

SUNBEAM

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OUR GOOD QUEEN.

At the very earliest dawn of June 20th, 1837, William IV, breathed his last, and the ministers of State hastened away from Windsor to Kensington, to announce the fact to the young girl who must now mount the throne of her ancestors.

The birds were singing under her windows, and she was in a sweet sleep, from which the attendants hesitated to awaken her, until informed that even the Queen's sleep must give way to this business. Presently Victoria stood before her visitors in a loose white night-gown and shawl, her long hair falling about her shoulders, and her feet in slippers.

The announcement of the vacant throne was made to her by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Chamberlain, and four other gentlemen from Windsor.

She entreated the Archbishop to pray for her; and so began the untried difficult path of sovereignty in dependence upon her Father in heaven.

The readiness with which she received and acted upon Lord Melbourne's instructions for every new duty, won the admiration of those most anxious as to the impression she would make on the British public. The young Queen quickly became popular. According to custom, she, as the new monarch, had to present herself at



WINDSOR CASTLE.

the window of St. James Palace when her accession was proclaimed by the Garter-King-at-Arms.

The striking up of the band for the National Anthem, the firing of the guns, the acclamations that thundered in the Palace-court and rolled away to the last

ermine and bordered with gold lace. Eight ladies bore her train, and fifty ladies of her household followed her. She had a gold circlet on her head. After she had knelt in prayer, the Archbishop of Canterbury presented her as the Queen of this realm, and was answered by shouts of

echo amid the surging crowds beyond, wholly overcame her, and turning to her mother she fell upon her neck and wept.

It was not till the 28th of June, 1838, that the coronation took place. O, what a long day it was! The firing of guns began with the dawn, and the streets of London were all alive soon afterwards. At ten o'clock a salute of twenty-one guns proclaimed that the Queen had just left Buckingham Palace in her grand state carriage, drawn by eight cream-coloured horses.

The gray old Abbey was resplendent with the purple and crimson and gold cloth that was laid along the aisles and over the galleries that had been erected.

There were tall Life Guards with their waving plumes, gorgeous ambassadors, bediamonded princes, peers in robes of state, and peeresses whose jewels flashed when the sun shone on them, till, as Harriet Martineau said, each peeress shone like a rainbow.

The young Queen walked up the nave escorted by two Bishops, and wearing a royal robe of crimson velvet trimmed with