

QUEEN VICTORIA.

BY MRS. OLIPHANT.



BUST OF QUEEN VICTORIA.

The Queen of these realms is perhaps the only great monarch who has stood before her people, eye to eye, and heart to heart, in all the sympathies of nature, in all the events of common life, which are the same to queen and to peasant; a woman like all women: yet also in the highest offices of princely action, a statesman like few statesmen—comptroller of the tides of empire, mediator among the nations, High Counsellor of Europe and the world. Her Majesty has disclosed herself consciously and unconsciously to us all with that perfect composure which in a monarch is at the same time perfect modesty, in all these positions, so that we really know more of her than we know of many of our near neighbours, and it is not on ignorance or false sentiment or any kind of

fictitious popular enthusiasm that our national pride and glory in our Queen are founded. She has given us her royal confidence throughout all the maturer years of her life, opening to her people in a great and touching humility the dearest secrets of her history; and this in no poor and formal record, but in words warm from her heart, the greatest sign of love which one friend can give to another.

The Queen has thus made of her people her friend in the truest sense of the word. We cannot be mistaken or led away by false report, because we know better. Were there backbiters, they are disarmed: the whispers of the backstairs die away; there is no place for them where there is the fullest affectionate confidence between two parties, by whom all has been said, the one in the ear of the other, with mutual tears and smiles. There is not one of us who may not say with respectful reverence, "We know our Queen." From time to time out of her royal seclusion there comes a message, eagerly received, eagerly read by millions. And what is the exclamation from every side? "It is so like the Queen!" She has permitted us to know her so well, that we almost know what she will say in moments which require such a communication. The touch of character, of nature in all, is from the royal friend whom we know.

So far as we know, no such personal intercourse exists between any other monarch and his subjects. There never was a time when sovereigns were more active, more prominent than the present. Absolutism, thought in our hopeful time to be dead and gone, is up