

only recently finished, has now been published in London, under the title of

"SPEECHES, ETC., OF THE PRINCE CONSORT."

The book bears on the title page the name of a Mr. HELPS, as "editor," but in a recent speech which that gentleman delivered at Manchester (already referred to in the *Express*), the confession was made that the book was entirely the "labour of love" of Queen VICTORIA.

It is extremely interesting to the general reader, as telling what this model wife thought of her model husband; and "useful," too—as the royal writer says herself—"to the future historian, who has to bring before himself some distinct image of each remarkable man he writes about, and who, for the most part, is furnished with only a superficial description, made up of the ordinary epithets which are attached, in a very haphazard way, to the various qualities of eminent persons by their contemporaries. We really obtain very little notion of a creature so strangely complex as a man, when we are told of him that he was virtuous, that he was just, that he loved the arts, and that he was good in all the important relations of life. We still hunger to know what were his peculiarities, and what made him differ from other men; for each man, after all, is a sort of new and distinct creation."

Therefore at the outset we have Her Majesty's opinion of

*The Prince's personal appearance.*—"The Prince had a noble presence. His carriage was erect; his figure betokened strength and activity; and his demeanour was dignified. He had a staid, earnest, thoughtful look, when he was in a grave mood; but when he smiled (and that is what no portrait can tell of a man) his whole countenance was irradiated with pleasure; and there was a pleasant sound and a heartiness about his laugh, which will not soon be forgotten by those who were wont to hear it.

"He was very handsome as a young man, but as often happens with thoughtful men who go through a good deal, his face grew to be a finer face than the earlier portraits of him promised; and his countenance never assumed a nobler aspect, nor had more real beauty in it, than in the last year or two of his life.

"The character is written in the countenance, however difficult it may be to decipher; and in the Prince's face there were none of those fatal lines which indicate craft or insincerity, greed or sensuality; but all was clear, open, pure-minded and honest. Marks of thought, of care, of studiousness, were there; but they were accompanied by the signs of a soul at peace with itself, and which was troubled chiefly by its love for others, and its solicitude for their welfare."

This is flattering. It reads like a young maid's confidential letter to "a dear friend," describing her "first love," and this we know Prince Albert not to have been. But now Her Majesty tells us of

*His originality of Mind.*—"Perhaps the thing of all others that struck an observer most when he came to see the Prince clearly, was the originality of his mind; and it was originality divested from all eccentricity. He would insist on thinking his own thoughts upon every subject that came before him; and whether he arrived at the same results as other men, or gainsaid them, his conclusions were always adopted upon laborious reasoning of his own.

"The next striking peculiarity about the Prince was his extreme readiness—intellectually speaking. He was one of those men who seem always to have all their powers of thought at hand, and all their knowledge readily producible.

"In serious conversation he was perhaps the first man of his day. He was a very sincere person in his way of talking; so that when he spoke at all upon any subject, he never played with it; he never took one side of the question because the person he was conversing with had taken the other; and, in fact, earnest discussion was one of his greatest enjoyments. He was very patient in bearing criticism and contradiction; and, indeed, rather liked to be opposed, so that from opposition he might illicit truth, which was always his first object.

"He delighted in wit and humor; and, in his narration of what was ludicrous, threw just so much of imitation into it as would enable you to bring the scene vividly before you, without, at the same time, making his imitation in the least degree disgraceful.

"There have been few men who have had a greater love of freedom, in its deepest and in its widest sense, than the Prince Consort. Indeed, in this respect, he was even more English than the English themselves.

"A strong characteristic of the Prince's mind was its sense of duty."

The trait next described was really the noblest one of all his characteristics:

*His aversion to intolerance.*—"Another characteristic of the Prince (which is not always found in those who take a strict view of duty) was his strong aversion to anything like prejudice or intolerance. He loved to keep his own mind clear for the reception of

new facts and arguments; and he rather expected that everybody else should do the same. His mind was eminently judicial; and it was never too late to bring him any new view, or fresh fact, which might be made to bear upon the ultimate decision which he would have to give upon the matter. To investigate carefully, weigh patiently, discuss dispassionately, and then notawfully, but after much turning over the question in his mind, to come to a decision—was his usual mode of procedure in all matters of much moment.

"There was one very rare quality to be noticed in the Prince—that he had the greatest delight in anybody else saying a fine saying, or doing a great deed. He would rejoice over it, and talk about it for days; and, whether it was a thing nobly said or done by a little child or by a veteran statesman, it gave him equal pleasure. He delighted in humanity doing well on any occasion and in any manner.

"This is surely very uncommon. We meet with people who can say fine sayings, and even do noble actions, but who are not very fond of dwelling upon the great sayings or noble deeds of other persons."

The ensuing extracts speak for themselves, and for their captions:

*Shyness of the Prince.*—"This defect (if so it can be called) in the Prince consisted in a certain appearance of shyness which he never conquered. And, in truth, it may be questioned whether it is a thing that can be conquered, though large converse with the world may enable a man to conceal it. Much might be said to explain and justify this shyness in the Prince, but there it was, and no doubt it sometimes prevented his high qualities from being at once observed and fully estimated. It was the shyness of a very delicate nature, that is not sure it will please, and is without the confidence and the vanity which often go to form characters that are outwardly more genial.

"The effect of this shyness was heightened by the rigid sincerity which marked the Prince's character. There are some men who gain much popularity by always expressing in a hearty manner much more than they feel. They are delighted to see you; they rejoice to hear that your health is improving; and, you, not caring to inquire how much substance there is behind these phrases, and not disinclined to imagine that your health is a matter of importance which people might naturally take interest in, enjoy this hearty but somewhat inflated welcome. But from the Prince there were no phrases of this kind to be had—nothing that was not based upon clear and complete sincerity. Indeed, his refined nature shrink from expressing all it felt, and still less would it condescend to put on any semblance of feeling which was not backed up by complete reality."

*Aversion to Flattery.*—"The Prince had a horror of flattery. I use the word 'horror' advisedly. Dr. Johnson somewhere says that flattery shows, at any rate, a desire to please, and may, therefore, be estimated as worth something on that account. But the Prince could not view it in that light. He shuddered at it; he tried to get away from it as soon as he could. It was simply nauseous to him.

"He had the same feeling with regard to vice generally. Its presence depressed him, grieved him, horrified him. His tolerance allowed him to make excuses for the vices of individual men; but the evil itself he hated."

*His Love of Knowledge.*—"He was singularly impressed with the intellectual beauty of knowledge; for, as he once remarked to her who most sympathised with him, 'To me a long, closely connected train of reasoning is like a beautiful strain of music. You can hardly imagine my delight in it.' But this was not all with him. He was one of those rare seekers after truth who carry their affections into their acquisitions of knowledge. He loved knowledge on account of what it could do for mankind.

"He never gave a listless or half-awake attention to anything that he thought worth looking at, or to any person to whom he thought it worth while to listen. And to the observant man, who is always on the watch for general laws, the minutest objects contemplated by him are full of insight and instruction. In the Prince's converse with men, he delighted in getting at what they knew best, and what they could do."

*His Love of Art.*—"He cared not so much for a close representation of the things of daily life as for that ideal world which art shadows forth and interprets to mankind. Hence his love for many a picture which might not be a masterpiece of drawing or of coloring, but which had tenderness and reverence in it, and told of something that was remote from common life, and high and holy."

*A Defect.*—"It has been said, that, if we knew any man's life intimately, there would be some great and peculiar moral to be derived from it—some tendency to be noted which other men, observing it in his career, might seek to correct in themselves. I cannot help thinking that I see what may be the moral to be derived from a study of the Prince's life. It is one which applies only to a few