

From Felix Farley's Bristol Journal.

SOME RECOLLECTIONS OF THE LAST DAYS OF HIS LATE MAJESTY KING WILLIAM THE FOURTH.

At no period, from the commencement of his attack, had his Majesty been insensible to his critical state; but when he alluded to the subject, it was evident that any anxiety which he felt arose less from personal apprehension than from solicitude for the country, and from a contemplation of the embarrassment into which it might possibly be thrown by his early dissolution. It was to such reflections as these that his Majesty gave expression the morning of the 16th, when he observed to the Queen—'I have had some quiet sleep: come and pray with me, and thank the Almighty for it.' Her Majesty joined in this act of heartfelt devotion, and when the King had ceased, said, 'And shall I not pray to the Almighty that you may have a good day?' To which his Majesty replied, 'Oh, do! I wish I could live ten years for the sake of the country. I feel it my duty to keep well as long as I can.'

On the morning of Sunday the 11th, grateful for the refreshing rest which he had enjoyed, his Majesty's mind was impressed with the most pure devotional feelings.—Seeing Lady Mary Fox occupied with a book, he inquired what she was reading, and being told that it was a Prayer Book, his countenance beamed with pleasure, but he said nothing. After a considerable lapse of time, the Queen asked whether it would be agreeable to him if she read the prayers to him. His Majesty answered, 'O, yes! I should like it very much, but it will fatigue you.' He then desired to be informed who preached that morning in the chapel of the Castle, and when Lady Mary had ascertained and told him that it was Mr. Wood who preached, he directed he might be sent for.

When Mr. Wood entered the room, the King said, 'I will thank you, My dear Sir, to read all the prayers till you come to the prayer for the church militant.' By which words his Majesty intended to include the communion service, and the other parts of the liturgy used in the celebration of public worship.

It was equally an affecting and instructive lesson to observe the devout humility of his Majesty, fervently dwelling, as would be perceived from his manner and the intonation of his voice, on every passage which bore even the most remote application to his own circumstances.—His mind seemed quite absorbed in the duty in which he was engaged, and to rise for a time superior to his bodily infirmities; for during the whole service his attention was undisturbed, and he experienced none of those fits of coughing and oppression which for some days past had formed an almost uninterrupted characteristic of his complaint. As Mr. Wood withdrew, his Majesty graciously expressed his thanks, and afterwards said to the Queen, 'It has been a great comfort to me.' Nor was this a transitory feeling. To this pure and scriptural source of spiritual consolation his Majesty recurred with unfeigned gratitude; and on each day of the ensuing week did Lord Augustus Fitzclarence receive the King's commands to read to him the prayers either of the morning or evening service. On one of these occasions, when his Majesty was much reduced and exhausted, the Queen, fearful of causing any fatigue to him, inquired hesitatingly, whether, unwell as he was, he should still like to have the prayers read to him? He replied, 'O, yes! beyond everything.' Though very languid, and disposed to sleep from the effects of medicine, his Majesty repeated all the prayers. The fatal progress of the King's complaint was very visible during the three following days, June 12th, 13th, 14th. Nevertheless, on Tuesday the 13th, his Majesty gave audience to his Hanoverian minister, Baron Ompteda, whom, contrary to the suggestions of his attendants he had specially summoned on business connected with that Kingdom, in the welfare of which he had never ceased to feel a truly paternal interest. On Wednesday, the 14th, his Majesty received a visit from the Duke of Cumberland.

The King's attention to his religious duties, and the great comfort which was inspired by their performance, have already been referred to. It will, therefore, create no surprise that his Majesty joyfully assented to the Queen's suggestion, that he should

receive the sacrament, or that he at once named the Archbishop of Canterbury as the person whom he wished to administer that holy rite. Sunday was the day fixed by the King for the discharge of this solemn duty; and a message was accordingly sent to his Grace, desiring his presence at Windsor Castle on the ensuing Saturday.

The two intervening days were a period of great suffering to the King, whose illness more than once in that interval assumed the most alarming form, and in the evening of Friday excited apprehensions of his Majesty's immediate dissolution. The next morning, however, the King felt easier, and the most urgent symptoms had disappeared. In the usual course of business with Sir H. Taylor, he signed two public documents, though not without difficulty; but on every subject which was brought before him, his Majesty's power of perception was quick and accurate, and he anticipated with pleasure and thankfulness the approaching sacred duty of the morrow.

On the morning of Sunday, the 18th, though his Majesty's mental energies remained vigorous and unimpaired, a greater degree of bodily weakness was perceptible. He raised himself in his chair with greater difficulty than the day before, and required more aid and support in every movement. The expression of his countenance, however, was, perhaps, more satisfactory. He transacted business with Sir H. Taylor, and affixed his signature to four documents—the remission of a court martial, two appointments of colonial judges, and a free pardon to a condemned criminal. Increasing debility prevented the repetition of a similar exertion; and thus, in the closing scene of his life, was beautifully and practically exemplified by an act of mercy, that spirit of benevolence and forgiveness which shone with such peculiar lustre in his Majesty's character, and was so strongly reflected in the uniform tenour of his reign.

It had been arranged, as has been already remarked, that the King should on this day receive the sacrament from the hands of the Archbishop of Canterbury; and when Sir Herbert left the room, it appeared to the Queen that the most favourable time had arrived. The physicians, however, suggested to her Majesty the expediency of deferring the ceremony till the King should have in some degree recovered from the fatigue; but his Majesty had already experienced the blessed consolations of religion, and removed the doubts which his anxious attendants were entertaining, by eagerly desiring the Queen to send for the Archbishop; seeming, as it were, anxious to ratify the discharge of his earthly, by the performance of his spiritual duties. His Grace promptly attended attired in his robes, and at a quarter to eleven administered the sacrament to his Majesty and the Queen, Lady Mary Fox communicating at the same time. The King was very calm and collected; his faculties were quite clear and he paid the greatest attention to the service, following it in the Prayer-Book, which lay on the table before him. His voice, indeed, failed him but his humble demeanour and uplifted eyes gave expression to the feeling of devotion and of gratitude to the Almighty, which his faltering lips refused to utter.

The performance of this act of religion, and this public attestation of his communion with that Church for the welfare and prosperity of which he had more than once, during his illness, ejaculated short but fervent prayers, was the source of great and manifest comfort to his Majesty.

Though the shorter form had been adopted by the archbishop, his Majesty was, nevertheless, rather exhausted by the duration and solemnity of the ceremony; but as his Grace retired, the King said, with that peculiar kindness of manner by which he was so much distinguished, and at the same time gently waving his hand and inclining his head, 'God bless you—a thousand, thousand thanks!'

There cannot be a more certain evidence of the inward strength and satisfaction which the King derived from this office of religion, than that in spite of great physical exertion, his Majesty, after the lapse of an hour, again requested the attendance of the archbishop, who, in compliance with the wishes of the Queen, read the prayers for the evening service, with the happiest effect on the King's spirits. This being done, the archbishop, naturally fearing the consequence of so much mental exertion on his Majesty's debilitated

frame, was about to retire, when the King motioned to him to sit down at the table, on the opposite side of which he himself was seated. His Majesty was too weak to hold any conversation, but his spirit seemed soothed and comforted by the presence of the archbishop, on whose venerable and benign countenance his Majesty's eye reposed with real pleasure.

The King at this interview stretched his hand across the table, and taking that of the archbishop pressed it fervently, saying, in a tone of voice which was audible only to the Queen, who was seated near his Majesty, 'I am sure the archbishop is one of those persons who pray for me.' The afternoon of this day witnessed a still further diminution of his Majesty's strength, but in proportion to the decay of his bodily power was the increase of his spiritual hope and consolation. At nine o'clock in the evening, the archbishop was again summoned by his Majesty's desire. The King was now still less able to converse than on the last occasion; but his grace remained more than three quarters of an hour, supplying by his presence the same comfort to the King; and receiving from his Majesty the same silent though expressive proof of his satisfaction and gratitude. At length, on the suggestion of the Queen, that it was already late, and the archbishop might become fatigued, the King immediately signified his assent that he should retire; and crossing his hands upon his breast, and inclining his head, said, as his grace left the room, 'God bless thee, dear, excellent, worthy man; a thousand, thousand thanks.'

The whole course of his Majesty's illness affords abundant proof, not only of his composure, his patience, and his resignation, but that even when under the pressure of great pain and suffering, his mind, far from being absorbed with the sad circumstances of his own situation was often dwelling on subjects connected either with the affairs of the country, or with the comfort and convenience of individuals.

His Majesty rose this morning with the recollection that this was the anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo. As early as half-past eight he alluded to the circumstance, and said to Doctor Chambers, 'Let me but live over this memorable day—I shall never live to see another sunset.' Doctor Chambers said, 'I hope your Majesty may live to see many.' To which his Majesty replied in a phrase which he commonly employed, but the peculiar force of which those only who had the honor of being frequently admitted into his Majesty's society can fully appreciate—'Oh! that is quite another thing.'

A splendid entertainment, as is well known, has been always given on this day to the officers engaged in that glorious action; and since his accession to the throne, his Majesty has himself honored it with his presence.

Under the present circumstances, the Duke naturally feeling unwilling to promote any scene of festivity, had sent Mr. Greville to request the King's commands—or at least to ascertain the wishes and opinion of the Queen. Previous to the flag, annually presented by his Grace being deposited in the Guard Chamber, it had been brought to his Majesty, who laying his hand upon it, and touching the eagle, said, 'I am glad to see it. Tell the Duke of Wellington that I desire his dinner may take place to-morrow; I hope it will be an agreeable one.' In course of the night, the Queen observed to his Majesty that the Archbishop had only been invited to stay till the following day—that his Grace wished to be honoured with the commands—and that he had expressed himself not only willing but anxious to stay as long as his services could be either acceptable or useful to him. The King immediately said, 'Yes; tell him to stay. It will be the greatest blessing of God to hear that beautiful service read by him once more;' alluding to the Liturgy of the Church of England, from the frequent use of the prayers of which his Majesty had been so much comforted and supported in his illness.

Monday June 19—Though his Majesty passed a tolerably tranquil night, yet no corresponding effect was produced upon his health. Decaying nature could no longer be recruited by the ordinary sources of strength and sustenance. His Majesty, however rose at seven, for he had at no time during his illness been confined to his bed, and had even, for some