should have been got quietly out of the way,' that 'such things occurred every day in palaces, people who place their daughters in them must take the consequences of doing so.' It was often said 'her brother would not have been so quiet if he had not known that more than he liked would have come out if the thing had not been hushed up.' I concluded that the opinion of the people at large was the same as that of the people of London, as they were both acted on by the same fallacious evidence, anonymous statements in newspapers; and I was confirmed in my original opinion that it was the duty of Lady Flora's family to extinguish all false reports by publishing a full statement of the case, and openly challenging contradiction. I felt that Lord Hastings could not do himself justice in publishing his own acts, and that delicacy, brotherly love, and family pride might prevent him from being sufficiently accurate and minute in stating his sister's wrongs. I therefore determined to publish it myself.

"HAMILTON FITZGERALD."

To the Marchioness of Hastings (Countess of Loudoun) Captain FitzGerald wrote:—

"DEAR LADY HASTINGS,—The manner in which I

find myself avoided by 'serviles' for having exposed their infamy made it necessary for me to write my reasons for publishing. I sent Hastings a copy of it, and I now send you one. I have no idea of publishing it, unless unforeseen circumstances do not make it useful to do, but I beg of you either to show it, or give a copy of it to anyone you choose. My first was a statement of the facts, this is one of the lies of the infamous; the actors knew that Flora's established character would show off their filth, so they tried to sap it. I have both Lady Portman's and Lady Tavistock's statement of their conduct. By the former it appears the doctor went *of his own accord* to tell his suspicions to Lady Portman, and asked her opinion. This proves breach of trust, plotting, and malignity. Why, if he had suspicions, did he not go to the Duchess of Kent? No! that would have stopped his agitation. Why did Lady Portman reduce an unanswerable examination into a doubtful consultation of physicians on the state of Flora's health? Because she knew it would have answered all the lies in circulation about former misconduct. But, bad as all this is, it is not as bad as Lady Tavistock's conduct. She says when she heard the reports in February she wished to have spoken of them to Flora, but was prevented by circumstances, and it became her duty to tell the Prime Minister of them. What, I should like to know, prevented her speaking to Flora? It could be nothing but a combination having decided that neither Flora nor her Royal Mistress should be informed of what was going on. Lord Melbourne, having been informed

of it, should either have stopped it, or informed the Duchess of it, if he believed the report. I think Lady Tavistock's short note would convict her and Lord Melbourne before any court in London."

Of course, these letters present the case from one side; the pity is that nothing remains in the way of evidence upon the other. The Queen seems to have thought that the private expression of her sorrow was sufficient. She did not realise, or she chose to ignore, that her very position made the matter a public one, and that the whole country was talking about and discussing the probability of Lady Flora's guilt. Either she herself had taken too great a part in the humiliation of Lady Flora to allow herself to show displeasure to anyone without being unjust, or she was obstinately determined to do and say no more to clear her mother's friend and servant, or she was screening one of her own people. Lady Flora's reputation would probably have suffered all through a long life had she lived, because of the Queen's silence and disregard, but the illness which had afflicted her early in the year returned, and she died in July.

Of this the Tories, who were, as has been said, in an excited, disaffected state, made great capital. Their papers announced the illness of Lady Flora, but ignored the mention of any specific disease; she was raised to the position of a martyr that the Queen might be the more effectually denounced. "Poor girl! the wound has not been healed, and the calumniated lady is sinking under a blow inflicted by the yet unpunished slanderers, who still seek the favour of the Sovereign

in the very Palace where the victim of their fiendish and indelicate malignity is lying with breaking heart and bowed down spirit. She has borne up nobly against the flood of demonised falsehood which has been let loose upon her; now Nature can no longer sustain the contest, and the body is prostrated by the agony of the mind. We dare not trust ourselves to speak as we feel, but this we will say, that if Lady Flora Hastings die, her death will fling a blight upon the Palace, which Royal banquetings will never overcome, and regal smiles never make to pass away."

This is but a sample of many articles and paragraphs. The Baroness Lehzen, though her name had not publicly appeared in the trouble, was regarded generally as the most obnoxious person about the Court, probably because she was never known to give counsel, and yet was believed to be always whispering in the ear of the Queen.

Lord Tavistock and Lord Portman both wrote to the papers in defence of their wives, the former denying that Lady Tavistock had taken any part in the Flora Hastings trouble; the latter asserting that Lady Portman did, on that painful occasion, neither more nor less than her duty towards the Court, towards Lady Flora Hastings herself, and towards the people of England, to whom, while in waiting upon her Sovereign, she was constitutionally responsible. Lord Portman, however, went further than this, if newspaper correspondents are to be believed. On the 3rd of April he took the chair when the Guardians of the Blandford district dined together; and on his wife's



health being drunk he in his reply alluded to Lady Flora Hastings, saying that the conduct of Lady Portman required no vindication, as a few months would testify.

With such hardness as this around her, one understands that the Queen may also have grown somewhat hard; yet even if Lady Portman did not credit the doctors' certificate, the Queen could not have ignored it. It is only possible to think that she did not understand what the results of her own inaction must be; yet from the beginning there were many who would have echoed Greville's biting comment on the affair had they heard it:—

“It is certain that the Court is plunged in shame and mortification at the exposure, that the Palace is full of bickerings and heart-burning, while the whole proceeding is looked upon by society at large as to the last degree disgusting and disgraceful. It is really an exemplification of the saying that kings and valets are made of the refuse clay of creation; for though such things sometimes happen in the servants' hall, and housekeepers charge stillroom and kitchen maids with frailty, they are unprecedented and unheard-of in good society, and among people in high or even in respectable stations. It is inconceivable how Melbourne can have permitted this disgraceful and mischievous scandal, which cannot fail to lower the character of the Court in the eyes of the world. There may be objections to Melbourne's extraordinary domiciliation in the Palace, but the compensation ought to be found in his good sense and experience

preventing the possibility of such *tricasseries* as these."

In June, Lady Flora suffered from what was regarded as a bilious fever, from which she seemed to be recovering; but it returned, and the vomiting weakened her so much that her physician—Dr. Chambers—suggested that some relatives should come to stay with her at the Palace. So her sister, Lady Sophia, went, and was there until all was over; and so filled with bitterness was she at the treatment given to Lady Flora that she would not have a bed prepared for her, but rested when necessary on the sofa.

Lady Portman was said to be in great distress of mind during the last illness of her victim, but it was not sufficient to prevent her from amusing herself in the gay world, and she seems to have made some remarks which aggravated the injury which she had done. Lady Selina Henry, another sister, wrote while Flora was ill:—"In a letter from Sophia to me there is a speech of Lady Portman's repeated so gross that she must be a beast; Flora says, 'As for Ladies Tavistock and Portman, I can never open my lips to them again.' I think she knows this horror that Lady Portman has said."

Lady Tavistock seems to have felt some compunction in having interfered, for the day before Flora died her doctor received the following clumsy and ineffective note from Lord Tavistock:—

"Spring Gardens, July 4th, 1839.

"DEAR DR. CHAMBERS.—If you see a favourable



LADY PORTMAN.



opportunity, Lady Tavistock wishes much you would say a kind word for her to Lady F. Hastings, towards whom she has not only never harboured an unkindly thought, but has been deeply interested in her well-being. She has been greatly distressed by the cruel and unfounded attacks that have so long been made upon her in some newspapers, and it would afford her pleasure to be able to convey a message of kindness to your patient, if you think it could be done without disturbing her; but you will, of course, exercise your own judgment and discretion about naming the subject to her.—Yours truly, TAVISTOCK.”

Dr. Chambers took this letter to Lady Sophia Hastings, who returned the following answer:—

“If I would have given the message, it is now beyond her comprehension, but you may say—if it would be any consolation to Lady Tavistock—I refer her to the Bishop of London.” In telling her mother of this reply, Sophia adds, “I hear Princess Sophia was enchanted when Lady Cornwallis told her this yesterday. She is very anxious to know if anything of regret had been expressed.”

As to this matter of regret, though it was expressed for the death of Flora Hastings, it was, as far as I can find out, only once connected with any allusion to the scandal. The Queen sent for Dr. Chambers and saw him alone, though the Baroness was in the next room. Her Majesty seemed much subdued, and after thanking him for the report he had sent, expressed her sorrow that suffering had been added to bodily illness. Lady Sophia commented upon this:—

“I told him I was very glad Her Majesty should have appeared to feel, and that she had done me the honour to enquire for me this morning. The Duchess of Gloucester was very much displeased she had not done it before, tho’ I believe she sent down that sad Friday morning, when I was collecting poor Flora’s things, and I have an indistinct idea of sending some answer, or Reichenbach (Lady Flora’s maid) did for me.”

A State ball arranged for Friday, June 28th, was postponed because of “the melancholy state of Lady Flora Hastings,” and a Royal banquet arranged for July 4th, the day on which Lady Flora died, was also countermanded. The Countess of Loudoun wrote some impassioned letters to the Queen, which eventually drew from Lord Melbourne the response that the Queen had acknowledged the unhappy error to Lady Flora, and it was not intended that any other step should be taken. This decision was, most unfortunately, adhered to. It may be that Melbourne, always praised for his generosity of mind, may have urged a different course upon his Royal mistress, and that she, swayed by less wise counsels or by her own pride, would not heed him. But it seems never to have been acknowledged by the Court that the terrible publicity given to the affair, which had been eagerly seized upon in the interest of party by the Press, had altered the whole matter, and that action of some sort was imperatively demanded. Lord Melbourne, who hated rows, who was inclined to concede too much rather than too little to obtain peace, and who was one

of the justest and kindest of men, must have suffered torment through this period.

If only Her Majesty had been royal enough and wise enough to have made public the affair from her point of view, and, if she shrank from ruining a man like Clark by dismissing him, have boldly said that she could not do it, this matter would not have remained to burden her thoughts with shame; but she wrapped herself in an inadequate covering of dignity, trying to believe the antiquated saying that a Queen can do no wrong. As a matter of fact, Dr. Clark entirely lost his reputation with the public over this matter, and there is something pathetic in the request Victoria made to Albert before their marriage :

“I have a request to make too, viz., that you will appoint poor Clark your physician; you need not consult him unless you wish it. It is only an honorary title, and would make him very happy.” Whether the Prince did this I do not know. To the end of the Queen's life this tragic affair must have pained Her Majesty; and she certainly wished it to be forgotten by everyone, for never anywhere is there given any mention of it. It is ignored in most of the “lives” of Her Majesty, and every scrap of allusion to it is withdrawn from her own letters and writings; she herself later wrote of destroying most of the letters which belonged to that, “the most unsatisfactory” period of her life. It must not be forgotten that the deepest injury of all was inflicted by those who were the first to make this matter public, that is to say, by those who first reported it, for unworthy reasons, in the public

Press. Many mistakes as bad as this have been made and atoned for—in private, and the sense of injury has disappeared; but when all the world knows of a shameful thing, then the atonement should be public.

When Lord Hastings paid the doctors and nurses, his money was returned with the information that handsome fees had been received. Lady Flora's maid showed him a brooch and a banknote for £50, which she offered to put in the fire; this he advised her not to do, so she banked it. Though it is not asserted in so many words, it is implied that the Queen had taken this way of showing her compunction. The presents to the maid had been conveyed to her through Viscountess Forbes. Lady Sophia, anxious as she was all through to show the keenness of her resentment, secured another note of the same amount, put it in an envelope, and returned it through the same channel. Of Lady Forbes, Sophia writes bitterly in the following letter, in which she also emphasises the painful position of the Duchess of Kent:—

“I found Dr. Chambers knew *nothing accurately* of Sir James Clark's conduct, so I told him the real state of the case; and as at Harewood and at Lord Tavistock's they had not told him the facts, I did. I parted from him with more feeling of regret than I did from anyone else. I saw the poor Duchess of Kent, who is 'floored,' I think. She was very kind to me, and about all of us; but she is beat down, she can fight no longer, and she will soon be completely under orders. I saw Fanny Forbes (Viscountess Forbes) and cleared my mind to her of her conduct. I cannot say



that there was much good feeling in her going to the Opera every night, tho' the Queen told her she need not; and tho' she came in when she came back, her flighty, flirty, lively manner, just out of the world, jarred horribly with one's feelings. When one night she came in with a *jaunty* step, we had just kept Flora from a fainting fit, and had sent off for Mr. Merriman, as he had told us such an attack might at any time prove fatal. When Mr. M—— came I said, 'Thank God it is only a fainting fit,' and he said in such a melancholy way, '*Only* a fainting fit, Lady Sophia, and who could tell how that might end?' And Lady Forbes says she loved Flora like a sister, and anxiety and watching has afflicted her health! She offered to give back the hair Reichenbach gave her [after Lady Flora was dead], but will not take out that given her by the Queen. I told her that hair was probably false, as I could not trace how the Queen got it, but that she did not care for. The Duchess of Kent did *not* give it, for I asked her."

To remove entirely any lingering feeling of doubt, Lady Sophia caused a post-mortem examination to be made, that a definite name might be given to the illness which brought about her sister's death, and she writes thus of it to her mother:

"I have to hope, my beloved mother, that I shall not be so unhappy as to incur your displeasure, or to have added to your agony, but if it be, on me be the blame, for no one suggested it to me. I proposed it to Hastings, and indeed it was due to the medical men who have been so very attentive, and that was an

'examination.' It took place at 6 o'clock yesterday evening, as late as it was possible. One was proposed, but Chambers would put it off to a later hour. I left her at once when he came, having wished her good-bye, and put round her neck the locket with your and Papa's hair, and I said that I trusted to him that it remained there. He burst into tears, and promised me. John remained the whole time out of respect while the surgeons were there, and it was only a slight operation, no uncovering, nothing to wound the feelings, not so bad as Sir James Clark. She was merely uncovered over her stomach, as if it were a wound in her side. John put the locket on her the last thing with his own hands, and he, Charles, and Hastings are at the Palace every night and day, and Reichenbach and the nurse sit up. *Every* respect is shown. God bless you. I am late."

There were five doctors present at the examination, Drs. Chambers, Holland, and Merriman, Sir A. Cooper and Sir B. Brodie. The last officiated, and it was found that Flora Hastings died from enlargement of the liver, which, pressing downwards, produced enlargement of the abdomen and inflammation.

It was curious that *The Times*, then devoted to Tory influence, should have struck a different note from the other Tory papers, and have asked, somewhat pertinently, though much to the anger of the Hastings family, "Did the Ladies of the Bedchamber cause the liver complaint of which Lady Flora Hastings died?"

The death of the maligned lady brought public

indignation up to fever-heat, and the Queen wisely remained in her Palâce, for to be hissed in the street is worse than to be forced to sit silently under a parson who has licence to outrage all one's cherished ideas. At the Opera one night someone asked the box-keeper if Her Majesty would be present, and the man replied :  
" Oh, no; she dare not come ! "

As for the Ministry, it was deeply depressed at the whole occurrence, and Lady Cowper told someone that her brother, Lord Melbourne, felt that its tragic ending was the worst blow the Government had so far received.

Lady Flora was buried at Loudoun by her own wish, for she had said, " I do not think I shall ever look upon Loudoun again, and I wish to be taken there. Under other circumstances I should have said, ' let the tree lie where it falls,' but as it is I wish to lie there. "

At four o'clock in the morning of Wednesday, July 12th, the coffin was removed from Buckingham Palace. The Guards and Life Guards were under arms all Tuesday night and Wednesday morning to show respect to the dead woman, but there was also a tremendous body of police, who accompanied the sad procession as far as Temple Bar, where they gave place to the City police. This was done, Sophia Hastings was told, to prevent the Queen's carriage from being pulled to pieces, of which she says, " which I never expected. " The fact that the Royal carriage was to follow was kept so secret that the rest of the Royal family did not know what to do. The whole matter

had been so turned to party uses that they did not like to show this public mark of respect if the Queen did not set the example. The Duchess of Gloucester found out in time, and she vexed the Duke of Cambridge very much by not letting him know. Princess Sophia was the only one who followed her own wishes irrespective of the actions of her niece, saying contemptuously of the others that they were but time-servers to care what the Queen did.

Though the hour of the start had been given as six, there was a great and silent crowd collected to watch the carriages pass at four o'clock, hats being lifted all along the route. Many comments of a strong nature were uttered; thus one respectable-looking man pointed with his stick to Her Majesty's carriage, saying, "What is the use of her gilded trumpery after she has killed her?" A policeman hearing this, went up and looked the man in the face, probably hoping to recognise or to remember him. Another man was heard to say, "Ah, there's the victim, but where's the murderer?" Sophia Hastings, who retailed these incidents with relish, said of the drive through London: "Not one thing pained me; the feeling was respect to her, and compassionate respect to myself, and total absence of bustle, noise, or any confusion. Even at the wharf you might have felt in a chapel, and I am told many were disappointed" (probably that there was no disturbance).

The following letter was sent by the Duchess of Kent, three weeks after the calamity, to Lady Selina Henry:—

“Buckingham Palace, *July 27th*, 1839.

“MY DEAR LADY SELINA,—My servant returned only the day before yesterday, or I would have written to you sooner to enquire how your excellent mother was after that most sad ceremony. I feel quite sure it is not necessary I should tell you how sincerely I felt for her, for you, and your sisters on that melancholy day. Also your poor sister Sophia; I fear she was very unwell on that day. Your and my severe loss appears to me still a dream! Alas! a very painful dream. I shall be very much obliged to you and your sister Adelaide to let me know how you are all. I heard from your dear sister Sophia to-day that your mother is still at Loudoun. I hope she will soon be able to go near the sea. Be so good as to give her my most affectionate regards, also to remember me most kindly to your sister, and to give my compliments to Captain Henry, who I am sorry I did not see before I left town. I was really not in a state to see him. Your dear sister Sophia was not very well when she left town, but I hope the change of air and scene will be very beneficial to her. I hope, my dear Lady Selina, you will not quite forget the friend of our beloved Flora, and believe me always to remain,

“Your very sincere friend, VICTORIA.”

Lady Hastings died six months after her daughter. Sir James Clark did his best to prove himself innocent of all harshness and indiscretion, but the attempt was not very satisfactory. He retained the Queen's favour until he died, in 1870. Lady Portman also held Her

Majesty's friendship until 1865, when her death occurred. As for Victoria, she never, as has been said, broke her silence, and something like general hatred was felt for Baroness Lehzen, who was believed to have been her adviser all through. As Sir Sidney Lee says in his *Biography of the Queen*, however cogently Victoria's attitude might be explained, the affair "came near proving a national calamity through the widespread hostility which it provoked against the Court."

Urged by some members of his family, the Marquis of Hastings sent a full account of all that had occurred to the *Morning Post*, his letter occupying eleven columns, and in this Melbourne was entirely exculpated, also Baroness Lehzen, but it did not elucidate the name of the person with whom the first suggestion arose; many believed the Queen's youthfully autocratic ways were at the root of the offence, while others did their best to distribute the blame.

Lady Flora was the author of many pretty verses, and her collected poems were published after her death. The following, "Lady Flora Hastings' Bequest," which was found among her papers, was not, however, included in the collection:—

" Oh, let the kindred circle,  
 Far in our Northern land,  
 From heart to heart draw closer  
 Affection's strength'ning band;  
 To fill my place long vacant,  
 Soon may our loved ones learn;  
 For to our pleasant dwelling  
 I never shall return.

Peace to each heart that troubled  
 My course of happy years;  
 Peace to each angry spirit  
 That quenched my life in tears!  
 Let not the thought of vengeance  
 Be mingled with regret;  
 Forgive my wrongs, dear Mother!  
 Seek even to forget.

Give to the friend, the stranger,  
 Whatever once was mine,  
 Nor keep the smallest token  
 To wake fresh tears of thine,  
 Save one, one loved memorial,  
 With thee I fain would leave;  
 'Tis one that will not teach thee  
 Yet more for me to grieve.

'Twas mine when early childhood  
 Turn'd to its sacred page  
 The gay, the thoughtless glances  
 Of almost infant age;  
 'Twas mine through days yet brighter,  
 The joyous years of youth,  
 When never had affliction  
 Bow'd down mine ear to truth.

'Twas mine when deep devotion  
 Hung breathless on each line  
 Of pardon, peace, and promise  
 Till I could call them mine;  
 Till o'er my soul's awakening  
 The gift of Heavenly love,  
 The spirit of adoption  
 Descended from above.

Unmarked, unhelped, unheeded,  
 In heart I've walked alone;  
 Unknown the prayers I've uttered,  
 The hopes I held unknown.

Till in the hour of trial,  
Upon the mighty train,  
With strength and succour laden,  
To bear the weight of pain.

Then, Oh! I fain would leave thee,  
For now my hours are few,  
The hidden mine of treasure,  
Whence all my strength I drew,  
Take, then, the gift, my mother;  
And, till thy path is trod,  
Thy child's last token cherish,  
It is the Book of God."

It is interesting to know that Sir James Clark was a Navy doctor, who by the friendship of King Leopold was placed in the household of the Duchess of Kent in 1834, and as Navy doctors have no practice among women, he could have known very little about the matter when he so rashly judged Lady Flora Hastings. For the last ten years of his life he lived at Birk Hall, Bagshot Park, which was lent him by the Queen. By those who knew him he was regarded as an estimable, upright man.



## CHAPTER XII.

### QUEEN VICTORIA'S LOVE.

“The noble Duke knows he is a Protestant; all England knows he is a Protestant; the whole world knows he is a Protestant.”—*Melbourne*.

“There is no prohibition as to marriage with a Catholic. It is only attended with a penalty, and that penalty is *merely the forfeiture of the Crown*.”—*Brougham*.

WHEREVER the blame of the Flora Hastings affair lay, it must be admitted that with it and the Bed-chamber squabble the Queen had had a nerve-breaking time. If the people had shown in a vague way before that they were passing judgment upon her, they now did not fail to announce that the judgment was a thing assured. Her Drawing Rooms and Levées were almost deserted; there were whispers that she was running heavily into debt. “It is probable that before 1841 the help of a now powerful house will be required.”

“She’s not in debt—tho’ some have said it, or  
If, why then I’m not a creditor.”

was a couplet that it was pretended was the work of Sir John Conroy.

In addition to this there were rumours that the split

between the Queen and her mother was complete, that disputes constantly took place, and that the Duchess was feeling anew the slights put upon Sir John Conroy : “ There are insinuations that the Duchess of Kent is malignantly enraged at the removal of Sir John Conroy, and that there are deep dissensions between mother and daughter,” is one paragraph of many. When we remember that the animus against Sir John was believed to be one of the reasons for showing so much indelicate harshness to Lady Flora Hastings, it is easy to understand that the Duchess would have liked to bring the matter of Conroy to a head once for all.

Melbourne had been gravely troubled by Victoria's display of temper and self-will over the Bedchamber question, and reports were now current everywhere of scenes of bad temper at the Palace; “ even noble dames can brook no longer the rebuffs and contumely to which they are exposed.” “ Tudor tempest bursts,” was the expression used by one journal.

At the end of August Leopold and his Queen came to England, staying at Ramsgate, and it was asserted that the visit had the express purpose of an attempt to reconcile the Queen and the Duchess of Kent, though before the King of the Belgians went away it was said that both he and Lord Melbourne were suffering from the Queen's unevenness of temper; to which was added the news that the Duchess intended to go abroad for a time.

Poor little Queen! When we private people have gone through a period of shock and trouble, so that

our nerves are all a-jangle, we indulge our little tempest-bursts, are rude to those about us and let the trouble wear itself away, without more than half-a-dozen people knowing or caring about it. But this imperious and wilful girl could utter no word that was not reported outside; in spite of her youth she was expected to be perfect, and when she proved entirely human and sometimes wrong-headed, the whole nation talked of it as a crime.

Only a year and a bit had passed since she had said that she would not marry for two or three years, yet now she was wondering where to look for sympathy and support. Of course, it was not the helpful hand of a husband that she needed, she was quite sure of that, and yet subconsciously this solution must have presented itself to her mind; so much so that a little earlier she had felt it necessary to impress once more upon her uncle that she did not mean yet to take the important step. It was in the midst of the indignation which followed Lady Flora Hastings's death that she wrote again to Leopold on this subject, probably in answer to a letter from him urging the marriage. She said that she was anxious that the family should understand that even if she should like Albert she would make no final promise during that year and would not marry for two or three years. She spoke of her youth, her *great repugnance* to change her position, and the fact that no anxiety was shown in the country for her marriage. The following paragraph is natural in one who had been practically disposed of in her childhood and who for two years had had a husband urged on

her with a faint but unremitting pressure by her uncle :

“ Though all the reports of Albert are most favourable, and though I have little doubt I shall like him, still one can never answer beforehand for *feelings*, and I may not have the *feeling* for him which is requisite to insure happiness. I may like him as a *friend*, as a *cousin*, and as a *brother*, but not *more*; and should this be the case (which is not likely), I am *very* anxious that it should be understood that I am *not* guilty of any breach of promise, for I *never gave any*. I am sure you will understand my anxiety, for I should otherwise, were this not completely understood, be in a very painful position. As it is, I am rather nervous about the visit (a suggestion that the young Princes should come to England), for the subject I allude to is not an agreeable one to me.”

Leopold was wise enough to put no further pressure upon her, but to leave circumstances to do their work. There can be no doubt but that the Queen was very lonely and ill at ease just then. She had lost the confidence of the nation, and her pride stood in the way of her setting herself right with it. By her own acts she had alienated her mother, with whom, as a matter of fact, she showed no signs of renewing the lost intimacy; she had clung to the people accused of wrong behaviour in the Hastings affair, yet the sight of them constantly reminded her of her humiliation; and through prejudice she had turned her back upon a vast number of delightful people, whose only sin was to hold different political views from herself;

in truth, there seemed to be no real comfort anywhere.

When the King and Queen of the Belgians went to Windsor after their stay at Ramsgate, and Leopold saw how matters stood, he came to the conclusion that it was time for him to act; thus on his return home he instructed his two nephews to go and pay the promised visit to England.

Gossip about Victoria's marriage was always ready when other excitements failed, and it was now said that Prince Albert had refused to accept the position of husband to his cousin, and that the *Camarilla* had failed in its object, and was now bending its energies to the keeping of the Queen unmarried, its method being to harp on the fate of Princess Charlotte, in the hope that that would deter her from making any matrimonial arrangement. Which, of course, was all nonsense. The Prince was preparing for his visit, and Victoria was preparing a way for herself which should at least halve all her troubles, even though it meant also submitting her own autocratic will.

In the summer of 1839 Stockmar gave an interesting criticism of the character of Prince Albert, which I reproduce, for it is by no means the judgment of one who flatters:—

“The Prince bears a striking resemblance to his mother, and, differences apart, is in many respects both in body and mind cast in her mould. He has the same intellectual quickness and adroitness, the same cleverness, the same desire to appear good-natured and amiable to others, and the same talent for fulfilling this

desire, the same love of *espiègeries* and of treating things and men from the comical side, the same way of not occupying himself long with the same subject.

“His constitution cannot be said to be a strong one, though I believe by careful attention to diet he could easily strengthen it and give it stamina. After exerting himself, he often for a short time appears pale and exhausted. He dislikes violent exertion, and both morally and physically tries to save himself. Full of the best intentions and noblest designs, he often fails in carrying them into practice.

“His judgment is in many subjects beyond his years, but, up to the present time, he has not shown the least possible interest in *political* matters. Even the most important events of this kind never, even at the time of their taking place, induce him to read a newspaper. He has, as it is, a perfect horror of all foreign newspapers, and says that the only readable and necessary paper is the *Augsburger Allgemeine*, and even this he does not read through. In the matter of *les belles manières* there is much to desire. This deficiency must be principally laid to the account of his having in his earliest years been deprived of the intercourse and supervision of a mother and of any cultivated woman. He will always have more success with men than with women. He is too little *empressé* with the latter, too indifferent, and too reserved.”

As a matter of fact, Prince Albert was too reserved with men as well as with women, and to this must be attributed the fact that he was never really popular in England.

The *Morning Post* of August 22nd made a premature announcement of the marriage :—"A matrimonial alliance is about to take place between Her Britannic Majesty and His Serene Highness Prince Albert Francis," &c. Even in those days it seems that the newspapers were so eager to be first with their news that they sometimes went a long way ahead of events.

It was not until October 10th that Albert and his brother arrived at Windsor, the Prince presumably not knowing what his fate was likely to be, but resolved to tell the Queen that if she did not then make up her mind he would no longer be able to await her decision. This pronouncement must have been caused by the intelligent tutorial instructions of Leopold, for Albert had only then just attained his twentieth birthday, and could scarcely have feared a life of obscurity if his cousin declined to take him as her husband.

On the 14th of the month Victoria gave a ball, and at that she openly showed him a sign of her preference by taking some flowers from her bouquet and offering them to him. There being no buttonhole in which to place them, Albert took out a penknife, cut a hole in his uniform, and fixed the flowers over his heart. The next day the Queen sent for her cousin to come to her private room, and there—to quote Albert's words when writing to his grandmother, the Dowager Duchess of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha—she declared, "in a genuine outburst of love and affection, that I had gained her whole heart, and would make her intensely happy if I would make the sacrifice of sharing her life with her; for she said she looked on it as a sacrifice; the only thing

that troubled her was that she did not think she was worthy of me. The joyous openness of manner in which she told me this quite enchanted me, and I was quite carried away by it."

Both the young people poured out their hopes to Stockmar, who was in Germany at the time. "Albert has completely won my heart," wrote the Queen, "and all was settled between us this morning. . . . 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." Albert enthused: "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. . . . More, or more seriously, I cannot write. I am at this moment too bewildered to do so."

But even in this matter of the heart Victoria's sense of her exalted position never left her. When talking to the Duchess of Gloucester about making the declaration before Parliament, the old lady asked her if it was not a very nervous thing to do, upon which she answered, "I did a much more nervous thing a while ago. I had to propose to Albert." Then she went on to explain that of course it would not have been possible for him to have proposed to the Queen of England; "he would never have presumed to have taken such a liberty."

This is almost too good to be true, but as it is given in the Peel papers it may be regarded as reliable. To have loved a man and to have spoken of him in this way seems incredible; only a very young and inexperienced person could have done it, for the lover does not



weigh etiquette against an honest expression of love. However, Her Majesty was truly young in her love and in her love-making, and had much to learn concerning the inner sentiments of life. That she learned it all through we believe, for we are told that her love for the man whom her uncle chose for her deepened and widened, so that her marriage was as happy as the most kind-hearted could have wished.

It is not to be wondered at that a girl brought up in such a guarded, reticent atmosphere as the Queen had been should be unduly reticent all through her days. The curious thing is that the impression she made upon all whom she met was that of absolute frankness; yet she had for eighteen years been accustomed to hide her thoughts and her emotions, to suppress all tendency to confidences, and it can scarcely be wondered at that in a matter which was very personal her secretiveness should reassert itself. It is impossible not to feel sorry that Melbourne should have been the person against whom she armed her mind in this case. The Queen did not speak to him of her marriage, neither by consulting him nor telling him of her intentions. He knew nothing but the report given in the *Morning Post*, and the talk of the clubs and the streets. At last he spoke to her, telling her that he could not pretend to be ignorant of the reports going about, nor could she; that though he would not presume to ask her what she intended to do, it was his duty to tell her that if she had any intentions it was necessary that the Ministers should know them. She replied that she had nothing to tell him. A somewhat doubtful state-

ment, for she had already written to Leopold, asking him to keep her cousins from arriving before the 3rd of October, as she would have a number of Ministers at Windsor on that day, who, if they saw the Coburgs arrive, might say the Princes had come "*to settle matters.*"

A fortnight after Melbourne spoke and a day before her proposal to the Prince she told him that the matter was settled. These little evidences of haughty independence raised many apprehensions in the minds of those who served her, for they asked, "If she will deal thus with a Minister whom she likes, what will she do when those are in power whom she does not like?"

It is, of course, quite arguable that Victoria wished to have the opportunity, like other girls, of making up her mind in quiet and of having her little romance to herself. But she was not like other girls; and she did not forget what she considered the duties of her position when proposing to Albert, yet when those duties clashed with her inclination she allowed sentimentality to prevent her performing them.

The reports that Melbourne feared the loss of his power if Victoria married, and therefore was doing his best to induce her to keep single, were not confined to the gossip of London and Paris. There were many who wondered how Melbourne would behave if he saw before him the probability of the loss of his influence, as an introduction to the loss of his position. One of these was the Duke of Wellington, his great rival in personal weight at Court. Wellington felt that the genuineness of Melbourne's devotion would be tested

by such an event, for the old general knew that if, from personal or party motives, Melbourne wished to put off the Queen's marriage, he could easily find specious, in fact almost unanswerable, reasons for such a course. Then if Victoria really made her choice, pretexts would be easy for causing delays. Thus our Prime Minister was watched with curiosity or malice from all sides. What will he do? Will he think of himself? Will he act the good father's part? Will he feel disappointed that he is not the chosen man? Such were the questions prompted by those who knew much, little, or nothing, and these questions were asked everywhere, while the wags of the Press announced that the Devil's Tower at Windsor had been assigned to him as a residence.

But Melbourne had watched the Queen with something more than affectionate criticism; he saw that she had grave faults which, if not trained into virtues, would lead her into evil, and he knew that outside influence would never be strong enough to counteract them. Gravely and anxiously he talked over all the possibilities of the matter with King Leopold. He felt that Albert, a young, untried man, who knew nothing of public business, and had practically no knowledge of the world, might be a great danger in himself, yet on the other hand he thought it very possible that the union might be all the more successful because of the youth of the two, and that Victoria's influence would probably complete and strengthen the character of the young Prince. Melbourne had been assailed on every side for his residence in the Palace, for his untiring devotion to the Queen, yet it was his

pride to be recognised as being the faithful and affectionate friend of Her Majesty. He knew well enough that he would be giving his own power into the hands of another, yet his sole desire was to do the best he could for his Queen and his country. It was natural in these circumstances that he should wish to know the Queen's intentions in the matter, and when he received the news on the 14th of October, the day before Victoria's momentous interview with Albert, his natural sweetness of disposition showed itself; for he said: "I think your news will be very well received everywhere; for I hear that there is an anxiety now that it should be, and I am very glad of it. You will be much more comfortable; for a woman cannot stand alone for any time, in whatever position she may be."

Of Melbourne in this instance Leopold said to the Queen, he "has shown himself the amiable and excellent man I always took him for. Another man in his position, instead of *your* happiness, might have merely looked to his own personal views and imaginary interests. Not so our good friend; he saw what was best *for you*; and I feel it deeply to his praise."

The Queen wrote to all her Royal relatives to impart her great news, and in writing to the Dowager Queen there was a curious mistake made by her secretary in addressing the envelope. Lord Howe, at his private residence, received a letter addressed to *Lord How*, the envelope being whitey-brown inscribed "per railroad." He supposed it to be one of many letters he was in the habit of receiving from people who wanted money or subscriptions, or permission to dedicate some-

thing to him, or something equally unimportant, and very nearly threw it into the fire. However, he thought better of it, and opened the curious missive—to discover a letter from Queen Victoria announcing to Queen Adelaide her approaching marriage; it was written by her own hand, was instinct with kindness and affection, and “as full of love as Juliet!” Said Sir Robert Peel, in commenting on this, “I suppose some footboy at Windsor Castle had enclosed and directed it to Lord *How*. If it had been disregarded, and had thus remained unanswered, what an outcry there would have been of neglect, insult, and so forth—and not unjustly.”

When Daniel O’Connell heard the news he made an extravagant speech at Bandon—before the engagement, as a matter of fact—in which he said: “We must be—we are—loyal to our young and lovely Queen—God bless her! We must be—we are—attached to the Throne, and to the lovely being by whom it is filled. She is going to be married! I wish she may have as many children as my grandmother had—two-and-twenty! God bless the Queen! I am a father and a grandfather; and in the face of heaven I pray with as much honesty and fervency for Queen Victoria as I do for any one of my own progeny. The moment I heard of the daring and audacious menaces of the Tories towards the Sovereign<sup>1</sup> I promulgated, through the press, my feelings of detestation and my determination on the matter! Oh! if I be not greatly mistaken, I’d get in one day 500,000 brave Irishmen to defend the life, the honour, and

<sup>1</sup> The Bradshaw incident and others.

the person of the beloved young lady by whom England's Throne is now filled! Let every man in this vast and multitudinous assembly stretched out before me, who is loyal to the Queen and would defend her to the last, lift up his right hand! (*The entire assembly responded to the appeal.*) There are hearts in those hands. I tell you that, if necessity required, there would be swords in them! (*Awful cheering.*)” Thus reported the *Annual Register* of that date.

This sounds absurd and high falutin', but it must have warmed the heart of the young lady. However, if some people welcomed the marriage, there were others who foretold from it national calamity. I have shown how keenly the ultra-Tories hated the idea of another Coburg alliance, and as soon as the matter was assured the whole Papist scare recommenced. Society people were filled with disdain for the Prince's birth and position—"a younger son of a petty and undistinguished German Duke"! Albert was also accused of want of knowledge, want of manners, want of morals, and, in fact, a general poverty in all that made a good man; besides this—greatest crime of all—he was said to be a Whig! Thus the Queen had by no means regained her popularity with the disaffected of her people, and all the bitterness of feeling against her came out when the necessary arrangements were being made for Albert's reception into English life.

It is not difficult to see that with her sense of Royal infallibility the Queen was likely to show little tact, and indeed she made such extravagant demands for

her prospective husband that dismay was felt even by her warmest supporters.

However, the first thing for her to do was to announce to her Privy Council, which was summoned to Buckingham Palace for the 23rd of November, her decision to accept Prince Albert as her husband. There were eighty-three Councillors present, among them being the Duke of Wellington, who had just alarmed the country by having a serious attack—supposed to be paralytic—on the previous Monday, and the results of which were visible in a slight twist of the right corner of his mouth, and some constraint in using the left arm. When all the Privy Councillors were assembled, the doors were thrown open, and the Queen, dressed in a plain morning gown, wearing a bracelet in which the Prince's portrait was set, was handed in by the Lord Chamberlain. She bowed to her Councillors, sat down and said, "Your Lordships will be seated." Then she unfolded a paper and read, with "a mixture of self-possession and feminine delicacy," her declaration, which ran :—

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

She read, we are told, in a clear, sonorous, sweet-toned voice, but her hands trembled excessively,

though her eyes were bright and calm, neither bold nor downcast, but firm and soft. Several times she looked towards the Duke of Wellington, for he was still ill, and she had been anxious about him; and when it was all over she wrote in her journal: "Lord Melbourne I saw, looking at me with tears in his eyes, but he was not near me. . . . I felt that my hands shook, but I did not make one mistake. I felt more happy and thankful when it was over." In a letter to Prince Albert she wrote: "I wish you could have seen the crowds of people who cheered me loudly as I left the Palace for Windsor. I am so happy to-day! Oh, if only *you* could be here!"

For three months Victoria's emotions alternated between happiness and annoyance, for she could by no means get all she desired for her beloved Albert. The political animus against herself made the Opposition captious, and they and the Lords behaved like naughty children, finding fault with everything. From the very first, from the day that it was known that Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha was coming to England as the Queen's husband, the Prince's character was calumniated and his prospects treated with contempt. Our enmity to the German race, begun when we were obliged to see our Throne filled with Germans—for even the later Georges were more German than English—and continued with something of the rancour of a conquered nation, as one German alliance after another took place; which has been fed of late years by commercial jealousy, and by a latent fear of what our cousin the Kaiser might do; this enmity was gain-



ing strength seventy years ago, and found its whole expression in diatribes against the young man who, being one of the most amiable people in existence, had been forced into his position as surely as a Japanese tree is forced into its pigmy development. This may sound exaggerated, but it is true nevertheless. From his boyhood Albert was educated, moulded, pruned, into the shape—morally and mentally—that seemed most suitable for the Consort of the Queen. There was no escape for him, and so carefully had he been prepared that he did not even think of escape. It has always been held that England did very well for the poor, undistinguished Prince who was allowed the supreme honour of marrying England's Queen; and to make him feel how magnanimous they had been, the English people and the newspapers comported themselves as the street boy now bears himself when he feels that a foreigner is pressed upon his notice. I once had two French servants, who often together took my children out, but they never appeared in the street without the youth of the neighbourhood pelting them with ribald remarks and sometimes with stones. In this way did the vulgar among the well-bred treat Albert, and some of them did it even to the time of his death.

The first stone thrown was one picked from the Declaration which Her Majesty made before Parliament, in which no mention had been made of the Prince's religion. At once the most lying and libellous articles were written, asserting that Albert was a Catholic, and, if not, that he belonged to a sect which

made it impossible that he could ever take the Communion in the English Church; and if he could bring himself to do that his religious beliefs were of that light type that he could be a Catholic to Catholics, but for the sake of his advancement he could also be a Protestant to Protestants. To this was added that at heart he was an infidel and a radical—evidently interchangeable terms with these violent supporters of a man who stood for the most prejudiced and retrograde views, Ernest, King of Hanover. There seems to have been little doubt that he was at the bottom of the reports about Albert; he still hoped to be King of England, or at least to know that his son would wear its crown; and it was at the time an open secret that he was doing his best to upset the marriage.

The angry and younger Tories needed little goading, and they acted as a spur to their leaders. One feels really sorry that such a man as the Duke of Wellington should have led the attack in the House of Lords. The Duke knew as everyone knew that Albert was a Protestant, yet he and Peel, chafed by the events of the past year, felt that some stratagem must be employed to discredit the Ministry. "It proceeds from the boiling impatience of the party, indoors and out. The Tory masses complain that nothing is done; and so, to gratify them, an immediate assault is resolved upon." Peel suggested to Wellington that some hostile movement must be made against the Government, adding, "It might be ungracious to cause conflict in an address congratulating a Queen Regnant on her marriage." The Duke agreed with this, yet took the

first opportunity which came along of sinking his loyalty to the Crown in party politics and personal feelings. After some acrid speeches and many columns in the papers, this quarrel, which was entirely one of bluff, was soothed by Baron Stockmar's affirmation that the Prince was a Protestant who could take Communion in the English Church as though he were in his own Lutheran Church. Greville, a good Tory, says of this: "The Duke moved an amendment, and foisted in the word Protestant—a sop to the silly. I was grieved to see him descend to such miserable humbug, and was in hopes that he was superior to it." As the Queen said in a letter to her uncle, "There was no need to affirm such a fact, as by law it was impossible that I could marry any but a Protestant."

This made a certain amount of stir, but not sufficient to satisfy the rank and file of the Tory party and the men who desired office; so it was unfortunate that the next Bill before the House should be one concerning the allowance to be given to the Prince. Here a new element came in, our delightful English snobbery. Had Albert come to us as a millionaire, his life would have been one of roses in our midst, but his total income then was about £2,500, and he had only a small estate in Germany. Was not this enough justification for putting him in his place? Tories and Radicals alike thought so, and when it came to considering the income suitable for a Prince Consort they practically said so. The sum asked for as an allowance was £50,000 a year. This had been given to the husband of Queen Anne, to the Queens Consort of George III.

and William IV., and to Prince Leopold when he married the Princess Charlotte, but as soon as it was suggested in Parliament that Queen Victoria's husband should have the same amount an outcry was raised. So far as can be judged from all the arguments put forward, this was simply an indication that at that moment a feminine Sovereign could be treated with less consideration than a King. Had it been a Queen Consort for whom provision was needed, it is certain, to judge by the Parliamentary speeches, that the sum asked for would have been granted, and it is also certain that had the Queen chosen George of Cambridge, neither the Duke of Wellington nor any other leader of the Opposition would have opposed the proposal. Even the frivolous Prince of Orange would have been accorded more favour. However, fortunately for England, Victoria was not intending to make her simple-minded cousin King, and the Prince of Orange had found no favour with her, also fortunately for England—and for her.

An amendment was proposed by Joseph Hume, the Radical, allowing the Prince the magnificent income of £21,000 a year, whereupon Colonel Sibthorp, who was, as Sir Sidney Lee says, "a Tory of a very pronounced kind, who warmly championed every insular prejudice," moved another amendment to make the sum stand at £30,000.

This was carried by a junction of extremes, the Tories and the Radicals; a year earlier the former had been as insistent in their demands that the Coronation expenses should be increased by a tremendous amount

that Royal dignity should be sustained. Now so bitter was their feeling against the Government that they were ready to strike the Queen over Melbourne's head. Victoria wrote of this: "It is a curious sight to see those who, as Tories, used to pique themselves upon their excessive loyalty, doing everything to degrade their young Sovereign in the eyes of the people. Of course, there are exceptions."

Stockmar says that after the division he met Melbourne on the staircase of the House, and that the Prime Minister said to him, "The Prince will be very annoyed with the Tories, but it is not only the Tories who have lessened his income; there were beside Radicals and some of our own people who voted against him." It was said that the less honest Whigs did this because they thought that as the whole blame of the proceedings would fall upon the Tories, the reduction of the Prince's income would widen the breach between the Queen and the Opposition. Both the Whigs and Tories of the baser sort were ready to go to any dishonourable length in their desire to secure or to hold power, only those who had for long been out of office went a little further than their opponents and cried their sentiments in a very much louder voice, and thus we hear more about them. Melbourne at least proved himself an honest man, and he was guilty of that stupidity which is much the same thing as wickedness; he knew the spirit of the politicians, yet he did not take necessary precautions, while he seemed always ready to take unnecessary risks: "There is no doubt that all will go through easily,"

was his feeling, and so he allowed matters to slip into public discussion and recrimination.

Leopold was enraged. "The whole mode and way in which those who have opposed the grant treated the question was so extremely *vulgar* and *disrespectful*, that I cannot comprehend the Tories. The men who uphold the dignity of the Crown to treat their Sovereign in such a manner, on such an occasion!" Prince Albert may well have been irritated on his part, and of him his uncle said, "he does not care about the money, but he is much shocked and exasperated by the disrespect of the thing, as he well may."

The third trouble was the Naturalisation Bill, which included the question of Precedency.

All through her life Victoria was a sentimentalist, and no sooner did she really feel herself in love with Albert than her impulse was to kiss his feet. This young man had spent years travelling from one town to another in Europe, seeking the education which would best enable him to fill his position as Prince Consort; he had, in fact, rarely been at home, to judge by Leopold's accounts of his doings. Yet as soon as he offered to settle down in England, Victoria began to see in him a martyr, one who was sacrificing his family and his country to live with her in an alien land, and she regarded it as her real duty to compensate him for the terrible expatriation from which he would suffer. Leopold wanted Albert to be made a peer; Victoria went a good step further, she desired that he should be made a King-Consort. The Ministers listened and hesitated, but Melbourne pointed out that

for the Legislature to make a King would be to infer that the Legislature could unmake a King. Precedent, he said, was the only thing to accept as guidance, and Prince Albert must take the same position as Prince George of Denmark, and he ended emphatically with :

“ For God’s sake, Ma’am, let’s hear no more of it ! ”

This was one of the times when the Queen was angry with Melbourne ; how could he compare the stupid and insignificant husband of Queen Anne with *her* Prince ?

Failing the highest dignity, she was against Albert’s being made a peer, writing to him on that subject : “ The English are very jealous of any foreigner interfering in the government of this country, and have already in some of the papers (which are friendly to me and to you) expressed a hope that you will not interfere. Now, though I know you never would, still if you were a Peer they would all say, the Prince meant to play a political part.”

It is doubtful whether, in spite of her ambition for him, Victoria had any desire that the Prince should take part in any way in the important art of governing. She intended to marry, but she was really quite innocent of a wish to receive a partner in her legislative duties as well as a partner in her home.

When the Naturalisation Bill was introduced, Lyndhurst watched the case, as it were, for the King of Hanover, and he objected very much to the Bill as framed, for it gave Albert the precedence next the Queen for life. Thus, had he survived Victoria, he would still have taken precedence of the Heir-Presumptive. The Royal Dukes and their party wanted

to give Albert precedence only over Archbishops and Dukes, excepting Dukes of Royal blood and other peers of the realm as the Queen should deem fit and proper. This had the difficulty of giving precedence, not only to the Royal Dukes, but to Prince George of Cambridge and Prince George of Cumberland when their fathers died. In this dispute Lord Lyndhurst and Lord Ellenborough were bracketted together as the impossibles. Greville saw the latter at his door one day, and asked what he was going to do about the precedence.

“Oh, give him the same which Prince George of Denmark had: place him next before the Archbishop of Canterbury.”

“That will by no means satisfy Her Majesty!” replied Greville, at which Ellenborough tossed up his head, saying,

“What does that signify?”

It would have been a curious thing to see the Queen enter a room, followed first by all the Guelphs, and at a distance by the humble and devoted husband. This was naturally not acceptable, so the whole idea of precedency was dropped, and the Bill became one of naturalisation only. The Dukes of Cambridge and Sussex, “who both wanted an increase in their incomes,” would have given way, but Ernest of Hanover affirmed contemptuously that he would not stand below any “paper royal highness.” Charles Greville studied up the law on this matter, and wrote a pamphlet proving that the Queen could grant her husband by Royal Warrant what precedence she chose without appeal to



Parliament. This unfortunately only applied to his position in her own dominions, and as long as he lived foreign Courts would only recognise the Prince according to his birth, thus making a tremendous difference between his rank and that of his wife. This explains such incidents as that when he once went to Boulogne, the Kings of Portugal and Belgium, who were there, both took their departure before Prince Albert arrived, that he might be the greatest man in the place. Before the Queen and Prince had been married a month we find the old Duke of Cambridge agitated like any society woman as to whether he *could* accept an invitation to meet the Prince and the Queen at the Queen Dowager's, because what *were* they to do about precedence if he went? As the law—an old Act of the time of Henry VIII.—stood, Lyndhurst and the Duke of Wellington told him he had no choice but to give precedence to the Prince. So the knotty point being settled, the Duke felt himself able to accept the invitation.

## CHAPTER XIII

### QUEEN VICTORIA'S EARLY MARRIED LIFE

“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.*

PRINCE ALBERT was firmly convinced that Queen Victoria was injudicious in her partisanship of the Whigs, and he desired to begin his career in England on an independent basis as far as the political parties were concerned; therefore he desired to choose for himself his secretary and other officials likely to be near him. His engagement was a short one, but it was full of troubles, as, indeed, most engagements are, for that is, I think, the least satisfactory part of the whole marriage arrangement. Thus he seems to have been really and thoroughly annoyed when he found that George Anson, who was Melbourne's secretary, and who was described as “a tried, discreet, and sensible man, high-bred in feeling as in bearing, capable without prompting of giving good advice when asked, and incapable of the folly of making a suggestion when it was not wanted,” had been selected by Victoria to fill the post of private secretary to himself. There was

considerable correspondence between the Royal lovers on this subject, part of which is given in the *Letters of Queen Victoria*. The Prince's letters are not included, but the Queen's tell the story. Here is a paragraph from one :—

“ It is, as you rightly suppose, my greatest, my most anxious wish to do everything most agreeable to you, but I must differ with you respecting Mr. Anson. . . . What I said about Anson giving you advice, means that if you like to ask him, he can and will be of the greatest use to you, as he is a very well-informed person. He will leave Lord Melbourne as soon as he is appointed about you. With regard to your last objection that it would make you a party man if you took the secretary of the Prime Minister as your Treasurer, I do not agree in it; for, though I am very anxious you should not appear to belong to a party, still it is necessary that your Household should not form a too strong contrast to mine, else they will say, ‘ Oh, we know the Prince says he belongs to no party, but we are sure he is a Tory!’ Therefore it is also necessary that it should appear you went with me in having some of your people who are staunch Whigs; but Anson is not in Parliament, and never was, and therefore he is not a violent politician. Do not think, because I urge this, Lord M. prefers it; on the contrary, he never urged it, and I only do it as I know it is for your good. . . . I am distressed to tell you what I fear you do not like, but it is necessary, my dearest, most excellent Albert. Once more I tell you that you can perfectly rely on me in these matters.”

In a later letter, the Queen pointed out that it was

absolutely essential that Albert should have an Englishman at the head of his affairs.

However, the two months rolled away, and the marriage morning dawned with the 10th of February, Albert arriving in London on the 8th. He, poor thing, had hoped for a real honeymoon, and was gently chided for desiring so much: "You forget, my dearest love, that I am the Sovereign, and that business can stop and wait for nothing. Parliament is sitting, and something occurs almost every day, for which I may be required, and it is quite impossible for me to be absent from London, therefore two or three days is already a long time to be absent."

The morning of Monday, February 10th, was stormy: "What weather! I believe, however, the rain will cease," scribbled Victoria to her bridegroom before they met that day; and, in spite of the torrents of rain and gusts of wind, a countless multitude thronged the streets and the Park to see the bride go from Buckingham Palace to the chapel in St. James's Palace and back, and then, after the breakfast, to Paddington on the way to Windsor, where the Royal pair were to spend four days.

Said the Sage of Chelsea concerning this event: "Yesterday the idle portion of the Town was in a sort of flurry owing to the marriage of little Queen Victory. I had to go out to breakfast with an ancient Notable of this place, one named Rogers, the Poet and Banker; my way lay past little Victory's Palace, and a perceptible crowd was gathering there even then, which went on increasing till I returned (about one o'clock); streams of idle gomerils flowing from



Photo]

H.R.H. PRINCE ALBERT.

Emery Walker.

From the Painting by Winterhalter in the National Portrait Gallery.



all quarters, to see one knows not what—perhaps Victory's gilt coach and other gilt coaches drive out, for that would be all! It was a wet day, too, of bitter heavy showers and abundant mud. . . . Poor little thing, I wish her marriage all prosperity too. . . . As for him (Prince Albert) they say he is a sensible lad; which circumstance may be of much service to him; he burst into tears on leaving his little native Coburg, a small, quiet town, like Annan, for example; poor fellow, he thought, I suppose, how he was bidding adieu to *quiet* there, and would probably never know *it* more, whatever else he might know."

Carlyle and Rogers seem to have discussed the Queen and all that had happened, for the former adds in amused fashion: "He (Rogers) defended the poor little Queen, and her fooleries and piques and pettings in this little wedding of hers."

It is said that of all the Tories the Queen only sent a personal invitation to one to be present at the ceremony, and that was her old friend, Lord Liverpool. The Royal pair returned to Buckingham Palace on the 14th, and the Queen held a Levée on the 19th, when Albert stood by her side to receive the guests.

The marriage of the Queen made it necessary to rearrange the apartments in Buckingham Palace, and those which had been devoted to the Duchess of Kent were done up in splendid style for the Prince.

The King of Hanover had retained some apartments in St. James's Palace for his own use, but had never returned to them since he left England; and it was considered, not without reason, that he might be willing to give up the rooms to the Duchess of Kent.

However, Ernest had not yet lost hope; he could not prevent the marriage, it was true, but the Queen might die, there might be no children, something might still happen to give him his heart's desire and set him on the Throne of England. Therefore, he felt it advisable to retain the rooms for his possible use in an emergency, and he wrote a curious letter about proceedings in England, implying that such terrible things were happening here that it would probably be necessary for him to return and save the situation.

So the Queen rented Ingestre House, Belgrave Square, at a cost of two thousand a year for a short time. When somewhat later Princess Augusta died the Duchess was transferred to Clarence House, St. James's Palace, and was given Frogmore at Windsor as a residence. Thus ended for her any influence in great matters which she may have hoped to exercise upon her daughter, and thus also ended the deplorable friction which had made her so very unhappy. It was very possible that some of the Queen's disregard for her mother—a disregard which was never shown in social matters or in outward filial conduct—existed really only in the mind of the Duchess, for it is usual for the person who feels slighted to exaggerate the offence. From this time forward, however, we hear of no further friction; indeed, Prince Albert seems to have acted as mediator, and to have championed the cause of his mother-in-law. Sir John Conroy lived in Berkshire, and one day in May, 1840, there appeared in a Berkshire paper an allusion to Royal affairs. If Conroy caused this to be inserted it only goes to prove the truth of the report: "Prince Albert,



having unravelled the mysterious web with which certain intriguantes had contrived to embarrass and annoy the Duchess of Kent, has expressed his detestation of their acts, and at the same time has avowed his determination to restore that amiable and ill-used lady to her proper station, influence, and suitable residence."

It is interesting to note that Victoria was quite well aware of the matrimonial project so long nursed by her uncle, the Duke of Cambridge, for in November, 1839, when writing to Melbourne to give an account of a visit which the Cambridges paid her, she said, in a somewhat mixed style: "They were all very kind and civil, George grown but not embellished, and much less reserved with the Queen, and evidently happy to be *clear* of me."

At the end of December, in writing to Albert she said: "I saw to-day the Duke of Cambridge, who has shown me your letter, with which he is quite delighted—and, indeed, it is a very nice one. The Duke told Lord Melbourne he had always greatly desired our marriage, and never thought of George; but that *I* do not believe."

At that time three of the sons of George III. were alive, and three daughters. The Queen had an affection for all but the King of Hanover, and did her best to make her uncle Sussex's life easy, though he was just at this period in a fractious mood, being jealous of the rights of "the family." He had made two illegal marriages, the second being, as has been said, with Cecilia Underwood—Lady Buggin—a daughter of the Earl of Arran, and widow

of an attorney-knight, though disliking the plebeian name which marriage had bestowed upon her, she had taken that of her mother as soon as she was widowed. She attracted the Duke of Sussex and lived with him as his wife for years, then in 1840 he came to the determination of going through the ceremony of marriage. Whether it was an access of virtue or prudence which caused this long-delayed decision it is difficult to say, but he put it forward as a plea for an increase in his allowance. This naturally caused criticism of an adverse kind, it being generally thought and said that these two had lived long enough together to know the amount of their joint expenses, and that marriage should not increase them. One paper advocated compliance with the Duke's demand on the ground that Cecilia would "not add a flock of locusts to increase the epidemic of the German pest."

Victoria made Cecilia Duchess of Inverness, that she might be near her husband's rank, and sometimes invited her to her own table, but she was never placed on the footing of a relative. It was in April, 1843, that the Duke died of erysipelas, and desired in his will that he should be buried at Kensal Green. This, after some hesitation, was done with military honours. Sussex seems to have won more affection and goodwill than any of his brothers.

The Duke of Cambridge, who took little part in public life after his return from Hanover, lived until 1850. In W. H. Brookfield's *Diary* is to be found the following description of him in 1841: "The Duke of Cambridge was there to hear the Bishop (preach), and sate in the pew before me. Such a noise as he made

in responses, Psalm reading, and singing, a sort of old Walpole with eyes. I had not caught what Psalm the clerk had given out, and turning to look on my neighbour's book for the page—fidgety, restless, Royal Highness turns round and bawls loud enough to drown the organ, 'It begins at the third verse—the third verse!' All eyes turned on Royalty speaking to inferior clergy. I turned red as a radish. Royalty went on singing like a bull!"

It was with the Duchess of Cambridge that Lady Cardigan says she once drove to London, and the former took from her pocket a German sausage, and, cutting off slices with a silver knife, conveyed the pieces to her mouth with the help of the blade! Young George of Cambridge married, not a Queen, but an actress, Louisa Fairbrother, with whom he lived very happily until she died in 1890—and it is said that he never recovered the blow caused by her death.

Of the three daughters of George III., one was Princess Sophia, who went blind after being operated on for cataract, and who, whatever the scandal associated with her name, always kept the affectionate respect of her niece Victoria. She was one of the sponsors to the Queen's eldest son, and also to the Princess Alice. She died in 1848, six months before Lord Melbourne. Princess Augusta died in September of 1840, and "the dear old Duchess of Gloucester," the last of the generation, who was looked upon by Victoria and her family as "a sort of grandmother," lived until 1857. She had always been very energetic, and there is an account of her calling upon the Queen, and reporting upon a round of gaieties indulged in

within a day or two, parties at the Duchess of Sutherland's, the Duke of Wellington's, and at Cambridge House, and luncheon with the Duke of Sussex, followed with the call upon Her Majesty.

The young Queen was naturally affectionate, and felt much grief at the deaths of these relatives, who had surrounded her all her life, yet a fuller, richer, if not less troubled, existence was forming about her. Her troubles were not of the kind which devastate, but of the recurring, irritating sort which neither rest nor sleep. Albert never did quite please the English people, and in her endeavour to make him acceptable she sometimes wounded him, and sometimes did injudicious things. Her naturally quick temper induced Leopold to write her a grave warning before the marriage, telling her not to let a single day pass over with a misunderstanding between them, and pointing out that if such arose she would find Albert gentle and open to reason, so that things could be easily explained; begging her to remember that he was not sulky but inclined to be melancholy if he thought he was not justly treated, and adding "But as you will always be together, there can *never* arise, I hope, any occasion for any disagreements even on the most trifling subjects."

It is open to wonder whether such disagreements did at first arise. If so, they were so slight as not to affect the abiding love between the two. The satiric papers recorded a constant succession of them, but who is to believe such? One report ran that the Prince annoyed his wife by contradicting her over the tea table, "and whether by accident or design, the Queen sprinkled

the contents of her cup over his face, which led to an estrangement for the whole evening." On another occasion we are told that Albert was admiring a bouquet which Miss Pitt, a Maid of Honour, carried, and while he was holding it the Queen entered, and, having praised the flowers, asked him whence they came. Then "the presence of Miss Pitt was dispensed with, Victoria seized the bouquet, and scattered its fragments over the room." Whether such incidents were true or not, Victoria never forgot that she was Queen, and to the end she sometimes unduly pressed that fact upon the mind of her husband. Melbourne said that the Queen was very proud of the Prince's utter indifference to the attractions of ladies, and when he suggested that they were early days to boast, she was indignant. The Prime Minister, watching her with his shrewd, fatherly air, saw with amusement, however, that she was really somewhat jealous if the Prince talked much even with any man. What would she have said if he had followed George the Fourth's plan of kissing all ladies who pleased him on their presentation?

But there was one thing which gradually weighed more and more upon the Prince's spirits and really hurt him. He found himself shut out as had been the Duchess of Kent. The Queen did not discuss affairs of State with him; she carried her reticence so far as to cause him to make serious complaints and to need the help both of Melbourne and Stockmar. In this again is to be traced the insidious influence of Baroness Lehzen, who was still always in the background, but whose name never passed the Queen's lips in her con-

ferences with Melbourne. When that good friend reasoned with her about the want of confidence both in trivial and great matters that she showed in her husband, she replied that it was caused by indolence, that when she was with the Prince she preferred talking of other and pleasanter things. Upon which Melbourne told her to try to alter that, for there was no objection to her telling the Prince all things. Melbourne's private opinion was that she feared difference of opinion. But really the Queen was the counterpart of the mid-Victorian husband, who thought it his duty to save his wife from any knowledge of his business, whether it worried or pleased him—a rather foolish position for her to take up, even though she had been Queen for three years.

Stockmar, in a conversation with George Anson, made the memorable remark, seeing how the Prince had fought against Anson's appointment: "The Prince leans more on you than on anyone else and gives you his entire confidence; you are honest, moral, and religious, and will not belie that trust. The Queen has not started upon a right principle." The Baron thought that Victoria was influenced more than she knew by Lehzen, and that in consequence of that influence she was not so ingenuous as she had been two years earlier.

However, a new aspect of life had opened up for Her Majesty at that time, and it is doubtful whether she was as engrossed in State matters as she seemed to be, whether while she was listening to disquisitions upon foreign affairs, she was not dreaming of more personal things. She trusted her Ministers without

question, and may well be excused if for a time she relied entirely upon their judgment, and had not the power even to explain to her young husband the arguments to which she listened. These things changed slowly, but for two years Albert's only share in his wife's work was that after many months he was allowed to go through official papers with her. He felt the position to be one of humiliation, and wrote to his friend, Prince William of Löwenstein, that in his house he was the husband and not the master. What Leopold had said of his nature was true, and this trouble filled him with melancholy. This difference between the Queen and the Prince, however, got abroad, and was commented on in light and airy fashion. It was said that Victoria sometimes drove her husband out in her pony carriage, and this was applied somewhat spitefully in the following verse :—

“ ‘ Thus to be driven ! ’ exclaim some folks,  
 ‘ Prince Albert’s a mere nincom.’  
 But spite of all their passing jokes  
 The boy enjoys his income.  
 Then *why* Vic drives the Prince is plain  
 To any common view—  
 The Sovereign who holds the rei(g)n  
 Should have the whip hand too.”

Yet privileges were yielded and concessions were made from time to time. Melbourne gave up his work to the Prince as private secretary; in August, when the Queen prorogued Parliament, Albert sat in an armchair next the throne, waiting doubtless for the protest from the Duke of Sussex, which had been threatened, but which did not get uttered. When the Queen had to look forward to illness, the Prince was appointed regent, much to the disgust of the once genial and

fatherly Sussex, who considered that "the family" was being slighted by such a course, and who, in these the last years of his life, was not so kind to his niece as he had hitherto been. The next, but by no means the least, of the Prince's small triumphs was that he gently but firmly returned the Baroness Lehzen to her native country.

Life had not been quite so smooth with the Baroness since the Queen's marriage, and there were occasions when she was subjected to hitherto unknown criticisms. The Duchess of Northumberland once sent by her some communication to Victoria, which was never transmitted, and this caused the Duchess to make a personal explanation to the Queen, and ask why her message had received no notice. This little matter, only one of many, being sifted, necessitated an ample apology from the lady behind the Throne.

Then again the Baroness was not liked by some of the people who now surrounded the Queen, and in spite of the strict reserve which Victoria always practised in regard to this mentor and friend of her youth, vague indications of this appear here and there. In June of 1841 the Queen and the Prince went on a visit to Nuneham, near Oxford, the home of the Archbishop of York, and did not take Lehzen with them, excusing the omission on the plea that it would be wiser if she remained with the baby Princess. The next month the Queen went to Woburn Abbey, which caused George Anson to note with satisfaction that this was the second expedition on which the Baroness had not been required to accompany them; and this remark he followed by a review of the Prince's progress since



his marriage, in which he mentions that the schemes of those who wished to prevent His Royal Highness from being useful to Her Majesty for fear that he might touch upon the Queen's prerogatives, had been completely foiled. "They thought they had prevented Her Majesty from yielding anything of importance to him by creating distrust through imaginary alarm. The Queen's good sense, however, has seen that the Prince has no other object in all he seeks but a means to Her Majesty's good."

By August of that year Prince Albert had been so harassed by the Baroness Lehzen that when a dissolution was threatened he spoke of the matter to Melbourne, describing how her interference kept him in a constant state of annoyance, and begging Lord Melbourne to help him to get rid of her, saying, "It will be far more difficult to remove her after the change of Government than now, because, if pressed to do it by a Tory Minister, the Queen's prejudice would be immediately aroused." Melbourne's knowledge of the Queen, and his own temperament also, led him to deprecate any definite measures. Victoria was already expecting the birth of a second child, and with fatherly care the Prime Minister did his best to save her from what he knew would be a painful event, which could not be accomplished without an exciting scene. He advised the Prince to be on his guard, and patiently abide the result, assuring him that people were beginning to understand that lady's character much better, and time must surely work its own ends. So Albert continued loyally to bear this burden, and it was not until the beginning of October, 1842, that the Baroness

was induced to go on a visit to her family and friends, a visit from which she never returned.

It must not be supposed that Baroness Lehzen was generally disliked or was an unpleasant woman. The Maids of Honour always found her kind and friendly; if a new Maid arrived, the Baroness would go to her room to welcome her and to give her her badge of office, a picture of the Queen surrounded with brilliants fastened to a red bow. Greville, no great friend to the Prince, says that she was much beloved by the women and much esteemed by all who frequented the Court, that she was very intelligent and had been a faithful friend to the Queen from the time of her birth, and that she was sent away simply because she was obnoxious to the Prince. This is written with considerable partiality. Lehzen may have been as faithful a friend as she knew how, but her views were limited. She fostered pride and an overweening sense of importance in her charge, and in an eager desire to be the most confidential person about the Queen, she set her against any who might rival her influence. She tried her strength against the Duchess of Kent, and won; she did what she could against Melbourne, but she was incapable against his position and his knowledge. Then she hoped to keep the Prince at a respectful distance from Victoria as the Queen, however near he might be to her as his wife, and fortunately, though after a long struggle, she failed, and was packed off to Germany. The Queen thought she was coming back, but in her heart even she, infatuated as she was, could not but have known that the position was impos-

sible for the man—her “dearest Angel”—upon whom she lavished such warm words of love. Thus we hear no more of Lehzen, except that she settled with a sister in a comfortable, small house at Bückeburg, covering the inner walls of her home with prints and pictures of the Queen whom she had served more lovingly than wisely.

Victoria's popularity was enhanced by her marriage, but decreased again owing to the popular fear of foreigners. She was sometimes greeted with silence, sometimes with cries of “no foreigners!” when she went to the theatres. It was a time of great hardship, yet the Queen gave dances and banquets, the accounts of which were exaggerated a hundred times as they percolated through the newspapers to the poor, many of whom were starving. We get many allusions to these gaieties. On January 29th, 1842, there was a little dance at Windsor to amuse the young Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, with just enough ladies to make up a quadrille. It finished with a country dance, including every sort of strange figure. “The Queen must have been studying some old books and concentrated the figures of several centuries into this one country dance.”

Her Majesty was very fond of dancing, and of organising country dances for the evening home party; and sometimes after dinner would take one of her ladies round the waist to polka with her. The polka, originally a Bohemian peasant dance and very different from the present-day polka, had just been introduced, so that it was the rage among dancers.

“ Oh ! sure the world is all run mad,  
The lean, the fat, the gay, the sad—  
All swear such pleasure they never had,  
Till they did learn the Polka.”

She was young, happy, and light-hearted, and her Court was particularly free from extravagant amusements, yet these little frolics brought grumbles and troubles in their train, and in the curiously short-sighted ideas of economy which then obtained, her State balls were regarded as nothing short of criminal. For Victoria was accused of flinging away money while many of her people were starving, and her popularity went down to zero. Some papers printed parallel columns describing the fancy dresses at the Queen's balls, the banquets, Royal purchases, &c., in one, and in the other cases of death from want, of suicides, and of failures. When this was at its worst the Royal pair were making magnificent preparations for christening the Prince of Wales, and Sir Robert Peel is said to have advised them to make haste and practise economy, advice which was good when the general standard of ignorance was considered, but all wrong from the point of trade and work. It was the Queen's custom when she gave a ball to tell her Equerry in waiting in the morning with whom she desired to dance, so that everything should run smoothly. She loved the brightness and the youthfulness which such functions brought around her, and would on occasions permit children to sit quietly and watch her dress. Thus Lady Cardigan speaks of getting introduced by General Cavendish sometimes to Buckingham Palace when Her Majesty was giving a State ball, which meant

no less a privilege than being allowed to sit in the Royal dressing-room and look at the pretty young Queen being attired in her ball dress. "We were too awestruck as a rule even to whisper, but I think the Queen found more honest admiration in our childish eyes than in all the honied flatteries of a Court." Miss Cavendish afterwards became a Maid of Honour.

In 1840 Victoria marked her sense of Mrs. Norton's innocence by allowing her to be presented at Court by her sister, Lady Seymour, who was the Queen of Beauty at the Eglinton Tournament. Mrs. Norton was so nervous that the Queen herself remarked upon it to King Leopold, who said he could well believe that she was much frightened having so many eyes upon her, some of which, perhaps, not with the most amiable expression.

Mrs. Norton had many things to endure from her husband, the loss of her children for one, for though the woman was innocent, the law allowed a man at that time, no matter how bad he might be, the sole control and power over the little ones. Later on, when things were easier for her in this respect, scandal once again arose in a most unwarrantable manner, accusing her of selling to *The Times* the secret of Peel's intended change of attitude on the Corn Laws. As a matter of fact, Lord Aberdeen, influenced by Colonial policy, and in view of the departure of the mails, had imparted this bit of hidden news to Delane the editor, with the result that it appeared the next day in the columns of the paper. Speculation was rife as to how *The Times* knew, and then it was whispered by jealousy, for Mrs. Norton was a very beautiful and a

very popular woman, that Delane had paid Mrs. Norton a large price for the knowledge which she had learned from one of her admirers. Later, of course, came the story of "Diana of the Crossways," which was regarded as an absolute confirmation of the scandal. George Meredith himself has emphatically denied that his romance was based upon anything in the life of Mrs. Norton, as the facts themselves, when known, disposed of it, but scandal dies hard.

Fanny Kemble, too, attended a Drawing Room in 1842 in consequence of an inquiry by the Queen as to why she did not come, and wrote of the event: "If Her Majesty has seen me, I have not seen her; and should be quite excusable in cutting her whenever I met her. 'A cat may look at a king,' it is said, but how about looking at the Queen? In great uncertainty of mind on this point, I did not look at my sovereign lady. I kissed a soft white hand which I believe was hers; I saw a pair of very handsome legs, in very fine silk stockings, which I am convinced were not hers, but am inclined to attribute to Prince Albert; and this is all I perceived of the whole Royal Family of England."

Prince Albert was something of a dandy in his dress, and the remark that "there was not a tailor in England who could make a coat" was attributed to him. In 1843 he invented, or was godfather to, a new hat for infantry, something like the Hessian cap introduced into the German service. *Punch* gave a picture of this hat, which is said not to be exaggerated, and devoted a column to a description of it, saying that "the Prince proposed to encase the heads of the British

soldiery in a machine which seemed a decided cross between a muff, a coal-scuttle, and a slop-pail, making it necessary for the honour of the English Army that *Punch* should interfere. The result has been that the headgear has been summarily withdrawn by an order from the War Office, and the manufacture of the Albert hat has been absolutely prohibited."

The Prince was credited with designing other garments as well, on which *Punch* remarked that "Hannibal was a great cutter-out, for he cut a passage through the Alps; but Prince Albert cuts out Hannibal, inasmuch as His Royal Highness devotes his talents to the cutting out of coats, waistcoats, and 'things inexpressible.'"

A dramatic incident in 1841 made the Queen for the moment a popular heroine, and that was the action of a publican's boy named Oxford, who shot at her as she was driving up Constitution Hill. She and Prince Albert went on with their drive, altering their route so that they might pass the Duchess of Kent's house and relieve her mind of anxiety in case she heard any rumours of what had just happened. On returning home they were received at the Palace by a great crowd cheering vociferously. The next day the shouts of thousands met them in the Park, and the Houses of the Lords and the Commons tendered their congratulations in state. The State carriage of the Speaker was followed by one hundred and nine other members' carriages to Buckingham Palace, and as they rolled away eighty carriages of the Lords began to enter, Barons first, rising in rank to

Royal Dukes, all wearing their Orders, Stars, and Garters.

There were those who said that this attempt upon the Queen's life had been instigated by the King of Hanover, but then—give a dog a bad name and you may as well hang him.

Her Majesty was acclaimed at Ascot that year, which greatly pleased her, part of the enthusiasm being probably caused by the suggestion that November might bring an heir to the Throne. The approaching birth of a Royal child was the subject of talk all over the country, and the not very delicate taste of the day allowed free speculation and comment in the daily and weekly papers. One devoted the top of a column to the subject every week, heading it:—

#### THE LADIES.

Pray remember  
The tenth of November.

It then proceeded to give news of various Court ladies who were emulating, or hoping to emulate, the example of the Queen, running something as below:—"The Hon. Mrs. Leicester Stanhope intends to go to Brighton in the autumn, and has retained the services of the celebrated Dr. Bradwell for early in November. The Duchess of Somerset has accepted invitations, for she feels sure that there are no family reasons to interfere. Lady Cork thinks she might as well stay in London." "Yes," replies the grim Lord Allen, "the London fogs will shelter you from observation," &c.

Lord Melbourne was facetiously reported as giving



a dinner-party on Her Majesty's birthday, and proposing a toast in the following terms:—

“ Fill up to the brim, a bright Burgundy bumper,  
With the drain of the goblet resound the loud cheer,  
Here's luck in November, and may a braw thumper  
In the shape of a Prince glad the close of the year.”

In June the Queen seemed to have come to a rather uncomfortable, not to say morbid, decision; for Admiral Knox tells us that she felt sure that she should die in her confinement, and she also made up her mind to let the event happen at Claremont, where she had everything replaced just as it had been in Princess Charlotte's time, even to the furniture in the bedroom in which she died. These little plans absorbed her thoughts, and she was constantly running down to Claremont. Of course, her frame of mind and her curious intention were the subjects of gossip in the streets, and gruesome caricatures were published, one representing Victoria lying dead in bed with a dead child in her arms, and *November* printed beneath. We do not hear quite so much talk about “the good old times” as we did in my childhood, but I really think we should, in the good present times, have no social brutality to offer which would vie with this.

Fortunately there were many considerations which would necessarily defeat the Claremont House scheme, and the little Princess—who was born just after the trouble in the East, making her mother laughingly suggest that Turko-Egypto should be added to her names—first saw the light in Buckingham Palace. After the birth, as the Duke of Wellington was leaving the

Palace he met Lord Hill, who made the usual inquiries about Her Majesty and the "little stranger," to which the old Duke answered :

"Very fine child, and very red, very red; nearly as red as you, Hill!"—an allusion to Lord Hill's claret-coloured complexion.

The Queen made a rapid recovery, and really behaved in such a healthy, normal way that the King of Hanover must at last have given up all hope of the English Throne. In the light of after events it is interesting to note that Victoria wrote to Leopold:—"I think, dearest uncle, you cannot really wish me to be the 'mamma of a numerous family,' for I think you will see with me the great inconvenience a *large* family would be to all of us, and particularly to the country, independent of the hardship and inconvenience to myself; men never think, at least seldom think, what a hard task it is for us women to go through this very often."

The married life of the Queen was as methodical as her life had been from 1837 to 1840, but the Prince found the round of the Court too fatiguing and full of change, desiring to reduce Victoria's programme to greater simplicity. He thought the late hours very trying, and though he was a lover of music would fall asleep before the evening ended. Lady Normanby gave a concert at which—wrote a Court lady to a friend—all "sang divinely, the Queen was charmed, and Cousin Albert looked beautiful and slept as quietly as usual, sitting by Lady Normanby." I have also come across such comments as these: "We hear a great deal of the beauty and pleasing qualities of Prince Albert,

who seems to be admired by all." Stockmar recorded about this time, "The Prince improves morally and politically. I can say with truth that I love him like my son, and that he deserves it."

It is not generally realised that when he came to England the Prince's knowledge of English was not very good, and this, added to his generally reticent character, helped to make social life difficult for him, especially with men. He used to be very glad when Miss Spring-Rice was in waiting, as she spoke German fluently, so that he could talk with her of his home. Yet he slowly gained good will among the nobility, for he was known to be a good man, though he was never really popular with a large number. Our aristocrats were but just emerging from the bondage of the hard drinking, high gaming, loud swearing, and promiscuous love-making which had debased the Courts of the Georges and the last family of Princes, and they could not like a man who lived cleanly, did not swear, drink, bet or gamble, knew nothing of sport, and actually disliked horse-racing. The Prince was neither rash nor docile; he went his own way largely, and did not trouble enough to make friends with men, though he gradually attracted a few staunch loyalists of sober life. Between him and others there grew a barrier of frigid reserve, which in only rare cases was ever broken. The papers did all they could to accentuate this difference; his inability to ride well was made the subject of constant comment, and his musical and literary tastes amused the scoffer. He tried, however, to please when he could, and he determined to show that he could ride as well as most men; but in April

he had what might have been a very bad accident. He rode to a staghound meeting at Ascot, on a horse which was a vicious thoroughbred, and it bolted as soon as the Prince mounted. He kept his seat and turned the animal round several times in the hope of stopping it, but at last he was knocked off against a tree, fortunately not sustaining much injury. Later he followed the hunt and drove four-in-hand; but it is almost pathetic to realise how the Queen must have scanned the papers and grieved at every sneer levelled at her husband, while she constantly urged him to remedy anything which to English eyes seemed a defect.

Indeed, the tendency all round was to press him into a mould, to treat him as the Mrs. Gamps of old thought it right to treat the heads of new-born babes : to press here and massage there, in an endeavour to present a good round even surface; and the Queen was just as busy as the Press in her endeavour to work on the skull of Albert's habits and leanings. He had really no use for society in the ordinary sense; he had no small talk, he could not expand or be confidential. But he had very definite tastes of his own; he would have liked to surround himself with literary and scientific people, artists, and musicians; for recreation he loved a game of double chess, in which he was proficient, but even double chess every night began to pall. As for the rest, it had to be given up, not because the critics of society disapproved, but because his little wife had no fancy for the invasion of their home by intellectual people. She felt that she could not sustain conversation on abstruse subjects, and she always liked to be in the centre of the picture; any other

place she would have looked upon as an insult. It is curious that we have had imposed upon us such fulsome laudations of Victoria's education, for she showed little evidence of superiority in that respect. She could speak French, play the piano, sing prettily, and paint a little, but none of these things really touch the mind, and her mind had been as neglected as were the minds of most of the women of her time. Thus the society around her knew of nothing better than small talk and twiddling the keynotes of a piano; and to this the Prince had to succumb, even at last giving up his chess to join the Queen's circle in a round game of cards!

They played *vingt-et-un* for money, everyone being desired to have *new* coins with which to play, and Victoria loved some curious game called *nainjaune*. They spun counters and rings; Georgiana Liddell, when she became a Maid of Honour, wrote of this:—

“The Prince began spinning counters, so I took to spinning rings, and the Queen was delighted. It always entertains me to see the little things that amuse Her Majesty and the Prince, instead of their looking bored as people so often do in English society.”

It is wonderful that people never seemed to realise that there might be something more for grown-up people than a choice between spinning rings or round games and boredom. But there is something very attractive in the picture of this healthy young pair playing their childish games, wandering in the Home Park at Windsor, with pigeons alighting on their shoulders, feeding the animals and rare aquatic birds imported by the Prince, and showing kindness to all

their great household; the married lovers sometimes having *tête-à-tête* dinners without watchful or obsequious eyes upon them, and just beginning to take politics seriously. For Melbourne, the beloved tutor and friend, was gone, and the Queen was beginning to think and decide for herself, with her husband's help.

Once a riddle, purporting to be from the Bishop of Salisbury, who was said to offer a reward to anyone who solved it, was sent to the Queen. She and her husband spent four days over it, and then called in the assistance of Charles Murray, Comptroller of the Household, who found out for them that the Bishop knew nothing of the matter, had not sent the riddle, and believed the whole thing to be a hoax.

Queen Victoria seems to have been thoroughly liked by her Maids of Honour, of whom there were eight—two waiting at a time for a period of three months—and who were generally expected to be good pianists. Often they would be called upon to play duets with the Queen and Prince Consort, and one of them made the remark, after playing a difficult Beethoven piece, "It was quite a relief to find that we all played the last bar at the same time"; adding, "I enjoy nothing so much as seeing the Queen in this quiet way, and I often wish that those who don't know Her Majesty could see how kind and gracious she is when she is perfectly at her ease, and able to throw off the restraint and form which must and ought to be observed when she is in public."

Victoria would say politely to one of these girls, "If it is *convenient*, come down any evening and try some music." "But I might come down at the wrong

THE  
GREAT BRITAIN



QUEEN VICTORIA.

From a Drawing by Drummond, 1842.

1870



moment," answered Miss Liddell on one occasion. "Then I will send for you, and if you are at home you can come," replied the Queen. "I did laugh in my sleeve," commented Georgiana, in recording this, "for except when I go to St. George's, by no chance do I go anywhere."

It was this young lady who said, on coming back to her duty, "Everything else changes, but the life here never does, and is always exactly the same from day to day, and year to year." She also tells us that the Maid of Honour's chief duty seemed to be to offer the Queen her bouquet before dinner each night. The Maids of Honour were each given a good sitting-room, with a piano in it, which they occupied when not on duty, and there was a special room downstairs in which they could receive guests, for such were not allowed in their private rooms.

But despite the distressing sameness and stability at Court, these girls saw everyone who came. It was also one of their duties to receive any important lady, such as the Duchess of Kent, on her arrival, and to take her to her room, and the Maid in Waiting always sat to the left of the Queen, being generally taken in to dinner by Melbourne. When the King of Prussia came over to the christening of the Prince of Wales in January, 1842, he brought various Germans with him, among them being Colonel von Brauhitch, a young-looking man and a great flirt. He paid much attention to Georgiana Liddell, and asked when he might be allowed to pay his respects to her. The girl laughed, and told him no visitors were allowed into her sitting-room, not even her brother. The Colonel

could not believe this; surely, surely she had mistaken her instructions! Oh, but he must ask the Baroness. So he went off to Baroness Lehzen, who confirmed what Miss Liddell had said, much to his sorrow and disgust at the "tyranny" exercised. He went on paying her such marked attention that one day old General Neumann came up to them, saying, "But, my dear friend, do you forget that you are a grandfather?" Which made the flirtatious Colonel extremely indignant, as it happened to be true.

Queen Victoria revived the old practice, so popular with George III., of walking on the terrace at Windsor on Sunday afternoons, and of allowing her loyal subjects free ingress thereto. "You never saw anything like the crowds of people. It was rather unpleasant when Her Majesty walked among them, for, though the gentlemen tried to give way, the people pressed up so, it was difficult to keep them back. I suppose it is right that the Queen should show herself to her subjects sometimes, but I am always glad when these walks are over." So said Miss Liddell after she became Lady Bloomfield.

## CHAPTER XIV

### QUEEN VICTORIA'S TORY MINISTRY

“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

By shaping some august decree,  
Which kept her throne unshaken still,  
Broad-based upon her people's will,  
And compass'd by the inviolate sea.”

—*Tennyson.*

IN September, 1841, the Queen found herself face to face with another political crisis, and Melbourne tendered his resignation once more. He went to Windsor to accomplish this dread deed, and it is said that he showed no appearance of depression, but seemed to consider the change only as it might affect the Queen.

“For four years I have seen you every day,” he said, “but it is so different now from what it would have been in 1839; the Prince understands everything so well.” Indeed, he warmed the Queen's affectionate heart by the way he both spoke and wrote of Albert. “I have formed the highest opinion of His Royal Highness's judgment, temper, and discretion, and can-

not but feel a great consolation and security in the reflection that your Majesty has the inestimable advantage of such advice and assistance. I feel certain that your Majesty cannot do better than have recourse to it whenever it is needed, and rely upon it with confidence." This made the Queen very pleased and proud, coming as it did from a man who was, as she herself said, no flatterer.

Thenceforth Melbourne had to endure not only loss of occupation, but of the society of one whom he had grown to love as a daughter, and in whose company he had for years passed several hours each day. "He consorted constantly with the Queen on the most easy and delightful footing, and he is continually banished from her presence."

However, he fell naturally into those habits which were his before his long spell of power, and ere a year had passed he had a slight stroke of paralysis, which kept him a prisoner for months.

The resignation of the Whig Government naturally brought once more to the front the vexed question of the Bedchamber Ladies. Extraordinary care was taken that the Queen's susceptibilities should not be hurt; Melbourne, on the one hand, conferring with the Royal pair and with Anson and Peel, and being approached by the last-named with pacific suggestions. Peel was terribly nervous, and desirous to do nothing that would give pain to Her Majesty, saying, "*I would waive every pretension to office, I declare to God, sooner than that my acceptance of it should be attended with any personal humiliation to the Queen.*"

The Mistress of the Robes, the sweet-natured Duchess of Sutherland, sent in her resignation, she being the only person who for the future would be required to be of the same party as the Government, and she was replaced by the Duchess of Buccleuch. The exclusively Whig character of the Household had been broken soon after the crisis in 1839 by the Queen's invitation to Lady Sandwich, the wife of a Tory peer, to fill a vacant post. The Duchess of Bedford (*i.e.*, Lady Tavistock) and Lady Normanby also resigned, and with these changes Peel was content. Thus the principle that the ladies about the Queen should belong to the governing party, and be changed when the party changed, was never established, and after that time the Queen's ladies were chosen irrespective of political considerations, excepting the Mistress of the Robes.

Victoria was desolate at the loss of Melbourne. Writing to King Leopold, she said: "You don't say that *you* sympathise with me in my present heavy trial, the heaviest I have ever had to endure, and which will be a sad heart-breaking to me"—and Melbourne did his utmost to cheer her and to insist upon her showing friendly feelings towards the new Government. But she spent the last evening on which the old Household remained in a sorrowful silence. "Scarcely a word was spoken at dinner, but later on tears and regrets broke forth with little restraint."

In considering the ways of Queen Victoria during her early career, I am forced to recognise the fact that when once she really accepted an impression she could

not let it fade. This is curiously exemplified in several ways, small as well as large. Thus when at the end of August most of the arrangements had been made for the formation of a Tory Administration, she somewhat frightened her husband by telling him that, seeing how the Tories had treated him nearly two years earlier in the matter of the annuity, he ought now to keep them at a distance. They would be sure to come and see him and to flatter him, and his part was to resist them and refuse to see them, at least for some time. A most extraordinary piece of advice! The curious fact about it is that Prince Albert did not laugh at it; he was really troubled, and told his secretary to repeat this to Melbourne, and ask him to influence Her Majesty to different thoughts.

Victoria's treatment of her mother and her uncle Leopold arose, I feel convinced, from the same limitation, aided, perhaps, by a strong dislike to appear in leading-strings to anyone. The articles in *The Times* could hardly have had influence enough to cause this dislike, which was probably the outcome of her character, but those articles may have indicated a certain policy to her which she followed too rigidly. This led her to slight her mother and to exclude her uncle, as he reminded her, from the ceremonies attending her accession, her coronation, and her marriage. In his letter written in January, 1841, a slight bitterness of spirit and a wounded heart is shown when he says:—

“I should not have bored you by my presence, but the act of christening is, in my eyes, a sort of closing of the first cyclus of your dear life.” He then reminds

her of his actions at her father's death, how he went down to Sidmouth two days before that happened, and how so great was the Duchess's need that she could not have left Sidmouth had he not been there to settle everything for her; and how, when the little party arrived in London, they were treated very unkindly by George IV. The copy of this letter, which is to be found in "The Letters of Queen Victoria," recently published by command of His late Majesty, ends with: "I wished to assist at the christening of the little Princess, an event which is of great importance. . . ." It is something of a relief to know that he *was* one of the sponsors to the Princess Royal.

When about a year later the Prince of Wales was christened, a great debate arose as to who should be the chief godfather, and Stockmar advised the exclusion of Leopold on the ground that both he and the King of Hanover could not be invited, and if the Belgian King were sponsor the Hanoverian King would be very angry; so to avoid this a mutually friendly Sovereign was asked to stand, and the King of Prussia accepted the invitation, Ernest of Hanover being furiously angry and considering himself slighted. This led to an attempt at pacification when Princess Alice was christened, and he was then invited to be sponsor. He promised to fill the post, and arrived in London two or three days after that fixed for the ceremony, "everyone asking why the King did not arrive or why the christening was not put off." He stayed some weeks, showing that he resented the fact that Victoria occupied the throne of his fathers, and trying

to belittle Prince Albert. During his visit Princess Augusta, daughter of the Duke of Cambridge, was married to the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz. All the Royalties were at the wedding, and there was a little amusing byplay in the vestry when names were appended to the register. While Victoria was signing the King of Hanover slipped to her side, intending to take the pen from her and add his name in front of Prince Albert; but the Queen saw his design and moved quickly round the table to where the Prince stood, had the book passed to her there, made her signature, and then gave the pen to the Prince, so by the time Ernest had also got round the table the deed was done. Once while in London the King asked the Prince to go for a walk with him, but the latter objected that they might be troubled with crowds.

“Oh, never mind that,” replied the King; “I was still more unpopular than you are now, and used to walk about with perfect impunity.”

Altogether he seems to have annoyed his niece very much, for she refused to go to Ascot that year, and it was currently reported that the reason was that she would have been obliged to have a house-party at Windsor, which would have necessitated the inclusion of the King of Hanover among her guests.

While writing of christenings, I might tell the story of how the escort for the King of Prussia went to fetch him from Ostend. The squadron was under the command of Lord Hardwick, and it had a series of adventures which ought to justify the theory of ill-luck. His ship was the *Firebrand*, and it, with several other



steamers and frigates, prepared to start on the Tuesday. Just as steam got up the *Firebrand* upheld its name by bursting its boiler. This was repaired during the day, and they started at night, promptly going aground in the darkness without getting damaged; but in the fog, which was very thick, one of the companion steamers ran into the *Firebrand* and broke off its figure-head. The third steamer ran ashore and could not be moved. In defiance of the advice of the pilots, Lord Hardwick insisted upon pushing on to the Nore. There it was found that the two frigates would, though the reason was not given, be unable to cross the Channel, and the second steamer broke her paddles, so the *Firebrand* steamed alone into Ostend Harbour at about the time that the King arrived there. The King decided to remain with the King of the Belgians that night, and Lord Hardwick remained on his ship. Just as he got to bed his cook walked over the ship's side into the water, and one of the sailors slipped down the ladder and got hold of him. Lord Hardwick rushed on deck in his shirt, and, shouting for a boat, threw out a rope to the sailor and asked if he had got the cook safe.

"Yes," said the man, who was so deep in the water that it was up to his neck, "yes, I've got his head tight between my knees."

Fortunately at that moment a boat took them both in, the cook apparently dead. However, hot blankets, rubbing, and the pump restored animation, and Lord Hardwick was the longest sufferer, as he caught a very severe cold.

The economic conditions were so bad at this time

that scarcely anything could raise the mob to enthusiasm. Why should a man with an empty stomach throw his hat in the air and shout for joy because his Queen passes him in the street? It is far more likely that he will scowl and say, "She has every luxury; I have nothing," as he would say it of any rich person. Fanny Kemble discoursed upon the attitude of the people during the visit of the King of Prussia, saying that the concourse was immense, but that she was much surprised at the entire want of excitement and enthusiasm in the vast multitude who thronged and all but choked up the Queen's way. All hats were lifted, but there was not a hatful of cheers, and the whole thing produced a disagreeable effect of coldness, indifference, and constraint. She went on to say that one person believed that it was nineteenth-century breeding which was too exquisite to allow of the mob shouting; and another person, who was a very warm Whig, thought the silence was to be accounted for by Paisley starvation and Windsor banquets. She concluded that when Horace Wilson was crossing the Park at the time that the Queen was driving through it, there was some, but not much, decided hissing.

When Queen Victoria found herself compelled to accept Peel as her chief Minister, she did not attempt to break off all intercourse with Lord Melbourne, though great pressure was put upon her from all sides, and especially by Stockmar, to make her refrain from either seeing him or writing to him. Both she absolutely refused to do, and for a time letters passed constantly between them. The German Baron grew

almost hysterical over these letters, and did not hesitate to convey to Lord Melbourne his conviction that he was acting dishonourably and jeopardising the Queen's honour, for nothing would convince him that Melbourne was not basely discussing politics with Her Majesty, doing all in his power to undermine Peel's work, and nursing the prospect of a return to the headship of affairs himself. Stockmar acted always upon the supposition that men were evil, and Melbourne's honour and magnanimity had no weight with him. Peel, however, was more just. Before he went to the Queen, Melbourne sent him a message, advising him of the things that the Queen liked or disliked, and doing his utmost to help his rival to obtain the Queen's favour. On the receipt of this message Peel said how kind it was of Lord Melbourne, and, on the subject of the Queen's friendship for her old Minister being mentioned, added that it was ridiculous to suppose that he could feel any jealousy, that he had full reliance on the Queen's fairness, and that implicit confidence was the wisest course.

It is worthy of note that at the first dinner-party given to her new Ministers the programme of the evening was changed. The Queen was very gracious and good-humoured with Aberdeen, Peel, the Duke, and others. But when they went into the drawing-room Melbourne's chair was gone, and, instead of showing herself interested in her guests, all the Ministers were set down to whist, so that there was no possibility of conversation. Victoria herself sat at her round table with Lady de la Warr and Lady Portman, and

there was practically silence. That an exchange of ideas, not on political matters, might have been pleasant to the gentlemen, did not enter the little lady's head.

Melbourne behaved with great courtesy to Stockmar, but he did not promise not to write to the Queen nor to answer her letters. Of all the people he knew, he loved her best; for four years he had been her constant companion and adviser; he had watched her with fatherly care through her trials, her mistakes, and her good fortune, and he took a pride in the development of character which he detected. He was ambitious for her, and believed that she was capable of greatness, and he did not in the least share Stockmar's Teutonic hope that the Queen would be gradually absorbed in the nursery and leave affairs of State to other minds. The letters that passed between them had little or no reference to State affairs, and could have in no way been objected to by Peel if he had seen them.

From this time until his death there was an element of tragedy in the life of the ex-Premier. He was given by Stockmar—who first instructed the Prince as to his decisions and what he should say, and then acted as the mouthpiece for the Prince's borrowed sentiments—the alternative either of obliterating himself as a politician, or of banishing himself entirely from the Queen's friendship. A short time after the change of Government Victoria asked him to come and stay a few days at Windsor, and not knowing how this would be regarded, yet wishing to accept, Melbourne wrote to Prince Albert to know if such a visit would be feasible. Albert was afraid to accept the responsibility,

and consulted Stockmar, who wrote a memorandum charging the late Prime Minister with committing an *essential injustice* to Sir Robert Peel by continuing to correspond with the Queen, and also by asking the Prince to give an opinion upon this suggested visit.

He sent Anson, who admired and loved his old master, to deliver this condemnation. Melbourne read the memorandum twice attentively with compressed lips. Then Anson repeated the lesson Stockmar had taught him in addition, saying that he had better meet the Queen first in general society in London, that the Prince thought that Melbourne's own sense of right should have enabled him to decide about his visit, and that his recent speech in the House of Lords, which identified him with the Opposition, added another impediment to his seeing Her Majesty.

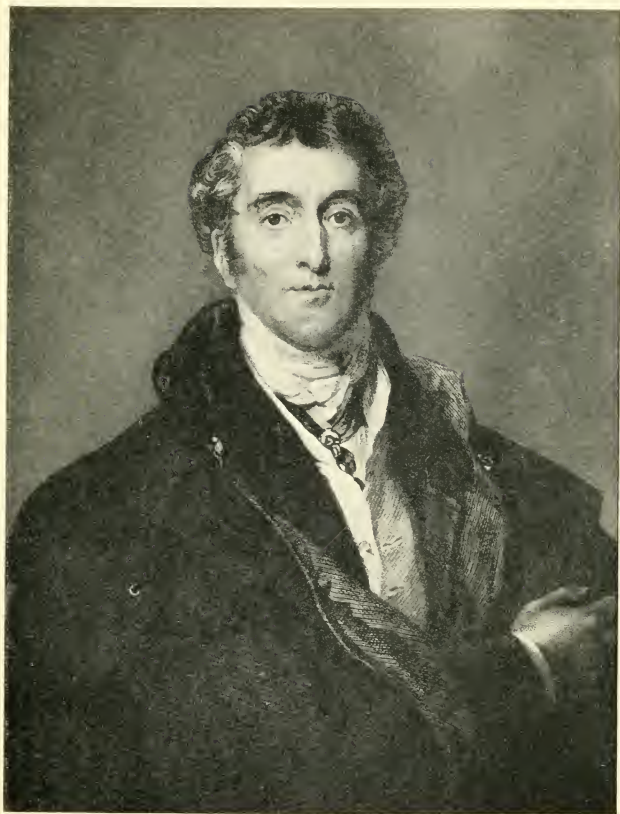
Melbourne had been sitting on a sofa, and at this he jumped up, striding up and down the room exclaiming "in a violent frenzy," I quote from Baron Stockmar, "God eternally damn it!—&c., &c. Flesh and blood cannot stand this. I only spoke upon the defensive, which Ripon's speech at the beginning of the session rendered quite necessary. I cannot be expected to give up my position in the country, neither do I think that it is to the Queen's interest that I should."

Melbourne continued to lead the Opposition, and when affairs were more settled he occasionally went to see the Queen, but after he had a slight stroke he seemed a broken man, never recovering his strength. In December, 1843, Georgiana Liddell wrote of him: "Lord Melbourne goes away to-day. He was not well

yesterday, and had a slight touch of gout; it always makes me sad to see him, he is so changed." When the Queen visited Chatsworth Melbourne was invited to make one of the guests, which gave him great pleasure, though it was doubtful whether the excitement was good for him, for a dreadful depression seized upon him afterwards, for he knew that his day was over, and chafed and fretted under the knowledge.

Another man who was beginning to show many signs of age was the Duke of Wellington, of whom Greville said, I think erroneously, that "he was a great man in little things, but a little man in great matters." All through the years from about 1834 Society seems to have been watching for the Duke's collapse. In June, 1838, one diarist remarked: "It is a sad thing to see how the Duke is altered in appearance, and what a stride old age has made upon him. He is much deafer than he was, he is whiter, his head is bent, his shoulders are raised, and there are muscular twitches in his face, not altogether new, but of a more marked character."

Prince Albert had the good sense to make a personal friend of this the most remarkable man in the kingdom. Someone gives an account of the two pacing the garden together in earnest conversation, and on passing them being amused to find that the Duke was giving a long discourse about larders, "it might have been a French cook instead of the great hero of Waterloo." When the changes of administration occurred in 1841, it was the Duke who gave expression to Albert's desire that those who came into office should be of "spotless character." However strongly Wellington at one time



THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.





opposed the repeal of the Corn Laws, he lived to be proud of the deed, for his death did not take place until 1852.

As to the "spotless character" upon which the Prince insisted from the men forming the new Tory Administration, it naturally caused terrible mortification and anger among those able men who could not show a clean bill morally; and in spite of the excellent principle it contained it was likely to be a public danger, as it is by no means proved that the most moral man is also the best statesman. However, the Prince adhered to this all his life, thus doing much to purify English society, and after his death the Queen became much more strict than he had been on this point; indeed, it is doubtful whether Mrs. Norton would have been as kindly received in 1870 as she was in 1840. Lady Cardigan remarks that in 1857 "the Court was as narrow-minded as when poor Flora Hastings had been the victim of its lying slander." But there was a difference; in 1839 the persecution of Flora Hastings had nothing to do with principle, it was caused by impulse and prejudice; in later years it became a principle that no woman, innocent or guilty, against whom slander had breathed, should set foot within the Palace. It was not so much a horror of sin itself as a conventional idea that the Court must set a good example, and according to the lax standard of Victorian times it was enough that the woman should suffer, the man was only banished if he were extremely and publicly bad. Even now our standard has risen, and we are beginning to think a light man as odious as a

light woman, and are certainly not in favour of punishing one and letting the other off.

One curious prejudice that the Queen developed was her strong sentiment against a second marriage, she herself being the child of a happy second marriage, and feeling a great affection for her half-sister. This must have arisen from the sentimental side of her love for her husband, making her feel that so intimate a union as that of marriage could only be possible with one person, only she translated "possible" into "moral." I do not think it was caused by any excess of religious convictions, for the Queen was not a slave to religious form, though she was devout. In 1844 she held a Drawing Room on the 25th of March, which was not only in Lent, but on the day of the Annunciation. "The Calverts are so shocked, and seem to think that Her Majesty will come to a sense of the enormity she is committing as Head of the Church and put off the Drawing Room. However, that remains to be seen!" writes a chronicler of small events.

Victoria gradually became absorbed in her new Government and new Prime Minister, and by 1844 had forgotten the old party almost as though it did not exist; indeed, in spite of the desire for aloofness from party politics expressed by Albert, she now seemed to regard the Whigs much as she once had regarded the Tories. Thus when the Russian Emperor came to England, and she gave parties in his honour, she invited all the Tories to meet him, and made a sparing choice among her old friends. So Lord John Russell, the then most noted leader among the Whigs, was

left out of everything, and was never presented to the Emperor at all. Melbourne was, however, included, and the Emperor thanked him for coming to the breakfast and affording him the opportunity of meeting him.

But as the years went, Her Majesty saw less and less of the man without whom at one time she seemed unable to exist; the letters between them became restricted to the briefest notes at long intervals, and four years after their official parting a contemporary noted that Melbourne could not speak of the Queen without tears in his eyes, and another remarked, "She never cared a farthing for any of the late Cabinet but Melbourne, and has apparently ceased to care for him."

This was not really according to fact; the Queen always felt an affection for her old Prime Minister, but as she grew more experienced she realised that his advice, though the best he could give, had not always been perfect, and that she in her girlish enthusiasm had not always seen things in their right proportion; thus, too late, she grew critical, and that somewhat altered her estimation of him. She also became more and more confident of Peel's power to help her, and had little time to spend in writing to the man who was no longer of importance. "She never forgot to write him on his birthday," one biographer announces triumphantly, but she did more than that, though the poor lonely Melbourne brooded sometimes until he felt himself neglected. It was unfortunate that he allowed his mind to dwell so much on his few years of Royal

companionship and favour, that he found the knowledge of his failing powers so painful, and that he ever dreamed of taking the leadership of the House again. When the O'Connell trial was nearing its close, he remarked :

“ There is not much chance of the House of Commons coming to a vote against Government ; but still such a thing is possible, and I was kept awake half the night thinking, suppose such a thing did occur, and I was sent for to Windsor, what advice I should give the Queen.” . . . “ It kept me awake,” he repeated, “ and I determined that I would advise her not to let Mr. O'Connell be brought up for judgment.”

Once the Queen's prejudice against Peel had disappeared, she felt more comfortable under his Government and its large majorities than she had done with the Whigs ; and when Peel resigned at the end of 1845 in consequence of the publication by Delane of his new Corn Law policy, she felt as upset, they say, as when Melbourne resigned in 1839. She could do nothing, however, but send for Lord John Russell, and knowing how Melbourne would feel about being left out she wrote to him, saying that she knew that his health would preclude his taking office, but she hoped he would come and give her his counsel. She was at Cowes at the time, and he replied that he could not face the little crossing, it would be as bad for him as a voyage over the ocean. However, in spite of Russell's gallant attempts, the somewhat overbearing Palmerston stood in the way of a Whig Cabinet. The Queen feared his foreign policy, and many of his col-

leagues disliked him. "Lord Palmerston is redeemed from the last extremity of political degradation by his cook," was the spiteful saying of one of his opponents. So Peel came to the Queen's assistance, and she received him back as joyfully almost as she had received Melbourne in 1839. It was not the Queen's ladies this time, but the Queen's Foreign Minister, who reinstated the old Government.

In 1842 the Queen and the Prince went on a visit to Scotland by boat. They were from all accounts charming on the journey, which was a slow one, taking three days; they took great interest in the ship, dining on deck in the midst of the sailors, making them dance, talking to the boatswain, &c. But Victoria got tired and impatiently wanted to land; as it was useless to do that before she arrived at Grantham Pier she became annoyed; as Greville says, her fault was impatience, inability to bear contradiction, and a desire always to go ahead. Thus as soon as she got into her carriage at Edinburgh, orders were given that the coachman should drive as fast as possible. At first they could scarcely move, for in its enthusiasm the crowd broke all bounds, pressed the soldiers out of the procession, and crushed close up to the carriage. When at last it was disengaged, the coachman went at a gallop through the city, the Queen being seen by no one. People had then, as now, been foolish enough to give great sums for windows and seats, the crowds which lined the streets had been waiting for hours, great labour had been spent to decorate the place, and all that a carriage might dash along bearing a Queen who did not

see her subjects through a multitude of people who did not believe that she would have treated them so badly.

Honestly I think the explanation of her motive given by Greville and others is wrong, and that the dash through Edinburgh was caused by nervousness. Paisley was looked upon as one of the centres of disaffection, and Peel was in a state of fear about the whole expedition, acknowledging at the end of one day that "we have just completed the very nervous operation of taking the Queen in a low open carriage from Dalkeith to Dalway, sixteen miles through Canongate and High Street, and back by Leith in the evening."

Thus when the street crowd hustled the soldiers and pressed so unceremoniously upon the Royal *cortège*, I think the whole party was inspired with fear for the Queen's safety, and got out of the town as quickly as possible. This very nearly brought about the result dreaded, for the Edinburgh people were very angry; they talked of abandoning the illuminations, and a public riot nearly took place. This was prevented, however, by the immediate arrangement being made for a great procession on another day.

In 1843 the Royal pair went to visit the French King at Eu, Victoria's first visit to the Continent. Everything was done to please the visitors, but Lady Bloomfield gives an amusing account of the details. She says that there were curious contradictions in the stateliness of the arrangements made by the King for their comfort. The carriages sent to fetch the Royal party from the shore were char-a-bancs, and though

the first was drawn by twelve caparisoned horses they were large and clumsy animals. There was but one driver in front, and three footmen in State livery behind, with many outriders in all kinds of liveries on all sorts of horses, some of them wretched beasts. The chief amusement each day was to go for a picnic, driving for several hours to a wood or a ruin over unmade roads with deep ruts and huge stones, the folk in the char-a-bancs being bumped and shaken to pieces. One night the Corps de l'Opera came from Paris to play before the visitors, and brought with them two pieces for selection, one ridiculing the English, and the other too improper to be acted before the Queen.

It was on the 29th of May in 1842 that a second mad attempt was made on Her Majesty's life, and it needed but one instance of this sort to prove how courageous were both the Queen and her husband. She was returning from church on the Sunday, and the ladies in the second carriage noticed that the Royal carriage stopped in Birdcage Walk. On reaching the Palace they also noticed that the Prince looked very annoyed and went away with the equerries; the Queen, who was quite calm and collected, going as usual up the grand staircase to her apartments, talking to her ladies, discussing the sermon and dismissing them as was her custom. The next day Matilda Paget and Georgiana Liddell remained all the afternoon expecting a summons to drive with the Queen, but none came, and at about six o'clock Her Majesty departed with Prince Albert in an open carriage. Georgiana went

for a walk in the Palace gardens, grumbling that she had been kept in for nothing, but when she got back she was horrified to learn that the Queen had been shot at by a lad named Francis. In the evening Victoria broke off a conversation with Sir Robert Peel to say :

“I dare say, Georgy, you were surprised at not driving with me this afternoon, but as we returned from church yesterday a man presented a pistol at the carriage window, which flashed in the pan ; we were so taken by surprise that he had time to escape, so I knew what was hanging over me, and was determined to expose no life but my own.” She added that when the young man had fired again that afternoon the report had been less loud than it was when Oxford fired at her, and that she should not have noticed it had she not been expecting it the whole time she was driving.

This youth of twenty was transported, but six weeks later a hunchback named Bean was seen to present a pistol at Her Majesty, and was taken into custody, but there was a difficulty in that the police would not at first believe in the charge, and let the man go. Thus, when convinced that the matter was serious, they collected all the hunchbacks they could find until they had about sixty at the police station. Admiral Knox says of this in one of his letters :

“Did you see in the papers the account of the attempt on the life of the Queen? You know it was by a hunchback boy, and I heard that when the police set out in pursuit of him, all the hunchbacks in the neighbourhood were arrested. There were no less than fifty or sixty assembled at the station house, and



they were all quarrelling and fighting, each saying to the other, 'Now confess that you did it, and let us off.' I think it must have been a most absurd scene."

Bean, however, was recognised, and as his attempt had been only of a half-hearted sort, he was sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment. These foolish actions were really induced by a desire for notoriety, and they bring to mind the boy Jones who on several occasions was found secreted in the palace, his inquisitiveness leading to definite results and much needed reform.

This boy, when about fifteen, first appeared in December of 1838, in the dress of a sweep, being found in the marble hall of Buckingham Palace at five o'clock in the morning. He made a dart for the door, but was captured in the Palace gardens. He had either come down a chimney or tried to get up one, for marks of soot were found in many bedrooms. A sword and some linen had been taken from one room, in another he had well larded himself with bear's-grease, in another he had broken a valuable picture of Queen Victoria and abstracted two letters. He told various tales, saying that he had lived in the Palace for months and had been behind a chair when Cabinet meetings had been held, also that he came from Hertfordshire. However, he was proved to be the son of a tailor named Jones, who lived in York Street, Westminster, and it was also proved that he had always stated a determination to see the inside of the Palace. When he was tried the matter was regarded as an escapade, and he went free.

This youth had been entirely forgotten when, eleven days after the birth of the Princess Royal in 1841, a young man was discovered lying under the sofa in the Queen's dressing-room, which adjoined the chamber in which she lay. He was short, dirty, repulsive-looking, and about seventeen. It was Jones again, who said he had entered the Palace twice by scaling the wall and getting in at a window, and had been there from Tuesday night to one o'clock on Thursday morning, secreting himself under different beds. He said he had sat on the throne and heard the baby cry. His punishment was three months in the House of Correction. Of him Samuel Rogers said he must be a descendant of In-i-go Jones, and *The Satirist* and other papers treated him to a few remarks, among them being :—

“ Now he in chains and in the prison garb is  
Mourning the crime that couples *Jones with darbies.*”

Jones left prison on March 2nd, and on the 15th of that month one of the extra sergeants of police put on in the Palace in consequence of these incursions, saw someone peeping through a glass door in the Marble Hall. It was Jones again, who had raided the pantries and carried a selection of food to a Royal apartment, where he had been feasting. He had another three months in the House of Correction with the addition of hard labour, and when that was over he was persuaded—persuaded sounds better than compelled, though it sometimes means the same thing—to go to sea. *Punch* gave an amusing account of his exploits, which ended with the following lines :—

“ One night, returnin’ home to bed,  
I walked through Pim-li-co,  
And twiggin’ of the Palass, sed,  
‘ I’m Jones, and In-i-go.’  
But afore I could get out, my boys,  
Polliseman 20A,  
He caught me by the corderoys,  
And lugged me right away.

My cuss upon Lord Melbun, and  
On Johnny Russ-al-so,  
That forced me from my native land  
Across the vaves to go-o-oh.  
But all their spiteful arts is vain  
My spirits down to keep;  
I hope I’ll soon git back again,  
To take another peep.”

## CHAPTER XV

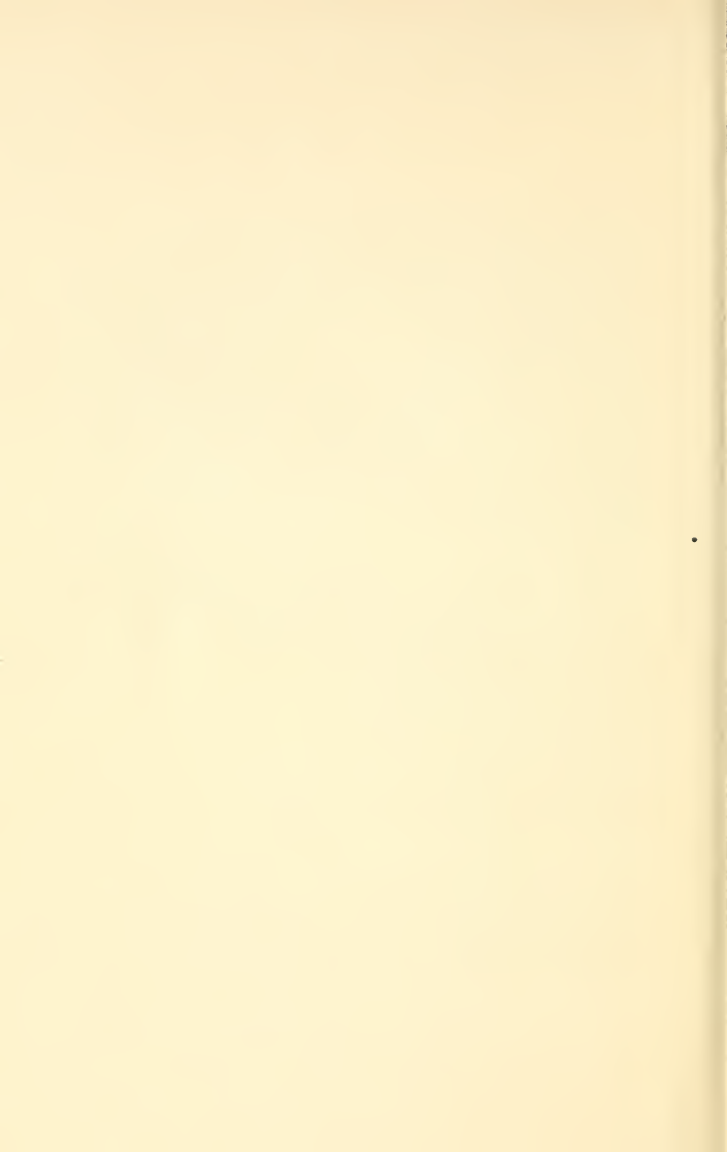
### QUEEN VICTORIA'S HOME

“I am born to this position; I must take it, and neither you nor I can help or hinder me. Surely, then, I need not fret myself to guard my own dignity.”—*Emerson*.

THIS incident of an ordinary street boy getting three times into Buckingham Palace without being seen, spending hours there each time and wandering at will about the building, was naturally the talk of London. It was found that there was a space between the Marble Arch—which then formed the entrance in front of the Palace—and its gates which a boy could easily get through, but this was no excuse for the opportunity he seems to have had of entering the building itself. Extra police and watchmen were put on at night, but Stockmar considered the matter serious enough to warrant study, and he discovered a most curious state of things in the arrangement of the Royal Household, a discovery which led to a general and much needed domestic revolution; and in consequence, through the executive ability of Stockmar and the alleged economic spirit of Prince Albert, to years of dissension and discontent among the servants, great and little; from which at last arose a system of domestic comfort which



BARON STOCKMAR.



allowed the Queen to be mistress in her own house. In actual fact, the conditions under which the Household had been run would have made a splendid subject for a Gilbertian opera.

The chief officers of the Household were in the same position and doing the same tasks as they had filled and done for centuries, and though all the details of their work had changed gradually no new rules had been made for their guidance. These chief officers were the Lord High Steward, the Lord Chamberlain, and the Master of the Horse. These three were also great officers of State, were changed with every Ministry—between 1830 and 1844 one was changed five and another six times—they could not reside at the Palace, and often could not be in the same place as the Court. They were chosen by the Ministers for their political strength and opinions, without any reference to their powers as good housekeepers, good organisers, or good masters. This led to the curious situation that the Masters of the Queen's Household could rarely attend to their duties, which had to be deputed to people who were perhaps incapable, or also not on the spot, and that in many trivial ways Victoria had no authority in her own home. There was no domestic to whom she could give orders, because the servants were under absentee masters, and neither she nor the Prince could ensure having a well-warmed room to live in. She was, in fact, so great a personage that it was arranged that every order to the servants should pass through other lips than hers, and as those other lips were generally miles away from the Royal domestic scene,

the orders, if they were of a serious nature and outside the sphere of ordinary servants, were not given at all. So the Queen sat and shivered in her drawing-room, paid enormously for candles to light a room which would be in darkness when needed, and could not from inside tell the state of the weather because of the dirt on the windows.

There was also a lack of co-operation or agreement among these three high officials, so that there was never any unity of action. This was the more absurd, as the labour had to be delegated or re-delegated to actual servants who dwelt on the spot, and who did not seem to have the wit to do their work in conjunction. In no part of the Royal Household was there any real discipline, order, or dignity about the domestic work. The servants themselves often did not know who was responsible for certain duties, and, servant-like, were always careful never to do anyone's work but their own. The great officials themselves were said not to know which parts of the Castle or Palace were under the charge of the Lord Steward or the Lord Chamberlain. When George III. was King the Lord Steward had charge of the whole Palace except the Royal apartments; in the next two reigns he was also held accountable for the ground floor, including the hall and the dining-rooms. But when Victoria came to the throne he gave over the grand hall and other lower rooms to the Lord Chamberlain, which seems to have left the mastership of the kitchen, sculleries, and pantries vague.

The authority over a room conferred responsibility



over the most trivial matters, such as the laying of the fire, the cleaning of the windows, the brushing of the carpet. This authority had no place outside the room, nor outside the house; thus the Lord Chamberlain or his deputy might order the windows of the Queen's boudoir to be cleaned inside, yet it remained for the Master of the Horse, who had authority over the woods and forests, to arrange when the outside should be cleaned. This sort of thing was complicated by the fact that the housekeepers, pages, housemaids, &c., were required to give obedience to the Lord Chamberlain, while the footmen, livery porters, and under butlers, being clothed and paid by the Master of the Horse, owned allegiance to him; and the rest of the servants, cooks, porters, &c., obeyed the Lord Steward.

In contemporary writings one frequently comes across hints of the discomfort of the Royal palaces, the draughts, the cold, the bad lighting, and it is scarcely to be wondered at, seeing the curious arrangements made by Her Majesty's Ministers for her comfort. Victoria, feeling the cold especially one day, sent a messenger to Sir Frederick Watson, then Master of the Household, complaining that the dining-room was always cold. That perplexed gentleman, who either had no initiative or who knew that interference would be useless, replied gravely to the messenger:

“You see, properly speaking, it is not our fault, for the Lord Steward lays the fire and the Lord Chamberlain lights it.”

As to the lighting of the Palace, it was the duty of the Lord Chamberlain to buy the lamps, and see that

there were sufficient both of them and of candles; but the Lord Steward was responsible for filling, cleaning, cutting, and lighting them.

Supposing a pane of glass was broken, so involved were the conditions for getting it repaired that it might be weeks before the necessary authority could be obtained. If the kitchen window happened to be smashed, the following process would have to be gone through. The chief cook would write and sign a request for the replacing of the glass, definitely describing where it was needed; this was countersigned by the Clerk of the Kitchen, then it had to be signed by the Master of the Household; from him it was taken to the Lord Chamberlain's office, where it awaited his presence and pleasure. Having received his invaluable signature, it was then laid before the Clerk of the Works under the Woods and Forest Department. By the time the workman was ordered to put in the window it was not improbable that months had elapsed, and one really wonders whether the Queen's cook did not resort to the time-honoured use of brown paper.

It is true that while these anomalies were going on there was a Master of the Household, but then his authority, which was of an attenuated character, was confined to the Lord Steward's Department, and was there quite undefined; while the servants under the Lord Chamberlain, comprising the housemaids, housekeepers, and pages, were entirely outside his jurisdiction.

This naturally had its bad effect upon the servants, who were left without any real master. They went off

duty when they chose, remained absent for hours on the day when they were especially expected to be in attendance, and committed any irregularity without anyone to reprimand them. The footmen, who slept ten or twelve in a dormitory, might smoke or drink there, but if anyone were the wiser, certainly there was no one who was in a position to remonstrate.

It is almost impossible to imagine a worse regulated establishment than that of the little lady who was the First Person in the Kingdom, yet who had not power to ensure decent attendance from her servants. I wonder if she was quite conscious of the inconvenience and indignity of it all, whether she knew the straits to which her visitors were sometimes reduced, and whether she felt a pang of shame at her enforced position of inaction. Guests might arrive at Windsor, and find no one to welcome them or to show them their rooms. Proper communication was not established among the innumerable servants; for the housemaids who obeyed the Lord Chamberlain, and who prepared the rooms, did not come into communication with the guests; and the footmen, who were under the Lord Steward, were not authorised to see to this matter; indeed, it was quite possible that most of the footmen were, in light and irresponsible fashion, seeing to their own business when the guests appeared. It all seems to have depended upon the right housekeeper being more or less accidentally in the right spot at the right moment, and she was not in the department of the Master of the Household. The usual course in such a case was to send a servant, if one could be found,

to the porter's lodge, where a list of rooms, &c., was kept. It was also no unusual thing for a visitor to be at a loss to find the drawing-room at night. He or she would start from the bedroom with more or less confidence, perhaps take a wrong turn, and wander about helpless and alone, one account says for an hour, finding no servants to give assistance to them, and coming across no one of whom the way could be asked.

When "The Boy Jones"—as *Punch* delighted to name him—made his surreptitious visits, the public blamed those on whom depended the regulations for protecting the Queen. But there was no responsible person in the Palace at the time. The Lord Chamberlain was in Staffordshire, and the porters were not in his department; the Lord Steward was not in the Palace, and had nothing to do with the pages and other people nearest to the Royal person; nor could the responsibility be fixed on the Master of the Household, who was only a subordinate officer in the Lord Steward's department. It did not occur to any of these good people, nor to the Government, that something more was needed than the adding of an iron bar to the front gate or placing an extra policeman in the front hall; and it was left to Stockmar to cause the whole arrangements of the Palace to be reconstructed. He advised that the three great officers of the Court, with their respective departments, should retain their connection with the political system of the country, but that each should in his own sphere be induced to delegate as much of his authority as was necessary to the maintenance of the order, security, and discipline of

the Palace to *one* official, who should always live at Court, and be responsible to the three departmental chiefs, but at the same time be able to secure unity of action in the use of the powers delegated to him.

As the abuses had been going on for many years, Stockmar's suggestions and interference gave rise to violent feeling and much bitterness, and it was some years before the storm subsided into calm. I have come across an account of King William's going to Ascot in 1833, when the Royal Household seems to have been absolutely disreputable, for *all* the King's grooms got drunk *every* day, excepting (seemingly) one man, and he was killed going home from the races. What an argument for the virtue of drunkenness! The person who described the event added that no one exercised any authority over these servants, and the household ran riot. Favourite abuses of this kind were not easily abolished, but the Prince Consort accepted Stockmar's advice and carried his suggestions into effect, firmly resisting all attempts to evade them, and appointing the Master of the Household as the delegate of the three departmental chiefs.

One interference in the Household led to another, and soon remarkable changes were made. Stockmar was doubtless at the back of them all, but upon the Prince Consort fell the odium. He had been brought up too economically not to know the value of money, and, like any other sensible person, he abhorred waste. There was one little matter which was particularly fastened upon him by his detractors. I remember an old lady speaking of him to me years ago with energetic

scorn, and on my asking why, she replied: "Oh, I remember him! He was one of the meanest of people, for he actually saved the candle-ends." "Well, why not, if he had the chance of doing it?" I asked. On looking up this matter I found that the great rooms were lit by hundreds of candles, and that some upper servant had acquired the perquisite of every day emptying all the receptacles and replacing the pieces by fresh candles; further, if a room had not been used, the candles were changed just the same, and the licensed looter carried off a rich booty. Prince Albert enforced a rule that this should no longer be done, and that the candles should remain to be burnt within a reasonable limit. Being an economist myself, I quite sympathise with him.

The lowering of salaries, however, created a tremendous *furor*. Thus there were about forty housemaids at Windsor, and the same number at Buckingham Palace, whose wages had been for many years £45 per annum. In the general revision this was reduced to £12 a year on commencing duties, with a gradual rise to £18, beyond which a housemaid could not go. A little book, "Sketches of Her Majesty's Household," published anonymously in 1848, shows that some of the economies were peculiarly unfair, as in the case of the sixteen gentlemen of the Chapel Royal who chanted the services, and who were given £73 a year each. They were required to attend on Sundays every other month and on saints' days, &c. From each salary four shillings in the pound was deducted as land tax, which, added to further deduction for income tax, reduced the salary

to £56. The same course was pursued with the organist, composers—all getting a nominal £73—and other people connected with the Chapel who received less. Think of the violinist who had to regard himself as “passing rich on forty pounds a year,” minus eight pounds deducted as land tax! It is a little difficult to realise this, for what could the land tax have to do with the chapel music?

From the same source we learn the regulations imposed upon the members of the Queen's Private Band, who were paid from the Privy Purse. Their salaries were reduced from £130, with supper and wine, to £80 and £90, with no supper, in lieu of which a small sum was given at each nightly attendance. Sometimes a vacancy occurred in the State Band, which was paid by the State, and then a piece of very sharp practice was indulged in. The vacancy would be filled by a member of the Private Band, and as a consequence of this promotion the man had to play in both bands, for which he should have received an extra £40 for his services in the State Band. He duly received that £40, but when his salary was paid him as a member of the Private Band he would find that the sum of £40 had been carefully deducted before it was handed to him—on the assumption that he had already received it!

In this description of the anomalies in the Royal Household I have mostly given Stockmar's view of the case. There was, of course, another aspect, and the English officially gave voice to it. In 1846 the Earl de la Warr, who was then Lord Chamberlain,

said that he experienced such an "extraordinary interference in the performance of his official duties from parties at Court," that he determined to resign, so he made "Free Trade in Corn" the excuse, and the day after Her Majesty's *accouchement* the announcement took place. Several noblemen refused the post, and at last it was semi-officially announced that Sir Robert Peel, in consequence of the uncertainty as to the life of the Government, would not at present fill up the appointment. So Lord de la Warr was virtually bribed to hold office for a time—that is to say, until Lord John Russell and the Whigs came in in July. One of De la Warr's sons, Mortimer West, was given a commission in the Grenadier Guards; another, Charles, was made military secretary to the Commander-in-Chief in India; and a third, Reginald, was gazetted Chaplain-in-Ordinary to Her Majesty.

When Russell formed his Administration it was even then very difficult to fill the Lord Chamberlain's office, everyone shrinking from the unofficial interference of Stockmar and the Prince. The Duke of Bedford, the Duke of Devonshire, and the Earl of Uxbridge all declined, but Earl Spencer was at last prevailed upon to take the responsibility.

The Inspector of the Palace was named Henry Saunders, and he gave in his resignation in March, 1844, because of "extraordinary interference with him in the performance of his duties by members of the Household unconnected with the Lord Chamberlain's department"; but Lord de la Warr persuaded him to remain until the Prince Consort, who was visiting his



home, returned from Germany. Saunders was believed by Anson to have given information of Palace doings to the Press, as many things had been made public, particularly about the wholesale discharge of servants in Saunders's department, as well as other matters which had formed subjects of private inquiry. He was pensioned at the end of 1845 on £500 a year. After that different Inspectors were appointed for each Palace, to superintend the care of the furniture and to make arrangements for the reception of the Court and of Her Majesty's visitors.

There was naturally a tremendous jealousy of the many German servants introduced by the Prince, and in 1848 it was pointed out by a newspaper that Richard the Second's Chamberlain was impeached for introducing aliens into the King's Household; the writer advocated a similar proceeding, though he added a belief that the Lord Chamberlain was not really responsible for the numerous appointments of foreigners.

Among these foreigners was a man named Heller, who came to England with the Prince as courier, and who was appointed by the Prince in 1842 to be Page of the Chambers, the impression being that among his other duties he was to be the "overlooker" of the other pages. These others, being English, bitterly resented this, and there were frequent rows between Heller and the other men. Once a page named Kinnaird was so enraged that, in spite of Albert's presence, he threatened to throw Heller over the banisters, telling the Prince that he "would not be insulted by a foreigner."

Another change made, and a very sensible one, was the abolition of fees for seeing the interior of Windsor Castle. Lady Mary Fox, a daughter of William IV. and wife of Major-General Fox, Surveyor-General of the Ordnance, was the State Housekeeper, receiving a residence in the Norman Tower, a salary of £320 a year, and all the fees from the visitors, amounting from £1,200 to £1,500 a year. This post she held until the end of 1845, when she was duly compensated for relinquishing it.

Various matters relating to the Household becoming public made the Prince very angry, and he complained to the Duke of Bedford of the way in which the proceedings at Court were publicly known and discussed. He said that on the Continent it was the Government which knew by its secret agents what its people were doing; while in England it was the people who knew what the Court was about—the Court knowing nothing about other people's affairs. He did not seem to realise that this was the tax great people had to pay for their position, and that as the public was curious about them the newspapers could and did secure all the information there was to be had. All his life in England Albert hated the "fierce light that beats upon the throne," and his exclusiveness tended to make the Court unpopular with the multitude. It also led to trouble and annoyance among those who immediately surrounded the Throne, for the Prince and Queen would arrange very important matters in utter secrecy, news of which would leak into the daily papers, while the Queen's advisers were in entire ignorance. Thus

when they went to visit Louise Philippe at the Château d'Eu, the Duke of Wellington and others constantly about the Court knew nothing of it until two or three days beforehand. Yet this visit must have been a long-laid plan, for lawyers had to be consulted as to the necessity of forming a Regency during Her Majesty's absence. Greville noted of this, "the Queen is to embark on Monday. . . . On Thursday I mentioned it to Arbuthnot, who said it could not be true. He asked the Duke the same day, who told him he had never heard a word of any such thing."

In this case it was not difficult to keep the matter quiet, as the yacht *Victoria and Albert* had just been finished and fitted up most gorgeously—gorgeously is really just the right word—and was in readiness for use. Concerning this yacht, by the way, there was very sore feeling among the officers, who found that their comfort had been sacrificed that the Royal flunkeys might travel in serenity. Thus two officers had to sleep in a little berth measuring seven feet by five, while the pages, who were really footmen, were given a large room with their berths ranged round it. The officers protested respectfully, and, willing to concede their dignity, implored to be allowed half the berths in the pages' room, the displaced men sleeping on one of the attendant steamers, but their prayer was not granted, as it was thought inconvenience might arise if all the servants were not together.

\* \* \* \* \*

I could write a book double this size if I included all the stories in which Queen Victoria figured, but I

have come to the end of the space allotted me. Yet some of these stories are very tempting, among them being one told by Sir Robert Peel about the Lord Mayor, when the Royal pair went to a banquet at the Guildhall in 1844. It was of this event that Barham wrote :—

“ Doctor Darling ! think how grand is  
Such a sight ! The great Lord May'r  
Heading all the City dandies  
There on horseback takes the air.

Chains and maces all attend, he  
Rides all glorious to be seen ;  
' Lad o' wax ! ' great heaven forbend he  
Don't get spilt before the Queen.”

He did not get spilt as did one of the Aldermen seven years earlier, but he had a curious mishap. It was muddy weather, and he put on enormous jack-boots over his dandy shoes and stockings to keep them clean. Waiting at Temple Bar, he tried to take off the boots when Her Majesty was near, but they were too tight, and would not move. One of the spurs caught an Alderman's robe and tore it, so his friends came to his aid, the Lord Mayor standing on one leg while they tugged. One boot came off, and they started on the other, but it remained firm, the crowd watching in uproarious glee. When at last the Queen was but a few paces away, the agonised City King roared, “ For God's sake, put my boot on again ! ” So, backed by half a dozen friends and tugged at by another half dozen, he recovered the displaced boot, and had to wear both of them until after the banquet, when a less frantic effort removed them.

When the Whigs came back to power in 1846, for Peel's return to office was of short duration, the Prime Minister, Lord John Russell, found that he had to deal with a two-in-one Monarch. He was never received alone by the Queen. She and the Prince were always together, and both of them always said, *We*. This was far better than the early exclusion of the Prince, though it naturally led at once to the assertion on the part of the men that while the Queen bore the title, the Prince discharged the function of the Sovereign. The Prince had devoted himself to her and to her country with marvellous assiduity and rectitude; indeed, if he had taken the work more lightly and interfered less in the detail of matters, he might not have succumbed as he practically did to hard work. In 1862 the Duke of Gotha said that his brother, Prince Albert, had killed himself with hard work, and that from the time he came to England he did not know what it was to have "a joyous day." Stockmar's influence in this respect was to be deplored. He was like a Dutch art student with whom I once worked: "You paint the trees and get their character," she said, "but I—I see all the little leafs, and must paint them."

After the Prince's death Lord Clarendon wrote:—"There is a vague belief that his influence was great and useful; but there is a very dim perception of the *modus operandi*. . . . Peel certainly took the Prince into council much more than Melbourne, who had his own established position with the Queen before the Prince came to this country; but I cannot tell you

whether it was Peel who first gave him a Cabinet key. My impression is that Lord Duncannon, during the short time he was Home Secretary, sent the Prince a key when the Queen was confined, and the contents of the boxes had to be read and signed by her."

Among those who helped to form Lord John Russell's Government was the historian Macaulay, who became Paymaster-General; under Melbourne he had been Secretary at War. He could talk for hours without stopping, and Fanny Kemble said of him, "He is like nothing in the world but Bayle's Dictionary, continued down to the present time, and purified from all objectionable matter. Such a Niagara of information did surely never pour from the lips of mortal man!" Someone else remarked that, "Macaulay is laying waste society with his waterspouts of talk; people in his company burst for want of an opportunity of dropping in a word;" and Sydney Smith also once said of him to Melbourne that he was a book in breeches. This, of course, Melbourne repeated to the Queen, so for a long time after whenever she saw her Secretary at War she went into fits of laughter. She once at Windsor offered him a horse to ride, drawing from him the remark, "If I ride anything, it must be an elephant"—thus alluding to his inability to remain on a horse if he once mounted. After dining at the Palace in March, 1850, he wrote: "The Queen was most gracious to me. She talked much about my book, and owned that she had nothing to say for her poor ancestor James the Second. 'Not your Majesty's ancestor,' said I;

‘your Majesty’s predecessor.’ I hope this was not an uncourtly correction. I meant it as a compliment, and she seemed to take it so.”

When Peel resigned office in 1846 he begged the Queen to grant him one favour, and that was never to ask him to take service again; however, his political ardour was too great a habit to be repressed, and he was speedily leading the Opposition. He fell from his horse in 1850, and died four days after the accident.

As for Brougham, when office was suggested again to him, he shook his head, saying that now he was getting old, and he had nothing left for which to live; but he showed great activity still in the cause of law reform, and took great interest in the Social Science Association. He died at Cannes in 1868, at the age of ninety.

Lord Melbourne died twenty years earlier. He had refused all honours several times, begging the Queen not to press her intention of bestowing the Garter upon him. It was enough that he had lived honourably and done his duty, he said. His character was once summed up in the following couplet:—

“For a patriot too cool, for a drudge disobedient,  
And too fond of the right to pursue the expedient.”

But as in his youth he had never sought favour, so in his age no one sought favour from him. The stirring world in which he had always lived had something more to do than to trouble about an old and ailing man, and he laboured under a sense of neglect, chafing daily at the indifference which was shown him

by those who for years had pressed their friendship upon him. In real fact he was suffering from his lonely state; neither wife nor child was there to give him company, and his only two relatives seem to have been his sister, Lady Palmerston, and his brother. In happier domestic circumstances his end would have been happier and his sorrows non-existent. In November, 1848, he had another attack of illness, and died in unconsciousness at the age of seventy. He was a very remarkable man, more perhaps from his extreme honesty in a difficult position than for his great attainments, though those were sufficiently noteworthy. He was the most lovable man who had moved in the Queen's circle, one who would never wittingly commit an injustice to anybody. When he was dead a letter from him was handed to his brother, in which he left a command that a certain sum of money should be given to Mrs. Norton, to help to some extent to show his sorrow for the trouble which his thoughtless friendship had brought her; and in this he solemnly declared that she and he were innocent of all evil in that friendship.

Queen Victoria was now, in a sense, in calm waters; she was happy domestically, she adored her husband, and in spite of her protest had a large family of children; the terrible leakage in her income, which had at one time threatened her with disastrous debt, had been stopped, and she was growing rich, though she was never so rich as the malcontents would have liked to believe, and did in many cases believe. George Anson told Greville in 1847 that the Queen's affairs



were so well managed that she would be able to provide for the expenses of Osborne out of her income, and those expenses would be £200,000. He also said that the Prince of Wales would not have less than £70,000 a year from his Duchy of Cornwall, and £100,000 had already been saved from it.

Though the Queen retained for a long time her Whiggish sympathies, she was now well on the road to strict Toryism, to the end of her life showing especial favour to her Conservative leaders, and more or less ignoring their rivals. This was caused more by the difference in their views upon foreign affairs than by her sentiments on home politics, and also by her keen sense of the dignity of the Crown. Though when displeased the Tories had shown themselves capable of dragging that dignity through the mire, yet when they were pleased they paid it all lip-service and outward homage. The Whigs, on the other hand, though inclined to take Royal disfavour with more equanimity, were also inclined to question the doings of Royalty in a calmer and, therefore from her point of view, more deadly way. When the party in power changed from time to time, she parted from Russell in anger, from Gladstone in coldness, from Aberdeen—whom she had detested on her accession—with a pang, and from Disraeli in deep dejection. It is the whirligig of time exemplified in the mind of a woman.

She had great Ministers to advise her in her work, but she was also a great Queen, for though she was no genius and had no surpassing intellect, she never shirked, she worked step by step through every diffi-

culty, she was essentially a climber, and when more talented people might have given up she went bravely on, so that, to use the slang phrase, she always got there. Yes, Queen Victoria was absolutely admirable in her conscientiousness and in her determination to do well. It angered her ever to be likened to Queen Elizabeth, who was an historical *bête noire* to her, yet she had something of Elizabeth's greatness as well as more than a touch of her arrogance, added to a more intimately personal greatness of her own, that which comes from recognising the importance of little things. This did not come to its strength until after the death of Prince Albert, but it began in the days when, as a girl of eighteen, she sat surrounded by despatch-boxes while her maid was doing her hair.

THE END.

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