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OUR QUEEN.

THE JUBILEE YEAR OF HER REIGN.

Fifty years ago, early on a June morning, the young Princess Victoria, all unconscious of the honor and power into which she had come, lay quietly sleeping in her room in the old palace of Kensington, sleeping her last sleep of free, happy girlhood. At five o'clock the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Chamberlain, and four other gentlemen arrived post-haste, having driven all the way from Windsor since two o'clock, when the king breathed his last. "They knocked, they rang, they thumped," writes Miss Wynn in her diary, "for a considerable time before they could rouse the porter at the gate. They were again kept waiting in the courtyard, then turned into one of the lower rooms, where they seemed forgotten by everybody." Presently they rang the bell and requested an audience with the princess on business of importance. The attendant objected to waking her as she was "in such a sweet sleep," but from henceforth her time must be no longer her own. "We are come on business of state to the Queen," said the Archbishop, "and even her sleep must give way to that." And it did. Anxious not to keep them waiting the young queen "appeared a few minutes later in a loose, white night-gown and shawl, her night-cap thrown off, and her hair falling upon her shoulders, her feet in slippers, and with tears in her eyes, but perfectly collected and dignified." When told their errand, her first words were to the Archbishop of Canterbury, "I beg your Grace to pray for me!" and down the little company knelt together, as on the very threshold of her reign the girl queen paused to dedicate herself and all her future interests to her God. Her next act was to write a letter of condolence full of sympathy and affection to the widowed queen at Windsor, and begging her dear aunt to stay at the castle as long as she pleased. Some one objected upon seeing that she had addressed the letter to "Her Majesty the Queen," instead of to "Her Majesty the Queen-Dowager." But the letter went as first directed. "I will not," said the thoughtful princess, "be the first to remind her of her altered position."

At eleven o'clock on the morning of the same day, the queen met the Privy Council at the palace to take the usual oaths of the

sovereign and receive the oaths of allegiance from all present. "Never," writes an eyewitness, "was anything like the first impression she produced, or the chorus of praise and admiration which was raised about her manner and behaviour. . . . The doors were thrown open, and the

signed the oath for the security of the Church of Scotland, the Privy Councillors were sworn, the two royal dukes, first by themselves, and as these two old men, her uncles, knelt before her swearing allegiance and kissing her hand, I saw her blush up to the eyes as if she felt the contrast be-

number of men who were sworn, and who came one after another to kiss her hand, but went through the whole ceremony with perfect calmness and self-possession, but at the same time with a graceful modesty and propriety particularly interesting and ingratiating." Sir Robert Peel expressed himself as amazed at her manner and behaviour, at her deep sense of her situation, her modesty and her firmness, and the Duke of Wellington declared that if she had been his own daughter he could not have desired to see her perform her part better.

The next day was even more trying than this. It was the ceremony of the Proclamation, when the Queen, escorted by a gorgeous company, passed through crowded streets to St. James' Palace, where from a certain window, as was the custom, the new sovereign made her first appearance before her people. The Garter King-at-Arms read the proclamation, the band struck up "God save the Queen," guns were fired in the park and answered by the guns at the Tower, the cheers of the throng in the courtyard were taken up and prolonged by the multitudes outside until the whole city rang with the echo. Unable to control herself longer at these manifestations of joy from her people, the young queen threw herself upon her mother's breast and burst into tears.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning thus beautifully commemorates this incident:—

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

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

The magnificent ceremony of the Coronation did not take place until a year afterwards, June 28, 1838, but during the interval her time was almost constantly devoted to the duties of state.

"Poor little queen," exclaimed Thomas



QUEEN VICTORIA.

Queen entered, accompanied by her two uncles, who advanced to meet her. She bowed to the Lords, took her seat, and then read her speech in a clear, distinct and audible voice, and without any appearance of fear or of embarrassment. She was quite plainly dressed in mourning. After she had read her speech, and taken and

tween their civil and their natural relations, and this was the only sign of emotion which she evinced. Her manner to them was very graceful and engaging. She kissed them both, rose from her chair, and moved towards the Duke of Sussex, who was furthest from her, and too infirm to reach her. She seemed rather bewildered at the