

say, a conventionalism many will describe it, but think what under those circumstances most other monarchs would have said, in what lengthy sentences they would have expressed their own sense of being the pivot of all military preparation, and their affection for men about to fight for their honor and their cause. The Queen arrives at their result, or a better result, without affording even an opportunity for criticism. Her few natural words carry more meaning to the hearts of those who hear them than the most eloquent outburst of oratory could do. She has in truth, not from any culture or experience, but from the grace of God, a talent for silence which is not cold, for reticence in which there is no guile, and there is no form of capacity in a constitutional sovereign more profitable to the people. Just reflect for a moment on the scenes that would have occurred had the Queen, remaining as good as she is, as qualified as she is, as constitutional as she is, been an indiscreet talker, given, let us say, to the epigrams in which so many women have avenged their powerlessness, or crushed the reputation of their otherwise unreachable foes. Party government would have been almost impossible, even if we had not seen at last that long-forgotten danger of the constitution as it is, a sovereign's party, holding the balance of power. Walter Bagehot said the constitution would be near a breakdown whenever a man of genius mounted the throne. We can imagine a sovereign without genius behind whom whole classes would rank themselves instead of the whole nation. To-day the people are only standing silent but determined around their standard, and one at least, of the reasons is that for sixty years their Queen, who not only

bears but is that standard, has had no impulse to speak a word which her people felt had better have been left unspoken. The standard has not only never been lowered, it has never in the hottest tumult of battle swayed to one side or the other. Always when the battle was over the standard was there, a centre for the nation to rally round as if it had never been divided.

There will of course come a time, probably after the next King's death, when the secret history of the Victorian period will be more accurately known—when memoirs have appeared in shoals and reminiscences in clouds, when private letters in scores have leaped to light, and the secretly hostile as well as the courtly have all said their say—and then no doubt the personality of the Queen will be more fully understood, and everyone will settle whether she most resembled Queen Elizabeth or Queen Anne, or herself as her subjects during her reign had pictured her. But even then the world, which will know all that happened, will never know what might have happened had not her Majesty been so strangely suited to the post which Providence called on her to fill. The monarchy was rocking when William IV. expired. Years later the coolest observers imagined that a great Republican party would be formed, and speculated whether the great change could be achieved in a constitutional way. The Monarchy transmitted by the steady attitude of the Queen is probably stronger than it has ever been, certainly better rooted in the temperate yet devoted liking of its subjects. The feeling for Republicanism, unexasperated by Royal blunders, has quietly died away into a philosophic doubt entertained by a few thinking men whether on the whole a people