

OSBORNE HOUSE, ISLE OF WIGHT.

## OUR SOVEREIGN LADY.

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

## CHAPTER III.—(Continued).

The year 1853 opened darkly with the gloom of impending war hanging over the land. The Queen's Speech, in January, asking for an increase of the Naval and Military forces, made the nearness of the danger understood. In March both Houses of Parliament promised Her Majesty the necessary support—and immediately on the Declaration of War with Russia, troops were dispatched to the Crimea, to serve with the allied armies of France and Turkey. The departure of the soldiers called forth the greatest enthusiasm. The Queen, the Prince, and their children went to bid farewell and God-speed to their Guards, at seven o'clock in the morning.

"Men in battle array,  
Ready of heart, and ready of hand,  
Marching with banner, and bugle, and fife."

They presented arms, cheered the Royal Family, and went off cheering, though well they knew that many a one out of their brave company would return no more. All hearts throughout the country were drawn closer together in sympathy, in one great sorrow which entered into remote villages, quiet country towns, and crowded cities; for in each alike there were partings from husbands and fathers, brothers, sons, and friends. Sorrow and dread in many a cottage, and sorrow in a royal home, where a widowed mother, the Duchess of Cambridge, and her daughter, the good and beautiful Princess Mary, from her youth upward beloved by the English nation, were parting with an only son and brother, the Duke of Cambridge, going out with his brigade.

A fortnight later the fleet sailed for the Baltic. In spite of bad weather, the Queen, in her little yacht, the "Fairy," sailed through the squadron of splendid ships, whilst the sailors manned the yards, shouting loyal cheers, and the great guns boomed forth their salutes.

The next day the fleet set sail; the "Fairy," with the Royal party on board, leading the way for several miles; and when they parted company, the Queen stood on the deck of the "Fairy," waving farewells to her sailors, as one by one the gallantships went by, and, sinking below the verge, were lost to sight. "It was a solemn moment," wrote her Majesty in her journal; "many a heart will be very heavy, and many a prayer, including our own, will be offered up for its safety and glory."

The events of that war are fresh in the memory of this generation. The grand news of the first victory at the battle of the Alma, and the dark shadow that follows every victory—the list of the honored names of the killed, and the wounded. The heroic charge of the Light Brigade, immortalized by our Post Laureate,

"Charging an army, while  
All the world wondered."

The Battle of Inkermann, fought and won on a cold, wet, and dark day, against tremendous odds. Then winter came on apace—that black winter, with its sad tales of the sufferings of our soldiers, not only from wounds and sickness, but from hunger, cold, and every kind of hardship. This dreadful state of things called forth the utmost indignation in England; but from its darkness there sprang to light many beautiful instances of self-denial and charity to help forward the two funds which were at once formed—"The Times Fund," for the immediate relief of the sufferings of the Army, and the "Patriotic Fund," headed by the Prince Consort, to which the Queen gave £1,000,—to form a provision for the widows and orphans of those who died in the war.

Another lamp of never-ending charity was also lighted at this time by the grand and beautiful example of Florence Nightingale, name dear to every English heart.

"A lady with a lamp shall stand  
In the great history of the land,  
A noble type of good,  
Heroic womanhood,

"On England's annals through the long  
Hereafter of her speech and song,  
That light its rays shall cast  
From portals of the past."

Miss Nightingale came forward in answer to the appeal, "Nurses are wanted as well as necessaries," and led the van of the brave company of devoted women who gladly followed.

Miss Nightingale found misery beyond description in the hospitals, but under her marvellous power of organization,—cleanliness, comfort, and hope, before long, began to prevail in the various wards and departments.

The Queen's heart was weighed down with sorrow for her soldiers. She wrote to Lord Raglan, the Commander-in-Chief, "The sad privations of the army, the bad weather, and the constant sickness, are causes of the deepest anxiety to the Queen and the Prince. The braver the troops are, and the more patiently they bear all their trials and sufferings, the more miserable we feel at their long continuance." Then followed such directions as she could suggest for their comfort in food, and shelter, and warm clothing. So deep was the Queen's anxiety of heart, that it affected her health, and when, in the following February, Lord Raglan paid a flying visit to Windsor Castle, the royal children said to him, "You must hurry back to Sebastopol and take it, or else it will kill mamma."

But many more months of fighting had yet to elapse, for the siege was not carried until the following September;—and long before that day of victory, Lord Raglan had himself been laid in a soldier's grave outside Sebastopol, and the terms of peace were not actually signed until March, 1856.

In July the Queen and the Prince went to Aldershot to review the troops returned from the Crimea, and then for the first time

was given the new and much-coveted distinction of the Victoria Cross, for saving life in battle. Standing up in her carriage, her voice clear as a silver bell, heard distinctly in the breathless silence, her Majesty told her soldiers how anxiously she had watched their difficulties and hardships, how greatly she had admired the noble manner in which they had met and borne them, how deeply she mourned for the brave men fallen in their country's service, how proud she felt of their valor, and that she thanked God that their dangers were over, while the glory of their deeds would remain. As the Queen ceased speaking, from line to line, through all the ranks, the shouts of grateful loyalty rose up in deafening cheers.

The next day, in hot July sunshine, the Guards marched back into London, and were welcomed by the Queen, the Prince, and the Royal Family, standing in the same balcony from which, two years before, they had witnessed the departure of the regiments, in the dim light of that sad morning.

"Two years, an age of glory and of pain,  
Since we, with wavings, and with shouts and tears,  
And blessings, and high hopes, dismissed  
that parting train,  
With everything but fears."

Happier days now returned to the country and to the Court. The engagement of the Princess Royal to the Crown Prince of Prussia, whilst it made the first real break in the family, could not but be rejoiced in by the royal parents; for it brought the prospect for their beloved daughter of a happiness like their own, in a true love marriage, and the gladness was shared in by the English nation, with whom the Princess Royal has always been most popular.

But even before the marriage could take place, the time of peace for England had again passed away. That awful mutiny, in which men, women, and children were massacred in cold blood, and with revolting cruelties, had broken out in India, and was spreading like wild-fire from province to province, and city to city. Like stars in a midnight sky, the brighter for the surrounding darkness, shine forth the names of the gallant men who, by God's mercy, quenched that outburst of fury. Some amongst the number, like Sir Henry Havelock, Sir James Outram, Sir Herbert Edwardes, and Sir John, afterwards Lord Lawrence, lived to receive their well-earned laurels from their grateful country; whilst to others came the call to lay down their lives on the field of battle, or at the post of duty, like General Nicholson, the hero of Delhi, "a youth in years—a veteran in the splendor of his achievements;" or Sir Henry Lawrence—

the beloved and revered of all India—killed in the siege of Lucknow, whose memory even sufficed to sustain the constancy of the besieged.

"Never surrender, I charge you, but every man die at his post!"  
"Voice of the dead whom we loved, our Lawrence the best of the brave!"

At length, with the relief of Lucknow, the mutiny was mercifully brought to a close, and not long afterwards the East India Company ceased to exist, and the Indian Empire was brought under the direct rule of the Queen, although Her Majesty was not proclaimed Empress of India until several years later.

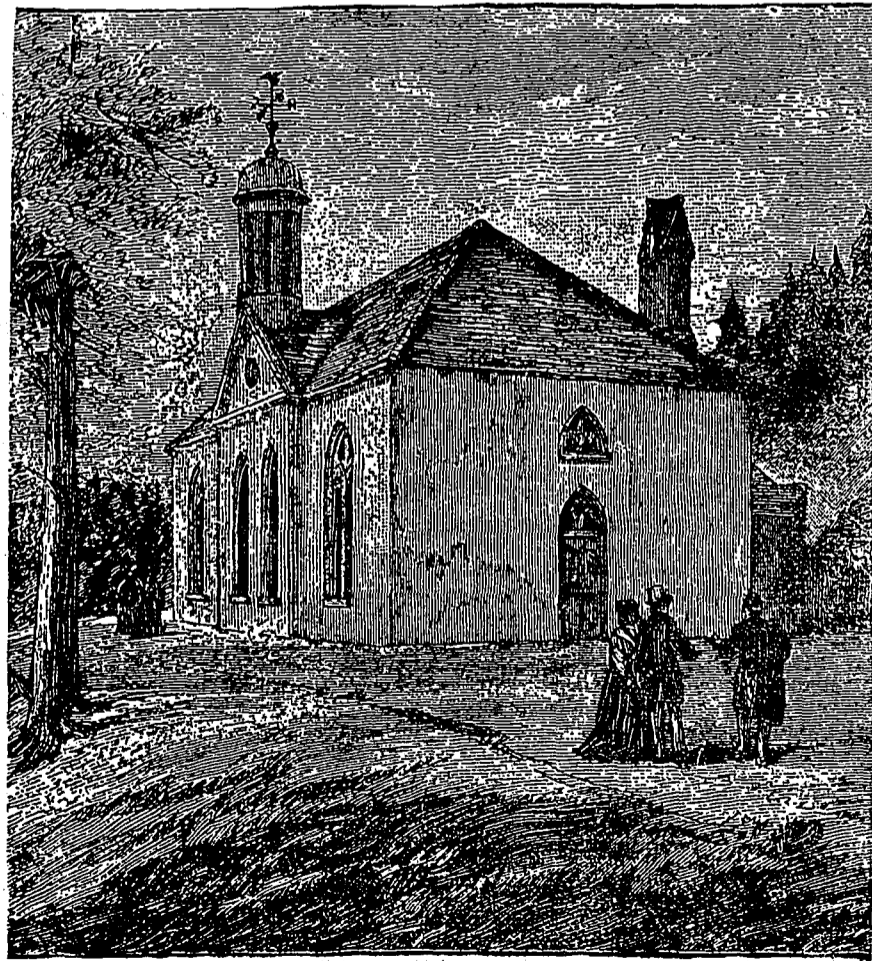
After the Princess Royal's marriage, in January, 1858, the Princess Alice (now in her sixteenth year) became the special companion of her royal parents. The Queen's journal at that time often speaks of her "fine good sense and unselfishness," and tells that she "was a great help and comfort in the royal circle."

Events too many and too various to be chronicled in this short sketch, occupied the following years. In the Royal Family the necessary separations had begun. The Prince of Wales went to Cambridge, and Prince Alfred had joined his ship. The Queen visited her royal daughter in her German home, to see her first grandchild. Abroad the thoughts of all Europe were occupied with Garibaldi, the liberator of Italy, its "uncrowned king." At home, the Volunteer movement had begun, and the first submarine Atlantic telegraph had been laid.

(To be Continued.)

WE QUOTE the following from a speech made by Dr. Meredith, of Boston, in one of the meetings of the Congregational National Council recently held in Chicago: In the realm of experience all Christians agree. I remember having read of a little colored boy down in Mississippi who was converted to God, and he was so happy he didn't know what to do with himself. He laughed, and he danced, and he sang, and he shouted, and finally he cried out, "Oh, it is sweet—it is sweet—it is sweet—as molasses!" Yes, you laugh at that; but 2,800 years before that, Israel's royal singer said, "It is sweeter than honey and the honey-comb." One of them lived in a honey country, and the other lived in a molasses country, but the sentiment is exactly the same!

I LOOKED TO JESUS and He looked on me, and we were one forever.—C. H. Spurgeon.



ORATHE CHURCH, NEAR BALMORAL CASTLE.