

## THE QUEEN.

MUCH praise has been written of the Queen, some of it a little too Oriental for our taste, and much of it based upon a confusion between her action and that of her people—the Queen, for instance, is really not responsible for the introduction of railways,—but most of those who have written have passed over a quality which is Her Majesty's own, but which has been of infinite service to the commonwealth. With the possible exception of Isabella of Castile—Louisa of Prussia, remember, only reigned indirectly—no woman on a throne has ever exhibited in such perfection what royal tact should be, a mingling of kindness and dignity, with a keen perception of the situation around her. It has been Queen Victoria's habit throughout her long reign to break occasionally the silence which is imposed on constitutional sovereigns, and which must be sometimes one of the heaviest of their burdens—imagine being a king when all is going wrong, and you see what would be right, and yet must remain motionless as any other figurehead—with utterances that are clearly her own, yet no one can recall one of them which offended her people, or produced any impression except one of gratitude to Providence that at last the right person occupied the throne. To how many sovereigns has that gift been given, or in which of them does it reside now, even though one amongst them at least is an orator of no mean force? And still, when the Queen approaches so closely to the verge of usual human life that few among us remember clearly any other sovereign, amidst much bodily weakness, and a strong sense of age, the faculty remains intact. Always the few brief sentences deepen the

double impression of a womanliness which yet is consistent with the recollection that she is Queen, and that her notice honors those on whom it falls. There can be little doubt that the Queen feels keenly the pressure of the necessity which has destroyed the hope that the closing years of her wonderful reign might be years of unbroken tranquillity and progress. She at least wanted no war, if only because she must be satiated with triumph, content with her Empire, incapable of even wishing for the defeat of more enemies, or the acquisition of fresh dominion. Yet the sad necessity once perceived, Her Majesty utters nothing that is not either an encouragement to her soldiers or a solace to those left behind by the victims of the war. There is no word of regret for herself, nothing but sympathy for her people, couched in words which in some strangely effective way, effective because it is instinctive, recall the fact that it is a great Queen who is speaking. Take the words of farewell to the Household Cavalry uttered at Windsor on Saturday last: "I have asked you, who have always served near me, to come here, that I may take leave of you before you start on your long voyage to a distant part of my Empire, in whose defence your comrades are now so nobly fighting. I know that you will always do your duty to your Sovereign and your country, wherever that duty may lead you, and I pray God to protect you and bring you back safely home." "You"—the idea might be put in other and less well-chosen words—"are my personal guards, and honored in so being, and to you I now express my friendship and my hopes for your safety, as well as your success." It seems a slight thing to