



THE PRINCE OF WALES.

OUR SOVEREIGN LADY.

(By the Author of "English Hearts and English Hands.")

CHAPTER V.—(Continued.)

A remarkable impression was produced in France by this irrepressible outburst of loyalty and sympathy in England.

La France said—

"Political life is suspended in England. One sole anxiety absorbs all minds—the health of the Prince of Wales. An entire nation, all impressed with strong convictions, turns to God, and partakes of the grief of its Sovereign, whose son is about to die. What a spectacle, and what a lesson! The Prince of Wales is dying, and no one laughs; the Queen kneels beside the probable death-bed of her first-born son, and no one laughs. The Princess of Wales only quits the bedside of her husband, not to seek necessary repose, but to hasten to church to pray, and to listen to prayers—and no one laughs. The Cabinet Council calls upon the Archbishop of Canterbury for a form of prayer to appeal to the Almighty on behalf of the Prince of Wales; and the people, instead of mocking, rush for copies of it, to repeat them in every place of worship. This people has the courage, the good sense, not to disown either its history, its past, its government, or its God! And yet it is a free people amongst all. Who can dispute that?"

The Gaulois wrote—

"Here we have the spectacle of a real nation kneeling to the Almighty. . . . Every house is darkened, life is in some degree suspended, and newspapers have dropped politics. It seems as if a part of the country itself were about violently to be snatched away. This England, which we were told was ready to become a republic, which was accused of despising its princes, and of having got rid of its old-fashioned loyalty, come and see it to-day, note its grief, and be instructed."

But amidst the general despondency there were many who refused to despair; and praying hearts rallied all their forces to take Heaven by storm; some even ventured to plead that the very day, which ten years before, had darkened the life of our beloved Queen, should be the day on which the Lord and Giver of Life might say to her, "Go thy way, thy son liveth."

A little child in a royal palace* pleads for his father's life. "I thought of God," he said "all through my prayers, and now the telegrams will be better."

And God hearkened and heard, and stretched forth His hand to save.

Beginning from that very evening, the 14th of December, and on every succeeding day of the week, the news from Sandringham told first of revival, then of improvement, and afterwards of steadily increasing progress. Each succeeding telegram, as it was posted up in the streets of London, was seen with shouts of joy by poor and ragged street boys; whilst strong men, unused to tears, read the good news with wet eyes; and short fervent thanksgivings were

* The eldest son of the Prince of Wales.

breathed, as they turned away to their daily work.

The 27th of February, 1872, was set apart as a day of national thanksgiving for the recovery of the Prince of Wales; and from the first streak of dawn a countless and ever increasing multitude thronged the streets of London. Such was their irrepressible good humor and happiness, that no amount of gray in the cold sky could shadow their faces, and no chilly showers could damp their cheerfulness. Loyal love had bedecked the houses with an endless variety of decorations, and had linked house to house and street to street all along the line of route with garlands of red and white roses, the handiwork of innumerable poor girls and children; whilst smiles, cheers, and blessings greeted the Queen and the Prince and Princess of Wales on every side, from the numbers who filled windows, platforms, balconies, and roof-tops, or crowded the streets up to the very line of carriages, for the seven miles along which the Royal Family were to pass. Doubtless the great sight of that great day was the people of England:—from early in the morning until late in the afternoon, and again at night to see the illuminations; sometimes in rain, always in blast, but never losing temper, heart, or spirits; yielding readily to the directions of the police; gentle to fainting women, tender to little children;—such is the grand material of an English crowd!

Thirteen thousand people assembled in St. Paul's Cathedral—no class was left unrepresented. None who were there can forget the moment when the great west door was flung open, the organ rolled forth the first bars of the National Anthem, and the sound without, as from the waves of a mighty sea, told of the royal arrival. The vast congregation sprang to their feet, as the Queen of our hearts and of our land entered the Cathedral. Tenderly supported by her princely son and the lovely and beloved Princess of Wales, and, followed by the other members of the Royal Family, Her Majesty moved towards the dome, and the Service of Thanksgiving commenced.

The heart of all England, and the heart of the royal mother, met in the words—

"THIS, MY SON WAS DEAD, AND IS ALIVE AGAIN."

"Bless, Father, him thou gavest
Back to the loyal land;
Oh! Saviour, him Thou savest
Still cover with Thine hand.
Oh! Spirit, the Defender,
Be his to guard and guide,
Now in life's midday splendor,
On to the eventide."

For some little time after the Prince of Wales' illness, Her Majesty's reign was undisturbed by any especially disquieting event.

In April, 1873, the Queen, to the great delight of the people in the East of London, visited their park, named after herself; and in June of the same year she received, with

great state, the Shah of Persia at Windsor Castle.

The first event in 1874 was the marriage of Prince Alfred, the Duke of Edinburgh, with the only daughter of the Czar of Russia.

In March, the Queen reviewed in the Park at Windsor, the troops who had just returned from the Ashantee war, in which Sir Garnet Wolseley's name first became famous; and with her own hand Her Majesty fastened the Victoria Cross upon the breast of a young officer who had won the highly prized distinction.

The Queen's kindness of heart extends to dumb creatures. We read of her sending £100 to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, expressing her warm interest in their efforts to diminish the sufferings of animals, and telling of the horror with which she heard and read of the cruelties practised upon them.

Another instance of Her Majesty's generosity to her people might be mentioned here. Out of the money which belonged to her as Duchess of Lancaster, she set apart £10,000 for a people's park in Heywood.

As the year 1878 drew to its close, a great trouble began to threaten the heart of our beloved Queen; the dread disease diphtheria had broken out in the Royal Family at Hesse-Darmstadt.

The married life of the Princess Alice, Grand Duchess of Hesse-Darmstadt, had been but the development of her sweet, unselfish girlhood. Her capacity of loving, and of living for others, had grown but the greater, as she had the more to live for and to love.

When the Franco-German war was raging, the Princess Alice had risen to the great emergency, and with the Crown Princess of Germany, our own Princess Royal, she met the long trains of wounded soldiers, and, undeterred by the ghastly sights before them, they set an example of heroic devotion in nursing and tending the sufferers.

Nor was it only under the enthusiasm of humanity in time of war, that the Grand Duchess had devoted herself to the benefit of her husband's people. In time of peace they had shared her thoughts and her labors with the first and dearest occupation of her life—the wise, careful, tender training of her children.

But from this fountain of her greatest happiness was to be drawn her bitterest draught of sorrow. Her youngest son, Prince Frederick, was playing beside his mother in the joy and beauty of his healthy

childhood. Running gaily into an adjoining room, in a moment he had fallen through an open window, and only survived the dreadful accident a few hours.

When that tender mother rose up from the first depths of her anguish after this stunning blow, it was to live the saintly life on earth of one whose heart is in Heaven. "Through much tribulation," said the Princess, some time afterwards, "I have been led to trust wholly in the Divine Redeemer."

(To be Continued.)

A RAT STORY.

Even rats are not without their good qualities. Miss Frances Power Cobbe tells us a story of a French convict who was reformed by a rat—a man who was long the terror of the prison authorities. Time after time he had broken out and made savage assaults on his gaolers. Stripes and chains had been multiplied year after year, and he was habitually confined in an underground cell, whence he was only taken to work with his fellow-convicts in the prison-yard; but his ferocity long remained untamed. At last it was observed that he grew rather more calm and docile, without apparent cause for the change, till one day, when he was working with his comrades, a large rat suddenly leaped from the breast of his coat and ran across the yard. Naturally the cry was raised to kill the rat, and the men were prepared to throw stones at it when the convict, hitherto so ferocious, with a sudden outburst of feeling implored them to desist and allow him to recover his favorite. The prison officials for once were guided by happy compassion, and suffered him to call back his rat, which came to his voice and nestled back in his dress. The convict's gratitude was as strong as his rebellious disposition had hitherto proved, and from that day he proved submissive and orderly. After some years he became the trusted assistant of the gaolers, and finally was killed in defending them against a mutiny of other convicts. The love of that humble creature finding a place in his rough heart had changed his whole character. Who shall limit the miracles to be wrought by affection when the love of a rat could transform a man?

If We Have Not the spirit of forgiveness towards our neighbor, how can we ask God to "forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us?"



THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH.