

taken by her parents to Sidmouth, a picturesque little town on the south coast of Devon; and while there she had her first narrow escape from death. A boy who was shooting in the vicinity of Woolbrook Cottage discharged his gun so close to one of the nursery windows that some panes of glass were broken, and several of the shot passed within an inch or two of the baby's head. It was only an accident, however, and the reckless young sportsman shed copious tears of contrition when brought before the Duke, who lectured him and let him go.

How little did the Duke think that his own end was so near! A few days after the incident above recorded, on the evening of January the 13th, 1820, he returned home from a long walk in the snow. Prudence would have dictated his removal of his wet clothing, but attracted by the sight of his wee daughter, he stayed to play with her. The delay was fated to bring him to his grave, for the next day severe inflammation of the lungs set in, and on the 23rd January, 1820, he died. The grief of the Duchess was painful to witness, for their marriage had been a genuine love-match, and it was well for her that she had at this time the staunch friendship of Prince Leopold, who was unremitting in his attentions to his royal sister and niece.

And right nobly did the Duchess acquit herself in her trying situation. The child destined to become the monarch of a great empire could hardly have had a more conscientious and loving guardian. For the forty-one years of her long widowhood her only object in life seemed to be to watch over the career of the daughter left in her charge. She trained that daughter in all things that were lovely and of good report, and guided her with loving counsels until he came,

"Wearing the white flower of a blameless life,  
A Prince indeed,  
Beyond all titles, and a household name  
Hereafter through all times, Albert the Good."

Leaving the sad scene of her husband's untimely end, the Duchess and her family were lodged in the old Palace at Kensington. It is not difficult to imagine what the daily routine of life must have been in the old court, but the following outline will be of interest in enabling one to realize more vividly that life.

At eight o'clock the Duchess and her family, having paid their morning tribute of prayer and thanksgiving, partook together of their first social meal, Victoria having her bread-and-milk and fruit put on a little table by her mother's side. After breakfast the little Princess went for an hour's walk or drive with her half-sister, Feodora (a daughter of the Duchess by a former marriage); then came lessons, from ten to twelve; and after that they might amuse themselves with their toys (Feodora had not quite grown out of dolls at that time) or romp about through the suite of rooms which extended round two sides of the Palace. Two o'clock was the Duchess's luncheon time, and the children's dinner hour; and our chronicler is careful to inform us that the latter meal was always extremely plain. After dinner there were more lessons, and then another drive, or perhaps a visit; and later still, if the evening were fine, the whole party would sit out on the lawn under the trees. Then, while her mother dined, the Princess Victoria would take her supper, which, like the rest of her meals, was always laid beside the Duchess, and consisted of the simplest fare; and, after a romp with "Boppy," she would join the party at dessert, when she would probably be made much of by the guests. At nine o'clock she would retire to her bed, "a beautiful little French bed," which was placed beside her mother's.

The Duchess made it a special part in the training of her child to inculcate rigid truthfulness, and very successfully impressed this highly important factor on the budding mind of her daughter. An instance of the Princess's truthfulness, and her aptitude to take in these lessons, may be quoted. One morning the Princess caused her governess some anxiety, and was, indeed, refractory during her lessons. The Duchess coming in, asked the governess, Baroness Lehzen, how the Princess had behaved. The governess replied, "Oh, once she was rather troublesome." Princess Victoria gently touched her arm, and said, "No, Lehzen, *twice*. Don't you remember?"

About this time an event happened which had an important bearing upon the child's future. On the 5th of January, 1827, the Duke of York, the Princess's uncle, was removed by death. There was now only one person between her and the English throne—the Duke of Clarence. The Baroness Lehzen suggested that the time had arrived

when she should be shown her place on the genealogical table, for up to this time, so well guarded had she been, that she was quite ignorant of the grand future awaiting her. A genealogical table was thereupon placed between the leaves of a book much used by the Princess. On opening the book, and observing the additional paper, she said, "I never saw that before." "It was not thought necessary you should, Princess," returned the Baroness. The child had begun to tremble, but said quietly, "I see I am nearer the throne than I thought." "So it is, Madam," answered the Baroness. A pause of some moments ensued, and then the Princess resumed, "Now, many a child would boast, but they don't know the difficulty. There is much splendor, but there is more responsibility." Then she placed her small hand in that of her governess, and earnestly uttered the words which commence our narrative: "I will be good! I understand now why you urged me so much to learn, even Latin. My Aunts Augusta and Mary never did; but you told me Latin is the foundation of English grammar, and of all the elegant expressions, and I learned it as you wished it—but I understand all better now."

The coronation of William the Fourth and Adelaide took place a few weeks later, and the years following were full of wild political tumult. Meanwhile, the future Queen was preparing herself for her high estate, or visiting various parts of England with her mother. In the autumn of the year 1835 they visited their favourite seaside resort, and enjoyed the last holiday together before the daughter was called upon to accept the cares and obligations of royalty. On May 24th, 1837, the Princess reached her eighteenth birthday, and accordingly came of age. The old King was at this time lying ill at Windsor, on a bed from which he was never again to rise, so he could not be present at the grand ball which was given in her honor at St. James's Palace. As time went on the King did not mend, but rather lost strength, and on the 20th of June, 1837, he passed away attended to the last by his faithful consort.

#### THE YOUNG SOVEREIGN.

The twenty-first of June had just dawned when two distinguished visitors (the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lord Chamberlain) arrived post haste at the old palace at Kensington, the inmates of which yet slumbered. Their business was of the utmost importance, and would admit of no delay, for they came to tell the Princess that she was now Queen of England. The young maiden came down from her chamber, clad in a loose white nightgown and shawl, her feet in slippers, her hair falling around her shoulders. Her first words on hearing the tidings were addressed to the Archbishop: "I beg your Grace to pray for me!" They knelt down together, and so the new reign that has since been so manifestly blessed of Heaven was begun with prayer at the footstool of the King of kings. To write a letter of loving sympathy to her bereaved aunt, Queen Adelaide, was the next thing. It was directed as usual to "Her Majesty the Queen." On it being gently suggested that it should be directed to "Her Majesty the Queen Dowager," the girl-Queen answered, "I am aware of that, but I will not be the first to remind her of her altered position."

As soon as possible the Queen got away to her mother. In the course of their conversation she remarked, "I can scarcely believe that I am Queen of England, but I suppose I am really so, and in time I shall become accustomed to the change." At her own request she was left for two hours quite alone, and then, strengthened and calm from her retirement, she came to her first council, which had been speedily summoned. Every one has heard how she charmed that assembly of the foremost men in the land with her simple, graceful dignity. Next day she was proclaimed as usual from the window of St. James's Palace.

Surrounded by the customary pageantry, Garter King-at-Arms proclaimed the accession of Queen Alexandrina Victoria to the throne of these realms.

Very soon was the young Queen busy receiving deputations from various people, to express to her their feelings of loyalty and good wishes and the favorable impression of her demeanor deepened. Those who were the nearest to her person were the most struck by the sterling worth of her character.

But fully occupied as she must have been, yet she would let no state or social duties interfere with her religious ones. In the first year of her reign, a certain minister came at a late hour to Windsor one Saturday night. He informed the Queen that he had brought